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a ***Grace Notes*** course

## **Jeremiah**

From Commentary on the Old Testament

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch

adapted for Grace Notes training by Warren Doud

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## Jeremiah

### Introduction

#### § 1. The Times of Jeremiah

It was in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, B.C. 629, that Jeremiah was called to be a prophet. At that time the kingdom of Judah enjoyed unbroken peace. Since the miraculous destruction of Sennacherib's host before the gates of Jerusalem in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, B.C. 714, Judah had no longer had much to fear from the imperial power of Assyria. The reverse then sustained before Jerusalem, just eight years after the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel, had terribly crushed the might of the great empire. It was but a few years after that disaster till the Medes under Deïoces asserted their independence against Assyria; and the Babylonians too, though soon reduced to subjection again, rose in insurrection against Sennacherib. Sennacherib's energetic son and successor Esarhaddon did indeed succeed in re-establishing for a time the tottering throne. While holding Babylon, Elam, Susa, and Persia to their allegiance, he restored the ascendancy of the empire in the western provinces, and brought lower Syria, the districts of Syria that lay on the sea coast, under the Assyrian yoke. But the rulers who succeeded him, Samuges and the second Sardanapalus, were wholly unable to offer any effective resistance to the growing power of the Medes, or to check the steady decline of the once so mighty empire. Cf. M. Duncker, *Gesch. des Alterth.* i. S. 707ff. of 3 Aufl. Under Esarhaddon an Assyrian marauding army again made an inroad into Judah, and carried King Manasseh captive to Babylon; but, under what circumstances we know not, he soon regained his freedom, and was permitted to return to Jerusalem and remount his throne (2 Chron. 33:11-13). From this time forward the Assyrians appeared no more in Judah. Nor did it seem as if Judah had any danger to apprehend from Egypt, the great southern empire; for the power of Egypt had been greatly weakened by intestine dissensions and civil

wars. It is true that Psammetichus, after the overthrow of the dodecarchy, began to raise Egypt's head amongst the nations once more, and to extend his sway beyond the boundaries of the country; but we learn much as to his success in this direction from the statement of Herodotus (ii. 157), that the capture of the Philistine city of Ashdod was not accomplished until after a twenty-nine years' siege. Even if, with Duncker, we refer the length of time here mentioned to the total duration of the war against the Philistines, we are yet enabled clearly to see that Egypt had not then so far recovered her former might as to be able to menace the kingdom of Judah with destruction, had Judah but faithfully adhered to the Lord its God, and in Him sought its strength. This, unhappily, Judah utterly failed to do, notwithstanding all the zeal wherewith the godly King Josiah laboured to secure for his kingdom that foremost element of its strength.

In the eighth year of his reign, "while he was yet young," i.e., when but a lad of sixteen years of age, he began to seek the God of David his father; and in the twelfth year of his reign he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places and Astartes, and the carved and molten images (2 Chron. 34:3). He carried on the work of reforming the public worship without intermission, until every public trace of idolatry was removed, and the lawful worship of Jahveh was re-established. In the eighteenth year of his reign, upon occasion of some repairs in the temple, the book of the law of Moses was discovered there, was brought and read before him. Deeply agitated by the curses with which the transgressors of the law were threatened, he then, together with the elders of Judah and the people itself, solemnly renewed the covenant with the Lord. To set a seal upon the renewal of the covenant, he instituted a passover, to which not only all Judah was invited, but also all remnants of the ten tribes that had been left behind in the land of Israel (2 Kings 22:3-23:24; 2 Chron. 34:4-35:19). To Josiah there is given in 2 Kings 23:25 the testimony that like unto him there was no king before him, that turned to Jahveh with all his

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heart, all his soul, and all his might, according to all the law of Moses; yet this most godly of all the kings of Judah was unable to heal the mischief which his predecessors Manasseh and Amon had by their wicked government created, or to crush the germs of spiritual and moral corruption which could not fail to bring about the ruin of the kingdom. And so the account of Josiah's reign and of his efforts towards the revival of the worship of Jahveh, given in 2 Kings 23:26, is concluded: "Yet Jahveh ceased not from His great wrath wherewith He was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations wherewith Manasseh provoked Him; and Jahveh said: Judah also will I put away from my face as I have put away Israel, and will cast off this city which I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall dwell there."

The kingdom of Israel had come to utter ruin in consequence of its apostasy from the Lord its God, and on account of the calf-worship which had been established by Jeroboam, the founder of the kingdom, and to which, from political motives, all his successors adhered. The history of Judah too is summed up in a perpetual alternation of apostasy from the Lord and return to Him. As early as the time of heathen-hearted Ahaz idolatry had raised itself to all but unbounded ascendancy; and through the untheocratic policy of this wicked king, Judah had sunk into a dependency of Assyria. It would have shared the fate of the sister kingdom even then, had not the accession of Hezekiah, Ahaz's godly son, brought about a return to the faithful covenant God. The reformation then inaugurated not only turned aside the impending ruin, but converted this very ruin into a glorious deliverance such as Israel had not seen since its exodus from Egypt. The marvellous overthrow of the vast Assyrian host at the very gates of Jerusalem, wrought by the angel of the Lord in one night by means of a sore pestilence, abundantly testified that Judah, despite its littleness and inconsiderable earthly strength, might have been able to hold its own against all the onsets of the great empire, if it had only kept true to the covenant God and

looked for its support from His almighty hand alone. But the repentant loyalty to the faithful and almighty God of the covenant hardly lasted until Hezekiah's death. The heathen party amongst the people gained again the upper hand under Hezekiah's son Manasseh, who ascended the throne in his twelfth year; and idolatry, which had been only outwardly suppressed, broke out anew and, during the fifty-five years' reign of this most godless of all the kings of Israel, reached a pitch Judah had never yet known. Manasseh not only restored the high places and altars of Baal which his father had destroyed, he built altars to the whole host of heaven in both courts of the temple, and went so far as to erect an image of Asherah in the house of the Lord; he devoted his son to Moloch, practised witchcraft and soothsaying more than ever the Amorites had done, and by his idols seduced Israel to sin. Further, by putting to death such prophets and godly persons as resisted his impious courses, he shed very much innocent blood, until he had filled Jerusalem therewith from end to end (2 Kings 21:1-16; 2 Chron. 33:1-10). His humbling himself before God when in captivity in Babylon, and his removal of the images out of the temple upon his return to Jerusalem and to his throne (2 Chron. 33:11ff., 15ff.), passed by and left hardly a trace behind; and his godless son Amon did but continue his father's sins and multiply the guilt (2 Kings 21:19-23; 2 Chron. 33:21-23). Thus Judah's spiritual and moral strength was so broken that a thorough-going conversion of the people at large to the Lord and His law was no longer to be looked for. Hence the godly Josiah accomplished by his reformation nothing more than the suppression of the grosser forms of idol-worship and the restoration of the formal temple-services; he could neither put an end to the people's estrangement at heart from God, nor check with any effect that moral corruption which was the result of the heart's forsaking the living God. And so, even after Josiah's reform of public worship, we find Jeremiah complaining: "As many as are thy cities, so many are thy gods, Judah; and as many as are the streets in

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Jerusalem, so many altars have ye made to shame, to burn incense to Baal" (Jeremiah 2:28; 11:13). And godlessness showed itself in all classes of the people. "Go about in the streets of Jerusalem," Jeremiah exclaims, "and look and search if there is one that doeth right and asks after honesty, and I will pardon her (saith the Lord). I thought, it is but the meaner sort that are foolish, for they know not the way of Jahveh, the judgment of their God. I will then get me to the great, and will speak with them, for they know the way of Jahveh, the right of their God. But they have all broken the yoke, burst the bonds" (Jeremiah 5:1-5). "Small and great are greedy for gain; prophet and priest use deceit" (Jeremiah 6:13). This being the spiritual condition of the people, we cannot wonder that immediately after the death of Josiah, unblushing apostasy appeared again as well in public idolatry as in injustice and sin of every kind. Jehoiakim did that which was evil in the eyes of Jahveh even as his fathers had done (2 Kings 23:37; 2 Chron. 36:6). His eyes and his heart were set upon nothing but on gain and on innocent blood, to shed it, and on oppression and on violence, to do it, Jeremiah 22:17. And his successors on the throne, both his son Jehoiachin and his brother Zedekiah, walked in his footsteps (2 Kings 24:5, 19; 2 Chron. 36:9, 12), although Zedekiah did not equal his brother Jehoiakim in energy for carrying out evil, but let himself be ruled by those who were about him. For Judah's persistence in rebellion against God and His law, the Lord ceased not from His great wrath; but carried out the threatening proclamation to king and people by the prophetess Hulda, when Josiah sent to consult her for himself, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of the newly found book of the law: "Behold, I bring evil in this place, and upon its inhabitants, all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: because that they have forsaken me, and burnt incense to other gods, to provoke me with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath is kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched" (2 Kings 22:16ff.).

This evil began to fall on the kingdom in Jehoiakim's days. Josiah was not to see the coming of it. Because, when he heard the curses of the law, he humbled himself before the Lord, rent his raiment and wept before Him, the Lord vouchsafed to him the promise that He would gather him to his fathers in peace, that his eyes should not look on the evil God would bring on Jerusalem (2 King 22:19f.); and this pledge God fulfilled to him, although they that were to execute God's righteous justice were already equipped, and though towards the end of his reign the storm clouds of judgment were gathering ominously over Judah.

While Josiah was labouring in the reformation of public worship, there had taken place in Central Asia the events which brought about the fall of the Assyrian empire. the younger son of Esarhaddon, the second Sardanapalus, had been succeeded in the year 626 by his son Saracus. Since the victorious progress of the Medes under Cyaxares, his dominion had been limited to the cradle of the empire, Assyria, to Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and Cilicia. To all appearance in the design of preserving Babylonia to the empire, Saracus appointed Nabopolassar, a Babylonian by birth and sprung from the Chaldean stock, to be governor of that province. This man found opportunity to aggrandize himself during a war between the Medes and the Lydians. An eclipse of the sun took place on the 30th September 610, while a battle was going on. Both armies in terror gave up the contest; and, seconded by Syennesis, who governed Cilicia under the Assyrian supremacy, Nabopolassar made use of the favourable temper which the omen had excited in both camps to negotiate a peace between the contending peoples, and to institute a coalition of Babylonia and Media against Assyria. To confirm this alliance, Amytis, the daughter of Cyaxares, was given in marriage to Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar; and the war against Assyria was opened without delay by the advance against Nineveh in the spring of 609 of the allied armies of Medes and Babylonians. But two years had been spent in the siege of that most impregnable city, and two

battles had been lost, before they succeeded by a night attack in utterly routing the Assyrians, pursuing the fugitives to beneath the city walls. The fortification would long have defied their assaults, had not a prodigious spring flood of the Tigris, in the third year of the war, washed down a part of the walls lying next the river, and so made it possible for the besiegers to enter the city, to take it, and reduce it to ashes. The fall of Nineveh in the year 607 overthrew the Assyrian empire; and when the conquerors proceeded to distribute their rich booty, all the land lying on the western bank of the Tigris fell to the share of Nabopolassar of Babylon. But the occupation by the Babylonians of the provinces which lay west of the Euphrates was contested by the Egyptians. Before the campaign of the allied Medes and Babylonians against Nineveh, Pharaoh Necho, the warlike son of Psammetichus, had advanced with his army into Palestine, having landed apparently in the bay of Acco, on his way to war by the Euphrates with Assyria, Egypt's hereditary enemy. To oppose his progress King Josiah marched against the Egyptian; fearing as he did with good reason, that if Syria fell into Necho's power, the end had come to the independence of Judah as a kingdom. A battle was fought in the plain near Megiddo; the Jewish army was defeated, and Josiah mortally wounded, so that he died on the way to Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:29f.; 2 Chron. 35:20f.). In his stead the people of the land raised his second son Jehoahaz to the throne; but Pharaoh came to Jerusalem, took Jehoahaz prisoner, and had him carried to Egypt, where he closed his life in captivity, imposed a fine on the country, and set up Eliakim, Josiah's eldest son, to be king as his vassal under the name of Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:30-35; 2 Chron. 36:1-4). Thereafter Necho pursued his march through Syria, and subject to himself the western provinces of the Assyrian empire; and he had penetrated to the fortified town of Carchemish (*Kirkesion*) on the Euphrates when Nineveh succumbed to the united Medes and Babylonians.—Immediately upon the dissolution of the Assyrian empire, Nabopolassar, now an old man no longer able

to sustain the fatigues of a new campaign, entrusted the command of the army to his vigorous son Nebuchadnezzar, to the end that he might wage war against Pharaoh Necho and wrest from the Egyptians the provinces they had possessed themselves of (cf. Berosi *fragm. in Joseph. Antt.* x. 11. 1, and c. Ap. i. 19). In the year 607, the third year of Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar put the army entrusted to him in motion, and in the next year, the fourth of Jehoiakim's reign, B.C. 606, he crushed Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish on the Euphrates. Pursuing the fleeing enemy, he pressed irresistibly forwards into Syria and Palestine, took Jerusalem in the same year, made Jehoiakim his dependant, and carried off to Babel a number of the Jewish youths of highest rank, young Daniel amongst them, together with part of the temple furniture (2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chron. 36:6f.; Dan. 1:1f.). He had done as far on his march as the boundaries of Egypt when he heard of the death of his father Nabopolassar at Babylon. In consequence of this intelligence he hastened to Babylon the shortest way through the desert, with but few attendants, with the view of mounting the throne and seizing the reins of government, while he caused the army to follow slowly with the prisoners and the booty (Beros. *l.c.*). This, the first taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, is the commencement of the seventy years of Judah's Chaldean bondage, foretold by Jeremiah in 25:11, shortly before the Chaldeans invaded Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim; and with the subjection of Judah to Nebuchadnezzar's supremacy the dissolution of the kingdom began. For three years Jehoiakim remained subject to the king of Babylon; in the fourth year he rebelled against him. Nebuchadnezzar, who with the main body of his army was engaged in the interior of Asia, lost no time in sending into the rebellious country such forces of Chaldeans as were about the frontiers, together with contingents of Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites; and these troops devastated Judah through out the remainder of Jehoiakim's reign (2 Kings 24:1, 2). But immediately upon the death of



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Jehoiakim, just as his son had mounted the throne, Nebuchadnezzar's generals advanced against Jerusalem with a vast army and invested the city in retribution for Jehoiakim's defection. During the siege Nebuchadnezzar joined the army. Jehoiachin, seeing the impossibility of holding out any longer against the besiegers, resolved to go out to the king of Babylon, taking with him the queen-mother, the princes of the kingdom, and the officers of the court, and to make unconditional surrender of himself and the city. Nebuchadnezzar made the king and his train prisoners; and, after plundering the treasures of the royal palace and the temple, carried captive to Babylon the king, the leading men of the country, the soldiers, the smiths and artisans, and, in short, every man in Jerusalem who was capable of bearing arms. He left in the land only the poorest sort of the people, from whom no insurrectionary attempts were to be feared; and having taken an oath of fealty from Mattaniah, the uncle of the captive king, he installed him, under the name of Zedekiah, as vassal king over a land that had been robbed of all that was powerful or noble amongst its inhabitants (2 Kings 24:8-17; 2 Chron. 36:10). Nor did Zedekiah either keep true to the oath of allegiance he had sworn and pledged to the king of Babylon. In the fourth year of his reign, ambassadors appeared from the neighbouring states of Edom, Ammon, Moab, Tyre, and Sidon, seeking to organize a vast coalition against the Chaldean supremacy (Jeremiah 27:3; 28:1). Their mission was indeed unsuccessful; for Jeremiah crushed the people's hope of a speedy return of the exiles in Babylon by repeated and emphatic declaration that the Babylonian bondage must last seventy years (Jeremiah 27-29). In the same year Zedekiah visited Babylon, apparently in order to assure his liege lord of his loyalty and to deceive him as to his projects (Jeremiah 51:59). But in Zedekiah's ninth year Hophra (Apries), the grandson of Necho, succeeded to the crown of Egypt; and when he was arming for war against Babylon, Zedekiah, trusting in the help of Egypt (Ezek. 17:15), broke the oath of fealty he had sworn (Ezek. 17:16), and tried to shake

off the Babylonian yoke. But straightway a mighty Chaldean army marched against Jerusalem, and in the tenth month of that same year established a blockade round Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:1). The Egyptian army advanced to relieve the beleaguered city, and for a time compelled the Chaldeans to raise the siege; but it was in the end defeated by the Chaldeans in a pitched battle (Jeremiah 37:5ff.), and the siege was again resumed with all rigour. For long the Jews made stout resistance, and fought with the courage of despair, Zedekiah and his advisers being compelled to admit that this time Nebuchadnezzar would show no mercy. The Hebrew slaves were set free that they might do military service; the stone buildings were one after another torn down that their materials might serve to strengthen the walls; and in this way for about a year and a half all the enemy's efforts to master the strong city were in vain. Famine had reached its extremity when, in the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the Chaldean battering rams made a breach in the northern wall, and through this the besiegers made their way into the lower city. The defenders withdrew to the temple hill and the city of Zion; and, when the Chaldeans began to storm these strongholds during the night, Zedekiah, under cover of darkness, fled with the rest of his soldiers by the door between the two walls by the king's garden. He was, however, overtaken in the steppes of Jericho by the pursuing Chaldeans, made prisoner, and carried to Riblah in Coele-Syria. Here Nebuchadnezzar had his headquarters during the siege of Jerusalem, and here he pronounced judgment on Zedekiah. His sons and the leading men of Judah were put to death before his eyes; he was then deprived of eyesight and carried in chains to Babylon, where he remained a prisoner till his death (2 Kings 25:3-7; Jeremiah 39:2-7; 52:6-11). A month later Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the king of Babylon's guard, came to Jerusalem to destroy the rebellious city. The principal priests and officers of the kingdom and sixty citizens were sent to the king at Riblah, and executed there. Everything of value to be found amongst the

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utensils of the temple was carried to Babylon, the city with the temple and palace was burnt to the ground, the walls were destroyed, and what able-bodied men were left amongst the people were carried into exile. Nothing was left in the land but a part of the poorer people to serve as vinedressers and husbandmen; and over this miserable remnant, increased a little in numbers by the return of some of those who had fled during the war into the neighbouring countries, Gedaliah the son of Ahikam was appointed governor in the Chaldean interest. Jeremiah chose to stay with him amidst his countrymen. But three months afterwards Gedaliah was murdered, at the instigation of Baalis the king of the Ammonites, by one Ishmael, who was sprung from the royal stock; and thereupon a great part of the remaining population, fearing the vengeance of the Chaldeans, fled, against the prophet's advice, into Egypt (Jeremiah 40–43). And so the banishment of the people was now a total one, and throughout the whole period of the Chaldean domination the land was a wilderness.

Judah was now, like the ten tribes, cast out amongst the heathen out of the land the Lord had given them for an inheritance, because they had forsaken Jahveh, their God, and had despised His statutes. Jerusalem, the city of the great King over all the earth, was in ruins, the house which the Lord had consecrated to His name was burnt with fire, and the people of His covenant had become a scorn and derision to all peoples. But God had not broken His covenant with Israel. Even in the law—Lev. 26 and Deut. 30—He had promised that even when Israel was an outcast from his land amongst the heathen, He would remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and not utterly reject the exiles; but when they had borne the punishment of their sins, would turn again their captivity, and gather them together out of the nations.

## § 2. The Person of the Prophet

Concerning the life and labours of the prophet Jeremiah, we have fuller information than we

have as to those of many of the other prophets. The man is very clearly reflected in his prophecies, and his life is closely interwoven with the history of Judah. We consider first the outward circumstances of the prophet's life, and then his character and mental gifts.

*a. His Outward Circumstances*—Jeremiah (יֵרֵמְיָהוּ, contracted יֵרֵמְיָה, Ἰερεμίας, Jeremias) was the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests belonging to the priest-city Anathoth, situated about five miles north of Jerusalem, now a village called *Anâta*. This Hilkiah is not the high priest of that name, mentioned in 2 Kings 22:4ff. and 2 Chron. 34:9, as has been supposed by some of the Fathers, Rabbins, and recent commentators. This view is shown to be untenable by the indefinite מִן הַכֹּהֲנִים, 1:1. Besides, it is hardly likely that the high priest could have lived with his household out of Jerusalem, as was the case in Jeremiah's family (Jeremiah 32:8; 37:12ff.); and we learn from 1 Kings 2:26 that it was priests of the house of Ithamar that lived in Anathoth, whereas the high priests belonged to the line of Eleazar and the house of Phinehas (1 Chron. 24:3). Jeremiah, called to be prophet at an early age (נָעַר, 1:6), laboured in Jerusalem from the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (B.C. 629) until the fall of the kingdom; and after the destruction of Jerusalem he continued his work for some years longer amidst the ruins of Judah, and in Egypt amongst those of his countrymen who had fled thither (Jeremiah 1:2f., 25:3, 40–44). His prophetic ministry falls, consequently, into the period of the internal dissolution of the kingdom of Judah, and its destruction by the Chaldeans. He had himself received a mission from the Lord to peoples and kingdoms, as well to break down and destroy, as to build and plant (Jeremiah 1:10). He was to fulfil this mission, in the first place, in the case of Judah, and then to the heathen peoples, in so far forth as they came in contact with the kingdom of God in Judah. The scene of his labours was Jerusalem. Here he proclaimed the word of the Lord in the courts of the temple (e.g., 7:2; 26:1); at the gates of the city (Jeremiah 17:19); in the king's palace (Jeremiah 32:1; 37:17); in the

prison (Jeremiah 32:1); and in other places (Jeremiah 18:1ff., 19:1ff., 27:2). Some commentators think that he first began as prophet in his native town of Anathoth, and that he wrought there for some time ere he visited Jerusalem; but this is in contradiction to the statement of 2:2, that he uttered almost his very first discourse "before the ears of Jerusalem." Nor does this assumption find any support from 11:21; 12:5ff. All that can be gathered from these passages is, that during his ministry he occasionally visited his native town, which lay so near Jerusalem, and preached the word of the Lord to his former fellow-citizens. When he began his work as prophet, King Josiah had already taken in hand the extirpation of idolatry and the restoration of the worship of Jahveh in the temple; and Jeremiah was set apart by the Lord to be a prophet that he might support the godly king in this work. His task was to bring back the hearts of the people to the God of their fathers by preaching God's word, and to convert that outward return to the service of Jahveh into a thorough turning of the heart to Him, so as to rescue from destruction all who were willing to convert and be saved. Encouraged by Manasseh's sins, backsliding from the Lord, godlessness, and unrighteousness had reached in Judah such a pitch, that it was no longer possible to turn aside the judgment of rejection from the face of the Lord, to save the backsliding race from being delivered into the power of the heathen. Yet the faithful covenant God, in divine long-suffering, granted to His faithless people still another gracious opportunity for repentance and return to Him; He gave them Josiah's reformation, and sent the prophets, because, though resolved to punish the sinful people for its stiff-necked apostasy, He would not make an utter end of it. This gives us a view point from which to consider Jeremiah's mission, and looking hence, we cannot fail to find sufficient light to enable us to understand the whole course of his labours, and the contents of his discourses.

Immediately after his call, he was made to see, under the emblem of a seething caldron, the

evil that was about to break from out of the north upon all the inhabitants of the land: the families of the kingdoms of the north are to come and set their thrones before the gates of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and through them God is to utter judgment upon Judah for its idolatry (Jeremiah 1:13-16). Accordingly, from the beginning of his work in the days of Josiah onwards, the prophet can never be driven from the maintenance of his position, that Judah and Jerusalem will be laid waste by a hostile nation besetting them from the north, that the people of Judah will fall by the enemy's sword, and go forth into captivity; cf. 4:5 ff, 13ff., 27ff.; 5:15ff., 6:22ff., etc. This nation, not particularly specified in the prophecies of the earlier period, is none other than that of the Chaldeans, the king of Babylon and his hosts. It is not the nation of the Scythians, as many commentators suppose; see the comm. on 4:5ff. Nevertheless he unremittently calls upon all ranks of his people to repent, to do away with the abominable idols, and to cease from its wickedness; to plough up a new soil and not sow among thorns, lest the anger of the Lord break forth in fire and burn unquenchably (Jeremiah 4:1-4; cf. 6:8, 16; 7:3f., etc.). He is never weary of holding up their sins to the view of the people and its leaders, the corrupt priests, the false prophets, the godless kings and princes; this, too, he does amidst much trial both from within and from without, and without seeing any fruit of his labours (cf. 25:3-8). After twenty-three years of indefatigable exhortation with the people, the judgment of which he had so long warned them burst upon the incorrigible race. The fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign (B.C. 606) forms a turning point not only in the history of the kingdom, but also in Jeremiah's work as prophet. In the year in which Jerusalem was taken for the first time, and Judah made tributary to the Chaldeans, those devastations began with which Jeremiah had so often threatened his hardened hearers; and together with it came the fulfilment of what Jeremiah had shortly before foretold, the seventy years' dominion of Babylon over Judah, and over Egypt and the neighbouring peoples

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(Jeremiah 25:19). For seventy years these nations are to serve the king of Babylon; but when these years are out, the king and land of the Chaldeans shall be visited, Judah shall be set free from its captivity, and shall return into its own land (Jeremiah 25:11f., 37:6f., 29:10).

The progressive fulfilment of Jeremiah's warning prophecies vindicated his character as prophet of the Lord; yet, notwithstanding, it was now that the sorest days of trial in his calling were to come. At the first taking of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar had contented himself with reducing Jehoiakim under his sway and imposing a tribute on the land, and king and people but waited and plotted for a favourable opportunity to shake off the Babylonian yoke. In this course they were encouraged by the lying prophecies of the false prophets, and the work done by these men prepared for Jeremiah sore controversies and bitter trials. At the very beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, the priests, the prophets, and the people assembled in the temple, laid hands on Jeremiah, because he had declared that Zion should share the fate of Shiloh, and that Jerusalem should be destroyed. He was by them found worthy of death, and he escaped from the power of his enemies only by the mediation of the princes of Judah, who hastened to his rescue, and reminded the people that in Hezekiah's days the prophet Micah had uttered a like prophecy, and yet had suffered nothing at the hand of the king, because he feared God. At the same time, Uriah, who had foretold the same issue of affairs, and who had fled to Egypt to escape Jehoiakim's vengeance, was forced back thence by an envoy of the king and put to death (Jeremiah 26). Now it was that Jeremiah, by command of God, caused his assistant Baruch to write all the discourses he had delivered into a roll-book, and to read it before the assembled people on the day of the fast, observed in the ninth month of the fifty year of Jehoiakim's reign. When the king had word of it, he caused the roll to be brought and read to him. But when two or three passages had been read, he cut the roll in pieces and cast the fragments into a brasier that was burning

before him. He ordered Jeremiah and Baruch to be brought; but by the advice of the friendly princes they had concealed themselves, and God hid them so that they were not found (Jeremiah 36). It does not appear that the prophet suffered any further persecution under Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin. Two years after the fast above mentioned, Jehoiakim rose against Nebuchadnezzar. The result was, that Jerusalem was besieged and taken for the second time in the reign of the next king; Jehoiakim, the leading men, and the flower of the nation were carried into exile to Babylon; and so Jeremiah's prophecy was yet more strikingly affirmed. Jerusalem was saved from destruction this time again, and in Zedekiah, the uncle of the exiled king, who had, of course, to take the oath of fealty, the country had again a king of the old stock. Yet the heavy blow that had now fallen on the nation was not sufficient to bend the stiff neck of the infatuated people and its leaders. Even yet were found false prophets who foretold the speedy overthrow of Chaldean domination, and the return, ere long, of the exiles (Jeremiah 28). In vain did Jeremiah lift up his voice in warning against putting reliance on these prophets, or on the soothsayers and sorcerers who speak like them (Jeremiah 27:9f., 14). When, during the first years of Zedekiah's reign, ambassadors had come from the bordering nations, Jeremiah, in opposition to the false prophets, declares to the king that God has given all these countries into the hand of the king of Babylon, and that these peoples shall serve him and his son and his grandson. He cries to the king, "Put your necks into the yoke of the king of Babylon, and ye shall live; he that will not serve him shall perish by sword, famine, and pestilence" (Jeremiah 27:12ff.). This announcement had repeated before the people, the princes, and the king, during the siege by the Chaldeans, which followed on Zedekiah's treacherous insurrection against his liege lord, and he chose for it the particular time at which the Chaldeans had temporarily raised the siege, in order to meet the Egyptian king in the field, Pharaoh Hophra having advanced to the help of the Jews

(Jeremiah 34:20ff.). It was then that, when going out by the city gate, Jeremiah was laid hold of, beaten by the magistrates, and thrown into prison, on the pretext that he wanted to desert to the Chaldeans. After he had spent a long time in prison, the king had him brought to him, and inquired of him secretly for a word of Jahveh; but Jeremiah had no other word from God to give him but, "Thou shalt be given into the hand of the king of Babylon." Favoured by this opportunity, he complained to the king about his imprisonment. Zedekiah gave order that he should not be taken back to the prison, but placed in the court of the prison, and that a loaf of bread should be given him daily until all the bread in Jerusalem was consumed (Jeremiah 37). Shortly thereafter, however, some of the princes demanded of the king the death of the prophet, on the ground that he was paralysing the courage of soldiers and people by such speeches as, "He that remains in this city shall die by sword, famine, and pestilence; but he that goeth out to the Chaldeans shall carry off his life as a prey from them." They alleged he was seeking the hurt and not the weal of the city; and the feeble king yielded to their demands, with the words: "Behold, he is in your hand, for the king can do nothing against you." Upon this he was cast into a deep pit in the court of the prison, in the slime of which he sank deep, and would soon have perished but for the noble-minded Ethiopian Ebed-melech, a royal chamberlain, who made application to the king on his behalf, and procured his removal out of the dungeon of mire. When consulted privately by the king yet again, he had none other than his former answer to give him, and so he remained in the court of the prison until the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans (Jeremiah 38). After this he was restored to freedom by Nebuzar-adan, the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard, at the command of the king; and being left free to choose his place of residence, he decided to remain at Mizpah with Gedaliah, appointed governor of the land, amongst his own people (Jeremiah 39:11-14, and 40:1-6). Now it was that he composed the

Lamentations upon the fall of Jerusalem and Judah.

After the foul murder of Gedaliah, the people, fleeing through fear of Chaldean vengeance, compelled him to accompany them to Egypt, although he had expressly protested against the flight as a thing displeasing to God (Jeremiah 41:17-43:7). In Egypt he foretold the conquest of the land by Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 43:8-13); and, further on, the judgment of God on his countrymen, who had attached themselves to the worship of the Queen of Heaven (44).

Beyond this we are told nothing else about him in Bible records. Neither the time, the place, nor the manner of his death is known. We cannot confidently assert from Jeremiah 44 that he was still living in B.C. 570, for this [last] discourse of the prophet does not necessarily presume the death of King Hophra (B.C. 570). Only this much is certain, that he lived yet for some years in Egypt, till about 585 or 580; that his labours consequently extended over some fifty years, and so that, presuming he was called to be prophet when a youth of 20 to 25 years old, he must have attained an age of 70 to 75 years. As to his death, we are told in the fathers Jerome, Tertull, Epiph., that he was stoned by the people at Tahpanhes (*Daphne* of Egypt), and accordingly his grave used to be pointed out near Cairo. But a Jewish tradition, in the *Seder ol. rabb. c. 26*, makes him out to have been carried off with Baruch to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar at the conquest of Egypt, in the 27th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Isidor Pelusiot, *epist. i. 298*, calls him *πολυπαθέστατος τῶν προφητῶν*; but the greater were the ignominy and suffering endured by Jeremiah in life, the higher was the esteem in which he was held by posterity, chiefly, doubtless, because of the exact fulfilment of his prophecy as to the seventy years' duration of the Babylonian empire (cf. Dan. 9; 2, 2 Chron. 36:20f., Ezra 1:1). Jesus Sirach, in his *Praise of the Prophets*, *Ecclus. c. xlix. 7*, does not go beyond what we already know from Jeremiah 1:10; but was early as the second book of the Maccabees, we have traditions and legends which leave no

doubt of the profound veneration in which he was held, especially by the Alexandrian Jews.

*b. His Character and Mental Qualities*—If we gather together in one the points of view that are discovered in a summary glance over Jeremiah's work as a prophet, we feel the truth of Ed. Vilmar's statement at p. 38 of his essay on the prophet Jeremiah in the periodical, *Der Beweis des Glaubens*. Bd. v. Gütersloh 1869. "When we consider the prophet's faith in the imperishableness of God's people, in spite of the inevitable ruin which is to overwhelm the race then living, and his conviction, firm as the rock, that the Chaldeans are invincible until the end of the period allotted to them by Providence, it is manifest that his work is grounded in something other and higher than mere political sharp-sightedness or human sagacity." Nor is the unintermitting steadfastness with which, amidst the sorest difficulties from without, he exercised his office to be explained by the native strength of his character. Naturally of a yielding disposition, sensitive and timid, it was with trembling that he bowed to God's call (Jeremiah 1:6); and afterwards, when borne down by the burden of them, he repeatedly entertained the wish to be relieved from his hard duties. "Thou hast persuaded me, Lord," he complains in 20:7ff., "and I let myself be persuaded; Thou hast laid hold on me and hast prevailed. I am become a laughing-stock all the day long: the word of Jahveh is become a reproach and a derision. And I thought: I will think no more of Him nor speak more in His name; and it was in my head as burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I become weary of bearing up, and cannot." Though filled with glowing love that sought the salvation of his people, he is compelled, while he beholds their moral corruptness, to cry out: "O that I had in my wilderness a lodging-place of wayfarers! then would I leave my people, and go from them; for they are all adulterers, a crew of faithless men" (Jeremiah 9:1). And his assurance that the judgment about to burst on the land and people could not be turned aside, draws from him the sigh: "O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!

then would I weep day and night for the slain of my people" (Jeremiah 8:23). "He was no second Elijah," as Hgstbg. *Christol.* ii. p. 370 happily puts it. "He had a soft nature, a susceptible temperament; his tears flowed readily. And he who was so glad to live in peace and love with all men, must needs, because he has enlisted in the service of truth, become a second Ishmael, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him; he whose love for his people was so glowing, was doomed to see that love misconstrued, to see himself branded as a traitor by those who were themselves the traitors to the people." Experiences like these raised bitter struggles in his soul, repeatedly set forth by him, especially in 12 and 20. Yet he stands immovably stedfast in the strife against all the powers of wickedness, like "a pillar of iron and a wall of brass against the whole land, the kings of Judah, its rulers and priests, and against the common people," so that all who strove against him could effect nothing, because the Lord, according to His promise, 1:18f., was with him, stood by his side as a terrible warrior (Jeremiah 20:11), and showed His power mighty in the prophet's weakness.

This character of Jeremiah is also reflected in his writings. His speech is clear and simple, incisive and pithy, and, though generally speaking somewhat diffuse, yet ever rich in thought. If it lacks the lofty strain, the soaring flight of an Isaiah, yet it has beauties of its own. It is distinguished by a wealth of new imagery which is wrought out with great delicacy and deep feeling, and by "a versatility that easily adapts itself to the most various objects, and by artistic clearness" (Ewald). In the management of his thoughts Jeremiah has more recourse than other prophets to the law and the older sacred writings (cf. Koenig, *das Deuteronom u. der Proph. Jeremia*, Heft ii. of the *Alltstl. Studien*; and A Küper, *Jeremias librorum sacrr. interpret atque vindex*). And his style of expression is rich in repetitions and standing phrases. These peculiarities are not, however, to be regarded as signs of the progressive decline of the prophetic gift (Ew.), but are to be derived from deeper foundations, from positive and

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fundamental causes. The continual recurrence to the law, and the frequent application of the prophetic parts of Deuteronomy, was prompted by the circumstances of the time. The wider the people's apostasy from God's law extended itself, so much the greater became the need for a renewed preaching of the law, that should point to the sore judgments there threatened against hardened sinners, now about to come into fulfilment. And as against the guile of false prophets whose influence with the infatuated people became ever greater, the true witnesses of the Lord could have no more effective means of showing and proving the divineness of their mission and the truth of their testimony than by bringing strongly out their connection with the old prophets and their utterances. On this wise did Jeremiah put in small compass and preserve the spiritual inheritance which Israel had received from Moses a thousand years before, and thus he sent it with the people into exile as its better self (E. Vilm. as above). The numerous repetitions do unquestionably produce a certain monotony, but this monotony is nothing else than the expression of the bitter grief that penetrates the soul; the soul is full of the one thought which takes entire possession of its elastic powers, and is never weary of ever crying out anew the same truth to the people, so as to stagger their assurance by this importunate expostulation (cf. Haevern. *Introd.* p. 196). From the same cause comes the negligence in diction and style, on which Jerome in *Prolog. in Jeremiam* passed this criticism: *Jeremias propheta sermone apud Hebraeos Jesaia et Osea et quibusdam aliis prophetis videtur esse rusticior, sed sensibus par est; and further in the Proaem. to lib. iv. of the Comment.: quantum in verbis simplex et facilis, tantum in majestate sensuum profundissimus.* And unadorned style is the natural expression of a heart filled with grief and sadness. "He that is sad and downcast in heart, whose eyes run over with tears (Lam. 2:2), is not the man to deck and trick himself out in frippery and fine speeches" (Hgstb. as above, p. 372). Finally, as to the language, the influence of the Aramaic

upon the Hebrew tongue is already pretty evident.

### § 3. The Book of the Prophecies of Jeremiah

*a.* Contents and Arrangement.—The prophecies of Jeremiah divide themselves, in accordance with their subjects, into those that concern Judah and the kingdom of God, and those regarding foreign nations. The former come first in the book, and extend from Jeremiah 1–45; the latter are comprised in Jeremiah 46–51. The former again fall into three groups, clearly distinguishable by their form and subjects. So that the whole book may be divided into *four* sections; while Jeremiah 1 contains the account of the prophet's consecration, and Jeremiah 52 furnishes an historical supplement.

The *first* section occupies Jeremiah 2–20, and comprises *six* lengthy discourses which contain the substance of Jeremiah's oral preaching during the reign of Josiah. In these the people is brought face to face with its apostasy from the Lord into idolatry; its unrighteousness and moral corruption is set before it, the need of contrition and repentance is brought home, and a race of hardened sinners is threatened with the devastation of their land by a barbarous people coming from afar: while to the contrite the prospect of a better future is opened up. By means of headings, these discourses or compilations of discourses are marked off from one another and gathered into continuous wholes. The *first* discourse, Jeremiah 2:1–3:5, sets forth, in general terms, the Lord's love and faithfulness towards Israel. The *second*, Jeremiah 3:6–6:30, presents in the first half of it (Jeremiah 3:6–4:2) the fate of the ten tribes, their dispersion for their backsliding, and the certainty of their being received again in the event of their repentance, all as a warning to faithless Judah; and in the second half (Jeremiah 4:3–6:30), announces that if Judah holds on in its disloyalty, its land will be ravaged, Jerusalem will be destroyed, and its people cast out amongst the heathen. The *third* discourse, Jeremiah 6–10, admonishes against a vain confidence in the temple and the sacrifices, and threatens the dispersion of Judah and the

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spoliation of the country (Jeremiah 7:1–8:3); chides the people for being obstinately averse to all reformation (Jeremiah 8:4–9:21); shows wherein true wisdom consists, and points out the folly of idolatry (Jeremiah 9:22–10:25). The *fourth* discourse, Jeremiah 11–13, exhibits the people’s disloyalty to the covenant (Jeremiah 11:1–17); shows by concrete examples their utter corruptness, and tells them that the doom pronounced is irrevocable (Jeremiah 11:18–12:17); and closes with a symbolical action adumbrating the expulsion into exile of the incorrigible race (13). The *fifth*, Jeremiah 14–17, “the word concerning the droughts,” gives illustrative evidence to show that the impending judgment cannot be turned aside by any entreaties; that Judah, for its sins, will be driven into exile, but will yet in the future be brought back again (Jeremiah 14:1–17:4); and closes with general animadversions upon the root of the mischief, and the way by which punishment may be escaped (Jeremiah 17:5–27). The *sixth* discourse, Jeremiah 18–20, contains two oracles from God, set forth in symbolical actions, which signify the judgment about to burst on Judah for its continuance in sin, and which drew down persecution, blows, and harsh imprisonment on the prophet, so that he complains of his distress to the Lord, and curses the day of his birth. All these discourses have this in common, that threatening and promise are alike general in their terms. Most emphatically and repeatedly is threatening made of the devastation of the land by enemies, of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of Judah amongst the heathen; and yet nowhere is it indicated who are to execute this judgment. Not until the threatening addressed to Pashur in 20:4 are we told that it is the king of Babylon into whose hand all Judah is to be given, that he may lead them away to Babylon and smite them with the sword. And beyond the general indication, 3:6, “in the days of Josiah,” not even the headings contain any hint as to the date of the several prophecies or of portions of them, or as to the circumstances that called them forth. The quite general character of the heading, 3:6, and the fact that

the tone and subject remain identical throughout the whole series of chapters that open the collected prophecies of Jeremiah, are sufficient to justify Hgstbg. (as above, p. 373) in concluding that “we have here before us not so much a series of prophecies which were delivered precisely as we have them, each on a particular occasion during Josiah’s reign, but rather a *resumé* of Jeremiah’s entire public work as prophet during Josiah’s reign; a summary of all that, taken apart from the special circumstances of the time, had at large the aim of giving deeper stability to the reformatory efforts Josiah was carrying on in outward affairs.” This view is not just, only it is not to be limited to Jeremiah 2–7, but is equally applicable to the whole of the first section of the collected prophecies.

The *second* section, Jeremiah 21–32, contains special predictions; on the one hand, of the judgment to be executed by the Chaldeans (27–29); on the other, of Messianic salvation (30–33). The predictions of judgment fall into three groups. The central one of these, the announcement of the seventy years’ dominion of the Chaldeans over Judah and all nations, passes into a description of judgment to come upon the whole world. As introductory to this, we have it announced in 21 that Judah and its royal family are to be given into the hands of the king of Babylon; we have in 22 and 23 the word concerning the shepherds and leaders of the people; while in 24 comes the statement, illustrated by the emblem of two baskets of figs, as to the character and future fortunes of the Jewish people. The several parts of this group are of various dates. The intimation of the fate awaiting Judah in 21 is, according to the heading, taken from the answer given to Zedekiah by Jeremiah during the last siege of Jerusalem, when the king had inquired of him about the issue of the war; the denunciation of the people’s corrupt rulers, the wicked kings and false prophets, together with the promise that a righteous branch is yet to be raised to David, belongs, if we may judge from what is therein said of the kings, to the times of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin; while the vision of



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the two baskets of figs in 24 dates from the first part of Zedekiah's reign, shortly after Jehoiachin and the best part of the nation had been carried off to Babylon. As this group of prophecies is a preparation for the central prediction of judgment in 25, so the group that follows, 26–29, serves to show reason for the universal judgment, and to maintain it against the contradiction of the false prophets and of the people deluded by their vain expectations. To the same end we are told in 26 of the accusation and acquittal of Jeremiah on the charge of his having foretold the destruction of Jerusalem: this and the supplementary notice of the prophet Urijah fall within the reign of Jehoiakim. The same aim is yet more clearly to be traced in the oracle in 27, regarding the yoke of the king of Babylon, which God will lay on the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Phoenicia, on King Zedekiah, the priests and people of Judah; in the threatening against the lying prophet Hananiah in 28; and in Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylon in 29, dating from the earlier years of Zedekiah's reign. From the dark background of these threatenings stands out in Jeremiah 30–33 the comforting promise of the salvation of Israel. The prediction of grace and glory yet in store for Israel and Judah through the Messiah occupies two long discourses. The first is a complete whole, both in matter and in form. It begins with intimating the recovery of both houses of Israel from captivity and the certainty of their being received again as the people of God (Jeremiah 30:1–22), while the wicked fall before God's wrath; then 31 promises grace and salvation, first to the ten tribes (vv. 1–22), and then to Judah (vv. 23–36); lastly, we have (vv. 27–40) intimation that a new and everlasting covenant will be concluded with the whole covenant people. The second discourse in chs. 32 and 33 goes to support the first, and consists of two words of God communicated to Jeremiah in the tenth year of Zedekiah, i.e., in prospect of the destruction of Jerusalem; one being in emblematic shape (32), the other is another explicit prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of blessings yet in store for the

race of David and for the Levitical priesthood (23).

The *third* section of the book, Jeremiah 34–44, has, in the first place, brief utterances of the prophet, dating from the times of Zedekiah and Jehoiachin, together with the circumstances that called them forth, in 34–36; secondly, in 37–39, notice of the prophet's experiences, and of the counsels given by him during the siege in Zedekiah's reign up till the taking of the city; finally, in 40–45 are given events that happened and prophecies that were delivered after the siege. So that here there is gathered together by way of supplements all that was of cardinal importance in Jeremiah's efforts in behalf of the unhappy people, in so far as it had not found a place in the previous sections.

In the *fourth* section, Jeremiah 46–51, follow prophecies against foreign nations, uttered partly in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, or rather later, partly in the first year of Zedekiah. And last of all, the conclusion of the whole collective book is formed by Jeremiah 52, an historical supplement which is not the work of Jeremiah himself. In it are notices of the destruction of the city, of the number of the captives taken to Babylon, and of what befell King Jehoiachin there.

*b. Origin of the Compilation or Book of the Prophecies of Jeremiah.*—Regarding the composition of the book, all sorts of ingenious and arbitrary hypotheses have been propounded. Almost all of them proceed on the assumption that the longer discourses of the first part of the book consist of a greater or less number of addresses delivered to the people at stated times, and have been arranged partly chronologically, but partly also without reference to any plan whatever. Hence the conclusion is drawn that in the book a hopeless confusion reigns. In proof of this, see the hypotheses of Movers and Hitzig. From the summary of contents just given, it is plain that in none of the four sections of the book has chronological succession been the principle of arrangement; this has been had regard to only in so far as it fell in with the plan chiefly kept in

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view, which was that of grouping the fragments according to their subject-matter. In the three sections of the prophecies concerning Israel, a general chronological order has to a certain extent been observed thus far, namely, that in the first section (2–20) are the discourses of the time of Josiah; in the second (21–33), the prophecies belonging to the period between the fourth year of Jehoiakim and the siege of Jerusalem under Zedekiah; in the third (34–45), events and oracles of the time before and after the siege and capture of the city. But even in those passages in the second and third sections which are furnished with historical references, order in time is so little regarded that discourses of the time of Zedekiah precede those of Jehoiakim's time. And in the first section the date of the several discourses is a matter of no secondary importance that, beyond the indefinite intimation in 3:6, there is not to be found in any of the headings any hint of the date; and here, upon the whole, we have not the individual discourses in the form in which they were under various circumstances delivered to the people, but only a *resumé* of his oral addresses arranged with reference to the subject-matter.

The first notice of a written collection of the prophecies occurs in 36. Here we are told that in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, Jeremiah, by divine command, caused his assistant Baruch to write in a roll all the words he had spoken concerning Israel and Judah and all nations from the day he was called up till that time, intending them to be read by Baruch to the assembled people in the temple on the approaching fast. And after the king had cut up the roll and cast it into the fire, the prophet caused the words Baruch had taken down to his dictation to be written anew in a roll, with the addition of many words of like import. This fact suggests the idea that the second roll written by Baruch to Jeremiah's dictation formed the basis of the collected edition of all Jeremiah's prophecies. The history makes it clear that till then the prophet had not committed his prophecies to writing, and that in the roll written by Baruch they for the first time

assumed a written form. The same account leads us also to suppose that in this roll the prophet's discourses and addresses were not transcribed in the precise words and in the exact order in which he had from time to time delivered them to the people, but that they were set down from memory, the substance only being preserved. The design with which they were committed to writing was to lead the people to humble themselves before the Lord and turn from their evil ways (Jeremiah 36:3, 7), by means of importunately forcing upon their attention all God's commands and warnings. And we may feel sure that this parenetic aim was foremost not only in the first document (burnt by the king), but in the second also; it was not proposed here either to give a complete and authoritative transcription of all the prophet's sayings and speeches. The assumption of recent critics seems justifiable, that the document composed in Jehoiakim's reign was the foundation of the book handed down to us, and that it was extended to the compass of the canonical book by the addition of revelations vouchsafed after that time, and of the historical notices that most illustrated Jeremiah's labours. But, however great be the probability of this view, we are no longer in a position to point out the original book in that which we have received, and as a constituent part of the same. At first sight, we might indeed be led to look on the first twenty chapters of our book as the original document, since the character of these chapters rather favours the hypothesis. For they are all lengthy compositions, condensed from oral addresses with the view of reporting mainly the substance of them; nor is there in them anything that certainly carries us beyond the time of Josiah and the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, except indeed the heading of the book, 1:1–3, and this was certainly prefixed only when the book was given forth as a whole. But according to the statement in 36:2, the original manuscript prepared by Baruch contained not only the words of the prophet which he had up to that time spoken concerning Israel and Judah, but also his words concerning all nations, that is,

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doubtless, all the prophecies concerning the heathen he had till now uttered, viz., 25:15–31; 46–49:33. Nor can the most important discourse, Jeremiah 25, belonging to the beginning of the fourth year of Jehoiakim, have been omitted from the original manuscript; certainly not from the second roll, increased by many words, which was put together after the first was burnt. For of the second manuscript we may say with perfect confidence what Ewald says of the first, that nothing of importance would be omitted from it. If then we may take for granted that the discourse of Jeremiah 25 was included in the book put together by Baruch, it follows that upon the subsequent expansion of the work that chapter must have been displaced from its original position by the intercalation of Jeremiah 21 and 24, which are both of the time of Zedekiah. But the displacement of 25 by prophecies of Zedekiah's time, and the arrangement of the several fragments which compose the central sections of the book now in our hands, show conclusively that the method and nature of this book are incompatible with the hypothesis that the existing book arose from the work written down by Baruch to Jeremiah's dictation by the addition and interpolation of later prophetic utterances and historical facts (Ew., Graf). The contents of Jeremiah 21–45 were unmistakably disposed according to a definite uniform plan which had regard chiefly to the subject-matter of those chapters, even though we are no longer in a position confidently to discriminate the several constituent parts, or point out the reason for the place assigned to them. The same plan may be traced in the arrangement of the longer compositions in Jeremiah 2–20.

The consistency of the plan goes to show that the entire collection of the prophecies was executed by *one* editor at *one* time. Ew., Umbr., and Graf conclude that the original book attained its final form by a process of completion immediately after the destruction of the city and the deportation of the people; but it is impossible to admit their conclusion on the grounds they give, namely, the heading at

Jeremiah 1:3: "until the carrying away of Jerusalem in the fifth month;" and the fact that what befell the prophet, and what was spoken by him after the city was destroyed, have found a place immediately after Jeremiah 39 in Jeremiah 40–44. Both circumstances are sufficiently explained by the fact that with the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah's work as a prophet, though not absolutely finished, had yet anticipatively come to an end. His later labours at Mizpah and in Egypt were but a continuation of secondary importance, which might consequently be passed over in the heading of the book. See the Comment. on 1:3. We are not sure that the period between the fifth and seventh months, 41:1, during which Jeremiah and Baruch remained with the governor Gedaliah at Mizpah, was more suitable than any other for looking back over his work which had now extended over more than forty-one years, and by expanding the book he had at an earlier period written, for leaving behind him a monument for posterity in the record of his most memorable utterances and experiences—a monument that might serve to warn and instruct, as well as to comfort in present suffering means of the treasure of hopes and promises which he has thus laid up (Graf). But, judging from Jeremiah's habit of mind, we imagine that at that time Jeremiah would be disposed rather to indite the Lamentations than to edit his prophecies.

Arguments for repeated editings and transformations of particular chapters have been founded partly on the subject-matter, partly on peculiarities in the form of certain passages, e.g., the alternation, in the headings, of the formulas *וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר* or *וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר* and *וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר*; and the title *וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר*, which occurs only in certain chapters, 20:2; 25:2; 28:5, 6, and often, 29:1, 29; 32:2. But on deeper investigation these arguments appear inconclusive. If we are desirous not to add by new and uncertain conjectures to the already large number of arbitrary hypotheses as to the compilation and origin of the book before us, we must abide by

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what, after a careful scrutiny of its subject-matter and form, proves to be certainly established. And the result of our examination may be epitomized in the following propositions:—1. The book in its canonical form has been arranged according to a distinct, self-consistent plan, in virtue of which the preservation of chronological order has been made secondary to the principle of grouping together cognate subjects. 2. The book written by Baruch in the fifth year of Jehoiakim's reign, which contained the oracles spoken by Jeremiah up till that time, is doubtless the basis of the book as finally handed down, without being incorporated with it as a distinct work; but, in accordance with the plan laid down for the compilation of the entire series, was so disposed that the several portions of it were interspersed with later portions, handed down, some orally, some in writing, so that the result was a uniform whole. For that prophecies other than those in Baruch's roll were straightway written down (if they were not first composed in writing), is expressly testified by 30:2; 29:1, and 51:60. 3. The complete edition of the whole was not executed till after the close of Jeremiah's labours, probably immediately after his death. This work, together with the supplying of the historical notice in Jeremiah 52, was probably the work of Jeremiah's colleague Baruch, who may have survived the last event mentioned in the book, 52:31ff., the restoration of Jehoiakim to freedom after Nebuchadnezzar's death, B.C. 563.

#### § 4. The Genuineness of the Book and the Integrity of the Masoretic Text

Jeremiah's prophecies bear everywhere so plainly upon the face of them the impress of this prophet's strongly marked individuality, that their genuineness, taken as a whole, remains unimpugned even by recent criticism. Hitzig, e.g., holds it to be so undoubted that in the prolegomena to his commentary he simply takes the matter for granted. And Ewald, after expounding this view of the contents and origin of the book, observes that so striking a similarity in expression, attitude, and colouring

obtains throughout every portion that from end to end we hear the same prophet speak. Ewald excepts, indeed, the oracle against Babylon in Jeremiah 50 and 51, which he attributes to an anonymous disciple who had not confidence to write in his own name, towards the end of the Babylonian captivity. He admits that he wrote after the manner of Jeremiah, but with this marked difference, that he gave an entirely new reference to words which he copied from Jeremiah; for example, according to Ewald, the description of the northern enemies, who were in Jeremiah's view first the Scythians and then the Chaldeans, is applied by him to the Medes and Persians, who were then at war with the Chaldeans. But with Ewald, as with his predecessors Eichh., Maur., Knobel, etc., the chief motive for denying the genuineness of this prophecy is to be found in the dogmatic prejudice which leads them to suppose it impossible for Jeremiah to have spoken of the Chaldeans as he does in Jeremiah 50f., since his expectation was that the Chaldeans were to be the divine instruments of carrying out the judgment near at hand upon Judah and the other nations. Others, such as Movers, de Wette, Hitz., have, on the contrary, proposed to get rid of what seemed to them out of order in this prediction by assuming interpolations. These critics believe themselves further able to make out interpolations, on a greater or less scale, in other passages, such as 10, 25, 27, 29, 30, 33, yet without throwing doubt on the genuineness of the book at large. See details on this head in my *Manual of Introduction*, § 75; and the proof of the assertions in the commentary upon the passages in question.

Besides this, several critics have denied the integrity of the Hebrew text, in consideration of the numerous divergencies from it which are to be found in the Alexandrine translation; and they have proposed to explain the discrepancies between the Greek and the Hebrew text by the hypothesis of two recensions, an Alexandrine Greek recension and a Babylonian Jewish. J. D. Mich., in the notes to his translation of the New Testament, i. p. 285, declared the text of the LXX to be the



to a Hebrew text differing in form from that which has been handed down to us."

We must maintain this position against Nägelsbach's attempt to explain, by means of discrepancies amongst the original Hebrew authorities, the different arrangement of the prophecies against foreign nations adopted in the LXX, these being here introduced in Jeremiah 25 between v. 12 and v. 14. For the arguments on which Näg., like Movers and Hitz., lays stress in his dissertations on Jeremiah in Lange's *Bibelwerk*, p. 13, and in the exposition of 25:12; 27:1; 49:34, and in the introduction to Jeremiah 46–51, are not conclusive, and rest on assumptions that are erroneous and quite illegitimate. In the first place, he finds in vv. 12–14, which, like Mov., Hitz., etc., he takes to be a later interpolation (see table below), a proof that the *Book against the Nations* must have stood in the immediate neighbourhood of Jeremiah 25. To avoid anticipating the exposition, we must here confine ourselves to remarking that the verses adduced give no such proof: for the grounds for this assertion we must refer to the comment. on 25:12–14. But besides, it is proved, he says, that the prophecies against the nations must once have come after Jeremiah 25 and before Jeremiah 27, by the peculiar expression τὰ Αἰλάμ at the end of Jeremiah 25:13 (Septuag.), by the omission of 27:1 in the Sept., and by the somewhat unexpected date given at 49:34. Now the date, "in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah," in the heading of the prophecy against Elam, 49:34, found not only in the Masoretic text, but also in the Alexandr. version (where, however, it occurs as a postscript at the end of the prophecy in 26:1), creates a difficulty only if the prophecy be wrongly taken to refer to a conquest of Elam by Nebuchadnezzar. The other two arguments, founded on the τὰ Αἰλάμ of 25:13, and the omission of the heading at 27:1 (Heb.) in the LXX, stand and fall with the assumption that the Greek translator adhered closely to the Hebrew text and rendered it with literal accuracy, the very reverse of which is betrayed from one end of the translation to the other. The heading at 27:1, "In the beginning of

the reign of *Jehoiakim* the son of Josiah king of Judah, came this word to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying," coincides word for word with the heading of 26:1, save that in the latter the words "to Jeremiah" do not occur; and this former heading the Greek translator has simply omitted,—holding it to be incorrect, since the prophecy belongs to the time of Zedekiah, and is addressed to him. On the other hand, he has appended τὰ Αἰλάμ to the last clause of 25:13, "which Jeremiah prophesied against the nations," taking this clause to be the heading of Jeremiah's prophecies against the nations; this appears from the τὰ Αἰλάμ, manifestly imitated from the ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη. His purpose was to make out the following oracle as against Elam; but he omitted from its place the full title of the prophecy against Elam, because it seemed to him unsuitable to have it come immediately after the (in his view) general heading, ἡ ἐπισημασία τῆς ἱερεμίας ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη, while, however, he introduced it at the end of the prophecy. It is wholly wrong to suppose that the heading at 27:1 of the Hebrew text, omitted in the LXX, is nothing but the postscript to the prophecy against Elam (Jeremiah 26:1 in the LXX and 49:34 in the Heb.); for this postscript runs thus: ἐν ἀρχῇ βασιλεύοντος Σεδεκίου βασιλέως ἐγένετὸ κ.τ.λ., and is a literal translation of the heading at 49:34 of the Heb. It is from this, and not from 27:1 of the Heb., that the translator has manifestly taken his postscript to the prophecy against Elam; and if so, the postscript is, of course, no kind of proof that in the original text used by the Greek translator of the prophecies against the nations stood before Jeremiah 27. The notion we are combating is vitiated, finally, by the fact that it does not in the least explain why these prophecies are in the LXX placed after 25:13, but rather suggests for them a wholly unsuitable position between 26 and 27, where they certainly never stood, nor by any possibility ever could have stood. From what has been said it will be seen that we can seek the cause for the transposition of the prophecies against the nations only in the

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Alexandrian translator's arbitrary mode of handling the Hebrew text.

For the exegetical literature on the subject of Jeremiah's prophecies, see my *Introduction to Old Testament*, vol. i. p. 332, English translation (Foreign Theological Library). Besides the commentaries there mentioned, there have since appeared: K. H. Graf, *der Proph. Jeremia erklärt*, Leipz. 1862; and C. W. E. Naegelsbach, *der Proph. Jeremia, Theologisch-homiletisch bearbeitet*, in J. P. Lange's *Bibelwerk*, Bielefeld and Leipz. 1868; translated in Dr. Schaff's edition of Lange's *Bibelwerk*, and published by Messrs. Clark.

## Jeremiah 1

### Heading. Call and Consecration of Jeremiah to Be Prophet.

**Jeremiah 1:1-3.** Verses 1-3 contain the heading to the whole book of the prophecies of Jeremiah. The heading runs thus: "*Sayings of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests at Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin, to whom befell the word of Jahveh in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign, and in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.*" The period mentioned in these verses includes the time of Jeremiah's principal labours, while no reference is here made to the work he at a later time wrought amidst the ruins of Judah and in Egypt; this being held to be of but subordinate importance for the theocracy. Similarly, when the names of the kings under whom he laboured are given, the brief reigns of Jehoahaz and of Jehoiachin are omitted, neither reign having lasted over three months. His prophecies are called דְּבָרֵי יְהוָה, words or speeches, as in 36:10; so with the prophecies of Amos, Am. 1:1. More complete information as to the person of the prophet is given by the mention made of his father and of his extraction. The name יְרֵמְיָהוּ, "Jahveh throws," was in very

common use, and is found as the name of many persons; cf. 1 Chron. 5:24; 12:4, 10, 13, 2 Kings 23:31, Jeremiah 35:3, Neh. 10:3; 12:1. Hence we are hardly entitled to explain the name with Hengstb. by Ex. 15:1, to the effect that whoever bore it was consecrated to the God who with almighty hand dashes to the ground all His foes, so that in his name the nature of our prophet's mission would be held to be set forth. His father Hilkiah is taken by Clem. Alex., Jerome, and some Rabbins, for the high priest of that name who is mentioned in 2 Chron. 22:4; but without sufficient grounds. For Hilkiah, too, is a name that often occurs; and the high priest is sure to have had his home not in Anathoth, but in Jerusalem. But Jeremiah and his father belonged to the priests who lived in Anathoth, now called *Anâta*, a town of the priests, lying 1 1/4 hours north of Jerusalem (see on Josh. 21:18), in the land, i.e., the tribal territory, of Benjamin. In v. 2 אֶלְיָי אֲשֶׁר: "to whom befell (to whom came) the word of Jahveh in the days of Josiah, ... in the thirteenth year of his reign." This same year is named by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 25:3 as the beginning of his prophetic labours. וַיְהִי in v. 3 is the continuation of הָיָה in v. 2, and its subject is דְּבַר יְהוָה: and then (further) it came (to him) in the days of Jehoiakim, ... to the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, etc. In the fifth month of the year named, the eleventh of the reign of Zedekiah, Jerusalem was reduced to ashes by Nebuzar-adan, and its inhabitants carried away to Babylon; cf. 52:12ff., 2 Kings 25:8ff. Shortly before, King Zedekiah, captured when in flight from the Chaldeans during the siege of Jerusalem, had been deprived of eyesight at Riblah and carried to Babylon in chains. And thus his kingship was at an end, thought the eleventh year of his reign might not be yet quite completed.

**Jeremiah 1:4-19.** The Call and Consecration of Jeremiah to be a Prophet of the Lord.—The investiture of Jeremiah with the prophetic office follows in four acts: the call on the part of the Lord, vv. 4-8; Jeremiah's consecration for his calling in vv. 9-10; and in two signs, by

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means of which the Lord assures him of certain success in his work and of powerful support in the exercise of his office (vv. 11–19). The call was given by a word of the Lord which came to him in this form: V. 5. *“Before I formed thee in the womb I have known thee, and before thou wentest forth from the belly have I consecrated thee, to be prophet to the nations have I set thee.* V. 6. *Then said I, Ah, Lord Jahveh! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am too young.* V. 7. *Then said Jahveh to me, Say not, I am too young; but to all to whom I send thee shalt thou go, and all that I command thee shalt thou speak.* V. 8. *Fear not before them: for I am with thee, to save thee, saith Jahveh.”* This word came to Jeremiah by means of inspiration, and is neither the product of a reflective musing as to what his calling was to be, nor the outcome of an irresistible impulse, felt within him, to come forward as a prophet. It was a supernatural divine revelation vouchsafed to him, which raised his spiritual life to a state of ecstasy, so that he both recognised the voice of God and felt his lips touched by the hand of God (v. 9). Further, he saw in spirit, one after another, two visions which God interpreted to him as confirmatory tokens of his divine commission (vv. 11–19). Jeremiah’s appointment to be a prophet for the nations follows upon a decree of God’s, fixed before he was conceived or born. God in His counsel has not only foreordained our life and being, but has predetermined before our birth what is to be our calling upon this earth; and He has accordingly so influenced our origin and our growth in the womb, as to prepare us for what we are to become, and for what we are to accomplish on behalf of His kingdom. This is true of all men, but very especially of those who have been chosen by God to be the extraordinary instruments of His grace, whom He has appointed to be instruments for the carrying out of the redemptive schemes of His kingdom; cf. Jeremiah 44:2, 24; 49:5, Gal. 1:15. Thus Samson was appointed to be a Nazarite from the womb, this having been revealed to his mother before he was conceived, Judges 13:3ff. To other men of God such divine predestination was made known for the first

time when they were called to that office to which God had chosen them. So was it with our prophet Jeremiah. In such a case a reminder by God of the divine counsel of grace, of old time ordained and provided with means for its accomplishment, should be accepted as an encouragement willingly to take upon one the allotted calling. For the man God has chosen before his birth to a special office in His kingdom He equips with the gifts and graces needed for the exercise of his functions. The three clauses of v. 5 give the three moments whereof the choosing consists: God has chosen him, has consecrated him, and has installed him as prophet. The reference of the words “I have known thee,” Calvin limited to the office, *quasi diceret, priusquam te formare in utero, destinavi te in hunc usum, nempe ut subires docendi munus in populo meo.* Divine knowing is at the same time a singling out; and of this, choosing is the immediate consequence. But the choosing takes place by means of *הקדיש*, sanctifying, i.e., setting apart and consecrating for a special calling, and is completed by institution to the office. “To be prophet for the nations have I set thee” (*נָתַן, ponere, not only appoint, but install*). The sense has been briefly put by Calv. thus: (*Jer.*) *fuisse hac lege creatum hominem, ut suo tempore manifestaretur propheta.* *לְגוֹיִם*, to the nations = for the nations; not for Judah alone, but for the heathen peoples too; cf. vv. 10, 25:9, 46ff. The Chethibh *אצורך* should apparently be read *אצורך*, from *צור*, equivalent to *יצר*; the root-form *צור*, being warranted by Ex. 32:4, 1 Kings 7:15, and being often found in Aramaic. It is, however, possible that the *Chet.* may be only *scriptio plena* of *אצור*, *a radice יצר*, since the *scriptio pl.* is found elsewhere, e.g., Hos 8:12, Jeremiah 44:17, Ezek. 21:28, etc.

**Jeremiah 1:6.** The divine call throws Jeremiah into terror. Knowing well his too great weakness for such an office, he exclaims: Ah, Lord Jahveh! I know not how to speak; for I am *נער*, i.e., young and inexperienced; cf. 1 Kings



3:7. This excuse shows that לֹא יָדַעְתִּי דְבַר means something else than לֹא אִישׁ דְּבָרִים, by which Moses sought to repel God's summons. Moses was not ready of speech, he lacked the gift of utterance; Jeremiah, on the other hand, only thinks himself not yet equal to the task by reason of his youth and want of experience.

**Jeremiah 1:7.** This excuse God holds of no account. As prophet to the nations, Jeremiah was not to make known his own thoughts or human wisdom, but the will and counsel of God which were to be revealed to him. This is signified by the clauses: for to all to whom I send thee, etc. The עַל belonging to תִּלְדָּה stands for אָל, and does not indicate a hostile advance against any one. כֹּל after עַל is not neuter, but refers to persons, or rather peoples; since to the relative אֲשֶׁר in this connection, עָלֶיהֶם is quite a natural completion; cf. Isa. 8:12, and Ew. § 331, c. Only to those men or peoples is he to go to whom God sends him; and to them he is to declare only what God commands him. And so he needs be in no anxiety on this head, that, as a youth, he has no experience in the matter of speaking.

**Jeremiah 1:8.** Just as little needs youthful bashfulness or shy unwillingness to speak before high and mighty personages stand as a hindrance in the way of his accepting God's call. The Lord will be with him, so that he needs have no fear for any man. The suffix in מִפְּנֵיהֶם refers to all to whom God sends him (v. 7). These, enraged by the threatenings of punishment which he must proclaim to them, will seek to persecute him and put him to death (cf. v. 19); but God promises to rescue him from every distress and danger which the fulfilment of his duties can bring upon him. Yet God does not let the matter cease with this pledge; but, further, He consecrates him to his calling.

**Jeremiah 1:9, 10.** *The Consecration.*—V. 9. "And Jahveh stretched forth His hand, and touched my mouth, and Jahveh said to me, Behold, I put my words into thy mouth. V. 10. Behold, I set thee this day over the nations, and over the kingdoms,

*to root up and to ruin, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant."* In order to assure him by overt act of His support, the Lord gives him a palpable pledge. He stretches out His hand and causes it to touch his mouth (cf. Isa. 6:7); while, as explanation of this symbolical act, He adds: I have put my words in thy mouth. The hand is the instrument of making and doing; the touching of Jeremiah's mouth by the hand of God is consequently an emblematical token that God frames in his mouth what he is to speak. It is a tangible pledge of ἔμπνευστος, *inspiratio*, embodiment of that influence exercised on the human spirit, by means of which the holy men of God speak, being moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. 1:21 (Nägelsb.). The act is a real occurrence, taking place not indeed in the earthly, corporeal sphere, but experienced in spirit, and of the nature of ecstasy. By means of it God has consecrated him to be His prophet, and endowed him for the discharge of his duties; He may now entrust him with His commission to the peoples and kingdoms, and set him over them as His prophet who proclaims to them His word. The contents of this proclaiming are indicated in the following infinitive clauses. With the words of the Lord he is to destroy and to build up peoples and kingdoms. The word of God is a power that carries out His will, and accomplishes that whereto He sends it, Isa. 55:10ff. Against this power nothing earthly can stand; it is a hammer that breaks rocks in pieces, 23:29. What is here said of the word of Jahveh to be preached by Jeremiah is said of Jahveh Himself in 31:28. Its power is to show itself in two ways, in destroying and in building up. The destroying is not set down as a mere preliminary, but is expressed by means of four different words, whereas the building is given only in two words, and these standing after the four; in order, doubtless, to indicate that the labours of Jeremiah should consist, in the first place and for the most part, in proclaiming judgment upon the nations. The assonant verbs שָׁתָּר and יָבִיט are joined to heighten the sense;

for the same reason לְהַרְוֹס is added to לְהַאֲבִיד, and in the antithesis לְנִטּוֹעַ is joined with לְבָנוֹת.

**Jeremiah 1:11–16.** *The Confirmatory Tokens.*—

The first is given in vv. 11 and 12: “*And there came to me the word of Jahveh, saying, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, I see an almond rod. Then Jahveh said to me, Thou hast seen aright: for I will keep watch over my word to fulfil it.*” With the consecration of the prophet to his office are associated two visions, to give him a surety of the divine promise regarding the discharge of the duties imposed on him. First, Jeremiah sees in spirit a rod or twig of an almond tree. God calls his attention to this vision, and interprets it to him as a symbol of the swift fulfilment of His word. The choice of this symbol for the purpose given is suggested by the Hebrew name for the almond tree, שֶׁקֶד, the wakeful, the vigilant; because this tree begins to blossom and expand its leaves in January, when the other trees are still in their winter’s sleep (*florat omnium prima mense Januario, Martio vero poma maturat. Plin. h. n. xvi. 42, and Von Schubert, Reise iii. S. 14*), and so of all trees awakes earliest to new life. Without any sufficient reason Graf has combated this meaning for שֶׁקֶד, proposing to change שֶׁקֶד into שֶׁקֶד, and, with Aquil., Sym., and Jerome, to translate שֶׁקֶד מִקָּל watchful twig, *virga vigilans*, i.e., a twig whose eyes are open, whose buds have opened, burst; but he has not even attempted to give any authority for the use of the verb שֶׁקֶד for the bursting of buds, much less justified it. In the explanation of this symbol between the words, thou hast seen aright, and the grounding clause, for I will keep watch, there is omitted the intermediate thought: it is indeed a שֶׁקֶד. The twig thou hast seen is an emblem of what I shall do; for I will keep watch over my word, will be watchful to fulfil it. This interpretation of the symbol shows besides that מִקָּל is not here to be taken, as by Kimchi, Vatabl., Seb. Schmidt, Nägelsb., and others, for a stick to beat with, or as a threatening rod of correction. The reasons

alleged by Nägelsb. for this view are utterly inconclusive. For his assertion, that מִקָּל always means a stick, and never a fresh, leafy branch, is proved to be false by Gen. 30:37; and the supposed climax found by ancient expositors in the two symbols: rod—boiling caldron, put thus by Jerome: *qui noluerint percutiente virga emendari, mittentur in ollam aeneam atque succensam*, is forced into the text by a false interpretation of the figure of the seething pot. The figure of the almond rod was meant only to afford to the prophet surety for the speedy and certain fulfilment of the word of God proclaimed by him. It is the second emblem alone that has anything to do with the contents of his preaching.

**Jeremiah 1:13–16.** *The Seething Pot.*—V. 13.

“*And there came to me the word of Jahveh for the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said: I see a seething-pot; and it looketh hither from the north. V. 14. Then said Jahveh to me: From the north will trouble break forth upon all inhabitants of the land. V. 15. For, behold, I call to all families of the kingdoms towards the north, saith Jahveh; that they come and set each his throne before the gates of Jerusalem, and against all her walls round about, and against all cities of Judah. V. 16. And I will pronounce judgment against them for all their wickedness, in that they have forsaken me, and have offered odours to other gods, and worshipped the work of their hands.*” קִיר is a large pot or caldron in which can be cooked vegetables or meat for many persons at once; cf. 2 Kings 4:38ff., Ezek. 24:3ff. נִפְּוֹחַ, fanned, blown upon, used of fire, Ezek. 21:36; 22:20f.; then by transference, seething, steaming, since the caldron under which fire is fanned steams, its contents boil; cf. Job 41:12. The פָּנִים of the pot is the side turned to the spectator (the prophet), the side towards the front. This is turned from the north this way, i.e., set so that its contents will run thence this way. צָפוֹנָה, properly: towards the north; then, that which lies towards the north, or the northerly direction. In the interpretation of this symbol in v. 14, תִּפְתָּח, assonant to נִפְּוֹחַ, is

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introduced, just as in Amos 8:2 קִיץ is explained by קָץ; so that there was no occasion for the conjecture of Houbig. and Graf: תִּפַּח, it is fanned up; and against this we have Hitzig's objection that the Hophal of תִּפַּח never occurs. Equally uncalled for is Hitzig's own conjecture, תִּפְחוּ, it will steam, fume, be kindled; while against this we have the fact, that as to תִּפַּח no evidence can be given for the meaning be kindled, and that we have no cases of such a mode of speaking as: the trouble is fuming, steaming up. The Arabian poetical saying: their pot steams or boils, i.e., a war is being prepared by them, is not sufficient to justify such a figure. We hold then תִּפְּחָה for the correct reading, and decline to be led astray by the paraphrastic ἐκκαυθήσεται of the LXX, since תִּפְּחָה gives a suitable sense. It is true, indeed, that תִּפַּח usually means open; but an opening of the caldron by the removal of the lid is not (with Graf) to be thought of. But, again, תִּפַּח has the derived sig. let loose, let off (cf. פָּתַח בְּיָדָהּ, Isa. 14:17), from which there can be no difficulty in inferring for the Niph. the sig. be let loose, and in the case of trouble, calamity: break forth. That which is in the pot runs over as the heat increases, and pours itself on the hearth or ground. If the seething contents of the pot represent disaster, their running over will point to its being let loose, its breaking out. יְשֻׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ are the inhabitants of the land of Judah, as the interpretation in v. 15 shows. In v. 15 reference to the figure is given up, and the further meaning is given in direct statement. The Lord will call to all families of the kingdoms of the north, and they will come (= that they are to come). The kingdoms of the north are not merely the kingdoms of Syria, but in general those of Upper Asia; since all armies marching from the Euphrates towards Palestine entered the land from the north. מִשְׁפְּחוֹת, families, are the separate races of nations, hence often used in parallelism with גוֹיִם; cf. 10:25, Nahum 3:4. We must not conclude from this explanation of

the vision seen that the seething pot symbolizes the Chaldeans themselves or the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar; such a figure would be too unnatural. The seething pot, whose contents boil over, symbolizes the disaster and ruin which the families of the kingdoms of the north will pour out on Judah.

**Jeremiah 1:15.** V. 15 is not the precise interpretation of the picture seen, but a direct statement of the afflictions about to fall on the inhabitants of Judah. "They will set each his throne." The representatives of the kingdoms are meant, the kings and generals. To set one's throne (שָׁמוּ or יָתִינוּ; cf. 43:10; 49:38) is a figure for the establishing of sovereignty. כִּסֵּא, seat or throne, is not the seat of judgment, but the throne of the sovereign; cf. the expression: set the throne upon these stones, 43:10; where a passing of judgment on the stones being out of the question, the only idea is the setting up of dominion, as is put beyond doubt by the parallel clause; to spread out his state carpet upon the stones. "Before the gates of Jerusalem:" not merely in order to besiege the city and occupy the outlets from it (Jerome and others), but to lord it over the city and its inhabitants. If we take the figurative expression in this sense, the further statement fits well into it, and we have no need to take refuge in Hitzig's unnatural view that these clauses are not dependent on וְגַם יָתִינוּ but on וּבָאוּ. For the words: they set up their dominion against the calls of Jerusalem, and against all cities of Judah, give the suitable sense, that they will use violence against the walls and cities.

**Jeremiah 1:16.** God holds judgment upon the inhabitants of Judah in this very way, viz., by bringing these nations and permitting them to set up their lordship before the gates of Jerusalem, and against all cities of Judah. The suffix in אֹתָם refers to יְשֻׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ, v. 14, and אֹתָם stands by later usage for אֵתָם, as frequently in Jer.; cf. Ew. § 264, b. דְּבַר מִשְׁפָּטִים אֶת־יְיָ, speak judgment, properly, have a lawsuit with one, an expression peculiar to Jeremiah,—cf. 4:12; 12:1; 39:5; 52:9, and 2 Kings 25:6,—is in

substance equivalent to נִשְׁפָּט אֶת, plead with one, cf. 12:1 with 2:35, Ezek. 20:35ff., and signifies not only remonstrating against wrong doing, but also the passing of condemnation, and so comprehends trial and sentencing; cf. 39:5; 42:9. "All their wickedness" is more exactly defined in the following relative clauses; it consists in their apostasy from God, and their worship of heathen gods and idols made by themselves; cf. 19:4, Kings 11:33, 2 Kings 22:17. קָטַר, offer odours, cause to rise in smoke, used not of the burning of incense alone, but of all offerings upon the altar, bloody offerings and meat-offerings; hence frequently in parallelism with זָבַח; cf. Hos. 4:13; 11:2, etc. In the Pentateuch the Hiphil is used for this sense. Instead of the plural מְעַשֵׂי, many MSS give the singular מְעַשֶׂה as the ordinary expression for the productions of the hand, handiwork; cf. 25:6, 7, 14; 32:30, 2 Kings 22:17, etc.; but the plural too is found in 44:8, 2 Chron. 34:25, and is approved by these passages. The sense is no way affected by this variation.

**Jeremiah 1:17–19.** The interpretation of the symbols is followed by a charge to Jeremiah to address himself stoutly to his duties, and to discharge them fearlessly, together with still further and fuller assurance of powerful divine assistance.

**Jeremiah 1:17.** *"But thou, gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak to them all that I command thee: be not dismayed before them, lest I dismay thee before them. V. 18. And I, behold I make thee this day a strong city, an iron pillar, a brazen wall against the whole land, the kings of Judah its princes, its priests, and the people of the land. V. 19. They shall strive against thee, but not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith Jahveh, to save thee."* To gird up the loins, i.e., to fasten or tuck up with the girdle the long wide garment, in order to make oneself fit and ready for labour, for a journey, or a race (Ex. 12:11; 1 Kings 18:46; 2 Kings 4:29; 9:1), or for battle (Job 38:3; 40:7). Meaning: equip thyself and arise to preach my words to the inhabitants of the land. In אֶל-תַּחַת מְ and אֶל-תַּחַת לִי there is a

play on words. The Niph. sig. broken in spirit by terror and anxiety; the Hiph. to throw into terror and anguish. If Jeremiah appears before his adversaries in terror, then he will have cause to be terrified for them; only if by unshaken confidence in the power of the word he preaches in the name of the Lord, will he be able to accomplish anything. Such confidence he has reason to cherish, for God will furnish him with the strength necessary for making a stand, will make him strong and not to be vanquished. This is the meaning of the pictorial statement in v. 18. A strong city resists the assaults of the foes; the storm cannot shatter an iron pillar; and walls of brass defy the enemy's missiles. Instead of the plural חֲמוֹת, the parallel passage 15:20 has the sing. חוֹמָה, the plural being used as frequently as the singular to indicate the wall encircling the city; cf. 2 Kings 25:10 with 1 Kings 3:1, Neh. 2:13; 4:1 with 1:3, and 2:17; 4:10. With such invincible power will God equip His prophet "against the whole land," i.e., so that he will be able to hold his own against the whole land. The mention of the component parts of "all the land," i.e., the several classes of the population, is introduced by לְמַלְכֵי, so that "the kings," etc., is to be taken as an apposition to "against all the land." Kings in the plural are mentioned, because the prophet's labours are to extend over several reigns. שְׂרָיִם are the chiefs of the people, the heads of families and clans, and officers, civil and military. "The people of the land" is the rest of the population not included in these three classes, elsewhere called men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, 17:25; 32:32, and frequently. אֶלְיָדָי for אֶלְיָדָי; so in 15:20, and often. With the promise in v. 19b, cf. v. 8.

## Jeremiah 2

### I.—General Admonitions and Reproofs Belonging to the Time of Josiah—Ch. 2–22

**Jeremiah 2–22.** If we compare the six longer discourses in these chapters with the sayings and prophecies gathered together in the other

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portions of the book, we observe between them this distinction in form and matter, that the former are more *general* in their character than the latter. Considered as to their form, these last prophecies have, with few exceptions, headings in which we are told both the date of their composition and the circumstances under which they were uttered; while in the headings of these six discourses, if we except the somewhat indefinite notice, "in the days of Josiah" (Jeremiah 3:6), we find nowhere mentioned either their date or the circumstances which led to their composition. Again, both the shorter sayings and the lengthier prophecies between Jeremiah 21 and the end of the book are unmistakeably to be looked upon as prophetic addresses, separately rounded off; but the discourses of our first part give us throughout the impression that they are not discourses delivered before the people, but treatises compiled in writing from the oral addresses of the prophet. As to their matter, too, we cannot fail to notice the difference that, whereas from Jeremiah 21 onwards the king of Babylon is named as the executor of judgment upon Judah and the nations, in the discourses of Jeremiah 2-20 the enemies who are to execute judgment are nowhere defined, but are only generally described as a powerful and terrible nation coming from the north. And so, in rebuking the idolatry and the prevailing sins of the people, no reference is made to special contemporary events; but there are introduced to a great extent lengthy general animadversions on their moral degeneracy, and reflections on the vanity of idolatry and the nature of true wisdom. From these facts we infer the probable conclusion that these discourses are but comprehensive summaries of the prophet's labours in the days of Josiah. The probability becomes certainty when we perceive that the matters treated in these discourses are arranged according to their subjects. The first discourse (Jeremiah 2:1-3:5) gives, so to speak, the programme of the subjects of all the following discourses: that disloyal defection to idolatry, with which Israel has from of old requited the Lord for His love

and faithfulness, brings with it sore chastening judgments. In the second discourse (Jeremiah 3:6-6:30) faithless Judah is shown, in the fall of the ten tribes, what awaits itself in case of stiff-necked persistence in idolatry. In the third (Jeremiah 7-10) is torn from it the support of a vain confidence in the possession of the temple and in the offering of the sacrifices commanded by the law. In the fourth (Jeremiah 11-13) its sins are characterized as a breach of the covenant; and rejection by the Lord is declared to be its punishment. In the fifth (Jeremiah 14-17) the hope is destroyed that the threatened chastisement can be turned aside by intercession. Finally, in the sixth (Jeremiah 18-20) the judgment of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the kingdom of Judah is exhibited in symbolical acts. In this arrangement and distribution of what the prophet had to announce to the people in his endeavours to save them, if possible, from destruction, we can recognise a progression from general admonitions and threatenings to more and more definite announcement of coming judgments; and when, on the other hand, we see growing greater and bitterer the prophet's complaints against the hatreds and persecutions he has to endure (cf. 12:1-6; 15:10, 11, 15-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23, 20), we can gather that the expectation of the people's being saved from impending destruction was growing less and less, that their obduracy was increasing, and that judgment must inevitably come upon them. These complaints of the prophet cease with Jeremiah 20, though later he had much fiercer hatred to endure. None of these discourses contains any allusions to events that occurred after Josiah's death, or stand in any relation to such events. Hence we believe we are safe in taking them for a digest of the quintessence of Jeremiah's oral preaching in the days of Josiah, and this arranged with reference to the subject-matter. It was by this preaching that Jeremiah sought to give a firm footing to the king's reformatory efforts to restore and inspire new life into the public worship, and to develop the external return to the legal temple worship into an inward

conversion to the living God. And it was thus he sought, while the destruction of the kingdom was impending, to save all that would let themselves be saved; knowing as he did that God, in virtue of His unchangeable covenant faithfulness, would sharply chastise His faithless people for its obstinate apostasy from Him, but had not determined to make an utter end of it.

**Ch. 2:1–3:5. The Love and Faithfulness of the Lord, and Israel’s Disloyalty and Idolatry**

**Jeremiah 2:1–3:5.** The Lord has loved Israel sincerely (Jeremiah 2:2, 3), but Israel has fallen from the Lord its God and followed after imaginary gods (vv. 4–8); therefore He will yet further punish it for this unparalleled sin (vv. 9–19). From of old Israel has been renegade, and has by its idolatry contracted fearful guilt, being led not even by afflictions to return to the Lord (vv. 20–30); therefore must the Lord chastise (vv. 31–37), because they will not repent (Jeremiah 3:1–5). This discourse is of a quite general character; it only sketches the main thoughts which are extended in the following discourses and prophecies concerning Judah. So that by most critics it is held to be the discourse by which Jeremiah inaugurated his ministry; for, as Hitzig puts it, “in its finished completeness it gives the impression of a first-uttered outpouring of the heart, in which are set forth, without restraint, Jahveh’s list of grievances against Israel, which has long been running up.” It unquestionably contains the chief of the thoughts uttered by the prophet at the beginning of his ministry.

**Jeremiah 2:1–3.** “And then came to me the word of Jahveh, saying: Go and publish in the ears of Jerusalem, saying: I have remembered to thy account the love of thy youth, the lovingness of thy courtship time, thy going after me in the wilderness, in a land unsown. Holy was Israel to the Lord, his first-fruits of the produce: all who would have devoured him brought guilt upon themselves: evil came upon him, is the saying of Jahveh.” The vv. 2 and 3 are not “in a certain sense the text of the following reproof” (Graf),

but contain “the main idea which shows the cause of the [following] rebuke” (Hitz.): The Lord has rewarded the people of Israel with blessings for its love to Him. זָכַר with לְ pers. and accus. rei means: to remember to one’s account that it may stand him in good stead afterwards,—cf. Neh. 5:19; 13:22, 31, Ps. 98:3; 106:45, etc.,—that it may be repaid with evil, Neh. 6:14; 13:29, Ps. 79:8, etc. The perfect זָכַרְתִּי is to be noted, and not inverted into the present. It is a thing completed that is spoken of; what the Lord has done, not what He is going on with. He remembered to the people Israel the love of its youth. הִסָּד, ordinarily, condescending love, graciousness and favour; here, the self-devoting, nestling love of Israel to its God. The youth of Israel is the time of the sojourn in Egypt and of the exodus thence (Hos. 2:17; 11:1); here the latter, as is shown by the following: lovingness of the courtship. The courtship comprises the time from the exodus out of Egypt till the concluding of the covenant at Sinai (Ex. 19:8). When the Lord redeemed Israel with a strong hand out of the power of Egypt, He chose it to be His spouse, whom He bare on eagles’ wings and brought unto Himself, Ex. 19:4. The love of the bride to her Lord and Husband, Israel proved by its following Him as He went before in the wilderness, the land where it is not sown, i.e., followed Him gladly into the parched, barren wilderness. “Thy going after me” is decisive for the question so much debated by commentators, whether הִסָּד and אֶהְבֶּה stand for the love of Israel to its God, or God’s love to Israel. The latter view we find so early as Chrysostom, and still in Rosenm. and Graf; but it is entirely overthrown by the לְבַתֶּךָ אַחֲרַי, which Chrysost. transforms into ποιῆσας ἐξἄκολουθησάι μου, while Graf takes no notice of it. The reasons, too, which Graf, after the example of Rosenm. and Dathe, brings in support of this and against the only feasible exposition, are altogether valueless. The assertion that the facts forbid us to understand the words of the love of Israel to the Lord,

because history represents the Israelites, when *vixdum Aegypto egressos, as refractarios et ad aliorum deorum cultum pronos*, cannot be supported by a reference to Deut. 9:6, 24, Isa. 48:8, Amos 5:25f., Ps. 106:7. History knows of no apostasy of Israel from its God and no idolatry of the people during the time from the exodus out of Egypt till the arrival at Sinai, and of this time alone Jeremiah speaks. All the rebellions of Israel against its God fall within the time after the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, and during the march from Sinai to Canaan. On the way from Egypt to Sinai the people murmured repeatedly, indeed, against Moses; at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh was pursuing with chariots and horsemen (Ex. 14:11ff.); at Marah, where they were not able to drink the water for bitterness (Jeremiah 15:24); in the wilderness of Sin, for lack of bread and meat (Jeremiah 16:2ff.); and at Massah, for want of water (Jeremiah 17:2ff.). But in all these cases the murmuring was no apostasy from the Lord, no rebellion against God, but an outburst of timorousness and want of proper trust in God, as is abundantly clear from the fact that in all these cases of distress and trouble God straightway brings help, with the view of strengthening the confidence of the timorous people in the omnipotence of His helping grace. Their backsliding from the Lord into heathenism begins with the worship of the golden calf, after the covenant had been entered into at Sinai (Ex. 32), and is continued in the revolts on the way from Sinai to the borders of Canaan, at Taberah, at Kibroth-hattaavah (Num. 11), in the desert of Paran at Kadesh (Num. 13, 20); and each time it was severely punished by the Lord.

Neither are we to conclude, with J. D. Mich., that God interprets the journey through the desert *in meliorem partem*, and makes no mention of their offences and revolts; nor with Graf, that Jeremiah looks steadily away from all that history tells of the march of the Israelites through the desert, of their discontent and refractoriness, of the golden calf and of Baal Peor, and, idealizing the past as contrasted with the much darker present, keeps in view only

the brighter side of the old times. Idealizing of this sort is found neither elsewhere in Jeremiah nor in any other prophet; nor is there anything of the kind in our verse, if we take up rightly the sense of it and the thread of the thought. It becomes necessary so to view it, only if we hold the whole forty years' sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness to be the espousal time, and make the marriage union begin not with the covenanting at Sinai, but with the entrance of Israel into Canaan. Yet more entirely without foundation is the other assertion, that the words rightly given as the sense is, "stand in no connection with the following, since then the point in hand is the people's forgetfulness of the divine benefits, its thanklessness and apostasy, not at all the deliverances wrought by Jahveh in consideration of its former devotedness." For in v. 2 it is plainly enough told how God remembered to the people its love. Israel was so shielded by Him, as His sanctuary, that whoever touched it must pay the penalty. קִדְּשׁ are all gifts consecrated to Jahveh. The Lord has made Israel a holy offering consecrated to Him in this, that He has separated it to Himself for a סֶגֶלָה, for a precious possession, and has chosen it to be a holy people: Ex. 19:5f.; Deut. 7:6; 14:2. We can explain from the Torah of offering the further designation of Israel: his first-fruits; the first of the produce of the soil or yield of the land belonged, as קִדְּשׁ, to the Lord: Ex. 23:19; Num. 8:8, etc. Israel, as the chosen people of God, as such a *consecrated* firstling. Inasmuch as Jahveh is Creator and Lord of the whole world, all the peoples are His possession, the harvest of His creation. But amongst the peoples of the earth He has chosen Israel to Himself for a firstling-people (רֵאשִׁית הַגּוֹיִם), Amos 6:1), and so pronounced it His sanctuary, not to be profaned by touch. Just as each laic who ate of a firstling consecrated to God incurred guilt, so all who meddled with Israel brought guilt upon their heads. The choice of the verb אִכְלִיז is also to be explained from the figure of firstling-offerings. The eating of firstling-fruit is appropriation of it to one's own

use. Accordingly, by the eating of the holy people of Jahveh, not merely the killing and destroying of it is to be understood, but all laying of violent hands on it, to make it a prey, and so all injury or oppression of Israel by the heathen nations. The practical meaning of יִשְׁמֹו is given by the next clause: mischief came upon them. The verbs יִשְׁמֹו and תִּבָּא are not futures; for we have here to do not with the future, but with what did take place so long as Israel showed the love of the espousal time to Jahveh. Hence rightly Hitz.: "he that would devour it must pay the penalty." An historical proof of this is furnished by the attack of the Amalekites on Israel and its result, Ex. 17:8-15.

**Jeremiah 2:4-8.** But Israel did not remain true to its first love; it has forgotten the benefits and blessings of its God, and has fallen away from Him in rebellion.

**Jeremiah 2:4.** *"Hear the word of Jahveh, house of Jacob, and all families of the house of Israel. V. 5. Thus saith Jahveh, What have your fathers found in me of wrongfulness, that they are gone far from me, and have gone after vanity, and are become vain? V. 6. And they said not, Where is Jahveh that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us in the wilderness, in the land of steppes and of pits, in the land of drought and of the shadow of death, in a land that no one passes through and where no man dwells? V. 7. And I brought you into a land of fruitful fields, to eat its fruit and its goodness: and ye came and defiled my land, and my heritage ye have made an abomination. V. 8. The priests said not, Where is Jahveh? and they that handled the law knew me not: the shepherds fell away from me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and after them that profit not are they gone."* The rebuke for ungrateful, faithless apostasy is directed against the whole people. The "house of Jacob" is the people of the twelve tribes, and the parallel member, "all families of the house of Israel," is an elucidative apposition. The "fathers" in v. 5 are the ancestors of the now living race onwards from the days of the Judges, when the generation arising after the death of Joshua and his contemporaries forsook the

Lord and served the Baals (Judg. 2:10ff.). עָוָל, perversity, wrongfulness, used also of a single wicked deed in Ps. 7:4, the opposite to acting in truth and good faith. Jahveh is a God of faithfulness (אֱמוּנָה); in Him is no iniquity (אֵין עָוָל), Deut. 32:4. The question, what have they found ... ? is answered in the negative by v. 6. To remove far from me and follow after vanity, is tantamount to forsaking Jahveh and serving the false gods (Baals), Judg. 2:11. הֶבֶל, lit., breath, thence emptiness, vanity, is applied so early as the song of Moses, Deut. 32:21, to the false gods, as being nonentities. Here, however, the word means not the gods, but the worship of them, as being groundless and vain; bringing no return to him who devotes himself to it, but making him foolish and useless in thought and deed. By the apostle in Rom. 1:21 יִהְיֶה expressed by ἐματαιώθησαν. Cf. 2 Kings 17:15, where the second hemistich of our verse is applied to the ten tribes.

**Jeremiah 2:6.** They said not, Where is Jahveh? i.e., they have no longer taken any thought of Jahveh; have not recalled His benefits, though they owed to Him all they had become and all they possessed. He has brought them out of Egypt, freed them from the house of bondage (Mic. 6:4), and saved them from the oppression of the Pharaohs, meant to extirpate them (Ex. 3:7ff.). He has led them through pathless and inhospitable deserts, miraculously furnished them with bread and water, and protected them from all dangers (Deut. 8:15). To show the greatness of His benefits, the wilderness is described as parched unfruitful land, as a land of deadly terrors and dangers. אֶרֶץ עֲרִבָה, land of steppes or heaths, corresponds to the land unsown of v. 2. "And of pits," i.e., full of dangerous pits and chasms into which one may stumble unawares. Land of drought, where one may have to pine through thirst. And of the shadow of death: so Sheol is named in Job 10:21 as being a place of deep darkness; here, the wilderness, as a land of the terrors of death, which surround the traveller with darkness as of death: Isa. 8:22; 9:1; Job 16:16. A land



through which no one passes, etc., i.e., which offers the traveller neither path nor shelter. Through his frightful desert God has brought His people in safety.

**Jeremiah 2:7.** And He has done yet more. He has brought them into a fruitful and well-cultivated land. פְּרֻמָּה, fruitful fields, the opposite of wilderness, Jeremiah 4:26; Isa. 29:17. To eat up its fruit and its good; cf. the enumeration of the fruits and useful products of the land of Canaan, Deut. 8:7–9. And this rich and splendid land the ungrateful people have defiled by their sins and vices (cf. Lev. 18:24), and idolatry (cf. Ezek. 36:18); and the heritage of Jahveh they have thus made an abomination, an object of horror. The land of Canaan is called “my heritage,” the especial domain of Jahveh, inasmuch as, being the Lord of the earth, He is the possessor of the land and has given it to the Israelites for a possession, yet dwells in the midst of it as its real lord, Num. 25:34.—In v. 8 the complaint briefly given in v. 6 is expanded by an account of the conduct of the higher classes, those who gave its tone to the spirit of the people. The priests, whom God had chosen to be the ministers of His sanctuary, asked not after Him, i.e., sought neither Him nor His sanctuary. They who occupy themselves with the law, who administer the law: these too are the priests as teachers of the law (Mic. 3:11), who should instruct the people as to the Lord’s claims on them and commandments (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 33:10). They knew not Jahveh, i.e., they took no note of Him, did not seek to discover what His will and just claims were, so as to instruct the people therein, and press them to keep the law. The shepherds are the civil authorities, princes and kings (cf. 23:1ff.): those who by their lives set the example to the people, fell away from the Lord; and the prophets, who should have preached God’s word, prophesied בַּבַּעַל, by Baal, i.e., inspired by Baal. Baal is here a generic name for all false gods; cf. 23:13. לֹא יִזְעֻדוּ, those who profit not, are the Baals as unreal gods; cf. Isa. 44:9, 1 Sam. 12:21. The utterances as to the various ranks form a climax, as Hitz. rightly remarks. The

ministers of public worship manifested no desire towards me; those learned in the law took no knowledge of me, of my will, of the contents of the book of the law; the civil powers went the length of rising up against my law; and the prophets fairly fell away to false gods, took inspiration from Baal, the incarnation of the lying spirit.

**Jeremiah 2:9–13.** Such backsliding from God is unexampled and appalling. V. 9. *“Therefore will I further contend with you, ad with your children’s children will I contend.* V. 10. *For go over to the islands of the Chittim, and see; and send to Kedar, and observe well, and see if such things have been;* V. 11. *whether a nation hath changed its gods, which indeed are no gods? but my people hath changed its glory for that which profits not.* V. 12. *Be horrified, ye heavens, at this, and shudder, and be sore dismayed, saith Jahveh.* V. 13. *For double evil hath my people done; me have they forsaken, the fountain of living waters, to hew out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, the hold no water.”*

In the preceding verses the fathers were charged with the backsliding from the Lord; in v. 9 punishment is threatened against the now-living people of Israel, and on their children’s children after them. For the people in its successive and even yet future generations constitutes a unity, and in this unity a moral personality. Since the sins of the fathers transmit themselves to the children and remoter descendants, sons and grandsons must pay the penalty of the fathers’ guilt, that is, so long as they share the disposition of their ancestors. The conception of this moral unity is at the foundation of the threatening. That the present race persists in the fathers’ backsliding from the Lord is clearly expressed in v. 17ff. In “I will further chide or strive,” is intimated *implicite* that God had chidden already up till now, or even earlier with the fathers. רִיב, contend, when said of God, is actual striving or chastening with all kinds of punishment. This must God do as the righteous and holy one; for the sin of the people is an unheard of sin, seen in no other people. “The islands of the Chittim”

are the isles and coast lands of the far west, as in Ezek. 27:6; כְּתִים having originally been the name for Cyprus and the city of *Cition*, see in Gen. 10:4. In contrast with these distant western lands, *Kedar* is mentioned as representative of the races of the east. The Kedarenes lived as a pastoral people in the eastern part of the desert between Arabia Petraea and Babylonia; see in Gen. 25:13 and Ezek. 27:21. Peoples in the two opposite regions of the world are individualizingly mentioned instead of all peoples. הִתְבּוֹנְנוּ, give good heed, serves to heighten the expression. הֲנָ = אֵם introduces the indirect question; cf. Ew. § 324, c. The unheard of, that which has happened amongst no people, is put interrogatively for rhetorical effect. Has any heathen nation changed its gods, which indeed are not truly gods? No; no heathen nation has done this; but the people of Jahveh, Israel, has exchanged its glory, i.e., the God who made Himself known to it in His glory, for false gods that are of no profit. כְּבוֹד is the glory in which the invisible God manifested His majesty in the world and amidst His people. Cf. the analogous title given to God, גִּאּוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל, Amos 8:7, Hos. 5:5. The exact antithesis to כְּבוֹדוֹ would be בִּשְׁתָּ, cf. 3:24; 11:13; but Jeremiah chose לֹא יוֹעִיל to represent the exchange as not advantageous. God showed His glory to the Israelites in the glorious deeds of His omnipotence and grace, like those mentioned in vv. 5 and 6. The Baals, on the other hand, are not אֱלֹהִים, but אֱלִילִים, nothings, phantoms without a being, that bring no help or profit to their worshippers. Before the sin of Israel is more fully set forth, the prophet calls on heaven to be appalled at it. The heavens are addressed as that part of the creation where the glory of God is most brightly reflected. The rhetorical aim is seen in the piling up of words. תָּרַב, lit., to be parched up, to be deprived of the life-marrow. Israel has committed two crimes: *a*. It has forsaken Jahveh, the fountain of living water. מֵיִם חַיִּים,

living water, i.e., water that originates and nourishes life, is a significant figure for God, with whom is the fountain of life (Ps. 36:10), i.e., from whose Spirit all life comes. Fountain of living water (here and 17:13) is synonymous with well of life in Prov. 10:11; 13:14; 14:27, Sir. 21:13. *b*. The other sin is this, that they hew or dig out wells, broken, rent, full of crevices, that hold no water. The delineation keeps to the same figure. The dead gods have no life and can dispense no life, just as wells with rents or fissures hold no water. The two sins, the forsaking of the living God and the seeking out of dead gods, cannot really be separated. Man, created by God and for God, cannot live without God. If he forsake the living God, he passes in spite of himself into the service of dead, unreal gods. Forsaking the living God is *eo ipso* exchanging Him for an imaginary god. The prophet sets the two moments of the apostasy from God side by side, so as to depict to the people with greater fulness of light the enormity of their crime. The fact in v. 11 that no heathen nation changes its gods for others, has its foundation in this, that the gods of the heathen are the creations of men, and that the worship of them is moulded by the carnal-mindedness of sinful man; so that there is less inducement to change, the gods of the different nations being in nature alike. But the true God claims to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and does not permit the nature and manner of His worship to depend on the fancies of His worshippers; He makes demands upon men that run counter to carnal nature, insisting upon the renunciation of sensual lusts and cravings and the crucifixion of the flesh, and against this corrupt carnal nature rebels. Upon this reason for the fact adduced, Jeremiah does not dwell, but lays stress on the fact itself. This he does with the view of bringing out the distinction, wide as heaven, between the true God and the false gods, to the shaming of the idolatrous people; and in order, at the same time, to scourge the folly of idolatry by giving prominence to the contrast between the glory of God and the nothingness of the idols.

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**Jeremiah 2:14–19.** By this double sin Israel has drawn on its own head all the evil that has befallen it. Nevertheless it will not cease its intriguing with the heathen nations. V. 14. *“Is Israel a servant? is he a home-born slave? why is he become a booty?”* V. 15. *Against him roared the young lions, let their voice be heard, and made his land a waste; his cities were burnt up void of inhabitants.* V. 16. *Also the sons of Noph and Tahpanes feed on the crown of thy head.* V. 17. *Does not this bring it upon thee, thy forsaking Jahveh thy God, at the time when He led thee on the way?* V. 18. *And now what hast thou to do with the way to Egypt, to drink the waters of the Nile? and what with the way to Assur, to drink the waters of the river?* V. 19. *Thy wickedness chastises thee, and thy backslidings punish thee; then know and see that it is evil and bitter to forsake Jahveh thy God, and to have no fear of me, saith the Lord Jahveh of hosts.”* The thought from vv. 14–16 is this: Israel was plundered and abused by the nations like a slave. To characterize such a fate as in direct contradiction to its destiny is the aim of the question: Is Israel a servant? i.e., a slave or a house-born serf. עֶבֶד is he who has in any way fallen into slavery, יָלִיד בַּיִת a slave born in the house of his master. The distinction between these two classes of slaves does not consist in the superior value of the servant born in the house by reason of his attachment to the house. This peculiarity is not here thought of, but only the circumstance that the son of a slave, born in the house, remained a slave without any prospect of being set free; while the man who has been forced into slavery by one of the vicissitudes of life might hope again to acquire his freedom by some favourable turn of circumstances. Another failure is the attempt of Hitz. to interpret עֶבֶד as servant of Jahveh, worshipper of the true God; for this interpretation, even if we take no account of all the other arguments that make against it, is rendered impossible by יָלִיד בַּיִת. That expression never means the son of the house, but by unfailing usage the slave born in the house of his master. Now the people of Israel

had not been born as serf in the land of Jahveh, but had become עֶבֶד, i.e., slave, in Egypt (Deut. 5:15); but Jahveh has redeemed it from this bondage and made it His people. The questions suppose a state of affairs that did not exist. This is shown by the next question, one expressing wonder: Why then is he [it] become a prey? Slaves are treated as a prey, but Israel was no slave; why then has such treatment fallen to his lot? *Propheta per admirationem quasi de re nova et absurda sciscitatur. An servus est Israel? atqui erat liber prae cunctis gentibus, erat enim filius primogenitus Dei; necesse est igitur quaerere aliam causam, cur adeo miser sit* (Calv.). Cf. the similar turn of the thought in v. 31. How Israel became a prey is shown in vv. 15 and 16. These verses do not treat of future events, but of what has already happened, and, according to vv. 18 and 19, will still continue. The imperff. יִשְׁאָגוּ and יִרְעוּדוּ alternate consequently with the perff. נָתַנוּ and נִצְתָה, and are governed by הָיָה לָבוֹ, so that they are utterances regarding events of the past, which have been and are still repeated. Lions are a figure that frequently stands for enemies thirsting for plunder, who burst in upon a people or land; cf. Mic. 5:7, Isa. 5:29, etc. Roared עָלָיו, against him, not, over him: the lion roars when he is about to rush upon his prey, Amos 3:4, 8; Ps. 104:21; Judg. 14:5; when he has pounced upon it he growls or grumbles over it; cf. Isa. 31:4.—In v. 15b the figurative manner passes into plain statement. They made his land a waste; cf. 4:7; 18:16, etc., where instead of שָׂוִים we have the more ordinary שָׂוִים. The Cheth. נִצְתָה from יָצַת, not from the Ethiop. נִצָּה (Graf, Hitz.), is to be retained; the Keri here, as in 22:6, is an unnecessary correction; cf. Ew. § 317, a. In this delineation Jeremiah has in his eye chiefly the land of the ten tribes, which had been ravaged and depopulated by the Assyrians, even although Judah had often suffered partial devastations by enemies; cf. 1 Kings 14:25.

**Jeremiah 2:16.** Israel has had to submit to spoliation at the hands of the Egyptians too.

The present reference to the Egyptians is explained by the circumstances of the prophet's times,—from the fact, namely, that just as Israel and Judah had sought the help of Egypt against the Assyrians (cf. Hos. 7:11, 2 Kings 17:4, and Isa. 30:1–5; 30:1) in the time of Hezekiah, so now in Jeremiah's times Judah was expecting and seeking help from the same quarter against the advancing power of the Chaldeans; cf. 37:7. Noph and Tahpanes are two former capitals of Egypt, here put as representing the kingdom of the Pharaohs. נֹפֶךְ, in Hos. 9:6 נֹפֶךְ contracted from נֹפֶכֶת, *Manoph* or *Menoph*, is *Memphis*, the old metropolis of Lower Egypt, made by Psammetichus the capital of the whole kingdom. Its ruins lie on the western bank of the Nile, to the south of Old Cairo, close by the present village of *Mitrahenny*, which is built amongst the ruins; cf. Brugsch *Reiseberichte aus Egypten*, § 60ff., and the remarks on Hos. 9:6 and Isa. 19:13. תַּחְפָּנֶס, elsewhere spelt as here in the Keri תַּחְפָּנֶסֶת,—cf. 43:7ff., 44:1; 46:14, Ez. 30:18, —was a strong border city on the Pelusiac arm of the Nile, called by the Greeks *Δάφναι* (Herod. ii. 20), by the LXX *Τάφναι*; see in Ezek. 30:18. A part of the Jews who had remained in the land fled hither after the destruction of Jerusalem, 43:7ff. יִרְעוּךָ קֶדְקֵד, feed upon thy crown (lit., feed on thee in respect of thy crown), is a trope for ignominious devastation; for to shave one bald is a token of disgrace and sorrow, cf. 47:5; 48:37, Isa. 3:17; and with this Israel is threatened in Isa. 7:20. רָעָה, to eat up by grazing, as in Job 20:26 and 24:21; in the latter passage in the sense of *depopulari*. We must then reject the conjectures of J. D. Mich., Hitz., and others, suggesting the sense: crush thy head for thee; a sense not at all suitable, since crushing the head would signify the utter destruction of Israel.—The land of Israel is personified as a woman, as is shown by the fem. suffix in יִרְעוּךָ. Like a land closely cropped by herds, so is Israel by the Egyptians. In 6:3 also the enemies are represented as shepherds coming with their flocks against Jerusalem, and pitching their tents round about

the city, while each flock crops its portion of ground. In 12:10 shepherds lay the vineyard waste.

**Jeremiah 2:17.** In v. 17 the question as to the cause of the evil is answered. זֵאת is the above-mentioned evil, that Israel had become a prey to the foe. This thy forsaking of Jahveh makes or prepares for thee. תַּעֲשֶׂה is neuter; the infin. עֲזַבְךָ is the subject of the clause, and it is construed as a neuter, as in 1 Sam. 18:23. The fact that thou hast forsaken Jahveh thy God has brought this evil on thee. At the time when He led thee on the way. The participle מוֹלִיךְ is subordinated to עָתָה in the *stat. constr.* as a *partic.* standing for the *praeterit. durans*; cf. Ew. § 337, c. בְּדֶרֶךְ is understood by Ros. and Hitz. of the right way (Ps. 25:8); but in this they forget that this acceptance is incompatible with the בְּעֵת, which circumscribes the leading within a definite time. God will lead His people on the right way at all times. The way on which He led them at the particular time is the way through the Arabian desert, cf. v. 6, and בְּדֶרֶךְ is to be understood as in Deut. 1:33, Ex. 18:8; 23:20, etc. Even thus early their fathers forsook the Lord: At Sinai, by the worship of the golden calf; then when the people rose against Moses and Aaron in the desert of Paran, called a rejecting (נִצְיָן) of Jahveh in Num. 14:11; and at Shittim, where Israel joined himself to Baal Peor, Num. 25:1–3. The forsaking of Jahveh is not to be limited to direct idolatry, but comprehends also the seeking of help from the heathen; this is shown by the following 18th verse, in which the reproaches are extended to the present bearing of the people. מַה־לָּךְ לְדֶרֶךְ וְגו', lit., what is to thee in reference to the way of Egypt (for the expression, see Hos. 14:9), i.e., what hast thou to do with the way of Egypt? Why dost thou arise to go into Egypt, to drink the water of the Nile? שְׁחֹרֵר, the black, turbid stream, is a name for the Nile, taken from its dark-grey or black mud. The Nile is the life-giving artery of Egypt, on whose fertilizing waters the fruitfulness and

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the prosperity of the country depend. To drink the waters of the Nile is as much as to say to procure for oneself the sources of Egypt's life, to make the power of Egypt useful to oneself. Analogous to this is the drinking the waters of the river, i.e., the Euphrates. What is meant is seeking help from Egyptians and Assyrians. The water of the Nile and of the Euphrates was to be made to furnish them with that which the fountain of living water, i.e., Jahveh (v. 14), supplied to them. This is an old sin, and with it Israel of the ten tribes is upbraided by Hosea (Hos. 7:11; 12:2). From this we are not to infer "that here we have nothing to do with the present, since the existing Israel, Judah, was surely no longer a suitor for the assistance of Assyria, already grown powerless" (Hitz.). The limitation of the reproach solely to the past is irreconcilable with the terms of the verse and with the context (v. 19). מַה־לָּךְ לְדַרְךְ cannot grammatically be translated: What hadst thou to do with the way; just as little can we make תִּסְרַדְךָ hath chastised thee, since the following: know and see, is then utterly unsuitable to it. תִּסְרַדְךָ and תּוֹכִיחֶךָ are not futures, but imperfects, i.e., expressing what is wont to happen over again in each similar case; and so to be expressed in English by the present: thy wickedness, i.e., thy wicked work, chastises thee. The wickedness was shown in forsaking Jahveh, in the מְשׁוּבוֹת, backslidings, the repeated defection from the living God; cf. 3:22; 5:6; 14:7. As to the fact, we have no historical evidence that under Josiah political alliance with Egypt or Assyria was compassed; but even if no formal negotiations took place, the country was certainly even then not without a party to build its hopes on one or other of the great powers between which Judah lay, whenever a conflict arose with either of them.—וְדַע־י, with the Vav of consecution (see Ew. § 347, a): Know then, and at last comprehend, that forsaking the Lord thy God is evil and bitter, i.e., bears evil and bitter fruit, prepares bitter misery for thee. "To have no fear of me" corresponds "to forsake," lit., thy forsaking, as second subject; lit.,: and the no

fear of me in thee, i.e., the fact that thou hast no awe of me. פִּה־דָתִי, awe of me, like פִּה־דָתִי in Deut. 2:25.

**Jeremiah 2:20–25.** All along Israel has been refractory; it cannot and will not cease from idolatry. V. 20. "For of old time thou hast broken thy yoke, torn off thy bands; and hast said: I will not serve; but upon every high hill, and under every green tree, thou stretchedst thyself as a harlot. V. 21. And I have planted thee a noble vine, all of genuine stock: and how hast thou changed thyself to me into the bastards of a strange vine? V. 22. Even though thou washedst thee with natron and tookest much soap, filthy remains thy guilt before me, saith the Lord Jahveh. V. 23. How canst thou say, I have not defiled me, after the Baals have I not gone? See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done—thou lightfooted camel filly, entangling her says. V. 24. A wild she-ass used to the wilderness, that in her lust panteth for air; her heat, who shall restrain it? all that seek her run themselves weary; in her month they will find her. V. 25. Keep thy foot from going barefoot, and thy throat from thirst; but thou sayest, It is useless; no; for I have loved strangers, and after them I go." V. 20. מִמְּעוֹלָם, from eternity, i.e., from immemorial antiquity, has Israel broken the yoke of the divine law laid on it, and torn asunder the bands of decency and order which the commands of God, the ordinances of the Torah, put on, to nurture it to be a holy people of the Lord; torn them as an untamed bullock (Jeremiah 31:18) or a stubborn cow, Hos. 4:16. מוֹסְרוֹת, bands, are not the bands or cords of love with which God drew Israel, Hos. 11:4 (Graf), but the commands of God whose part it was to keep life within the bounds of purity, and to hold the people back from running riot in idolatry. On this head see 5:5; and for the expression, Ps. 2:3. The Masoretes have taken שְׁבֵרְתִי and נִתְקַתִּי for the 1st person, pointing accordingly, and for אֶעְבֹּד, as unsuitable to this, they have substituted אֶעְבֹּר. Ewald has decided in favour of these readings; but he is thus compelled to tear the verse to pieces and to

hold the text to be defective, since the words from **וְהִזְמַרְתִּי** onwards are not in keeping with what precedes. Even if we translate: I offend [transgress] not, the thought does not adapt itself well to the preceding; I have of old time broken thy yoke, etc.; nor can we easily reconcile with it the grounding clause; for on every high hill, ... thou layest a whoring, where Ew. is compelled to force on **כִּי** the adversative sig. Most commentators, following the example of the LXX and Vulg., have taken the two verbs for 2nd person; and thus is maintained the simple and natural thought that Israel has broken the yoke laid on it by God, renounced allegiance to Him, and practised idolatry on every hand. The spelling **שְׁבַרְתִּי**, **נִתְקַתִּי**, i.e., the formation of the 2nd pers. perf. with **י**, is frequently found in Jer.; cf. 5:33; 3:4; 4:19; 13:21, etc. It is really the fuller original spelling **תִּי** which has been preserved in Aramaic, though seldom found in Hebrew; in Jeremiah it must be accounted an Aramaism; cf. Ew. § 190, c; Gesen. § 44, 2, Rem. 4. With the last clause, on every high hill, etc., cf. Hos. 4:13 and Ezek. 6:13 with the comm. on Deut. 12:2. Stretchest thyself as a harlot or a whoring, is a vivid description of idolatry. **צָעָה**, bend oneself, lie down *ad coitum*, like *κατακλίνεσθαι*, *inclinari*.

**Jeremiah 2:21.** In this whoring with the false gods, Israel shows its utter corruption. I have planted thee a noble vine; not, with noble vines, as we translate in Isa. 5:2, where Israel is compared to a vineyard. Here Israel is compared to the vine itself, a vine which Jahveh has planted; cf. Ps. 80:9, Hos. 10:1. This vine was all (**בְּלֹהָ**, in its entirety, referred to **שׁוֹרֵק**, as *collect.*) genuine seed; a proper shoot which could bear good grapes (cf. Ezek. 17:5); children of Abraham, as they are described in Gen. 18:19. But how has this Israel changed itself to me (**לִי**, *dativ. incommodi*) into bastards! **סוּרִי** is *accus.*, dependent on **נִגְהַפְכָה**; for this constr. cf. Lev. 13:25, Ps. 114:8. **סוּרִים** sig. not shoots or twigs, but degenerate sprouts or

suckers. The article in **הַנִּפְתָּן** is generic: wild shoots of the species of the wild vine; but this is not the first determining word; cf. for this exposition of the article 13:4, 2 Sam. 12:30, etc., Ew. § 290, a ); and for the omission of the article with **נִבְרָיָה**, cf. Ew. § § 293, a. Thus are removed the grammatical difficulties that led Hitz. to take **סוּרִי** quite unnaturally as vocative, and Graf to alter the text. “A strange vine” is an interloping vine, not of the true, genuine stock planted by Jahveh (v. 10), and which bears poisonous berries of gall. Deut. 32:32.

**Jeremiah 2:22.** Though thou adoptedst the most powerful means of purification, yet couldst thou not purify thyself from the defilement of thy sins. **נַתַּר**, natron, is mineral, and **בְּרִית** vegetable alkali. **נִבְתָּם** introduces the apodosis; and by the participle a lasting condition is expressed. This word, occurring only here in the O.T., sig. in Aram. to be stained, filthy, a sense here very suitable. **לְפָנַי**, before me, i.e., before my eyes, the defilement of thy sins cannot be wiped out. On this head see Isa. 1:18, Ps. 51:4, 9.

**Jeremiah 2:23.** And yet Judah professes to be pure and upright before God. This plea Jeremiah meets by pointing to the open practising of idolatrous worship. The people of Judah personified as a woman—**זוֹנָה** in v. 20—is addressed. **אֵיךְ** is a question expressing astonishment. **נִדְמַאֲתִי**, of defilement by idolatry, as is shown by the next explanatory clause: the Baals I have not followed. **בְּעֲלִים** is used generically for strange gods, 1:16. The public worship of Baal had been practised in the kingdom of Judah under Joram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah only, and had been extirpated by Jehu, 2 Kings 10:18ff. Idolatry became again rampant under Ahaz (by his instigation), Manasseh, and Amon, and in the first year of Josiah’s reign. Josiah began to restore the worship of Jahveh in the twelfth year of his reign; but it was not till the eighteenth that he was able to complete the

reformation of the public services. There is then no difficulty in the way of our assuming that there was yet public worship of idols in Judah during the first five years of Jeremiah's labours. We must not, however, refer the prophet's words to this alone. The following of Baal by the people was not put an end to when the altars and images were demolished; for this was sufficient neither to banish from the hearts of the people the proneness to idolatry, nor utterly to suppress the secret practising of it. The answer to the protestation of the people, blinded in self-righteousness, shows, further, that the grosser publicly practised forms had not yet disappeared. "See thy way in the valley." Way, i.e., doing and practising. בְּגֵיאַ with the article must be some valley known for superstitions cultivated there; most commentators suggest rightly the valley of *Ben* or *Bne-Hinnom* to the south of Jerusalem, where children were offered to Moloch; see on 7:31. The next words, "and know what thou hast done," do not, taken by themselves, imply that this form of idol-worship was yet to be met with, but only that the people had not yet purified themselves from it. If, however, we take them in connection with what follows, they certainly do imply the continued existence of practices of that sort. The prophet remonstrates with the people for its passionate devotion to idolatry by comparing it to irrational animals, which in their season of heat yield themselves to their instinct. The comparison gains in pointedness by his addressing the people as a camel-filly and a wild she-ass. בְּכֶרֶה ק' is vocative, co-ordinate with the subject of address, and means the young filly of the camel. קָלָה, running lightly, nimbly, swiftly. מְשַׁרְכֶת דֶּר', intertwining, i.e., crossing her says; rushing right and left on the paths during the season of heat. Thus Israel ran now after one god, now after another, deviating to the right and to the left from the path prescribed by the law, Deut. 28:14. To delineate yet more sharply the unruly passionateness with which the people rioted in idolatry, there is added the figure of a wild ass running herself

weary in her heat. Hitz. holds the comparison to be so managed that the figure of the she-camel is adhered to, and that this creature is compared to a wild ass only in respect of its panting for air. But this view could be well founded only if the *Keri* נִפְשָׁה were the original reading. Then we might read the words thus: (like) a wild ass used to the wilderness she (the she-camel) pants in the heat of her soul for air. But this is incompatible with the *Cheth*. נִפְשֹׁ, since the suffix points back to פָּרָה, and requires שִׁפְאָפָה to be joined with ל' פָּרָה, so that שִׁפְאָפָה must be spoken of the latter. Besides, taken on its own account, it is a very unnatural hypothesis that the behaviour of the she-camel should be itself compared to the gasping of the wild ass for breath; for the camel is only a figure of the people, and v. 24 is meant to exhibit the unbridled ardour, not of the camel, but of the people. So that with the rest of the comm. we take the wild ass to be a second figure for the people. פָּרָה differs only orthographically from פָּרָא, the usual form of the word, and which many codd. have here. This is the wood ass, or rather wild ass, since the creature lives on steppes, not in woods. It is of a yellowish colour, with a white belly, and forms a kind of link between the deer species and the ass; by reason of its arrow-like speed not easily caught, and untameable. Thus it is used as an emblem of boundless love of freedom, Gen. 16:12, and of unbridled licentiousness, see on Job 24:5 and 39:5. פָּרָה as *nom. epicaen.* has the adj. next it, לָמַד, in the masc., and so too in the apposition נִפְשֹׁ בְּאֵזוֹת; the fem. appears first in the statement as to its behaviour, שִׁפְאָפָה: she pants for air to cool the glow of heat within. תִּאֲנָה sig. neither copulation, from אָנָה, approach (Dietr.), nor *austus libidinosus* (Schroed., Ros.). The sig. approach, meet, attributed to אָנָה, Dietr. grounds upon the Ags. *gelimpan*, to be convenient, opportune; and the sig. slow is derived from the fact that Arab. 'ny is used of

the boiling of water. The root meaning of אָנָה, Arab. 'ny, is, according to Fleischer, *tempestivus fuit*, and the root indicates generally any effort after the attainment of the aim of a thing, or impulse; from which come all the meanings ascribed to the word, and for תִּאֲנֶה in the text before us the sig. heat, i.e., the animal instinct impelling to the satisfaction of sexual cravings.

**Jeremiah 2:24b.** In v. 24b בְּחֹדֶשָׁ is variously interpreted. Thus much is beyond all doubt, that the words are still a part of the figure, i.e., of the comparison between the idolatrous people and the wild ass. The use of the 3rd person stands in the way of the direct reference of the words to Israel, since in what precedes and in what follows Israel is addressed (in 2nd pers.). חֹדֶשׁ can thus mean neither the new moon as a feast (L. de Dieu, Chr. B. Mich.), still less *tempus menstruum* (Jerome, etc.), but month; and the suffix in חֹדֶשָׁ is to be referred, not with Hitz. to תִּאֲנֶתָהּ, but to פָּרָהּ. The suffixes in מְבַקְשֶׁיהָ and יִמְצְאוּנָהּ absolutely demand this. "Her month" is the month appointed for the gratification of the wild ass's natural impulse, i.e., as Bochart rightly explains it (*Hieroz.* ii. p. 230, ed. Ros.) *mensis quo solent sylvestres asinae maris appetitu fervere*. The meaning of the comparison is this: the false gods do not need anxiously to court the favour of the people; in its unbridled desires it gives itself up to them; cf. 3:2, Hos. 2:7, 15. With this is suitably coupled the warning of v. 25: hold back, i.e., keep thy foot from getting bare (יָחַף is subst. not adjective, which would have had to be fem., since רִגְלֶךָ is fem.), and thy throat from thirst, viz., by reason of the fever of running after the idols. This admonition God addresses by the prophet to the people. It is not to wear the sandals off its feet by running after amours, nor so to heat its throat as to become thirsty. Hitz. proposes unsuitably, because in the face of the context, to connect the going barefoot with the visiting of the sanctuary, and the thirsting of the throat (1 Kings 18:26) with incessant calling on the gods. The answer of the people to this

admonition shows clearly that it has been receiving an advice against running after the gods. The *Chet.* וְגִרְוֹנֶךָ is evidently a copyists' error for וְגִרְוֹנֶךָ. The people replies: נוֹאֵשׁ, *desperatum (est)*, i.e., hopeless; thy advice of all in vain; cf. 18:12, and on Isa. 57:10. The meaning is made clearer by לֹא: no; for I love the aliens, etc. זָרִים are not merely strange gods, but also strange peoples. Although idolatry is the matter chiefly in hand, yet it was so bound up with intriguing for the favour of the heathen nations that we cannot exclude from the words some reference to this also.

**Jeremiah 2:26–28.** And yet idolatry brings to the people only disgrace, giving no help in the time of need. V. 26. "As a thief is shamed when he is taken, so is the house of Israel put to shame; they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets. V. 27. Because they say to the wood, Thou art my father; and to the stone, Thou hast borne me: for they have turned to me the back and not the face; but in the time of their trouble they say, Arise, and help us. V. 28. Where then are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can help thee in the time of thy trouble; for as many as are thy cities, so many are thy gods, Judah." The thought in vv. 26 and 27a is this, Israel reaps from its idolatry but shame, as the thief from stealing when he is caught in the act. The comparison in v. 26 contains a universal truth of force at all times. The perf. הוֹבִישׁוּ is the timeless expression of certainty (Hitz.), and refers to the past as well as to the future. Just as already in past time, so also in the future, idolatry brings but shame and confusion by the frustration of the hopes placed in the false gods. The "house of Israel" is all Israel collectively, and not merely the kingdom of the ten tribes. To give the greater emphasis to the reproaches, the leading ranks are mentioned one by one. אֹמְרִים, not: who say, but because (since) they say to the wood, etc., i.e., because they hold images of wood and stone for the gods to whom they owe life and being; whereas Jahveh alone is their Creator or Father and Genitor, Deut. 32:6, 18; Isa. 64:7;



Mal. 2:10. אִמָּן is fem., and thus is put for mother. The *Keri* ילְדָתֶנּוּ is suggested solely by the preceding אִמָּרִים, while the *Chet.* is correct, and is to be read ילְדָתֶנּוּ, inasmuch as each one severally speaks thus.—With “for they have turned” follows the reason of the statement that Israel will reap only shame from its idolatry. To the living God who has power to help them they turn their back; but when distress comes upon them they cry to Him for help (קוֹמָה וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנּוּ as in Ps. 3:8). But then God will send the people to their gods (idols); then will it discover they will not help, for all so great as their number is. The last clause of v. 28 runs literally: the number of thy cities are thy gods become, i.e., so great is the number of thy gods; cf. 11:13. Judah is here directly addressed, so that the people of Judah may not take for granted that what has been said is of force for the ten tribes only. On the contrary, Judah will experience the same as Israel of the ten tribes did when disaster broke over it.

**Jeremiah 2:29–37.** Judah has refused to let itself be turned from idolatry either by judgments or by the warnings of the prophets; nevertheless it holds itself guiltless, and believes itself able to turn aside judgment by means of its intrigues with Egypt. V. 29. *“Wherefore contend ye against me? ye are all fallen away from me, saith Jahveh. V. 30. In vain have I smitten your sons; correction have they not taken: your sword hath devoured your prophets, like a devouring lion. V. 31. O race that ye are, mark the word of Jahveh. Was I a wilderness to Israel, or a land of dread darkness? Why saith my people, We wander about, come no more to thee? V. 32. Does a maiden forget her ornaments, a bride her girdle? but my people hath forgotten me days without number. V. 33. How finely thou trimmest thy ways to seek love! therefore to misdeeds thou accustomest thy ways. V. 34. Even in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the innocent poor ones; not at housebreaking hast thou caught them, but by reason of all this. V. 35. And thou sayest, I am innocent, yea His wrath hath turned from me:*

*behold, I will plead at law with thee for that thou hast said, I have not sinned. V. 36. Why runnest thou so hard to change thy way? for Egypt too thou shalt come to shame, as thou wast put to shame for Asshur. V. 37. From this also shalt thou come forth, beating thy hands upon thy head; for Jahveh rejecteth those in whom thou trustest, and thou shalt not prosper with them.”* The question in v. 29, Wherefore contend ye against me? implies that the people contended with God as to His visitations, murmured at the divine chastisements they had met with; not as to the reproaches addressed to them on account of their idolatry (Hitz., Graf). רִיבִי with אָל, contend, dispute against, is used of the murmuring of men against divine visitations, 12:1, Job 33:13. Judah has no ground for discontent with the Lord; for they have all fallen away from Him, and (v. 31) let themselves be turned to repentance neither by afflictions, nor by warnings, nor by God’s goodness to them. לְשׁוֹן, to vanity, i.e., without effect, or in vain. Hitz. and Graf wish to refer “your sons” to the able-bodied youth who had at different times been slain by Jahveh in war. The LXX seem to have taken it thus, expression לְקָחוּ by ἐδέξασθε; for the third pers. of the verb will not agree with this acceptance of “your sons,” since the reproach of not having taken correction could not apply to such as had fallen in war, but only to those who had escaped. This view is unquestionably incorrect, because, as Hitz. admits the subject, those addressed in לְקָחוּ, must be the people. Hence it follows of necessity that in בְּנֵיכֶם too the people is meant. The expression is similar to בְּנֵי עַמָּךָ, Lev. 19:18, and is used for the members of the nation, those who constitute the people; or rather it is like בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה, Joel 4:6, where Judah is looked on by the prophet as a unity, where sons are the members of the people. הִבָּה, too, is not to be limited to those smitten or slain in war. It is used of all the judgments with which God visits His people, of sword, pestilence, famine, failure of crops, drought, and of all kinds of diseases;

cf. Lev. 26:24ff., Deut. 28:22, 27ff. מוֹסֵר is instruction by word and by warning, as well as correction by chastisement. Most comm. take the not receiving of correction to refer to divine punitive visitations, and to mean refusal to amend after such warning; Ros., on the other hand, holds the reference to be to the warnings and reproofs of the prophets (מוֹסֵר *hic instructionem valet, ut* Prov. 5:12, 23 *cet.*). But both these references are one-sided. If we refer “correction have they not taken” to divine chastisement by means of judgments, there will be no connection between this and the following clause: your sword devoured your prophets; and we are hindered from restraining the reference wholly to the admonitions and rebukes of the prophets by the close connection of the words with the first part of the verse, a connection indicated by the omission of all particles of transition. We must combine the two references, and understand מוֹסֵר both of the rebukes or warnings of the prophets and of the chastisements of God, holding at the same time that it was the correction of the people by the prophets that Jeremiah here chiefly kept in view. In administering this correction the prophets not only applied to the hearts of the people as judgments from God all the ills that fell upon them, but declared to the stiff-necked sinners the punishments of God, and by their words showed those punishments to be impending: e.g., Elijah, 1 Kings 17 and 18, 2 Kings 1:9ff.; Elisha, 2 Kings 2:23; the prophet at Bethel, 1 Kings 13:4. Thus this portion of the verse acquires a meaning for itself, which simplifies the transition from the first to the third clause, and we gain the following thought: I visited you with punishments, and made you to be instructed and reproved by prophets, but ye have slain the prophets who were sent to you. Nehemiah puts it so in 9:26; but Jeremiah uses a much stronger expression, Your sword devoured your prophets like a lion which destroys, in order to set full before the sinners’ eyes the savage hatred of the idolatrous people against the prophets of God. Historical examples of this are furnished by 1 Kings 18:4,

13; 19:10, 2 Chron. 24:21ff., 2 Kings 21:16, Jeremiah 26:23.

The prophet’s indignation grows hotter as he brings into view God’s treatment of the apostate race, and sets before it, to its shame, the divine long-suffering and love. הַדְּיוֹר אָתָּם, O generation ye! English: O generation that ye are! (cf. Ew. § 327, *a*), is the cry of indignation; cf. Deut. 32:5, where Moses calls the people a perverse foolish generation. רָא: see, observe, give heed to the word of the Lord. This verb is often used of perceptions by any sense, as expressive of that sense by which men apprehend most of the things belonging to the outward world. Have I been for Israel a wilderness, i.e., an unfruitful soil, offering neither means of support nor shelter? This question contains a litotes, and is as much as to say: have not I richly blessed Israel with earthly goods? Or a land of dread darkness? מַאֲפָלְיָהּ, lit., a darkness sent by Jahveh; cf. the analogous form שְׁלֵה־בְתִיָּהּ, Cant. 8:6. The desert is so called not merely because it is pathless (Job 3:23), but as a land in which the traveller is on all sides surrounded by deadly dangers; cf. v. 6 and Ps. 65:5. Why then will His people insist on being quit of Him? We roam about unfettered (as to רוּד, see on Hos. 12:1), i.e., we will no longer bear the yoke of His law; cf. v. 20. By a comparison breathing love and longing sadness, the prophet seeks to bring home to the heart of the people a feeling of the unnaturalness of their behaviour towards the Lord their God. Does a bride, then, forget her ornaments? etc. קִשְׁרִים, found besides in Isa. 3:20, is the ornamental girdle with which the bride adorns herself on the wedding-day; cf. Isa. 3:20 with 49:18. God is His people’s best adornment; to Him it owes all the precious possessions it has. It should keep fast hold of Him as its most priceless treasure, should prize Him more highly than the virgin her jewels, than the bride her girdle. but instead of this it has forgotten its God, and that not for a brief time, but throughout countless days. יָמִים is

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accus. of duration of time. Jeremiah uses this figure besides, as Calv. observed, to pave the way for what comes next. *Volebat enim Judaeos conferre mulieribus adulteris, quae dum feruntur effreni sua libidine, rapiuntur post suos vagos amores.*

**Jeremiah 2:33.** In v. 33 the style of address is ironical. How good thou makest thy way! i.e., how well thou knowest to choose out and follow the right way to seek love. הֵיטִיב דָּרַךְ sig. usually: strive after a good walk and conversation; cf. 7:3, 5; 18:11, etc.; here, on the other hand, to take the right way for gaining the end in view. "Love" here is seen from the context to be love to the idols, intrigues with the heathen and their gods. Seek love = strive to gain the love of the false gods. To attain this end thou hast taught thy ways misdeeds, i.e., accustomed thy ways to misdeeds, forsaken the commandments of thy God which demand righteousness and the purifying of one's life, and accommodated thyself to the *immoral* practices of the heathen. הִרְעוּת, with the article as in 3:5, the evil deeds which are undisguisably visible; not: the evils, the misfortunes which follow thee closely, as Hitz. interprets in the face of the context. For in v. 34 we have indisputable evidence that the matter in hand is not evils and misfortunes, but evil deeds or misdemeanours; since there the cleaving of the blood of innocent souls to the hems of the garments is mentioned as one of the basest "evils," and as such is introduced by the גַּם of gradation. The "blood of souls" is the blood of innocent murdered men, which clings to the skirts of the murderers' clothes. כַּנְפֵי are the skirts of the flowing garment, Ezek. 5:3; 1 Sam. 15:27; Zech. 8:23. The plural נִמְצְאוּ before דָּם is explained by the fact that נִפְשׁוֹת is the principal idea. אֲבִיוֹנִים are not merely those who live in straitened circumstances, but pious oppressed ones as contrasted with powerful transgressors and oppressors; cf. Ps. 40:18; 72:13f., 86:1, 2, etc. By the next clause greater prominence is given to the fact that they were

slain being innocent. The words: not בְּמִחְתָּרָת, at housebreaking, thou tookest them, contain an allusion to the law in Ex. 22:1 and onwards; according to which the killing of a thief caught in the act of breaking in was not a cause of blood-guiltiness. The thought runs thus: The poor ones thou hast slain were no thieves or robbers whom thou hadst a right to slay, but guiltless pious men; and the killing of them is a crime worthy of death. Ex. 21:12. The last words עַל כָּל-אֵלֶּה are obscure, and have been very variously interpreted. Changes upon the text are not to the purpose. For we get no help from the reading of the LXX, of the Syr. and Arab., which seem to have read אֵלֶּה as אֵלֶּה, and which have translated δρυς oak or terebinth; since "upon every oak" gives no rational meaning. Nor from the connection of the words with the next verse (Venem., Schnur., Ros., and others): yet with all this, or in spite of all this, thou saidst; since neither does כִּי mean *yet*, nor can the ו before תֹּאמְרִי, in this connection, introduce the sequel thought. The words manifestly belong to what goes before, and contain a contrast: not in breaking in by night thou tookest them, but upon, or on account of all this. עַל in the sig. *upon* gives a suitable sense only if, with Abarb., Ew., Näg., we refer אֵלֶּה to דָּם בְּכַנְפֵי and take מִצְאוֹתֵי as 1st pers.: I found it (the blood of the slain souls) not on the place where the murder took place, but upon all these, sc. lappets of the clothes, i.e., borne openly for display. But even without dwelling on the fact that מִחְתָּרָת does not mean the scene of a murder or breaking in, this explanation is wrecked on the unmistakably manifest allusion to the law, אִם בְּמִחְתָּרָת יִמְצָא הַגֵּב, Ex. 21:1, which is ignored, or at least obscured, by that view. The allusion to this passage of the law shows that מִצְאוֹתֵי is not 1st but 2nd pers., and that the suffix refers to the innocent poor who were slain. Therefore, with Hitz. and Graf, we take עַל-כָּל אֵלֶּה in the sig. "on account of all this," and refer the "all this" to the idolatry

before mentioned. Consequently the words bear this meaning: Not for a crime thou killedst the poor, but because of thine apostasy from God and thy fornication with the idols, their blood cleaves to thy raiment. the words seem, as Calv. surmised, to point to the persecution and slaying of the prophets spoken of in v. 30, namely, to the innocent blood with which the godless king Manasseh filled Jerusalem, 2 Kings 21:16; 24:4; seeking as he did to crush out all opposition to the abominations of idolatry, and finding in his way the prophets and the godly of the land, who by their words and their lives lifted up their common testimony against the idolaters and their abandoned practices.

**Jeremiah 2:35.** Yet withal the people holds itself to be guiltless, and deludes itself with the belief that God's wrath has turned away from it, because it has for long enjoyed peace, and because the judgment of devastation of the land by enemies, threatened by the earlier prophets, had not immediately received its fulfilment. For this self-righteous confidence in its innocence, God will contend with His people (יִתְּנֶנּוּ לְפָנָי as in 1:16).

**Jeremiah 2:36f.** Yet in spite of its proud security Judah seeks to assure itself against hostile attacks by the eager negotiation of alliances. This thought is the link between v. 35 and the reproach of v. 36. Why runnest thou to change thy way? תִּזְלֵי for תִּתְּנֵי, from זָלַל, go, with מְאֹד, go impetuously or with strength, i.e., go in haste, run; cf. 1 Sam. 20:19. To change, shift (שָׁנִיתָ) one's way, is to take another way than that on which one has hitherto gone. The prophet's meaning is clear from the second half of the verse: "for Egypt, too, wilt thou come to shame, as for Assyria thou hast come to shame." Changing they way, is ceasing to seek help from Assyria in order to form close relations with Egypt. The verbs תִּבְשִׁי and בָּשַׁתָּ show that the intrigues for the favour of Assyria belong to the past, for the favour of Egypt to the present. Judah was put to shame in regard to Assyria under Ahaz, 2 Chron. 28:21; and after the experience of Assyria it had had under

Hezekiah and Manasseh, there could be little more thought of looking for help thence. But what could have made Judah under Josiah, in the earlier days of Jeremiah, to seek an alliance with Egypt, considering that Assyria was at that time already nearing its dissolution? Graf is therefore of opinion that the prophet is here keeping in view the political relations in the days of Jehoiakim, in which and for which time he wrote his book, rather than those of Josiah's times, when the alliance with Asshur was still in force; and that he has thus in passing cast a stray glance into a time influenced by later events. But the opinion that in Josiah's time the alliance with Asshur was still existing cannot be historically proved. Josiah's invitation to the passover of all those who remained in what had been the kingdom of the ten tribes, does not prove that he exercised a kind of sovereignty over the provinces that had formerly belonged to the kingdom of Israel, a thing he could have done only as vassal of Assyria; see against this view the remarks on 2 Kings 23:15ff. As little does his setting himself against the now mighty Pharaoh Necho at Mediggo show clearly that he remained faithful to the alliance with Asshur in spite of the disruption of the Assyrian empire; see against this the remarks on 2 Kings 23:29f. Historically only thus much is certain, that Jehoiakim was raised to the throne by Pharaoh Necho, and that he was a vassal of Egypt. During the period of this subjection the formation of alliances with Egypt was for Judah out of the question. Such a case could happen only when Jehoiakim had become subject to the Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar, and was cherishing the plan of throwing off the Chaldean yoke. But the reference of the words to this design is devoid of the faintest probability, vv. 35 and 36; and the discourse throughout is far from giving the impression that Judah had already lost its political independence; they rather imply that the kingdom was under the sway neither of Assyrians nor Egyptians, but was still politically independent. We may very plausibly refer to Josiah's time the resolution to give up all trust in the assistance of Assyria and to court the

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favour of Egypt. We need not seek for the outward inducement to this in the recognition of the beginning decline of the Assyrian power; it might equally well lie in the growth of the Egyptian state. that the power of Egypt had made considerable progress in the reign of Josiah, is made clear by Pharaoh Necho's enterprise against Assyria in the last year of Josiah, from Necho's march towards the Euphrates. Josiah's setting himself in opposition to the advance of the Egyptians, which cost him his life at Megiddo, neither proves that Judah was then allied with Assyria nor excludes the possibility of intrigues for Egypt's favour having already taken place. It is perfectly possible that the taking of Manasseh a captive to Babylon by Assyrian generals may have shaken the confidence in Assyria of the idolatrous people of Judah, and that, their thoughts turning to Egypt, steps may have been taken for paving the way towards an alliance with this great power, even although the godly king Josiah took no part in these proceedings. The prophets' warning against confidence in Egypt and against courting its alliance, is given in terms so general that it is impossible to draw any certain conclusions either with regard to the principles of Josiah's government or with regard to the circumstances of the time which Jeremiah was keeping in view.

**Jeremiah 2:37.** Also from this, i.e., Egypt, shalt thou go away (come back), thy hands upon thy head, i.e., beating them on thy head in grief and dismay (cf. for this gesture 2 Sam. 13:19). **זָהָה** refers to Egypt, thought of as a people as in 46:8, Isa. 19:16, 25; and thus is removed Hitz.'s objection, that in that case we must have **זֹאת**. **מִבְּטָחִים**, objects of confidence. The expression refers equally to Egypt and to Assyria. As God has broken the power of Assyria, so will He also overthrow Egypt's might, thus making all trust in it a shame. **לָהֶם**, in reference to them.

### Jeremiah 3

**Jeremiah 3:1-5.** As a divorced woman who has become another man's wife cannot return to

her first husband, so Judah, after it has turned away to other gods, will not be received again by Jahveh; especially since, in spite of all chastisement, it adheres to its evil ways. V. 1. *"He saith, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, can he return to her again? would not such a land be polluted? and thou hast whored with many partners; and wouldst thou return to me? saith Jahveh. V. 2. Lift up thine eyes unto the bare-topped hills and look, where hast thou not been lien with; on the ways thou sattest for them, like an Arab in the desert, and pollutedst the land by thy whoredoms and by thy wickedness. V. 3. And the showers were withheld, and the latter rain came not; but thou hadst the forehead of an harlot woman, wouldst not be ashamed. V. 4. Ay, and from this time forward thou criest to me, My father, the friend of my youth art thou. V. 5. Will he always bear a grudge and keep it up for ever? Behold, thou speakest thus and dost wickedness and carriest it out."* This section is a continuation of the preceding discourse in Jeremiah 2, and forms the conclusion of it. That this is so may be seen from the fact that a new discourse, introduced by a heading of its own, begins with v. 6. The substance of the fifth verse is further evidence in the same direction; for the rejection of Judah by God declared in that verse furnishes the suitable conclusion to the discourse in Jeremiah 2, and briefly shows how the Lord will plead with the people that holds itself blameless (Jeremiah 2:35). But it is somewhat singular to find the connection made by means of **לְאָמַר**, which is not translated by the LXX or Syr., and is expressed by Jerome by *vulgo dicitur*. Ros. would make it, after Rashi, *possem dicere*, Rashi's opinion being that it stands for **יש לי לימר**. In this shape the assumption can hardly be justified. It might be more readily supposed that the infinitive stood in the sense: it is to be said, one may say, it must be affirmed; but there is against this the objection that this use of the infinitive is never found at the beginning of a new train of thought. The only alternative is with Maur. and Hitz. to join **לְאָמַר** with what precedes, and to

make it dependent on the verb **מָאָס** in 2:37: Jahveh hath rejected those in whom thou trustest, so that thou shalt not prosper with them; for He says: As a wife, after she has been put away from her husband and has been joined to another, cannot be taken back again by her first husband, so art thou thrust away for thy whoredom. The rejection of Judah by God is not, indeed, declared *expressis verbis* in vv. 1–5, but is clearly enough contained there in substance. Besides, “the rejection of the people’s sureties (Jeremiah 2:37) involves that of the people too” (Hitz.). **לְאָמַר**, indeed, is not universally used after *verbis dicendi* alone, but frequently stands after very various antecedent verbs, in which case it must be very variously expressed in English; e.g., in Josh. 22:11 it comes after **וַיִּשְׁמָעוּ**, they heard: as follows, or these words; in 2 Sam. 3:12 we have it twice, once after the words, he sent messengers to David to say, i.e., and cause them say to him, a second time in the sense of namely; in 1 Sam. 27:11 with the force of: for he said or thought. It is used here in a manner analogous to this: he announces to thee, makes known to thee.—The comparison with the divorced wife is suggested by the law in Deut. 24:1–4. Here it is forbidden that a man shall take in marriage again his divorced wife after she has been married to another, even although she has been separated from her second husband, or even in the case of the death of the latter; and re-marriage of this kind is called an abomination before the Lord, a thing that makes the land sinful. The question, May he yet return to her? corresponds to the words of the law: her husband may not again (**לְשׁוֹב**) take her to be his wife. The making of the land sinful is put by Jeremiah in stronger words: this land is polluted; making in this an allusion to Lev. 18:25, 27, where it is said of similar sins of the flesh that they pollute the land.

With “and thou hast whored” comes the application of this law to the people that had by its idolatry broken its marriage vows to its God. **וַיִּזְנֶה** is construed with the *accus.* as in Ezek.

16:28. **רָעִים**, comrades in the sense of paramours; cf. Hos. 3:1. **רָבִים**, inasmuch as Israel or Judah had intrigued with the gods of many nations. **וַיִּשׁוֹב אֵלַי** is *infin. abs.*, and the clause is to be taken as a question: and is it to be supposed that thou mayest return to me? The question is marked only by the accent; cf. Ew. § 328, *a*, and Gesen. § 131, 4, *b*. Syr., Targ., Jerome, etc. have taken **וַיִּשׁוֹב** as imperative: return again to me; but wrongly, since the continuity is destroyed. This argument is not answered by taking **ו** *copul.* adversatively with the sig. yet: it is on the contrary strengthened by this arbitrary interpretation. The call to return to God is incompatible with the reference in v. 2 to the idolatry which is set before the eyes of the people to show it that God has cause to be wroth. “Look but to the bare-topped hills.” **שָׁפְיִים**, bald hills and mountains (cf. Isa. 41:18), were favoured spots for idolatrous worship; cf. Hos. 4:13. When hast not thou let thyself be ravished? i.e., on all sides. For **וַיִּשְׁגַּלְתָּ** the Masoretes have here and everywhere substituted **וַיִּשְׁכַּבְתָּ**, see Deut. 28:30, Zech. 14:2, etc. The word is here used for spiritual ravishment by idolatry; here represented as spiritual fornication. Upon the roads thou sattest, like a prostitute, to entice the passers-by; cf. Gen. 38:14, Prov. 7:12. This figure corresponds in actual fact to the erection of idolatrous altars at the corners of the streets and at the gates: 2 Kings 23:8; Ezek. 16:25. Like an Arab in the desert, i.e., a Bedouin, who lies in wait for travellers, to plunder them. The Bedouins were known to the ancients, cf. Diod. Sic. 2:48, Plin. *Hist. Nat.* vi. 28, precisely as they are represented to this day by travellers.—By this idolatrous course Israel desecrated the land. The plural form of the suffix with the singular **וַיִּזְנֶה** is to be explained by the resemblance borne both in sound and meaning (an abstract) by the termination **וַיִּזְנֶה** to the plural **וַיִּזְנֶה**; cf. v. 8, Zeph. 3:20, and Ew. § 259, *b*. **וַיִּרְעַתְךָ** refers to the moral enormities bound up with

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idolatry, e.g., the shedding of innocent blood, 2:30, 35. The shedding of blood is represented as defilement of the land in Num. 35:33.

**Jeremiah 3:3.** But the idolatrous race was not to be brought to reflection or turned from its evil ways, even when judgment fell upon it. God chastised it by withholding the rain, by drought; cf. 14:1ff., Amos 4:7ff. רַב־יָבֵים, rain-showers (Deut. 32:2), does not stand for the early rain (יֹזֶרֶה), but denotes any fall of rain; and the late rain (shortly before harvest) is mentioned along with it, as in Hos. 6:3, Zech. 10:1. But affliction made no impression. The people persisted in its sinful courses with unabashed effrontery; cf. 5:3, Ezek. 3:7f.

**Jeremiah 3:4.** Henceforward, forsooth, it calls upon its God, and expects that His wrath will abate; but this calling on Him is but lip-service, for it goes on in its sins, amends not its life. הָלֹא, *nonne*, has usually the force of a confident assurance, introducing in the form of a question that which is held not to be in the least doubtful. מִנְעָתָהּ, henceforward, the antithesis to מִנְעוֹלָם, 2:20, 27, is rightly referred by Chr. B. Mich. to the time of the reformation in public worship, begun by Josiah in the twelfth year of his reign, and finally completed in the eighteenth year, 2 Chron. 34:3–33. Clearly we cannot suppose a reference to distress and anxiety excited by the drought; since, in v. 3, it is expressly said that this had made no impression on the people. On אָבִי, cf. 2:27. אֱלֹהֵי (cf. Prov. 2:17), the familiar friend of my youth, is the dear beloved God, i.e., Jahveh, who has espoused Israel when it was a young nation (Jeremiah 2:2). Of Him it expects that He will not bear a grudge for ever. נָטַר, guard, then like τηρεῖν, cherish ill-will, keep up, used of anger; see on Lev. 19:18, Ps. 103:9, etc. A like meaning has יִשְׁמַר, to which אָף, *iram*, is to be supplied from the context; cf. Amos 1:11.—Thus the people speaks, but it does evil. דְּבַרְתִּי, like קְרָאתִי in v. 4, is 2nd pers. fem.; see in 2:20. Hitz. connects דְּבַרְתִּי so closely with וַתַּעֲשֵׂי as to make

הָרַעוֹת the object to the former verb also: thou hast spoken and done the evil; but this is plainly contrary to the context. “Thou speakest” refers to the people’s saying quoted in the first half of the verse: Will God be angry for ever? What they do is the contradiction of what they thus say. If the people wishes that God be angry no more, it must give over its evil life. הָרַעוֹת, not calamity, but misdeeds, as in 2:33. תּוֹכַל, thou hast managed it, properly mastered, i.e., carried it through; cf. 1 Sam. 26:25, 1 Kings 22:22. The form is 2nd pers. fem., with the fem. ending dropped on account of the *Vav consec.* at the end of the discourse, cf. Ew. § 191, *b*. So long as this is the behaviour of the people, God cannot withdraw His anger.

#### Ch. 3:6–6:30—The Rejection of Impenitent Israel

**Jeremiah 3:6–6:30.** These four chapters form a lengthy prophetic discourse of the time of Josiah, in which two great truths are developed: that Israel can become a partaker of promised blessing only through conversion to the Lord, and that by perseverance in apostasy it is drawing on itself the judgment of expulsion amongst the heathen. In the first section, Jeremiah 3:6–4:2, we have the fate of the ten tribes displayed to the faithless Judah, and the future reception again and conversion of Israel announced. In the second section, Jeremiah 4:3–31, the call to Judah to repent is brought home to the people by the portrayal of the judgment about to fall upon the kingdom, the destruction of Jerusalem and the devastation of the land. In the third section, Jeremiah 5, a further description is given of the people’s persistence in unrighteousness and apostasy. And in the fourth section, Jeremiah 6, the impending judgment and its horrors are yet more fully exhibited to a generation blinded by its self-righteous confidence in the external performance of the sacrificial worship. Eichhorn and Hitz. have separated Jeremiah 3:6–4:2 from what follows as being a separate oracle, on the ground that at Jeremiah 4:3 a new series of oracles begins, extending to 10:25. These oracles, they say, “are composed

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under the impressions created by an invasion of a northern nation, looked for with dread and come at last in reality;" while they find no trace of this invasion in Jeremiah 3:6-4:2. This latter section they hold rather to be the completion to Jeremiah 2:1-3:5, seeing that the severe retort (Jeremiah 3:5) upon repentant Judah is justified here (Jeremiah 3:10) by the statement that this is no true repentance; that the harsh saying: thou hast thyself wrought out thy misfortunes, cannot be the prophet's last word; and that the final answer to לְעוֹלָם הַיְיָטוֹר in v. 5 is not found before לְעוֹלָם אֶטוֹר in v. 12. By Dahler, Umbreit, Neumann, Jeremiah 3 is taken as an independent discourse; but they hold it to extend to 4:4, because כִּי in 4:3 cannot introduce a new discourse. The two views are equally untenable. It is impossible that a new discourse should begin with "for thus saith Jahveh;" and it is as impossible that the threatening of judgment beginning with 4:5, "declare ye in Jahveh," should be torn apart, separated from the call: "plow up a new soil; circumcise the foreskins of your hearts, that my wrath go not forth like fire and burn," etc. (Jeremiah 4:3, 4). Against the separation and for the unity we have arguments in the absence of any heading and of any trace of a new commencement in Jeremiah 4, and in the connection of the subject-matter of all the sections of these chapters. We have no ground for the disjunction of one part of the discourse from the other in the fact that in Jeremiah 3:6-4:2 apostate Israel (of the ten tribes) is summoned to return to the Lord, and invited to repentance by the promise of acceptance and rich blessing for those who in penitence return again to God; while in 4:3-6 the devastation of the land and dispersion among the heathen are held out as punishment of a people (Judah) persisting in apostasy (see comment. on 3:6ff.). The supposed connection between the discourse, 3:6-4:2 and 2:1-3:5, is not so close as Hitz. would have it. The relation of Jeremiah 3:6ff. to 2:1ff. is not that the prophet desires in Jeremiah 3:6-4:2 to explain or mitigate the harsh utterance in 3:5, because his own heart

could not acquiesce in the thought of the utter rejection of his people, and because the wrath of the seer was here calming down again. This opinion and the reference of the threatened judgment in Jeremiah 4-6 to the Scythians are based on unscriptural views of the nature of prophecy. But even if, in accordance with what has been said, these four chapters form one continuous prophetic discourse, yet we are not justified by the character of the whole discourse as a unity in assuming that Jeremiah delivered it publicly in this form before the people at some particular time. Against this tells the indefiniteness of the date given; in the days of Josiah; and of still greater weight is the transition, which we mark repeated more than once, from the call to repentance and the denunciation of sin, to threatening and description of the judgment about to fall on people and kingdom, city and country; cf. 4:3 with 5:1 and 6:1, 16. From this we can see that the prophet continually begins again afresh, in order to bring more forcibly home to the heart what he has already said. The discourse as we have it is evidently the condensation into one uniform whole of a series of oral addresses which had been delivered by Jeremiah in Josiah's times.

**Jeremiah 3:6-4:2.** The Rejection and Restoration of Israel (of the Ten Tribes).—Hgstb. speaks of this passage as the announcement of redemption in store for Israel. And he so speaks not without good cause; for although in 3:6-9 the subject is the rejection of Israel for its backsliding from the Lord, yet this introduction to the discourse is but the historical foundation for the declaration of good news (Jeremiah 3:12-4:2), that rejected Israel will yet return to its God, and have a share in the glory of the Messiah. From the clearly drawn parallel between Israel and Judah in 3:8-11 it is certain that the announcement of Israel's redemption can have no other aim than "to wound Judah." The contents of the whole discourse may be summed up in two thoughts: 1. Israel is not to remain always rejected, as pharisaic Judah imagined; 2. Judah is not to be always spared. When Jeremiah entered upon his



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office Israel had been in exile for 94 years, and all hope for the restoration of the banished people seemed to have vanished. But Judah, instead of taking warning by the judgment that had fallen upon the ten tribes, and instead of seeing in the downfall of the sister people the prognostication of its own, was only confirmed by it in its delusion, and held its own continued existence to be a token that against it, as the people of God, no judgment of wrath could come. This delusion must be destroyed by the announcement of Israel's future reinstatement.

**Jeremiah 3:6–10.** *Israel's backsliding and rejection a warning for Judah.*—V. 6. "And Jahveh spake to me in the days of King Josiah, Hast thou seen what the backsliding one, Israel, hath done? she went up on every high mountain, and under every green tree, and played the harlot there. V. 7. And I thought: After she hath done all this, she will return to me; but she returned not. And the faithless one, her sister Judah, saw it. V. 8. And I saw that, because the backsliding one, Israel, had committed adultery, and I had put her away, and had given her a bill of divorce, yet the faithless one, Judah, her sister, feared not even on this account, and went and played the harlot also. V. 9. And it befell that for the noise of her whoredom the land was defiled, and she committed adultery with stone and wood. V. 10. And yet with all this, the faithless one, her sister Judah, turned not to me with her whole heart, but with falsehood, saith Jahveh."

The thought of these verses is this: notwithstanding that Judah has before its eyes the lot which Israel (of the ten tribes) has brought on itself by its obdurate apostasy from the covenant God, it will not be moved to true fear of God and real repentance. Viewing idolatry as spiritual whoredom, the prophet develops that train of thought by representing the two kingdoms as two adulterous sisters, calling the inhabitants of the ten tribes *מִשְׁבָּה*, the backsliding, those of Judah *בְּגוֹדָה*, the faithless. On these names Venema well remarks: "*Sorores propter unam eandemque stirpem, unde uterque populus fuit, et arctam ad se invicem relationem appellantur. Utraque fuit*

*adultera propter idololatriam et faederis violationem; sed Israel vocatur uxor aversa; Juda vero perfida, quia Israel non tantum religionis sed et regni et civitatis respectu, adeoque palam erat a Deo alienata, Juda vero Deo et sedi regni ac religionis adfixa, sed nihilominus a Deo et cultu ejus defecerat, et sub externa specie populi Dei faedus ejus fregerat, quo ipso gravius peccaverat.*" This representation Ezekiel has in Ezek. 23 expanded into an elaborate allegory. The epithets *מִשְׁבָּה* and *בְּגוֹדָה* or *בַּגְדָה* (v. 11) are coined into proper names. This is shown by their being set without articles before the names; as mere epithets they would stand after the substantives and have the article, since *Israel* and *Judah* as being *nomm. propr.* are definite ideas. *מִשְׁבָּה* is elsewhere an abstract substantive: apostasy, defection (Jeremiah 8:5; Hos. 11:7, etc.), here concrete, the apostate, so-called for her many *מִשְׁבוֹת*, v. 22 and 2:19. *בְּגוֹדָה*, the faithless, used of perfidious forsaking of a husband; cf. v. 20, Mal. 2:14. *הֲלִכָה הִיא*, going was she, expressing continuance. Cf. the same statement in 2:20. *וְהָזְנִי*, 3rd pers. fem., is an Aramaizing form for *וְהָזְנָה* or *וְהָזְנָה*; cf. Isa. 53:10.

**Jeremiah 3:7.** And I said, sc. to myself, i.e., I thought. A speaking by the prophets (Rashi) is not to be thought of; for it is no summons, turn again to me, but only the thought, they will return. It is true that God caused backsliding Israel to be ever called again to repentance by the prophets, yet without effect. Meantime, however, no reference is made to what God did in this connection, only Israel's behaviour towards the Lord being here kept in view. The *Chet*. *וְהָרָאָה* is the later usage; the *Keri* substitutes the regular contracted form *וְהָרָא*. The object, it (the whoredom of Israel), may be gathered from hat precedes.

**Jeremiah 3:8.** Many commentators have taken objection to the *וְהָרָאָה*, because the sentence, "I saw that I had therefore given Israel a bill of divorce," is as little intelligible as "and the faithless Judah saw it, and I saw it, for," etc. Thus e.g., Graf, who proposes with Ew. and Syr.

to read וַתִּרְאֵהָ, “and she saw,” or with Jerome to omit the word from the text. Against both conjectures it is decisive that the LXX translates καὶ εἶδον, and so must have read וַתִּרְאֵהָ. To this we may add, that either the change or the omission destroys the natural relation to one another of the clauses. In either case we would have this connection: “and the faithless one, her sister Judah, saw that, because the backslider Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away ... yet the faithless one feared not.” But thus the gist of the thing, what Judah saw, namely, the repudiation of Israel, would be related but cursorily in a subordinate clause, and the 7th verse would be shortened into a half verse; while, on the other hand, the 8th verse would be burdened with an unnaturally long protasis. Ros. is right in declaring any change to be unnecessary, provided the two halves of vv. 7 and 8 are connected in this sense: *vidi quod quum adulteram Israelitidem dimiseram, tamen non timeret ejus perfida soror Juda*. If we compare vv. 7 and 8 together, the correspondence between the two comes clearly out. In the first half of either verse Israel is spoken of, in the second Judah; while as to Israel, both verses state how God regarded the conduct of Israel, and as to Judah, how it observed and imitated Israel’s conduct. וַתִּרְאֵהָ corresponds to וַתִּמְרָא in v. 7. God thought the backsliding Israel will repent, and it did not, and this Judah saw. Thus, then, God saw that even the repudiation of the backsliding Israel for her adultery incited no fear in Judah, but Judah went and did whoredom like Israel. The true sense of v. 8 is rendered obscure or difficult by the external co-ordination to one another of the two thoughts, that God has rejected Israel just because it has committed adultery, and, that Judah nevertheless feared not; the second thought being introduced by Vav. In reality, however, the first should be subordinated to the second thus: that although I had to reject Israel, Judah yet feared not. What God saw is not the adultery and rejection or divorce of Israel, but that Judah nevertheless had no fear in committing and persisting in the

self-same sin. The כִּי belongs properly to לֹא יִרְאֶהָ, but this relation is obscured by the length of the prefixed grounding clause, and so לֹא יִרְאֶהָ is introduced by וְ. עַל-כֵּל-אֲדוֹת וְגו'. literally: that for all the reasons, because the backslider had committed adultery, I put her away and gave her a bill of divorce; yet the faithless Judah feared not. In plain English: that, in spite of all my putting away the backsliding Israel, and my giving her ... because she had committed adultery, yet the faithless Judah feared not. On סִפְרָה כְּרִיתוֹת, cf. Deut. 24:1, 3.

**Jeremiah 3:9.** In v. 9 Judah’s fornication with the false gods is further described. Here מְקַלְתָּהּ is rather stumbling, since *ob vocem scortationis* cannot well be simply tantamount to *ob famosam scortationem*; for קוֹל, voice, tone, sound, din, noise, is distinct from שָׁמַע or שָׁמַע, fame, rumour. All ancient translators have taken קַל from קָלַל, as being formed analogously to הָסַח, הָסַח, הָסַח; and a Masoretic note finds in the defective spelling קַל an indication of the meaning *levitas*. Yet we occasionally find קוֹל, *vox*, written defectively, e.g., Ex. 4:8, Gen. 27:22; 45:16. And the derivation from קָלַל gives no very suitable sense; neither lightness nor despisedness is a proper predicate for whoredom, by which the land is polluted; only shame or shameful would suit, as it is put by Ew. and Graf. But there is no evidence from the usage of the language that קַל has the meaning of קָלוֹן. Yet more inadmissible is the conjecture of J. D. Mich., adopted by Hitz., that of reading מְקַלְתָּהּ, stock, for מְקַלְתָּהּ, a stock being the object of her unchastity; in support of which, reference is unfairly made to Hos. 4:12. For there the matter in hand is rhabdomancy, with which the present passage has evidently nothing to do. The case standing thus, we adhere to the usual meaning of קַל: for the noise or din of her whoredom, not, for her crying whoredom (*de Wette*). Jeremiah makes use of this epithet to

point out the open riotous orgies of idolatry. *וַתִּהְיֶה* is neither used in the active signification of desecrating, nor is it to be pointed *וַתִּהְיֶה* (*Hiph.*). On the last clause cf. 2:27.

**Jeremiah 3:10.** But even with all this, i.e., in spite of this deep degradation in idolatry, Judah returned not to God sincerely, but in hypocritical wise. "And yet with all this," Ros., following Rashi, refers to the judgment that had fallen on Israel (v. 8); but this is too remote. The words can bear reference only to that which immediately precedes: even in view of all these sinful horrors the returning was not "from the whole heart," i.e., did not proceed from a sincere heart, but in falsehood and hypocrisy. For (the returning being that which began with the abolition of idolatrous public worship in Josiah's reformation) the people had returned outwardly to the worship of Jahveh in the temple, but at heart they still calve to the idols. Although Josiah had put an end to the idol-worship, and though the people too, in the enthusiasm for the service of Jahveh, awakened by the solemn celebration of the passover, had broken in pieces the images and altars of the false gods throughout the land, yet there was imminent danger that the people, alienated in heart from the living God, should take the suppression of open idolatry for a true return to God, and, vainly admiring themselves, should look upon themselves as righteous and pious. Against this delusion the prophet takes his stand.

**Jeremiah 3:11–18.** *Israel's return, pardon, and blessedness.*—V. 11. "And Jahveh said to me, *The backsliding one, Israel, is justified more than the faithless one, Judah.* V. 12. *Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Turn, thou backsliding one, Israel, saith Jahveh; I will not look darkly on you, for I am gracious, saith Jahveh; I will not always be wrathful.* V. 13. *Only acknowledge thy guilt, for from Jahveh thy God art thou fallen away, and hither and thither hast thou wandered to strangers under every green tree, but to my voice ye have not hearkened, saith Jahveh.* V. 14. *Return, backsliding sons, saith Jahveh; for I have wedded you to me, and will*

*take you, one out of a city and two out of a race, and will bring you to Zion;* V. 15. *And will give you shepherds according to my heart, and they will feed you with knowledge ad wisdom.* V. 16. *And it comes to pass, when ye increase and are fruitful in the land, in those days, saith Jahveh, they will no more say, 'The ark of the covenant of Jahveh;' and it will no more come to mind, and ye will not longer remember it or miss it, and it shall not be made again.* V. 17. *In that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jahveh; and to it all peoples shall gather themselves, because the name of Jahveh is at Jerusalem: and no longer shall they walk after the stubbornness of their evil heart.* V. 18. *In those days shall the house of Judah go along with the house of Israel, and together out of the land of midnight shall they come into the land which I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers."* In v. 11, from the comparison of the faithless Judah with the backsliding Israel, is drawn the conclusion: Israel stands forth more righteous than Judah. The same is said in other words by Ezekiel, 16:51f.; cf. (Ezek.) 23:11. *וַיִּצְדַּק* in *Piel* is to show to be righteous, to justify. *נַפְשָׁהּ*, her soul, i.e., herself. Israel appears more righteous than Judah, not because the apostasy and idolatry of the Israelites was less than that of the people of Judah; in this they are put on the same footing in vv. 6–10; in the like fashion both have played the harlot, i.e., stained themselves with idolatry (while by a rhetorical amplification the apostasy of Judah is in v. 9 represented as not greater than that of Israel). But it is inasmuch as, in the first place, Judah had the warning example of Israel before its eyes, but would not be persuaded to repentance by Israel's punishment; then again, Judah had more notable pledges than the ten tribes of divine grace, especially in the temple with its divinely-ordained cultus, in the Levitical priesthood, and in its race of kings chosen by God. Hence its fall into idolatry called more loudly for punishment than did that of the ten tribes; for these, after their disruption from Judah and the Davidic dynasty, had neither a lawful cultus, lawful priests, nor a divinely-ordained kingship. If,

then, in spite of these privileges, Judah sank as far into idolatry as Israel, its offence was greater and more grievous than that of the ten tribes; and it was surely yet more deserving of punishment than Israel, if it was resolved neither to be brought to reflection nor moved to repentance from its evil ways by the judgment that had fallen upon Israel, and if, on the contrary, it returned to God only outwardly and took the *opus operatum* of the temple-service for genuine conversion. For “the measure of guilt is proportioned to the measure of grace.” Yet will not the Lord utterly cast off His people, v. 12ff. He summons to repentance the Israelites who had now long been living in exile; and to them, the backsliding sons, who confess their sin and return to Him, He offers restoration to the full favours of the covenant and to rich blessings, and this in order to humble Judah and to provoke it to jealousy. The call to repentance which the prophet is in v. 12 to proclaim towards the region of midnight, concerns the ten tribes living in Assyrian exile. צַפְנָה, towards midnight, i.e., into the northern provinces of the Assyrian empire the tribes had been carried away (2 Kings 17:6; 18:11). שׁוּבָה, return, sc. to thy God. Notwithstanding that the subject which follows, מְשֻׁבָּה, is fem., we have the masculine form here used *ad sensum*, because the faithless Israel is the people of the ten tribes. לֹא אֶפְּלֵ פָנַי, I will not lower my countenance, is explained by Gen. 4:5, Job 29:24, and means to look darkly, frowningly, as outward expression of anger; and this without our needing to take פָּנַי for כְּעֵסִי as Kimchi does. For I am חַסִּיד, gracious; cf. Ex. 34:6. As to אָטוּר, see on v. 5.

**Jeremiah 3:13.** An indispensable element of the return is: Acknowledge thy guilt, thine offence, for grievously hast thou offended; thou art fallen away (פָּשַׁע), and תִּפְזְרִי אֶת־דְּרָכֶיךָ, lit., hast scattered thy ways for strangers; i.e., hither and thither, on many a track, hast thou run after the strange gods: cf. 2:23.

The repeated call שׁוּבָה, v. 14, is, like that in v. 12, addressed to Israel in the narrower sense, not to the whole covenant people or to Judah. The “backsliding sons” are “the backsliding Israel” of vv. 7, 8, 11f., and of v. 22. In v. 18 also Judah is mentioned only as it is in connection with Israel. בְּעֵלְתֵּי בָכֶם, here and in 31:32, is variously explained. There is no evidence for the meaning loathe, despise, which Ges. and Diet. in the *Lex.*, following the example of Jos. Kimchi, Pococke, A Schultens, and others, attribute to the word בְּעַל; against this, cf. Hgstb. *Christol.* ii. p. 375; nor is the sig. “rule” certified (LXX διότι ἐγὼ κατακυριεύσω ὑμῶν); it cannot be proved from Isa. 26:13. בְּעַל means only, own, possess; whence come the meanings, take to wife, have oneself married, which are to be maintained here and in 31:32. In this view Jerome translates, *quia ego vir vester*; Luther, *denn ich will euch mir vertrauen*; Hgstb., *denn ich traue euch mir an*;—the reception anew of the people being given under the figure of a new marriage. This acceptance is, however, not suitable to the perf. בְּעֵלְתֵּי, for this, even if taken prophetically, cannot refer to a renewal of marriage which is to take place in the future. The perf. can be referred only to the marriage of Israel at the conclusion of the covenant on Sinai, and must be translated accordingly: I am your husband, or: I have wedded you to me. This is demanded by the grounding כִּי; for the summons to repent cannot give as its motive some future act of God, but must point to that covenant relationship founded in the past, which, though suspended for a time, was not wholly broken up. The promise of what God will do if Israel repents is given only from וְלִקְחֵתִי (with ו consec.) onwards. The words, I take you, one out of a city, two out of a race, are not with Kimchi to be so turned: if even a single Israelite dwelt in a heathen city; but thus: if from amongst the inhabitants of a city there returns to me but one, and if out of a whole race there return but two, I will gather even these few and bring them to Zion. Quite aside from the point is Hitz.’s remark, that in Mic. 5:1, too, a city is

called אֲלֵף, and is equivalent to מְשֻׁפָּחָה. The numbers one and two themselves show us that מְשֻׁפָּחָה is a larger community than the inhabitants of one town, i.e., that it indicates the great subdivisions into which the tribes of Israel were distributed. The thought, then, is this: Though but so small a number obey the call to repent, yet the Lord will save even these; He will exclude from salvation no one who is willing to return, but will increase the small number of the saved to a great nation. This promise is not only not contradictory of those which declare the restoration of Israel as a whole; but it is rather a pledge that God will forget no one who is willing to be saved, and shows the greatness of the divine compassion. As to the historical reference, it is manifest that the promise cannot be limited, as it is by Theodrt. and Grot., to the return from the Assyrian and Babylonian exile; and although the majority of commentators take it so, it can as little be solely referred to the Messianic times or to the time of the consummation of the kingdom of God. The fulfilment is accomplished gradually. It begins with the end of the Babylonian exile, in so far as at that time individual members of the ten tribes may have returned into the land of their fathers; it is continued in Messianic times during the lives of the apostles, by the reception, on the part of the Israelites, of the salvation that had appeared in Christ; it is carried on throughout the whole history of the Church, and attains its completion in the final conversion of Israel. This Messianic reference of the words is here the ruling one. This we may see from "bring you to Zion," which is intelligible only when we look on Zion as the seat of the kingdom of God; and yet more clearly is it seen from the further promise, vv. 15–17, I will give you shepherds according to my heart, etc. By shepherds we are not to understand prophets and priests, but the civil authorities, rulers, princes, kings (cf. 2:8, 26). This may not only be gathered from the parallel passage, Jeremiah 23:4, but is found in the כְּלָבִי, which is an unmistakeable allusion to 1 Sam. 13:14, where David is spoken of as a man

whom Jahveh has sought out for Himself after His heart (כְּלָבִי), and has set to be prince over His people. They will feed you דָּעָה וְהִשְׂבִּיל. Both these words are used adverbially. דָּעָה is a noun, and הִשְׂבִּיל an *infin.*: deal wisely, possess, and show wisdom; the latter is as noun generally הִשְׂבִּיל, Dan. 1:17, Prov. 1:3; 21:16, but is found also as *infin. absol.* 9:23. A direct contrast to these shepherds is found in the earlier kings, whom Israel had itself appointed according to the desire of its heart, of whom the Lord said by Hosea, They have set up kings (to themselves), but not by me (Hos. 8:4); kings who seduced the people of God to apostasy, and encouraged them in it. "In the whole of the long series of Israelitish rulers we find no Jehoshaphat, no Hezekiah, no Josiah; and quite as might have been expected, for the foundation of the throne of Israel was insurrection" (Hgstb.). But if Israel will return to the Lord, He will give it rulers according to His heart, like David (cf. Ezek. 34:23, Hos. 3:5), who did wisely (מְשֻׁבֵּל) in all his ways, and with whom Jahveh was (1 Sam. 18:14f.; cf. 1 Kings 2:3). The knowledge and wisdom consists in the keeping and doing of the law of God, Deut. 4:6; 29:8. As regards form, the promise attaches itself to the circumstances of the earlier times, and is not to be understood of particular historical rulers in the period after the exile; it means simply that the Lord will give to Israel, when it is converted to Him, good and faithful governors who will rule over it in the spirit of David. But the Davidic dynasty culminates in the kingship of the Messiah, who is indeed named David by the prophets; cf. 22:4. **Jeremiah 3:16, 17.** In vv. 16 and 17 also the thought is clothed in a form characteristic of the Old Testament. When the returned Israelites shall increase and be fruitful in the land, then shall they no more remember the ark of the covenant of the Lord or feel the want of it, because Jerusalem will then be the throne of the Lord. The fruitfulness and increase of the saved remnant is a constant feature in the picture of Israel's Messianic future; cf. 23:3, Ezek. 36:11, Hos. 2:1. This promise rests on the

blessing given at the creation, Gen. 1:28. God as creator and preserver of the world increases mankind together with the creatures; even so, as covenant God, He increases His people Israel. Thus He increased the sons of Israel in Egypt to be a numerous nation, Ex. 1:12; thus, too, He will again make fruitful and multiply the small number of those who have been saved from the judgment that scattered Israel amongst the heathen. In the passages which treat of this blessing, פָּרָה generally precedes רָבָה; here, on the contrary, and in Ezek. 36:11, the latter is put first. The words לֹא יֵאמְרוּ וּגְוֹ must not be translated: they will speak no more of the ark of the covenant; אָמַר *c. accus.* never has this meaning. They must be taken as the substance of what is said, the predicate being omitted for rhetorical effect, so that the words are to be taken as an exclamation. Hgstb. supplies: It is the aim of all our wishes, the object of our longing. Mov. simply: It is our most precious treasure, or the glory of Israel, 1 Sam. 4:21f.; Ps. 78:61. And they will no more remember it. Ascend into the heart, i.e., come to mind, joined with זָכַר here and in Isa. 65:17; cf. Jeremiah 7:31; 32:35; 51:50, 1 Cor. 2:9. וְלֹא יִפְקְדוּ, and they will not miss it; cf. Isa. 34:16, 1 Sam. 20:6, etc. This meaning is called for by the context, and especially by the next clause: it will not be made again. Hitz.'s objection against this, that the words cannot mean this, is an arbitrary dictum. *Non fiet amplius* (Chr. B. Mich.), or, it will not happen any more, is an unsuitable translation, for this would be but an unmeaning addition; and the expansion, that the ark will be taken into the battle as it formerly was, is such a manifest rabbinical attempt to twist the words, that it needs no further refutation. Luther's translation, nor offer more there, is untenable, since עָשָׂה by itself never means offer.

The thought is this: then they will no longer have any feeling of desire or want towards the ark. And wherefore? The answer is contained in v. 17a: At that time will they call Jerusalem the throne of Jahveh. The ark was the throne of

Jahveh, inasmuch as Jahveh, in fulfilment of His promise in Ex. 25:22, and as covenant God, was ever present to His people in a cloud over the extended wings of the two cherubim that were upon the covering of the ark of the law; from the mercy-seat too, between the two cherubs, He spake with His people, and made known to them His gracious presence: Lev. 16:2; cf. 1 Chron. 13:6, Ps. 80:2, 1 Sam. 4:4. The ark was therefore called the footstool of God, 1 Chron. 28:2; Ps. 99:5; 132:7; Lam. 2:1. But in future Jerusalem is to be, and to be called, the throne of Jahveh; and it is in such a manner to take the place of the ark, that the people will neither miss it nor make any more mention of it. The promise by no means presumes that when Jeremiah spoke or wrote this prophecy the ark was no longer in existence; "was gone out of sight in some mysterious manner," as Movers, *Chron. S.* 139, and Hitz. suppose, but only that it will be lost or destroyed. This could happen only at and along with the destruction of Jerusalem; and history testifies that the temple after the exile had no ark. Hence it is justly concluded that the ark had perished in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and that upon the rebuilding of the temple after the exile, the ark was not restored, because the nucleus of it, the tables of the law written by the finger of God, could not be constructed by the hand of man. Without the ark the second temple was also without the gracious presence of Jahveh, the Shechinah or dwelling-place of God; so that this temple was no longer the throne of God, but only a seeming temple, without substance or reality. And thus the Old Testament covenant had come to an end. "We have here then before us," Hgstb. truly observes, "the announcement of an entire overthrow of the earlier form of the kingdom; but it is such an overthrow of the form that it is at the same time the highest perfection of the substance—a process like that in seed-corn, which only dies in order to bring forth much fruit; like that in the body, which is sown a corruptible that it may rise an incorruptible." For the dwelling and enthronement of the Lord amidst His people was again to come about, but

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in a higher form. Jerusalem is to become the throne of Jahveh, i.e., Jerusalem is to be for the renewed Israel that which the ark had been for the former Israel, the holy dwelling-place of God. Under the old covenant Jerusalem had been the city of Jahveh, of the great King (Ps. 48:3); because Jerusalem had possessed the temple, in which the Lord sat enthroned in the holy of holies over the ark. If in the future Jerusalem is to become the throne of the Lord instead of the ark, Jerusalem must itself become a sanctuary of God; God the Lord must fill all Jerusalem with His glory (כְּבוֹד), as Isaiah prophesied He would in Is. 60, of which prophecy we have the fulfilment portrayed in Apoc. 21 and 22. Jeremiah does not more particularly explain how this is to happen, or how the raising of Jerusalem to be the throne of the Lord is to be accomplished; for he is not seeking in this discourse to proclaim the future reconstitution of the kingdom of God. His immediate aim is to clear away the false props of their confidence from a people that set its trust in the possession of the temple and the ark, and further to show it that the presence of the temple and ark will not protect it from judgment; that, on the contrary, the Lord will reject faithless Judah, destroying Jerusalem and the temple; that nevertheless He will keep His covenant promises, and that by receiving again as His people the repentant members of the ten tribes, regarded by Judah as wholly repudiated, with whom indeed He will renew His covenant. As a consequence of Jerusalem's being raised to the glory of being the Lord's throne, all nations will gather themselves to her, the city of God; cf. Zech. 2:15. Indeed in the Old Testament every revelation of the glory of God amongst His people attracted the heathen; cf. Jos. 9:9ff. לְשֵׁם יְהוָה, not, to the name of Jahveh towards Jerusalem (Hitz.), but, because of the name of Jahveh at Jerusalem (as in Jos. 9:9), i.e., because Jahveh reveals His glory there; for the name of Jahveh is Jahveh Himself in the making of His glorious being known in deeds of almighty power and grace. לְיְרוּשָׁלַם, prop. belonging to

Jerusalem, because the name makes itself known there; cf. 16:19, Mic. 4:2, Zech. 8:22.—The last clause, they will walk no more, etc., refers not to the heathen peoples, but to the Israelites as being the principal subject of the discourse (cf. 5:16), since שְׁרָרוּת לָב is used of Israel in all the cases (Jeremiah 7:24; 9:13; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12; 23:17, and Ps. 81:13), thus corresponding to the original in Deut. 29:18, whence it is taken. שְׁרָרוּת prop. firmness, but in Hebr. always *sensu malo*: obstinacy, obduracy of heart, see in Deut. *l.c.*; here strengthened by the adjective הָרַע belonging to לָבָם.

**Jeremiah 3:18.** In those days when Jerusalem is glorified by being made the throne of the Lord, Judah along with Israel will come out of the north into the land which the Lord gave to their fathers. As the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple is foretold *implicite* in v. 16, so here the expulsion of Judah into exile is assumed as having already taken place, and the return not of Israel, only, but of Judah too is announced, as in Hos. 2:2, and more fully in Ezek. 27:16ff. We should note the arrangement, the house of Judah with (עַל, prop. on) the house of Israel; this is as much as to say that Israel is the first to resolve on a return and to arise, and that Judah joins itself to the house of Israel. Judah is thus subordinated to the house of Israel, because the prophet is here seeking chiefly to announce the return of Israel to the Lord. It can surely not be necessary to say that, as regards the fulfilment, we are not entitled hence to infer that the remnant of the ten tribes will positively be converted to the Lord and redeemed out of exile sooner than the remnant of Judah. For more on this point see on 31:8.

**Jeremiah 3:19–25.** *The return of Israel to its God.*—V. 19. "I thought, O how I will put thee among the sons, and give thee a delightful land, a heritage of the chiefest splendour of the nations! and thought, 'My Father,' ye will cry to me, and not turn yourselves away from me. V. 20. truly as a wife faithlessly forsakes her mate, so are ye become faithless towards me, house of Israel,

saith Jahveh. V. 21. A voice upon the bare-topped hills is heard, suppliant weeping of the sons of Israel; for that they have made their way crooked, forsaken Jahveh their God. V. 22. 'Return, ye backsliding sons, I will heal your backsliding,' Behold, we come to thee; for Thou Jahveh art our God. V. 23. Truly the sound from the hills, from the mountains, is become falsehood: truly in Jahveh our God is the salvation of Israel. V. 24. And shame hath devoured the gains of our fathers from our youth on; their sheep and their oxen, their sons and their daughters. V. 25. Let us lie down in our shame, and let our disgrace cover us; for against Jahveh our God have we sinned, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not listened to the voice of our God." Hitz. takes vv. 18 and 19 together, without giving an opinion on וְאֲנֹכִי אֶמְרָתִי. Ew. joins v. 19 to the preceding, and begins a new strophe with v. 21. Neither assumption can be justified. With v. 18 closes the promise which formed the burden of the preceding strophe, and in v. 19 there begins a new train of thought, the announcement as to how Israel comes to a consciousness of sin and returns penitent to the Lord its God (vv. 21–25). The transition to this announcement is formed by vv. 19 and 20, in which the contrast between God's fatherly designs and Israel's faithless bearing towards God is brought prominently forward; and by וְאֲנֹכִי אֶמְרָתִי it is attached to the last clause of the 18th verse. His having mentioned the land into which the Israelites would again return, carries the prophet's thoughts back again to the present and the past, to the bliss which Jahveh had designed for them, forfeited by their faithless apostasy, and to be regained only by repentant return (Graf). "I thought," refers to the time when God gave the land to their fathers for an inheritance. Then spake, i.e., thought, I; cf. Ps. 31:23. How I will set thee or place thee among the sons! i.e., how I will make thee glorious among the sons (שִׁיתָ c. accus. and בָּ, as in 2 Sam. 19:29). No valid objection against this is founded by Hitz.'s plea that in that case we must read אֶשְׁתִּיתָ, and that by Jeremiah, the

teacher of morals, no heathen nation, or any but Israel, can ever be regarded as a son of God (Jeremiah 31:9, 20). The fem. אֶשְׁתִּיתָ is explained by the personification of Judah and Israel as two sisters, extending throughout the whole prophecy. The other objection is erroneous as to the fact. In 31:9 Jahveh calls Ephraim, = Israel, his first-born son, as all Israel is called by God in Ex. 4:22. But the conception of first-born has, as necessary correlate, that of other "sons." Inasmuch as Jahveh the God of Israel is creator of the world and of all men, all the peoples of the earth are His בְּנִים; and from amongst all the peoples He has made choice of Israel as סִגְלָה, or chosen him for His first-born son. Hitz.'s translation: how will I endow thee with children, is contrary to the usage of the language.—The place which God willed to give Israel amongst His children is specified by the next clause: and I willed to give thee a delightful land (אֶרֶץ הַמְּדֵבָה as in Zech. 7:14, Ps. 106:24). צְבִי צְבָאוֹת, ornament of ornaments, i.e., the greatest, most splendid ornament. For there can be no doubt that צְבָאוֹת does not come from צָבָא, but, with Kimchi after the Targum, is to be derived from צָבִי; for the plural צְבָיִים from צָבִי may pass into צְבָאִים, cf. Gesen. § 93. 6b, as Ew., too, in § 186, c, admits, though he takes our צְבָאוֹת from צָבָא, and strains the meaning into: an heirloom-adornment amidst the hosts of heathen. After such proofs of a father's love, God expected that Israel would by a true cleaving to Him show some return of filial affection. To cry, "My father," is a token of a child's love and adherence. The *Chet*. תְּשׁוּבוּ and תִּקְרְאוּ are not to be impugned; the *Keris* are unnecessary alterations.

**Jeremiah 3:20.** But Israel did not meet the expectation. Like a faithless wife from her husband, Israel fell away from its God. The particle of comparison כִּי אִשָּׁר is omitted before the verb, as in Isa. 55:9, cf. 10 and 11. רַע does not precisely mean husband, nor yet paramour,



but friend and companion, and so here is equal to wedded husband. מִן בָּגַד c. מִן, withdraw faithlessly from one, faithlessly forsake,—c. בָּ, be faithless, deal faithlessly with one. Yet Israel will come to a knowledge of its iniquity, and bitterly repent it, v. 21. From the heights where idolatry was practised, the prophet already hears in spirit the lamentations and supplications of the Israelites entreating for forgiveness. עַל שִׁפְיִים points back to v. 2, when the naked heights were mentioned as the scenes of idolatry. From these places is heard the supplicating cry for pardon. כִּי הִקְעוּ, because (for that) they had made their way crooked, i.e., had entered on a crooked path, had forgotten their God.

**Jeremiah 3:22.** The prophet further overhears in spirit, as answer to the entreaty of the Israelites, the divine invitation and promise: Return, ye backsliding children (cf. v. 14), I will heal your backslidings. אָרְפָּא for אָרְפָּה.

Backslidings, i.e., mischief which backsliding has brought, the wounds inflicted by apostasy from God; cf. Hos. 14:5, a passage which was in the prophet's mind; and fore the figure of healing, cf. Jeremiah 30:17; 33:6. To this promise they answer: Behold, we come to Thee (אָתָּה for אָתָּאנוּ from אָתָּה, Isa. 21:12, for אָתָּה), for Thou art Jahveh, art our God. Of this confession they further state the cause in vv. 23–25.

**Jeremiah 3:23.** From the false gods they have gained but disgrace; the salvation of Israel is found only in Jahveh their God. The thought now given is clearly expressed in the second clause of the verse; less clear is the meaning of the first clause, which tells what Israel had got from idolatry. The difficulty lies in הִמּוֹן הָרִים, which the early commentators so joined together as to make הִמּוֹן *stat. constr.* (הִמּוֹן). LXX: εἰς ψεῦδος ἦσαν οἱ βουνοὶ καὶ ἡ δύναμις τῶν ὀρέων. Jerome: *mendaces erant colles et multitudo (s. fortitudo) montium*. Similarly Hitz. and Graf: from the hills the host (or tumult) of the mountains is (for) a delusion; Hitz.

understanding by the host of the mountains the many gods, or the numerous statues of them that were erected at the spots where they were worshipped, while Graf takes the tumult of the mountains to mean the turmoil of the pilgrims, the exulting cries of the celebrants. But it is as impossible that “the sound of the hills” should mean the multitude of the gods, as that it should mean the tumult of the pilgrims upon the mountains. Besides, the expression, “the host or tumult of the mountains comes from the hills,” would be singularly tautological. These reasons are enough to show that הָרִים cannot be a genitive dependent on הִמּוֹן, but must be taken as coordinate with מְגִבְעוֹת, so that the preposition מִן will have to be repeated before הָרִים. But הִמּוֹן must be the subject of the clause, else where would be no subject at all. הִמּוֹן means bustle, eager crowd, tumult, noise, and is also used of the surging mass of earthly possessions or riches, Ps. 37:16, Isa. 60:5. Schnur., Ros., Maur., de W., have preferred the last meaning, and have put the sense thus: *vana est ex collibus, vana ex montibus affluentia*, or: delusive is the abundance that comes from the hills, from the mountains. This view is not to be overthrown by Graf's objection, that we cannot here entertain the idea of abundance, however, imaginary, acquired by the Israelites through idolatry, seeing that in the next verses it is declared that the false gods have devoured the wealth which the Israelites had inherited and received from God. For in the present connection the abundance would be not a real but expected or imagined abundance, the delusiveness of which would be shown in the next verse by the statement that the false gods had devoured the acquisitions of Israel. But to take הִמּוֹן in the sense of *affluentia* seems questionable here, when the context makes no reference to wealth or earthly riches, and where the abundance of the hills and mountains cannot be understood to mean their produce; the abundance is that which the idolatry practised upon the hills and mountains brought or was expected to bring to the people.

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Hence, along with Ew., we take this word in the sig. tumult or noise, and by it we understand the wild uproarious orgies of idolatry, which, according to vv. 2 and 6, were practised on the hills and mountains (קל זְנוּתָהּ, v. 9). Thus we obtain the sense already given by the Targ.: *in vanum coluimus super collibus et non in utilitatem congregavimus nos* (אַתְרֵינִישְׁנָא, prop. *tumultuati sumus*) *super montibus*, i.e., delusive and profitless were our idolatrous observances upon the heights.

**Jeremiah 3:24.** In v. 24 we are told in what particulars idolatry became to them לְשִׁקָּר. הַבְּשֵׁת, the shame, opprobrious expression for הַבְּעַל, equal to shame-god, cf. 11:13 and Hos. 9:10; since the worship of Baal, i.e., of the false gods, resulted in disgrace to the people. He devoured the wealth of our fathers, namely, their sheep and oxen, mentioned as a specimen of their wealth, and their sons and daughters. The idols devoured this wealth, to in respect that sheep and oxen, and, on Moloch's altar, children too, were sacrificed, for sheep and oxen were offered to Jahveh; but because idolatry drew down judgments on the people and brought about the devastation of the land by enemies who devoured the substance of the people, and slew sons and daughters, Deut. 28:30, 33. From our youth on;—the youth of the people is the period of the judges.

**Jeremiah 3:25.** The people does not repudiate this shame and disgrace, but is willing to endure it patiently, since by its sin it has fully deserved it. נִשְׁכַּבְּהָ, not: we lie, but: we will lay us down in our shame, as a man in pain and grief throws himself on the ground, or on his couch (cf. 2 Sam. 12:16; 13:31, 1 Kings 21:4), in order wholly to give way to the feelings that crush him down. And let our disgrace cover us, i.e., enwrap us as a mourning robe or cloak; cf. Ps. 35:26; 109:29, Mic. 7:10, Obad. v. 10.

#### Jeremiah 4

**Jeremiah 4:1, 2.** *The answer of the Lord.*—V. 1. *"If thou returnest, Israel, saith Jahveh, returnest*

*to me; and if thou puttest away thine abominations from before my face, and strayest not, V. 2. and swearest, As Jahveh liveth, in truth, with right, and uprightness; then shall the nations bless themselves in Him, and in Him make their boast."* Graf errs in taking these verses as a wish: if thou wouldst but repent ... and swear ... and if they blessed themselves. His reason is, that the conversion and reconciliation with Jahveh has not yet taken place, and are yet only hoped for; and he cites passages for אָם with the force of a wish, as Gen. 13:3; 28:13, where, however, אָן or לוֹ is joined with it. But if we take all the verbs in the same construction, we get a very cumbrous result; and the reason alleged proceeds upon a prosaic misconception of the dramatic nature of the prophet's mode of presentation from 3:21 onwards. Just as there the prophet hears in spirit the penitent supplication of the people, so here he hears the Lord's answer to this supplication, by inward vision seeing the future as already present. The early commentators have followed the example of the LXX and Vulg. in construing the two verses differently, and take אֲלֵי תָשׁוּב and וְלֹא תָנוּד as apodoses: if thou returnest, Israel, then return to me; or, if thou, Israel, returnest to me, then shalt thou return, sc. into thy fatherland; and if thou puttest away thine abominations from before mine eyes, then shalt thou no longer wander; and if thou swearest ... then will they bless themselves. But by reason of its position after יְהוָה אֱמֵם it is impossible to connect אֲלֵי with the protasis. It would be more natural to take אֲלֵי תָשׁוּב as apodosis, the אֲלֵי being put first for the sake of emphasis. But if we take it as apodosis at all, the apodosis of the second half of the verse does not rightly correspond to that of the first half. וְלֹא תָנוּד would need to be translated, "then shalt thou no longer wander without fixed habitation," and so would refer to the condition of the people as exiled. but for this נֹד is not a suitable expression. Besides, it is difficult to justify the introduction of אֱמֵם before וְנִשְׁבַּעְתָּ,

since an apodosis has already preceded. For these reasons we are bound to prefer the view of Ew. and Hitz., that vv. 1 and 2a contain nothing but protases. The removal of the abominations from before God's face is the utter extirpation of idolatry, the negative moment of the return to the Lord; and the swearing by the life of Jahveh is added as a positive expression of their acknowledgment of the true God. הָגוּר is the wandering of the idolatrous people after this and the other false god, 2:23 and 3:13. "And strayest not" serves to strengthen "puttest away thine abominations." A sincere return to God demanded not only the destruction of images and the suppression of idol-worship, but also the giving up of all wandering after idols, i.e., seeking or longing after other gods. Similarly, swearing by Jahveh is strengthened by the additions: בְּאֵמֶת, in truth, not deceptively (לְשָׁקֵר, 5:2), and with right and uprightness, i.e., in a just cause, and with honest intentions.—The promise, "they shall bless themselves," etc., has in it an allusion to the patriarchal promises in Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14, but it is not, as most commentators, following Jerome, suppose, a direct citation of these, and certainly not "a learned quotation from a book" (Ew.), in which case בּוּ would be referable, as in those promises, to Israel, the seed of Abraham, and would stand for בְּךָ. This is put out of the question by the parallel וְבוּ יִתְהַלְּלוּ, which never occurs but with the sense of glorying in God the Lord; cf. Isa. 41:16, Ps. 34:3; 64:11; 105:3, and Jeremiah 9:22. Hence it follows that בּוּ must be referred, as Calv. refers it, to יהוה, just as in Isa. 65:16: the nations will bless themselves in or with Jahveh, i.e., will desire and appropriate the blessing of Jahveh and glory in the true God. Even under this acceptation, the only one that can be justified from an exegetical point of view, the words stand in manifest relation to the patriarchal blessing. If the heathen peoples bless themselves in the name of Jahveh, then are they become partakers of the salvation that

comes from Jahveh; and if this blessing comes to them as a consequence of the true conversion of Israel to the Lord, as a fruit of this, then it has come to them through Israel as the channel, as the patriarchal blessings declare *disertis verbis*. Jeremiah does not lay stress upon this intermediate agency of Israel, but leaves it to be indirectly understood from the unmistakable allusion to the older promise. The reason for the application thus given by Jeremiah to the divine promise made to the patriarchs is found in the aim and scope of the present discourse. The appointment of Israel to be the channel of salvation for the nations is an outcome of the calling grace of God, and the fulfilment of this gracious plan on the part of God is an exercise of the same grace—a grace which Israel by its apostasy does not reject, but helps onwards towards its ordained issue. The return of apostate Israel to its God is indeed necessary ere the destined end be attained; it is not, however, the ground of the blessing of the nations, but only one means towards the consummation of the divine plan of redemption, a plan which embraces all mankind. Israel's apostasy delayed this consummation; the conversion of Israel will have for its issue the blessing of the nations.

**Jeremiah 4:3–31.** Threatening of Judgment upon Jerusalem and Judah.—If Judah and Jerusalem do not reform, the wrath of God will be inevitably kindled against them (vv. 3, 4). Already the prophet sees in spirit the judgment bursting in upon Judah from the north, to the dismay of all who were accounting themselves secure (vv. 5–10). Like a hot tempest-blast it rushes on, because of the wickedness of Jerusalem (vv. 11–18), bringing desolation and ruin on the besotted people, devastating the whole land, and not to be turned aside by any meretricious devices (vv. 19–31).

**Jeremiah 4:3.** *"For thus hath Jahveh spoken to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: Break up for yourselves new ground, and sow not among thorns. V. 4. Circumcise yourselves to Jahveh, and take away the foreskins of your heart, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest my fury break forth like fire and burn unquenchably,*

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*because of the evil of your doings.*" The exhortation to a reformation of life is attached by כִּי, as being the ground of it, to the preceding exhortation to return. The אָם תִּשׁוּבָה, v. 1, contained the indirect call to repent. In v. 1 this was addressed to Israel. In v. 3 the call comes to Judah, which the prophet had already in his eye in Jeremiah 3; cf. 3:7, 8, 10, 11. The transition from Israel to Judah in the phrase: *for thus saith Jahveh*, is explained by the introduction of a connecting thought, which can without difficulty be supplied from the last clause of v. 2; the promise that the nations bless themselves in Jahveh will come to be fulfilled. The thought to be supplied is: this conversion is indispensable for Judah also, for Judah too must begin a new life. Without conversion there is no salvation. The evil of their doings brings nought but heavy judgments with it. אֵישׁ, as often, in collective sense, since the plural of this word was little in use, see in Josh. 9:6. נִיר לֹו נִיר, as in Hos. 10:12, plough up new land, to bring new untilled soil under cultivation—a figure for the reformation of life; as much as to say, to prepare new ground for living on, to begin a new life. Sow not among thorns. The seed-corns are the good resolutions which, when they have sunk into the soil of the mind, should spring up into deeds (Hitz.). The thorns which choke the good seed as it grows (Mat. 13:7) are not *mala vestra studia* (Ros.), but the evil inclinations of the unrenewed heart, which thrive luxuriantly like thorns. "Circumcise you to the Lord" is explained by the next clause: remove the foreskins of your heart. The stress lies in לִיהוּה; in this is implied that the circumcision should not be in the flesh merely. In the flesh all Jews were circumcised. If they then are called to circumcise themselves to the Lord, this must be meant spiritually, of the putting away of the spiritual impurity of the heart, i.e., of all that hinders the sanctifying of the heart; see in Deut. 10:16. The plur. עֲרֻלוֹת is explained by the figurative use of the word, and the reading עֲרֻלָּה, presented by some codd., is a correction from Deut. 10:16. The foreskins are the evil

lusts and longings of the heart. Lest my fury break forth like fire; cf. 7:20, Amos 5:6, Ps. 89:47. מִפְּנֵי רַעַם. as in Deut. 28:20. This judgment of wrath the prophet already in spirit sees breaking on Judah.

**Jeremiah 4:5–10.** *From the north destruction approaches.*—V. 5. "Proclaim in Judah, and in Jerusalem let it be heard, and say, Blow the trumpet in the land; cry with a loud voice, and say, Assemble, and let us go into the defenced cities. V. 6. Raise a standard toward Zion: save yourselves by flight, linger not; for from the north I bring evil and great destruction. V. 7. A lion comes up from his thicket, and a destroyer of the nations is on his way, comes forth from his place, to make they land a waste, that thy cities be destroyed, without an inhabitant. V. 8. For this gird you in sackcloth, lament and howl, for the heat of Jahveh's anger hath not turned itself from us. V. 9. And it cometh to pass on that day, saith Jahveh, the heart of the king and the heart of the princes shall perish, and the priests shall be confounded and the prophets amazed." The invasion of a formidable foe is here represented with poetic animation; the inhabitants being called upon to publish the enemy's approach throughout the land, so that every one may hide himself in the fortified cities. The ו before תִּקְעוּ in the *Chet.* has evidently got into the text through an error in transcription, and the *Keri*, according to which all the old versions translate, is the only correct reading. "Blow the trumpet in the land," is that which is to be proclaimed or published, and the blast into the far-sounding שׁוֹפָר is the signal of alarm by which the people was made aware of the danger that threatened it; cf. Joel 2:1, Hos. 5:8. The second clause expresses the same matter in an intensified form and with plainer words. Cry, make full (the crying), i.e., cry with a full clear voice; gather, and let us go into the fortified cities; cf. 8:14. This was the meaning of the trumpet blast. Raise a banner pointing towards Zion, i.e., showing the fugitives the way to Zion as the safest stronghold in the kingdom. גֹּסֶן, a lofty pole with a waving flag (Isa. 33:23; Ezek.

27:7), erected upon mountains, spread the alarm farther than even the sound of the pealing trumpet; see in Isa. 5:26. הָעִיּוּ, secure your possessions by flight; cf. Isa. 10:31. The evil which Jahveh is bringing on the land is specified by שָׁבַר גְּדוּל, after Zeph. 1:10, but very frequently used by Jeremiah; cf. 6:1; 48:3; 50:22; 51:54. שָׁבַר, breaking (of a limb), Lev. 21:19, then the upbreking of what exists, ruin, destruction. In v. 7 the evil is yet more fully described. A lion is come up from his thicket (סָבַב with *dag. forte dirim.*, from שָׁבַב [שׁוֹבֵב, 2 Sam. 18:9], or from סָבַב, Ps. 74:5; cf. Ew. § 255, *d*, and Olsh. § 155, *b*), going forth for prey. This lion is a destroyer of the nations (not merely of individual persons as the ordinary lion); he has started (נָסַע, or striking tents for the march), and is come out to waste the land and to destroy the cities. The infin. is continued by the *temp. fin.* תִּצְיָנָה, and the Kal of נָצָה is here used in a passive sense: to be destroyed by war.

**Jeremiah 4:8.** For this calamity the people was to mourn deeply. For the description of the mourning, cf. Joel 1:13, Mic. 1:8. For the wrath of the Lord has not turned from us, as in blind self-delusion ye imagine, 2:35. The heath of Jahveh's anger is the burning wrath on account of the sins of Manasseh, with which the people has been threatened by the prophets. This wrath has not turned itself away, because even under Josiah the people has not sincerely returned to its God.

**Jeremiah 4:9.** When this wrath bursts over them, the rulers and leaders of the people will be perplexed and helpless. The heart, i.e., the mind, is lot. For this use of לֵב, cf. Job 12:3; 34:10, Prov. 7:7, etc. נִשְׁמָו, be paralyzed by terror, like the Kal in 2:12. The prophets are mentioned last, because v. 10 cites a word of prophecy whereby they seduced the people into a false security.

**Jeremiah 4:10.** "Then said I, Ah, Lord Jahveh, truly Thou hast deceived this people and Jerusalem in saying, Peace shall be to you, and

*the sword is reaching unto the soul.*" This verse is to be taken as a sign addressed to God by Jeremiah when he heard the announcement of the judgment about to fall on Judah, contained in vv. 5–9. The Chald. has well paraphrased וְאָמַר thus: *et dixi: suscipe deprecationem meam, Jahveh, Deus.* but Hensler and Ew. wish to have וְאָמַר changed to וְאָמַר, "so that they say," quite unnecessarily, and indeed unsuitably, since הָשָׂאָה, thou hast deceived, is out of place either in the mouth of the people or of the lying prophets. That the word quoted, "Peace shall be to you," is the saying of the false prophets, may be gathered from the context, and this is directly supported by 14:13; 23:17. The deception of the people by such discourse from the false prophets is referred back to God: "Lord, Thou hast deceived," inasmuch as God not only permits these lying spirits to appear and work, but has ordained them and brought them forth for the hardening of the people's heart; as He once caused the spirit of prophecy to inspire as a lying spirit the prophets of Ahab, so that by promises of victory they prevailed upon him to march to that war in which, as a punishment for his godlessness, he was to perish; 1 King 22:20–23. Umbr. takes the words less correctly as spoken in the name of the people, to whom the unexpected turn affairs had now taken seemed a deception on the part of God; and this, although it was by itself it had been deceived, through its revolt from God. For it is not the people's opinion that Jeremiah expresses, but a truth concerning which his wish is that the people may learn to recognise it, and so come to reflect and repent before it be too late. On the use of the *perf. consec.* וְנִגְעָה, see Ew. § 342, *b*. As to the fact, cf. 5:18, Ps. 69:2.

**Jeremiah 4:11–18.** *Description of the impending ruin, from which nothing can save but speedy repentance.—V. 11. "At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A hot wind from the bleak hills in the wilderness cometh on the way toward the daughter of my people, not to winnow and not to cleanse. V. 12. A wind fuller than for this shall come to me; now*

will I also utter judgments upon them. V. 13. Behold, like clouds it draws near, and like the storm are its chariots, swifter than eagles its horses. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled. V. 14. Wash from wickedness thy heart, Jerusalem, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thine iniquitous thoughts lodge within thee? V. 15. For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from the Mount Ephraim. V. 16. Tell it to the peoples; behold, publish it to Jerusalem: Besiegers come from a far country, and let their voice ring out against the cities of Judah. V. 17. As keepers of a field, they are against her round about; for against me hath she rebelled, saith Jahveh. V. 18. Thy way and thy doings have wrought thee this. This is thy wickedness; yea, it is bitter, yea, it reacheth unto thine heart."

A more minute account of the impending judgment is introduced by the phrase: at that time. It shall be said to this people; in other words, it shall be said of this people; substantially, that shall fall upon it which is expressed by the figure following, a hot wind blowing from the naked hills of the wilderness. רוח is *stat. constr.*, and שפּוּפּים its genitive, after which latter the adjective צח should be placed; but it is interpolated between the *nomen regens* and the *n. rectum* by reason of its smallness, and partly, too, that it may not be too far separated from its *nomen*, while בּמִדְבָּר belongs to שפּוּפּים. The wind blowing from the bleak hills in the wilderness, is the very severe east wind of Palestine. It blows in incessant gusts, and cannot be used for winnowing or cleansing the grain, since it would blow away chaff and seed together; cf. Wetzst. in Del., *Job*, S. 320. דָּרַךְ is universally taken adverbially: is on the way, i.e., comes, moves in the direction of the daughter of Zion. The daughter of Zion is a personification of the inhabitants of Zion or Jerusalem. This hot blast is a figure for the destruction which is drawing near Jerusalem. It is not a chastisement to purify the people, but a judgment which will sweep away the whole people, carry away both wheat and chaff—a most effective figure for the approaching

catastrophe of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the carrying away captive of its inhabitants.

Hitz. and Graf have, however, taken דָּרַךְ as subject of the clause: the path, i.e., the behaviour of my people, is a keen wind of the bare hills in the wilderness. Thus the conduct of the people would be compared with that wind as unprofitable, inasmuch as it was altogether windy, empty, and further as being a hurtful storm. But the comparison of the people's behaviour with a parched violent wind is a wholly unnatural one, for the justification of which it is not sufficient to point to Hos. 8:7: sow wind and reap storm. Besides, upon this construction of the illustration, the description: not to winnow and not to cleanse, is not only unmeaning, but wholly unsuitable. Who is to be winnowed and cleansed by the windy ways of the people? Jahveh?! V. 14 is indeed so managed by Hitz. and Graf that the tempestuous wind blows against God, "is directed against Jahveh like a blast of defiance and hostility." But this argument is sufficient to overthrow that unnatural view of the figure, which, besides, obtains no support from v. 12. מֵאֵלֶּה cannot refer to בְּתַעֲמִי: a full wind from these, i.e., the sons of my people; and יָבוֹא לִי, in spite of the passages, 22:23; 50:26; 51:48, Job 3:25, does not mean: comes towards me, or: blows from them on me; for in all these passages לִי is *dativ commodi* or *incommodi*.

Here, too, לִי is dative, used of the originator and efficient cause. The wind comes for me,—in plainer English: from me. Properly: it comes to God, i.e., at His signal, to carry out His will. מֵאֵלֶּה is comparative: fuller than these, namely, the winds useful for winnowing and cleansing. Now will I *too* utter. The intensifying גַּם does not point to a contrast in the immediately preceding clause: because the people blows against God like a strong wind, He too will utter judgment against it. The גַּם refers back to the preceding לִי: the storm comes from me; for now will I on my side hold judgment with them. The

contrast implied in **גַּם** lies in the wider context, in the formerly described behaviour of the people, particularly in the sayings of the false prophets mentioned in v. 10, that there will be peace. On **דַּבֵּר מִשְׁפָּטִים**, cf. 1:16.

These judgments are already on the way in v. 13. "Like clouds it draws near." The subject is not mentioned, but a hostile army is meant, about to execute God's judgments. "Like clouds," i.e., in such thick dark masses; cf. Ezek. 38:16. The war-chariots drive with the speed of the tempest; cf. Isa. 5:28; 66:15. The running of the horses resembles the flight of the eagle; cf. Hab. 1:8, where the same is said of the horsemen of the hostile people. Both passages are founded on Deut. 28:49; but Jeremiah, while he had the expression **קָלוּ מִנְּמָרִים סוֹסֵי**, Hab. 1:8, in his mind, chose **נְשָׂרִים** instead of leopards (**נְמָרִים**), in this following the original in Deut.; cf. 2 Sam. 1:23 and Lam. 4:19. Already is heard the cry of woe: we are spoiled, cf. v. 20, 9:18; 48:1.

**Jeremiah 4:14.** If Jerusalem wishes to be saved, it must thoroughly turn from its sin, wash its heart clean; not merely abstain outwardly from wickedness, but renounce the evil desires of the heart. In the question: How long shall ... remain? we have implied the thought that Jerusalem has already only too long cherished and indulged wicked thoughts. **תָּלִין** is 3rd pers. imperf. Kal, not 2nd pers. Hiph.: wilt thou let remain (Schnur. and others). For the Hiphil of **לִוֵן** is not in use, and besides, would need to be **תָּלִינִי**. The **מִחֲשָׁבוֹת אָוֶן**, as in Prov. 6:18, Isa. 59:7, refer chiefly to sins against one's neighbour, such as are reckoned up in 7:5f., 8f.

**Jeremiah 4:15.** It is high time to cleanse oneself from sin, *periculum in mora est*; for already calamity is announced from Dan, even from the Mount Ephraim. **קוֹל מְגִיד**, the voice of him who gives the alarm, sc. **נִשְׁמָע**, is heard; cf. 3:21; 31:15. That of which the herald gives warning is not given till the next clause. **אָוֶן**, mischief, i.e., calamity. **מִשְׁמַעֲנִי** is still dependent

on **קוֹל**. "From Dan," i.e., the northern boundary of Palestine; see on Judg. 20:1. "From Mount Ephraim," i.e., the northern boundary of the kingdom of Judah, not far distant from Jerusalem. The alarm and the calamity draw ever nearer. "The messenger comes from each successive place towards which the foe approaches" (Hitz.). In v. 16 the substance of the warning message is given, but in so animated a manner, that a charge is given to make the matter known to the peoples and in Jerusalem. Tell to the peoples, behold, cause to be heard. The **הִנֵּה** in the first clause points forward, calling attention to the message in the second clause. A similar charge is given in v. 5, only "to the peoples" seems strange here. "The meaning would be simple if we could take 'the peoples' to be the Israelites," says Graf. But since **גוֹיִם** in this connection can mean only the other nations, the question obtrudes itself: to what end the approach of the besiegers of Jerusalem should be proclaimed to the heathen peoples. Jerome remarks on this: *Vult omnes in circuitu nationes Dei nosse sententiam, et flagelatâ Jerusalem cunctos recipere disciplinam.* In like manner, Chr. B. Mich., following Schmid: *Gentibus, ut his quoque innotescat severitatis divinae in Judaeos exemplum.* Hitz. and Gr. object, that in what follows there is no word of the taking and destruction of Jerusalem, but only of the siege; that this could form no such *exemplum*, and that for this the issue must be awaited. But this objection counts for little. After the description given of the enemies (cf. v. 13), there can be no doubt as to the issue of the siege, that is, as to the taking of Jerusalem. But if this be so, then the warning of the heathen as to the coming catastrophe, by holding the case of Jerusalem before them, is not so far-fetched a thought as that it should be set aside by Hitz.'s remark: "So friendly an anxiety on behalf of the heathen is utterly unnatural to a Jew, especially seeing that the prophet is doubly absorbed by anxiety for his own people." Jeremiah was not the narrow-minded Jew Hitz. takes him for. Besides, there is no absolute necessity for holding "Tell to the peoples" to be a warning of

a similar fate addressed to the heathen. The charge is but a rhetorical form, conveying the idea that there is no doubt about the matter to be published, and that it concerned not Jerusalem alone, but the nations too. This objection settled, there is no call to seek other interpretations, especially as all such are less easily justified. By changing the imper. הַזְכִּירוּ and הַשְׁמִיעוּ into perfects, Ew. obtains the translation: "they say already to the peoples, behold, they come, already they proclaim in Jerusalem," etc.; but Hitz. and Graf have shown the change to be indefensible. Yet more unsatisfactory is the translation, "declare of the heathen," which Hitz. and Graf have adopted, following the LXX, Kimchi, Vat., and others. This destroys the parallelism, it is out of keeping with the הִנֵּה, and demands the addition (with the LXX) of בָּאוּ thereto to complete the sense. Graf and Hitz. have not been able to agree upon the sense of the second member of the verse. If we make לְגוֹיִם *de gentibus*, then הַשְׁמִיעוּ וּגְוֹרֹת ought to be: proclaim upon (i.e., concerning) Jerusalem. Hitz., however, translates, in accordance with the use of מְשַׁמֵּעַ in vv. 5 and 15: Cry it aloud in Jerusalem (prop. over Jerusalem, Ps. 49:12, Hos. 8:1); but this, though clearly correct, does not correspond to the first part of the verse, according to Hitz.'s translation of it. Graf, on the other hand, gives: Call them (the peoples) out against Jerusalem—a translation which, besides completely destroying the parallelism of the two clauses, violently separates from the proclamation the thing proclaimed: Besiegers come, etc. Nor can הַשְׁמִיעוּ be taken in the sense: call together, as in 50:29; 51:27, 1 Kings 15:22; for in that case the object could not be omitted, those who are to be called together would need to be mentioned; and it is too much to assume גְּוֹרֹת from the לְגוֹיִם for an object. The warning cry to Jerusalem runs: וּצְרִי, besiegers, (acc. to Isa. 1:8) come from the far country (cf. 5:15), and give their voice (cf. 2:15); i.e., let the tumult of a besieging army echo throughout the cities of Judah. These

besiegers will be like field-keepers round about Jerusalem (עֲלֵיהָ refers back to Jerus.), like field-keepers they will pitch their tents round the city (cf. 1:15) to blockade it. For against me (Jahveh) was she refractory (מָרְדָה *c. acc. pers.*, elsewhere with כָּ, Hos. 14:1, Ps. 5:11, or with אָתֶּרְפִי, Num. 20:24, and often). This is expanded in v. 18. Thy way, i.e., they behaviour and thy doings, have wrought thee this (calamity). This is thy wickedness, i.e., the effect or fruit of thy wickedness, yea, it is bitter, cf. 2:19; yea, it reacheth unto thine heart, i.e., inflicts deadly wounds on thee.

**Jeremiah 4:19–26.** *Grief at the desolation of the land the infatuation of the people.*—V. 19. "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained! the chambers of my heart—my heart rages within me! I cannot hold my peace! for thou hearest (the) sound of the trumpet, my soul, (the) war-cry. V. 20. Destruction upon destruction is called; for spoiled is the whole land; suddenly are my tents spoiled, my curtains in a moment. V. 21. How long shall I see (the) standard, hear (the) sound of the trumpet? V. 22. For my people is foolish, me they know not; senseless children are they, and without understanding; wise are they to do evil, but to do good they know not. V. 23. I look on the earth, and, lo, it is waste and void; and towards the heavens, and there is no light in them. V. 24. I look on the mountains, and, lo, they tremble, and all the hills totter. V. 25. I look, and, lo, no man is there, and all the fowls of the heavens are fled. V. 26. I look, and, lo, Carmel is the wilderness, and all the cities thereof are destroyed before Jahveh, before the heath of His anger."

To express the misery which the approaching siege of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah is about to bring, the prophet breaks forth into lamentation, vv. 19–21. It is a much debated question, whether the prophet is the speaker, as the Chald. has taken it, i.e., whether Jeremiah is uttering his own (subjective) feelings, or whether the people is brought before us speaking, as Grot., Schnur., Hitz., Ew. believe. The answer is this: the prophet certainly is



expressing his personal feelings regarding the nearing catastrophe, but in doing so he lends words to the grief which all the godly will feel. The lament of v. 20, suddenly are *my* tents spoiled, is unquestionably the lament not of the prophet as an individual, but of the congregation, i.e., of the godly among the people, not of the mass of the blinded people. The violence of the grief finds vent in abrupt ejaculations of distress. "My bowels, my bowels!" is the cry of sore pain, for with the Hebrews the bowels are the seat of the deepest feelings. The *Chet.* אוחולה is a monstrosity, certainly a copyist's error for אֶחֱוֹלָה, as it is in many MSS and edd., from חול: I am driven to writhe in agony. The *Keri* אֶחֱוֹלָה, I will wait (cf. Mic. 7:7), yields no good sense, and is probably suggested merely by the cohortative form, a cohortative being regarded as out of place in the case of חול. But that form may express also the effort to incite one's own volition, and so would here be rendered in English by: I am bound to suffer pain, or must suffer; cf. Ew. § 228, a.—קירות לְבִי, prop. the walls of my heart, which quiver as the heart throbs in anguish. הוֹמָה לִי is not to be joined with the last two words as if it were part of the same clause; in that case we should expect הוֹמָה. But these words too are an ejaculation. The subject of הוֹמָה is the following לְבִי; cf. 48:36. In defiance of usage, Hitz. connects לְבִי with אֶחֱרִישׁ: my heart can I not put to silence. But this verb in Hiph. means always: be silent, never: put to silence. Not even in Job 11:3 can it have the latter meaning; where we have the same verb construed with *acc. rei*, as in Job 41:4, and where we must translate: at thy harangues shall the people be silent. The heart cannot be silent, because the soul hears the peal of the war-trumpet. שָׁמַעְתִּי is 2nd pers. fem., as in 2:20, 33, and freq., the soul being addressed, as in Ps. 16:2 (in אֶמְרָתְךָ), Ps. 42:6, 12. This apostrophe is in keeping with the agitated tone of the whole verse.

**Jeremiah 4:20.** One destruction after another is heralded (on שָׁבַר, see v. 6). Ew. translates loosely: wound upon wound meet one another. For the word does not mean wound, but the fracture of a limb; and it seems inadmissible to follow the Chald. and Syr. in taking נִקְרָא here in the sense of נִקְרָה, since the sig. "meet" does not suit שָׁבַר. The thought is this: tidings are brought of one catastrophe after another, for the devastation extends itself over the whole land and comes suddenly upon the tents, i.e., dwellings of those who are lamenting. Covers, curtains of the tent, is used as synonymous with tents; cf. 10:20, Isa. 54:2. How long shall I see the standard, etc.! is the cry of despair, seeing no prospect of the end to the horrors of the war. The standard and the sound of the trumpet are, as in v. 5, the alarm-signals on the approach of the enemy.

There is no prospect of an end to the horrors, for (v. 22) the people is so foolish that it understands only how to do the evil, but not the good; cf. for this 5:21, Isa. 1:3, Mic. 7:3. V. 21 gives God's answer to the woful query, how long the ravaging of the land by war is to last. The answer is: as long as the people persists in the folly of its rebellion against God, so long will chastising judgments continue. To bring this answer of God home to the people's heart, the prophet, in vv. 23–26, tells what he has seen in the spirit. He has seen (רָאִיתִי, *perf. proph.*) bursting over Judah a visitation which convulses the whole world. The earth seemed waste and void as at the beginning of creation, Gen. 1:2, before the separation of the elements and before the creation of organic and living beings. In heaven no light was to be seen, earth and heaven seemed to have been thrown back into a condition of chaos. The mountains and hills, these firm foundations of the earth, quivered and swayed (הִתְקַלְקַל, be put into a light motion, cf. Nah. 1:5); men had fled and hidden themselves from the wrath of God (cf. Isa. 2:19, 21), and all the birds had flown out of sight in terror at the dreadful tokens of the beginning catastrophe (Jeremiah 9:9). The

fruitful field was the wilderness,—not a wilderness, but “changed into the wilderness with all its attributes” (Hitz.). הַכְּרָמִל is not *appell.* as in 2:7, but *nom. prop.* of the lower slopes of Carmel, famed for their fruitfulness; these being taken as representatives of all the fruitful districts of the land. The cities of the Carmel, or of the fruitful-field, are manifestly not to be identified with the store cities of 1 Kings 9:19, as Hitz. supposes, but the cities in the most fertile districts of the country, which, by reason of their situation, were in a prosperous condition, but now are destroyed. “Before the heat of His anger,” which is kindled against the foolish and godless race; cf. Nah. 1:6, Isa. 13:13.

**Jeremiah 4:27–31.** *The devastation of Judah, though not its utter annihilation, is irrevocably decreed, and cannot be turned away by any meretricious expedients.—V. 27. “For thus saith Jahveh, A waste shall the whole land be, yet will I not make an utter end. V. 28. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heaven above darken, because I have said it, purposed it, and repent it not, neither will I turn back from it. V. 29. For the noise of the horseman and bowman every city flees; they come into thickets, and into clefts of the rock they go up; every city is forsaken, and no man dwells therein. V. 30. And thou, spoiled one, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself in purple, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou tearest open thine eyes with paint, in vain thou makest thyself fair; the lovers despise thee, they seek thy life. V. 31. For I hear a voice as of a woman in travail, anguish as of one who bringeth forth her first-born, the voice of the daughter of Zion; she sigheth, she spreadeth out her hands: Woe is me! for my soul sinketh powerless beneath murderers.”*

**Jeremiah 4:27, 28.** Vv. 27 and 28 confirm and explain what the prophet has seen in spirit in vv. 23–26. A waste shall the land become; but the wasting shall not be a thorough annihilation, not such a destruction as befell Sodom and Gomorrah. עָשָׂה כְּלָה, as in Nah. 1:8f., Isa. 10:23, and freq. This limitation is yet again

in v. 5:10, 18 made to apply to Jerusalem, as it has done already to the people at large. It is founded on the promise in Lev. 26:44, that the Lord will punish Israel with the greatest severity for its stubborn apostasy from Him, but will not utterly destroy it, so as to break His covenant with it. Accordingly, all prophets declare that after the judgments of punishment, a remnant shall be left, from which a new holy race shall spring; cf. Amos 9:8, Isa. 6:13; 11:11, 16; 10:20ff., Mic. 2:12; 5:6, Zeph. 3:13, etc. “For this” refers to the first half of v. 27, and is again resumed in the עַל כֵּי following: for this, because Jahveh hath purposed the desolation of the whole land. The earth mourns, as in Hos. 4:3, because her productive power is impaired by the ravaging of the land. The heaven blackens itself, i.e., shrouds itself in dark clouds (1 Kings 18:45), so as to mourn over the desolated earth. The vividness of the style permits “have decreed it” to be appended as asyndeton to “I have said it,” for the sake of greater emphasis. God has not only pronounced the desolation of the land, but God’s utterance in this is based upon a decree which God does not repent, and from which He will not turn back. The LXX have placed the וְזָמַתִּי after גָּדַמְתִּי, and have thus obtained a neater arrangement of the clauses; but by this the force of expression in “I have said it, decreed it,” is weakened. In v. 29 the desolation of the land is further portrayed, set forth in v. 30 as inevitable, and exhibited in its sad consequences in v. 31. On the approach of the hostile army, all the inhabitants flee into inaccessible places from the clatter or noise of the horsemen and archers. He that casts the bow, the Bowman; cf. Ps. 78:9. כָּל־הָעִיר means, in spite of the article, not the whole city, but every city, all cities, as may be gathered from the בָּהֶן, which points back to this. So frequently before the definite noun, especially when it is further defined by a relative clause, as e.g., Ex. 1:22, Deut. 4:3, 1 Sam. 3:17; cf. Ew. § 290, c. For the first כָּל־הָעִיר the LXX have πᾶσα ἡ χώρα, and accordingly J. D. Mich., Hitz., and Graf propose to amend to כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, so as to avoid “the clumsy

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repetition." But we cannot be ruled here by aesthetic principles of taste. Clearly the first "every city" means the populace of the cities, and so בָּאוּ is: they (i.e., the men) come, pouring forth. עָבִים is not here clouds, but, according to its etymology, to be dark, means the dark thickets or woods; cf. the Syr. 'āb, wood. בְּפִים, rocks, here clefts in the rocks, as is demanded by the בָּ. For this state of things, cf. Isa. 2:19, 21, and the accounts of Judg. 6:2, 1 Sam. 13:6, where the Israelites hide themselves from the invading Midianites in caves, ravines, thorn-thickets, rocks, and natural fastnesses.

**Jeremiah 4:30.** In vain will Jerusalem attempt to turn away calamity by the wiles of a courtesan. In v. 31 the daughter of Zion is addressed, i.e., the community dwelling around the citadel of Zion, or the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom, regarded as a female personality (as to בַּת־צִיּוֹן, see on Isa. 1:8). "Spoiled one" is in apposition not to the אֲהָיָה, but to the person in the verb; it is regarded as adverbial, and so is without inflexion: if thou art spoiled, like עָרוֹם, Job 24:7, 10; cf. Ew. § 316, b. The following clauses introduced by כִּי are not so connected with the question, what wilt thou do? as that כִּי should mean *that*: what wilt thou do, devise to the end that thou mayest clothe thee? (Graf); the כִּי means *if* or *though*, and introduces new clauses, the apodosis of which is: "in vain," etc. If thou even clothest thyself in purple. שָׁנִי, the crimson dye, and stuffs or fabrics dyed with it, see in Ex. 25:4. פּוֹדֵד is a pigment for the eye, prepared from silver-glance, sulphur-antimony—the *Cohol*, yet much esteemed by Arab women, a black powder with a metallic glitter. It is applied to the eyelids, either dry or reduced to a paste by means of oil, by means of a blunt-pointed style or eye-pencil, and increases the lustre of dark eyes so that they seem larger and more brilliant. See the more minute account in Hillel, on the eye-paint of the East, in ref. to 2 Kings 9:30. קָרַע, tear

asunder, not, prick, puncture, as Ew., following J. D. Mich., makes it. This does not answer the mode of using the eye-paint, which was this: the style rubbed over with the black powder is drawn horizontally through between the closed eyelids, and these are thus smeared with the ointment. This proceeding Jeremiah sarcastically terms rending open the eyes. As a wife seeks by means of paint and finery to heighten the charms of her beauty in order to please men and gain the favour of lovers, so the woman Jerusalem will attempt by like stratagems to secure the favour of the enemy; but in vain like Jezebel in 2 Kings 9:30. The lovers will despise her. The enemies are called lovers, paramours, just as Israel's quest for help amongst the heathen nations is represented as intrigue with them; see on 2:33, 36.

**Jeremiah 4:31.** V. 31, as giving a reason, is introduced by כִּי. Zion's attempts to secure the goodwill of the enemy are in vain, for already the prophet hears in spirit the agonized cry of the daughter of Zion, who beseechingly stretches out her hands for help, and falls exhausted under the assassin's strokes. חוֹלָה, *partic. Kal faem.* from חוּלָה; see Ew. § 151, b, and Gesen. § 72, Rem. 1. צָרָה, in parallelism with קוֹל and dependent on "I hear," means cry of anguish. הִתְיַפֵּחַ, breathe heavily, pant, sign. הִתְפָּרַשׁ is joined asynd. with the preceding word, but is in sense subordinate to it: she sighs with hands spread out; a pleading gesture expressing a prayer for protection. עָנִי, be exhausted, here = sink down faint, succumb to the murderers.

## Jeremiah 5

**Jeremiah 5.** The Causes which Called Down the Judgment Pronounced: The Total Corruption of the People.—Chr. B. Mich. has excellently summed up thus the contents of this chapter: *Deus judicia sua, quae cap. IV praedixerat, justificat ostendens, se quamvis invitum, tamen non aliter posse quam punire Judaeos propter praefractam ipsorum malitiam.* The train of

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thought in this chapter is the following: God would pardon if there were to be found in Jerusalem but one who practised righteousness and strove to keep good faith; but high and low have forsaken God and His law, and serve the false gods. This the Lord must punish (vv. 1–9). Judah, like Israel, disowns the Lord, and despises the words of His prophets; therefore the Lord must affirm His word by deeds of judgment (vv. 10–18). Because they serve the gods of strangers, He will throw them into bondage to strange peoples, that they may learn to fear Him as the Almighty God and Lord of the world, who withholds His benefits from them because their sins keep them far from Him (vv. 19–25); for wickedness and crime have acquired a frightful predominance (vv. 26–31).

**Jeremiah 5:1–9.** *By reason of the universal godlessness and moral corruption the Lord cannot pardon.—V. 1. “Range through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek upon her thoroughfares, if ye find any, if any doth judgment, seeketh after faithfulness, and I will pardon her. V. 2. And if they say, ‘As Jahveh liveth,’ then in this they swear falsely. V. 3. Jahveh, are not Thine yes upon faithfulness? Thou smitest them, an they are not pained; thou consumest them, they will take no correction; they make their face harder than rock, they will not turn. V. 4. And I thought, It is but the baser sort, they are foolish; for they know not the way of Jahveh, the judgment of their God. V. 5. I will get me then to the great, and will speak with them, for they know the way of Jahveh, the judgment of their God; yet together have they broken the yoke, burst the bonds. V. 6. Therefore a lion out of the wood smiteth them, a wolf of the deserts spoileth them, a leopard lieth in wait against their cities: every one that goeth out thence is torn in pieces; because many are their transgressions, many their backslidings. V. 7. Wherefore should I pardon thee? thy sons have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods. I caused them to sear, but they committed adultery, and crowd into the house of the harlot. V. 8. Like well-fed horses, they are roaming about; each neigheth after the other’s wife. V. 9.*

*Shall I not punish this? saith Jahveh; or shall not my soul be avenged on such a people as this?”*

The thought of v. 1, that in Jerusalem there is not to be found one solitary soul who concerns himself about uprightness and sincerity, does not, though rhetorically expressed, contain any rhetorical hyperbole or exaggeration such as may have arisen from the prophet’s righteous indignation, or have been inferred from the severity of the expected judgment (Hitz.); it gives but the simple truth, as is seen when we consider that it is not Jeremiah who speaks according to the best of his judgment, but God, the searcher of hearts. Before the all-seeing eye of God no man is pure and good. They are all gone astray, and there is none that doeth good, Ps. 14:2, 3. And if anywhere the fear of God is the ruling principle, yet when the look falls on the mighty hosts of the wicked, even the human eye loses sight of the small company of the godly, since they are in no case to exert an influence on the moral standing of the whole mass. “If ye find any” is defined by, “if there is a worker of right;” and the doing of right or judgment is made more complete by “that seeketh faithfulness,” the doing of right or judgment is made more complete by “that seeketh faithfulness,” the doing being given as the outcome of the disposition. אֱמֻנָה is not truth (אֱמֶת), but sincerity and good faith. On this state of affairs, cf. Hos. 4:1, Mic. 7:2, Isa. 64:5f. The pledge that God would pardon Jerusalem if He found but one righteous man in it, recalls Abraham’s dealing with God on behalf of Sodom, Gen. 18:23. In support of what has been said, it is added in v. 2, that they even abuse God’s name for lying purposes; cf. Lev. 19:12. Making oath by the life of Jahveh is not looked on here as a confession of faith in the Lord, giving thus as the sense, that even their worship of God was but the work of the lips, not of the heart (Ros.); but the solemn appeal to the living God for the purpose of setting the impress of truth on the face of a life, is brought forward as evidence that there is none that strives after sincerity. the antithesis forced in here by Hitz. and Graf is foreign to text and

context both, viz., that between swearing by Jahveh and by the false gods, or any other indifferent name. The emphasis lies on swearing לְשָׁקֵר, as opposed to swearing in the way demanded by God, וּבְצִדְקָה, 4:2. לְכֵן, therein, i.e., yet even in this, or nevertheless.

**Jeremiah 5:3.** The eye of the Lord is directed towards faithfulness, which is not to be found in Jerusalem (v. 1), לְ, showing the direction toward person or thing, as in Ps. 33:18, where לְ alternates with אֶל. Hitz. is wrong in translating: are not thine eyes faithful, i.e., directed according to faithfulness; a sense quite unsuitable here, since the matter in hand is not the character or direction of the eye of God, but that on which God looks. But because God desired sincerity, and there was none in the people of Jerusalem, He has smitten them, chastised them, but they felt no pain (חָלוּ from חָלָה, the tone being drawn back by reason of the ֶ-); the chastisement made no impression.

Thou consumedst them, exterminatedst them, i.e., "Thou hast utterly exterminated multitudes and swarms of them" (Hitz.), but they refused to receive correction; cf. 2:30. They made their face harder than rock, i.e., hardened themselves by obstinately setting the divine chastisements at naught; cf. Ezek. 3:7, 8.

**Jeremiah 5:4f.** This total want of good faith and uprightness is found not only in the lower orders of the populace, amongst the mean and ignorant rabble, but in the higher ranks of the educated. This is rhetorically put in this shape, that Jeremiah, believing that only the common people are so deeply sunk in immorality, turns to the great to speak to them, and amongst them discovers a thorough-going renunciation of the law of God. דְּלִים, weak, are the mean and poor of the people, who live from hand to mouth in rudeness and ignorance, their anxieties bent on food and clothing (cf. 39:10; 40:7). These do foolishly (נֹאֲלִין as in Num. 12:11), from want of religious training. They

know not the way of Jahveh, i.e., the way, the manner of life, prescribed to men by God in His word; cf. 2 Kings 21:22, Ps. 25:9, etc. The judgment of their God, i.e., that which God demanded as right and lawful, 2 Kings 17:26, etc. The great, i.e., the wealthy, distinguished, and educated. Yet even these have broken the yoke of the law, i.e., have emancipated themselves from obedience to the law (Hitz.); cf. 2:20. Therefore they must be visited with punishment.

**Jeremiah 5:6.** This verse is neither a threatening of future punishments, nor is to be taken figuratively (lion, bear, leopard, as figures for dreadful enemies). The change from the perf. הָכֵם to the imperf. יִשְׁדְּדוּ and יִטְרְףוּ tells against the future construction, showing as it does that the verbs are used aoristically of chastisements which have partly already taken place, which may be partly yet to come. And the figurative explanation of the beasts of prey by hostile peoples—found so early as the Chald.—is not in the least called for by the text; nor is it easy to reconcile it with the specification of various kinds of wild beasts. The words are a case of the threatening of the law in Lev. 26:22, that God will chasten the transgressors of His law by sending beasts of prey which shall rob them of their children. Cf. with the promise, that if they keep His commandments, He will destroy the wild beasts out of the land. Cf. also the fact given in 2 Kings 17:25, that God sent lions amongst the heathen colonists who had been transplanted into the depopulated kingdom of the ten tribes, lions which slew some of them, because they served not Jahveh. The true conception of the words is confirmed by Ezek. 14:15, when in like manner the sending of evil (ravaging) beasts is mentioned as an example of God's punishments. הִכָּה, smite, is a standing expression for the lion's way of striking down his prey with his paws; cf. 1 Kings 20:36. יִזְאֵב עֲרֵבוֹת is not wolf of the evening, as Chald. Syr., Hitz. explain it, following Hab. 1:8 and Zeph. 3:3; for עֲרֵבוֹת is not the plural of עֲרַב, but of עֲרֵבָה, steppe: the wolf that

lives in the steppe, and thence makes its raids on inhabited spots. The reference of the words to place is suggested plainly by the parallel, the lion out of the wood. The leopard (panther) watches, i.e., lies lurking in wait against their cities, to tear those that come out. The panther is wont to lie in wait for his prey, and to spring suddenly out on it; cf. Hos. 13:7. With "because many are thy transgressions," cf. 30:14f. Since these chastisements have profited nothing God cannot pardon the people. This is the meaning of the question in v. 7, **אֵי לִזְוָתָהּ**, wherefore should I then pardon? not, should I then pardon for this? for **אֵי** by itself does not stand for *interrog.*, but is set before the *pronom. demonstr.* to give it the force of an interrogative adjective; cf. Ew. § 326, a. The *Cheth.* **אֶסְלֹחָהּ** *est obsoletum adeoque genuinum* (Ros.); the *Keri* substitutes the usual form. To justify the question with a negative answer implied, the people's fall into idolatry is again set up before it in strong colours. Thy sons (the sons of the daughter of Zion, i.e., of the national congregation, and so the individual members of the nation; cf. Lev. 19:18) have forsaken me, and swear by them that are not gods, i.e., the idols; cf. 2:11. For **אֲשַׁבֵּיעַ אוֹתָם**, I caused them to swear, the old translators have **אֲשַׁבֵּיעַ**, I filled them to the full, and so it is read in many codd. and edd. This reading is preferred by most of the ancient commentators, and they appeal for a parallel to v. 28, and Deut. 32:15 ("when Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked"), Hos. 13:6, Neh. 9:25, etc., where apostasy from God is chidden as a consequence of superfluity of earthly goods. So Luther: "and now that I have filled them full, they committed adultery." Now possibly it is just the recollection of the passages cited that has suggested the reading **אֲשַׁבֵּיעַ**. The apodosis, they committed adultery, forms no antithesis to filling full. Adultery presupposes a marriage vow, or troth plighted by an oath. God caused Israel to swear fidelity when He made the covenant with it at Sinai, Ex. 24. This oath Israel repeated at each renewal of

the covenant, and last under Josiah: 2 Kings 23:3; 2 Chron. 34:31f. Hence we must not wholly restrict the searing to the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, nor wholly to the renewal of it under Josiah. We must refer it to both acts, or rather to the solemnity at Sinai, together with all solemn renewals of it in after times; while at the same time the reference to the renewal under Josiah, this being still fresh in memory, may have been the foremost. We must not confine the reference of **יִזְנַפּוּ** to spiritual adultery (= a fall away from Jahveh into idolatry); the context, especially the next clause, and yet more unmistakeably v. 8, refers to carnal uncleanness. This too was a breach of the covenant, since in taking it the people bound itself not only to be faithful to God, but to keep and follow all the laws of His covenant. That the words, crowd into the house of the harlot, i.e., go thither in crowds, are to be taken of carnal uncleanness, may be gathered from v. 8b: each neighs after the wife of his neighbour. Fornication is denounced as a desecration of the name of the Lord in Amos 2:7. The first clause of v. 8 suggests a comparison: well-fed horses are they, i.e., they resemble such. On the lechery of horses, see on Ezek. 23:20. The *Cheth.* **מוֹזְנִים** is partic. Hoph. of **זָנַן**, in Aram. feed, fatten, here most suitable. The *Keri* **מִזְנִים** would be the partic. Pu. from **זָנַן**, the meaning of which is doubtful, given arbitrarily by Kimchi and others as *armati sc. membro genitali*. **מִשְׁבִּים**, too, is derived from **מָשַׁךְ**, and given by Jerome *sensu obscaeno: trahentes sc. genitalia*; but **מִשְׁבִּים** cannot come from **מָשַׁךְ**, **מִשְׁבִּים** being the only possible form in that case. Nor does *trahentes*, "draught-horses" (Hitz.), give a sense at all in point for the comparison. A better view is that of those who follow Simonis, in holding it to be partic. Hiph. of **שָׁכַח**, in Aethiop. *oberravit, vagatus est*. The participle is not to be joined with "horses" as a second qualifying word, but to be taken with **הָיָו**, the periphrastic form being chosen to indicate the enduring chronic character of the roaming.

**Jeremiah 5:9.** Such abandoned behaviour the Lord must punish.

**Jeremiah 5:10–18.** *In spite of the feeling of security fostered by the false prophets, the Lord will make good His word, and cause the land and kingdom to be laid waste by a barbarous people.—V. 10. “Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy, but make not a full end: tear away her tendrils; for they are not Jahveh’s. V. 11. For faithless to me is the house of Israel become and the house of Judah, saith Jahveh. V. 12. They deny Jahveh, and say, He is not; and evil shall not come upon us, and sword and famine we shall not see. V. 13. And the prophets shall become wind, and he that speaketh is not in them: so may it happen unto them. V. 14. Therefore thus saith Jahveh the God of hosts: Because ye speak this word, behold, I make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. V. 15. Behold, I bring upon you a nation from far, house of Israel, saith Jahveh, a people that is strong, a people that is from of old, a people whose speech thou knowest not, and understandest not what it saith. V. 16. Its quiver is as an open grave, they are all mighty men. V. 17. It shall eat up thy harvest and thy bread; they shall eat up thy sons and thy daughters; it shall eat up thy flocks and thy cattle, eat up thy vine and thy fig-tree; it shall break down thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustest, with the sword. V. 18. But yet in those days, saith Jahveh, I will not make a full end with you.”*

To give emphasis to the threat, that the Lord will avenge Himself on such a people, we have immediately following, in v. 10, the summons given to the enemy to subdue the land. עָלוּ בְּשָׂרוֹתֶיהָ is variously explained. The old translators took שָׂרוֹת to mean walls; but the second clause, tear away the tendrils, seems not to suit this well. And then this word occurs but once again, and with the meaning “caravan,” while walls are שָׂרוֹת in Job 24:11. But this reason is not strong enough to throw any doubt on the rendering: walls, supported as it is by the old versions. The form שָׂרוֹת from שָׂרָה is contracted from a form שָׂרוֹרִים, constructed

analogously to שָׂרוֹת. The second clause would be unsuitable to the first only in the case that walls were to mean exclusively town walls or fortifications. But this is not the case. Even if the suffix here referred to Jerusalem, mentioned in v. 1, which is very doubtful, still then the city would be looked on not in the light of a stronghold, but only as representative of the kingdom or of the theocracy. Probably, however, the suffix refers to the daughter of Zion as seat of the kingdom of God, and the idea of a vineyard was in the prophet’s mind (cf. 2:21), under which figure Isaiah (Is. 5:1–7) set forth the kingdom of God founded on Mount Zion; so that under walls, the walls of the vineyard are to be thought of. Elsewhere, indeed, these are called גְּדֵרוֹת (also in 49:3), but only where the figure of a vineyard is further developed, or at least is brought more plainly and prominently forward. Here, again, where the enemy is summoned to go upon the walls, this figure is mixed up with that of a city; and so the word שָׂרוֹת, as indicating walls of any kind, seems most fitting. Graf has overthrown, as being unfounded, Hitz.’s assertion, that עָלָה בְּ signified only, to go up against a thing; and that accuracy and elegance required that the destruction should be of the walls, not of the vineyard itself. עָלָה c. בְּ means also: to go up upon a thing, e.g., Ps. 24:3, Deut. 5:5; and the verb שָׂחַתוּ stands quite absolutely, so that it cannot be restricted to the walls. “And destruction can only take place when, by scaling the walls, entrance has been obtained into that which is to be destroyed, be it city or vineyard.” We therefore adhere to the sig. walls, especially since the other translations attempted by Ew. and Hitz. are wholly without foundation. Hitz. will have us read שָׂרוֹתֶיהָ, and take this as plural of שָׂרוֹה; next he supposes a row of vines to be intended, but he obtains this sense only by arbitrarily appending the idea of vines. Ew. endeavours, from the Aram. and Arab., to vindicate for the word the meaning: clusters of blossom, and so to obtain for the

whole the translation: push in amidst the blossom-spikes. A singular figure truly, which in no way harmonizes with **עָלוּ בָּ**. “Destroy” is restricted by the following “but make not,” etc.; see on 4:27. On “tear away her tendrils,” cf. Isa. 18:5. The spoilers are not to root up the vine itself, but to remove the tendrils, which do not belong to Jahveh. Spurious members of the nation are meant, those who have degenerated out of their kind.

The reasons of this command are given in v. 11ff., by a renewed exposure of the people’s apostasy. The house of Israel and the house of Judah are become faithless. On this cf. 3:6ff. The mention of Israel along with Judah gives point to the threatening, since judgment has already been executed upon Israel. Judah has equalled Israel in faithlessness, and so a like fate will be its lot. Judah shows its faithlessness by denying the Lord, by saying **לֹא הוּא**. This Ew. translates: not so, after the **οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα** of the LXX; but he is certainly wrong in this. Even though **הוּא** may be used in place of the neuter, yet it cannot be so used in this connection, after the preceding **כִּי־שָׁנוּ בִיהוָה**. Better to take it: He is not, as the fools speak in Ps. 14:1: there is no God, i.e., go on in their lives as if God were not. “Jahveh is not” is therefore in other words: there exists not a God such as Jahveh is preached to us, who is to visit His people with sore punishments. This view is not open to the objection, *quod pro lubitu supplent*, which Ros. raises against the interpretation: *non est is, qualem prophetae describunt*. For we take **הוּא** not as *is qualem*, but as *est sc. Jahveh*; and we explain the meaning of Jahveh only in that reference in which He is disowned by these men, namely, as God who visits His people with punishments. In this character He was preached by the prophets. This appears from what is further said by these disowners of God: evil or mischief will not come on us. To a saying of this kind they could have been provoked only by threatenings of punishments. The prophets were not indeed the first to announce judgments; Moses in the law threatened

transgressors with the sorest punishments. But the context, the threatening against the false prophets in v. 13, suggests that here we are to think of announcements by the prophets. Doubtless the false prophets assured the people: evil shall not come upon you, in opposition to the true prophets, who threatened the sinful race with the judgments of God. Such prophets are to become wind, sc. with their utterances. **הַדְבָר** is not a noun: the word, but a verb, with the article instead of the relative pronoun, as in Josh. 1:24, 1 Chron. 26:28, and often: He who speaks is not in them, i.e., in them there is none other speaker than themselves; the Spirit of God is not in them. **יִאֵר**, “there is none,” is stronger than **לֹא**, meaning: they speak out of their own hearts. The threat, *so be it unto them*, may be most simply referred to the first clause: they become wind. Let the emptiness of their prophecies fall on their own heads, so that they themselves may come to nought.

**Jeremiah 5:14.** But the people is to have proof of the truth of the word of the Lord. Because it, despising the threatening of punishment, says: Misfortune shall not light upon us, the Lord will make the word in the mouth of Jeremiah a fire, and the people wood, that the fire may consume it. On this figure, cf. Isa. 1:31; 10:17. V. 15ff. explain this, and announce the inroad of a dreadful enemy that is to lay waste the land and consume the people. “A people from far,” as in 4:16. Judah is called “house of Israel,” not so much because it is what remains of Israel, but because, after the captivity of the ten tribes, Judah regarded itself as the only true Israel or people of God. Further description of the hostile people is intended to show its formidable power, and to inspire dread. **אֵי־תָן**, enduring, firm, strong; cf. Gen. 49:24, Mic. 6:2. **מִנְעוּלָם**, dating from eternity, i.e., very ancient, not of recent origin, but become mighty in immemorial antiquity. A people speaking a language unfamiliar to the Jews, to comprehend whom is impossible, i.e., barbarous; cf. Deut. 28:49. Further (v. 16), it is a race of very



heroes, fully furnished with deadly weapons. J. D. Mich. took objection to the figure, "its quiver is as an open grave;" but his conjecture *יחַוּ* put nothing better in place of it. The link of comparison is this: as an open grave is filled with dead men, so the quiver of this enemy is filled with deadly missiles.

**Jeremiah 5:17.** This people will devour the harvest and the bread, the children, the cattle, and the best fruits of the land. Devour, here as often, in the wider sense, destroy; cf. e.g., 3:24 and 10:25, where the first half of the present verse is compressed into the words: they ate up Jacob. We need not wait to refute Hitz.'s absurd remark, that the author imagined the enemy, the assumed Scythians, to be cannibals. In the second half of the verse the words, "the fenced cities wherein thou trustest," are a reminiscence of Deut. 28:52; and hence we may see, that while our prophet is describing the enemy in vv. 15–18, Moses' threatening, Deut. 28:49–52, was in his mind. *שָׁרַף*, break in pieces, as in Mal. 1:4. With the sword, i.e., by force of arms; the sword, as principal weapon, being named, instead of the entire apparatus of war. In v. 18 the restriction of v. 10 (cf. 4:27) is repeated, and with it the threatening of judgment is rounded off.

**Jeremiah 5:19–31.** *This calamity Judah is preparing for itself by its obduracy and excess of wickedness.—V. 19. "And if ye then shall say, Wherefore hath Jahveh our God done all this unto us? then say to them, Like as ye have forsaken me and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours. V. 20. Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying, V. 21. Hear now this, foolish people without understanding, that have eyes and see not, have ears and hear not. V. 22. Me will ye not fear, saith Jahve, nor tremble before me? who have set the sand for a bound to the sea, an everlasting boundary that it passes not, and its waves toss themselves and cannot, and roar and pass not over. V. 23. But this people hath a stubborn and rebellious heart; they turned away and went. V. 24. And said not in their heart: Let us now fear Jahveh our God,*

*who giveth rain, the early rain and the late rain, in its season; who keepeth for us the appointed weeks of the harvest. V. 25. Your iniquities have turned away these, and your sins have withholden the good from you. V. 26. For among my people are found wicked men; they lie in wait as fowlers stoop; they set a trap, they catch men. V. 27. As a cage full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit; therefore are they become great and rich. V. 28. They are grown fat and sleek, they go beyond bound in wickedness; the cause they try not, the cause of the orphans, that they might have prosperity; and the right of the needy they judge not. V. 29. Shall I not punish this? saith Jahveh; shall not my soul be avenged on such a people as this? V. 30. The appalling and horrible is done in the land. V. 31. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule under their lead, and my people loves it so. But what will ye do in the end thereof."*

The thought of v. 19, that the people, by its apostasy, draws down this judgment on itself, forms the transition from the threat of punishment to the reproof of sins. The penalty corresponds to the sin. Because Judah in its own land serves the gods of foreigners, so it must serve strangers in a foreign land.

**Jeremiah 5:20f.** The reproof of sins is introduced by an apostrophe to the hardened race. The exhortation, "Publish this," is addressed to all the prophet's hearers who have the welfare of the people at heart. "This," in vv. 20 and 21, refers to the chiding statement from v. 23 onwards, that the people fears not God. The form of address, people foolish and without understanding (cf. 4:22, Hos. 7:11), is made cutting, in order, if possible, to bring the people yet to their senses. The following clauses, "they have eyes," etc., depict spiritual blindness and deafness, as in Ezek. 12:22; cf. Deut. 29:3. Blindness is shown in that they see not the government of God's almighty power in nature; deafness, in that they hear not the voice of God in His word. They have no fear even of the God whose power has in the sand set an impassable barrier for the mighty waves of the sea. "Me" is put first for emphasis. The waves

beat against their appointed barrier, but are not able, sc. to pass it.

**Jeremiah 5:23.** But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; it bows not beneath the almighty hand of God. "Stubborn and rebellious," joined as in Deut. 21:18, 20. Hence the following סָרָו is not to be taken from סָרַר: they defy (Hitz.), but from סוּר: they turn away and go off, and consider not that they owe their daily bread to the Lord. Neither does God's power move the obdurate people to the fear of Him, nor do the proofs of His love make any impression. They do not consider that God gives them the rain which lends the land its fruitfulness, so that at the fixed time they may gather in the harvest. The ו *cop.* before יוֹרָה is rejected by the Masoretes in the *Keri* as out of place, since גֶּשֶׁם is not any special rain, co-ordinate to the early and late rain (Hitz.), or because they had Deut. 11:14, Joel 2:23 before them. But in this they failed to notice that the ו before יוֹרָה and that before מְלִקוּשׁ are correlative, having the force of *et—et*. שָׁבַעַת is *stat. constr.* from שָׁבַעַת, weeks, and to it חֲקוּת is co-ordinated in place of an adjective, so that קָצִיר is dependent on two co-ordinate *stat. constr.*, as in 46:9, 11, Zeph. 2:6. But the sense is not, the weeks, the statutes, of the harvest, i.e., the fixed and regulated phenomena which regulate the harvest (Graf), but, appointed weeks of harvest. The seven weeks between the second day of the passover and the feast of harvest, or of weeks, Ex. 23:16; 34:22, Deut. 16:9f., are what is here meant. We must reject the rendering, "oath as to the harvest-time" (L. de Dieu, J. D. Mich., and Ew.), since Scripture knows nothing of oaths taken by God as to the time of harvest; in Gen. 8:22 there is no word of an oath.

**Jeremiah 5:25.** The people has by its sins brought about the withdrawal of these blessings (the withholding of rain, etc.). הָטוּ, turned away, as in Amos 5:12, Mal. 3:5. "These," i.e., the blessings mentioned in v. 24. The

second clause repeats the same thing. The good, i.e., which God in His goodness bestowed on them.

This is established in v. 26f. by bringing home to the people their besetting sins. In (amidst) the people are found notorious sinners. יְשׁוּר in indefinite generality: they spy about, lie in wait; cf. Hos. 13:7. The singular is chosen because the act described is not undertaken in company, but by individuals. שָׁךְ from שָׁכַךְ, bend down, stoop, as bird-catchers hide behind the extended nets till the birds have gone in, so as then to draw them tight. "They set;" not the fowlers, but the wicked ones. מְשַׁחֵית, destroyer (Ex. 12:23, and often), or destruction (Ezek. 21:36); here, by virtue of the context, a trap which brings destruction. The men they catch are the poor, the needy, and the just; cf. v. 28 and Isa. 29:21. The figure of bird-catching leads to a cognate one, by which are set forth the gains of the wicked or the produce of their labours. As a cage is filled with captured birds, so the houses of the wicked are filled with deceit, i.e., possessions obtained by deceit, through which they attain to credit, power, and wealth. Graf has overthrown Hitz.'s note, that we must understand by מְרִמָּה, not riches obtained by deceit, but he means and instruments of deceit; and this on account of the following: therefore they enrich themselves. But, as Graf shows, it is not the possession of these appliances, but of the goods acquired by deceit, that has made these people great and rich, "as the birds that fill the cage are not a means for capture, but property got by cunning." כְּלוּב, cage, is not strictly a bird-cage, but a bird-trap woven of willows (Amos 8:1), with a lid to shut down, by means of which birds were caught.

**Jeremiah 5:28.** Through the luxurious living their wealth makes possible to them, they are grown fat and sleek. עָשְׂתוּ, in graphic description, is joined *asynd.* to the preceding verb. It is explained by recent comm. of fat bodies, become glossy, in keeping with the

noun עֲשֶׂת, which in Cant. 5:14 expresses the glitter of ivory; for the meaning *cogitare*, think, meditate, which עֲשֶׂת bears in Chald., yields no sense available here. The next clause is variously explained. נָם points to another, yet worse kind of behaviour. It is not possible to defend the translation: they overflow with evil speeches, or swell out with evil things (Umbr., Ew.), since עָבַר *c. accus.* does not mean to overflow *with* a thing. Yet more arbitrary is the assumption of a change of the subject: (their) evil speeches overflow. The only possible subject to the verb is the wicked ones, with whom the context deals before and after. דְּבַר־רָע are not words of wickedness = what may be called wickedness, but things of wickedness, wicked things. דְּבַר־י serves to distribute the idea of רָע into the particular cases into which it falls, as in Ps. 65:4; 105:27, and elsewhere, where it is commonly held to be pleonastic. Hitz. expounds truly: the individual wickednesses in which the abstract idea of wicked manifests itself. Sense: they go beyond all that can be conceived as evil, i.e., the bounds of evil or wickedness. The cause they plead not, namely, the case of the orphans. וַיִּצְלִיחוּ, *imperf. c. 1 consec.*: that so they might have prosperity. Hitz. regards the wicked men as the subject, and explains the words thus: such justice would indeed be a necessary condition of their success. But that the wicked could attain to prosperity by seizing every opportunity of defending the rights of the fatherless is too weak a thought, coming after what has preceded, and besides it does not fit the case of those who go beyond all bounds in wickedness. Ew. and Graf translate: that they (the wicked) might make good the rightful cause (of the orphan), help the poor man to his rights. But even if הִצְלִיחַ seems in 2 Chron. 7:11, Dan. 8:25, to have the signif. carry through, make good, yet in these passages the sig. carry through with success is fundamental; there, as here, this will not suit, הִצְלִיחַ being in any case applicable only

to doubtful and difficult causes—a thought foreign to the present context. Blame is attached to the wicked, not because they do not defend the orphan's doubtful pleas, but because they give no heed at all to the orphan's rights. We therefore hold with Raschi that the orphans are subject to this verb: that the orphans might have had prosperity. The plural is explained when we note that יָתוּם is perfectly general, and may be taken as collective. The accusation in this verse shows further that the prophet had the godless rulers and judges of the people in his eye.

**Jeremiah 5:29.** V. 29 is a refrain-like repetition of v. 9.—The vv. 30 and 31 are, as Hitz. rightly says, “a sort of *epimetrum* added after the conclusion in v. 29,” in which the already described moral depravity is briefly characterized, and is asserted of all ranks of the people. Appalling and horrible things happen in the land; cf. 2:12; 23:14; 18:13, Hos. 6:10. The prophets prophesy with falsehood, בִּשְׁקֶר, as in 20:6; 29:9; more fully לְשִׁמְי לְשִׁקֶר, 23:25; 27:15. The priests rule עַל יְדֵיהֶם (the prophets') hands, i.e., under their guidance or direction; cf. 1 Chron. 25:2ff., 2 Chron. 23:18; not: go by their side (Ges., Dietr.), for רָדָה is not: go, march on, but: trample down. My people loves it so, yields willingly to such a lead; cf. Amos 4:5. What will ye do לְאַחֲרֵיתָהּ, as to the end of this conduct? The *suff. faem.* with neuter force. The end thereof will be the judgment; will ye be able to turn it away?

## Jeremiah 6

**Jeremiah 6.** The Judgment is Irrevocably Decreed.—A hostile army approaches from the north, and lays siege to Jerusalem, in order to storm the city (vv. 1–8). None is spared, since the people rejects all counsels to reform (vv. 9–15). Since it will not repent, it will fall by the hands of the enemy, in spite of the outward sacrificial service (vv. 16–21). The enemy will smite Zion without mercy, seeing that the trial

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of the people has brought about no change for the better in them (vv. 22–30).

**Jeremiah 6:1–8.** *The judgment breaking over Jerusalem.*—V. 1. *“Flee, ye sons of Benjamin, out of the midst of Jerusalem, and in Tekoa blow the trumpet, and over Beth-haccerem set up a sign; for evil approacheth from the north, and great destruction.* V. 2. *The comely and the delicate—I lay waste the daughter of Zion.* V. 3. *To her come shepherds with their flocks, pitch their tents about her round about, and devour each his portion.* V. 4. *Sanctify war against her; arise, let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day declineth; for the shadows of evening lengthen.* V. 5. *Arise, let us go up by night, and destroy her palaces.* V. 6. *For thus hath Jahveh of hosts spoken, Hew down wood, and pile up against Jerusalem a rampart; she is the city that is (to be) punished, she is all full of oppression in her midst.* V. 7. *As a fountain pours forth its water, so pours she forth her wickedness: violence and spoiling is heard in her; before my face continually, wounds and smiting.* V. 8. *Be warned, Jerusalem, lest my soul tear herself from thee, lest I make thee a waste, a land uninhabited.”*

In graphic delineation of the enemy’s approach against Jerusalem, the prophet calls on the people to flee. As regarded its situation, Jerusalem belonged to the tribe of Benjamin; the boundary between the tribal domain of Judah and Benjamin passed through the valley of Ben-Hinnom on the south side of Jerusalem, and then ran northwards to the west of the city (Josh. 15:8; 18:16f.). The city was inhabited by Judeans and Benjamites, 1 Chron. 9:2ff. The summons is addressed to the Benjamites as the prophet’s fellow-countrymen. Tekoa lay about two hours’ journey southwards from Bethlehem, according to Jerome, on a hill twelve Roman miles south of Jerusalem; see on Josh. 15:59. This town is mentioned because its name admits of a play on the word תִּקְעוּ. The alarm is given in the country south of Jerusalem, because the enemy is coming from the north, so that the flight will be directed southwards. Beth-haccerem, acc. to Jerome, was

a hamlet (*vicus*) between Jerusalem and Tekoa, *qui lingua Syra et Hebraic Bethacharma nominatur, et ipse in monte positus*, apparently on what is now called the Frank’s Hill, *Jebel Fureidis*; see on Neh. 3:14. מִשְׁצֵאתָ, the lifting up, that which raises itself up, or is raised; here a lofty beacon or signal, the nature of which is not further made known. The meaning, fire-signal, or ascending column of smoke, cannot be made good from Judg. 20:38, 40, since there עָשָׂן is appended; nor from the statements of classical authors (in Ros.), that in time of war bodies of troops stationed in different places made their positions known to one another by masses of rising flame during the night, and by columns of smoke in the day time. As to the last clause, cf. 1:14. “Great destruction,” as in 4:6.—In v. 2 the impending judgment is further described. It falls on the daughter of Zion, the capital and its inhabitants, personified as a beautiful and delicately reared woman. נְיָה, defectively written for נְיָהָ, contracted from נְיָהָה, lovely, beautiful. The words are not vocatives, O fair and delicate, but accusatives made to precede their governing verb absolutely, and are explained by “the daughter of Zion,” dependent on “I destroy:” the fair and the delicate, namely, the daughter of Zion, I destroy. דָּמָה as in Hos. 4:5. The other meaning of this verb, to be like, to resemble, is wholly unsuitable here; and, besides, in this signification it is construed with לְ or לָ. Ew.’s translation, I mean the daughter of Zion, is not justifiable by the usage of the word, the Piel only, and not the Kal, being capable of this interpretation.

**Jeremiah 6:3.** The destruction comes about by means of shepherds with their flocks, who set up their tents round the city, and depasture each his portion. We need hardly observe that the shepherds and their flocks are a figure for princes, who with their peoples besiege and sack Jerusalem; with this cf. 1:15. The figure does not point to a nomad swarm, or the Scythian people, as Ew. supposes. “Each his hand,” i.e., what lies to his hand, or next him.

**Jeremiah 6:4.** The description passes from figure to reality, and the enemies appear before us as speaking, inciting one another to the combat, encouraging one another to storm the city. To sanctify a war, i.e., prepare themselves for the war by religious consecration, inasmuch as the war was undertaken under commission from God, and because the departure of the army, like the combat itself, was consecrated by sacrifice and other religious ceremonies; see on Joel 4:9. עָלָה, to go up against a place as an enemy, not, go up upon, in which case the object, them (the city or walls), could not be omitted. It is plainly the storming or capture of the town that is meant by the going up; hence we may understand what follows: and we will destroy her palaces. We have a rousing call to go up at noon or in clear daylight, joined with “woe to us,” a cry of disappointment that they will not be able to gain their ends so soon, not indeed till night; in these we see the great eagerness with which they carry on the assault. יוֹם פָּנָה, the day turns itself, declines towards its end; cf. Ps. 90:9. The enemies act under a commission from God, who has imposed on them the labour of the siege, in order to punish Jerusalem for her sins. Jahveh is here most fittingly called the God of hosts; for as God of the world, obeyed by the armies of heaven, He commands the kings of the earth to chastise His people. Hew wood, i.e., fell trees for making the siege works, cf. Deut. 20:20, both for raising the attacking ramparts, and for the entire apparatus necessary for storming the town. עֲצָה is not a collective form from עָץ, like דָּגָה from דָּג; but the הֶ- is a suffix in spite of the omission of the Mappik, which is given by but a few of the *codd.*, eastern and western, for we know that Mappik is sometimes omitted, e.g., Num. 15:28, 31; cf. Ew. § 247, *d*. We are encouraged to take it so by Deut. 20:19, where עֲצָה are the trees in the vicinity of the town, of which only the fruit trees were to be spared in case of siege, while those which did not bear eatable fruit were to be made use of for the purposes of the siege. And thus we must here, too, read עֲצָה, and refer

the suffix to the next noun (Jerusalem). On “pile up a rampart,” cf. 2 Sam. 20:5, Ezek. 4:2, etc. הִפְקֹד is used as passive of Kal, and impersonally. The connection with הִעִיר is to be taken like הִנְיָה דָּוִד in Isa. 29:1: the city where it is punished, or perhaps like Ps. 59:6, the relative being supplied: that is punished. בָּלָה is not to be joined, contrary to the accents, with הִפְקֹד (Ven., J. D. Mich.), a connection which, even if it were legitimate, would give but a feeble thought. It belongs to what follows, “she is wholly oppression in her midst,” i.e., on all sides in her there is oppression. This is expanded in v. 7. LXX and Jerome have taken הִקִּיר from קָרַר, and translate: like as a cistern keeps its water cool (ψύχει, *frigidam facit*), so she keeps her wickedness cool. Hitz. has pronounced in favour of this interpretation, but changes “keep cool” into “keep fresh,” and understands the metaphor thus: they take good care that their wickedness does not stagnate or become impaired by disuse. But it would be a strange metaphor to put “keep wickedness cool,” for “maintain it in strength and vigour.” We therefore, along with Luth. and most commentators, prefer the rabbinical interpretation: as a well makes its water to gush out, etc.; for there is no sufficient force in the objection that מְקוֹר from קוֹר, dig, is not a spring but a well, that הִקִּיר has still less the force of making to gush forth, and that בּוֹר wholly excludes the idea of causing to spring out. The first assertion is refuted by 2:13, מְקוֹר, fountain of living water; whence it is clear that the word does mean a well fed by a spring. It is true, indeed, that the word בּוֹר, a later way of writing בְּאֵר (cf. 1 Chron. 11:17f. 22 with 2 Sam. 23:15f. 20), means usually, a pit, a cistern dug out; but this form is not substantially different from בְּאֵר, well, *puteus*, which is used for בּוֹר in Ps. 55:24 and 69:16. Accordingly, this latter form can undoubtedly stand with the force of בְּאֵר, as has been admitted by the Masoretes

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when they substituted for it בִּיר = בְּאֵר; cf. the Arab. *bi'run*. The noun מְקוֹר puts beyond doubt the legitimacy of giving to הִקִּיר, from קוּר, to dig a well, the signification of making water to gush forth. The form הִקְרָה is indeed referable to קָרַר, but only shows, as is otherwise well known, that no very strict line of demarcation can be drawn between the forms of verbs עָע and עָי;

הִקִּיר, again, is formed regularly from קוּר.

Violence and spoiling; cf. 20:8, and Amos 3:10, Hab. 1:3. "Before my face," before mine eyes, corresponds to "is heard," as wounds and smittings are the consequences of violence. On that head, cf. Ps. 55:10–12.

**Jeremiah 6:8.** If Jerusalem cease not from these sins and crimes, the Lord must devote it to spoliation. Let thyself be corrected, warned; cf. Ps. 2:10, Lev. 26:23. תִּקַּע from יָקַע, tear oneself loose, estrange oneself, as in Ezek. 23:17ff. "A land uninhabited" is an apposition giving greater expressiveness to "a waste," 22:6.

**Jeremiah 6:9–15.** *This judgment will fall unsparingly on Jerusalem, because they listen to no warning, but suffer themselves to be confirmed in their shameless courses by false prophets and wicked priests.—V. 9. "Thus hath Jahveh of hosts said: They shall have a gleaning of the remnant of Israel as of a vine: lay thine hand again as a vine-dresser on the soots. V. 10. To whom shall I speak, and testify, that they may hear? Behold, uncircumcised is their ear, and they cannot give heed: behold, the word of Jahveh is become to them a reproach; they have no pleasure in it. V. 11. But of the fury of Jahveh am I full, am weary with holding it in. Pour it out upon the child on the street, and upon the group of young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the old man with him that is full of days. V. 12. And their houses shall pass unto others, fields and wives together; for I stretch out mine hand against the inhabitants of the land, saith Jahveh. V. 13. For great and small are all of them greedy for gain; and from the prophet to the priest, all use deceit.*

V. 14. *And they heal the breach of the daughter of my people lightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. V. 15. They are put to shame because they have done abomination, yet they take not shame to themselves, neither know they disgrace; therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall stumble, hath Jahveh said."*

The threatening of v. 9 is closely connected with the foregoing. The Lord will make Jerusalem an uninhabited waste, because it will not take warning. The enemy will make a gleaning like vine-dressers, i.e., they will yet search out eve that which is left of the people, and crush it or carry it captive. This still sterner threat does come into contradiction with the repeated pledge, that Israel is not to be wholly extirpated, not to be made an utter end of (Jeremiah 4:27; 5:10, 18). For even at the gleanings odd clusters are left, which are not noticed or set store by. The words convey the idea that the enemy will not have done with it after one devastating campaign, but will repeat his inroads. עוֹלֵל is construed with the accus. of the vineyard in Lev. 19:10. The "remnant of Israel" is not the kingdom of Judah at large, but Judah already reduced by judgments. In the second clause the idea of the first is repeated in the form of a command to the gleaners. The command is to be looked on as addressed to the enemy by God; and this turn of the expression serves to put the thought with a positiveness that excludes the faintest doubt. To bring back the hand means: yet again to turn it, stretch it out against a person or thing; cf. Amos 1:8, Isa. 1:25. סְלִסְלוֹת is not baskets, like סְלִים, Gen. 40:16, but like וְזֵלִים, Isa. 18:5, vine-shoots, prop. waving twigs, like תְּלֵתִים, Cant. 5:11, from סָלַל = וְזֵל and תָּלַל, wave (Ew., Hitz.).

**Jeremiah 6:10f.** Well might Jeremiah warn the people once more (cf. v. 8), in order to turn sore judgment away from it; but it cannot and will not hear, for it is utterly hardened. Yet can he not be silent; for he is so filled with the fury of God, that he must pour it forth on the depraved race. This is our view of the progress of the

thought in these verses; whereas Hitz. and Graf make what is said in v. 11 refer to the utterance of the dreadful revelation received in v. 9. But this is not in keeping with "testify that they may hear," or with the unmistakable contrast between the pouring out of the divine fury, v. 11, and the testifying that they may hear, v. 10. Just because their ear is uncircumcised so that they cannot hear, is it in vain to speak to them for the purpose of warning them; and the prophet has no alternative left but to pour out on the deaf and seared people that fury of the Lord with which he is inwardly filled. The question: to whom should I speak? etc. (לַעֲלֹמָי, as 111:2 and often), is not to be taken as a question to God, but only as a rhetorical turn of the thought, that all further speaking or warning is in vain. "Testify," lay down testimony by exhibiting the sin and the punishment it brings with it. "That they may hear," *ut audiant*, the Chald. has well paraphrased: *ut accipiant doctrinam*. Uncircumcised is their ear, as it were covered with a foreskin, so that the voice of God's word cannot find its way in; cf. 5:24; 4:4. The second clause, introduced by הַגִּידָה, adduces the reason of their not being able to hear. The word of God is become a reproach to them; they are determined not to hearken to it, because it lashes their sins. V. 11 comes in adversatively: But the fury of the Lord drives him to speak. הַיְהוָה יִהְיֶה is not a holy ardour for Jahveh (Graf and many ancient comm.), but the wrath of God against the people, which the prophet cannot contain, i.e., keep to himself, but must pour out. Because they will not take correction, he must inflict the judgment upon them, not merely utter it. The imper. הִשָּׁבֵת is to be taken like הִשָּׁבֵת, v. 9, not as an expression of the irresistible necessity which, in spite of all his efforts against it, compels the prophet to pour forth, in a certain sense, the wrath of the Lord on all classes of the people by the very publishing of God's word (Graf); but it is the command of God, to be executed by him, as is shown by "for I stretch out mine hand," v. 12. The prophet is to

pour out the wrath of God by the proclamation of God's word, which finds its fulfilment in judgments of wrath; see on 1:10. Upon all classes of the people: the children that play in the street (cf. 9:20), the young men gathered together in a cheerful company, the men and women, old men and them that are full of days, i.e., those who have reached the furthest limit of old age. כִּי tells why the prophet is so to speak: for upon the whole population will God's wrath be poured out. לֹא־יִלְכָד, not, be taken captive, but, be taken, overtaken by the wrath, as in 8:9; cf. 1 Sam. 14:41.

**Jeremiah 6:12a.** V. 12a gives the result of being thus taken: their houses, fields, and wives will be handed over to others, descend to others. Wives are mentioned along with houses and fields, as in the commandment, Ex. 20:17; cf. Deut. 5:18. The loss of all one's possessions is mentioned in connection with reproof, following in v. 13, of greed and base avarice. The threatening is confirmed in v. 12b by the clause: for I (Jahveh) stretch my hand out, etc. Then in vv. 13 and 14 the cause of the judgment is adduced. The judgment falls upon all, for all, great and little, i.e., mean and powerful (cf. vv. 4, 5), go after base gain; and the teachers, who ought to lead the people on the true way (Isa. 30:21), sue deceit and dishonesty. They heal the breach of the daughter of my people, i.e., the infirmities and injuries of the state, after a light and frivolous fashion (הַנְּקֻלָּה is *partic. Niph. faem.*, and עַל is of the thing that covers another);—in this, namely, that they speak of peace and healing where there is no peace; that they do not uncover the real injuries so as to heal them thoroughly, but treat them as if they were trifling and in no way dangerous infirmities.

**Jeremiah 6:15.** For this behaviour they are put to shame, i.e., deceived in their hope. The perf. is prophetic, representing the matter as being equally certain as if it had been already realized. It cannot bear to be translated either: they should be ashamed (Ros., Umbr. after the Chald.), or: they would be ashamed (Ew.). The following grounding clause adduces the cause

of their being put to shame: because they have done abomination; and the next clauses bring in a contrast: yet on the contrary, shame and disgrace they know not; therefore on the day of visitation they will fall with the rest. When these verses are repeated in Jeremiah 8:12, the Niph. הִכְלִים is used in place of the Hiph. הִכְלִימוּ. It does not, however, follow from this that the Hiph. has here the force of the Niph., but only thus much, that the Hiph. is here used, not in a transitive, but in a simply active meaning: to have shame or disgrace. For פָּקְדוֹתַי with the relative omitted, time when I visit, we have in 8:12 the simpler form of the noun פְּקֻדָּתָם, as in 10:15; 46:21, and often. Such divergencies do not justify the accommodation of the present passage to these others, since on occasions of repetitions the expression in matters of subordinate importance is often varied. The perf. of the verb has here the force of the *fut. exact*.

**Jeremiah 6:16–21.** *The judgment cannot be turned aside by mere sacrifice without a change of heart.—V. 16. “Thus hath Jahveh said: Stand on the ways, and look, and ask after the everlasting paths, which (one) is the way of good, and walk therein; so shall ye find rest for your souls. But they say, We will not go. V. 17. And I have set over you watchmen, (saying): Hearken to the sound of the trumpet; but they say, We will not hearken. V. 18. Therefore hear, ye peoples, and know, thou congregation, what happens to them. V. 19. Hear, O earth! Behold, I bring evil on this people, the fruit of their thoughts; for to my words they have not hearkened, and at my law they have spurned. V. 20. To what end, then, is their incense coming to me from Sheba, and the good spice-cane from a far land? Your burnt-offerings are not a pleasure, and your slain-offerings are not grateful to me. V. 21. Therefore thus hath Jahveh said: Behold, I lay stumbling-blocks for this people, that thereon fathers and sons may stumble, at once the neighbour and his friend shall perish.”*

**Jeremiah 6:16f.** The Lord has not left any lack of instruction and warning. He has marked out for them the way of salvation in the history of

the ancient times. It is to this reference is made when they, in ignorance of the way to walk in, are called to ask after the everlasting paths. This thought is clothed thus: they are to step forth upon the ways, to place themselves where several ways diverge from one another, and inquire as to the everlasting paths, so as to discover which is the right way, and then on this they are to walk. נְתִיבוֹת עוֹלָם are paths that have been trod in the hoary time of old, but not all sorts of ways, good and bad, which they are to walk on indiscriminately, so that it may be discovered which of them is the right one (Hitz.). This meaning is not to be inferred from the fact, that in 18:15 everlasting paths are opposed to untrodden ways; indeed this very passage teaches that the everlasting ways are the right ones, from which through idolatry the people have wandered into unbeaten paths. Thus the paths of the old time are here the ways in which Israel’s godly ancestors have trod; meaning substantially, the patriarchs’ manner of thinking and acting. For the following question, “which is the way,” etc., does not mean, amongst the paths of old time to seek out that which, as the right one, leads to salvation, but says simply thus much: ask after the paths of the old time, so as thus to recognise the right way, and then, when ye have found it, to walk therein. דְּרֹךְ הַטּוֹב, not, the good way; for הַטּוֹב cannot be an objective appended to דְּרֹךְ, since immediately after, the latter word is construed in בָּהּ as *faem*. “The good” is the genitive dependent on “way:” way of the good, that leads to the good, to salvation. This way Israel might learn to know from the history of antiquity recorded in the Torah. Graf has brought the sense well out in this shape: “Look inquiringly backwards to ancient history (Deut. 32:7), and see how success and enduring prosperity forsook your fathers when they left the way prescribed to them by God, to walk in the ways of the heathen (Jeremiah 18:15); learn that there is but one way, the way of the fear of Jahveh, on which blessing and salvation are to be found (Jeremiah 32:39, 40).” Find (with 1



consec.), and find thus = so shall ye find; cf. Ew. § 347, *b*; Ges. § 130, 2. To “we will not go,” we may supply from the context: on the way of good.

**Jeremiah 6:17.** But God does not let the matter end here. He caused prophets to rise up amongst them, who called their attention to the threatening evil. Watchers are prophets, Ezek. 3:17, who stand upon the watch-tower to keep a lookout, Hab. 2:1, and to give the people warning, by proclaiming what they have seen in spirit. “Hearken to the sound,” etc., are not the words of the watchmen (prophets), for it is they who blow the trumpet, but the words of God; so that we have to supply, “and I said.” The comparison of the prophets to watchmen, who give the alarm of the imminent danger by means of the sound of the trumpet, involves the comparison of the prophets’ utterances to the clang of the signal-horn,—suggested besides by Amos 3:6.

**Jeremiah 6:18.** Judah being thus hardened, the Lord makes known to the nations what He has determined regarding it; cf. Mic. 1:2. The sense of “Know, thou congregation,” etc., is far from clear, and has been very variously given. Ros., Dahl., Maur., Umbr., and others, understand עֲדָה of the congregation or assembly of the foreign nations; but the word cannot have this meaning without some further qualifying word. Besides, a second mention of the nations is not suitable to the context. the congregation must be that of Israel. The only question can be, whether we are by this to think of the whole people (of Judah), (Chald, Syr., Ew., and others), or whether it is the company of the ungodly that is addressed, as in the phrase עֲדַת קָרָח (Hitz.). But there is little probability in the view, that the crew of the ungodly is addressed along with the nations and the earth. Not less open to debate is the construction of אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם. In any case little weight can be attached to Hitz.’s assumption, that אֶת is used only to mark out the אֲשֶׁר as relative pronoun: observe it, O company that is amidst them. The passages, 38:16 (*Chet.*), and Eccles. 4:3, where אֶת seems to have this force,

are different in kind; for a definite noun precedes, and to it the relation אֶת־אֲשֶׁר is subjoined. And then what, on this construction, is the reference of בָּם, *amidst them*? Hitz. has said nothing on this point. But it could only be referred to “peoples:” the company which is amidst the peoples; and this gives no reasonable sense. These three words can only be object to “know:” know what is amongst (in) them; or: what is or happens to them (against them). It has been taken in the first sense by Chald. (their sins), Umbr., Maur.: what happens in or amongst them; in the second by Ros., Dahl.: what I shall do against them. Ewald, again, without more ado, changes בָּם into בָּא: know, thou congregation, what is coming. By this certainly a suitable sense is secured; but there are no sufficient reasons for a change of the text, it is the mere expedient of embarrassment. All the ancient translators have read the present text; even the translation of the LXX: καὶ οἱ ποιμαίνοντες τὰ ποίμνια αὐτῶν, has been arrived at by a confounding of letters (רעִי עֲדָר with דעִי עֲדָה). We understand “congregation” of Israel, i.e., not of the whole people of Judah, but of those to whom the title “congregation” was applicable, i.e., of the godly, small as their number might be. Accordingly, we are not to refer אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם to “peoples:” what is occurring amidst the peoples, viz., that they are coming to besiege Jerusalem, etc. (v. 3ff.). Nor is it to be referred to those in Judah who, according to vv. 16 and 17, do not walk in the right way, and will not give ear to the sound of the trumpet. The latter reference, acc. to which the disputed phrase would be translated: what will happen to them (against them), seems more feasible, and corresponds better to the parallelism of vv. 18 and 19, since this corresponds better to the parallelism of vv. 18 and 19, since this same phrase is then explained in v. 19 by: I bring evil upon this people.

**Jeremiah 6:19.** In v. 19 the evil is characterized as a punishment drawn down by them on themselves by means of the apposition: fruit of their thoughts. “Fruit of their thoughts,” not of

their deeds (Isa. 3:10), in order to mark the hostility of the evil heart towards God. God's law is put in a place of prominence by the turn of the expression: My law, and they spurned at it; cf. Ew. § 344, *b*, with 309, *b*.

**Jeremiah 6:20.** The people had no shortcoming in the matter of sacrifice in the temple; but in this service, as being mere outward service of works, the Lord has no pleasure, if the heart is estranged from Him, rebels against His commandments. Here we have the doctrine, to obey is better than sacrifice, 1 Sam. 15:22. The Lord desires that men do justice, exercise love, and walk humbly with Him, Mic. 6:8. Sacrifice, as *opus operatum*, is denounced by all the prophets: cf. Hos. 6:6, Amos 5:21ff., Isa. 1:11, Ps. 50:8ff. Incense from Sheba (see on Ezek. 27:22) was required partly for the preparation of the holy incense (Ex. 30:34), partly as an addition to the meat-offerings, Lev. 2:1, 15, etc. Good, precious cane, is the aromatic reed, *calamus odoratus* (Ex. 30:23), calamus from a far country,—namely, brought from India,—and used in the preparation of the anointing oil; see on Ex. 30:23. לְרִצּוֹן is from the language of the Torah; cf. Lev. 1:3ff., 22:19ff., Ex. 28:38; and with לֹא: not to well-pleasing, sc. before Jahveh, i.e., they cannot procure for the offerers the pleasure or favour of God. With לֹא עָרְבוּ לִי cf. Hos. 9:4.

**Jeremiah 6:21.** Therefore the Lord will lay stumbling-blocks before the people, whereby they all come to grief. The stumbling-blocks by which the people are to fall and perish, are the inroads, of the enemies, whose formidableness is depicted in v. 22ff. The idea of totality is realized by individual cases in “fathers and sons, neighbour and his friend.” יְהוָה belongs to the following clause, and not the *Keri*, but the *Cheth*. יֵאבֹדוּ, is the true reading. The *Keri* is formed after the analogy of 46:6 and 50:32; but it is unsuitable, since then we would require, as in the passages cited, to have נָפַל in direct connection with כָּשַׁל.

**Jeremiah 6:22–30.** *A distant, cruel people will execute the judgment, since Judah, under the trial, has proved to be worthless metal.—V. 22. “Thus hath Jahveh said: Behold, a people cometh from the land of the north, and a great nation raises itself from the furthest sides of the earth. V. 23. Bows and javelins they bear; cruel it is, and they have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and on horses they ride, equipped as a man for the war against thee, daughter of Zion. V. 24. We heard the rumour thereof: weak are our hands: anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail. V. 25. Go not forth into the field, and in the way walk not; for a sword hath the enemy, fear is all around. V. 26. O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and besprinkle thee with ashes; make mourning for an only son, butter lamentation: for suddenly shall the spoiler come upon us. V. 27. For a trier have I set thee among my people as a strong tower, that thou mightest know and try their way. V. 28. They are all revolvers of revolvers; go about as slanderers; brass and iron; they are all dealing corruptingly. V. 29. Burned are the bellows by the fire, at an end is the lead; in vain they melt and melt; and wicked ones are not separated. V. 30. Rejected silver they call them, for Jahveh hath rejected them.”*

In v. 22 the stumbling-blocks of v. 21 are explained. At the end of this discourse yet again the invasion of the enemy from the far north is announced, cf. 4:13 and 5:15, and its terribleness is portrayed with new colours. The farther the land is from which the enemy comes, the more strange and terrible he appears to the imagination. The farthest (hindmost) sides of the earth (cf. 25:32) is only a heightening of the idea: land of the north, or of the far distance (Jeremiah 5:15); in other words, the far uttermost north (cf. Isa. 14:13). In this notice of their home, Hitz. finds a proof that the enemies were the Scythians, not the Chaldeans; since, acc. to Ezek. 38:6, 15, and 39:2, Gog, i.e., The Scythians, come “from the sides of the north.” But “sides of the earth” is not a geographical term for any particular northern country, but only for very remote lands; and that the Chaldeans were reckoned as

falling within this term, is shown by the passage 31:8, according to which Israel is to be gathered again from the land of the north and from the sides of the earth. Here any connection with Scythia in “sides of the earth” is not to be thought of, since prophecy knows nothing of a captivity of Israel in Scythia, but regards Assur and Babylon alone as the lands of the exile of Israelites and Jews. As weapons of the enemy then are mentioned bows (cf. 4:29; 5:16), and the javelin or lance (בִּידֹן, not shield; see on 1 Sam. 17:6). It is cruel, knows no pity, and is so numerous and powerful, that its voice, i.e., the tumult of its approach, is like the roaring of the sea; cf. Isa. 5:30; 17:12. On horses they ride; cf. 4:13; 8:16, Hab. 1:8. עָרֹךְ in the singular, answering to “cruel it is,” points back to גֹּי or עַם. כְּאִישׁ אָחָד (Ros.), but for כְּאִישׁ מְלָחָמָה, cf. 1 Sam. 17:33, Isa. 42:13; and the genitive is omitted only because of the לְמַלְחָמָה coming immediately after (Graf). “Against thee” is dependent on עָרֹךְ: equipped as a warrior is equipped for the war, against the daughter of Zion. In vv. 24–26 are set forth the terrors and the suspense which the appearance of the foe will spread abroad. In v. 24 the prophet, as a member of the people, gives utterance to its feelings. As to the sense, the clauses are to be connected thus: As soon as we hear the rumour of the people, i.e., of its approach, our hands become feeble through dread, all power to resist vanishes: cf. Isa. 13:7; and for the metaphor of travail, Isa. 13:8, Mic. 4:9, etc. In v. 28 the inhabitants of Jerusalem, personified as the daughter of Zion, are warned not to go forth of the city into the field or about the country, lest they fall into the enemies’ hands and be put to death. מְגֹרַם מְסֻבִּיב, often used by Jeremiah, cf. 20:3, 10; 46:5; 49:29, and, as 20:10 shows, taken from Ps. 31:14. Fear or terrors around, i.e., on all sides danger and destruction threaten.

**Jeremiah 6:26.** Sorest affliction will seize the inhabitants of Jerusalem. As to “daughter of my people,” cf. 4:11; on “gird thee with sackcloth,”

cf. 4:8. To bestrew the head with ashes is a mode of expressing the greatest affliction; cf. Ezek. 27:30, Mic. 1:10. אֶבֶל יָחִיד as in Amos 8:10, Zech. 12:10.

The closing verses of this discourse (27–30) are regarded by Hitz. as a meditation upon the results of his labours. “He was to try the people, and he found it to be evil.” But in this he neglects the connection of these verses with the preceding. From the conclusion of v. 30, “Jahveh hath rejected them,” we may see that they stand connected in matter with the threatening of the spoiler; and the fact is put beyond a doubt when we compare together the greater subdivisions of the present discourse. The vv. 27–30 correspond in substance with the view given in 5:30, 31 of the moral character of the people. As that statement shows the reasons for the threatening that God must take vengeance on such a people (Jeremiah 5:29), so what is said in the verses before us explain why it is threatened that a people approaching from the north will execute judgment without mercy on the daughter of Zion. For these verses do not tell us only the results of the prophet’s past labours, but they at the same time indicate that his further efforts will be without effect. The people is like copper and iron, unproductive of either gold or silver; and so the smelting process is in vain. The illustration and the thing illustrated are not strictly discriminated in the statement. בָּחוּן is *adject. verb.* with active force: he that tries metal, that by smelting separates the slag from the gold and silver ore; cf. Zech. 13:9, Job 23:10. מְבַצֵּר creates a difficulty, and is very variously understood. The ancient comm. have interpreted it, according to 1:18, as either in a fortress, or as a fortress. So the Chald., changing בחון for בחור: *electum dedi te in populo meo, in urbe munita forti.* Jerome: *datur propheta populo incredulo probator robustus, quod ebraice dicitur מבצר, quod vel munitum juxta Aquil., vel clausum atque circumdatum juxta Symm. et LXX sonat.* The extant text of the LXX has ἐν λαοῖς δεδοκιμασμένοις. Following the usage of the language, we are justified only in

taking מְבַצֵּר as apposition to בְּחוֹן, or to the suffix in נְתַתִּידָהּ; in which case Luther's connection of it with עַמִּי, "among my people, which is so hard," will appear to be impossible. But again, it has been objected, not without reason, that the reference of "fortress" to Jeremiah is here opposed to the context, while in 1:18 it falls well in with it; consequently other interpretations have been attempted. Gaab, Maur., Hitz., have taken note of the fact that בְּצֹר occurs in Job 36:19, like בְּצֹר in the signification of gold; they take מְבַצֵּר as a contraction for מִן בְּצֹר, and expound: without gold, i.e., although then was there no gold, to try for which was thy task. To this view Graf has objected: the testing would be wholly purposeless, if it was already declared beforehand that there was no noble metal in the people. But this objection is not conclusive; for the testing could only have as its aim to exhibit the real character of the people, so as to bring home to the people's apprehension what was already well known to God. These are weightier considerations: 1. We cannot make sure of the meaning gold-ore for בְּצֹר by means of Job 36:19, since the interpretation there is open to dispute; and בְּצֹר, Job 22:24, does not properly mean gold, but unworked ore, though in its connection with the context we must understand virgin gold and silver ore in its natural condition. Here, accordingly, we would be entitled to translate only: without virgin ore, native metal. 2. The choice of a word so unusual is singular, and the connection of מְבַצֵּר with עַמִּי is still very harsh. Yet less satisfactory is the emendation defended by J. D. Mich., Dahl, Ew., and Graf, מְבַצֵּר: "for a trier have I made thee among my people, for a separator;" for בְּצֹר has in Heb. only the meaning cut off and fortify, and the Pi. occurs in Isa. 22:10 and Jeremiah 51:53 in the latter meaning, whereas the signif. separate, discriminate, can be maintained neither from Hebrew nor Arabic usage. The case being so, it seems to us that the interpretation acc. to 1:18

has most to be said for it: To be a trier have I set thee amid my people "as a strong tower;" and to this Ges., Dietr. in *Lex. s.v.*, adhere.

**Jeremiah 6:28.** V. 28 gives a statement as to the moral character of the people. "Revolters of revolters" is a kind of superlative, and סָרְרִי is to be derived from סָרַר, not from סוּר, perverse of perverse; or, as Hitz., imitating the Heb. phrase, rebels of the rebellious. Going about as slanderers, see on Lev. 19:16, in order to bring others into difficulties; cf. Ezek. 22:9. To this is subjoined the figurative expression: brass and iron, i.e., ignoble metal as contrasted with gold and silver, cf. Ezek. 22:18; and to this, again, the unfigurative statement: they are all dealing corruptingly. מְשַׁחֲתִים, cf. Isa. 1:4, Deut. 31:29.

There is no sufficient reason for joining בְּלָם with the preceding: brass and iron, as Hitz. and Graf do in defiance of the accents.

**Jeremiah 6:29.** The trial of the people has brought about no purification, no separation of the wicked ones. The trial is viewed under the figure of a long-continued but resultless process of smelting. נָחַר, Niph. from חָרַר, to be burnt, scorched, as in Ezek. 15:4. מְאֻשָּׁתָם is to be broken up, as in the *Keri*, into two words: מְאֻשׁ and תָּם (from תָּמַם). For there does not occur any feminine form אֻשָּׁה from אָשׁ, nor any plural אֻשֹׁת (even אֻשָּׁה forms the plur. אֻשִּׁים), so as to admit of our reading מְאֻשָּׁתָם or מְאֻשָּׁתָם. Nor would the plur., if there were one, be suitable; Ew.'s assertion that אֻשֹׁת means flames of fire is devoid of all proof. We connect מְאֻשׁ with what precedes: Burnt are the bellows with fire, at an end is the lead. Others attach "by the fire" to what follows: By the fire is the lead consumed. The thought is in either case the same, only תָּם is not the proper word for: to be consumed. Sense: the smelting has been carried on so perseveringly, that the bellows have been scorched by the heat of the fire, and the lead added in order to get the ore into fusion is used up; but they have gone on smelting quite in

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vain. פָּרַץ with indefinite subject, and the *infin. absol.* added to indicate the long duration of the experiment. In the last clause of the verse the result is mentioned in words without a figure: The wicked have not been separated out (prop., torn asunder from the mass).

**Jeremiah 6:30.** The final statement of the case: They call them (the whole people) rejected silver, i.e., they are recognised as such; for Jahveh has rejected them, has given over trying to make anything of them.

## Jeremiah 7

### Ch. 7–10.—The Vanity of Putting Trust in the Temple and in the Sacrificial Service, and the Way to Safety and Life

**Jeremiah 7–10.** This discourse divides itself into three sections. Starting with the people's confident reliance in the possession of the temple and the legal sacrificial worship, Jeremiah in the first section, by pointing to the destruction of Shiloh, where in the old time the sanctuary of the ark of the covenant had been, shows that Jerusalem and Judah will not escape the fate of Shiloh and the kingdom of Ephraim, in case they persist in their stiffneckedness against the Lord their God (Jeremiah 7:1–8:3). For the confirmation of this threatening he goes on, in the second section, further to tell of the people's determined resistance to all reformation, and to set forth the terrible visitation which hardened continuance in sin draws down on itself (Jeremiah 8:4–9:21). To the same end he finally, in the third section, points out the means of escape from impending destruction, showing that the way to safety and life lies in acknowledging the Lord as the only, everlasting, and almighty God, and in seeing the nothingness of the false gods; and, as the fruit of such knowledge, he inculcates the fear of the Lord, and self-humiliation under His mighty hand (Jeremiah 9:22–10:25).

This discourse also was not uttered at any one particular time before the people in the temple, and in the shape in which it comes before us; but it has been gathered into one uniform

whole, out of several oral addresses delivered in the temple by Jeremiah upon various occasions in the days of Josiah. According to Jeremiah 26, Jeremiah, at the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, and in the court of the temple before the people, uttered the threatening that if they would not hear the words addressed to them by the prophets, nor reform their lives, the Lord would make the temple like Shiloh, and make the city a curse to all nations. For this speech he was found worthy of death by the priests and false prophets, and was saved only through the interference of the princes of the people. Now the present discourse opposes to the people's vain confidence in the temple the solemn warning that the temple will share the fate of Shiloh; and hence many commentators, especially Graf and Näg., have inferred the identity of this with the discourse in Jeremiah 26, and have referred its composition to the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign. But the agreement of the two chapters on this one point is not sufficient to justify such an inference. Jeremiah is wont often to repeat his leading thoughts in his discourses; and so it is not unlikely that more than once, during the eighteen years of his ministry under Josiah, he may have held up the fate of Shiloh and the sanctuary there, as a warning to the people which built its confidence on the possession of the temple and the performance of the legal cultus. If the foundation even of the first section of the present discourse were to be found in that given in Jeremiah 26, taken in connection with the impression it made on the priests and prophets, with the violent feeling it excited, and the storm against Jeremiah which it called forth, then certainly the continuation of this discourse from 7:16 onwards would have been something different from what we find it. In writing down the discourse, Jeremiah would certainly not have passed immediately from threatening the people with the fate of Shiloh to the repudiation of all intercessory prayers, and to the statement there made as to the sacrificial service. This we mention without entering on the discussion of the other portions of the discourse. In the

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whole of the rest of the discourse, as continued Jeremiah 8–10, there is not the least trace of hostility against Jeremiah on the part of priests or people, or any hint of anything that would carry us beyond the time of Josiah into the reign of Jehoiakim.

**Jeremiah 7:1–8:3.** Warning against a False Trust in the Temple and the Sacrificial Service.—The temple does not afford protection from the threatened punishment. If Judah does not change its manner of life, the temple will suffer the fate of Shiloh, and Judah will, like Ephraim, be rejected by the Lord (vv. 1–15). Neither intercession on behalf of the corrupt race, nor the multitude of its burnt and slain offerings, will turn aside from Jerusalem the visitation of wrath (vv. 16–28); for the Lord has cast away the hardened sinners on account of their idolatry, and will make Jerusalem and Judah a field of death (v. 29–8:3).

**Jeremiah 7:1–15.** *The vanity of trusting in the temple.*—V. 1. *“The word that came to Jeremiah from Jahveh, saying, V. 2. Stand in the gate of the house of Jahveh, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of Jahveh, all ye of Judah, that enter these gates to worship before Jahveh: V. 3. Thus hath spoken Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel, Make your ways and your doings good, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. V. 4. Trust ye not in lying words, when they say, The temple of Jahveh, the temple of Jahveh, the temple of Jahveh, is this. V. 5. But if ye thoroughly make your ways good, and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute right amongst one another; V. 6. Oppress not stranger, fatherless, and widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither follow after other gods to your hurt; V. 7. Then I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land which I have given unto your fathers, from eternity unto eternity. V. 8. Behold, ye trust in lying words, though they profit not. V. 9. How? to steal, to murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and offer odours to Baal, and to walk after other gods whom ye know not? V. 10. And then ye come and stand before my face in this house, upon which my name is named, and think, We are saved to do all these abominations. V. 11. Is then this house become a den or murderers,*

*over which my name is named, in your eyes? I too, behold, have seen it, saith Jahveh. V. 12. For go ye now to may place which was at Shiloh, where I formerly caused my name to dwell, and see what I have done unto it for the wickedness of my people Israel. V. 13. And now, because ye do all these deeds, saith Jahve, and I have spoken to you, speaking from early morning on, and ye have not heard; and I have called you, and ye have not answered; V. 14. Therefore I do unto this house, over which my name is named, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I have given to you and to your fathers, as I have done unto Shiloh. V. 15. And cast you away from my face, as I have cast away all your brethren, the whole seed of Ephraim.”*

**Jeremiah 7:2.** The gate of the temple into which the prophet was to go and stand, is doubtless one of the three gates of the inner or upper court, in which he could stand and address the people gathered before him, in the outer court; perhaps the same in which Baruch read Jeremiah’s prophecies to the people, 36:10 (Schmid, Hitz.). The gates through which the people entered to worship are those of the outer court. The form of address: All Judah, ye who enter, etc., warrant us in assuming that Jeremiah delivered this discourse at one of the great annual festivals, when the people were wont to gather to Jerusalem from the length and breadth of the land.

**Jeremiah 7:3.** V. 3 contains the central idea of the discourse: it is only morally good endeavours and deeds that give the people a sure title to a long lease of the land. הַיְטִיב דְרָךְ is not merely, amend one’s conduct; but, make one’s way good, i.e., lead a good life. The “ways” mean the tendency of life at large, the “doings” are the individual manifestations of that tendency; cf. 18:11; 26:13. “In this place,” i.e., in the land that I have given to your fathers; cf. v. 8 and 14:13 with v. 15, 24:5, 6. Positive exhortation to a pure life is followed by negative dehortation from putting trust in the illusion: The temple, etc. The threefold repetition of the same word is the most marked way of laying very great emphasis upon it; cf.

22:29, Isa. 6:3. "These," these halls, the whole complex mass of buildings (Hitz.), as in 2 Chron. 8:11; and here הַמִּקְדָּשׁ has the force of the neuter; cf. Ew. § 318, *b*. The meaning of this emphatic way of mentioning the temple of the Lord is, in this connection, the following: Jerusalem cannot be destroyed by enemies, because the Lord has consecrated for the abode of His name that temple which is in Jerusalem; for the Lord will not give His sanctuary, the seat of His throne, to be a prey to the heathen, but will defend it, and under its protection we too may dwell safely. In the temple of the Lord we have a sure pledge for unbroken possession of the land and the maintenance of the kingdom. Cf. the like discourse in Mic. 3:11, "Jahveh is in our midst, upon us none evil can come." This passage likewise shows that the "lying words" quoted are the sayings of the false prophets, whereby they confirmed the people in their secure sinfulness; the mass of the people at the same time so making these sayings their own as to lull themselves into the sense of security.

**Jeremiah 7:5.** Over against such sayings Jeremiah puts that which is the indispensable condition of continued sojourn in the land. כִּי, v. 5, after a preceding negative clause, means: but on the contrary. This condition is a life morally good, that shall show itself in doing justice, in putting away all unrighteousness, and in giving up idolatry. With אַם begins a list of the things that belong to the making of one's ways and doings good. The adjunct to מִשְׁפָּט, right, "between the man and his neighbour," shows that the justice meant is that they should help one man to his rights against another. The law attached penalties to the oppression of those who needed protection—strangers, orphans, widows; cf. Ex. 22:21ff., Deut. 24:17ff., 27:19; and the prophets often denounce the same; cf. Isa. 1:17, 23; 10:2, Ezek. 22:7, Zech. 7:10, Mal. 3:5, Ps. 94:6, etc. אֶל־תִּשְׁפָּכוּ for לֹא־תִּי אֵת is noteworthy, but is not a simple equivalent for it. Like οὐ μὴ, אֶל implies a deeper interest on the part of the speaker, and the sense here is: and ye be really determined not to shed

innocent blood (cf. Ew. § 320, *b*). Hitz.'s explanation, that אֶל is equal to לֹא אֲשֶׁר לֹא or אִם לֹא, and that it here resumes again the now remote אַם, is overturned by the consideration that אֶל is not at the beginning of the clause; and there is not the slightest probability in Graf's view, that the אֶל must have come into the text through the copyist, who had in his mind the similar clause in 22:3. Shedding innocent blood refers in part to judicial murders (condemnation of innocent persons), in part to violent attacks made by the kings on prophets and godly men, such as we hear of in Manasseh's case, 2 Kings 21:16. In this place (v. 7), i.e., first and foremost Jerusalem, the metropolis, where moral corruption had its chief seat; in a wider sense, however, it means the whole kingdom of Judah (vv. 3 and 7). "To your hurt" belongs to all the above-mentioned transgressions of the law; cf. 25:7. "In the land," etc., explains "this place." "From eternity to eternity" is a rhetorically heightened expression for the promise given to the patriarchs, that God would give the land of Canaan to their posterity for an everlasting possession, Gen. 17:8; although here it belongs not to the relative clause, "that I gave," but to the principal clause, "cause you to dwell," as in Ex. 32:13.

**Jeremiah 7:8.** In v. 8 there is a recurrence to the warning of v. 4, under the form of a statement of fact; and in vv. 9–11 it is expanded to this effect: The affirmation that the temple of the Lord affords protection is a sheer delusion, so long as all God's commandments are being audaciously broken. לִבְלֹתֵי הוֹעֵל, lit., to no profiting: ye rely on lying words, without there being any possibility that they should profit you.

**Jeremiah 7:9.** The query before the *infin. absol.* is the expression of wonder and indignation; and the infinitives are used with special emphasis for the *verb. fin.*: How? to steal, kill, etc., is your practice, and then ye come ...

**Jeremiah 7:10.** Breaches of almost all the commandments are specified; first the eighth,

sixth, and seventh of the second table, and then two commandments of the first table; cf. Hos. 4:2. Swearing falsely is an abuse of God's name. In "offer odours to Baal," Baal is the representation of the false gods. The phrase, *other* gods, points to the first commandment, Ex. 20:3; and the relative clause: whom ye knew not, stands in opposition to: I am Jahveh your God, who hath brought you out of Egypt. They knew not the other gods, because they had not made themselves known to them in benefits and blessings; cf. 19:4. While they so daringly break all God's commands, they yet come before His face in the temple which Jahveh has chosen to reveal His name there. אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא וְגו' is not: which bears my name (Hitz.); or: on which my name is bestowed, which is named after me (Graf). The name of Jahveh is the revelation of Himself, and the meaning is: on which I have set my glory, in which I have made my glorious being known; see on Deut. 28:10 and Amos 9:12. We are saved, sc. from all the evils that threaten us, i.e., we are concealed, have nothing to fear; cf. Ezek. 14:16, 18, Amos 3:12. The perfect *denotat firmam persuasionem incolumitatis*. Ch. B. Mich. By changing נִצְּלָנוּ into נִצְּלָנוּ, as Ewald, following the Syr., reads, the sense is weakened. לְמַעַן עֲשׂוּת וְגו' is neither: as regards what we have done, nor: because = while or whereas ye have done (Hitz.), but: in order to do that ye may do. לְמַעַן with the *infin.*, as with the *perf.*, has never the signif., because of or in reference to something past and done, but always means, with the view of doing something; English: to the end that. The thought is simply this: Ye appear in my temple to sacrifice and worship, thinking thus to appease my wrath and turn aside all punishment, that so ye may go on doing all these (in v. 9 enumerated) abominations. By frequenting the temple, they thought to procure an indulgence for their wicked ongoings, not merely for what they had already done, but for what they do from day to day.

**Jeremiah 7:11.** To expose the senselessness of such an idea, God asks if they take the temple

for a den of robbers? "In your eyes" goes with הֲיָיָה: is it become in your eyes, i.e., do ye take it for such? If thieves, murderers, adulterers, etc., gathered to the temple, and supposed that by appearing there they procured the absolution of their sins, they were in very act declaring the temple to be a robbers' retreat. פָּרִיץ, the violent, here: the house-breaker, robber. I, too, have seen, sc. that the temple is made by you a den of thieves, and will deal accordingly. This completion of the thought appears from the context.

**Jeremiah 7:12.** The temple is to undergo the fate of the former sanctuary at Shiloh. This threat is introduced by a grounding כִּי, for. This *for* refers to the central idea of the last verse, that they must not build their expectations on the temple, hold it to be a pledge for their safety. For since the Lord has seen how they have profaned and still profane it, He will destroy it, as the sanctuary at Shiloh was destroyed. The rhetorical mode of utterance, Go to the place, etc., contributes to strengthen the threatening. They were to behold with their own eyes the fate of the sanctuary at Shiloh, that so they might understand that the sacredness of a place does not save it from overthrow, if men have desecrated it by their wickedness. We have no historical notice of the event to which Jeremiah refers. At Shiloh, now *Seilân* (in ruins) the Mosaic tabernacle was erected after the conquest of Canaan (Josh. 18:1), and there it was still standing in the time of the high priest Eli, 1 Sam. 1:1-3; but the ark, which had fallen into the hands of the Philistines at the time of their victory (1 Sam. 4), was not brought back to the tabernacle when it was restored again to the Israelites. In the reign of Saul we find the tabernacle at Nob (1 Sam. 21:2ff.). The words of v. 12 intimate, that at that time "the place of God at Shiloh" was lying in ruins. As Hitz. justly remarks, the destruction of it is not to be understood of its gradual decay after the removal of the ark (1 Sam. 4:11; 7:1ff.); the words imply a devastation or destruction, not of the place of God at Shiloh only, but of the place Shiloh itself.



This is clearly seen from v. 14: I will do unto this house (the temple), and the place which I gave to your fathers, as I have done unto Shiloh. This destruction did not take place when the Assyrians overthrew the kingdom of the ten tribes, but much earlier. It may, indeed, be gathered from Judg. 18:20, 31 (see the comment. on this passage), that it was as early as the time of Saul, during a Syrian invasion. By the destruction of the place of God at Shiloh, we need not understand that the tabernacle itself, with its altar and other sacred furniture (except the ark), was swept away. Such a view is contradicted by the statement in 1 Chron. 21:29, 2 Chron. 1:3, according to which the tabernacle built by Moses in the wilderness was still standing at Gibeon in David's time, and in the beginning of Solomon's reign; cf. with 2 Chron. 1:5, when the brazen altar of burnt-offering is expressly mentioned as that which was made by Bezaleel. Hence it is clear that the Mosaic tabernacle, with its altar of burnt-offering, had been preserved, and consequently that it must have been moved first from Shiloh to Nob, and then, when Saul sacked this town (1 Sam. 22), to Gibeon. The destruction of the place of God in Shiloh must accordingly have consisted in this, that not only was the tabernacle with the altar carried off from thence, but the buildings necessary in connection with the maintenance of the public worship which surrounded it were swept away when the city was plundered, so that of the place of the sanctuary nothing was left remaining. It is clear that about the tabernacle there were various buildings which, along with the tabernacle and its altars, constituted "the house of God at Shiloh;" for in 1 Sam. 3 we are told that Samuel slept in the temple of Jahveh (v. 3), and that in the morning he opened the doors of the house of God (v. 15). Hence we may gather, that round about the court of the tabernacle there were buildings erected, which were used partly as a dwelling-place for the officiating priests and Levites, and partly for storing up the heave-offerings, and for preparing the thank-offerings at the sacrificial meals (1 Sam. 2:11–21). This whole system of

buildings surrounding the tabernacle, with its court and altar of burnt-offering, was called the "house of God;" from which name Graf erroneously inferred that there was at Shiloh a temple like the one in Jerusalem. The wickedness of my people, is the Israelites' fall into idolatry in Eli's time, because of which the Lord gave up Israel into the power of the Philistines and other enemies (Judg. 13:1; cf. 1 Sam. 7:3). "These deeds" (v. 13) are the sins named in v. 9. וְאֵדְבָר is a continuation of the infinitive sentence, and is still dependent on יַעַן. Speaking from early morn, i.e., speaking earnestly and unremittingly; cf. Gesen. § 131, 3, b. I have called you, i.e., to repent, and ye have not answered, i.e., have not repented and turned to me.

**Jeremiah 7:15.** I cast you out from my sight, i.e., drive you forth amongst the heathen; cf. Deut. 29:27; and with the second clause cf. 2 Kings 17:20. The whole seed of Ephraim is the ten tribes.

**Jeremiah 7:16–28.** *This punishment will be turned aside, neither by intercession, because the people refuses to give up its idolatry, nor by sacrifice, which God desires not, because for long they have turned to Him the back and not the face, and have not hearkened to His words.—V. 16. "But thou, pray not for this people, and lift not up for them cry and prayer; and urge me not, for I do not hear thee. V. 17. Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? V. 18. The sons gather sticks, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the Queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, to provoke me. V. 19. Provoke they me, saith Jahveh, not themselves, to the shaming of their face? V. 20. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jahveh, Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out on this place, upon man, upon beast, upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and shall burn, and not be quenched. V. 21. Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Your burnt-offerings add to your slain-offerings, and eat flesh. V. 22. For I spake not with your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I*

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brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning the matters of burnt-offering or slain-offering. V. 23. But this word commanded I them, saying, Harken to my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk in the way which I command you, that it may be well with you. V.24. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, and walked in the counsels, in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and turned to me the back, and not the face. V. 25. Since the day that your fathers went forth of the land of Egypt until this day, I sent to you all my servants the prophets, daily from early morn sending them; V. 26. But they hearkened not to me, nor inclined their ear, and were stiffnecked, and did worse than their fathers. V. 27. And though thou speakest all these words unto them, yet will they not hearken unto thee; and though thou callest unto them, yet will they not answer thee. V. 28. Thus speak to them: This is the people that hearken not unto the voice of Jahveh its God, and that receive not correction. Perished is faithfulness, cut off from their mouth."

The purport of v. 16, that God will not suffer Himself to be moved by any entreaties to revoke the doom pronounced on the wicked people, is expressed by way of a command from God to the prophet not to pray for the people. That Jeremiah did sometimes pray thus, however, we see from 14:19ff. (cf. 18:20), when to his prayer the same answer is given as we have here, and all intercession for the corrupt race is characterized as in vain. The second clause: lift not up for them crying, i.e., supplicatory prayer, expresses the same, only more strongly; while the third clause: urge me not, cuts off all hope of success from even the most importunate intercession. The reason for this command to desist is shown in v. 17, by a reference to the idolatry which was openly practised throughout the land by young and old, men and women. Each takes part according to strength and capacity: the sons gather wood together, the fathers set the fire in order, etc. The deity so zealously worshipped by the people is called the Queen of heaven, and is mentioned only by Jeremiah. Besides here, there is reference to her in 44:17, where we see

that her worship was very diligently cultivated, and that she was adored as the bestower of earthly possessions. (מְלֻכָּת is *stat. constr.*, either from the Chald. form מְלֻכָּה, or from מְלִיכָה, after the analogy of גְּבֻרָת, *st. constr.* of גְּבִירָה; but perhaps it has מְלֻכָּת in *stat. abs.*) This worship was combined with that of the stars, the host of heaven, which especially prevailed under Manasseh (2 Kings 21:5). Thence it may be presumed that the Queen of heaven was one of the deities who came to Western Asia with the Assyrians, and that she corresponds to the Assyrian-Persian *Tanis* and *Artemis*, who in the course of time took the place once occupied by the closely related Phoenician *Astarte*. She is originally a deification of the moon, the Assyrian *Selene* and *Virgo caelestis*, who, as supreme female deity, was companion to *Baal-Moloch* as sun-god; cf. Movers, *Phönizier*, i. S. 623ff. With this accords the statement of Steph. Byz., that σελήνη is also πήπανόν τι τῷ ἄστρῳ παραπλήσιον. The offerings which, acc. to this verse and Jeremiah 44:19, were brought to her, are called כְּבִינִים, a word which would appear to have come to the Hebrews along with the foreign cultus. By the LXX it was Grecized into χαῶνας, for which we find in glossators and *codd.* καῶνας and χαβῶνας. They were, acc. to the *Etymol. magn.* and Suidas, ἄρτοι ἐλαίῳ ἀναφουραθέντες or λάχανα ὄπτα (? cooked vegetables); acc. to Jerome, χαῶνας, *quas nos placentas interpretati sumus*. In any case, they were some kind of sacrificial cakes, which Vitruvius put alongside of the πόπανα of Aristophanes and Lucian; cf. the various interpretations in Schleussner, *Lexic. in LXX s.v. χαῶν*. These cakes were kindled on the altar (cf. מִקְטָרִים, 44:19) as a kind of *Minchah* (meat-offering), and with this *Minchah* a libation or drink-offering (נְסֻכִים) was combined. דְּשָׁה corresponds to לְעֹשֶׂהוּ, so that לְ has to be repeated; cf. 44:19, 25, where we find libations poured out to the Queen of heaven. In the 18th verse the expression is generalized into "other gods," with reference to the fact that the service of the

Queen of heaven was but one kind of idolatry along with others, since other strange gods were worshipped by sacrifices and libations. To provoke me; cf. Deut. 31:29; 32:16, etc.

**Jeremiah 7:19.** But instead of vexing Him (Jahveh) they rather vex themselves, inasmuch as God causes the consequences of their idolatry to fall on their own head. אָנָּח is used reflexively: *se ipsos*; cf. Ew. § 314, c; Gesen. § 124, 1, b. For the cause of the shame of their face, i.e., to prepare for themselves the shame of their face, to cover their face with shame; cf. 3:25.—For (v. 20) because of this idolatrous work, the wrath of the Lord will pour itself over the land in the consuming fire of war (cf. 4:4 with 5:17, Nah. 1:6, etc.), so as to cut off men and beasts, trees and fruit.

**Jeremiah 7:21.** The multiplication of burnt and slain offerings will not avert judgment. Your burnt-offerings add to your slain-offerings. In the case of the זֶבַח־הַיִּם, the greater part of the flesh was eaten at the sacrificial meals by those who brought them. Along with these they might put the burnt-offerings, which were wont to be burnt entire upon the altar, and eat them also. The words express indignation at the sacrifices of those who were so wholly alienated from God. God had so little pleasure in their sacrifices, that they might eat of the very burnt-offerings.

To show the reason of what is here said, Jeremiah adds, in v. 22, that God had not commanded their fathers, when He led them out of Egypt, in the matter of burnt and slain offerings, but this word: "Hearken to my voice, and I will be your God," etc. The *Keri* הוֹצִיאִי is a true exegesis, acc. to 11:4; 34:13, but is unnecessary; cf. Gen. 24:30; 25:26, etc. This utterance has been erroneously interpreted by the majority of commentators, and has been misused by modern criticism to make good positions as to the late origin of the Pentateuch. To understand it aright, we must carefully take into consideration not merely the particular terms of the present passage, but the context as well. In the two verses as they stand there is the

antithesis: Not עוֹלָה וְזֶבַח did God speak and give command to the fathers, when He led them out of Egypt, but commanded the word: Hearken to my voice, etc. The last word immediately suggests Ex. 19:5: If ye will hearken to my voice, then shall ye be my peculiar treasure out of all peoples; and it points to the beginning of the law-giving, the decalogue, and the fundamental principles of the law of Israel, in Ex. 20–23, made known in order to the conclusion of the covenant in 24, after the arrival at Sinai of the people marching from Egypt. The promise: Then will I be your God, etc., is not given in these precise terms in Ex. 19:5ff.; but it is found in the account of Moses' call to be the leader of the people in their exodus, Ex. 6:7; and then repeatedly in the promises of covenant blessings, if Israel keep all the commandments of God, Lev. 26:12, Deut. 26:18. Hence it is clear that Jeremiah had before his mind the taking of the covenant, but did not bind himself closely to the words of Ex. 19:5, adopting his expression from the passages of Leviticus and Deuteronomy which refer to and reaffirm that transaction. If there be still any doubt on this head, it will be removed by the clause: and walk in *all* the way which I command you this day (וְהִלַּכְתֶּם) is a continuation of the imper. שָׁמְעוּ). The expression: to walk in *all* the way God has commanded, is so unusual, that it occurs only once besides in the whole Old Testament, viz., Deut. 5:30, after the renewed inculcation of the ten commandments. And they then occur with the addition לְמַעַן תִּהְיוּ in which we cannot fail to recognise the לְמַעַן יִיטֵב לָכֶם of our verse. Hence we assume, without fear of contradiction, that Jeremiah was keeping the giving of the law in view, and specially the promulgation of the fundamental law of the book, namely of the decalogue, which was spoken by God from out of the fire on Sinai, as Moses in Deut. 5:23 repeats with marked emphasis. In this fundamental law we find no prescriptions as to burnt or slain offerings. On this fact many commentators, following Jerome, have laid stress, and suppose the prophet to be

speaking of the first act of the law-giving, arguing that the Torah of offering in the Pentateuch was called for first by the worship of the golden calf, after which time God held it to be necessary to give express precepts as to the presenting of offerings, so as to prevent idolatry. But this view does not at all agree with the historical fact. For the worship of the calf was subsequent to the law on the building of the altar on which Israel was to offer burnt and slain offerings, Ex. 20:24; to the institution of the daily morning and evening sacrifice, Ex. 29:38ff.; and to the regulation as to the place of worship and the consecration of the priests, Ex. 25–31. But besides, any difficulty in our verses is not solved by distinguishing between a first and a second law-giving, since no hint of any such contrast is found in our verse, but is even entirely foreign to the precise terms of it. The antithesis is a different one. The stress in v. 23 lies on: hearken to the voice of the Lord, and on walking in all the way which God commanded to the people at Sinai. “To walk in all the way God commanded” is in substance the same as “not to depart from all the words which I command you this day,” as Moses expands his former exhortation in Deut. 28:14, when he is showing the blessings of keeping the covenant. Harkening to God’s voice, and walking in all His commandments, are the conditions under which Jahveh will be a God to the Israelites, and Israel a people to Him, i.e., His peculiar people from out of all the peoples of the earth. This word of God is not only the centre of the act of taking the covenant, but of the whole Sinaitic law-giving; and it is so both with regard to the moral law and to the ceremonial precepts, of which the law of sacrifice constituted the chief part. If yet the words demanding the observance of the whole law be set in opposition to the commandments as to sacrifices, and if it be said that on this latter head God commanded nothing when He led Israel out of Egypt, then it may be replied that the meaning of the words cannot be: God has given no law of sacrifice, and desires no offerings. The sense can only be: When the covenant was entered into, God did not speak

עַל דְּבָרַי, i.e., as to the matters of burnt and slain offerings. עַל דְּבָרַי is not identical with עַל־דְּבָרַי.

עוֹלָה דְּבָרַי are words or things that concern burnt and slain offerings; that is, practically, detailed prescriptions regarding sacrifice.

The purport of the two verses is accordingly as follows: When the Lord entered into covenant with Israel at Sinai, He insisted on their hearkening to His voice and walking in all His commandments, as the condition necessary for bringing about the covenant relationship, in which He was to be God to Israel, and Israel a people to Him; but He did not at that time give all the various commandments as to the presenting of sacrifices. Such an intimation neither denies the divine origin of the Torah of sacrifice in Leviticus, nor discredits its character as a part of the Sinaitic legislation. All it implies is, that the giving of sacrifices is not the thing of primary importance in the law, is not the central point of the covenant laws, and that so long as the cardinal precepts of the decalogue are freely transgressed, sacrifices neither are desired by God, nor secure covenant blessings for those who present them. That this is what is meant is shown by the connection in which our verse stands. The words: that God did not give command as to sacrifice, refer to the sacrifices brought by a people that recklessly broke all the commandments of the decalogue (v. 9f.), in the thought that by means of these sacrifices they were proving themselves to be the covenant people, and that to them as such God was bound to bestow the blessings of His covenant. It is therefore with justice that Oehler, in Herzog’s *Realencykl.* xii. S. 228, says: “In the sense that the righteousness of the people and the continuance of its covenant relationship were maintained by sacrifice as such—in this sense Jahveh did not ordain sacrifices in the Torah.” Such a soulless service of sacrifice is repudiated by Samuel in 1 Sam. 15:22, when he says to Saul: Hath Jahveh delight in burnt and slain offerings, as in hearkening to the voice of Jahveh? Behold, to hearken is better than sacrifice, etc. So in Ps. 40:7; 50:8ff., 51:18, and Isa. 1:11f., Jeremiah

6:20, Amos 5:22. What is here said differs from these passages only in this: Jeremiah does not simply say that God has no pleasure in such sacrifices, but adds the inference that the Lord does not desire the sacrifices of a people that have fallen away from Him. This Jeremiah gathers from the history of the giving of the law, and from the fact that, when God adopted Israel as His people, He demanded not sacrifices, but their obedience to His word and their walking in His ways. The design of Jeremiah's addition was the more thoroughly to crush all such vain confidence in sacrifices.

**Jeremiah 7:24ff.** But they have not regarded that which was foremost and most cardinal in the law. They hearkened not, sc. to my voice; and instead of walking in the ways commanded, they walked in the counsels of the stubbornness of their evil heart. *בְּמַעֲצוֹת* is *stat. absol.*, and *בְּשִׁרְרוֹת* is co-ordinated with it in apposition, instead of being subordinated; cf. Ew. § 289, c. The LXX have not seen their way to admit such a co-ordination, and so have omitted the second term; and in this, Movers, Hitz., and Graf have followed them, deleting the word as a mere gloss. As to "the stubbornness of their evil heart," see on 3:17. *יָהִי לְאָחוֹר*, they were backwards, not forwards, i.e., they so walked as to turn to me the back and not the face. *יָהִי* with *לְ* expresses the direction or aim of a thing. The subject to these clauses is the Israelites from the time of Moses down to that of Jeremiah. This is shown by the continuation of the same idea in vv. 25 and 26. From the time the fathers were led out of Egypt till the present time, God has with anxious care been sending prophets to exhort and warn them; but they have not hearkened, they have made their neck hard, i.e., were stiffnecked, and did worse than their fathers, i.e., each succeeding generation did more wickedly than that which preceded it. On *לְמִן הַיּוֹם*, (the period) from the day ... until ... cf. the remarks on Hagg. 2:18. The *לְ* gives to the mention of the time the value of an independent clause, to which that which is said

regarding that time is joined by *ו* *consec.* *יוֹם* is adverbial accusative: by the day, i.e., daily, in early morn, i.e., with watchful care sending (on this expression, see at v. 13). *יוֹם* acquires this sense, not in virtue of its standing for *יוֹם יוֹם*, but by reason of its connection with the two infinitives *absoll.*

**Jeremiah 7:27.** Just as little will they listen to Jeremiah's words. *וְדַבַּרְתָּ* with *ו* *consec.* is properly: Speak to them, and they will not hearken to thee, for: Even if thou speakest to them, they will not hearken to thee.

**Jeremiah 7:28.** Hence the prophet will be bound to say to them: This is the people that hath not hearkened to the voice of God. On this Chr. B. Mich. makes this remark: *Etsi adhortationibus tuis non obedient, tamen, ut sciant quales sint et quae paenae ipsos maneat, dicas eis.* Perished or gone is faithfulness, and cut off out of their mouth. They have violated the fidelity they owed to God, by not hearkening to His voice, by breaking all His commandments (cf. vv. 23 and 9). "Out of their mouth" is used instead of "out of the heart," because they continually make profession with their mouth of their devotion to God, e.g., swear by Jahveh, but always lyingly, v. 2.

**Jeremiah 7:29-8:3.** *Therefore the Lord has rejected the backsliding people, so that it shall perish shamefully.—V. 29. "Cut off thy diadem (daughter of Zion), and cast it away, and lift up a lamentation on the bald peaked mountains; for the Lord hath rejected and cast out the generation of His wrath. V. 30. For the sons of Judah have done the evil in mine eyes, saith Jahveh, have put their abominations in the house on which my name is named, to pollute it; V. 31. And have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of Benhinnom, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire; which I have not commanded, neither came it into my heart. V. 32. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jahveh, that they shall no longer say, Tophet and Valley of Benhinnom, but, The valley of slaughter; and they shall bury in Tophet for want of room. V. 33. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for*

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*the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the earth, with no one to fray them away. V. 34. And I make to cease out of the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for a waste shall the land become. Ch. 8:1. At that time, saith Jahveh, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah and the bones of his princes, the bones of the priests and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves. V. 2. And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, which they have loved, and which they have served, after which they have walked, and which they have sought and worshipped: they shall not be gathered nor buried; for dung upon the face of the earth shall they be. V. 3. And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue which is left of this evil race, in all the places whither I have driven them that are left, saith Jahveh of hosts."*

In these verses the judgment of v. 20 is depicted in all its horror, and the description is introduced by a call upon Zion to mourn and lament for the evil awaiting Jerusalem and the whole land. It is not any particular woman that is addressed in v. 29, but the daughter of Zion (cf. 6:23), i.e., the capital city personified as a woman, as the mother of the whole people. Cut off נִגְרָה, thy diadem. There can be no doubt that we are by this to understand the hair of the woman; but the current opinion, that the words simply and directly means the hair, is without foundation. It means crown, originally the diadem of the high priest, Ex. 29:6; and the transference of the same word to the hair of the head is explained by the practice of the Nazarites, to wear the hair uncut as a mark of consecration to the Lord, Num. 6:5. The hair of the Nazarite is called in Num. 6:7 the consecration (נִגְרָה) of his God upon his head, as was the anointing oil on the head of the high priest, Lev. 21:12. In this sense the long hair of the daughter of Zion is called her diadem, to mark her out as a virgin consecrated to the Lord. Cutting off this hair is not only in token of

mourning, as in Job 1:20, Mic. 1:16, but in token of the loss of the consecrated character. The Nazarite, defiled by the sudden occurrence of death near to his person, was bound to cut off his long hair, because by this defilement his consecrated hair had been defiled; and just so must the daughter of Zion cut off her hair and cast it from her, because by her sins she had defiled herself, and must be held as unconsecrated. Venema and Ros. object to this reference of the idea to the consecrated hair of the Nazarite: *quod huc non quadrat, nec in faeminis adeo suetum erat*; but this objection is grounded on defective apprehension of the meaning of the Nazarite's vow, and on misunderstanding of the figurative style here employed. The allusion to the Nazarite order, for the purpose of representing the daughter of Zion as a virgin consecrated to the Lord, does not imply that the Nazarite vow was very common amongst women. Deprived of her holy ornament, Zion is to set up a lament upon bare hill-tops (cf. 3:21), since the Lord has rejected or cast out (v. 30) the generation that has drawn His wrath down on it, because they have set idols in the temple in which He has revealed His glory, to profane it. The abominations are the image of Asherah which Manasseh set up in the temple, and the altars he had built to the host of heaven in both the courts (2 Kings 21:5, 7). Besides the desecration of the temple of the Lord by idolatry, Jeremiah mentions in v. 31, as an especially offensive abomination, the worship of Moloch practised in the valley of Benhinnom. Here children were burnt to this deity, to whom Manasseh had sacrificed his son, 2 Kings 21:6. The expression "high altars of Tophet" is singular. In the parallel passages, where Jeremiah repeats the same subject, 19:5 and 32:35, we find mentioned instead high altars of Baal; and on this ground, Hitz. and Graf hold הַתְּפֵת in our verse to be a contemptuous name for Baal Moloch. תְּפֵת is not derived from the Persian; nor is it true that, as Hitz. asserts, it does not occur till after the beginning of the Assyrian period, since we have it in Job 17:6. It is formed from תָּפַח, to spit out, like נִפְתָּה from נָפַח;

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and means properly a spitting out, then that before or on which one spits (as in Job 17:6), object of deepest abhorrence. It is transferred to the worship of Moloch here and 19:6, 13ff., and in 2 Kings 23:10. In the latter passage the word is unquestionably used for the place in the valley of Benhinnom where children were offered to Moloch. So in Jeremiah 19:6, 13 (the place of Tophet), and 14; and so also, without a doubt, in v. 32 of the present chapter. There is no valid reason for departing from this well-ascertained local signification; "high altars of the Tophet" may perfectly well be the high altars of the place of abominable sacrifices. With the article the word means the ill-famed seat of the Moloch-worship, situated in the valley of Ben or Bne Hinnom, to the south of Jerusalem. *Hinnom* is *nomen propr.* of a man of whom we know nothing else, and בְּנֵי הַגִּזְמוֹת (בְּנֵי) is not an appellative: son of sobbing, as Hitz., Graf, Böttcher explain (after Rashi), rendering the phrase by "Valley of the weepers," or "of groaning, sobbing," with reference to the cries of the children slain there for sacrifices. For the name *Ben-Hinnom* is much older than the Moloch-worship, introduced first by Ahaz and Manasseh. We find it in Josh. 15:8; 18:16, in the topographical account of the boundaries of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. As to Moloch-worship, see on Lev. 18:21 and Ezek. 16:20f. At the restoration of the public worship of Jahveh, Josiah had extirpated Moloch-worship, and had caused the place of the sacrifice of abominations in the valley of Ben-Hinnom to be defiled (2 Kings 23:20); so that it is hardly probable that it had been again restored immediately after Josiah's death, at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign. Nor does the present passage imply this; for Jeremiah is not speaking of the forms of idolatry at that time in favour with the Jews, but of the abominations they had done. That he had Manasseh's doings especially in view, we may gather from Jeremiah 15:4, where the coming calamities are expressly declared to be the punishment for Manasseh's sins. Neither is it come into my heart, i.e., into my mind, goes to strengthen: which I have not commanded.

**Jeremiah 7:32.** Therefore God will make the place of their sins the scene of judgment on the sinners. There shall come days when men will call the valley of these abominations the valley of slaughter, i.e., shall make it into such a valley. Where they have sacrificed their children to Moloch, they shall themselves be slaughtered, massacred by their enemies. And in this valley, as an unclean place (Jeremiah 19:13), shall they be buried "for want of room;" since, because of the vast numbers of the slain, there will be nowhere else to put them.

**Jeremiah 7:33.** Even the number of the dead will be so great that the corpses shall remain unburied, shall become food for beasts of prey, which no one will scare away. This is taken almost literally from Deut. 28:26.

**Jeremiah 7:34.** Thus the Lord will put an end to all joyfulness in life throughout the land: cf. Hos. 2:13; Ezek. 26:13. The voice of the bridegroom and the bride is a circumlocution for the mirth of marriage festivities; cf. 1 Macc. 9:39. All joy will be dumb, for the land shall become a waste; as the people had been warned, in Lev. 26:31, 33, would be the case if they forsook the Lord.

## Jeremiah 8

**Jeremiah 8:1-3.** But even then the judgment has not come to a height. Even sinners long dead must yet bear the shame of their sins. "At that time" points back to "days come" in 7:32. The Masoretes wished to have the י before יָצִיאוּ deleted, apparently because they took it for י consec. But it here stands before the jussive, as it does frequently, e.g., 13:10, Ex. 12:3. They will take the bones of the kings, princes, priests, and prophets, the rulers and leaders of the people (cf. 2:26), and the bones of the other inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves, and spread them out before the sun, the moon, and the stars, i.e., expose them under the open sky to the influence of the heavenly bodies, so that they shall rot away, become "dung on the face of the earth." The worst dishonour that could be done to the dead, a just return in kind for their worship of sun, moon, and stars: cf.

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7:18; 2 Kings 21:5; 23:11. This worship the prophet describes in its various stages: "Inclination of the heart, the act of devoting and dedicating themselves to the service, the frequenting of gods' sanctuary in order to worship and to obtain oracles; while he strives to bring out in strong relief the contrast between the zeal of their service and the reward they get by it" (Hitz.). They shall not be gathered, i.e., for burial: cf. 2 Sam. 21:13f.; 1 Sam. 31:13. The dead shall suffer this at the hands of enemies despoiling the land. The reason for so doing was, as Jerome observes, the practice of burying ornaments and articles of value along with the dead. Seeking for such things, enemies will turn up the graves (cf. acts of this kind the case of Ibn Chaldun, in Sylv. de Sacy, *Abdollar* p. 561), and, in their hatred and insolence, scatter the bones of the dead all about.

**Jeremiah 8:3.** Not less dreadful will be the fate of those who remain in life; so appalling that they will prefer death to life, since every kind of hardship in exile and imprisonment amongst the heathen is awaiting them: cf. Lev. 26:36–39, Deut. 28:65–67. הַמְקֻמָּוֹת הַנִּשְׁאָרִים strikes us as peculiar, seeing that the latter word cannot be adjective to the former; for "in all the remaining places of Judah" (Umbr.) gives no suitable sense, and "in all remaining places outside of Judah" is contrary to usage. But הַנִּשְׁאָרִים may be taken as genitive, in spite of the article prefixed to the *stat. constr.* מְקֻמָּוֹת; and we may then translate, with Maur.: in all the places of those who remain whither I have driven them. The LXX have omitted the second word; and it is possible it may have found its way hither from the preceding line by an error of transcription. And so Hitz., Ew., and Graf have deleted it as a gloss; but the arguments adduced have little weight. The LXX have also omitted "and say to them," v. 4, have changed כֹּה into כִּי, and generally have treated Jeremiah in a quite uncritical fashion: so that they may have omitted the word from the present verse because it seemed awkward to them, and was

not found in the parallel passages, 29:14; 23:3, which are not, however, precisely similar to the present verse.

**Jeremiah 8:4–23.** The People's Obstinacy in Wickedness, and the Dreadfulness of the Judgment.—Since the people cleaves stedfastly to its sin (vv. 4–13), the Lord must punish sorely (vv. 14–23).—Vv. 4–13. "And say to them, Thus hath the Lord said: Doth one fall, and not rise again? or doth one turn away, and not turn back again? V. 5. Why doth this people of Jerusalem turn itself away with a perpetual turning? They hold fast by deceit, they refuse to return. V. 6. I listened and heard: they speak not aright; no one repenteth him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? They all turn to their course again, like a horse rushing into the battle. V. 7. Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and turtle-dove, and swallow, and crane, keep the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of Jahveh. V. 8. How can ye say, Wise are we, and the law of Jahve we have? Certainly the lying pen of the scribes hath made it a lie. V. 9. Ashamed the wise men become, confounded and taken; lo, the word of Jahveh they spurn at; and whose wisdom have they? V. 10. Therefore will I give their wives unto others, their fields to new heirs: for from the small to the great, they are all greedy for gain; from the prophet even unto the priest, they all use deceit. V. 11. And they heal the hurt of the daughter of my people as it were a light matter, saying, Peace, peace; and yet there is no peace. V. 12. They have been put to shame because they have done abomination; yet they take not shame to themselves, ashamedness they know not. Therefore they shall fall amongst them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall stumble, that Jahve said. V. 13. Away, away will I sweep them, saith Jahveh: no grapes on the vine, and no figs on the fig-tree, and the leaf is withered; so I appoint unto them those that shall pass over them."

This strophe connects itself with what precedes. A judgment, dreadful as has been described in 7:32–8:3, will come on Judah, because the people cleaves stiffneckedly to its



sins. The *וְאָמַרְתָּ* of v. 4 corresponds to that in 7:28. The questioning clauses in v. 4 contain universal truths, which are applied to the people of Judah in v. 5. The subjects to *יָפְלוּ* and *יָשׁוּב* are indefinite, hence singular and plural with like significance: cf. Gesen. § 137, 3; Ew. § 294, b. The verb *יָשׁוּב*, turn oneself, turn about, is here used in a double sense: first, as turn away from one; and then turn towards him, return again. In the application in v. 5, the Pilel is used for to turn away from, and strengthened by: with perpetual turning away or backsliding. *נֶצְחָה* is not *partic. Niph. fem.* from *נָצַח*, but an adjectival formation, continual, enduring, from *נָצַח*, continuance, durableness. "Jerusalem" belongs to "this people:" this people of Jerusalem; the loose grammatical connection by means of the *stat. constr.* not being maintained, if the first idea gives a sense intelligible by itself, so that the second noun may then be looked on rather in the light of an apposition conveying additional information; cf. Ew. § 290, c. *תִּרְמִית*, equivalent to *מִרְמָה*, deceit against God. they refuse to return. Sense: they will not receive the truth, repent and return to God. The same idea is developed in v. 6. The first person: I have listened and heard, Hitz. insists, refers to the prophet, "who is justified as to all he said in v. 5 by what he has seen." But we cannot account that even an "apt" view of the case, which makes the prophet cite his own observations to show that God had not spoken without cause. It is Jahveh that speaks in v. 5; and seeing that v. 6 gives not the slightest hint of any change in the speaker, we are bound to take v. 6 also as spoken by God. Thus, to prove that they cleave unto deceit, Jahveh says that He has given heed to their deeds and habits, and heard how they speak the *לוֹא־כֵן*, the not right, i.e., lies and deceit. The next clause: not one repents him of his wickedness, corresponds to: they refuse to return; cf. v. 5 (*נָחַם* is *partic.*). Instead of this, the whole of it, i.e., all of them, turn again to their course. *שׁוּב* with *כִּי*, construed as in Hos. 12:7: turn oneself to a thing, so as to

enter into it. For *מְרוּצָה*, the sig. course is certified to by 2 Sam. 18:27. The *Chet.* *מְרוּצוֹתֵם* is doubtless merely an error of transcription for *מְרוּצוֹתֵי*, as is demanded by the *Keri*. Turn again into their course. The thought is: instead of considering, of becoming repentant, they continue their evil courses. This, too, is substantially what Hitz. gives. Ros., Graf, and others, again, take this in the sense of turning themselves away in their course; but it is not fair to deduce this sense for *שׁוּב* without *מִן* from v. 4; nor is the addition of "from me" justifiable. Besides, this explanation does not suit the following comparison with the horse. It is against analogy to derive *מְרוּצוֹתֵם* from *רָצָה* with the sig. desire, cupidity. Ew., following the *Chald.*, adopts this sense both here and in 22:17 and 23:10, though it is not called for in any of these passages, and is unsuitable in 22:17. As a horse rusheth into the battle. *שָׁטַף*, pour forth, overflow, hence rush on impetuously; by Jerome rightly translated, *cum impetu vadens*. Several commentators compare the Latin *se effundere* (Caes. *Bell. Gall.* v. 19) and *effundi* (Liv. xxviii. 7); but the cases are not quite in point, since in both the words are used of the cavalry, and not of the steed by itself. This simile makes way for more in v. 7. Even the fowls under the heaven keep the time of their coming and departure, but Israel takes no concern for the judgment of its God; cf. Isa. 1:3. *חֲסִידָה*, (*avis*) *pia*, is the stork, not the heron; see on Lev. 11:19. "In the heaven" refers to the flight of the stork. All the birds mentioned here are birds of passage. *תּוֹר* and *סוּס* are turtle-dove and pigeon. For *סוּס* the Masoretes read *סִיס*, apparently to distinguish the word from that for horse; and so the oriental *Codd.* propose to read in Isa. 38:14, although they wrote *סוּס* *עָגוּר*. *סוּס* is the crane (acc. to Saad. and Rashi), both here and in Isa. 38:14, where Gesen., Knob., and others, mistaking the asyndeton, take it as an adjective in the sig. sighing. *מוֹעֲדֵי* are the fixed

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times for the arrival and departure of the birds of passage.

**Jeremiah 8:8.** In spite of this heedlessness of the statutes, the judgment of God, they vainly boast in their knowledge and possession of God's law. Those who said, We are wise, are mainly the priests and false prophets; cf. v. 10, 2:8; 5:31. The wisdom these people claimed for themselves is, as the following clause shows, the knowledge of the law. They prided themselves on possessing the law, from which they conceived themselves to have drawn their wisdom. The second clause, as Hitz. observed, shows that it is the written law that is meant. The law is with us. This is not to be understood merely of the outward possession of it, but the inward, appropriated knowledge, the mastery of the law. The law of Jahveh, recorded in the Pentateuch, teaches not only the bearing towards God due by man, but the bearing of God towards His people. The knowledge of this law begets the wisdom for ruling one's life, tells how God is to be worshipped, how His favour is to be procured and His anger appeased.

As against all this, Jeremiah declares: Assuredly the lying pen (style) of the scribes hath made it a lie. Ew., Hitz., Graf, translate סִפְּרִים, authors, writers; and the two latter of them take עֲשָׂה = labour: "for a lie (or for deception) hath the lying style (pen) of the writers laboured." This transl. is feasible; but it seems simpler to supply יָצָא: hath made it (the law); and

there is no good reason for confining סוֹפְּרֵי to the original composers of works. The words are not to be limited in their reference to the efforts of the false prophets, who spread their delusive prophecies by means of writings: they refer equally to the work of the priests, whose duty it was to train the people in the law, and who, by false teaching as to its demands, led the people astray, seduced them from the way of truth, and deceived them as to the future. The labours both of the false prophets and of the wicked priests consisted not merely in authorship, in composing and circulating writings, but to a very great extent in the oral teaching of the

people, partly by prophetic announcements, partly by instruction in the law; only in so far as it was necessary was it their duty to set down in writing and circulate their prophecies and interpretations of the law. But this work by word and writing was founded on the existing written law, the Torah of Moses; just as the true prophets sought to influence the people chiefly by preaching the law to them, by examining their deeds and habits by the rule of the divine will as revealed in the Torah, and by applying to their times the law's promises and threatenings. For this work with the law, and application of it to life, Jeremiah uses the expression "style of the Shoferim," because the interpretation of the law, if it was to have valid authority as the rule of life, must be fixed by writing. Yet he did not in this speak only of authors, composers, but meant such as busied themselves about the book of the law, made it the object of their study. But inasmuch as such persons, by false interpretation and application, perverted the truth of the law into a lie, he calls their work the work of the lying style (pen).

**Jeremiah 8:9.** Those who held themselves wise will come to shame, will be dismally disabused of their hopes. When the great calamity comes on the sin-hardened people, they shall be confounded and overwhelmed in ruin (cf. 6:11). They spurn at the word of Jahveh; whose wisdom then have they? None; for the word of the Lord alone is Israel's wisdom and understanding, Deut. 4:6.

The threatening in v. 10 includes not only the wise ones, but the whole people. "Therefore" attaches to the central truth of vv. 5 and 6, which has been elucidated in vv. 7-9. The first half of v. 10 corresponds, in shorter compass, to what has been said in 6:12, and is here continued in vv. 10b-12 in the same words as in 6:13-15. יוֹרְשֵׁים are those who take possession, make themselves masters of a thing, as in 49:2 and Mic. 1:15. This repetition of the three verses is not given in the LXX, and Hitz. therefore proposes to delete them as a supplementary interpolation, holding that they are not only superfluous, but that they

interrupt the sense. For he thinks v. 13 connects remarkably well with v. 10a, but, taken out of its connection with what precedes as we have it, begins baldly enough. To this Graf has made fitting answer: This passage is in no respect more superfluous or awkward than 6:13ff.; nor is the connection of v. 13 with v. 10a at all closer than with v. 12. And Hitz., in order to defend the immediate connection between v. 13 and v. 10, sees himself compelled, for the restoration of equilibrium, to delete the middle part of v. 13 (from “no grapes” to “withered”) as spurious; for which proceeding there is not the smallest reason, since this passage has neither the character of an explanatory gloss, nor is it a repetition from any place whatever, nor is it wanting in the LXX. Just as little ground is there to argue against the genuineness of the two passages from the variations found in them. Here in v. 10 we have *מִקְטָן וְעַד־גְּדוֹל* instead of the *מִקְטָנִם וְעַד־גְּדוֹלֵם* of 6:13; but the suffix, which in the latter case pointed to the preceding “inhabitants of the land,” was unnecessary here, where there is no such reference. In like manner, the forms *הַכְּלִים* for *הַכְּלִים*, and *עַת־פָּקְדוֹתֵי* for *עַת־פָּקְדוֹתֵי*, are but the more usual forms used by Jeremiah elsewhere. So the omission of the *א* in *יִרְפוּ* for *יִרְפְּאוּ*, as coming either from the writer or the copyist, clearly does not make against the genuineness of the verses. And there is the less reason for making any difficulty about the passage, seeing that such repetitions are amongst the peculiarities of Jeremiah’s style: cf. e.g., 7:31–33 with 19:5–7; 10:12–16 with 51:15–19; 15:13, 14, with 17:3, 4; 16:14, 15, with 23:7, 8; 23:5, 6, with 33:15, 16; 23:19, 20, with 30:23, 24, and other shorter repetitions.

**Jeremiah 8:13.** The warning of coming punishment, reiterated from a former discourse, is strengthened by the threatening that God will sweep them utterly away, because Judah has become an unfruitful vine and fig-tree. In *אָסַף אָסַף* we have a combination of *אָסַף*, gather, glean, carry away, and *הִסִּיף*, Niph. of *סוּף*,

make an end, sweep off, so as to heighten the sense, as in Zeph. 1:1f.,—a passage which was doubtless in the prophet’s mind: wholly will I sweep them away. The circumstantial clauses: no grapes—and the leaves are withered, show the cause of the threatening: The people is become an unfruitful vine and fig-tree, whose leaves are withered. Israel was a vineyard the Lord had planted with noble vines, but which brought forth sour grapes, 2:21, Isa. 5:2. In keeping with this figure, Israel is thought of as a vine on which are no grapes. With this is joined the like figure of a fig-tree, to which Micah in 7:1 makes allusion, and which is applied by Christ to the degenerate race of His own time in His symbolical act of cursing the fig-tree (Matt. 21:19). To exhaust the thought that Judah is ripe for judgment, it is further added that the leaves are withered. The tree whose leaves are withered, is near being parched throughout. Such a tree was the people of Judah, fallen away from its God, spurning at the law of the Lord; in contrast with which, the man who trusts in the Lord, and has delight in the law of the Lord, is like the tree planted by the water, whose leaves are ever green, and which bringeth forth fruit in his season, 17:8, Ps. 1:1–3. Ros. and Mov. are quite wrong in following the Chald., and in taking the circumstantial clauses as a description of the future; Mov. even proceeds to change *אָסַף אָסַף* into *אָסַף אָסַף*. The interpretation of the last clause is a disputed point. Ew., following the old translators (Chald., Syr., Aq., Symm., Vulg.; in the LXX they are omitted), understands the words of the transgression of the commands of God, which they seem to have received only in order to break them. *וְאָתָּן* seems to tell in favour of this, and it may be taken as *praeter*. with the translation: and I gave to them that which they transgress. But unless we are to admit that the idea thus obtained stands quite abruptly, we must follow the Chald., and take it as the reason of what precedes: They are become an unfruitful tree with faded leaves, because they have transgressed my law which I gave them. But *וְאָתָּן* with *consec.* goes directly against this

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construction. Of less weight is the other objection against this view, that the plural suffix in יַעֲבְרוּם has no suitable antecedent; for there could be no difficulty in supplying “judgments” (cf. v. 8). But the abrupt appearance of the thought, wholly unlooked for here, is sufficient to exclude that interpretation. We therefore prefer the other interpretation, given with various modifications by Ven., Rose., and Maur., and translate: so I appoint unto them those that shall pass over them. The imperf. c. יַעֲבְרוּ consec. attaches itself to the circumstantial clauses, and introduces the resulting consequence; it is therefore to be expressed in English by the present, not by the *praeter*: therefore I gave them (Näg.). נָתַן in the general sig. appoint, and the second verb with the *pron. rel.* omitted: *illos qui eos invadent*. עָבַר, to overrun a country or people, of a hostile army swarming over it, as e.g., Isa. 8:8; 28:15. For the construction *c. accus.* cf. Jeremiah 23:9; 5:22. Hitz.’s and Graf’s mode of construction is forced: I deliver them up to them (to those) who pass over them; for then we must not only supply an object to אָתָּן, but adopt the unusual arrangement by which the pronoun לָהֶם is made to stand before the words that explain it.

**Jeremiah 8:14–23.** *The horrors of the approaching visitation.—V. 14. “Why do we sit still? Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities, and perish there; for Jahveh our God hath decreed our ruin, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against Jahveh. V. 15. We looked for safety, and there is no good; for a time of healing, and behold terrors. V. 16. From Dan is heard the snorting of his horses; at the loud neighing of his steeds the whole earth trembles: they come, and devour the land and its fulness, the city and those that dwell therein. V. 17. For, behold, I send among you serpents, vipers, of which there is no charming, which shall sting you, saith Jahve. V. 18. Oh my comfort in sorrow, in me my heart grows too sock. V. 19. Behold, loud sounds the cry of the daughter from out of a far country: ‘Is Jahveh not in Zion, nor her King in her?’ Why provoked they*

*me with their images, with vanities of a foreign land? V. 20. Past is the harvest, ended is the fruit-gathering, and we are not saved. V. 21. For the breaking of the daughter of my people am I broken, am in mourning; horror hath taken hold on me. V. 22. Is there no balm in Gilead, or no physician there? why then is no plaister laid upon the daughter of my people? V. 23. Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears! then would I weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.”*

In spirit the prophet sees the enemy forcing his way into the country, and the inhabitants fleeing into the fortified cities. This he represents to his hearers with graphic and dramatic effect. In v. 14 the citizens of Judah are made to speak, calling on one another to flee and give up hope of being saved. “Why do we sit still?” i.e., remain calmly where we are? We will withdraw into the strong cities (cf. 4:5), and perish there by famine and disease (הַגְדִּמָּה גְדִמָּה, imperf. Niph., from גָּדַם: cf. Gesen. § 67, 5, Rem. 11; in Niph. be destroyed, perish). The fortresses cannot save them from ruin, since they will be besieged and taken by the enemy. For our sin against Him, God has decreed our ruin. The Hiph. from דָּמַם, prop. put to silence, bring to ruin, here with the force of a decree. מֵי רֹאשׁ, bitter waters; רוֹשׁ or רֹאשׁ, Deut. 32:32, is a plant with a very bitter taste, and so, since bitterness and poison were to the Jews closely connected, a poisonous plant; see on Deut. 29:17. So they call the bitter suffering from the ruin at hand which they must undergo. Cf. the similar figure of the cup of the anger of Jahveh, Jeremiah 25:15ff.

**Jeremiah 8:15.** Instead of peace and safety hoped for, there is calamity and terror. The infin. abs. קָוָה is used emphatically for the imperf.: We looked for safety, and no good has come to us: for healing, sc. of our injuries, and instead comes terror, by reason of the appearance of the foe in the land. This hope has been awakened and cherished in the people by false prophets (see on 4:10), and now, to their sore suffering, they must feel the contrary of it.

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The same idea is repeated in 14:19. מְרַפָּה is a mis-spelling of מְרַפֵּא, 14:19, etc.

**Jeremiah 8:16.** From the northern borders of Canaan (from Dan; see on 4:15) is already heard the dreadful tumult of the advancing enemy, the snorting of his horses. The suffix in סוֹסָיו refers to the enemy, whose invasion is threatened in 6:22, and is here presumed as known. אַבְיָרָיו, his strong ones, here, as in 47:3; 50:11, a poetical name for strong horses, stallions; elsewhere for strong animals, e.g., Ps. 22:13; 50:13. The whole earth, not the whole land. With “devour the land,” cf. 5:17. עִיר and אֶרֶץ have an indefinite comprehensive force; town and country on which the enemy is marching.

**Jeremiah 8:17.** The terribleness of these enemies is heightened by a new figure. They are compared to snakes of the most venomous description, which cannot be made innocuous by any charming, whose sting is fatal. “Vipers” is in apposition to “serpents;” serpents, namely basilisks. צִפְפֹּנִי is, acc. to Aq. and Vulg. on Isa. 11:8, *serpens regulus*, the basilisk, a small and very venomous species of viper, of which there is no charming. Cf. for the figure, Cant. 10:11; and fore the enemies’ cruelty thereby expressed, cf. 6:23, Isa. 13:18.

**Jeremiah 8:18–23.** The hopeless ruin of his people cuts the prophet to the very heart. In vv. 18–23 his sore oppressed heart finds itself vent in bitter lamentations. Oh my comfort in sorrow! is the cry of sore affliction. This may be seen from the second half of the verse, the sense of which is clear: sick (faint) is my heart upon me. עָלַי shows that the sickness of heart is a sore burden on him, crushes him down; cf. Ew. § 217, i. “My comfort” is accordingly vocative: Oh my comfort concerning the sorrow! Usually מִי יִתֵּן is supplied: Oh that I had, that there were for me comfort! The sense suits, but the ellipse is without parallel. It is simpler to take the words as an exclamation: the special force of it, that he knows not when to seek

comfort, may be gathered from the context. For other far-fetched explanations, see in Ros. *ad h. l.* The grief which cuts so deeply into his heart that he sighs for relief, is caused by his already hearing in spirit the mourning cry of his people as they go away into captivity.

**Jeremiah 8:19.** From a far country he hears the people complain: Is Jahveh not in Zion? is He no longer the King of His people there? The suffix in מְלִכָה refers to “daughter of my people,” and the King is Jahveh; cf. Isa. 33:22. They ask whether Jahveh is no longer King in Zion, that He may release His people from captivity and bring them back to Zion. To this the voice of God replies with the counter-question: Why have they provoked me with their idolatry, sc. so that I had to give them over into the power of the heathen for punishment? “Images” is expounded by the apposition: vanities (no-gods; for הַבָּל, see on 2:5) of a foreign land.

Because they have chosen the empty idols from abroad (Jeremiah 14:22) as their gods, Jahveh, the almighty God of Zion, has cast them out into a far country amidst strange people. The people goes on to complain in v. 20: Past is the harvest ... and we are not saved. As Schnur. remarked, these words have something of the proverb about them. As a country-man, hoping for a good harvest, falls into despair as to his chances, so the people have been in vain looking for its rescue and deliverance. The events, or combinations of events, to which it looked for its rescue are gone by without bringing any such result. Many ancient commentators, following Rashi, have given too special a significance to this verse in applying it to the assistance expected from Egypt in the time of Jehoiakim or Zedekiah. Hitz. is yet more mistaken when he takes the saying to refer to an unproductive harvest. From v. 19 we see that the words are spoken by the people while it pines in exile, which sets its hopes of being saved not in the productiveness of the harvest, but in a happy turn of the political situation.

**Jeremiah 8:21.** The hopeless case of the people and kingdom moves the seer so deeply, that he bursts forth with the cry: For the breaking of

my people I am broken (the Hoph. הִשְׁבַּרְתִּי, of the breaking of the heart, only here; in this sig. usu. the Niph., e.g., 38:7. Horror hath taken hold on me, is stronger than: Anguish hath taken hold on me, 6:24, Mic. 4:9. Help is nowhere to be found. This thought is in v. 22 clothed in the question: Is there no balm in Gilead, or no physician there? "There" points back to Gilead. Graf's remark, that "it is not known that the physicians were got from that quarter," shows nothing more than that its author has mistaken the figurative force of the words. צָרִי, balsam, is mentioned in Gen. 37:25 as an article of commerce carried by Midianite merchants to Egypt (cf. Ezek. 27:17), but is hardly the real balsam from Mecca (*amyris opobalsamum*), which during the Roman sovereignty was grown under culture in the gardens of Jericho, and which only succeeds in a climate little short of tropical. It was more likely the *resina* of the ancients, a gum procured from the terebinth or mastic tree (*lentiscus*, σάχινος), which, acc. to Plin. *h. nat.* xxiv. 22, was held in esteem as a medicament for wounds (*resolvitur resina ad vulnerum usus et malagmata oleo*). Acc. to our passage and 46:11, cf. Ge. 37:25, it was procured chiefly from Gilead; cf. Movers, *Phöniz.* ii. 3, S. 220ff., and the remarks on Gen. 37:25. To these questions a negative answer is given. From this we explain the introduction of a further question with כִּי: if there were balm in Gilead, and a physician there, then a plaister would have been laid on the daughter of my people, which is not the case. As to עֲלֶתָהּ אֶרְכָּבָה, lit., a plaister comes upon, see on 30:17. The calamity is so dreadful, that the prophet could weep about it day and night. To express the extremity of his grief, he wishes that his head were water, i.e., might be dissolved into water, and that his eye might become an inexhaustible fountain of tears. מִי יִתֵּן, who might give, make my head water, i.e., would that it were water!

### Jeremiah 9

**Jeremiah 9:1-21.** Lament for the Faithlessness and Folly of the People, Infatuated regarding

their Sin.—Upon the lament for the ruin of the kingdom, follows in vv. 1-8 the lament for the wickedness which rendered judgment necessary, which is further gone into in vv. 9-21.

**Jeremiah 9:1-8.** *"Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfarers! then would I leave my people, and go away from them. For they be all adulterers, a crew of faithless ones. V. 2. They bend their tongue like their bow with lying; and not according to faithfulness do they manage in the land, but go on from evil to evil, and me they know not, saith Jahve. V. 3. Beware each of his neighbour, and trust not in any brother; for every brother supplanteth, and every friend goeth slandering. V. 4. And one overreacheth the other, and truth they speak not; they teach their tongue to speak lies, to deal perversely they weary themselves. V. 5. Thy dwelling is in the midst of deceit; in deceit they refuse to know me, saith Jahveh. V. 6. Therefore thus hath spoken Jahveh of hosts: Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how should I deal in regard to the daughter of my people? V. 7. A deadly arrow is their tongue; they speak deceit; with his mouth one speaketh peace with his neighbour, and inwardly within him he layeth ambush. V. 8. Shall I not visit this upon them? saith Jahveh; or on such a people as this shall not my soul take vengeance?"*

Jeremiah would flee into the wilderness, far away from his people; because amidst such a corrupt, false, and cunning people, life had become unbearable, v. 1. מִי יִתֵּן לִי, as in Isa. 27:4, equivalent to מִי יִתֵּן לִי, Ps. 55:7: who would give me = Oh that I had! The "lodging-place" is not a resting-place under the open sky, but a harbour for travellers,—a building (khan) erected on the route of the caravans, as a shelter for travellers. Adultery and faithlessness are mentioned as cardinal sins. The first sin has been rebuked in 5:7, the second is exposed in vv. 2-4. בּוֹגֵד, faithless either towards God or one's fellow-men; here in the latter sense. The account of the unfaithful conduct is introduced in v. 2 by the imperf. with ך̄ consec., and is

carried on in the perf. Manifestations of sin are the issue of a sinful state of heart; the perfects are used to suggest the particular sins as accomplished facts. In the clause, "they bend," etc., שָׁקַר is the second object; and "their bow" is in apposition to "their tongue:" they bend their tongue, which is their bow, with lying. For this construction the Hiph. is the proper form, and this is not to be changed into the Kal (as by Hitz., Gr., Näg.). In Job 28:8 the Hiph. is used instead of the Kal in the sense of tread upon, walk upon; here it is used of the treading of the bow to bend it, and lying is looked upon as the arrow with which the bow is stretched or armed for shooting. If the verb be changed into the Kal, we must join שָׁקַר with קִשְׁתָּם: their lying-bow. For this connection דְּרַבְּדָה זָמָה, Ezek. 16:27, may be cited; but it gives us the unnatural figure: their tongue as a bow, which is lying. It is neither the tongue nor the bow which is lying, but that which they shoot with their tongue as with a bow. According to faithfulness; לְ of the rule, norm, as in 5:3. Not faithfulness to their convictions (Hitz.), but in their behaviour towards their fellow-man. גָּבַר, be strong, exercise strength, rule, and manage. The prophet has in view the great and mighty who had power in their hands, and who misused it to oppress their inferiors. From evil to evil they go on, i.e., they proceed from one sin to another; but God the Lord they know not, i.e., are determined to know nothing of Him; cf. 1 Sam. 2:12, Job 18:21. Hence each must keep himself on his guard against the other. To express this in the most emphatic manner, Jeremiah gives it the form of a command: Beware each of his neighbour, trust not in a brother; for each seeks to overreach and trip up the other. In the words יַעֲקֹב יַעֲקֹב there seems to be an allusion to Jacob's underhand dealing with his brother Esau, Gen. 27:36. On "goes slandering," cf. 6:28, and cf. also the similar description in Mic. 7:5, 6.

**Jeremiah 9:4.** In v. 4 these sinful ways are exposed in yet stronger words. יִהְיֶה לְ,

uncontracted form of the imperf. Hiph. of תָּלַל, trip up, deceive. On the infin. הִעָוָה, cf. Ew. § 238, e, and Gesen. § 75, Rem. 17. They weary themselves out, put themselves to great labour, in order to deal corruptly; גִּלְעָה as in 20:9, Isa. 16:12, elsewhere to be weary of a thing; cf. 6:11; 15:6.—In v. 5 the statement returns to the point at which it commenced: thy sitting (dwelling) is in the midst of deceit. In deceit, i.e., in the state of their mind, directed as it is by deceit and cheating, they refuse to know me, i.e., they are resolved to have nothing to do with the knowledge of God, because in that case they must give up their godless ways. By reason of this depravity, the Lord must purge His people by sore judgments. He will melt it in the fire of affliction (Isa. 48:10), to separate the wicked: cf. Isa. 1:25, Zech. 13:9; and on בָּהֶן, Jeremiah 6:27. For how should I do, deal? Not: what dreadful judgments shall I inflict (Hitz., Gr.), in which case the grounding בִּי would not have its proper force; but: I can do none otherwise than purge. Before the face of, i.e., by reason of, the daughter, because the daughter of my people behaves herself as has been described in vv. 2–4, and as is yet to be briefly repeated in v. 7. The LXX have paraphrased ἄποδ' προσώπου πονηρίας. This is true to the sense, but it is unfair to argue from it, as Ew., Hitz., Gr. do, that רָעַת has been dropped out of the Hebrew text and should be restored.—In v. 7 what has been said is recapitulated shortly, and then in v. 8 the necessity of the judgment is shown. הָיָה שׁוֹחֵט, a slaying, slaughtering, i.e., murderous arrow. Instead of this *Chet.*, which gives a good sense, the *Keri* gives שְׁחֹט, which, judging from the Chald. translation, is probably to be translated sharpened. But there is no evidence for this sig., since שְׁחֹט occurs only in connection with זָהָב, 1 Kings 10:16, and means beaten, lit., spread gold. At מְרַמֶּה דְבָר the plural passes into the singular: he (one of them) speaks; cf. Ps. 55:22. אָרַב for insidious scheming, as in Hos. 7:6. With v. 8 cf. 5:9, 29.

**Jeremiah 9:9–15.** *The land laid waste, and the people scattered amongst the heathen.—V. 9. “For the mountains I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the pastures of the wilderness a lament; for they are burnt up so that no man passeth over them, neither hear they the voice of the flock; the fowls of the heavens and the cattle are fled, are gone. V. 10. And I make Jerusalem heaps, a dwelling of jackals; and the cities of Judah I make a desolation, without an inhabitant. V. 11. Who is the wise man, that he may understand this? and to whom the mouth of Jahveh hath spoken, that he may declare it? Wherefore doth the land come to ruin, is it burnt up like the wilderness, that none passeth through? V. 12. Jahveh said: Because they forsake my law which I set before them, and have not hearkened unto my voice, neither walked therein, V. 13. But went after the stubbornness of their heart, and after the Baals, which their fathers have taught them. V. 14. Therefore thus hath Jahveh of hosts spoken, the God of Israel: Behold, I feed this people with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink, V. 15. And scatter them among the nations which they knew not, neither they nor their fathers, and send the sword after them, until I have consumed them.”*

Already in spirit Jeremiah sees God’s visitation come upon the land, and in vv. 9 and 10 he raises a bitter lamentation for the desolation of the country. The mountains and meadows of the steppes or prairies are made so desolate, that neither men nor beasts are to be found there. Mountains and meadows or pastures of the steppes, as contrasted with the cities (v. 10), represent the remoter parts of the country. על is here not local: upon, but causal, concerning = because of, cf. 4:24ff., as is usual with (קִינָה) נָשָׂא נְהִי; cf. 2 Sam. 1:17, Amos 5:1, Ezek. 26:17, etc. נִצְתּוּ, kindled, burnt up, usually of cities (cf. 2:15), here of a tract of country with the sig. be parched by the glowing heat of the sun, as a result of the interruption of agriculture. מְדָבָר is steppe, prairie, not suitable for tillage, but well fitted for pasturing cattle, as e.g., the wilderness of Judah; cf. 1 Sam. 17:28. With מְבִלֵי עֵבֶר, v. 11,

cf. Ezek. 33:28. Not only have the herds disappeared that used to feed there, but the very birds have flown away, because the parched land no longer furnishes food for them; cf. 4:25. To “are fled,” which is used most properly of birds, is added: are gone away, departed, in reference to the cattle.

**Jeremiah 9:10.** Jerusalem is to become stone-heaps, where only jackals dwell. תַּנִּים is jackals (*canis aureus*), in Isa. 13:22 called אַיִים from their cry; see on Isa. *l.c.*, and Gesen. *thes. s. v.* מְבִלֵי יוֹשֵׁב as in 2:15; 4:7.—That such a judgment will pass over Judah every wise man must see well, and every one enlightened by God is to declare it; for universal apostasy from God and His law cannot but bring down punishment. But such wisdom and such spiritual enlightenment is not found in the infatuated people. This is the idea of vv. 11–13. The question: Who is the wise man? etc., reminds us of Hos. 14:10, and is used with a negative force: unhappily there is none so wise as to see this. “This” is explained by the clause, Wherefore doth the land, etc.: this, i.e., the reason why the land is going to destruction. The second clause, “and to whom,” etc., is dependent on the מִי, which is to be repeated in thought: and who is he that, etc. Jeremiah has the false prophets here in view, who, if they were really illumined by God, if they had the word of God, could not but declare to the people their corruptness, and the consequences which must flow from it. But since none is so wise ... Jeremiah proposes to them the question in v. 11b, and in v. 12 tells the answer as given by God Himself. Because they have forsaken my law, etc. נָתַן לְפָנַי, to set before; as in Deut. 4:8, so here, of the oral inculcation of the law by the prophets. “Walketh therein” refers to the law. The stubbornness of their heart, as in 3:17; 7:24. After the Baals, 2:23. The relative clause, “which their fathers,” etc., refers to both clauses of the verse; אֲשֶׁר with a neuter sense: which their fathers have taught them.

**Jeremiah 9:14.** The description of the offence is again followed by the threatening of judgment. To feed with wormwood and give



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gall to drink is a figure for sore and bitter suffering at the overthrow of the kingdom and in exile. The meaning of the suffix in מֵאֲכִילָם is shown by the apposition: this people. On water of gall see 8:14, and for the use of לֵעָנָה and ראש together see Deut. 29:17.—הַפִּיצוּתִים וגו' implies a verbal allusion to the words of Deut. 28:64 and 36, cf. Lev. 26:33. With this latter passage the second clause: I send the sword after them, has a close affinity. The purport of it is: I send the sword after the fugitives, to pursue them into foreign lands and slay them; cf. 42:16; 44:27. Thus it is indicated that those who fled into Egypt would be reached by the sword there and slain. This does not stand in contradiction to what is said in 4:27; 5:18, etc., to the effect that God will not make an utter end of them (Graf's opinion). This appears from 44:27, where those that flee to Egypt are threatened with destruction by famine and sword עַד כְּלוּתִי אוֹתָם, while v. 28 continues: but they that have escaped the sword shall return. Hence we see that the terms of the threatening do not imply the extirpation of the people to the last man, but only the extirpation of all the godless, of this wicked people.

**Jeremiah 9:16–21.** *Zion laid waste.*—V. 16. *“Thus hath Jahveh of hosts said: Give heed and call for mourning women, that they may come, and send to the wise women, that they may come,* V. 17. *And may make haste and strike up a lamentation for us, that our eyes may run down with tears and our eyelids gush out with water.* V. 18. *For loud lamentation is heard out of Zion: How are we spoiled, sore put to shame! because we have left the land, because they have thrown down our dwellings.* V. 19. *For year, ye women, the word of Jahve, and let your ear receive the word of His mouth, and teach your daughters lamentation, and let one teach the other the song of mourning!* V. 20. *For death cometh up by our windows, he entereth into our palaces, to cut off the children from the streets, the young men from the thoroughfares.* V. 21. *Speak: Thus runs the saying of Jahve: And the carcasses of men shall*

*fall as dung upon the field, and as a sheaf behind the shearer, which none gathereth.”*

In this strophe we have a further account of the execution of the judgment, and a poetical description of the vast harvest death is to have in Zion. The citizens of Zion are called upon to give heed to the state of affairs now in prospect, i.e., the judgment preparing, and are to assemble mourning women that they may strike up a dirge for the dead. הִתְבֹּנְנָה, to be attentive, give heed to a thing; cf. 2:10. Women cunning in song are to come with speed (תְּמַהֲרָנָה takes the place of an adverb). The form תְּבוֹאֲיָנָה (Ps. 45:16, 1 Sam. 10:7) alternates with תְּבוֹאָנָה, the usual form in this verb, e.g., Gen. 30:38, 1 Kings 3:16, etc., in order to produce an alternating form of expression. “For us” Näg. understands of those who call the mourning women, and in it he finds “something unusual,” because ordinarily mourners are summoned to lament for those already dead, i.e., others than those who summon them. “But here they are to raise their laments for the very persons who summon them, and for the death of these same, which has yet to happen.” There is a misunderstanding at the bottom of this remark. The “for us” is not said of the callers; for these are addressed in the second person. If Näg.’s view were right, it must be “for you,” not “for us.” True, the LXX has ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς; but Hitz. has rejected this reading as a simplification and weakening expression, and as disturbing the plan. “For us” is used by the people taken collectively, the nation as such, which is to be so sorely afflicted and chastised by death that it is time for the mourning women to raise their dirge, that so the nation may give vent to its grief in tears. We must also take into account, that even although the lamentations were for the dead, they yet chiefly concerned the living, who had been deeply afflicted by the loss of beloved relations; it would not be the dead merely that were mourned for, but the living too, because of their loss. It is this reference that stands here in the foreground, since the purpose of the chanting of dirges is that our

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eyes may flow with tears, etc. Zion will lament the slain of her people (Jeremiah 8:23), and so the mourning women are to strike up dirges. תִּשְׁאָנָה for תִּשְׁנָה, as in Ruth 1:14; cf. Ew. § 198, *b*.

On the use of יָרַד and נָזַל with the *accus.*: flow down in tears, cf. Gesen. § 138, 1, Rem. 2, Ew. § 281, *b*.

**Jeremiah 9:18.** V. 18 gives the reason why the mourning women are to be called: Loud lamentation is heard out of Zion. Ew. takes “out of Zion” of the Israelites carried away from their country—a view arbitrary in itself, and incompatible with v. 20. “How are we spoiled!” cf. 4:13; brought utterly to shame, because we have left the land, i.e., have been forced to leave it, and because they (the enemies) have thrown down our dwellings! הִשְׁלִיךְ, cast down, overthrow, Job 18:7, cf. Ezek. 19:12, and of buildings, Dan. 8:11. Kimchi and Hitz., again, take “our dwellings” as subject: our dwellings have cast us out, and appeal to Lev. 18:25: The land vomited out its inhabitants. But the figurative style in this passage does not justify us in adopting so unnatural a figure as this, that the dwellings cast out their occupants. Nor could the object be omitted in such a case. The passages, Isa. 33:9, Mic. 2:4, to which Hitz. appeals, are not analogous to the present one. The subject, not expressed, *acc.* to our view of the passage, is readily suggested by the context and the nature of the case. The “for” in v. 19 gives a second reason for calling the mourning women together. They are to come not only to chant laments for the spoiling of Zion, but that they may train their daughters and other women in the art of dirge-singing, because the number of deaths will be so great that the existing number of mourning women will not be sufficient for the task about to fall on them. This thought is introduced by a command of God, in order to certify that this great harvest of death will without fail be gathered. אֶזְנֹכֶם and בְּנֵי־כֶסֶם have masc. suffixes instead of feminine, the masc. being often thus used as the more general form; cf. Ew. § 184, *c*. In the last clause

the verb “teach” is to be supplied from the preceding context.

**Jeremiah 9:20.** Death comes in through (in at) the windows, not because the doors are to be thought of as barricaded (Hitz.), but as a thief in the night, i.e., suddenly, in an unexpected way. Perhaps Jeremiah was here thinking of Joel 2:9. And comes into the palaces, i.e., spares no house, but carries off high and low. The second clause is not to be very closely joined with the first, thus: Death comes into the houses and palaces, to sweep the children from off the streets; this would be self-contradictory. We must rather repeat “comes” from the first clause: He comes to sweep off the streets the child at play. That is: In the houses and palaces, as upon the streets and highways, he will seize his prey.

**Jeremiah 9:21.** The numbers of the dead will be so great, that the bodies will be left lying unburied. The concluding touch to this awful picture is introduced by the formula, “Speak: Thus saith the Lord,” as a distinct word from God to banish all doubt of the truth of the statement. This formula is interposed parenthetically, so that the main idea of the clause is joined by *ἵ cop.* to v. 20. This *ἵ* is not to be deleted as a gloss, as it is by Ew. and others, because it is not found in the LXX. With “as dung,” cf. 8:2; 16:4. עֲמִיר, prop. a bundle of stalks, grasped by the hand and cut, then = עֲמָר, sheaf. As a sheaf behind the reaper, which nobody gathers, i.e., which is left to lie unheeded, is not brought by the reaper into the barn. The point of the simile is in the lying unheeded. Strange to say, Graf and Näg. propose to refer the “none gathereth” not to the sheaf of the shearer, but to the dead bodies: whereas the reaper piles the sheaves upon the waggon and brings them to the threshing-floor, the corpses are left ungathered.

**Jeremiah 9:22–10:25.** The True Wisdom.—It is not a reliance on one’s own wisdom and strength that brings well-being, but the knowledge of the Lord and of His dealings in grace and justice (Jeremiah 9:22–25). Idolatry

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is folly, for the idols are the mere work of men's hands; whereas Jahveh, the Almighty God, is ruler of the world (Jeremiah 10:1-16). Israel will be made to understand this by the coming judgment (vv. 17-25).

**Jeremiah 9:22-25.** *The way of safety.*—V. 22. "Thus hath Jahveh said: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, and let not the strong man glory in his strength; let not the rich man glory in his riches: V. 23. But let him that glorieth glory in this, in having understanding, and in knowing me, that I am Jahveh, dealing grace, right, and justice upon earth; for therein have I pleasure, saith Jahveh. V. 24. Behold, days come, saith Jahveh, that I punish all the circumcised (who are) with foreskin, V. 25. Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the sons of Ammon, Moab and them that have their hair-corners polled, that dwell in the wilderness; for all the heathen are uncircumcised, and the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart."

After having overturned the foundations of the people's false reliance on the temple, or the sacrifices, and in the wisdom of its leaders, Jeremiah finally points out the way that leads to safety. This consists solely in the true knowledge of the Lord who doth grace, right, and justice, and therein hath pleasure. In v. 23 he mentions the delusive objects of confidence on which the children of this world are wont to pride themselves: their own wisdom, strength, and riches. These things do not save from ruin. Safety is secured only by "having understanding and knowing me." These two ideas are so closely connected, that the second may be looked on as giving the nearer definition of the first. The having of understanding must manifest itself in the knowing of the Lord. The two verbs are in the *infin. abs.*, because all that was necessary was to suggest the idea expressed by the verb; cf. Ew. § 328, b. The knowledge of God consists in knowing Him as Him who doth grace, right, and justice upon earth. **דָּבָר**, grace, favour, is the foundation on which right and justice are based; cf. 32:18, Ps. 33:5; 99:4; 103:6. He who has attained to this knowledge will seek to practise these virtues

towards his fellow-men, because only therein has God pleasure (**אֵלֶּהָ** pointing back to the objects before mentioned); cf. 22:3, Ps. 11:7; 37:28. But because the Lord has pleasure in right and justice, He will punish all peoples that do not practise justice.

**Jeremiah 9:24, 25.** Thus vv. 24 and 25 are connected with what precedes. The lack of righteousness is indicated by the idea **מִוֶּלֶד** **בְּעֶרְלָה**: circumcised with foreskin, i.e., not, circumcised in the foreskin (LXX, Vulg.), but circumcised and yet possessed of the foreskin. It is incorrect to translate: circumcised together with the uncircumcised (Kimchi, de W.). This is not only contrary to the usage of the language, but inconsistent with the context, since in v. 25 uncircumcisedness is predicated of the heathen and of Judah. The expression is an *oxymoron*, thus: uncircumcised-circumcised (Ew.), intended to gather Jews and heathen into one category. This is shown by the order of the enumeration in v. 24: Egypt, Judah, Edom, etc.; whence we may see that in this reference the prophet puts Judah on the same footing with the heathen, with the Egyptians, Edomites, etc., and so mentions Judah between Egypt and Edom. From the enumeration Ew. and Näg., following the example of Jerome, conclude that all the peoples named along with Judah practised circumcision. But neither on exegetical nor on historical grounds can this be confidently asserted. Considered from the exegetical point of view, it is contradictory of the direct statement in v. 25, that all the nations are uncircumcised. We must certainly not take the words **כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם** as: all these peoples, giving the article then the force of a retrospective demonstrative; still less can they mean "all the other nations" besides those named. "All the nations" are all nations besides Israel. When these are called "uncircumcised," and Israel "uncircumcised in heart," it is as clear as can be that all nations, and so Egyptians, Edomites, etc., are called uncircumcised, i.e., in the flesh; while Israel—the whole house of Israel, i.e., Judah and the other tribes—are set over against

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the nations in contrast to them as being uncircumcised in heart, i.e., spiritually. From the historical view-point, too, it is impossible to prove that circumcision was in use amongst all the nations mentioned along with Judah. Only of the Egyptians does Herod. ii. 36f., 104, record that they practised circumcision; and if we accept the testimony of all other ancient authors, Herod.'s statement concerns only the priests and those initiated into the mysteries of Egypt, not the Egyptian people as a whole; cf. my *Bibl. Archäol.* i. S. 307f. The only ground for attributing the custom of circumcision to the Moabites and Arabs, is the fact that Esau and Ishmael, the ancestors of these peoples, were circumcised. But the inference drawn therefrom is not supported by historical testimony. Indeed, so far as the Edomites are concerned, Josephus testifies directly the contrary, since in Antt. xiii. 9. 1, he tells us that when John Hyrcanus had conquered this people, he offered them the choice of forsaking their country or adopting circumcision, and that they chose the latter alternative. As to the ancient Arabs, we find in the *Ztschr. für die Kunde des Morgl.* iii. S. 230, a notice of the tribe 'Advân, where we are told that the warriors of this tribe consist of uncircumcised young men along with those already circumcised. But this gives us no certain testimony to the universal prevalence of circumcision; for the notice comes from a work in which pre- and post-Mohammedan traditions are confounded. Finally, there is no historical trace of the custom of circumcision amongst the Ammonites and Moabites. קְצוּצֵי פֶּאֶה here, and 25:23; 49:32: those polled, cropped at the edges of the beard and sides of the head, are such as have the hair cut from off the temples and the forehead, observing a custom which, according to Herod. iii. 8, was usual amongst some of the tribes of the Arabian Desert. The imitation of this practice was forbidden to the Israelites by the law, Lev. 19:27; from which passage we may see that פֶּאֶה refers to the head and the beard. Acc. to 49:32, cf. with v. 28, the tribes meant belonged to the Kedarenes, descended

according to Gen. 25:13 from Ishmael. In the wilderness, i.e., the Arabian Desert to the east of Palestine. By means of the predicate "uncircumcised in heart," the whole house of Israel, i.e., the whole covenant people, is put in contrast with the heathen. Circumcision involved the obligation to walk blameless before God (Gen. 17:1), and, as sign of the covenant, to keep God's commandments. If this condition was not fulfilled, if the heart remained uncircumcised, Israel lost all pre-eminence over the heathen, and was devoid of all room for glorying in the sight of God, just as the heathen were, who know not God the Lord, who have turned the truth of God into unrighteousness, and in their unrighteousness have become liable to the judgment of God.

### Jeremiah 10

**Jeremiah 10:1-16.** Warning against idolatry by means of a view of the nothingness of the false gods (vv. 1-5), and a counter-view of the almighty and everlasting God (vv. 6-11) and of His governing care in the natural world. This warning is but a further continuation of the idea of 9:23, that Israel's glory should consist in Jahveh who doth grace, right, and justice upon earth. In order thoroughly to impress this truth on the backsliding and idolatrous people, Jeremiah sets forth the nullity of the gods feared by the heathen, and, by showing how these gods are made of wood, plated with silver and gold, proves that these dead idols, which have neither life nor motion, cannot be objects of fear; whereas Jahveh is God in truth, a living and everlasting God, before whose anger the earth trembles, who has created the earth, and rules it, who in the day of visitation will also annihilate the false gods.

**Jeremiah 10:1-5.** *The nothingness of the false gods.*—V. 1. "Hear the word which Jahveh speaketh unto you, house of Israel! V. 2. Thus saith Jahveh: To the ways of the heathen use yourselves not, and at the signs of the heaven be not dismayed, because the heathen are dismayed at them. V. 3. For the ordinances of the peoples are vain. For it is wood, which one hath cut out of

*the forest, a work of the craftsman's hands with the axe. V. 4. With silver and with gold he decks it, with nails and hammers they fasten it, that it move not. V. 5. As a lathe-wrought pillar are they, and speak not; they are borne, because they cannot walk. Be not afraid of them; for they do not hurt, neither is it in them to do good."*

This is addressed to the house of Israel, i.e., to the whole covenant people; and "house of Israel" points back to "all the house of Israel" in 9:25. עֲלֵיכֶם for אֲלֵיכֶם, as frequently in Jeremiah.

The way of the heathen is their mode of life, especially their way of worshipping their gods; cf. ἡ ὁδὸς, Acts 9:2; 19:9. לָמַד c. אָ, accustom oneself to a thing, used in 13:21 with the synonymous עָל, and in Ps. 18:35 (Piel) with לָ.

The signs of heaven are unwonted phenomena in the heavens, eclipses of the sun and moon, comets, and unusual conjunctions of the stars, which were regarded as the precursors of extraordinary and disastrous events. We cannot admit Hitz.'s objection, that these signs in heaven were sent by Jahveh (Joel 3:3, 4), and that before these, as heralds of judgment, not only the heathen, but the Jews themselves, had good cause to be dismayed. For the signs that marked the dawning of the day of the Lord are not merely such things as eclipses of sun and moon, and the like. There is still less ground for Näg.'s idea, that the signs of heaven are such as, being permanently there, call forth religious adoration from year to year, the primitive constellations (Job 9:9), the twelve signs of the zodiac; for נִחַת (תַּחַתוֹ), to be in fear, *consternari*, never means, even in Mal. 2:5, regular or permanent adoration. "For the heathen," etc., gives the cause of the fear: the heathen are dismayed before these, because in the stars they adored supernatural powers.

**Jeremiah 10:3.** The reason of the warning counsel: The ordinances of the peoples, i.e., the religious ideas and customs of the heathen, are vanity. הוּא refers to and is in agreement with the predicate; cf. Ew. § 319, c. The vanity of the religious ordinances of the heathen is proved by the vanity of their gods. "For wood, which

one has hewn out of the forest," sc. it is, viz., the god. The predicate is omitted, and must be supplied from הַבָּל, a word which is in the plural used directly for the false gods; cf. 8:19, Deut. 32:21, etc. With the axe, sc. wrought. מֵעֵצָה Rashi explains as axe, and suitably; for here it means in any case a carpenter's tool, whereas this is doubtful in Isa. 44:12. The images were made of wood, which was covered with silver plating and gold; cf. Isa. 30:22; 40:19. This Jeremiah calls adorning them, making them fair with silver and gold. When the images were finished, they were fastened in their places with hammer and nails, that they might not tumble over; cf. Isa. 41:7; 40:20. When thus complete, they are like a lathe-wrought pillar. In Judg. 4:5, where alone this word elsewhere occurs. תִּמָּר means palm-tree (= תְּמָר); here, by a later, derivative usage, = pillar, in support of which we can appeal to the Talmudic תִּמָּר, *columnam facere*, and to the O.T. תִּמְרָה, pillar of smoke. מְקִשָּׁה is the work of the turning-lathe, Ex. 25:18, 31, etc. Lifeless and motionless as a turned pillar. Not to be able to speak is to be without life; not to walk, to take not a single step, i.e., to be without all power of motion; cf. Isa. 46:7. The *Chald.* paraphrases correctly: *quia non est in iis spiritus vitalis ad ambulandum*. The incorrect form יִשְׂאוּ is doubtless only a copyist's error, induced by the preceding יִשְׂאוּ. They can do neither good nor evil, neither hurt nor help; cf. Isa. 41:23. אֹתָם for אֹתָם, as frequently; see on 1:16.

**Jeremiah 10:6-11.** *The almighty power of Jahveh, the living God.—V. 6. "None at all is like Thee, Jahveh; great art Thou, and Thy name is great in might. V. 7. Who would not fear Thee, Thou King of the peoples? To Thee doth it appertain; for among all the wise men of the peoples, and in all their kingdoms, there is none at all like unto Thee. V. 8. But they are all together brutish and foolish; the teaching of the vanities is wood. V. 9. Beaten silver, from Tarshish it is brought, and gold from Uphaz,*

*work of the craftsman and of the hands of the goldsmith; blue and red purple is their clothing; the work of cunning workmen are they all. V. 10. But Jahveh is God in truth, He is living God and everlasting King; at His wrath the earth trembles, and the peoples abide not His indignation. V. 11. Thus shall ye say unto them: The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, these shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens."*

In this second strophe Jahveh is contrasted, as the only true God and Lord of the world, with the lifeless gods. These there is no need to fear, but it behoves all to fear the almighty God, since in His wrath He can destroy nations. When compared with Ps. 86:8, the מן in מֵאִין seems redundant,—so much so, that Ven. pronounces it a copyist's error, and Hitz. sets it aside by changing the vowels. The word as it stands contains a double negation, and is usually found only in dependent clauses with a strong negative force: so that there is none. Here it has the same force, but at the beginning of the sentence: none at all is as Thou; cf. Ew. § 323, a. Great is Thy name, i.e., the manifestation of Thee in the world, in Thy government of the earth. "In (or with) might" belongs to "great:" great with might, displaying itself in acts of might; cf. 16:21. Who would not fear Thee? a negative setting of the thought: every one must fear Thee. King of the nations; cf. Ps. 22:29; 47:8; 96:10. יֵאָהָה from יָאָה, ἄπ. λεγ. equivalent to נָאָה (whence נִאָּהָה), to be seemly, suitable.

Among the wise men of the peoples none is like Thee, so as that any should be able to make head against Thee by any clever stroke; cf. Isa. 19:12; 29:14. Nor is there in any kingdom of the peoples any one like Jahveh, i.e., in might. It is not merely earthly kings that are meant, but the gods of the heathen as well. In no heathen kingdom is there any power to be compared with Jahveh. We are led here to think also of the pagan gods by v. 8, where the wisdom and almighty power of the living God are contrasted with foolishness and vanity of the false gods. בְּאֵתָהּ is not: *in uno = in una re, sc. idololatria*

(Rabb.); nor is it, as Hitz. in most strained fashion makes it: by means of one thing, i.e., by (or at) a single word, the word which comes immediately after: it is wood. אֵתָהּ is unquestionably neuter, and the force of it here is collective, = all together, like the Chald. כְּחֶדְא. The nominative to "are brutish" is "the peoples." The verb בָּעֵר is denom. from בְּעִיר, to be brutish, occurring elsewhere in the Kal only in Ps. 94:8, Ezek. 21:36; in the Niph. vv. 14, 21, 51:17, Isa. 19:11. כָּסַל as verb is found only here; elsewhere we have כָּסִיל, foolish, and כָּסַל, folly (Cant. 7:25), and, as a verb, the transposed form סָכַל. The remaining words of the verse make up one clause; the construction is the same as in v. 3a, but the sense is not: "a mere vain doctrine is the wood," i.e., the idol is itself but a doctrine of vanities. In this way Ew. takes it, making "wood" the subject of the clause and מוֹסֵר the predicate. מוֹסֵר הַבְּלִים is the antithesis to מוֹסֵר יהוה, Deut. 11:2, Prov. 3:11, Job 5:17. As the latter is the παιδεία of the Lord, so the former is the παιδεία of the false gods (הַבְּלִים, cf. 8:19). The παιδεία of Jahveh displayed itself, acc. to Deut. 11:2, in deeds of might by means of which Jahveh set His people Israel free from the power of Egypt. Consequently it is the education of Israel by means of acts of love and chastenings, or, taken more generally, the divine leading and guidance of the people. Such a παιδεία the null and void gods could not give to their worshippers. Their παιδεία is wood, i.e., not: wooden, but nothing else than that which the gods themselves are—wood, which, however it be decked up (v. 9), remains a mere lifeless block. So that the thought of v. 8 is this: The heathen, with all their wise men, are brutish; since their gods, from which they should receive wisdom and instruction, are wood. Starting from this, v. 9 continues to this effect: However much this wood be decked out with silver, gold, and purple raiment, it remains but the product of men's hands; by no such process does the wood become a god. The description of the polishing off of the wood into

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a god is loosely attached to the predicate עָנָה, by way of an enumeration of the various things made use of therefore. The specification served to make the picture the more graphic; what idols were made of was familiar to everybody. מִרְקָע, beat out into thin plates for coating over the wooden image; cf. Ex. 39:3, Num. 17:3f. As to תַּרְשִׁישׁ, Tartessus in Spain, the source of the silver, see on Ezek. 27:12. Gold from Ophir; אֹפִיז here and Dan. 10:5 is only a dialectical variety of אֹפִיר, see on 1 Kings 9:27. As the blue and red purple, see on Ex. 25:4. חֲכָמִים, skilful artisans, cf. Isa. 40:20. They all, i.e., all the idols.

**Jeremiah 10:10.** Whereas Jahveh is really and truly God. אֱלֹהִים אֲמֵת (standing in apposition), God in truth, "truth" being strongly contrasted with "vanity," and "living God" (cf. Deut. 5:23) with the dead gods (vv. 5, 8); and everlasting King of the whole world (cf. Ps. 10:16; 29:10, Ex. 15:18), before whose wrath the earth trembles and the peoples quake with terror; cf. Nah. 1:5, Joel 2:11, Ps. 97:5. לֹא יִכְלוּ (written as in 2:13), they hold not, do not hold out, do not endure.

**Jeremiah 10:11.** V. 11 is Chaldee. But it must not be regarded as a gloss that has found its way into the text, on the grounds on which Houb., Ven., Ros., Ew., Hitz., Gr., etc., so regard it, namely, because it is Chaldee, and because there is an immediate connection between vv. 10 and 12. Both the language in which the verse is written, and the subject-matter of it, are unfavourable to this view. The latter does not bear the character of a gloss; and no copyist would have interpolated a Chaldee verse into the Hebrew text. Besides, the verse is found in the Alexandrian version; and in point of sense it connects very suitably with v. 10: Jahveh is everlasting King, whereas the gods which have not made heaven and earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens. This the Israelites are to say to the idolaters. אֲרִקָא is the harder form for אֲרִקָא. The last word, אֱלֹהִים, is Hebrew; it does not belong to שְׂמִיָּא, but serves

to emphasize the subject: the gods—these shall perish. Jeremiah wrote the verse in Chaldee, *ut Judaeis suggerat, quomodo Chaldaeis (ad quos non nisi Chaldaice loqui poterant) paucis verbis respondendum sit*, as Seb. Schm. has remarked. The thought of this verse is a fitting conclusion to the exhortation not to fear the gods of the heathen; it corresponds to the 5th verse, with which the first strophe concludes the warning against idolatry. The Israelites are not only not to fear the null and void gods of the heathen, but they are to tell the heathen that their gods will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.

**Jeremiah 10:12–16.** *The third strophe.—In it the almighty power of the living God is shown from His providential government of nature, the overthrow of the false gods in the time of judgment is declared, and, finally, the Creator of the universe is set forth as the God of Israel.—V. 12. "That made the earth by His power, that founded the world by His wisdom, and by His understanding stretched out the heavens. V. 13. When He thundering makes the roar of waters in the heavens, He causes clouds to rise from the ends of the earth, makes lightnings for the rain, and brings the wind forth out of His treasures. V. 14. Brutish becomes every man without knowledge; ashamed is every goldsmith by reason of the image, for falsehood is his molten image, and there is no spirit in them. V. 15. Vanity are they, a work of mockery; in the time of their visitation they perish. V. 16. Not like these is the portion of Jacob: the framer of (the) all is He, and Israel is the stock of His inheritance: Jahveh of hosts is His name."*

In point of form, "that made the earth," etc., connects with "Jahveh God," v. 10; but in respect of its matter, the description of God as Creator of heaven and earth is led up to by the contrast: The gods which have not made the heaven and the earth shall perish. The subject to עָשָׂה and the following verbs is not expressed, but may be supplied from the contrasted statement of v. 11, or from the substance of the several statements in v. 12. The connection may be taken thus: The true God is the one making

the earth by His power = is He that made, etc. As the creation of the earth is a work of God's almighty power, so the establishing, the founding of it upon the waters (Ps. 24:2) is an act of divine wisdom, and the stretching out of the heavens over the earth like a tent (Isa. 40:22; Ps. 104:2) is a work of intelligent design. On this cf. Isa. 42:5; 44:24; 45:18; 51:13. Every thunder-storm bears witness to the wise and almighty government of God, v. 13. The words *תהו לקול* are difficult. Acc. to Ew. § 307, *b*, they stand for *קול לתהו*: when He gives His voice, i.e., when He thunders. In support of this it may be said, that the mention of lightnings, rain, and wind suggests such an interpretation. But the transposition of the words cannot be justified. Hitz. has justly remarked: The putting of the accusative first, taken by itself, might do; but not when it must at the same time be *stat. constr.*, and when its genitive thus separated from it would assume the appearance of being an accusative to *תהו*. Besides, we would expect *קול לתהו* rather than *תהו לקול* cannot grammatically be rendered: the voice which He gives, a Näg. would have it, but: the voice of His giving; and "roar of waters" must be the accusative of the object, governed by *תהו*. Hence we must protest against the explanation of L. de Dieu: *ad vocem dationis ejus multitudo aquarum est in caelo*, at least if *ad vocem dationis* is tantamount to *simul ac dat.* Just as little can *תהו לקול* taken by itself mean thunder, so that *ad vocem* should, with Schnur., be interpreted by *tonitru est dare ejus multitudinem aquae*. The only grammatically feasible explanation is the second of those proposed by L. de Dieu: *ad vocem dandi ipsum*, i.e., *qua dat vel ponit multitudinem aquarum*. So Hitz.: at the roar of His giving wealth of waters. Accordingly we expound: at the noise, when He gives the roar of waters in heaven, He raises up clouds from the ends of the earth; taking, as we do, the *ויעלה* to be a *consec.* introducing the supplementary clause. The voice or noise with which God gives the roar or the fulness of waters in the heaven,

is the sound of the thunder. With this the gathering of the dark thunder-clouds is put into causal connection, as it appears to be to the eye; for during the thunder we see the thunder-clouds gather thicker and darker on the horizon. *אשׁיׁא*, the ascended, poetic word for cloud. Lightnings for the rain; i.e., since the rain comes as a consequence of the lightning, for the lightning seems to rend the clouds and let them pour their water out on the earth. Thunderstorms are always accompanied by a strong wind. God causes the wind to go forth from His store-chambers, where He has it also under custody, and blow over the earth. See a like simile of the store-chambers of the snow and hail, Job 38:22f. From *ויעלה* onwards, this verse is repeated in Ps. 135:7.

**Jeremiah 10:14f.** In presence of such marvels of divine power and wisdom, all men seem brutish and ignorant (away from knowledge = without knowledge), and all makers of idols are put to shame "because of the image" which they make for a god, and which is but a deception, has no breath of life. *דבן*, prop. drink-offering, *libamen*, cf. 7:15; here molten image = *מסכה*, as in Isa. 41:29; 48:5, Dan. 11:8. Vanity they are, these idols made by the goldsmith. A work of mockings, i.e., that is exposed to ridicule when the nullity of the things taken to be gods is clearly brought to light. Others: A work which makes mockery of its worshippers, befools and deludes them (Hitz., Näg.). In the time of their visitation, cf. 6:15.

**Jeremiah 10:16.** Quite other is the portion of Jacob, i.e., the God who has fallen to the lot of Jacob (the people of Israel) as inheritance. The expression is formed after Deut. 4:19, 20, where it is said of sun, moon, and stars that Jahveh has apportioned (*חלק*) them to the heathen as gods, but has taken Israel that it may be to Him *לעם נחלה*; accordingly Israel is in Deut. 32:9 called *חלק יהוה*, while in Ps. 16:5 David praises Jahveh as *מנתחלקו*. For He is the framer *הבל*, i.e., of the universe. Israel is the stock of His inheritance, i.e., the race which



belongs to Him as a peculiar possession. שָׁבֵט is like נְהַלְתֹּהוּ, Deut. 32:9; in Ps. 74:2 it is said of Mount Zion, and in Isa. 63:17 it is used in the plural, שְׂבָטֵי ה', of the godly servants of the Lord. The name of this God, the framer of the universe, is Jahveh of hosts—the God whom the hosts of heaven, angels and stars, serve, the Lord and Ruler of the whole world; cf. Isa. 54:5, Amos 4:13.

**Jeremiah 10:17–25.** *The captivity of the people, their lamentation for the devastation of the land, and entreaty that the punishment may be mitigated.*—V. 17. “Gather up thy bundle out of the land, thou that sittest in the siege. V. 18. For thus hath Jahveh spoken: Behold, I hurl forth the inhabitants of the land this time, and press them hard, that they may find them. V. 19. Woe is me for my hurt! grievous is my stroke! yet I think: This is my suffering, and I will bear it! V. 20. My tent is despoiled, and all my cords are rent asunder. My sons have forsaken me, and are gone: none stretches forth my tent any more, or hangs up my curtains. V. 21. For the shepherds are become brutish, and have not sought Jahveh; therefore they have not dealt wisely, and the whole flock is scattered.—V. 22. Hark! a rumour: behold, it comes, and great commotion from the land of midnight, to make the cities of Judah a desolation, an abode of jackals.—V. 23. I know, Jahveh, that the way of man is not in himself, nor in the man that walketh to fix his step. V. 24. Chasten me, Jahveh, but according to right; not in Thine anger, lest Thou make me little. V. 25. Pour out Thy fury upon the peoples that know Thee not, and upon the races that call not upon Thy name! for they have devoured Jacob, have devoured him and made an end of him, and laid his pastures waste.”

**Jeremiah 10:17.** In v. 17 the congregation of the people is addressed, and captivity in a foreign land is announced to them. This announcement stands in connection with 9:25, in so far as captivity is the accomplishment of the visitation of Judah threatened in 9:24. That connection is not, however, quite direct; the announcement is led up to by the warning against idolatry of vv. 1–16, inasmuch as it

furnishes confirmation of the threat uttered in v. 15, that the idols shall perish in the day of their visitation, and shows besides how, by its folly in the matter of idolatry, Judah has drawn judgment down on itself. The confession in v. 21: the shepherds are become brutish, points manifestly back to the description in v. 14 of the folly of the idolaters, and exhibits the connection of vv. 17–25 with the preceding warning against idolatry. For “gather up,” etc., Hitz. translates: gather thy trumpery from the ground; so that the expression would have a contemptuous tone. But the meaning of rubbish cannot be proved to belong to כְּנֻטָה; and the mockery that would lie in the phrase is out of place. כְּנֻטָה, from Arab. *kn'*, *contrahere*, *constipare*, means that which is put together, packed up, one's bundle. The connection of אָסַף and מֵאָרֶץ is pregnant: put up thy bundle and carry it forth of the land. As N. G. Schroeder suspected, there is about the expression something of the nature of a current popular phrase, like the German *Schnür dein Bündel*, pack up, i.e., make ready fore the road. She who sits in the siege. The daughter of Zion is meant, but we must not limit the scope to the population of Jerusalem; as is clear from “inhabitants of the land,” v. 18, the population of the whole land are comprised in the expression. As to the form יוֹשְׁבֵתִי, see at 22:23. אָסַף with *dag. lene* after the sibilant, as in Isa. 47:2. “I hurl forth” expresses the violent manner of the captivity; cf. Isa. 22:17f. “This time;” hitherto hostile invasions ended with plundering and the imposition of a tribute: 2 Kings 14:14; 16:5; 18:13f.—And I press them hard, or close them in, לָמַטְן יִמְצְאוּ. These words are variously explained, because there is no object expressed, and there may be variety of opinion as to what is the subject. Hitz., Umbr., Näg., take the verb *find* in the sense of *feel*, and so the object צָרָה would easily be supplied from the verb הִצְרֵתִי: so that they may feel it, i.e., I will press them sensibly. But we cannot make sure of this meaning for מִצָּא either from 17:9 or

from Eccles. 8:17, where know (יָדַעַ) and מָצָא are clearly identical conceptions. Still less is Graf entitled to supply as object: that which they seek and are to find, namely, God. His appeal in support of this to passages like Ps. 32:6, Deut. 4:27 and 29, proves nothing; for in such the object is manifestly suggested by the context, which is not the case here. A just conclusion is obtained when we consider that הִצְרִיתִי contains a play on בְּמִצּוֹר in v. 17, and cannot be understood otherwise than as a hemming in by means of a siege. The aim of the siege is to bring those hemmed in under the power of the besiegers, to get at, reach them, or find them. Hence we must take the enemy as subject to “find,” while the object is given in לָהֶם: so that they (the enemy) may find them (the besieged). Thus too Jerome, who translates the disputed verb passively: *et tribulabo eos ut inveniantur*; while he explains the meaning thus: *sic eos obsideri faciam, sicque tribulabo et coangustabo, ut omnes in urbe reperiantur et effugere nequeant malum*. Taken thus, the second clause serves to strengthen the first: I will hurl forth the inhabitants of this land into a foreign land, and none shall avoid this fate, for I will so hem them in that none shall be able to escape.

This harassment will bring the people to their senses, so that they shall humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. Such feelings the prophet utters at v. 19ff, in the name of the congregation, as he did in the like passage 4:19f. As from the hearts of those who had been touched by their affliction, he exclaims: Woe is me for my breach! i.e., my crushing overthrow. The breach is that sustained by the state in its destruction, see at 4:6. נִחְלָה, grown sick, i.e., grievous, incurable is the stroke that has fallen upon me. For this word we have in 15:18 אָנֹשָׁה, which is explained by “refuseth to be healed.” וְאָנִי introduces an antithesis: but I say, sc. in my heart, i.e., I think. Hitz. gives אָנִי the force of a limitation = nothing further than this, but wrongly; and, taking the perf. אֶמְרָתִי as a

preterite, makes out the import to be: “in their state of careless security they had taken the matter lightly, saying as it were, If no further calamity than this menace us, we may be well content;” a thought quite foreign to the context. For “this my suffering” can be nothing else than the “hurt” on account of which the speaker laments, or the stroke which he calls dangerous, incurable. אָנִי has, besides, frequently the force of positive asseveration: yea, certainly (cf. Ew. § 354, a), a force readily derived from that of only, nothing else than. And so here: only this, i.e., even this is my suffering. הִלִּי, sickness, here suffering in general, as in Hos. 5:13, Isa. 53:3f., etc. The old translators took the Yod as pronoun (my suffering), whence it would be necessary to point הִלִּי, like גֹּי, Zeph. 2:9; cf. Ew. § 293, b, Rem.—The suffering which the congregation must bear consists in the spoliation of the land and the captivity of the people, represented in v. 20 under the figure of a destruction of their tent and the disappearance of their sons. The Chald. has fairly paraphrased the verse thus: my land is laid waste and all my cities are plundered, my people has gone off (into exile) and is no longer here. וְאָנִי construed with the accus. like *egredi urbem*; cf. Ge. 54:4, etc.—From “my sons have forsaken me” Näg. draws the inference that vv. 19 and 20 are the words of the country personified, since neither the prophet could so speak, nor the people, the latter being indeed identical with the sons, and so not forsaken, but forsaking. This inference rests on a mistaken view of the figure of the daughter of Zion, in which is involved the conception of the inhabitants of a land as the children of the land when personified as mother. Nor is there any evidence that the land is speaking in the words: I think, This is my suffering, etc. It is besides alleged that the words give no expression to any sense of guilt; they are said, on the contrary, to give utterance to a consolation which only an innocent land draws from the fact that a calamity is laid upon it, a calamity which must straightway be borne. This is neither true in point of fact, nor does it prove

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the case. The words, This is my suffering, etc., indicate resignation to the inevitable, not innocence or undeserved suffering. Hereon Graf remarks: "The suffering was unmerited, in so far as the prophet and the godly amongst the people were concerned; but it was inevitable that he and they should take it upon their shoulders, along with the rest." Asserted with so great width, this statement cannot be admitted. The present generation bears the punishment not only for the sins of many past generations, but for its own sins; nor were the godly themselves free from sin and guilt, for they acknowledge the justice of God's chastisement, and pray God to chasten them בְּמִשְׁפָּט, not in anger (v. 24). Besides, we cannot take the words as spoken by the prophet or by the godly as opposed to the ungodly, since it is the sons of the speaker ("my sons") that are carried captive, who can certainly not be the sons of the godly alone.

**Jeremiah 10:21.** The cause of this calamity is that the shepherds, i.e., the princes and leaders of the people (see on 2:8; 3:15), are become brutish, have not sought Jahveh, i.e., have not sought wisdom and guidance from the Lord. And so they could not deal wisely, i.e., rule the people with wisdom. הַשְׂכִּיל is here not merely: have prosperity, but: show wisdom, deal wisely, securing thus the blessed results of wisdom. This is shown both by the contrasted "become brutish" and by the parallel passage, 3:15. מִרְעִיתָם, their pasturing, equivalent to "flock of their pasturing," their flock, 23:1.

The calamity over which the people mourns is drawing near, v. 22. Already is heard the tremendous din of a mighty host which approaches from the north to make the cities of Judah a wilderness. שְׂמוֹעָה is an exclamation: listen to the rumour, it is coming near. From a grammatical point of view the subject to "comes" is "rumour," but in point of sense it is that of which the rumour gives notice. Graf weakens the sense by gathering the words into one assertory clause: "They hear a rumour come." The "great commotion" is that of

an army on the march, the clattering of the weapons, the stamping and neighing of the war-horses; cf. 6:23; 8:16. From the land of midnight, the north, cf. 1:14; 4:6, etc. "To make the cities," etc., cf. 4:7; 9:10.—The rumour of the enemy's approach drives the people to prayer, vv. 23–25. The prayer of these verses is uttered in the name of the congregation. It begins with the confession: Not with man is his way, i.e., it is not within man's power to arrange the course of his life, nor in the power of the man who walks to fix his step (וְלֹא בְּאִישׁ מְרַבֵּץ before the thought: merely marking the connection of the thought: cf. Ew. § 348, a). The antithesis to לֹא בְּאִישׁ and לֹא בְּאִישׁ is לִיהוָה, with God; cf. Ps. 37:23, Prov. 16:9:

Man's heart deviseth his way, but Jahveh establisheth the steps. The thought is not: it is not in man's option to walk in straight or crooked, good or evil ways, but: the directing of man, the way by which he must go, lies not in his own but in God's power. Hitz. justly finds here the wisdom that admits: "Mit unserer Macht ist nichts getan,"—man's destiny is ordained not by himself, but by God. Upon this acquiescence in God's dispensation of events follows the petition: Chasten me, for I have deserved punishment, but chasten בְּמִשְׁפָּט, acc. to right, not in Thine anger; cf. Ps. 6:2; 38:2. A chastening in anger is the judgment of wrath that shall fall on obstinate sinners and destroy them. A chastening acc. to right is one such as is demanded by right (judgment), as the issue of God's justice, in order to the reclamation and conversion of the repentant sinner. "Lest Thou make me little," insignificant, puny; not merely, diminish me, make me smaller than I now am. For such a decrease of the people would result even from a gentle chastisement. There is no comparative force in the words. To make small, in other words, reduce to a small, insignificant people. This would be at variance with "right," with God's ordained plan in regard to His people. The expression is not equivalent to: not to make an utter end, 30:11, etc. The people had no call to pray that they might escape being made an utter end of; thus much had been promised by God, 4:27; 5:10.—God is asked to

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pour forth His fury upon the heathen who know not the Lord nor call upon His name, because they seek to extirpate Jacob (the people of Israel) as the people of God, at this time found in Judah alone. The several words in v. 25*b* suggest the fury with which the heathen proceed to the destruction of Israel. The present verse is reproduced in Ps. 79:6, 7, a psalm written during the exile, or at least after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; but in the reproduction the energetic expansion of the “devoured” is omitted.

## Jeremiah 11

### Ch. 11–13—Judah’s Faithlessness to Covenant Obligations, and the Consequences Thereof

**Jeremiah 11–13.** In the first part of this compilation of discourses (Jeremiah 11:1–17) Judah is upbraided for disloyalty to the covenant, on account of which people and kingdom are threatened with sore disaster. In the second part (Jeremiah 11:18–12:17), the murderous attempt of the people of Anathoth against the prophet’s life (Jeremiah 11:18–23) gives occasion for a description of Judah’s irreclaimable perverseness; while Jeremiah’s expostulation with God as to the prosperity of godless men, and the reproof therefor received by him from God (Jeremiah 12:1–6), call forth an announcement that, in spite of God’s long-suffering, judgment on Judah and all nations will not be for ever deferred (Jeremiah 12:7–17). Finally, in the third part, Jeremiah 13, we have first a further account, by means of a symbolical action to be performed by the prophet, of the abasement of Judah’s pride in banishment to Euphrates (vv. 1–11); and next, an account of the judgment about to fall on Judah in the destruction of Jerusalem, and this both in figurative and in direct language (vv. 12–27).

From the contents of the discourses it appears unquestionable that we have here, gathered into the unity of a written record, various oral addresses of Jeremiah, together with some of the experiences that befell him in the exercise of his calling. There is no foundation for the

assertion, that 12:7–17 is a self-complete prophetic discourse (Hitz.), or a supplement to the rest, written in the last years of Jehoiakim (Graf); nor for the assumption of several commentators, that the composition of c. 13 falls into the time of Jehoiachin,—as will be shown when we come to expound the passages referred to. The discourse throughout contains nothing that might not have been spoken or have happened in the time of Josiah; nor have we here any data for determining precisely the dates of the several portions of the whole discourse.

**Jeremiah 11:1–17.** Judah’s Disloyalty to the Covenant, with the Consequences Thereof—In vv. 2–8 is a short summary of the covenant made with the fathers; in vv. 9–13 is an account of the breaking of this covenant by Judah, and of the calamity which results therefrom; and in vv. 14–17 further description of this calamity.

**Jeremiah 11:1–8.** *“The word which came to Jeremiah from Jahveh, saying: V. 2. Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, V. 3. And say thou to them: Thus hath Jahve, the God of Israel, said: Cursed is the man that heareth not the words of this covenant, V. 4. Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace, saying: Hearken to my voice, and do them according to all which I command you; so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God; V. 5. That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day. And I answered and said: So be it, Jahveh. V. 6. Then said Jahveh to me: Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: Hear ye the words of this covenant and do them. V. 7. For I have testified to your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt unto this day, testifying from early morning on: Hearken to my voice! V. 8. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked each in the stubbornness of their evil heart; and so I brought on them all the words of this covenant which I have commanded them to do, and they have not done them.”*

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The form of address, v. 2: hear ye (שמעו), and speak ye (דברתם), is noteworthy since we are not told who are to hear and speak; while at v. 3, in וְאָמַרְתָּ Jeremiah receives the commission to declare the words of the covenant to the people, and to make known in the cities of Judah, etc. (v. 6). The difficulty is not removed by the plan adopted by Hitz. and Graf from the LXX, of changing וְדַבַּרְתֶּם into וְדִבְרַתֶּם, “and speak them;” for the שמעו remains to be dealt with. To whom then, is it addressed? Schleussner proposed to change it into שמעה—a purely arbitrary change. In v. 4 “hearing” is used in the sense of giving ear to, obeying. And in no other sense can it be taken in v. 1. “The words of this covenant” are, as is clear from the succeeding context, the words of the covenant recorded in the Pentateuch, known from the reading of the Torah. The call to hear the words thereof can only have the meaning of: to give ear to them, take them to heart. Hence Chr. B. Mich. and Schnur. have referred the words to the Jews: Listen, ye Jews and ye citizens of Jerusalem, to the words of the covenant, and make them know to one another, and exhort one another to observe them. But this paraphrase is hardly consistent with the wording of the verse. Others fancied that the priests and elders were addressed; but if so, these must necessarily have been named. Clearly it is to the prophets in general that the words are spoken, as Kimchi observed; and we must not take “hear ye” as if the covenant was unknown to the prophets, but as intended to remind the prophets of them, that they might enforce them upon the people. Taken thus, this introductory verse serves to exalt the importance of the truths mentioned, to mark them out as truths which God had commanded all the prophets to proclaim. If it be the prophets in general who are addressed in v. 2, the transition to “and say thou” is easily explained. Jeremiah, too, must himself do that which was the bounden duty of all the prophets, must make the men of Judah and Jerusalem call to mind the curse overhanging transgressors of the covenant. The words:

Cursed is the man, etc., are taken from Deut. 27:26, from the directions for the engagement to keep the covenant, which the people were to solemnise upon their entry into Canaan, and which, acc. to Josh. 8:30ff., they did solemnise. The quotation is made freely from memory. Instead of “that heareth not the words of this covenant,” we find in Deut. *l.c.*: “the confirmeth not (יקים) the words of this law to do them.” The choice there of the word יקים is suggested by its connection with the act of solemnisation enjoined. The recitation and promulgation of the law upon Mount Gerizim and Ebal (Deut. 27) had no other aim than that of solemnly binding the people to keep or follow the law; and this is what Jeremiah means by “hearing.” The law to be established is the law of the covenant, i.e., the covenant made by Jahveh with Israel, and spoken of in Deut. 28:69 and 29:8 as the “words of this covenant.” This covenant, which Moses had made with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab (Deut. 28:69), was but a renewal of that solemnly concluded at Sinai (Ex. 24). And so Jeremiah speaks of this covenant as the one which Jahveh commanded the fathers in the day, i.e., at the time, of their leaving Egypt. “In the day that,” etc., as in 7:22. “Out of the iron furnace:” this metaphor for the affliction endured by Israel in Egypt is taken from Deut. 4:20. The words: hearken unto my voice and do *them* (the words of the covenant), suggest Deut. 27:1, 2; and the words: so shall ye be my people, suggest Deut. 29:12, a passage which itself points back to ex. 6:7 (Jeremiah 19:5f.), Lev. 27:12, Deut. 7:6, etc. That I may establish, i.e., perform, the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, i.e., the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Deut. 7:8, etc.), promising to give them a land flowing, etc. The frequently repeated description of the promised land; cf. Ex. 3:8, 17, Deut. 6:3, etc. כִּי־נִהְיֶה, as in Deut. 2:30; 4:20, etc., is not: at this time, now (Graf), but: as this day, meaning: as is even now the case, sc. that ye still possess this precious land. The assenting reply of the prophet: אָמֵן יְהוָה, yea, or so be it (γένοιτο, LXX),

Lord, corresponds to the *מִנְּךָ* with which the people, acc. to Deut. 27:15ff., were to take on themselves the curses attached to the breaking of the law, curses which they did take on themselves when the law was promulgated in Canaan. As the whole congregation did on that occasion, so here the prophet, by his “yea,” expresses his adherence to the covenant, and admits that the engagement is yet in full force for the congregation of God; and at the same time indicates that he, on his part, is ready to labour for the fulfilment of the covenant, so that the people may not become liable to the curse of the law.

**Jeremiah 11:6–8.** Having set forth the curse to which transgressors of the law are exposed, God commands the prophet to proclaim the words of the covenant to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, and to call upon them to do these. “All these words” are those subsequently specified, i.e., the commandments of the law (cf. v. 2). Jeremiah is to proclaim these, because, in spite of unremitting exhortation to hear and give heed to the voice of the Lord, the fathers had paid no regard thereto. *קָרָא*, not: read aloud (Hitz., Graf), but: proclaim, make known, as in 2:2; 3:12, etc. *הָעֵיד* with *בְּ*, to testify against any one, equivalent to: solemnly to enforce on one with importunate counsel and warning; cf. Deut. 30:19, Ps. 50:7, etc. On *וְהָעַד וְהָשְׁכַם*, see at 7:13.—But they have not hearkened, v. 8a, running almost literally in the words of 7:24. “And I brought upon them,” etc., i.e., inflicted upon them the punishments with which transgressors of the law were threatened, which curses had been, in the case of the greater part of the people, the ten tribes, carried to the extreme length, i.e., to the length of their banishment from their own land into the midst of the heathen; cf. 2 Kings 17:13ff.

**Jeremiah 11:9–13.** *The people’s breach of the covenant, and the consequences of this.*—V. 9. “And Jahveh said unto me: Conspiracy is found among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. V. 10. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to

*give ear to my words, and they are gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers. V. 11. Behold, I bring evil upon them, from which they cannot escape; and though they cry to me, I will not hear them. V. 12. And the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall go and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense, but they shall not help them in the time of their trouble. V. 13. For as many as are thy cities, so many are thy gods become, O Judah; and as many as are the streets of Jerusalem, so many altars have ye set up to Shame, altars to offer odours to Baal.”*

Jeremiah is once more to enforce the words of the covenant upon the people, because they have broken the covenant, returned to the idolatry of the fathers. Conspiracy is found, is to be seen. The people’s defection from Jahveh, their breach of faith towards the covenant God, is called conspiracy, because it had become as universal as if it had been initiated by a formal preconcertment. “The former fathers,” forefathers of the people, are the Israelites under Moses, who broke the covenant by idolatry while still at Sinai, and those of the time of the Judges. With *וְהָמָה* the subject is changed; “they” are not the forefathers, but the prophet’s contemporaries. In the last clause of v. 10 is comprehended the apostasy of the whole people: Like Israel, Judah too has broken the covenant. Israel has been punished for this by being cast out among the heathen, the like doom awaits Judah.

**Jeremiah 11:11.** Because of the covenant broken, the Lord will bring on Judah and Jerusalem evil out of which they shall not come forth, i.e., not merely, from which they shall not escape safely, but: in which they shall find no way of rescue; for it in this calamity they cry to the Lord, He will not hear them. Nor will the gods whom they serve, i.e., the false gods, help them then. As to “as many as are,” etc., see on 2:28. “(The) Shame,” i.e., Baal, as at 3:24.

**Jeremiah 11:14–17.** *Neither entreaty on their behalf nor their hypocritical worship will avert judgment.*—V. 14. “But thou, pray not for this

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people, neither lift up for them cry or prayer; for I hear them not in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble. V. 15. What would my beloved in my house? they who practise guile? Shall vows and holy flesh remove they calamity from thee? then mayest thou exult. V. 16. A green olive, fair for its goodly fruit, Jahveh called thy name; with the noise of great tumult He set fire to it, and its branches brake. V. 17. And Jahveh of hosts, that planted thee, hath decreed evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah which they themselves have done, to provoke me, in that they have offered odours to Baal."

We have already, in Jeremiah 7:16, met with the declaration that the Lord will not accept any intercession for the covenant-breaking people (v. 14); the termination of this verse differs slightly in the turn to takes.—בָּעַד רָעָתָם the ancient commentators have almost unanimously rendered: *tempore mali eorum*, as if they had read בָּעַת (this is, in fact, the reading of some codd.); but hardly on sufficient grounds. בָּעַד gives a suitable sense, with the force of the Greek ἀμφί, which, like the German *um*, passes into the sense of *wegen*, as the English *about* passes into that of *concerning*.—In vv. 15–17 we have the reason why the Lord will hear neither the prophet's supplication nor the people's cry in their time of need. V. 15 is very obscure; and from the Masoretic text it is hardly possible to obtain a suitable sense. "The beloved" of Jahveh is Judah, the covenant people; cf. Deut. 33:12, where Benjamin is so called, and Jeremiah 12:7, where the Lord calls His people יְדִידוֹת נַפְשִׁי. "What is to my beloved in my house?" i.e., what has my people to do in my house—what does it want there? "My house" is the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, as appears from the mention of holy flesh in the second clause. The main difficulty lies in the words עֲשׂוֹתָהּ הַמְזַמְתָּה הָרָבִים. Hitz. takes עֲשׂוֹתָהּ to be the subject of the clause, and makes the suffix point back to יְדִידִי, which, as collective, is to be construed *generis faem.*: what should the accomplishment of his plans be to my beloved

in my house? But as adverse to this we must note, a. the improbability of יְדִידִי as used of the people being feminine; b. the fact that even if we adopt Hitz.'s change of הַמְזַמְתָּה into הַמְזַמּוֹת, yet the latter word does not mean plans or designs to bring offerings. The phrase is clearly to be taken by itself as a continuation of the question; and the suffix to be regarded, with Ew., Umbr., etc., as pointing, in the Aramaic fashion, to the object following: they who practise guile. מְזַמָּה, a thinking out, devising, usually of hurtful schemes, here guile, as in Ps. 139:20, Job 21:27. What is meant is the hypocrisy of cloaking their apostasy from God by offering sacrifices in the temple, of concealing their idolatry and passing themselves off as worshippers of Jahve. On the form מְזַמְתָּה, see Ew. § 173, g, Gesen. § 80, Rem. 2, f. הָרָבִים makes no sense. It belongs manifestly to the words which follow; for it can neither be subject to עֲשׂוֹתָהּ, nor can it be joined to הַמְזַמְתָּה as its genitive. The LXX render: μη εὐχαὶ καὶ κρέα ἄγια ἀφελούσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ τὰς κακίας σου; and following this, Dathe, Dahl., Ew., Hitz. hold הַנְּדָרִים to be the original reading. On the other hand, Maur., Graf, and Næg. think we should read הַרְנִים (after Ps. 32:7) or הַרְנִים, crying, loud supplication; on the ground of Buxtorf's hint, *Anticrit.* p. 661, that probably the Alexandrians had הָרָבִים in their text, but, changing the ב for ו, read הַרְנִים. We must make our choice between these two conjectures; for even if הָרָבִים did not stand in the codex used by the Alexandrians, it cannot have been the original word. The form הַרְנִים is, indeed, sufficiently attested by פָּלַטְרִי, Ps. 32:7; but the meaning of exultation which it has there is here wholly out of place. And we find no case of a plural to רָנָה, which means both exultation and piteous, beseeching cry (e.g., 7:16). So that, although רָנָה is in the LXX occasionally rendered by δέησις (Jeremiah 11:14; 14:12, etc.) or προσευχή (1 Kings 8:28), we prefer the conjecture הַנְּדָרִים; for "vow" is in

better keeping with “holy flesh,” i.e., flesh of sacrifice, Hag. 2:12, since the vow was generally carried out by offering sacrifice.—Nor do the following words, יַעֲבְרוּ מֵעֲלֵיךָ וְגוֹ, convey any meaning, without some alteration. As quoted above, they may be translated: shall pass away from thee. But this can mean neither: they shall be torn from thee, nor: they shall disappoint thee. And even if this force did lie in the words, no statement can begin with the following כִּי רָעַתְכִי. If this be a protasis, the verb is wanting. We shall have to change it, after the manner of the LXX, to יַעֲבְרוּ מֵעֲלֵיכִי רָעַתְכִי: shall vows and holy flesh (sacrifice) avert thine evil from thee? For the form יַעֲבְרוּ as Hiph. cf. יִדְרְכוּ, 9:2. “Thine evil” with the double force: thy sin and shame, and the disaster impending, i.e., sin and (judicial) suffering. There is no occasion for any further changes. אָז, rendered הַ by the LXX, and so read אִזּ by them, may be completely vindicated: then, i.e., if this were the case, if thou couldst avert calamity by sacrifice, then mightest thou exult. Thus we obtain the following as the sense of the whole verse: What mean my people in my temple with their hypocritical sacrifices? Can vows and offerings, presented by you there, avert calamity from you? If it could be so, well might you shout for joy.

**Jeremiah 11:16, 17.** This idea is carried on in vv. 16, 17. Judah (Israel) was truly a noble planting of God’s, but by defection from the Lord, its God and Creator, it has drawn down on itself this ruin. Jahveh called Judah a green olive with splendid fruit. For a comparison of Israel to an olive, cf. Hos. 14:7, Ps. 52:10; 128:3. The fruit of the tree is the nation in its individual members. The naming of the name is the representation of the state of the case, and so here: the growth and prosperity of the people. The contrasted state is introduced by לְקוֹל הַ without adversative particle, and is thus made to seem the more abrupt and violent (Hitz.). Noise of tumult (הַמְלָה), occurring besides here

only in Ezek. 1:24 as equivalent to הַמּוֹן), i.e., of the tumult of war, cf. Isa. 13:4; not: roar of the thunderstorm or crash of thunder (Näg., Graf). עָלֶיהָ for בָּהּ, cf. 17:27; 21:14, etc. The suffix is regulated by the thing represented by the olive, i.e., Judah as a kingdom. Its branches brake; רָעַע, elsewhere only transitive, here intransitive, analogously to רָצַץ in Isa. 42:4. Hitz. renders less suitably: its branches look bad, as being charred, robbed of their gay adornment. On this head cf. Ezek. 31:12. The setting of fire to the olive tree Israel came about through its enemies, who broke up one part of the kingdom after the other, who had already destroyed the kingdom of the ten tribes, and were now about to destroy Judah next. That the words apply not to Judah only, but to Israel as well, appears from v. 17, where the Lord, who has planted Israel, is said to have spoken, i.e., decreed evil for the sin of the two houses, Israel and Judah. דָּבַר is not directly = decree, but intimates also the utterance of the decree by the prophet. לָהֶם after עָשׂוּ is *dat. incomm.*: the evil which they have done to their hurt; cf. 44:3, where the dative is wanting. Hitz. finds in לָהֶם an intimation of voluntary action, as throwing back the deed upon the subject as an act of free choice; cf. Ew. § 315, a.

**Jeremiah 11:18–12:17.** Evidence that Judah is Unreclaimable, and that the Sore Judgments Threatened cannot be Averted.—As a practical proof of the people’s determination not to reform, we have in

**Jeremiah 11:18–23.** Vv. 18–23 an account of *the designs of the inhabitants of Anathoth against the prophet’s life*, inasmuch as it was their ill-will towards his prophecies that led them to this crime. They are determined not to hear the word of God, chiding and punishing them for their sins, and so to put the preacher of this word out of the way.—V. 18. “*And Jahveh gave me knowledge of it, and I knew it; then showedst Thou me their doings.* V. 19. *And I was as a tame lamb that is led to the slaughter, and knew not that they plotted designs against me:*



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*Let us destroy the three with the fruit thereof, and cut him off out of the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered. V. 20. But Jahveh of hosts, that judgeth justly, trieth reins and heart—I shall see Thy vengeance on them, for to Thee have I confided my case. V. 21. Therefore thus hath Jahveh spoken against the men of Anathoth, that seek after thy life, saying, Thou shalt not prophesy in the name of Jahveh, that thou die not by our hand. V. 22. Therefore thus hath Jahveh of hosts spoken: Behold, I will punish them; the young men shall die by the sword, their sons and daughters shall die by famine. V. 23. And a remnant shall not remain to them; for I bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, the year of their visitation.”*

Jeremiah had not himself observed the designs of the people of Anathoth against his life, because the thing was carried on in secret; but the Lord made it known to him. אָז, then, sc. when I knew nought of their murderous intent; cf. v. 19. “Their doings,” i.e., those done in secret. V. 19. כֶּבֶשׂ אֱלוֹף, *agnus mansuetus*, a tame pet-lamb, such as the Arabs used to keep, such as the Hebrews too, 2 Sam. 12:3, kept; familiar with the household, reared by them in the house, that does not suspect when it is being taken to be killed. In like manner Jeremiah had no suspicion that his countrymen were harbouring evil designs against him. These designs are quoted directly without לְאָמַר. The saying is a figurative or proverbial one: we will destroy the tree בְּלֶחֶם. This word is variously taken. The ordinary meaning, food for men and beasts, usually bread, seems not to be suitable. And so Hitz. wishes to read בְּלֶחֶם, in its sap (cf. Deut. 34:7, Ezek. 21:3), because לֶחֶם may mean grain, but it does not mean fruit. Näg. justly remarks against this view: What is here essential is simply the produce of the tree, furnished for the use of man. The word of the prophet was a food which they abhorred (cf. v. 21b). As לֶחֶם originally meant food, we here understand by it the edible product of the tree, that is, its fruit, in opposition to sap, wood,

leaves. This interpretation is confirmed by the Arabic; the Arabs use both *lahûmun* and *ukulu* of the fruit of a tree, see ill. in Rosenm. *Schol. ad h. l.* The proverbial saying is given in plain words in the next clause. We will cut him (i.e., the prophet) off, etc.

**Jeremiah 11:20.** Therefore Jeremiah calls upon the Lord, as the righteous judge and omniscient searcher of hearts, to punish his enemies. This verse is repeated almost verbally in 20:12, and in substance in 17:10. Who trieth reins and heart, and therefore knows that Jeremiah has done no evil. אֲרֵאָה is future as expressing certainty that God will interfere to punish; for to Him he has wholly committed his cause. גְּלִיִּי, Pi. of גָּלָה, is taken by Hitz., Ew., etc. in the sense of גָּלָה: on Thee have I rolled over my cause; in support of this they adduce Ps. 22:9; 37:5, Prov. 16:3, as parallel passages. It is true that this interpretation can be vindicated grammatically, for גָּלָה might have assumed the form of גָּלָה (Ew. § 121, a). But the passages quoted are not at all decisive, since Jeremiah very frequently gives a new sense to quotations by making slight alterations on them; and in the passage cited we read גְּלִיִּי אֶת רֵיב. We therefore adhere, with Grot. and Ros., to the usual meaning of גָּלָה; understanding that in making known there is included the idea of entrusting, a force suggested by the construction with אָל instead of לְ. רֵיב, controversy, cause.—The prophet declares God’s vengeance to the instigators of the plots against his life, vv. 21–23. The introductory formula in v. 21 is repeated in v. 22, on account of the long intervening parenthesis. “That thou diest not” is introduced by the י of consecution. The punishment is to fall upon the entire population of Anathoth; on the young men of military age (בְּחֹרִים), a violent death in war; on the children, death by famine consequent on the siege. Even though all had not had a share in the complot, yet were they at heart just as much alienated from God and ill-disposed towards His word. “Year of their

visitation” is still dependent on “bring.” This construction is simpler than taking תָּבִיא for *accus. adverb.*, both here and in 23:12.

## Jeremiah 12

**Jeremiah 12:1–6.** *The prophet’s displeasure at the prosperity of the wicked.*—The enmity experienced by Jeremiah at the hands of his countrymen at Anathoth excites his displeasure at the prosperity of the wicked, who thrive and live with immunity. He therefore beings to expostulate with God, and demands from God’s righteousness that they be cut off out of the land (vv. 1–4); whereupon the Lord reproves him for this outburst of ill-nature and impatience by telling him that he must patiently endure still worse.—This section, the connection of which with the preceding is unmistakable, shows by a concrete instance the utter corruptness of the people; and it has been included in the prophecies because it sets before us the greatness of God’s long-suffering towards a people ripe for destruction.

**Jeremiah 12:1.** *“Righteous art Thou, Jahveh, if I contend with Thee; yet will I plead with Thee in words. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper, are all secure that deal faithlessly? V. 2. Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root; grow, yea, bring forth fruit. Near art Thou in their mouth, yet far from their reins. V. 3. But Thou, Jahveh, knowest me, seest me, and triest mine heart toward Thee. Tear them away like sheep to the slaughter, and devote them for a day of slaughter. V. 4. How long is the earth to mourn and the herb of the field to wither? For the wickedness of them that dwell therein, gone are cattle and fowl; for they say: He sees not our end. V. 5. If with the footmen thou didst run and they wearied thee, how couldst thou contend with the horses? and if thou trustest in the land of peace, how wilt thou do in the glory of Jordan? V. 6. For even thy brethren and thy father’s house, even they are faithless towards thee, yea, they call after thee with full voice. Believe them not, though they speak friendly to thee.”*

The prophet’s complaint begins by acknowledging: Thou art righteous, Lord, if I

would dispute with Thee, i.e., would accuse Thee of injustice. I could convict Thee of no wrong; Thou wouldst appear righteous and prove Thyself in the right. Ps. 51:6; Job 9:2ff. With תָּבִיא comes in a limitation: only he will speak pleas of right, maintain a suit with Jahveh, will set before Him something that seems incompatible with God’s justice, namely the question: Why the way of the wicked prospers, why they that act faithlessly are in ease and comfort? On this cf. Job 21:7ff., where Job sets forth at length the contradiction between the prosperity of the wicked and the justice of God’s providence. The way of the wicked is the course of their life, their conduct. God has planted them, i.e., has placed them in their circumstances of life; like a tree they have struck root into the ground; they go on, i.e., grow, and bear fruit, i.e., their undertakings succeed, although they have God in their mouth only, not in their heart.

**Jeremiah 12:3.** To show that he has cause for his question, Jeremiah appeals to the omniscience of the Searcher of hearts. God knows him, tries his heart, and therefore knows how it is disposed towards Himself (תָּבִיא belongs to לִבִּי, and תָּבִיא indicating the relation— here, viz., fidelity—in which the heart stands to God; cf. 2 Sam. 16:17). Thus God knows that in his heart there is no unfaithfulness, and that he maintains to God an attitude altogether other than that of those hypocrites who have God on their lips only; and knows too the enmity which, without having provoked it, he experiences. How then comes it about that with the prophet it goes ill, while with those faithless ones it goes well? God, as the righteous God, must remove this contradiction. And so his request concludes: Tear them out (קַטְּף of the tearing out of roots, Ezek. 17:9); here Hiph. with the same force (pointing back to the metaphor of their being rooted, v. 2), implying total destruction. Hence also the illustration: as sheep, that are dragged away out of the flock to be slaughtered. Devote them for the day of slaughter, like animals devoted to sacrifice.

**Jeremiah 12:4.** Ver. 4 gives the motive of his prayer: How long shall the earth suffer from the wickedness of these hypocrites? be visited with drought and dearth for their sins? This question is not to be taken as a complaint that God is punishing without end; Hitz. so takes it, and then proposes to delete it as being out of all connection in sense with v. 3 or v. 5. It is a complaint because of the continuance of God's chastisement, drawn down by the wickedness of the apostates, which are bringing the land to utter ruin. The mourning of the land and the withering of the herb is a consequence of great drought; and the drought is a divine chastisement: cf. 3:3; 5:24ff., 14:2ff., etc. But this falls not only on the unfaithful, but upon the godly too, and even the beasts, cattle, and birds suffer from it; and so the innocent along with the guilty. There seems to be injustice in this. To put an end to this injustice, to rescue the innocent from the curse brought by the wickedness of the ungodly, the prophet seeks the destruction of the wicked. **קָפָה**, to be swept away. The 3rd pers. fem. sing. with the plural **הֵם**, as in Joel 1:20 and often; cf. Ew. § 317, *a*, Gesen. § 146, 3. "They that dwell therein" are inhabitants of the land at large, the ungodly multitude of the people, of whom it is said in the last clause: they say, He will not see our end. The sense of these words is determined by the subject. Many follow the LXX (οὐκ ὄψεται ὁ Θεὸς ὁδοὺς ἡμῶν) and refer the seeing to God. God will not see their end, i.e., will not trouble Himself about it (Schnur., Ros., and others), or will not pay any heed to their future fate, so that they may do all they choose unpunished (Ew.). But to this Graf has justly objected, that **הֵם**, in all the passages that can be cited for this sense of the word, is used only of that which God sees, regards as already present, never of that which is future. "He sees" is to be referred to the prophet. Of him the ungodly say, he shall not see their end, because they intend to put him out of the way (Hitz.); or better, in a less special sense, they ridicule the idea that his prophecies will be fulfilled, and say: He shall

not see our end, because his threatenings will not come to pass.

**Jeremiah 12:5, 6.** In vv. 5 and 6 the Lord so answers the prophet's complaint as to reprove his impatience, by intimating that he will have to endure still worse. Both parts of v. 5 are of the nature of proverbs. If even the race with footmen made him weary, how will he be able to compete with horses? **תִּחַרְרָה** here and 22:15, a Tiph., Aramaic form for Hiph., arising by the hardening of the **ה** into **ת**—cf. Hos. 11:3, and Ew. § 122, *a*—rival, vie with. The proverb exhibits the contrast between tasks of smaller and greater difficulty, applied to the prophet's relation to his enemies. What Jeremiah had to suffer from his countrymen at Anathoth was but a trifle compared with the malign assaults that yet awaited him in the discharge of his office. The second comparison conveys the same thought, but with a clearer intimation of the dangers the prophet will undergo. If thou puttest thy trust in a peaceful land, there alone countest on living in peace and safety, how wilt thou bear thyself in the glory of Jordan? The latter phrase does not mean the swelling of Jordan, its high flood, so as that we should with Umbr. and Ew., have here to think of the danger arising from a great and sudden inundation. It is the strip of land along the bank of the Jordan, thickly overgrown with shrubs, trees, and tall reeds, the lower valley, flooded when the river was swollen, where lions had their haunt, as in the reedy thickets of the Euphrates. Cf. v. Schubert, *Resie*, iii. S. 82; Robins. *Bibl. Researches in Palestine*, i. 535, and *Phys. Geogr. of the Holy Land*, p. 147. The "pride of the Jordan" is therefore mentioned in 49:19; 50:44, Zech. 11:3, as the haunt of lions, and comes before us here as a region where men's lives were in danger. The point of the comparison is accordingly this: Thy case up till this time is, in spite of the onsets thou hast borne, to be compared to a sojourn in a peaceful land; but thou shalt come into much sorer case, where thou shalt never for a moment be sure of thy life. To illustrate this, he is told in v. 6 that his nearest of kin, and those dwelling under the

same roof, will behave unfaithfully towards him. they will cry behind him מְלֵא, *plena voce* (Jerome; cf. קְרָאוּ מְלֵאוּ, 4:5). They will cry after him, “as one cries when pursuing a thief or murderer” (Gr.). Perfectly apposite is therefore Luther’s translation: They set up a hue and cry after thee. These words are not meant to be literally taken, but convey the thought, that even his nearest friends will persecute him as a malefactor. It is therefore a perverse design that seeks to find the distinction between the inhabitants of Anathoth and the brethren and housemates, in a contrast between the priests and the blood-relations. Although Anathoth was a city of the priests, the men of Anathoth need not have been all priests, since these cities were not exclusively occupied by priests.—In this reproof of the prophet there lies not merely the truth that much sorer suffering yet awaits him, but the truth besides, that the people’s faithlessness and wickedness towards God and men will yet grow greater, ere the judgment of destruction fall upon Judah; for the divine long-suffering is not yet exhausted, nor has ungodliness yet fairly reached its highest point, so that the final destruction must straightway be carried out. But judgment will not tarry long. This thought is carried on in what follows.

**Jeremiah 12:7–17.** *The execution of the judgment on Judah and its enemies.*—As to this passage, which falls into two strophes, vv. 7–13 and vv. 14–17, Hitz., Graf, and others pronounce that it stands in no kind of connection with what immediately precedes. The connection of the two strophes with one another is, however, allowed by these commentators; while Eichh. and Dahler hold vv. 14–17 to be a distinct oracle, belonging to the time of Zedekiah, or to the seventh or eighth year of Jehoiakim. These views are bound up with an incorrect conception of the contents of the passage,—to which in the first place we must accordingly direct our attention.

**Jeremiah 12:7.** *“I have forsaken mine house, cast out mine heritage, given the beloved of my soul into the hand of its enemies. V. 8. Mine heritage is become unto me as a lion in the*

*forest, it hath lifted up its voice against me; therefore have I hated it. V. 9. Is mine heritage to me a speckled vulture, that vultures are round about it? Come, gather all the beasts of the field, bring them to devour! V. 10. Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard, have trodden down my ground, have made the plot of my pleasure a desolate wilderness. V. 11. They have made it a desolation; it mourneth around me desolate; desolated is the whole land, because none laid it to heart. V. 12. On all the bare-peaked heights in the wilderness are spoilers come; for a sword of Jahveh’s devours from one end of the land unto the other: no peace to all flesh. V. 13. They have sown wheat and reaped thorns; they have worn themselves weary and accomplished nothing. So then ye shall be put to shame for your produce, because of the hot anger of Jahve.”*

*V. 14. “Thus saith Jahveh against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the heritage which I have given unto my people Israel: Behold, I pluck them out of their land, and the house of Judah will I pluck out of their midst. V. 15. But after I have plucked them out, I will pity them again, and bring them back, each to his heritage, and each into his land. V. 16. And it shall be, if they will learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name: As Jahveh liveth, as they have taught my people to swear by Baal, then they shall be built in the midst of my people. V. 17. But if they hearken not, I will pluck up such a nation, utterly destroying it, saith Jahve.”*

Hitz. and Graf, in opposition to other commentators, will have the strophe, vv. 7–13, to be taken not as prophecy, but as a lament on the devastation which Judah, after Jehoiakim’s defection from Nebuchadnezzar in the eighth year of his reign, had suffered through the war of spoliation undertaken against insurgent Judah by those neighbouring nations that had maintained their allegiance to Chaldean supremacy, 2 Kings 24:2f. In support of this, Gr. appeals to the use throughout of unconnected perfects, and to the prophecy, v. 14ff., joined with this description; which, he says, shows that it is something complete, existing, which is described, a state of affairs on which the prophecy is based. For although the prophet,

viewing the future with the eyes of a seer as a thing present, often describes it as if it had already taken place, yet, he says, the context easily enables us in such a case to recognise the description as prophetic, which, acc. to Graf, is not the case here. This argument is void of all force. To show that the use of unconnected perfects proves nothing, it is sufficient to note that such perfects are used in v. 6, where Hitz. and Gr. take **בָּגְדוּ** and **קָרְאוּ** as prophetic. So with the perfects in v. 7. The context demands this. For though no particle attaches v. 7 to what precedes, yet, as Graf himself alleges against Hitz., it is shown by the lack of any heading that the fragment (vv. 7–13) is “not a special, originally independent oracle;” and just as clearly, that it can by no means be (as Gr. supposes) an appendix, stuck on to the preceding in a purely external and accidental fashion. These assumptions are disproved by the contents of the fragment, which are simply an expansion of the threat of expulsion from their inheritance conveyed to the people already in 11:14–17; an expansion which not merely points back to 11:14–17, but which most aptly attaches itself to the reproof given to the prophet for his complaint that judgment on the ungodly was delayed (Jeremiah 12:1–6); since it discloses to the prophet God’s designs in regard to His people, and teaches that the judgment, though it may be delayed, will not be withheld.

**Jeremiah 12:7ff.** contain sayings of God, not of the prophet, who had left his house in Anathoth, as Zwingli and Bugenhagen thought. The perfects are prophetic, i.e., intimate the divine decree already determined on, whose accomplishment is irrevocably fixed, and will certainly by and by take place. “My house” is neither the temple nor the land inhabited by Israel, in support whereof appeal is unjustly made to passages like Hos. 8; 1, 9:15, Ezek. 8:12; 9:9; but, as is clearly shown by the parallel “mine heritage,” taken in connection with what is said of the heritage in v. 8, and by “the beloved of my soul,” v. 7, means the people of Israel, or Judah as the existing representative

of the people of God (house = family); see on Hos. 8:1. **נְחֻלָּהּ = נְחֻלָּהּ**, Deut. 4:20, cf. Isa. 47:6; 19:25. **יְדֻדוֹת**, object of my soul’s love, cf. 11:15. This appellation, too, cannot apply to the land, but to the people of Israel,—V. 8 contains the reason why Jahveh gives up His people for a prey. It has behaved to God like a lion, i.e., has opposed Him fiercely like a furious beast. Therefore He must withdraw His love. To give with the voice = to lift up the voice, as in Ps. 46:7; 68:34. “Hate” is a stronger expression for the withdrawal of love, shown by delivering Israel into the hand of its enemies, as in Mal. 1:3. There is no reason for taking **שָׂנְאֹתִי** as inchoative (Hitz., I learned to hate it). The “hating” is explained fully in the following verses. In v. 9 the meaning of **הָעֵיט צָבוּעַ** is disputed. In all other places where it occurs **עֵיט** means a bird of prey, cf. Isa. 46:11, or collective, birds of prey, Gen. 15:11, Isa. 18:6. **צָבוּעַ**, in the Rabbinical Heb. the hyaena, like the Arabic *şabu’un* or *şab’un*. So the LXX have rendered it; and so, too, many recent comm., e.g., Gesen. in *thes*. But with this the asyndeton by way of connection with **עֵיט** does not well consist: is a bird of prey, a hyaena, mine heritage? On this ground Boch. (*Hieroz.* ii. p. 176, ed. Ros.) sought to make good the claim of **עֵיט** to mean “beast of prey,” but without proving his case. Nor is there in biblical Heb. any sure case for **צָבוּעַ** in the meaning of hyaena; and the Rabbinical usage would appear to be founded on this interpretation of the word in the passage before us. **צָבַע**, Arab. *şaba’a*, means dip, hence dye; and so **צָבַע**, Judg. 5:30, is dyed materials, in plur. parti-coloured clothes. To this meaning Jerome, Syr., and Targ. have adhered in the present case; Jerome gives *avis discolor*, whence Luther’s *der sprincklight Vogel*; Chr. B. Mich., *avis colorata*. So, and rightly, Hitz., Ew., Graf, Näg. The prophet alludes to the well-known fact of natural history, that “whenever a strange-looking bird is seen amongst the others, whether it be an owl of the night amidst the

birds of day, or a bird of gay, variegated plumage amidst those of duskier hue, the others pursue the unfamiliar intruder with loud cries and unite in attacking it." Hitz., with reference to Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 28, Sueton. *Caes.* 81, and Plin. *Hist. N.* x. 19. The question is the expression of amazement, and is assertory. לִי is *dat. ethic.*, intimating sympathetic participation (Näg.), and not to be changed, with Gr., into כִּי. The next clause is also a question: are birds of prey round about it (mine heritage), sc. to plunder it? This, too, is meant to convey affirmation. With it is connected the summons to the beasts of prey to gather round Judah to devour it. The words here come from Isa. 56:9. The beasts are emblem for enemies. הַחַיִּי is not first mode or perfect (Hitz.), but imperat., contracted from הַחַיִּי, as in Isa. 21:14. The same thought is, in v. 10, carried on under a figure that is more directly expressive of the matter in hand. The perfects in vv. 10–12 are once more prophetic. The shepherds who (along with their flocks, of course) destroy the vineyard of the Lord are the kings of the heathen, Nebuchadnezzar and the kings subject to him, with their warriors. The "destroying" is expanded in a manner consistent with the figure; and here we must not fail to note the cumulation of the words and the climax thus produced. They tread down the plot of ground, turn the precious plot into a howling wilderness. With "plot of my pleasure" cf. אֶרֶץ חַמְדָּה וְגוֹי, 3:19.

In v. 11 the emblematical shepherds are brought forward in the more direct form of enemy. שָׂמָה, he (the enemy, "they" impersonal) has changed it (the plot of ground) into desolation. It mourneth עָלַי, round about me, desolated. Spoilers are come on all the bare-topped hills of the desert. מְדַבֵּר is the name for such parts of the country as were suited only for rearing and pasturing cattle, like the so-called wilderness of Judah to the west of the Dead Sea. A sword of the Lord's (i.e., the war sent by Jahveh, cf. 25:29; 6:25) devours the

whole land from end to end; cf. 25:33. "All flesh" is limited by the context to all flesh in the land of Judah. בְּשָׂרָא in the sense of Gen. 6:12, sinful mankind; here: the whole sinful population of Judah. For them there is no שְׁלוֹמָא, welfare or peace.

**Jeremiah 12:13.** They reap the contrary of what they have sowed. The words: wheat they have sown, thorns they reap, are manifestly of the nature of a saw or proverb; certainly not merely with the force of *meliora expectaverant et venerunt pessima* (Jerome); for sowing corresponds not to hoping or expecting, but to doing and undertaking. Their labour brings them the reverse of what they aimed at or sought to attain. To understand the words directly of the failure of the crop, as Ven., Ros., Hitz., Graf, Näg. prefer to do, is fair neither to text nor context. To reap thorns is not = to have a bad harvest by reason of drought, blight, or the ravaging of enemies. The seed: wheat, the noblest grain, produces thorns, the very opposite of available fruit. And the context, too, excludes the thought of agriculture and "literal harvesting." The thought that the crop turned out a failure would be a very lame termination to a description of how the whole land was ravaged from end to end by the sword of the Lord. The verse forms a conclusion which sums up the threatening of vv. 7–12, to the effect that the people's sinful ongoing will bring them sore suffering, instead of the good fortune they hoped for. נִחְלָו, they have worn themselves out, exhausted their strength, and secured no profit. Thus shall ye be put to shame for your produce, ignominiously disappointed in your hopes for the issue of your labour.

**Jeremiah 12:14–17.** The spoilers of the Lord's heritage are also to be carried off out of their land; but after they, like Judah, have been punished, the Lord will have pity on them, and will bring them back one and all into their own land. And if the heathen, who now seduce the people of God to idolatry, learn the ways of God's people and be converted to the Lord, they shall receive citizenship amongst God's people and be built up amongst them; but if they will

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not do so, they shall be extirpated. Thus will the Lord manifest Himself before the whole earth as righteous judge, and through judgment secure the weal not only of Israel, but of the heathen peoples too. By this discovery of His world-plan the Lord makes so complete a reply to the prophet's murmuring concerning the prosperity of the ungodly (vv. 1-6), that from it may clearly be seen the justice of God's government on earth. Viewed thus, both strophes of the passage before us (vv. 7-17) connect themselves singularly well with vv. 1-6.

**Jeremiah 12:14.** The evil neighbours that lay hands on Jahve's heritage are the neighbouring heathen nations, the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and Syrians. It does not, however, follow that this threatening has special reference to the event related in 2 Kings 24:2, and that it belongs to the time of Jehoiakim. These nations were always endeavouring to assault Israel, and made use of every opportunity that seemed favourable for waging war against them and subjugating them; and not for the first time during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, at which time it was indeed that they suffered the punishment here pronounced, of being carried away into exile. The neighbours are brought up here simply as representatives of the heathen nations, and what is said of them is true for all the heathen. The transition to the first person in **שְׂכֵנַי** is like that in 14:15. Jahveh is possessor of the land of Israel, and so the adjoining peoples are His neighbours. **נָגַעְךָ**, to touch as an enemy, to attack, cf. Zech. 2:12. I pluck the house of Judah out of their midst, i.e., the midst of the evil neighbours. This is understood by most commentators of the carrying of Judah into captivity, since **נָתַתְּ** cannot be taken in two different senses in the two corresponding clauses. For this word used of deportation, cf. 1 Kings 14:15. "Them," v. 15, refers to the heathen peoples. After they have been carried forth of their land and have received their punishment, the Lord will again have compassion upon them, and will bring back

each to its inheritance, its land. Here the restoration of Judah, the people of God, is assumed as a thing of course (cf. v. 16 and 32:37, 44; 33:26).

**Jeremiah 12:16.** If then the heathen learn the ways of the people of God. What we are to understand by this is clear from the following infinitive clause: to swear in the name of Jahveh, viz., if they adopt the worship of Jahveh (for swearing is mentioned as one of the principal utterances of a religious confession). If they do so, then shall they be built in the midst of God's people, i.e., incorporated with it, and along with it favoured and blessed.

**Jeremiah 12:17.** But they who hearken not, namely, to the invitation to take Jahveh as the true God, these shall be utterly destroyed. **נִתְּנָהּ**, so to pluck them out that they may perish. The promise is Messianic, cf. 16:19, Isa. 56:6f., Mic. 4:1-4, etc., inasmuch as it points to the end of God's way with all nations.

### Jeremiah 13

**Jeremiah 13.** The Humiliation of Judah's Pride.—The first section of this chapter contains a symbolical action which sets forth the corruptness of Judah (vv. 1-11), and shows in figurative language how the Lord will bring Judah's haughtiness to nothing (vv. 12-14). Upon the back of this comes the warning to repent, and the threatening addressed to the king and queen, that the crown shall fall from their head, that Judah shall be carried captive, and Jerusalem dishonoured, because of their disgraceful idolatry (vv. 15-27).

**Jeremiah 13:1-11.** *The spoilt girdle.*—V. 1. "Thus spake Jahveh unto me: Go and buy thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, but into the water thou shalt not bring it. V. 2. So I bought the girdle, according to the word of Jahveh, and put it upon my loins, V. 3. Then came the word of Jahveh to me the second time, saying: V. 4. Take the girdle which thou hast bought, which is upon thy loins, and arise, and go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a cleft of the rock. V. 5. So I went and hid it, as Jahveh had

*commanded me. V. 6. And it came to pass after many days, that Jahveh said unto me: Arise, go to the Euphrates, and bring thence the girdle which I commanded thee to hide there. V. 7. And I went to the Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it; and, behold, the girdle was marred, was good for nothing. V. 8. And the word of Jahveh came to me, saying: V. 9. Thus hath Jahveh said, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem. V. 10. This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the stubbornness of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them and to worship them, it shall be as this girdle which is good for nothing. V. 11. For as the girdle cleaves to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith Jahveh; that it might be to me for a people and for a name, for a praise and for an ornament; but they hearkened not."*

With regard to the symbolical action imposed on the prophet and performed by him, the question arises, whether the thing took place in outward reality, or was only an occurrence in the spirit, in the inward vision. The first view seems to be supported by the wording of the passage, namely, the twice repeated account of the prophet's journey to the Phrat on the strength of a twice repeated divine command. But on the other hand, it has been found very improbable that "Jeremiah should twice have made a journey to the Euphrates, merely to prove that a linen girdle, if it lie long in the damp, becomes spoil, a thing he could have done much nearer home, and which besides everybody knew without experiment" (Graf.). On this ground Ros., Graf, etc., hold the matter for a parable or an allegorical tale, But this view depends for support on the erroneous assumption that the specification of the Euphrates is of no kind of importance for the matter in hand; whereas the contrary may be gathered from the four times repeated mention of the place. Nor is anything proved against the real performance of God's command by the remark, that the journey thither and back on both occasions is spoken of as if it were a mere

matter of crossing a field. The Bible writers are wont to set forth such external matters in no very circumstantial way. And the great distance of the Euphrates—about 250 miles—gives us no sufficient reason for departing from the narrative as we have it before us, pointing as it does to a literal and real carrying out of God's command, and to relegate the matter to the inward region of spiritual vision, or to take the narrative for an allegorical tale.—Still less reason is to be found in arbitrary interpretations of the name, such as, after Bochart's example, have been attempted by Ven., Hitz., and Ew. The assertion that the Euphrates is called פְּרָת נְהָר everywhere else, including Jeremiah 46:2, 6, 10, loses its claim to conclusiveness from the fact that the prefaced נְהָר is omitted in Gen. 2:14, Jeremiah 51:63. And even Ew. observes, that "fifty years later a prophet understood the word of the Euphrates at 51:63." Now even if 51:63 had been written by another prophet, and fifty years later (which is not the case, see on Jeremiah 50ff.), the authority of this prophet would suffice to prove every other interpretation erroneous; even although the other attempts at interpretation had been more than the merest fancies. Ew. remarks, "It is most amazing that recent scholars (Hitz. with Ven. and Dahl.) could seriously come to adopt the conceit that פְּרָת is one and the same with אֶפְרָת (Gen. 48:7), and so with Bethlehem;" and what he says is doubly relevant to his own rendering. פְּרָת, he says, is either to be understood like Arab. *frt*, of fresh water in general, or like *frdt*, a place near the water, a crevice opening from the water into the land,—interpretations so far fetched as to require no serious refutation.

More important than the question as to the formal nature of the emblematical action is that regarding its meaning; on which the views of commentators are as much divided. From the interpretation in vv. 9–11 thus much is clear, that the girdle is the emblem of Israel, and that the prophet, in putting on and wearing this girdle, illustrates the relation of God to the folk



of His covenant (Israel and Judah). The further significance of the emblem is suggested by the several moments of the action. The girdle does not merely belong to a man's adornment, but is that part of his clothing which he must put on when about to undertake any laborious piece of work. The prophet is to buy and put on a linen girdle. פְּשֵׁתִים, linen, was the material of the priests' raiment, Ezek. 44:17f., which in Ex. 28:40; 39:27ff. is called שֵׁשׁ, white byssus, or בָּד, linen. The priest's girdle was not, however, white, but woven parti-coloured, after the four colours of the curtains of the sanctuary, Ex. 28:40; 39:29. Wool (צֶמֶר) is in Ezek. 44:18 expressly excluded, because it causes the body to sweat. The linen girdle points, therefore, to the priestly character of Israel, called to be a holy people, a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6). "The purchased white girdle of linen, a man's pride and adornment, is the people bought out of Egypt, yet in its innocence as it was when the Lord bound it to Himself with the bands of love" (Umbr.). The prohibition that follows, "into water thou shalt not bring it," is variously interpreted. Chr. B. Mich. says: *forte ne madefiat et facilius dein computrescat*; to the same effect Dahl., Ew., Umbr., Graf: to keep it safe from the hurtful effects of damp. A view which refutes itself; since washing does no kind of harm to the linen girdle, but rather makes it again as good as new. Thus to the point writes Näg., remarking justly at the same time, that the command not to bring the girdle into the water plainly implies that the prophet would have washed it when it had become soiled. This was not to be. The girdle was to remain dirty, and as such to be carried to the Euphrates, in order that, as Ros. and Maur. observed, it might symbolize *sordes quas contraxerit populus in dies majores, mores populi magis magisque lapsi*, and that the carrying of the soiled girdle to the Euphrates might set forth before the eyes of the people what awaited it, after it had long been borne by God covered with the filth of its sins.—The just appreciation of this prohibition leads us easily to the true meaning of the command in v. 4, to bring the girdle that was on

his loins to the Euphrates, and there to conceal it in a cleft in the rock, where it decays. But it signifies, as Chr. B. Mich., following Jerome, observes, *populi Judaici apud Chaldaeos citra Euphratem captivitas et exilium*. Graf has objected: "The corruptness of Israel was not a consequence of the Babylonish captivity; the latter, indeed, came about in consequence of the existing corruptness." But this objection stands and falls with the amphibolia of the word corruptness, decay. Israel was, indeed, morally decayed before the exile; but the mouldering of the girdle in the earth by the Euphrates signifies not the moral but the physical decay of the covenant people, which, again, was a result of the moral decay of the period during which God had, in His long-suffering, borne the people notwithstanding their sins. Wholly erroneous is the view adopted by Gr. from Umbr.: the girdle decayed by the water is the sin-stained people which, intriguing with the foreign gods, had in its pride cast itself loose from its God, and had for long imagined itself secure under the protection of the gods of Chaldea. The hiding of the girdle in the crevice of a rock by the banks of the Euphrates would have been the most unsuitable emblem conceivable for representing the moral corruption of the people. Had the girdle, which God makes to decay by the Euphrates, loosed itself from him and imagined it could conceal itself in a foreign land? as Umbr. puts the case. According to the declaration, v. 9, God will mar the great pride of Judah and Jerusalem, even as the girdle had been marred, which had at His command been carried to the Euphrates and hid there. The carrying of the girdle to the Euphrates is an act proceeding from God, by which Israel is marred; the intriguing of Israel with strange gods in the land of Canaan was an act of Israel's own, against the will of God.

**Jeremiah 13:6.** After the course of many days—these are the seventy years of the captivity—the prophet is to fetch the girdle again. He went, digged (הִפָּרַר), whence we see that the hiding in the cleft of the rock was a

burying in the rocky soil of the Euphrates bank), and found the girdle marred, fit for nothing. These words correspond to the effect which the exile was designed to have, which it has had, on the wicked, idolatrous race. The ungodly should as Moses' law, Lev. 26:36, 39, declared, perish in the land of their enemies; the land of their enemies will devour them, and they that remain shall pine or moulder away in their iniquities and in the iniquities of their fathers. This mouldering (יִמְקוּ) is well reproduced in the marring (גִּשְׁחַת) of the girdle. It is no contradiction to this, that a part of the people will be rescued from the captivity and brought back to the land of their fathers. For although the girdle which the prophet had put on his loins symbolized the people at large, yet the decay of the same at the Euphrates sets forth only the physical decay of the ungodly part of the people, as v. 10 intimates in clear words: "This evil people that refuses to hear the word of the Lord, etc., shall be as this girdle." The Lord will mar the נִסְאָה of Judah and Jerusalem. The word means highness in both a good and in an evil sense, glory and self-glory. Here it is used with the latter force. This is shown both by the context, and by a comparison of the passage Lev. 26:19, that God will break the נִסְאָה of the people by sore judgments, which is the foundation of the present v. 9.—In v. 11 the meaning of the girdle is given, in order to explain the threatening in vv. 9 and 10. As the girdle lies on the loins of a man, so the Lord hath laid Israel on Himself, that it may be to Him for a people and for a praise, for a glory and an adornment, inasmuch as He designed to set it above all other nations and to make it very glorious; cf. Deut. 26:19, whither these words point back.

**Jeremiah 13:12–17.** *How the Lord will destroy His degenerate people, and how they may yet escape the impending ruin.—V. 12. "And speak unto them this word: Thus hath Jahveh the God of Israel said, Every jar is filled with wine. And when they say to thee, Know we not that every jar is filled with wine? V. 13. Then say to them:*

*Thus hath Jahve said: Behold, I fill all inhabitants of this land—the kings that sit for David upon his throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all inhabitants of Jerusalem—with drunkenness, V. 14. And dash them one against another, the fathers and the sons together, saith Jahve; I will not spare, nor pity, nor have mercy, not to destroy them.— V. 15. Hear ye and give ear! Be not proud, for Jahveh speaketh. V. 16. Give to Jahveh, your God, honour, ere He bring darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the mountains of dusk, and ye look for light, but He turn it into the shadow of death and make it darkness. V. 17. But if ye hear it not, then in concealment shall my soul weep for the pride, and weep and run down shall mine eye with tears, because the flock of Jahve is carried away captive."*

To give emphasis to the threatening conveyed in the symbolical action, the kind and manner of the destruction awaiting them is forcibly set before the various ranks in Judah and Jerusalem by the interpretation, in vv. 12–14, of a proverbial saying and the application of it to them. The circumstantial way in which the figurative saying is brought in in v. 12, is designed to call attention to its import. נֶבֶל, an earthenware vessel, especially the wine jar (cf. Isa. 30:24, Lam. 4:2), is here the emblem of man; cf. 18:6, Isa. 29:16. We must not, as Näg. does, suppose the similar to be used because such jars are an excellent emblem of that carnal aristocratic pride which lacked all substantial merit, by reason of their being of bulging shape, hollow within and without solidity, and of fragile material besides. No stress is laid on the bulging form and hollowness of the jars, but only on their fulness with wine and their brittleness. Nor can aristocratic haughtiness be predicated of all the inhabitants of the land. The saying: Every jar is filled with wine, seemed so plain and natural, that those addressed answer: Of that we are well aware. "The answer is that of the psychical man, who dreams of no deeper sense" (Hitz.). Just this very answer gives the prophet occasion to expound the deeper meaning of this word of God's. As one fills all wine jars, so must all inhabitants of the land be

filled by God with wine of intoxication. Drunkenness is the effect of the intoxicating wine of God's wrath, Ps. 60:5. This wine Jahveh will give them (cf. 25:15, Isa. 51:17, etc.), so that, filled with drunken frenzy, they shall helplessly destroy one another. This spirit will seize upon all ranks: upon the kings who sit upon the throne of David, not merely him who was reigning at the time; upon the priests and prophets as leaders of the people; and upon all inhabitants of Jerusalem, the metropolis, the spirit and temper of which exercises an unlimited influence upon the temper and destiny of the kingdom at large. I dash them one against the other, as jars are shivered when knocked together. Here Hitz. finds a foreshadowing of civil war, by which they should exterminate one another. Jeremiah was indeed thinking of the staggering against one another of drunken men, but in "dash them," etc., adhered simply to the figure of jars or pots. But what can be meant by the shivering of pots knocked together, other than mutual destruction? The kingdom of Judah did not indeed fall by civil war; but who can deny that the fury of the various factions in Judah and Jerusalem did really contribute to the fall of the realm? The shattering of the pots does not mean directly civil war; it is given as the result of the drunkenness of the inhabitants, under which they, no longer capable of self-control, dash against and so destroy one another. But besides, the breaking of jars reminds us of the stratagem of Gideon and his 300 warriors, who, by the sound of trumpets and the smashing of jars, threw the whole Midianite camp into such panic, that these foes turned their swords against one another and fled in wild confusion: Judg. 7:19ff., cf. too 1 Sam. 14:20. Thus shall Judah be broken without mercy or pity. To increase the emphasis, there is a cumulation of expressions, as in 21:7; 15:5, cf. Ezek. 5:11; 7:4, 9, etc.

**Jeremiah 13:15ff.** With this threatening the prophet couples a solemn exhortation not to leave the word of the Lord unheeded in their pride, but to give God the glory, ere judgment fall on them. To give God the glory is, in this

connection, to acknowledge His glory by confession of apostasy from Him and by returning to Him in sincere repentance; cf. Josh. 7:19, Mal. 2:2. "Your God," who has attested Himself to you as God. The Hiph.  $\text{פָּשַׁע}$  is not used intransitively, either here or in Ps. 139:12, but transitively: before He brings or makes darkness; cf. Amos 8:9. Mountains of dusk, i.e., mountains shrouded in dusk, are the emblem of unseen stumbling-blocks, on which one stumbles and falls. Light and darkness are well-known emblems of prosperity and adversity, welfare and misery. The suffix in  $\text{פְּשָׁמָה}$  goes with  $\text{אָרָר}$ , which is construed feminine here as in Job 36:32. Shadow of death = deep darkness;  $\text{עֲרֵפָל}$ , cloudy night, i.e., dark night. The *Chet.*  $\text{יִשִׁית}$  is *imperf.*, and to be read  $\text{יִשִׁית}$ ; the *Keri*  $\text{וְיִשִׁית}$  is uncalled for and incorrect.

**Jeremiah 13:17.** Knowing their obstinacy, the prophet adds: if ye hear it (what I have declared to you) not, my soul shall weep. In the concealment, *quo secedere lugentes amant, ut impensius flere possint* (Chr. B. Mich.). For the pride, sc. in which ye persist. With tears mine eye shall run down because the flock of Jahveh, i.e., the people of God (cf. Zech. 10:3), is carried away into captivity (*perfect. proph.*).

**Jeremiah 13:18–27.** *The fall of the kingdom, the captivity of Judah, with upbraidings against Jerusalem for her grievous guilt in the matter of idolatry.*—V. 18. "Say unto the king and to the sovereign lady: Sit you low down, for from your heads falls the crown of your glory. V. 19. The cities of the south are shut and no man openeth; Judah is carried away captive all of it, wholly carried away captive. V. 20. Lift up your eyes and behold them that come from midnight! Where is the flock that was given thee, thy glorious flock? V. 21. What wilt thou say, if He set over thee those whom thou hast accustomed to thee as familiar friends, for a head? Shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail? V. 22. And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore cometh this upon me? for the plenty of thine iniquity are thy skirts uncovered, thy heels abused. V. 23. Can an Ethiopian change his skin, and a leopard his

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*spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to doing evil. V. 24. Therefore will I scatter them like chaff that flies before the wind of the wilderness. V. 25. This is thy lot, thine apportioned inheritance from me, because thou hast forgotten me and trustedst in falsehood. V. 26. Therefore will I turn thy skirts over thy face, that thy shame be seen. V. 27. Thine adultery and thy neighing, the crime of thy whoredom upon the ills, in the fields, I have seen thine abominations. Woe unto thee, Jerusalem! thou shalt not be made clean after how long a time yet!"*

From v. 18 on the prophet's discourse is addressed to the king and the queen-mother. The latter as such exercised great influence on the government, and is in the Books of Kings mentioned alongside of almost all the reigning kings (cf. 1 Kings 15:13, 2 Kings 10:13, etc.); so that we are not necessarily led to think of Jehoniah and his mother in especial. To them he proclaims the loss of the crown and the captivity of Judah. Set yourselves low down (cf. Gesen. § 142, 3, *b*), i.e., descend from the throne; not in order to turn aside the threatening danger by humiliation, but, as the reason that follows show, because the kingdom is passing from you. For fallen is *מִרְאָשְׁתֵּיכֶם*, your head-gear, lit., what is about or on your head (elsewhere pointed *מִרְאָשׁוֹת*, 1 Sam. 19:13; 26:7), namely, your splendid crown. The perf. here is prophetic. The crown falls when the king loses country and kingship. This is put expressly in v. 19. The meaning of the first half of the verse, which is variously taken, may be gathered from the second. In the latter the complete deportation of Judah is spoken of as an accomplished fact, because it is as sure to happen as if it had taken place already. Accordingly the first clause cannot bespeak expectation merely, or be understood, as it is by Grotius, as meaning that Judah need hope for no help from Egypt. This interpretation is irreconcilable with "the cities of the south." "The south" is the south country of Judah, cf. Josh. 10:40, Gen. 13:1, etc., and is not to be taken according to the prophetic use of "king of

the south," Dan. 11:5, 9. The shutting of the cities is not to be taken, with Jerome, as siege by the enemy, as in Josh. 6:1. There the closedness is otherwise illustrated: No man was going out or in; here, on the other hand, it is: No man openeth. "Shut" is to be explained according to Isa. 24:10: the cities are shut up by reason of ruins which block up the entrances to them; and in them is none that can open, because all Judah is utterly carried away. The cities of the south are mentioned, not because the enemy, avoiding the capital, had first brought the southern part of the land under his power, as Sennacherib had once advanced against Jerusalem from the south, 2 Kings 18:13f., 19:8 (Graf, Näg., etc.), but because they were the part of the kingdom most remote for an enemy approaching from the north; so that when they were taken, the land was reduced and the captivity of all Judah accomplished. For the form *הִגְלָתָהּ* see Ew. § 194, *a*, Ges. § 75, Rem. 1.

*מִשְׁלֹמֹה* is adverbial accusative: in entirety, like *מִשְׁרָיִם*, Ps. 58:2, etc. For this cf. *גְּלוֹת שְׁלֹמֹה*, Amos 1:6, 9.

The announcement of captivity is carried on in v. 20, where we have first an account of the impression which the carrying away captive will produce upon Jerusalem (vv. 20 and 21), and next a statement of the cause of that judgment (vv. 22–27). In *שְׂאֵי* and *רְאֵי* a feminine is addressed, and, as appears from the suffix in *עֵינֶיכֶם*, one which is collective. The same holds good of the following verses on to v. 27, where Jerusalem is named, doubtless the inhabitants of it, personified as the daughter of Zion—a frequent case. Näg. is wrong in supposing that the feminines in v. 20 are called for by the previously mentioned queen-mother, that vv. 20–22 are still addressed to her, and that not till v. 23 is there a transition from her in the address to the nation taken collectively and regarded as the mother of the country. The contents of v. 20 do not tally with Näg.'s view; for the queen-mother was not the reigning sovereign, so that the inhabitants of the land could have been called her flock, however great

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was the influence she might exercise upon the king. The mention of foes coming from the north, and the question coupled therewith: Where is the flock? convey the thought that the flock is carried off by those enemies. The flock is the flock of Jahveh (v. 17), and, in virtue of God's choice of it, a herd of gloriousness. The relative clause: "that was given thee," implies that the person addressed is to be regarded as the shepherd or owner of the flock. This will not apply to the capital and its citizens; for the influence exerted by the capital in the country is not so great as to make it appear the shepherd or lord of the people. But the relative clause is in good keeping with the idea of the idea of the daughter of Zion, with which is readily associated that of ruler of land and people. It intimates the suffering that will be endured by the daughter of Zion when those who have been hitherto her paramours are set up as head over her. The verse is variously explained. The old transl. and comm. take פָּקַד עַל in the sense of visit, chastise; so too Chr. B. Mich. and Ros.; and Ew. besides, who alters the text acc. to the LXX, changing פָּקַד into the plural יִפְקְדוּ. For this change there is no sufficient reason; and without such change, the signif. visit, punish, gives us no suitable sense. The phrase means also: to appoint or set over anybody; cf. e.g., 15:3. The subject can only be Jahveh. The words from וְאַתָּה onwards form an adversative circumstantial clause: and yet thou hast accustomed them עָלֶיךָ, for אֵלֶיךָ, to thee (cf. for לְמַד c. לֵא, 10:2). The connection of the words אֵלֶיךָ לְרֹאשׁ depends upon the sig. assigned to אֵלֶיךָ. Gesen. (*thes.*) and Ros. still adhere to the meaning taken by Luther, Vat., and many others, viz., *principes*, princes, taking for the sense of the whole: whom thou hast accustomed (trained) to be princes over thee. This word is indeed the technical term for the old Edomitish chieftains of clans, Gen. 36:15ff., and is applied as an archaic term by Zech. 9:7 to the tribal princes of Judah; but it does not, as a general rule, mean prince, but familiar, friend,

Ps. 65:14, Prov. 16:28, Mic. 7:5; cf. Jeremiah 11:19. This being the well-attested signification, it is, in the first place, not competent to render עָלֶיךָ *over* or *against* thee (*adversus te*, Jerome); and Hitz.'s exposition: thou hast instructed them to thy hurt, hast taught them a disposition hostile to thee, cannot be justified by usage. In the second place, אֵלֶיךָ cannot be attached to the principal clause, "set over thee," and joined with "for a head:" if He set over thee—as princes for a head; but it belongs to "hast accustomed," while only "for a head" goes with "if He set" (as de Wet., Umbr., Näg., etc., construe). The prophet means the heathen kings, for whose favour Judah had hitherto been intriguing, the Babylonians and Egyptians. There is no cogent reason for referring the words, as many comm. do, to the Babylonians alone. For the statement is quite general throughout; and, on the one hand, Judah had, from the days of Ahaz on, courted the alliance not of the Babylonians alone, but of the Egyptians too (cf. 2:18); and, on the other hand, after the death of Josiah, Judah had become subject to Egypt, and had had to endure the grievous domination of the Pharaohs, as Jeremiah had threatened, 2:16. If God deliver the daughter of Zion into the power of these her paramours, i.e., if she be subjected to their rule, then will grief and pain seize on her as on a woman in childbirth; cf. 6:24; 22:23, etc. אִשָּׁת לֵדָה, woman of bearing; so here, only, elsewhere יוֹלְדָה (cf. the passages cited); לֵדָה is *infin.*, as in Isa. 37:3, 2 Kings 19:3, Hos. 9:11.

**Jeremiah 13:22.** This will befall the daughter of Zion for her sore transgressions. Therefore will she be covered with scorn and shame. The manner of her dishonour, discovery of the skirts (here and esp. in v. 26), recalls Nah. 3:5, cf. Isa. 47:3, Hos. 2:5. Chr. B. Mich. and others understand the violent treatment of the heels to be the loading of the feet with chains; but the mention of heels is not in keeping with this. Still less can the exposure of the heels by the upturning of the skirts be called maltreatment of the heels; nor can it be that, as Hitz. holds,

the affront is simply specialized by the mention of the heels instead of the person. The thing can only mean, that the person will be driven forth into exile barefoot and with violence, perhaps under the rod; cf. Ps. 89:52.

**Jeremiah 13:23.** Judah will not escape this ignominious lot, since wickedness has so grown to be its nature, that it can as little cease therefrom and do good, as an Ethiopian can wash out the blackness of his skin, or a panther change its spots. The consequential clause introduced by **אִם יִשְׁמַח** connects with the possibility suggested in, but denied by, the preceding question: if that could happen, then might even ye do good. The one thing is as impossible as the other. And so the Lord must scatter Judah among the heathen, like stubble swept away by the desert wind, lit., passing by with the desert wind. The desert wind is the strong east wind that blows from the Arabian Desert; see on 4:11.

**Jeremiah 13:25.** In v. 25 the discourse draws to a conclusion in such a way that, after a repetition of the manner in which Jerusalem prepares for herself the doom announced, we have again, in brief and condensed shape, the disgrace that is to befall her. This shall be thy lot. Hitz. renders **מִנְתַּי מְדִינָה**: portion of thy garment, that is allotted for the swelling folds of thy garment (cf. Ruth 3:15, 2 Kings 4:39), on the ground that **מִדָּ** never means *mensura*, but garment only. This is, however, no conclusive argument; since so many words admit of two plural forms, so that **מְדִינִים** might be formed from **מְדִינָה**; and since so many are found in the singular in the forms of both genders, so that, alongside of **מְדִינָה**, **מִדָּ** might also be used in the sense of *mensura*; especially as both the signiff. measure and garment are derived from the same root meaning of **מָדַד**. We therefore adhere to the usual rendering, *portio mensurae tuae*, the share portioned out to thee. **אֲשֶׁר**, causal, *because*. Trusted in falsehood, i.e., both in delusive promises (Jeremiah 7:4, 8) and in the help of beingless gods (Jeremiah 16:19).—In

the **וְגַם-אֲנִי** lies the force of reciprocation: because thou hast forgotten me, etc., I too have taken means to make retribution on your unthankfulness (Calv.). The threatening of this verse is word for word from Nah. 3:5.—For her lewd idolatry Jerusalem shall be carried off like a harlot amid mockery and disgrace. In v. 27 the language is cumulative, to lay as great stress as possible on Jerusalem's idolatrous ongoings. Thy lewd neighing, i.e., thy ardent longing for and running after strange gods; cf. 5:8; 2:24f. **וְזָמָה**, as in Ezek. 16:27; 22:9, etc., of the crime of uncleanness, see on Lev. 18:17. The three words are accusatives dependent on **רָאִיתִי**, though separated from it by the specification of place, and therefore summed up again in "thine abominations." The addition: in the field, after "upon the hills," is meant to make more prominent the publicity of the idolatrous work. The concluding sentence: thou shalt not become clean for how long a time yet, is not to be regarded as contradictory of v. 23, which affirms that the people is beyond the reach of reformation; v. 23 is not a hyperbolic statement, reduced within its true limits here. What is said in v. 23 is true of the present generation, which cleaves immoveably to wickedness. It does not exclude the possibility of a future reform on the part of the people, a purification of it from idolatry. Only this cannot be attained for a long time, until after sore and long-lasting, purifying judgments. Cf. 12:14f., 3:18ff.

## Jeremiah 14

### Ch. 14–17—The Word Concerning the Droughts

**Jeremiah 14–17.** The distress arising from a lengthened drought (Jeremiah 14:2–6) gives the prophet occasion for urgent prayer on behalf of his people (Jeremiah 14:7–9 and 19–22); but the Lord rejects all intercession, and gives the people notice, for their apostasy from Him, of their coming destruction by sword, famine, and pestilence (Jeremiah 14:10–18 and 15:1–9). Next, the prophet complains of the persecution he has to endure, and is corrected

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by the Lord and comforted (Jeremiah 15:10–21). Then he has his course of conduct for the future prescribed to him, since Judah is, for its sins, to be cast forth into banishment, but is again to be restored (Jeremiah 16:1–17:4). And the discourse concludes with general considerations upon the roots of the mischief, together with prayers for the prophet's safety, and statements as to the way by which judgment may be turned aside.

This prophetic word, though it had its origin in a special period of distress, does not contain any single discourse such as may have been delivered by Jeremiah before the people upon occasion of this calamity, but is, like the former sections, a summary of addresses and utterances concerning the corruption of the people, and the bitter experiences to which his office exposes the prophet. For these matters the special event above mentioned serves as a starting-point, inasmuch as the deep moral degradation of Judah, which must draw after it yet sorer judgments, is displayed in the relation assumed by the people to the judgment sent on them at that time.—The favourite attempts of recent commentators to dissect the passage into single portions, and to assign these to special points of time and to refer them to particular historical occurrences, have proved an entire failure, as Graf himself admits. The whole discourse moves in the same region of thought and adheres to the same aspect of affairs as the preceding ones, without suggesting special historical relations. And there is an advance made in the prophetic declaration, only in so far as here the whole substance of the discourse culminates in the thought that, because of Judah's being hardened in sin, the judgment of rejection can in no way be turned aside, not even by the intercession of those whose prayers would have the greatest weight.

**Jeremiah 14:1–15:9.** The Uselessness of Prayer on behalf of the People.—The title in v. 1 specifies the occasion for the following discourse: *What came a word of Jahveh to Jeremiah concerning the drought.*—Besides

here, *אֲשֶׁר הָיָה* is made to precede the *דָּבַר יְהוָה* in 46:1; 47:1; 49:34; and so, by a kind of attraction, the prophecy which follows receives an outward connection with that which precedes. Concerning the matters of the droughts. *בְּצָרוֹת*, plur. of *בְּצָרָה*, Psa. 9:10; 10:1, might mean harassments, troubles in general. But the description of a great drought, with which the prophecy begins, taken along with 17:8, where *בְּצָרָה* occurs, meaning drought, lit., cutting off, restraint of rain, shows that the plural here is to be referred to the sing. *בְּצָרָה* (cf. *עֲשֵׂתָרָה* from *עֲשֵׂתָרָה*), and that it means the withholding of rain or drought (as freq. in Chald.). We must note the plur., which is not to be taken as intensive of a great drought, but points to repeated droughts. Withdrawal of rain was threatened as a judgment against the despisers of God's word (Lev. 26:19f.; Deut. 11:17; 28:23); and this chastisement has at various times been inflicted on the sinful people; cf. 3:3; 12:4; 23:10, Hag. 1:10f. As the occasion of the present prophecy, we have therefore to regard not a single great drought, but a succession of droughts. Hence we cannot fix the time at which the discourse was composed, since we have no historical notices as to the particular times at which God was then punishing His people by withdrawing the rain.

**Jeremiah 14:2–6.** *Description of the distress arising from the drought.*—V. 2. *Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish, like mourning on the ground, and the cry of Jerusalem goeth up.* V. 3. *Their nobles send their mean ones for water: they come to the wells, find no water, return with empty pitchers, are ashamed and confounded and cover their head.* V. 4. *For the ground, which is confounded, because no rain is fallen upon the earth, the husbandmen are ashamed, cover their head.* V. 5. *Yea, the hind also in the field, she beareth and forsaketh it, because there is no grass.* V. 6. *And the wild asses stand on the bare-topped heights, gasp for air like the jackals; their eyes fail because there is no herb."*

The country and the city, the distinguished and the mean, the field and the husbandmen, are thrown into deep mourning, and the beasts of the field pine away because neither grass nor herb grows. This description gives a touching picture of the distress into which the land and its inhabitants have fallen for lack of rain. Judah is the kingdom or the country with its inhabitants; the gates as used poetically for the cities with the citizens. Not mankind only, but the land itself mourns and pines away, with all the creatures that live on it; cf. v. 4, where the ground is said to be dismayed along with the tillers of it. The gates of the cities are mentioned as being the places where the citizens congregate. אֲמָלֵל, fade away, pine, is strengthened by: are black, i.e., mourn, down to the earth; pregnant for: set themselves mourning on the ground. As frequently, Jerusalem is mentioned alongside of Judah as being its capital. Their cry of anguish rises up to heaven. This universal mourning is specialized from v. 3 on. Their nobles, i.e., the distinguished men of Judah and Jerusalem, send their mean ones, i.e., their retainers or servants and maids, for water to the wells (גְּבִים, pits, 2 Kings 3:16, here cisterns). The *Chet*. צָעִיר, here and in 48:4, is an unusual form for צָעִיר, *Keri*. Finding no water, they return, their vessels empty, i.e., with empty pitchers, ashamed of their disappointed hope. בָּשׁוּ is strengthened by the synonym הִכְלָמוּ. Covering the head is a token of deep grief turned inwards upon itself; cf. 2 Sam. 15:30; 19:5. הָאֲדָמָה is the ground generally. הָתָה is a relative clause: *quae consternata est*. "Because no rain," etc., literally as in 1 Kings 17:7.—Even the beasts droop and perish. כִּי is intensive: yea, even. The hind brings forth and forsakes, sc. the new-born offspring, because for want of grass she cannot sustain herself and her young. עָזוּב, *infin. abs.* set with emphasis for the *temp. fin.*, as Gen. 41:43, Ex. 8:11, and often; cf. Gesen. § 131, 4, a, Ew. § 351, c. The hind was regarded by the ancients as tenderly caring for her young, cf. Boch. *Hieroz.* i. lib. 3, c. 17 (ii. p.

254, ed. Ros.) The wild asses upon the bleak mountain-tops, where these animals choose to dwell, gasp for air, because, by reason of the dreadful drought, it is not possible to get a breath of air even on the hills. Like the תַּנִּים, jackals, cf. 9:10; 10:22, etc. *Vulg.* has *dracones*, with the Aram. versions; and Hitz. and Graf are of opinion that the mention of jackals is not here in point, and that, since תַּנִּים does not mean *dracones*, the word stands here, as in Ex. 29:3; 32:2, for תַּנִּין, the monster inhabiting the water, a crocodile or some kind of whale that stretches its head out of the water to draw breath with gaping jaws. On this Näg. has well remarked: he cannot see why the gaping, panting jaws of the jackal should not serve as a figure in such a case as the present. Their eyes fail away—from exhaustion due to want of wear. עֲשָׂב, bushes and under-shrubs, as distinguished from יֵרֵק, green grass.

**Jeremiah 14:7-9.** *The prayer.*—V. 7. "If our iniquities testify against us, O Jahveh, deal Thou for Thy name's sake, for many are our backslidings; against Thee have we sinned. V. 8. Thou hope of Israel, his Saviour in time of need, why wilt Thou be as a stranger in the land, like a wayfarer that hath put up to tarry for a night? V. 9. Why wilt Thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot help, and yet Thou art in the midst of us, Jahveh, and Thy name is named upon us—O leave us not!"

The prophet utters this prayer in the name of his people (cf. v. 11). It begins with confession of sore transgression. Thus the chastisement which has befallen them they have deserved as a just punishment; but the Lord is besought to help for His name's sake, i.e., not: "for the sake of Thy honour, with which it is not consistent that contempt of Thy will should go unpunished" (Hitz.). This interpretation suits neither the idea of the name of God nor the context. The name of God is the manifestation of God's being. From Moses' time on, God, as *Jahveh*, has revealed Himself as the Redeemer and Saviour of the children of Israel, whom He had adopted to be His people, and as God, who



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is merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and of great goodness and faithfulness (Ex. 34:6). As such He is besought to reveal Himself now that they confess their backsliding and sin, and seek His grace. Not for the sake of His honour in the eyes of the world, lest the heathen believe He has no power to help, as Graf holds, for all reference to the heathen nations is foreign to this connection; but He is entreated to help, not to belie the hope of His people, because Israel sets its hope in Him as Saviour in time of need (v. 9). If by withholding rain He makes His land and people to pine, then He does not reveal Himself as the lord and owner of Judah, not as the God that dwells amidst His people; but He seems a stranger passing through the land, who sets up His tent there only to spend the night, who “feels no share in the weal and woe of the dwellers therein” (Hitz.). This is the meaning of the question in v. 8b. The ancient expositors take נָטָה elliptically, as in Gen. 12:8: that stretches out His tent to pass the night. Hitz., again, objects that the wayfarer does not drag a tent about with him, and, like Ew., takes this verb in the sense of swerve from the direct route, cf. 2 Sam. 2:19, 21, etc. But the reason alleged is not tenable; since travellers did often carry their tents with them, and נָטָה, to turn oneself, is not used absolutely in the sig. to turn aside from the way, without the qualification: to the right or to the left. סוּר is in use for to turn aside to tarry, to turn in, Jeremiah 15:5. We therefore abide by the old interpretation, since “swerve from the way” has here no suitable meaning.

**Jeremiah 14:9.** The pleader makes further appeal to God’s almighty power. It is impossible that Jahveh can let Himself look like a man at his wit’s end or a nerveless warrior, as He would seem to be if He should not give help to His people in their present need. Since the time of A. Schultens the ἀπ. ληγ. מְדַהֵם is rendered, after the Arab. *dahama*, to make an unforeseen attack, by *stupefactus*, *attonitus*, one who, by reason of a sudden mischance, has lost his presence of mind and is helpless. This is in

keeping with the next comparison, that with a warrior who has no strength to help. The passage closes with an appeal to the relation of grace which Jahveh sustains towards His people. וְאַתָּה comes in adversatively: yet art Thou in our midst, i.e., present to Thy people. Thy name is named upon us, i.e., Thou hast revealed Thyself to us in Thy being as God of salvation; see on 7:10. אַל-תִּגְנוּנוּ, lit., lay us not down, i.e., let us not sink.

**Jeremiah 14:10–18.** *The Lord’s answer.*—V. 10. “Thus saith Jahveh unto this people: Thus they loved to wander, their feet they kept not back; and Jahveh hath no pleasure in them, now will He remember their iniquities and visit their sins. V. 11. And Jahveh hath said unto me: Pray not for this people for their good. V. 12. When they fast, I hear not their cry; and when they bring burnt-offering and meat-offering, I have no pleasure in them; but by sword, and famine, and pestilence will I consume them. V. 13. Then said I: Ah Lord Jahveh, behold, the prophets say to them, Ye shall see no sword, and famine shall not befall you, but assured peace give I in this place. V. 14. And Jahveh said unto me: Lies do the prophets prophesy in my name: I have not sent them, nor commanded them, nor spoken to them; lying vision, and divination, and a thing of nought, and deceit of their heart they prophesy to you. V. 15. Therefore thus saith Jahveh concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, when I have not sent them, who yet say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land: By sword and famine shall these prophets perish. V. 16. And the people to whom they prophesy shall lie cast out upon the streets of Jerusalem, by reason of the famine and of the sword, and none will bury them, them and their wives, their sons and their daughters; and I pour their wickedness upon them. V. 17. And thou shalt say to them this word: Let mine eyes run down with tears day and night and let them not cease; for with a great breach is broken the virgin-daughter of my people, with a very grievous blow. V. 18. If I go forth into the field, behold the slain with the sword; and if I come into the city, behold them that pine with famine;

*for prophet and priest pass into a land and know it not."*

To the prophet's prayer the Lord answers in the first place, v. 10, by pointing to the backsliding of the people, for which He is now punishing them. In the "thus they love," etc., lies a backward reference to what precedes. The reference is certainly not to the vain going for water (v. 3), as Ch. B. Mich. and R. Salomo Haccohen thought it was; nor is it to the description of the animals afflicted by thirst, vv. 5 and 6, in which Näg. finds a description of the passionate, unbridled lust after idolatry, the real and final cause of the ruin that has befallen Israel. Where could be the likeness between the wild ass's panting for breath and the wandering of the Jews? That to which the "thus" refers must be sought for in the body of the prayer to which Jahveh makes answer, as Ros. rightly saw. Not by any means in the fact that in v. 9 the Jews prided themselves on being the people of God and yet went after false gods, so that God answered: *ita amant vacillare*, as good as to say: *ita instabiles illos esse, ut nunc ab ipso, nunc ab aliis auxilium quaerant* (Ros.); for נָטוּ cannot here mean the waving and swaying of reeds, but only the wandering after other gods, cf. 2:23, 31. This is shown by the addition: they kept not back their feet, cf. with 2:25, where in the same reference the withholding of the feet is enjoined. Graf is right in referring *huts* to the preceding prayer: "Thus, in the same degree as Jahveh has estranged Himself from His people (cf. vv. 8 and 9), have they estranged themselves from their God." They loved to wander after strange gods, and so have brought on themselves God's displeasure. Therefore punishment comes on them. The second clause of the verse is a reminiscence of Hos. 8:13.—After mentioning the reason why He punishes Judah, the Lord in v. 11f. rejects the prayer of the prophet, because He will not hear the people's cry to Him. Neither by means of fasts nor sacrifice will they secure God's pleasure. The prophet's prayer implies that the people will humble themselves and turn to the Lord. Hence God explains His rejection of the prayer

by saying that He will give no heed to the people's fasting and sacrifices. The reason of this appears from the context,—namely, because they turn to Him only in their need, while their heart still cleaves to the idols, so that their prayers are but lip-service, and their sacrifices a soulless formality. The suffix in נָטוּ refers not to the sacrifices, but, like that in נָטוּ, to the Jews who, by bringing sacrifices, seek to win God's love. כִּי, but, introducing the antithesis to "have no pleasure in them." The sword in battle, famine, and pestilence, at the siege of the cities, are the three means by which God designs to destroy the backsliding people; cf. Lev. 26:25f.

In spite of the rejection of his prayer, the prophet endeavours yet again to entreat God's favour for the people, laying stress, v. 13, on the fact that they had been deceived and confirmed in their infatuation by the delusive forecastings of the false prophets who promised peace. Peace of truth, i.e., peace that rests on God's faithfulness, and so: assured peace will I give you. Thus spoke these prophets in the name of Jahveh; cf. on this 4:10; 5:12. Hitz. and Graf propose to change נְשִׁילֶם וְאָמְתָה into נְשִׁילֶם וְאָמְתָה, acc. to 33:6 and Isa. 39:8, because the LXX have ἀλήθειαν καὶ εἰρήνην. But none of the passages cited furnishes sufficient ground for this. In 33:6 the LXX have rendered εἰρήνην καὶ πίστιν, in Isa. 39:8, εἰρήνη καὶ δικαιοσύνη; giving thereby a clear proof that we cannot draw from their rendering any certain inferences as to the precise words of the original text. Nor do the parallels prove anything, since in them the expression often varies in detail. But there can be no doubt that in the mouth of the pseudo-prophets "assured peace" is more natural than "peace and truth." But the Lord does not allow this excuse. He has not sent the prophets that so prophesy: they prophesy lying vision, divination, falsehood, and deceit, and shall themselves be destroyed by sword and famine. The cumulation of the words, "lying vision," etc., shows God's wrath and indignation at the wicked practices of these men. Graf wants to

delete ו before אֱלִיל and to couple אֱלִיל with קֶסֶם, so as to make one idea: prophecy of nought. For this he can allege none other than the erroneous reason that קֶסֶם, taken by itself, does not sufficiently correspond to “lying vision,” inasmuch as, he says, it has not always a bad sense attached to it; whereas the fact is that it is nowhere used for genuine prophecy. The *Chet. אֱלִיל* and *תְּרַמּוֹת* are unusual formations, for which the usual forms are substituted in the *Keri*. Deceit of their heart is not self-deceit, but deceit which their heart has devised; cf. 23:26. But the people to whom these prophets prophesied are to perish by sword and famine, and to lie unburied in the streets of Jerusalem; cf. 8:2; 16:4. They are not therefore held excused because false prophets told them lies, for they have given credit to these lies, lies that flattered their sinful passions, and have not been willing to hear or take to heart the word of the true prophets, who preached repentance and return to God. To Hitz. it seems surprising that, in describing the punishment which is to fall on seducers and seduced, there should not be severer judgment, in words at least, levelled against the seducers as being those involved in the deeper guilt; whereas the very contrary is the case in the Hebrew text. Hitz. further proposes to get rid of this discrepancy by conjectures founded on the LXX, yet without clearly informing us how we are to read. But the difficulty solves itself as soon as we pay attention to the connection. The portion of the discourse before us deals with the judgment which is to burst on the godless people, in the course of which those who had seduced the people are only casually mentioned. For the purpose in hand, it was sufficient to say briefly of the seducers that they too should perish by sword and famine who affirmed that these punishments should not befall the people, whereas it was necessary to set before the people the terrors of this judgment in all their horror, in order not to fail of effect. With the reckoning of the various classes of persons: they, their wives, etc., cf. the account of their participation in idolatry, 7:18. Hitz. rightly

paraphrases וְשִׁפְכֵתִי: and in this wise will I pour out. רַעְתָּם, not: the calamity destined for them, but: their wickedness which falls on them with its consequences, cf. 2:19, Hos. 9:15, for *propheta videtur causam reddere, cur Deus horribile illud iudicium exequi statuerit contra Judaeos, nempe quoniam digni erant tali mercede* (Calv.).

**Jeremiah 14:17.** The words, “and speak unto them this word,” surprise us, because no word from God follows, as in 13:12, but an exposition of the prophet’s feelings in regard to the dreadful judgment announced. Hence Dahl. and Ew. propose to join the words in question with what goes before, while at the same time Ew. hints a suspicion that an entire sentence has been dropped after the words. But for this suspicion there is no ground, and the joining of the words with the preceding context is contrary to the unfailing usage of this by no means infrequent formula. The true explanation is found in Kimchi and Calvin. The prophet is led to exhibit to the hardened people the grief and pain he feels in contemplating the coming ruin of Judah, *ut pavorem illis incuteret, si forte, cum haec audirent, resipiscerent* (Kimchi). If not his words, then surely his tears; for the terrible calamity he has to announce must touch and stagger them, so that they may be persuaded to examine themselves and consider what it is that tends to their peace. To make impression on their hardened consciences, he depicts the appalling ruin, because of which his eyes run with tears day and night. On “run down,” etc., cf. 9:17; 13:17, Lam. 2:18, etc. “Let them not cease” gives emphasis: not be silent, at peace, cf. Lam. 3:49, i.e., weep incessantly day and night. The appellation of the people: virgin-daughter of my people, i.e., daughter that is my people, cf. 8:11, corresponds to the love revealing itself in tears. The depth of sorrow is further shown in the clause: with a blow that is very dangerous, cf. 10:19. In v. 18 the prophet portrays the condition of things after the fall of Jerusalem: out upon the field are those pierced with the sword; in the city תְּהָלִיא רָעַב, lit., suffering of

famine, Deut. 29:21, here *abstr. pro concr.* of those pining in famine; and those that remain in life depart into exile. Instead of the people Jeremiah mentions only the prophets and priests as being the flower of God's people. סָהַר, to wander about, in Hebr. usually in the way of commerce, here acc. to Aram. usage, possibly too with the idea of begging subjoined. In the וְלֹא יָדְעוּ Graf holds the וְ to be entirely out of place, while Hitz. pronounces against him. The words are variously taken; e.g., and know nothing, wander about aimless and helpless. But with this the omission of the article with אֲרָץ is incompatible. The omission shows that "and now not" furnishes an attribute to "into a land." We therefore translate: and know it not = which they know not, since the pronominal suffix is wont to be often omitted where it can without difficulty be supplied from the preceding clause.

### Jeremiah 15

**Jeremiah 14:19–22 and 15:1–9.** *Renewed supplication and repeated rejection of the same.*—V. 19. "Hast thou then really rejected Judah? or doth thy soul loathe Zion? Why hast Thou smitten us, so that there is no healing for us? We look for peace, and there is no good; for the time of healing, and behold terror! V. 20. We know, Jahveh, our wickedness, the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against Thee. V. 21. Abhor not, for Thy name's sake; disgrace not the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us! V. 22. Are there among the vain gods of the Gentiles givers of rain, or will the heavens give showers? Art not Thou (He), Jahveh our God? and we hope in Thee, for Thou hast made all these."

**Jeremiah 15:1–5.** "And Jahveh said unto me: If Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet would not my soul incline to this people. Drive them from my face, that they go forth. V. 2. And if they say to thee: Whither shall we go forth? then say to them: Thus hath Jahveh said—Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the

*famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.* V. 3. *And I appoint over them four kinds, saith Jahveh: the sword to slay and the dogs to tear, the fowls of the heaven and the cattle of the earth, to devour and destroy.* V. 4. *And I give them up to be abused to all kingdoms of the earth, for Manasseh's sake, the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.* V. 5. *For who shall have pity upon thee, Jerusalem? and who shall bemoan thee? and who shall go aside to ask after thy welfare?* V. 6. *Thou hast rejected me, saith Jahveh; thou goest backwards, and so I stretch forth mine hand against thee and destroy thee; I am weary of repenting.* V. 7. *And I fan them with a fan into the gates of the land: bereave, ruin my people; from their ways they turned not.* V. 8. *More in number are his widows become unto me than the sand of the sea; I bring to them, against the mother of the young man, a spoiler at noon-day; I cause to fall upon her suddenly anguish and terrors.* V. 9. *She that hath borne seven languisheth, she breatheth out her soul, her sun goeth down while yet it is day, she is put to shame and confounded; and their residue I give to the sword before their enemies, saith Jahveh."*

The Lord had indeed distinctly refused the favour sought for Judah; yet the command to disclose to the people the sorrow of his own soul at their calamity (vv. 17 and 18) gave the prophet courage to renew his supplication, and to ask of the Lord if He had in very truth cast off Judah and Zion (v. 19), and to set forth the reasons which made this seem impossible (vv. 20–22). In the question, v. 19, the emphasis lies on the מְאַסָּה, strengthened as it is by the *inf. abs.*: hast Thou utterly or really rejected? The form of the question is the same as that in 2:14; first the double question, dealing with a state of affairs which the questioner is unable to regard as being actually the case, and then a further question, conveying wonder at what has happened. גָּעַל, loathe, cast from one, is synonymous with מָאָס. The second clause agrees verbally with 8:15. The reasons why the Lord cannot have wholly rejected Judah are: 1. That they acknowledge their wickedness.

Confession of sin is the beginning of return to God; and in case of such return, the Lord, by His compassion, has vouchsafed to His people forgiveness and the renewal of covenant blessings; cf. Lev. 26:41ff., Deut. 30:2ff. Along with their own evil doing, the transgression of their fathers is mentioned, cf. 2:5ff., 7:25ff., that full confession may be made of the entire weight of wickedness for which Israel has made itself answerable. So that, on its own account, Judah has no claim upon the help of its God. But the Lord may be moved thereto by regard for His name and the covenant relation. On this is founded the prayer of v. 21: Abhor not, sc. thy people, for Thy name's sake, lest Thou appear powerless to help in the eyes of the nations; see on v. 7 and on Num. 14:16. נִבְּלָה, lit., to treat as fools, see on Deut. 32:15, here: make contemptible. The throne of the glory of God is the temple, where Jahveh sits enthroned over the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies, Ex. 25:22, etc. The destruction of Jerusalem would, by the sack of the temple, dishonour the throne of the Lord. The object to "remember," viz., "Thy covenant," comes after "break not." The remembering or rememberedness of the covenant is shown in the not breaking maintenance of the same; cf. Lev. 26:44f. Lastly, we have in v. 22 the final motive for supplication: that the Lord alone can put an end to trouble. Neither the vain gods of the heathen (הַבְּלִים, see 8:19) can procure rain, nor can the heaven, as one of the powers of nature, without power from God. אָתָּה הוּא, Thou art (הוּא is the *copula* between subject and predicate). Thou hast made all these. Not: the heaven and the earth, as Hitz. and Gr. would make it, after Isa. 37:16; still less is it, with Calv.: the punishment inflicted on us; but, as אֲלֵה demands, the things mentioned immediately before: *caelum, pluvias et quidquid est in omni rerum natura*, Ros. Only when thus taken, does the clause contain any motive for: we wait upon Thee, i.e., expect from Thee help out of our trouble. It further clearly appears from this verse that the supplication was called forth by the calamity depicted in vv. 2-5.

**Jeremiah 15:1-9.** *Decisive refusal of the petition.*—V. 1. Even Moses and Samuel, who stood so far in God's favour that by their supplications they repeatedly rescued their people from overwhelming ruin (cf. Ex. 17:11; 32:11f., Num. 14:13ff., and 1 Sam. 7:9f., 12:17f., Ps. 99:6), if they were to come now before the Lord, would not incline His love towards this people. אֲלֵה indicates the direction of the soul towards any one; in this connection: the inclination of it towards the people. He has cast off this people and will no longer let them come before His face. In vv. 2-9 this is set forth with terrible earnestness. We must supply the object, "this people," to "drive" from the preceding clause. "From my face" implies the people's standing before the Lord in the temple, where they had appeared bringing sacrifices, and by prayer invoking His help (Jeremiah 14:12). To go forth from the temple = to go forth from God's face. V. 2. But in case they ask where they are to go to, Jeremiah is to give them the sarcastic direction: Each to the destruction allotted to him. He that is appointed to death, shall go forth to death, etc. The clauses: such as are for death, etc., are to be filled up after the analogy of 2 Sam. 15:20, 2 Kings 8:1, so that before the second "death," "sword," etc., we supply the verb "shall go." There are mentioned four kinds of punishments that are to befall the people. The "death" mentioned over and above the sword is death by disease, for which we have in 14:12 דָּבָר, pestilence, disease; cf. 43:11, where death, captivity, and sword are mentioned together, with Ezek. 14:21, sword, famine, wild beasts, and disease (דָּבָר), and 33:27, sword, wild beasts, and disease. This doom is made more terrible in v. 3. The Lord will appoint over them (פָּקֵד as in 13:21) four kinds, i.e., four different destructive powers which shall prepare a miserable end for them. One is the sword already mentioned in v. 2, which slays them; the three others are to execute judgment on the dead: the dogs which shall tear, mutilate, and partly devour the dead bodies (cf. 2 Kings 9:35, 37), and birds and beasts of prey, vultures,

jackals, and others, which shall make an end of such portions as are left by the dogs. In v. 4 the whole is summed up in the threatening of Deut. 28:25, that the people shall be delivered over to be abused to all the kingdoms of the earth, and the cause of this terrible judgment is mentioned. The *Chet*. זועה is not to be read זועה, but זועה, and is the contracted form from זועה, see on Deut. 28:25, from the *rad.* זוע, lit., tossing hither and thither, hence for maltreatment. For the sake of King Manasseh, who by his godless courses had filled up the measure of the people's sins, so that the Lord must cast Judah away from His face, and give it up to the heathen to be chastised; cf. 2 Kings 23:26; 24:3, with the exposition of these passages; and as to what Manasseh did, see 2 Kings 21:1–16.

**Jeremiah 15:5–9.** In vv. 5–9 we have a still further account of this appalling judgment and its causes. The grounding כִּי in v. 5 attaches to the central thought of v. 4. The sinful people will be given up to all the kingdoms of the earth to be ill used, for no one will or can have compassion on Jerusalem, since its rejection by God is a just punishment for its rejection of the Lord (v. 6). "Have pity" and "bemoan" denote loving sympathy for the fall of the unfortunate. חָמַל, to feel sympathy; נָדַד, to lament and bemoan. סָוַר, to swerve from the straight way, and turn aside or enter into any one's house; cf. Gen. 19:2f., Ex. 3:3, etc. שָׁאַל לְשָׁלוֹם לְ, to inquire of one as to his health, cf. Ex. 18:7; then: to salute one, to desire שָׁלוֹם לְ, Gen. 43:27, Judg. 18:15, and often. Not only will none show sympathy for Jerusalem, none will even ask how it goes with her welfare.

**Jeremiah 15:6.** The reason of this treatment: because Jerusalem has dishonoured and rejected its God, therefore He now stretched out His hand to destroy it. To go backwards, instead of following the Lord, cf. 7:24. This determination the Lord will not change, for He is weary of repenting. הִנָּחַם frequently of the withdrawal, in grace and pity, of a divine decree to punish, cf. 4:28, Gen. 6:6f., Joel 2:14, etc.

**Jeremiah 15:7.** וְאֶזְרָם is a continuation of וְאֶט, v. 6, and, like the latter, is to be understood prophetically of what God has irrevocably determined to do. It is not a description of what is past, an allusion to the battle lost at Megiddo, as Hitz., carrying out his *à priori* system of slighting prophecy, supposes. To take the verbs of this verse as proper preterites, as J. D. Mich. and Ew. also do, is not in keeping with the contents of the clauses. In the first clause Ew. and Gr. translate שַׁעְרֵי הָאָרֶץ gates, i.e., exits, boundaries of the earth, and thereby understand the remotest lands of the earth, the four corners of extremities of the earth, Isa. 11:12 (Ew.). But "gates" cannot be looked on as corners or extremities, nor are they ends or borders, but the inlets and outlets of cities. For how can a man construe to himself the ends of the earth as the outlets of it? where could one go to from there? Hence it is impossible to take שַׁעְרֵי הָאָרֶץ of the earth in this case; it is the land of Judah. The gates of the land are either mentioned by synecdoche for the cities, cf. Mic. 5:5, or are the approaches to the land (cf. Nah. 3:13), its outlets and inlets. Here the context demands the latter sense. נָזְרָה, to fan, *c. q. loci*, to scatter into a place, cf. Ezek. 12:15; 30:26: fan into the outlets of the land, i.e., cast out of the land. שָׁכַל, make the people childless, by the fall in battle of the sons, the young men, cf. Ezek. 5:17. The threat is intensified by אֲבָדְתֵי, added as asyndeton. The last clause: from their ways, etc., subjoins the reason.

**Jeremiah 15:8.** By the death of the sons, the women lose their husbands, and become widows. לִי is the dative of sympathetic interest. "Sand of the sea" is the figure for a countless number. יָמִים is poetic plural; cf. Ps. 78:27, Job 6:3. On these defenceless women come suddenly spoilers, and these mothers who had perhaps borne seven sons give up the ghost and perish without succour, because their sons have fallen in war. Thus proceeds the portrayal as Hitz. has well exhibited it. עַל אֵם בָּחוּר is variously interpreted. We must reject the view

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taken by Ch. B. Mich. from the Syr. and Arab. versions: upon mother *and* young man; as also the view of Rashi, Cler., Eichh., Dahl., etc., that **אָם** means the mother-city, i.e., Jerusalem. The true rendering is that of Jerome and Kimchi, who have been followed by J. D. Mich., Hitz., Ew., Graf, and Näg.: upon the mother of the youth or young warrior. This view is favoured by the correspondence of the woman mentioned in v. 9 who had borne seven sons. Both are individualized as women of full bodily vigour, to lend vividness to the thought that no age and no sex will escape destruction **בְּצַהֲרִים**, at clear noontide, when one least looks for an attack. Thus the word corresponds with the “suddenly” of the next clause. **עִיר**, Aramaic form for **צִיר**, Isa. 13:8, pangs. The bearer of seven, i.e., the mother of many sons. Seven as the perfect number of children given in blessing by God, cf. 1 Sam. 2:5, Ruth 4:15. “She breathes to her life,” cf. Job 31:39. Graf wrongly: she sighs. The sun of her life sets (**בְּצָהָה**) while it is still day, before the evening of her life has been reached, cf. Am. 8:9. “Is put to shame and confounded” is not to be referred to the son, but the mother, who, bereaved of her children, goes covered with shame to the grave. The *Keri* **בָּא** for **בְּצָהָה** is an unnecessary change, since **שָׁמַשׁ** is also construed as fem., Gen. 15:17. The description closes with a glance cast on those left in life after the overthrow of Jerusalem. These are to be given to the sword when in flight before their enemies, cf. Mic. 6:14.

**Jeremiah 15:10–21.** Complaint of the Prophet, and Soothing Answer of the Lord.—His sorrow at the rejection by God of his petition so overcomes the prophet, that he gives utterance to the wish: he had rather not have been born than live on in the calling in which he must ever foretell misery and ruin to his people, thereby provoking hatred and attacks, while his heart is like to break for grief and fellow-feeling; whereupon the Lord reprovably replies as in vv. 11–14.

**Jeremiah 15:10.** “Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast born me, a man of strife and contention to all the earth! I have not lent out, nor have men lent to me; all curse me. V. 11. *Jahveh saith, Verily I strengthen thee to thy good; verily I cause the enemy to entreat thee in the time of evil and of trouble.* V. 12. *Does iron break, iron from the north and brass?* V. 13. *Thy substance and thy treasures give I for a prey without a price, and that for all thy sins, and in all thy borders,* V. 14. *And cause thine enemies bring it into a land which thou knowest not; for fire burneth in mine anger, against you it is kindled.”*

Woe is me, exclaims Jeremiah in v. 10, that my mother brought me forth! The apostrophe to his mother is significant of the depth of his sorrow, and is not to be understood as if he were casting any reproach on his mother; it is an appeal to his mother to share with him his sorrow at his lot. This lament is consequently very different from Job’s cursing of the day of his birth, Job 3:1. The apposition to the suffix “me,” the man of strife and contention, conveys the meaning of the lament in this wise: me, who must yet be a man, with whom the whole world strives and contends. Ew. wrongly render it: “to be a man of strife,” etc.; for it was not his mother’s fault that he became such an one. The second clause intimates that he has not provoked the strife and contention. **נָשָׂה**, lend, i.e., give on loan, and with **לְ**, to lend to a person, lend out; hence **נֹשֵׂה**, debtor, and **בֹּ**, **נֹשֵׂה**, creditor, Isa. 24:2. These words are not an individualizing of the thought: all interchange of friendly services between me and human society is broken off (Hitz.). For intercourse with one’s fellow-men does not chiefly, or in the foremost place, consist in lending and borrowing of gold and other articles. Borrowing and lending is rather the frequent occasion of strife and ill-will; and it is in this reference that it is here brought up. Jeremiah says he has neither as bad debtor or disobliging creditor given occasion to hatred and quarrelling, and yet all curse him. This is the meaning of the last

words, in which the form *מִקְלָלִי* is hard to explain. The rabbinical attempts to clear it up by means of a commingling of the verbs *קָלַל* and *קָלָה* are now, and reasonably, given up. Ew. (*Gram.* § 350, *c*) wants to make it *מִקְלָלִי*; but probably the form has arisen merely out of the wrong dividing of a word, and ought to be read *בְּלָהֶם קָלָלִי*. So read most recent scholars, after the example of J. D. Mich.; cf. also Böttcher, *Grammat.* ii. S. 322, note. It is true that we nowhere else find *בְּלָהֶם*; but we find an analogy in the archaic *בְּלָהֶם*. In its favour we have, besides, the circumstance, that the heavy form *קָלָה* is by preference appended to short words; see Böttcher, as above, S. 21.

**Jeremiah 15:11-14.** To this complaint the Lord makes answer in vv. 11-14, first giving the prophet the prospect of complete vindication against those that oppose him (v. 11), and then (vv. 12-14) pointing to the circumstances that shall compel the people to this result. The introduction of God's answer by *אָמַר יְהוָה* without *כִּי* is found also in 46:25, where Graf erroneously seeks to join the formula with what precedes. In the present 11th verse the want of the *כִּי* is the less felt, since the word from the Lord that follows bears in the first place upon the prophet himself, and is not addressed to the people. *אֵם לֹא* is a particle of asseveration, introducing the answer which follows with a solemn assurance. The vowel-points of *שְׁרוּתֶךָ* require *שְׁרִיתֶיךָ*, 1 *pers. perf.*, from *שָׁרָה* = the Aram. *שָׁרָא*, loose, solve (Dan. 5:12): I loose (free) thee to thy good. The *Chet.* is variously read and rendered. By reason of the preceding *אֵם לֹא*, the view is improbable that we have here an infinitive; either *שְׁרוּתֶךָ*, *inf. Pi.* of *שָׁרַר* in the sig. inflict suffering: "thy affliction becomes welfare" (Hitz.); or *שְׁרוּתֶךָ*, *inf. Kal* of *שָׁרָה*, set free: thy release falls out to thy good (Ros., etc.). The context suggests the 1 *pers. perf.* of *שָׁרַר*,

against which the defective written form is no argument, since this occurs frequently elsewhere, e.g., *עָנִתְךָ*, Nah. 1:12. The question remains: whether we are to take *שָׁרַר* according to the Hebrew usage: I afflict thee to thy good, harass thee to thine advantage (Gesen. in the *thes.* p. 1482, and Näg.), or according to the Aramaic (*šra*) in the sig. *firmabo, stabiliam*: I strengthen thee or support thee to thy good (Ew., Maur.). We prefer the latter rendering, because the saying: I afflict thee, is not true of God; since the prophet's troubles came not from God, nor is Jeremiah complaining of affliction at the hand of God, but only that he was treated as an enemy by all the world. *לְטוֹב*, for good, as in Ps. 119:122, so that it shall fall out well for thee, lead to a happy issue, for which we have elsewhere *לְטוֹבָה*, 14:11, Ps.

86:17, Neh. 5:19.—This happy issue is disclosed in the second clause: I bring it about that the enemy shall in time of trouble turn himself in supplication to thee, because he shall recognise in the prophet's prayers the only way of safety; cf. the fulfilment of this promise, 21:1f., 37:3; 38:14ff., 42:2. *הַכְפִּינֵי*, here causative, elsewhere only with the sig. of the *Kal*, e.g., 36:25, Isa. 53:12. "The enemy," in unlimited generality: each of thine adversaries.

**Jeremiah 15:12-14.** That the case will turn out so is intimated by vv. 12-14, the exposition of which is, however, difficult and much debated. V. 12 is rendered either: can iron (ordinary iron) break northern iron and brass (the first "iron" being taken as subject, the second as object)? or: can one break iron, (namely) iron of the north, and brass ("iron" being taken both times as object, and "break" having its subject indefinite)? or: can iron ... break (*יָרוּעַ* intrans. as in 11:16)? Of these three translations the first has little probability, inasmuch as the simile of one kind of iron breaking another is unnatural. But Hitz.'s view is wholly unnatural: that the first "iron" and "brass" are the object, and that "iron from the north" is subject, standing as it does between the two objects, as in Cant. 5:6, where, however, the construction



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alleged is still very doubtful. Nor does the sense, which would in this way be expressed, go far to commend this rendering. By iron and brass we would then have to understand, according to 6:28, the stiff-necked Jewish people; and by iron from the north, the calamity that was to come from the north. Thus the sense would be: will this calamity break the sullen obstinacy of the prophet's enemies? will it make them pliable? The verse would thus contain an objection on the part of the prophet against the concession vouchsafed by God in v. 11. With this idea, however, vv. 11-14 are emphatically not in harmony. The other two translations take each a different view of the sense. The one party understand by iron and brass the prophet; the other, either the Jewish people or the northern might of the Chaldean empire. Holding that the prophet is so symbolized, L. de Dieu and Umbr. give the sense thus: "Let him but bethink him of his immoveable firmness against the onsets of the world; in spite of all, he is iron, northern iron and brass, that cannot be broken." Thus God would here be speaking to the prophet. Dahl., again, holds the verse to be spoken by the prophet, and gives the sense: Can I, a frail and feeble man, break the determination of a numerous and stiff-necked nation? Against the later view the objection already alleged against Hitz. is decisive, showing as it did that the verse cannot be the prophet's speech or complaint; against the former, the improbability that God would call the prophet iron, northern iron and brass, when the very complaint he has making showed how little of the firmness of iron he had about him. If by the northern iron we understand the Jewish people, then God would here say to the prophet, that he should always contend in vain against the stiff-neckedness of the people (Eichh.). This would have been but small comfort for him. But the appellation of northern iron does not at all fit the Jewish people. For the observation that the hardest iron, the steel made by the Chalybes in Pontus, was imported from the north, does not serve the turn; since a distinction between ordinary iron and very hard iron nowhere else appears

in the Old Testament. The attribute "from the north" points manifestly to the iron sway of the Chaldean empire (Ros., Ew., Maur., and many others); and the meaning of the verse can only be this: As little as a man can break iron, will the Jewish people be able to break the hostile power of the north (Jeremiah 13:20). Taken thus, the pictorial style of the verse contains a suggestion that the adversaries of the prophet will, by the crushing power of the Chaldeans, be reduced to the condition of turning themselves in supplication to the prophet.

**Jeremiah 15:13, 14.** With this vv. 13 and 14 are thus connected: This time of evil and tribulation (v. 10) will not last long. Their enemies will carry off the people's substance and treasures as their booty into a strange land. These verses are to be taken, with Umbr., as a declaration from the mouth of the Lord to His guilt-burdened people. This appears from the contents of the verses. The immediate transition from the address to the prophet to that to the people is to be explained by the fact, that both the prophet's complaint, v. 10, and God's answer, vv. 11-13, have a full bearing on the people; the prophet's complaint at the attacks on the part of the people serving to force them to a sense of their obstinacy against the Lord, and God's answer to the complaint, that the prophet's announcement will come true, and that he will then be justified, serving to crush their sullen doggedness. The connection of thought in vv. 13 and 14 is thus: The people that so assaults thee, by reason of thy threatening judgment, will not break the iron might of the Chaldeans, but will by them be overwhelmed. It will come about as thou hast declared to them in my name; their substance and their treasures will I give as booty to the Chaldeans. בְּלֹא מְחִיר = לֹא בְּמַחִיר, Isa. 55:1, not for purchase-money, i.e., freely. As God sells His people for nought, i.e., gives them up to their enemies (cf. Isa. 52:3, Ps. 44:13), so here He threatens to deliver up their treasures to the enemy as a booty, and for nought. When Graf says that this last thought has no sufficient meaning, his reasons therefor do not appear.

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Nor is there anything “peculiar,” or such as could throw suspicion on the passage, in the juxtaposition of the two qualifying phrases: and that for all thy sins, and in all thy borders. The latter phrase bears unmistakably on the treasures, not on the sins. “Cause ... to bring it,” lit., I cause them (the treasures) to pass with thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not, i.e., I cause the enemies to bring them, etc. Hitz. and Graf erroneously: I carry thine enemies away into a land; which affords no suitable sense. The grounding clause: for hire, etc., is taken from Deut. 32:22, to show that the threatening of judgment contained in Moses’ song is about to come upon degenerate Judah. “Against you it is kindled” apply the words to Jeremiah’s contemporaries.

**Jeremiah 15:15–18.** *Jeremiah continues his complaint.*—V. 15. “Thou knowest it, Jahveh; remember me, and visit me, and revenge me on my persecutors! Do not, in Thy long-suffering, take me away; know that for Thy sake I bear reproach. V. 16. Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy words were to me a delight and the joy of my heart: for Thy name was named upon me, Jahveh, God of hosts. V. 17. I sat not in the assembly of the laughers, nor was merry; because of Thy hand I sat solitary; for with indignation Thou hast filled me. V. 18. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound malignant? will not heal. Wilt Thou really be to me as a deceiving brook, a water that doth not endure?”

The Lord’s answer, vv. 11–14, has not yet restored tranquillity to the prophet’s mind; since in it his vindication by means of the abasement of his adversaries had been kept at an indefinite distance. And so he now, v. 15, prays the Lord to revenge him on his adversaries, and not to let him perish, since for His sake he bears reproach. The object to “Thou knowest, Lord,” appears from the context,—namely: “the attacks which I endure,” or more generally: Thou knowest my case, my distress. At the same time he clearly means the harassment detailed in v. 10, so that “Thou knowest” is, as to its sense, directly connected with v. 10. But it by no means follows from this that vv. 11–14 are not original; only that

Jeremiah did not feel his anxiety put at rest by the divine answer conveyed in these verses. In the climax: Remember me, visit me, i.e., turn Thy care on me, and revenge me, we have the utterance of the importunity of his prayer, and therein, too, the extremity of his distress. According to Thy long-suffering, i.e., the long-suffering Thou showest towards my persecutors, take me not away, i.e., do not deliver me up to final ruin. This prayer he supports by the reminder, that for the Lord’s sake he bears reproach; cf. Ps. 69:8. Further, the imperative: know, recognise, bethink thee of, is the utterance of urgent prayer. In v. 16 he exhibits how he suffers for the Lord’s sake. The words of the Lord which came to him he has received with eagerness, as it had been the choicest dainties. “Thy words were found” intimates that he had come into possession of them as something actual, without particularizing how they were revealed. With the figurative expression: I ate them, cf. the symbolical embodiment of the figure, Ezek. 2:9; 3:3, Apoc. 10:9f. The *Keri* כִּרְיָהּ is an uncalled for correction, suggested by the preceding יְהוָה, and the *Chet.* is perfectly correct. Thy words turned out to me a joy and delight, because Thy name was named upon me, i.e., because Thou hast revealed Thyself to me, hast chosen me to be the proclaimer of Thy word.

**Jeremiah 15:17.** To this calling he has devoted his whole life: has not sat in the assembly of the laughers, nor made merry with them; but sat alone, i.e., avoided all cheerful company. Because of Thy hand, i.e., because Thy hand had laid hold on me. The hand of Jahveh is the divine power which took possession of the prophets, transported their spirit to the ecstatic domain of inner vision, and impelled to prophesy; cf. 20:7, Isa. 8:11, Ezek. 1:3, etc. Alone I sat, because Thou hast filled me with indignation. אַעֲמִ is the wrath of God against the moral corruptness and infatuation of Judah, with which the Spirit of God has filled Jeremiah in order that he may publish it abroad, cf. 6:11. The sadness of what he had to publish filled his

heart with the deepest grief, and constrained him to keep far from all cheery good fellowship.

**Jeremiah 15:18.** Why is my pain become perpetual? "My pain" is the pain or grief he feels at the judgment he has to announce to the people; not his pain at the hostility he has on that account to endure. נָצַח adverbial = לְנֶצַח, as in Am. 1:11, Ps. 13:2, etc. "My wound," the blow that has fallen on him. אֲנִי־נִשְׁחָה, malignant, is explained by "(that) will not heal," cf. 30:12, Mic. 1:9. The clause הֲיִי תְהִיָּה וגו' still depends on לָמָּה, and the infin. gives emphasis: Wilt Thou really be? אֲכַזֵּב, lit., lying, deception, means here, and in Mic. 1:16, a deceptive torrent that dries up in the season of drought, and so disappoints the hope of finding water, cf. Job 6:15ff. "A water," etc., is epexegetis: water that doth not endure. To this the Lord answers—

**Jeremiah 15:19–21.** *By reprimanding his impatience, and by again assuring him of His protection and of rescue from the power of his oppressors.—V. 19. "Therefore thus saith Jahveh: If thou return, then will I bring thee again to serve me; and if thou separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth. They will return to thee, but thou shalt not return unto them. V. 20. And I make thee unto this people a strong wall of brass, so that they fight against thee, but prevail not against thee; for I am with thee, to help thee and to save thee, saith Jahveh. V. 21. And I save thee out of the hand of the wicked, and deliver thee out of the clutch of the violent."*

In the words: if thou return, lies the reproach that in his complaint, in which his indignation had hurried him on to doubt God's faithfulness, Jeremiah had sinned and must repent. אֲשִׁיבָךְ is by many commentators taken adverbially and joined with the following words: then will I again cause thee to stand before me. But this adverbial use has been proved only for the Kal of שׁוּב, not for the Hiphil, which must here be taken by itself: then will I bring thee again, sc. into proper relations with me—namely, to stand before me, i.e., to be my servant. עָמַד לְפָנַי,

of the standing of the servant before his lord, to receive his commands, and so also of prophets, cf. 1 Kings 17:1; 18:15, 2 Kings 3:14, etc. In the words: if thou make to go forth, i.e., separate the precious from the vile, we have the figure of metal-refining, in course of which the pure metal is by fusion parted from the earthy and other ingredients mixed with it. The meaning of the figure is, however, variously understood. Some think here, unfittingly, of good and bad men; so Chald. and Rashi: if thou cause the good to come forth of the bad, turn the good into bad; or, if out of the evil mass thou cause to come forth at least a few as good, i.e., if thou convert them (Ch. B. Mich., Ros., etc.). For we cannot here have to do with the issue of his labours, as Graf well remarks, since this did not lie in his own power. Just as little is the case one of contrast between God's word and man's word, the view adopted by Ven., Eichh., Dahl., Hitz., Ew. The idea that Jeremiah presented man's word for God's word, or God's word mixed with spurious, human additions, is utterly foreign to the context; nay, rather it was just because he declared only what God imposed on him that he was so hard bested. Further, that idea is wholly inconsistent with the nature of true prophecy. Maurer has hit upon the truth: *si quae pretiosa in te sunt, admixtis liberaveris sordibus, si virtutes quas habes maculis liberaveris impatientiae et iracundiae*; with whom Graf agrees. כָּפִי (with the so-called  $\tau$  *verit.*), as my mouth shalt thou be, i.e., as the instrument by which I speak, cf. Ex. 4:16. Then shall his labours be crowned with success. They (the adversaries) will turn themselves to thee, in the manner shown in v. 11, but thou shalt not turn thyself to them, i.e., not yield to their wishes or permit thyself to be moved by them from the right way. V. 20f. After this reprimand, the Lord renews to him the promise of His most active support, such as He had promised him at his call, 1:18f.; "to save thee" being amplified in v. 21.

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## Jeremiah 16

**Jeremiah 16:1–17:4.** The Course to be Pursued by the Prophet in Reference to the Approaching Overthrow of the Kingdom of Judah.—The ruin of Jerusalem and of Judah will inevitably come. This the prophet must proclaim by word and deed. To this end he is shown in 16:1–9 what relation he is to maintain towards the people, now grown ripe for judgment, and next in vv. 10–15 he is told the cause of this terrible judgment; then comes an account of its fulfilment (vv. 16–21); then again, finally, we have the cause of it explained once more (Jeremiah 17:1–4).

**Jeremiah 16:1–9.** *The course to be pursued by the prophet with reference to the approaching judgment.*—V. 1. *“And the word of Jahveh cam to me, saying: V. 2. Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place. V. 3. For thus hath Jahveh said concerning the sons and the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bear them, and concerning their fathers that beget them in this land: V. 4. By deadly suffering shall they die, be neither lamented or buried; dung upon the field shall they become; and by sword and by famine shall they be consumed, and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of the heavens and the beasts of the field. V. 5. For thus hath Jahveh said: Come not into the house of mourning, and go not to lament, and bemoan them not; for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith Jahveh, grace and mercies. V. 6. And great and small shall die in this land, not be buried; they shall not lament them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. V. 7. And they shall not break bread for them in their mourning, to comfort one for the dead; nor shall they give to any the cup of comfort for his father and his mother. V. 8. And into the house of feasting go not, to sit by them, to eat and to drink. V. 9. For thus hath spoken Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I cause to cease out of this place before your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.”*

What the prophet is here bidden to do and to forbear is closely bound up with the proclamation enjoined on him of judgment to come on sinful Judah. This connection is brought prominently forward in the reasons given for these commands. He is neither to take a wife nor to beget children, because all the inhabitants of the land, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, are to perish by sickness, the sword, and famine (vv. 3 and 4). He is both to abstain from the customary usages of mourning for the dead, and to keep away from mirthful feasts, in order to give the people to understand that, by reason of the multitude of the dead, customary mourning will have to be given up, and that all opportunity for merry-making will disappear (vv. 5–9). Adapting thus his actions to help to convey his message, he will approve himself to be the mouth of the Lord, and then the promised divine protection will not fail. Thus closely is this passage connected with the preceding complaint and reproof of the prophet (Jeremiah 15:10–21), while it at the same time further continues the threatening of judgment in 15:1–9.—With the prohibition to take a wife, cf. the apostle’s counsel, 1 Cor. 7:26. “This place” alternates with “this land,” and so must not be limited to Jerusalem, but bears on Judah at large. **יְלִידִים**, *adj. verbale*, as in Ex. 1:32. The form **מְמוֹתֵי י** is found, besides here, only in Ezek. 28:8, where it takes the place of **מוֹתֵי י**, v. 10. **מְמוֹתֵי תַחֲלָאִים**, lit., deaths of sicknesses or sufferings, i.e., deaths by all kinds of sufferings, since **תַחֲלָאִים** is not to be confined to disease, but in 14:18 is used of pining away by famine. With “they shall not be lamented,” cf. 25:33; 8:2; 14:16; 7:33.

**Jeremiah 16:5ff.** The command not to go into a house of mourning (**מְרִיחָה**, loud crying, cry of lament for one dead, see on Am. 6:7), not to show sympathy with the survivors, is explained by the Lord in the fearfully solemn saying: I withdraw from this people my peace, grace, and mercy. **שְׁלוֹמִי** is not “the inviolateness of the relation between me and my people” (Graf), but the pace of God which rested on Judah, the

source of its well-being, of its life and prosperity, and which showed itself to the sinful race in the extension to them of grace and mercy. The consequence of the withdrawal of this peace is the death of great and small in such multitudes that they can neither be buried nor mourned for (v. 6). הַתְּגֹדֵד, but one's self, is used in Deut. 14:1 for נָתַן שְׂרֵט, to make cuts in the body, Lev. 19:28; and קָרַח, *Niph.*, to crop one's self bald, acc. to Deut. 14:1, to shave a bare place on the front part of the head above the eyes. These are two modes of expressing passionate mourning for the dead which were forbidden to the Israelites in the law, yet which remained in use among the people, see on Lev. 19:28 and Deut. 14:1. לָהֶם, for them, in honour of the dead.

**Jeremiah 16:7.** פָּרַס, as in Isa. 58:7, for פָּרַשׁ, Lam. 4:4, break, sc. the bread (cf. Isa. *l.c.*) for mourning, and to give to drink the cup of comfort, does not refer to the meals which were held in the house of mourning upon occasion of a death after the interment, for this custom cannot be proved of the Israelites in Old Testament times, and is not strictly demanded by the words of the verse. To break bread to any one does not mean to hold a feast with him, but to bestow a gift of bread upon him; cf. Isa. 58:7. Correspondingly, to give to drink, does not here mean to drink to one's health at a feast, but only to present with wine to drink. The words refer to the custom of sending bread and wine for refreshment into the house of the surviving relatives of one dead, to comfort them in their sorrow; cf. 2 Sam. 3:35; 12:16ff., and the remarks on Ezek. 24:17. The singular suffixes on לְנַחֲמוֹ, אָבִיו, and אָמוֹ, alongside of the plurals לָהֶם and אוֹתָם, are to be taken distributively of every one who is to be comforted upon occasion of a death in his house; and לָהֶם is not to be changed, as by J. D. Mich. and Hitz., into לָחֶם.

**Jeremiah 16:8f.** The prophet is to withdraw from all participation in mirthful meals and feasts, in token that God will take away all joy

from the people. בֵּית־מִשְׁתֶּה, house in which a feast is given. אוֹתָם, for אֹתָם, refers, taken *ad sensum*, to the others who take part in the feast. On v. 9, cf. 7:34.

**Jeremiah 16:10–15.** “*And when thou showest this people all these things, and they say unto thee, Wherefore hath Jahveh pronounced all this great evil against us, and what is our transgression, and what our sin that we have committed against Jahveh our God? V. 11. Then say thou to them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith Jahveh, and have walked after other gods, and served them, and worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and not kept my law; V. 12. And ye did yet worse than your fathers; and behold, ye walk each after the stubbornness of his evil heart, hearkening not unto me. V. 13. Therefore I cast you out of this land into the land which he know not, neither ye nor your fathers, and there may ye serve other gods day and night, because I will show you no favour. V. 14. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jahveh, that it shall no more be said, By the life of Jahveh, that brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt, V. 15. But, By the life of Jahveh, that brought the sons of Israel out of the land of the north, and out of all the lands whither I had driven them, and I bring them again into their land that I gave to their fathers.*”

The turn of the discourse in vv. 10 and 11 is like that in 5:19. With v. 11 cf. 11:8, 10; 7:24; with “ye did yet worse,” etc., cf. 1 Kings 14:9; and on “after the stubbornness,” cf. on 3; 17. The apodosis begins with “therefore I cast you out.” On this head cf. 7:15; 9:15, and 22:26. The article in עַל־הָאָרֶץ, Graf quite unnecessarily insists on having cancelled, as out of place. It is explained sufficiently by the fact, that the land, of which mention has so often been made, is looked on as a specific one, and is characterized by the following relative clause, as one unknown to the people. Besides, the “ye know not” is not meant of geographical ignorance, but, as is often the case with יָדַע, the knowledge is that obtained by direct experience. They know not the land, because they have never

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been there. "There ye may serve them," Ros. justly characterizes as *concessio cum ironia*: there ye may serve, as long as ye will, the gods whom ye have so longed after. The irony is especially marked in the "day and night." Here Jeremiah has in mind Deut. 4:28; 28:36, 63. רָשָׁא is causal, giving the grounds of the threat, "I cast you out." The form הִנְיָנָהּ is ὁπ. λεγ.—In vv. 14 and 15 the prophet opens to the people a view of ultimate redemption from the affliction amidst the heathen, into which, for their sin, they will be cast. By and by men will swear no more by Jahveh who redeemed them out of Egypt, but by Jahveh who has brought them again from the land of the north and the other lands into which they have been thrust forth. In this is implied that this second deliverance will be a blessing which shall outshine the former blessing of redemption from Egypt. But just as this deliverance will excel the earlier one, so much the greater will the affliction of Israel in the northern land be than the Egyptian bondage had been. On this point Ros. throws especial weight, remarking that the aim of these verses is not so much to give promise of coming salvation, as to announce *instare illis atrocius malum, quam illud Aegyptiacum, eamque quam mox sint subituri servitutem multo fore duriolem, quam olim Aegyptiaca fuerit*. But though this idea does lie *implicite* in the words, yet we must not fail to be sure that the prospect held out of a future deliverance of Israel from the lands into which it is soon to be scattered, and of its restoration again to the land of its fathers, has, in the first and foremost place, a comforting import, and that it is intended to preserve the godly from despair under the catastrophe which is now awaiting them. לָכֵן is not *nevertheless*, but, as universally, *therefore*; and the train of thought is as follows: Because the Lord will, for their idolatry, cast forth His people into the lands of the heathen, just for that very reason will their redemption from exile not fail to follow, and this deliverance surpass in gloriousness the greatest of all former deeds of blessing, the rescue of Israel from Egypt. The prospect of future redemption

given amidst announcements of judgment cannot be surprising in Jeremiah, who elsewhere also interweaves the like happy forecastings with his most solemn threatenings; cf. 4:27; 5:10, 18, with 3:14f., 23:3ff., etc. "This ray of light, falling suddenly into the darkness, does not take us more by surprise than 'I will not make a full end,' 4:27. There is therefore no reason for regarding these two verses as interpolations from 23:7, 8" (Graf).

**Jeremiah 16:16–21.** *Further account of the punishment foretold, with the reasons for the same.*—V. 16. "Behold, I send for many fishers, saith Jahve, who shall fish them, and after will I send fore many hunters, who shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rock. V. 17. For mine eyes are upon all their ways, they are not hidden from me, neither is their iniquity concealed from mine eyes. V. 18. And first, I requite double their iniquity and their sin, because they defiled my land with the carcasses of their detestables, and with their abominations they have filled mine inheritance. V. 19. Jahveh, my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of trouble! Unto Thee shall the peoples come from the ends of the earth and say: But lies have our fathers inherited, vanity, and amidst them none profiteth at all. V. 20. Shall a man make gods to himself, which are yet no gods? V. 21. Therefore, behold, I make them to know this once, I make them to know my hand and my might, and they shall know that my name is Jahveh."

**Jeremiah 16:16–18.** Vv. 16–18 are a continuation of the threatening in v. 13, that Judah is to be cast out, but are directly connected with v. 15b, and elucidate the expulsion into many lands there foretold. The figures of the fishers and hunters do not bespeak the gathering again and restoration of the scattered people, as Ven. would make out, but the carrying of Judah captive out of his land. This is clear from the second of the figures, for the hunter does not gather the animals together, but kills them; and the reference of the verses is put beyond a doubt by vv. 17 and 18, and is consequently admitted by all other comm. The two figures signify various kinds of

treatment at the hands of enemies. The fishers represent the enemies that gather the inhabitants of the land as in a net, and carry them wholesale into captivity (cf. Am. 4:2, Hab. 1:15). The hunters, again, are those who drive out from their hiding-places, and slay or carry captive such as have escaped from the cities, and have taken refuge in the mountains and ravines; cf. 4:29, Judg. 6:2 1 Sam. 13:6. In this the idea is visibly set forth that none shall escape the enemy. שְׁלַח *c. לְ pers.*, send for one, cause him to come, as in 14:3 (send for water), so that there is no call to take לְ according to the Aram. usage as sign of the accusative, for which we can cite in Jeremiah only the case in 40:2. The form דְּרִיגִים (*Chet.*) agrees with Ezek. 47:10, while the *Keri*, דְּרִיגִים, is a formation similar to צִדְדִים. In the second clause רַב־בַּיִם is, like the numerals, made to precede the noun; cf. Prov. 31:29, Ps. 89:51.—For the Lord knows their doings and dealings, and their transgressions are not hid from Him; cf. 23:24; 32:19. עַל for אֵל, indicating the direction. Their ways are not the ways of flight, but their course of action.

**Jeremiah 16:18.** The punishment foretold is but retribution for their sins. Because they have defiled the land by idolatry, they shall be driven out of it. ראשֹׁנָה, first, is by Jerome, Hitz., Ew., Umbr. made to refer to the salvation promised in v. 15: first, i.e., before the restoration of my favour spoken of in v. 15, I requite double. Against this Graf has objected, that on this view “first” would appear somewhat superfluous; and Näg., that the manifestly intended antithesis to מְשֻׁנָּה is left out of account. There is little force in either objection. Even Näg.’s paraphrase does not do full justice to the presumed antithesis; for if we render: “For the first time the double shall be requited, in the event of repetition a severer standard shall be used,” then the antithesis to “first” would not be “double,” but the supplied repetition of the offence. There is not the slightest hint in the context to lead us to supply this idea; nor is there any antithesis between “first” and

“double.” It is a mere assumption of the comm., which Rashi, Kimchi, Ros., Maur., etc., have brought into the text by the interpolation of a ו *cop.* before מְשֻׁנָּה: I requite the first of their transgressions and the repetition of them, i.e., their earlier and their repeated sins, or the sins committed by their fathers and by themselves, on a greater scale. We therefore hold the reference to v. 15 to be the only true one, and regard it as corresponding both to the words before us and the context. “The double of their iniquity,” i.e., ample measure for their sins (cf. Isa. 40:2, Job 11:6) by way of the horrors of war and the sufferings of the exile. The sins are more exactly defined by: because they defiled my land by the carcasses of their detestables, i.e., their dead detestable idols. נְבֵלֹת שְׁקוּצִים is formed according to פְּגַרֵי גְלוּלִים, Lev. 26:30, and it belongs to “they defiled,” not to “they filled,” as the Masoretic accentuation puts it; for מְלֵא is construed, not with בָּ of the thing, but with double accus.; cf. Ezek. 8:17; 30:11, etc. So it is construed in the last clause: With their abominations they have filled the inheritance of Jahveh, i.e., the land of the Lord (cf. 2:7). The *infin.* הִלְלָם is continued by מְלֵאוּ in *verbo fin.*, as usual.

In vv. 19–21 we have more as to the necessity of the threatened punishment. The prophet turns to the Lord as his defence and fortress in time of need, and utters the hope that even the heathen may some time turn to the Lord and confess the vanity of idolatry, since the gods which men make are no gods. To this the Lord answers in v. 21, that just therefore He must punish His idolatrous people, so that they shall feel His power and learn to know His name.

**Jeremiah 16:19.** In his cry to the Lord: My strength ... in the day of trouble, which agrees closely with Ps. 28:8; 59:17; 18:3, Jeremiah utters not merely his own feelings, but those which would animate every member of his people. In the time of need the powerlessness of the idols to help, and so their vanity, becomes apparent. Trouble therefore drives to

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God, the Almighty Lord and Ruler of the world, and forces to bend under His power. The coming tribulation is to have this fruit not only in the case of the Israelites, but also in that of the heathen nations, so that they shall see the vanity of the idolatry they have inherited from their fathers, and be converted to the Lord, the only true God. How this knowledge is to be awakened in the heathen, Jeremiah does not disclose; but it may be gathered from v. 15, from the deliverance of Israel, there announced, out of the heathen lands into which they had been cast forth. By this deliverance the heathen will be made aware both of the almighty power of the God of Israel and of the nothingness of their own gods. On הִבֵּל cf. 2:5; and with “none that profiteth,” cf. 2:8; 14:22. In v. 20 the prophet confirms what the heathen have been saying. The question has a negative force, as is clear from the second clause. In v. 21 we have the Lord’s answer to the prophets’ confession in v. 19. Since the Jews are so blinded that they prefer vain idols to the living God, He will this time so show them His hand and His strength in that foretold chastisement, that they shall know His name, i.e., know that He alone is God in deed and in truth. Cf. Ezek. 12:15, Ex. 3:14.

### Jeremiah 17

**Jeremiah 17:1–4.** Judah’s sin is ineffaceably stamped upon the hearts of the people and on their altars. These four verses are closely connected with the preceding, and show why it is necessary that Judah be cast forth amidst the heathen, by reason of its being perfectly steeped in idolatry. V. 1. *“The sin of Judah is written with an iron pen, with the point of a diamond graven on the table of their hearts and on the horns of your altars. V. 2. As they remember their children, so do they their altars and their Astartes by the green tree upon the high hills. V. 3. My mountain in the field, thy substance, all thy treasures give I for a prey, thy high places for sin in all thy borders. V. 4. And thou shalt discontinue, and that of thine own self, from thine inheritance that I gave thee, and I cause thee to serve thine enemies in a land which*

*thou knowest not; for a fire have ye kindled in mine anger, for ever it burneth.”*

The sin of Judah (v. 1) is not their sinfulness, their proneness to sin, but their sinful practices, idolatry. This is written upon the tables of the hearts of them of Judah, i.e., stamped on them (cf. for this figure Prov. 3:3; 7:3), and that deep and firmly. This is intimated by the writing with an iron pen and graving with a diamond. צִפְרָן, from צָפַר, scratch, used in Deut. 21:12 for the nail of the finger, here of the point of the style or graving-iron, the diamond pencil which gravers use for carving in iron, steel, and stone. שְׁמִיר, diamond, not emery as Bochart and Ros. supposed; cf. Ezek. 3:9, Zech. 7:12. The things last mentioned are so to be distributed that “on the table of their heart” shall belong to “written with a pen of iron,” and “on the horns of their altars” to “with the point of a diamond grave.” The iron style was used only for writing or carving letters in a hard material, Job 19:24. If with it one wrote on tables, it was for the purpose of impressing the writing very deeply, so that it could not easily be effaced. The having of sin engraved upon the tables of the heart does not mean that a sense of unatoned sin could not be got rid of (Graf); for with a sense of sin we have here nothing to do, but with the deep and firm root sin has taken in the heart. To the tables of the heart as the inward seat of sin are opposed the horns of their altars (at “altars” the discourse is directly addressed to the Jews). By altars are generally understood idolatrous altars, partly because of the plural, “since the altar of Jahveh was but one,” partly because of v. 2, where the altars in question are certainly those of the idols. But the first reason proves nothing, since the temple of the Lord itself contained two altars, on whose horns the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled. The blood of the sin-offering was put not merely on the altar of burnt-offering, but also on the horns of the altar of incense, Lev. 4:7, 8; 16:16. Nor is the second reason conclusive, since there is no difficulty in taking it to be the altars of Jahveh as defiled by idolatry. This, indeed, we must do, since Josiah had destroyed the altars of the false



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gods, whereas here the altars are spoken of as existing monuments of idolatry. The question, in how far the sin of Judah is ineffaceably engraven upon the horns of her altars, is variously answered by comm., and the answer depends on the view taken of v. 2, which is itself disputed. It is certainly wrong to join v. 2 as protasis with v. 3 as apodosis, for it is incompatible with the beginning of v. 3, הַרְרִי.

Ew. therefore proposes to attach "my mountain in the field" to v. 2, and to change הַרְרִי into הַרְרִי: upon the high hills, the mountains in the field—a manifest makeshift. Umbr. translates: As their children remember their altars ... so will I my mountain in the field, thy possession ... give for a prey; and makes out the sense to be: "in proportion to the strength and ineffaceableness of the impressions, such as are to be found in the children of idolatrous fathers, must be the severity of the consequent punishment from God." But if this were the force, then כֵּן could not possibly be omitted before the apodosis; apart altogether from the suddenness of such a transition from the sins of the people (v. 1) to the sins of the children.

**Jeremiah 17:2.** V. 2 is plainly meant to be a fuller and clearer disclosure of the sins written on the tables of Judah's heart, finding therein its point of connection with v. 1. The verse has no *verbum finit.*, and besides it is a question whether "their children" is subject or object to "remember." The rule, that in calm discourse the subject follows the verb, does not decide for us; for the object very frequently follows next, and in the case of the infinitive the subject is often not mentioned, but must be supplied from the context. Here we may either translate: as their sons remember (Chald. and Jerome), or: as they remember their sons. As already said, the first translation gives no sense in keeping with the context. Rashi, Kimchi, J. D. Mich., Maur., Hitz. follow the other rendering: as they remember their children, so do they their altars. On this view, the *verb. fin.* יִזְכְּרוּ is supplied from the *infin.* זָכַר, and the two accusatives are placed alongside, as in Isa. 66:3

after the participle, without the particle of comparison demanded by the sense, cf. also Ps. 92:8, Job 27:15. Näg. calls this construction very harsh; but it has analogues in the passages cited, and gives the very suitable sense: Their altars, Astartes, are as dear to them as their children. Hitz. takes the force to be this: "Whenever they think of their children, they remember, and cannot but remember, the altars to whose horns the blood of their sacrificed children adheres. And so in the case of a green tree upon the heights; i.e., when they light upon such an one, they cannot help calling to mind the Asherahs, which were such trees." But this interpretation is clearly wrong; for it takes the second clause עַל עֵץ as object to זָכַר, which is grammatically quite indefensible, and which is besides incompatible with the order of the words. Besides, the idea that they remember the altars because the blood of their children stuck to the horns of them, is put into the words; and the putting of it in is made possible only by Hitz.'s arbitrarily separating "their Astartes" from "their altars," and from the specification of place in the next clause: "by the green tree." The words mean: As they remember their children, so do they their altars and Asherahs by every green tree. The co-ordination of Asherahs and altars makes it clear that it is not sacrifices to Moloch that are meant by altars; for the Asherahs have no connection with the worship of Moloch. Näg.'s assertions, that אֲשֵׁרִים is the name for male images of Baal, and that there can be no doubt of their connection with child-slaughtering Moloch-worship, are unfounded and erroneous. The word means images of Asherah; see on 1 Kings 14:23 and Deut. 16:21. Graf says that עַל-עֵץ ר' does not belong to "altars and Asherahs," because in that case it would need to be תַּחַת עֵץ ר', as in 2:20; 3:6, 13, Isa. 57:5, Deut. 12:2, 2 Kings 16:4; 17:10, but that it depends on זָכַר. This remark is not correctly expressed, and Graf himself gives עַל a local force, thus: by every green tree and on every high hill they think of the altars and Asherahs. This local

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relation cannot be spoken of as a “dependence” upon the verb; nor does it necessarily exclude the connection with “altars and Asherahs,” since we can quite well think of the altars and Asherahs as being by or beside every green tree and on the hills. At the same time, we hold it better to connect the local reference with the verb, because it gives the stronger sense,—namely, that the Jews not merely think of the altars and Asherahs which are by every green tree and upon the high hills, but that by every green tree and on the high hills they think of their altars and Asherahs, even when there are no such things to be seen there. Thus we can now answer the question before thrown out, in what respects the sin was ineffaceably engraven on the horns of the altar: It was because the altars and images of the false gods had entwined themselves as closely about their hearts as their children, so that they brought the sin of their idolatry along with their sacrifices to the altars of Jahveh. The offerings which they bring, in this state of mind, to the Lord are defiled by idolatry and carry their sins to the altar, so that, in the blood which is sprinkled on its horns, the sins of the offerers are poured out on the altar. Hence it appears unmistakably that v. 1 does not deal with the consciousness of sin as not yet cancelled or forgiven, but with the sin of idolatry, which, ineradicably implanted in the hearts of the people and indelibly recorded before God on the horns of the altar, calls down God’s wrath in punishment as announced in vv. 3 and 4.

“My mountain in the field” is taken by most comm. as a name for Jerusalem or Zion. But it is a question whether the words are vocative, or whether they are accusative; and so with the rest of the objects, “thy substance,” etc., dependent on יָהוָה. If we take them to be vocative, so that Jerusalem is addressed, then we must hold “thy substance” and “thy treasures” to be the goods and gear of Jerusalem, while the city will be regarded as representative of the kingdom, or rather of the population of Judah. But the second clause, “thy high places in all thy borders,” does not seem to

be quite in keeping with this, and still less v. 4: thou shalt discontinue from thine inheritance, which is clearly spoken of the people of Judah. Furthermore, if Jerusalem were the party addressed, we should expect feminine suffixes, since Jerusalem is everywhere else personified as a woman, as the daughter of Zion. We therefore hold “my mountain” to be accusative, and, under “the mountain of Jahveh in the field,” understand, not the city of Jerusalem, but Mount Zion as the site of the temple, the mountain of the house of Jahveh, Isa. 2:3, Zech. 8:3, Ps. 24:3. The addition בַּשָּׂדֶה may not be translated: with the field (Ges., de W., Näg.); for אֵל denotes the means or instrument, or an accessory accompanying the principal thing or action and subservient to it (Ew. § 217,f. 3), but not the mere external surroundings or belongings. Näg.’s assertion, that אֵל, amidst = together with, is due to an extreme position in an empirical mode of treating language. בַּשָּׂדֶה means “in the field,” and “mountain in the field” is like the “rock of the plain,” 21:13. But whether it denotes “the clear outstanding loftiness of the mountain, so that for it we might say: My mountain commanding a wide prospect” (Umbr., Graf), is a question. שָׂדֶה, field, denotes not the fruitful fields lying round Mount Zion, but, like “field of the Amalekites,” Gen. 14:7, “field of Edom” (Gen. 32:4), the land or country; see on Ezek. 21:2; and so here: my mountain in the land (of Judah or Israel). The land is spoken of as a field, as a level or plain (Jeremiah 21:13), in reference to the spiritual height of the temple mountain or mountain of God above the whole land; not in reference to the physical pre-eminence of Zion, which cannot be meant, since Zion is considerably exceeded in height of the highlands of Judah. By its choice to be the site of the Lord’s throne amid His people, Mount Zion was exalted above the whole land as is a mountain in the field; and it is hereafter to be exalted above all mountains (Isa. 2:2; Mic. 4:1), while the whole land is to be lowered to the level of a plain (Zech. 14:10). The following objects are ranged alongside as

asyndetons: the Mount Zion as His peculiar possession and the substance of the people, all their treasures will the Lord give for a prey to the enemy. "Thy high places" is also introduced, with rhetorical effect, without copula. "Thy high places," i.e., the heights on which Judah had practised idolatry, will He give up, for their sins' sake, throughout the whole land. The whole clause, from "thy high places" to "thy borders," is an apposition to the first half of the verse, setting forth the reason why the whole land, the mountain of the Lord, and all the substance of the people, are to be delivered to the enemy; because, viz., the whole land has been defiled by idolatry. Hitz. wrongly translates  $\text{בְּחַטָּאת}$  for sin, i.e., for a sin-offering.

**Jeremiah 17:4.** And thou shalt discontinue from thine inheritance. There is in  $\text{וְשָׁמַטְתָּ$  an allusion to the law in Ex. 23:11, to let the ground lie untilled in the seventh year, and in Deut. 15:2, to let loans go, not to exact from one's neighbour what has been lent to him. Because Judah has transgressed this law, the Lord will compel the people to let go their hold of their inheritance, i.e., He will cast them out of it.  $\text{וְבָרָךְ}$  seems strange, interposed between the verb and the "from thine inheritance" dependent on it. The later Greek translators (for the entire passage vv. 1-4 is wanting in the LXX) render it  $\mu\acute{o}\nu\eta$ , and Jerome *solus*. Ew. therefore conjectures  $\text{לְבָרָךְ}$ , but without due reason, since the translation is only a free rendering of: and that by thyself. J. D. Mich., Gr., and Næg. propose to read  $\text{וְיָדְךָ}$ , on the ground of the connection wrongly made between  $\text{וְשָׁמַט}$  and  $\text{וְיָדְךָ}$ , to let go his hand, Deut. 15:2, given in Ges. *Lex. s.v.* For  $\text{וְיָדְךָ}$  in this case is not object to  $\text{וְשָׁמַט}$ , but belongs to  $\text{מְשִׁיבָה}$ , hand-lending; and in Deut. 15:3  $\text{וְיָדְךָ}$  is subject to  $\text{תְּשַׁמְטֶנָּה}$ , the hand shall quit hold.  $\text{וְבָרָךְ}$  sig. and that by thee, i.e., by thine own fault; cf. Ezek. 22:16. Meaning: by thine own fault thou must needs leave behind thee thine inheritance, thy land, and serve thine enemies in a foreign land. On the last clause, "for a fire,"

etc., cf. 15:14, where is also discussed the relation of the present vv. 3 and 4 to 15:13, 14. For ever burns the fire, i.e., until the sin is blotted out by the punishment, and for ever inasmuch as the wicked are to be punished for ever.

**Jeremiah 17:5-27.** Further Confirmation of this Announcement in General Reflections concerning the Sources of Ruin and of Well-Being.—This portion falls into two halves: *a.* On the sources of ruin and of well-being (vv. 5-18); *b.* On the way to life (vv. 18-27). The reflections of the first half show the curse of confidence in man and the blessings of confidence in God the Lord, vv. 5-13; to which is joined, vv. 14-18, a prayer of the prophet for deliverance from his enemies.

**Jeremiah 17:5.** "Thus saith Jahveh: Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, while his heart departeth from Jahveh. V. 6. He shall be as a destitute man in the wilderness, and shall not see that good cometh; he shall inhabit parched places in the desert, a salt land and uninhabited. V. 7. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Jahve, and whose trust Jahveh is. V. 8. He shall be as a tree planted by the water, and shall by the river spread out his roots, and shall not fear when heat cometh; his leaves shall be green, and in the year of drouth he shall not have care, neither cease from yielding fruit. V. 9. Deceitful is the heart above all, and corrupt it is, who can know it? V. 10. I Jahveh search the heart and try the reins, even to give every one according to his way, according to the fruit of his doings. V. 11. The partridge hatcheth the egg which it laid not; there is that getteth riches and not by right. In the midst of his days they forsake him, and at his end he shall be a fool. V. 12. Thou throne of glory, loftiness from the beginning, thou place of our sanctuary. V. 13. Thou hope of Israel, Jahveh, all that forsake Thee come to shame. They that depart from me shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the fountain of living water, Jahveh."

Trust in man and departure from God brings only mischief (vv. 5 and 6); trust in the Lord brings blessing only (vv. 7, 8). These truths are

substantiated in vv. 9–13, and elucidated by illustrations.

**Jeremiah 17:5.** Trust in man is described according to the nature of it in the second clause: he that maketh flesh his arm, i.e., has strength. Flesh, the antithesis to spirit (cf. Isa. 31:3), sets forth the vanity and perishableness of man and of all other earthly beings; cf. besides Isa. 31:3, also Job 10:4, Ps. 56:5. In v. 6 we are shown the curse of this trusting in man. One who so does is as עֲרֵעֵר in the steppe. This word, which is found beside only in Ps. 102:18, and in the form עֲרוּעֵר Jeremiah 48:6, is rendered by the old translators by means of words which mean desert plants or thorny growths (LXX ἀγριομυρική; Jerome, *myrice*; similarly in Chald. and Syr.); so Ew., arid shrub; Umbr., a bare tree. All these renderings are merely guesses from the context; and the latter, indeed, tells rather against than for a bush or tree, since the following clause, “he shall not see,” can be said only of a man. So in Ps. 102:18, where we hear of the prayer of the עֲרֵעֵר. The word is from עָרַר, to be naked, made bare, and denotes the destitute man, who lacks all the means of subsistence. It is not the homeless or outcast (Graf, Hitz.). He shall not see, i.e., experience that good comes, i.e., he shall have no prosperity, but shall inhabit “burnt places,” tracts in the desert parched by the sun’s heat. Salt-land, i.e., quite unfruitful land; cf. Deut. 29:22. לֹא תֵשֶׁב is a relative clause: and which is not inhabited = uninhabitable. Dwelling in parched tracts and salt regions is a figure for the total want of the means of life (equivalent to the German: *auf keinen grünen Zweig kommen*).

**Jeremiah 17:7, 8.** Vv. 7 and 8 show the companion picture, the blessings of trusting in the Lord. “That trusteth in Jahveh” is strengthened by the synonymous “whose trust Jahveh is;” cf. Ps. 40:5. The portrayal of the prosperity of him that trusts in the Lord is an extension of the picture in Ps. 1:3, 4, of the man that hath his delight in the law of the Lord. The form יוֹבֵל is ὄπ. λεγ., equivalent to יָבַל, water-brook, which, moreover, occurs only in the

plural (יְבֵלִי), Isa. 30:25; 44:4. He spreads forth his roots by the brook, to gain more and more strength for growth. The *Chet.* יֵרָא is imperf. from יָרָא, and is to be read יָרָא. The *Keri* gives יָרָא from יָרָא, corresponding to the יָרָא in v. 6. The *Chet.* is unqualifiedly right, and לֹא יָרָא correspond to לֹא יֵרָא. As to בְּעֵרָה, see on 14:1. He has no fear for the heat in the year of drought, because the brook by which he grows does not dry up.

**Jeremiah 17:9.** To bring this truth home to the people, the prophet in v. 9 discloses the nature of the human heart, and then shows in v. 10 how God, as the Searcher of hearts, requites man according to his conduct. Trust in man has its seat in the heart, which seeks thereby to secure to itself success and prosperity. But the heart of man is more deceitful, cunning than all else (עֵקֶב, from the denom. עָקַב, to deal treacherously). אָנוּשׁ, lit., dangerously sick, incurable, cf. 15:18; here, sore wounded by sin, corrupt or depraved. Who can know it? i.e., fathom its nature and corruptness. Therefore a man must not trust the suggestions and illusions of his own heart.

**Jeremiah 17:10.** Only God searches the heart and tries the reins, the seat of the most hidden emotions and feelings, cf. 11:20; 12:3, and deals accordingly, requiting each according to his life and his doings. The ך before לֵתָה, which is wanting in many MSS and is not expressed by the old translators, is not to be objected to. It serves to separate the aim in view from the rest, and to give it the prominence due to an independent thought; cf. Ew. § 340, b. As to the truth itself, cf. 32:19. With this is joined the common saying as to the partridge, v. 11. The aim is not to specify greed as another root of the corruption of the heart, or to give another case of false confidence in the earthly (Näg., Graf); but to corroborate by a common saying, whose truth should be obvious to the people, the greater truth, that God, as Searcher of hearts, requites each according to his works. The proverb ran: He that gains riches, and that

by wrong, i.e., in an unjust, dishonourable manner, is like a partridge which hatches eggs it has not laid. In the Proverbs we often find comparisons, as here, without the  $\text{ך}$  *similit.*: a gainer of riches is a partridge (*Rephuhn*, properly *Röphuhn* from *röpen = rufen*, to call or cry); a bird yet found in plenty in the tribe of Judah; cf. Robinson, *Palestine*. All other interpretations are arbitrary. It is true that natural history has not proved the fact of this peculiarity of the partridge, on which the proverb was founded; testimonies as to this habit of the creature are found only in certain Church fathers, and these were probably deduced from this passage (cf. Winer, *bibl. R. W.*, art. *Rebhuhn*). But the proverb assumes only the fact that such was the widespread popular belief amongst the Israelites, without saying anything as to the correctness of it. "Hatcheth and layeth not" are to be taken relatively.  $\text{ךְגַר}$ , the Targum word in Job 39:14 for  $\text{חַמֵּם}$ , *fovere*, sig. hatch, lit., to hold eggs close together, cover eggs; see on Isa. 34:15.  $\text{לָלַד}$ , to bring forth, here of laying eggs. As to the *Kametz* in both words, see Ew. § 100, c. The point of the comparison, that the young hatched out of another bird's eggs forsake the mother, is brought out in the application of the proverb. Hence is to be explained "forsake him:" the riches forsake him, instead of: are lost to him, vanish, in the half of his days, i.e., in the midst of life; and at the end of his life he shall be a fool, i.e., the folly of his conduct shall fully appear.

**Jeremiah 17:12, 13.** In vv. 12 and 13 Jeremiah concludes this meditation with an address to the Lord, which the Lord corroborates by His own word.

**Jeremiah 17:12.** Ver. 12 is taken by many ancient comm. as a simple statement: a throne of glory, loftiness from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary. This is grammatically defensible; but the view preferred by almost all moderns, that it is an apostrophe, is more in keeping with the tension of feeling in the discourse. The "place of our sanctuary" is the temple as the spot where God sits throned

amidst His people, not the heaven as God's throne: Isa. 66:1. This the pronoun *our* does not befit, since heaven is never spoken of as the sanctuary of Israel. Hence we must refer both the preceding phrases to the earthly throne of God in the temple on Zion. The temple is in 14:21 called throne of the יהוה  $\text{כְּבֹד־יְהוָה}$ , because in it Jahveh is enthroned above the ark; Ex. 25:22; Ps. 80:2; 99:1.  $\text{מִרְאֵשׁוֹן}$  has here the sig. of  $\text{מִרְאֵשׁ}$ , Isa. 40:21; 41:4, 26; 48:16: from the beginning onwards, from all time. Heaven as the proper throne of God is often called  $\text{מְרוֹם}$ , loftiness; cf. Isa. 57:15, Ps. 7:8; but so also is Mount Zion as God's earthly dwelling-place; cf. Ezek. 17:23; 20:40. Zion is called loftiness from the beginning, i.e., from immemorial time, as having been from eternity chosen to be the abode of God's glory upon earth; cf. Ex. 15:17, where in the song of Moses by the Red Sea, Mount Zion is pointed out prophetically as the place of the abode of Jahveh, inasmuch as it had been set apart thereto by the sacrifice of Isaac; see the expos. of Ex. 15:17. Nor does  $\text{מִרְאֵשׁ}$  always mean the beginning of the world, but in Isa. 41:26 and 48:16 it is used of the beginning of the things then under discussion. From the place of Jahveh's throne amongst His people, v. 13, the discourse passes to Him who is there enthroned: Thou hope of Israel, Jahveh (cf. 14:8), through whom Zion and the temple had attained to that eminence. The praise of God's throne prepares only the transition to praise of the Lord, who there makes known His glory. The address to Jahveh: Thou hope of Israel, is not a prayer directed to Him, so as to justify the objection against the vocative acceptance of v. 12, that it were unseemly to address words of prayer to the temple. The juxtaposition of the sanctuary as the throne of God and of Jahveh, the hope of Israel, involves only that the forsaking of the sanctuary on Zion is a forsaking of Jahveh, the hope of Israel. It needs hardly be observed that this adverting to the temple as the seat of Jahve's throne, whence help may come, is not in contradiction to the warning given in 7:4, 9f. against false confidence in the temple as a power present to protect. That

warning is aimed against the idolaters, who believed that God's presence was so bound up with the temple, that the latter was beyond the risk of harm. The Lord is really present in the temple on Zion only to those who draw near Him in the confidence of true faith. All who forsake the Lord come to shame. This word the Lord confirms through the mouth of the prophet in the second part of the verse. **יְסוּרֵי**, according to the *Chet.*, is a substantive from **סוּר**, formed like **יְרִיב** from **רִיב** (cf. Ew. § 162, *a*); the *Keri* **יְסוּרֵי** is *partic.* from **סוּר** with *ן cop.*—an uncalled-for conjecture. My departers = those that depart from me, shall be written in the earth, in the loose earth, where writing speedily disappears. **אֶרֶץ**, synonymous with **עֶפְרָיִם**, cf. Job 14:8, suggesting death. The antithesis to this is not the graving in rock, Job 19:24, but being written in the book of life; cf. Dan. 12:1 with Ex. 32:32. In this direction the grounding clause points: they have forsaken the fountain of living water (Jeremiah 2:13); for without water one must pine and perish.—On this follows directly, **Jeremiah 17:14–18**. *The prophet's prayer for rescue from his enemies.*—V. 14. "Heal me, Jahveh, that I may be healed; help me, that I may be holpen, for Thou art my praise. V. 15. Behold, they say to me, Where is the word of Jahveh? let it come, now. V. 16. I have not withdrawn myself from being a shepherd after Thee, neither wished for the day of trouble, Thou knowest; that which went forth of my lips was open before Thy face. V. 17. Be not to me a confusion, my refuge art Thou in the day of evil. V. 18. Let my persecutors be put to shame, but let not me be put to shame; let them be confounded, but let not me be confounded; bring upon them the day of evil, and break them with a double breach."

The experience Jeremiah had had in his calling seemed to contradict the truth, that trust in the Lord brings blessing (v. 7ff.); for his preaching of God's word had brought him nothing but persecution and suffering. Therefore he prays the Lord to remove this contradiction and to verify that truth in his case also. The prayer of v. 14, "heal me," reminds one of Ps. 6:3; 30:3.

Thou art **תְּהִלָּתִי**, the object of my praises; cf. Ps. 71:6, Deut. 10:21.—The occasion for this prayer is furnished by the attacks of his enemies, who ask in scorn what then has become of that which he proclaims as the word of the Lord, why it does not come to pass. Hence we see that the discourse, of which this complaint is the conclusion, was delivered before the first invasion of Judah by the Chaldeans. So long as his announcements were not fulfilled, the unbelieving were free to persecute him as a false prophet (cf. Deut. 18:22), and to give out that his prophecies were inspired by his own spite against his people. He explains, on the contrary, that in his calling he has neither acted of his own accord, nor wished for misfortune to the people, but that he has spoken by the inspiration of God alone. **לֹא אֶצְתִּי וְגוֹ'** cannot mean: I have not pressed myself forward to follow Thee as shepherd, i.e., pressed myself forward into Thy service in vain and overweening self-conceit (Umbr.). For although this sense would fall very well in with the train of thought, yet it cannot be grammatically justified. **אֶצְתִּי**, press, press oneself on to anything, is construed with **לְ**, cf. Josh. 10:13; with **מִן** it can only mean: press oneself away from a thing. **מִרְעָה** may stand for **רְעָה** *מְהִיּוֹת רְעָה*, cf. 48:2, 1 Sam. 15:23, 1 Kings 15:13: from being a shepherd after Thee, i.e., I have not withdrawn myself from following after Thee as a shepherd. Against this rendering the fact seems to weigh, that usually it is not the prophets, but only the kings and princes, that are entitled the shepherds of the people; cf. 23:1. For this reason, it would appear, Hitz. and Graf have taken **רְעָה** in the sig. to seek after a person or thing, and have translated: I have not pressed myself away from keeping after Thee, or from being one that followed Thee faithfully. For this appeal is made to places like Prov. 13:20; 28:7, Ps. 37:3, where **רְעָה** does mean to seek after a thing, to take pleasure in it. But in this sig. **רְעָה** is always construed with the *accus.* of the thing or person, not with **אֶחָרֵי**, as here. Nor does it by

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any means follow, from the fact of shepherds meaning usually kings or rulers, that the idea of “shepherd” is exhausted in ruling and governing people. According to Ps. 23:1, Jahveh is the shepherd of the godly, who feeds them in green pastures and leads them to the refreshing water, who revives their soul, etc. In this sense prophets, too, feed the people, if they, following the Lord as chief shepherd, declare God’s word to the people. We cannot in any case abide by Näg.’s rendering, who, taking רָעָה in its literal sense, puts the meaning thus: I have not pressed myself away from being a shepherd, in order to go after Thee. For the assumption that Jeremiah had, before his call, been, like Amos, a herd of cattle, contradicts Jeremiah 1:1; nor from the fact, that the cities of the priests and of the Levites were provided with grazing fields (מִגְרָשִׁים), does it at all follow that the priests themselves tended their flocks. “The day of trouble,” the ill, disastrous day, is made out by Näg. to be the day of his entering upon the office of prophet—a view that needs no refutation. It is the day of destruction for Jerusalem and Judah, which Jeremiah had foretold. When Näg. says: “He need not have gone out of his way to affirm that he did not desire the day of disaster for the whole people,” he has neglected to notice that Jeremiah is here defending himself against the charges of his enemies, who inferred from his prophecies of evil that he found a pleasure in his people’s calamity, and wished for it to come. For the truth of his defence, Jeremiah appeals to the omniscience of God: “Thou knowest it.” That which goes from my lips, i.e., the word that came from my lips, was נִבְּחָ פִּיךָ, before or over against thy face, i.e., manifest to Thee.

**Jeremiah 17:17.** On this he founds his entreaty that the Lord will not bring him to confusion and shame by leaving his prophecies as to Judah unfulfilled, and gives his encouragement to pray in the clause: Thou art my refuge in the day of evil, in evil times; cf. 15:11. May God rather put his persecutors to shame and confusion by the accomplishment of the

calamity foretold, v. 18. תִּהְיֶה pointed with *Tsere* instead of the abbreviation תְּהִי, cf. Ew. § 224, c. הִבִּיא is *imperat.* instead of הִבֵּא, as in 1 Sam. 20:40, where the Masoretes have thus pointed even the הִבִּיא. But in the Hiph. the *i* has in many cases maintained itself against the *ē*, so that we are neither justified in regarding the form before us as *scriptio plena*, nor yet in reading הִבִּיאָה.—Break them with a double breach, i.e., let the disaster fall on them doubly. “A double breach,” pr. something doubled in the way of breaking or demolition. שִׁבְרוֹן is not subordinated to מִשְׁנָה in *stat. constr.*, but is added as *accus.* of kind; cf. Ew. § 287, h.

**Jeremiah 17:19–27.** *Of the hallowing of the Sabbath.*—V. 19. “Thus said Jahveh unto me: Go and stand in the gate of the sons of the people, by which the kings of Judah come in and by which they go out, and in all gates of Jerusalem, V. 20. And say unto them: Hear the word of Jahveh, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all inhabitants of Jerusalem, that go in by these gates: V. 21. Thus hath Jahveh said: Take heed for your souls, and bear no burden on the Sabbath-day, and bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. V. 22. And carry forth no burden out of your houses on the Sabbath-day, and do no work, and hallow the Sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers. V. 23. But they hearkened not, neither inclined their ear, and made their neck stiff, that they might not hear nor take instruction. V. 24. But if ye will really hearken unto me, saith Jahveh, to bring in no burden by the gates of the city on the Sabbath-day, and to hallow the Sabbath-day, to do no work thereon, V. 25. Then shall there go through the gates of the city kings and princes, who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, ad this city shall be inhabited for ever. V. 26. And they shall come from the cities of Judah and the outskirts of Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and from the lowland, from the hill-country and from the south, that bring burnt-offering and slain-offering, meat-offering and incense, and

*that bring praise into the house of Jahveh. V. 27. But if ye hearken not to me, to hallow the Sabbath-day, and not to bear a burden, and to come into the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day, then will I kindle fire in her gates, so that it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and not be quenched."*

The introduction, v. 19, shows that this passage has, in point of form, but a loose connection with what precedes. It is, however, not a distinct and independent prophecy; for it wants the heading, "The word of Jahveh which came," etc., proper to all the greater discourses. Besides, in point of subject-matter, it may very well be joined with the preceding general reflections as to the springs of mischief and of well-being; inasmuch as it shows how the way of safety appointed to the people lies in keeping the decalogue, as exemplified in one of its fundamental precepts.—The whole passage contains only God's command to the prophet; but the execution of it, i.e., the proclamation to the people of what was commanded, is involved in the nature of the case. Jeremiah is to proclaim this word of the Lord in all the gates of Jerusalem, that it may be obeyed in them all. The locality of the gate of the sons of the people is obscure and difficult to determine, that by which the kings of Judah go and come. בְּנֵי עַם seems to stand for בְּנֵי הָעָם, as the *Keri* would have it. In 25:23 and 2 Kings 23:6, "sons of the people" means the common people as opposed to the rich and the notables; in 2 Chron. 35:5, 7ff., the people as opposed to the priests and Levites, that is, the laity. The first sig. of the phrase seems here to be excluded by the fact, that the kings come and go by this gate; for there is not the smallest probability that a gate so used could have borne the name of "gate of the common people." But we might well pause to weigh the second sig. of the word, if we could but assume that it was a gate of the temple that was meant. Näg. concludes that it was so, on the ground that we know of no city gate through which only the kings and the dregs of the people were free to go, or the kings and the mass of their subjects, to the exclusion of the

priests. But this does not prove his point; for we are not informed as to the temple, that the kings and the laity were permitted to go and come by one gate only, while the others were reserved for priests and Levites. Still it is much more likely that the principal entrance to the outer court of the temple should have obtained the name of "people's gate," or "laymen's gate," than that a city gate should have been so called; and that by that "people's gate" the kings also entered into the court of the temple, while the priests and Levites came and went by side gates which were more at hand for the court of the priests. Certainly Näg. is right when he further remarks, that the name was not one in general use, but must have been used by the priests only. On the other hand, there is nothing to support clearly the surmise that the gate יָסוּד, 2 Chron. 23:5, was so called; the east gate of the outer court is much more likely. We need not be surprised at the mention of this chief gate of the temple along with the city gates; for certainly there would be always a great multitude of people to be found at this gate, even if what Näg. assumes were not the case, that by the sale and purchase of things used in the temple, this gate was the scene of a Sabbath-breaking trade. But if, with the majority of comm., we are to hold that by "people's gate" a city gate was meant, then we cannot determine which it was. Of the suppositions that it was the Benjamin-gate, or the well-gate, Neh. 2:14 (Maur.), or the gate of the midst which led through the northern wall of Zion from the upper city into the lower city (Hitz.), or the water-gate, Neh. 3:26 (Graf), each is as unfounded as another. From the plural: the kings of Judah (v. 20), Hitz. infers that more kings than one were then existing alongside one another, and that thus the name must denote the members of the royal family. But his idea has been arbitrarily forced into the text. The gates of the city, as well as of the temple, did not last over the reign of but one king, v. 21. הַשָּׂמֵר בְּנַפְשׁוֹתָם, to take heed for the souls, i.e., take care of the souls, so as not to lose life (cf. Mal. 2:15), is a more pregnant construction than that with לֵ, Deut. 4:15,



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although it yields the same sense. Näg. seeks erroneously to explain the phrase according to 2 Sam. 20:10 (נִשְׁמַר בְּחָרֶב) (take care against the sword) and Deut. 24:8, where הִשְׁמַר ought not to be joined at all with בְּנִינָע. The bearing of burdens on the Sabbath, both into the city and out of one's house, seems to point most directly at market trade and business, cf. Neh. 13:15ff., but is used only as one instance of the citizens' occupations; hence are appended the very words of the law: to do no work, Ex. 12:16; 20:10, Deut. 5:14, and: to hallow the Sabbath, namely, by cessation from all labour, cf. v. 24. The remark in v. 23, that the fathers have already transgressed God's law, is neither contrary to the aim in view, as Hitz. fancies, nor superfluous, but serves to characterize the transgression censured as an old and deeply-rooted sin, which God must at length punish unless the people cease therefrom. The description of the fathers' disobedience is a verbal repetition of 7:26. The *Chet.* שְׂמוּעַ cannot be a participle, but is a clerical error for שְׂמוּעַ (*infin. constr. with scriptio plena*), as in 11:10 and 19:15. See a similar error in 2:25 and 8:6. On "nor take instruction," cf. 2:30.

In the next verses the observance of this commandment is enforced by a representation of the blessings which the hallowing of the Sabbath will bring to the people (vv. 24–26), and the curse upon its profanation (v. 27). If they keep the Sabbath holy, the glory of the dynasty of David and the prosperity of the people will acquire permanence, and Jerusalem remain continually inhabited, and the people at large will bring thank-offerings to the Lord in His temple. Hitz., Graf, and Näg. take objection to the collocation: kings and princes (v. 25), because princes do not sit on the throne of David, nor can they have other "princes" dependent on them, as we must assume from the "they and their princes." But although the וְשָׂרִים be wanting in the parallel, 22:4, yet this passage cannot be regarded as the standard; for whereas the discourse in Jeremiah 22 is addressed to the king, the present is to the

inhabitants of Jerusalem, or rather the people of Judah. The וְשָׂרִים is subordinate to the kings, so that the sitting on the throne of David is to be referred only to the kings, the following וְשָׂרִים helping further to define them. "Riding" is to be joined both with "in chariots" and "on horses," since רָכַב means either driving or riding. The driving and riding of the kings and their princes through the gates of Jerusalem is a sign of the undiminished splendour of the rule of David's race.

**Jeremiah 17:26.** Besides the blessing of the continuance of the Davidic monarchy, Jerusalem will also have to rejoice in the continued spiritual privilege of public worship in the house of the Lord. From the ends of the kingdom the people will come with offerings to the temple, to present thank-offerings for benefits received. The rhetorical enumeration of the various parts of the country appears again in 32:44. The cities of Judah and the outskirts of Jerusalem denote the part of the country which bordered on Jerusalem; then we have the land of Benjamin, the northern province of the kingdom, and three districts into which the tribal domain of Judah was divided: the Shephelah in the west on the Mediterranean Sea, the hill-country, and the southland; see on Josh. 15:21, 33, and 48. The desert of Judah (Josh. 15:61) is not mentioned, as being comprehended under the hill-country. The offerings are divided into two classes: bloody, burnt and slain offerings, and unbloody, meat-offerings and frankincense, which was strewed upon the meat-offering (Lev. 2:1). The latter is not the incense-offering (Graf), which is not called לְבוֹנָה, but קֶטֶרֶת, cf. Ex. 30:7ff., although frankincense was one of the ingredients of the incense prepared for burning (Ex. 30:34). These offerings they will bring as "praise-offering" into the house of the Lord. תּוֹדָה is not here used for זֶבַח תּוֹדָה, praise-offering, as one species of slain-offering, but is, as we see from 33:11, a general designation for the praise and thanks which they desire to express by means of the offerings specified.

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**Jeremiah 17:27.** In the event of the continuance of this desecration of the Sabbath, Jerusalem is to be burnt up with fire, cf. 21:14, and, as regards the expressions used, Amos 1:14, Hos. 8:14.

## Jeremiah 18

### Ch. 18–20—The Figures of the Potter’s Clay and of the Earthen Pitcher

**Jeremiah 18–20.** These three chapters have the title common to all Jeremiah’s discourses of the earlier period: The word which came to Jeremiah from Jahveh (Jeremiah 18:1). In them, bodied forth in two symbolical actions, are to discourses which are very closely related to one another in form and substance, and which may be regarded as one single prophecy set forth in words and actions. In them we find discussed Judah’s ripeness for the judgment, the destruction of the kingdom, and the speediness with which that judgment was to befall. The subject-matter of this discourse-compilation falls into two parts: Jeremiah 18 and Jeremiah 19 and 20; that is, into the accounts of two symbolical actions, together with the interpretation of them and their application to the people (Jeremiah 18:1–17 and Jeremiah 19:1–13), followed immediately by notices as to the reception which these announcements met on the part of the people and their rulers (Jeremiah 18:18–23, and Jeremiah 19:14–20:18). In the first discourse, that illustrated by the figure of a potter who remodels a misshapen vessel, Jeremiah 18, the prophet inculcates on the people the truth that the Lord has power to do according to His good-will, seeking in this to make another appeal to them to turn from their evil ways; and the people replies to this appeal by scheming against the life of the austere preacher of repentance. As the consequence of this obdurate impenitency, he, in Jeremiah 19, by breaking an earthen pitcher bought of the potter, predicts to the elders of the people and the priests, in the valley of Benhinnom, the breaking up of the kingdom and the demolition of Jerusalem (vv. 1–13). For this he is put in the stocks by Pashur,

the ward of the temple; and when freed from this imprisonment, he tells him that he and all Judah shall be carried off to Babylon and be put to death by the sword (Jeremiah 19:14–20:6). As a conclusion we have, as in Jeremiah 18, complaint at the sufferings that attend his calling (Jeremiah 20:7–18).

As to the time of these two symbolical actions and announcements, we can determine only thus much with certainty, that they both belong to the period before the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, and that they were not far separated in time from one another. The first assumes still the possibility of the people’s repentance, whence we may safely conclude that the first chastisement at the hands of the Chaldeans was not yet ready to be inflicted; in the second, that judgment is threatened as inevitably on the approach, while still there is nothing here either to show that the catastrophe was immediately at hand. Näg. tries to make out that Jeremiah 18 falls before the critical epoch of the battle at Carchemish, Jeremiah 19 and 20 after it; but his arguments are worthless. For there is not ground whatever for the assertion that Jeremiah did not, until after that decisive battle, give warning of the deliverance of all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and that not till the prophecies after that time do we find the phrase: Jeremiah the prophet, as in 20:2. The contents of the three chapters do not even point us assuredly to the first year of Jehoiakim’s reign. There is no hint that Judah had become tributary to Egypt; so that we might even assign both prophecies to the last year of Josiah. For it might have happened even under Josiah that the upper warden of the temple should have kept the prophet in custody for one night.

**Jeremiah 18.** The Emblem of the Clay and the Potter and the Complaint of the Prophet against his Adversaries.—The figure of the potter who remodels a misshapen vessel (vv. 2–4). The interpretation of this (vv. 5–10), and its application to degenerate Israel (vv. 11–17). The reception of the discourse by the people, and Jeremiah’s cry to the Lord (vv. 18–23).

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**Jeremiah 18:2–10.** *The emblem and its interpretation.*—V. 2. “Arise and go down into the potter’s house; there will I cause thee to hear my words. V. 3. And I went down into the potter’s house; and, behold, he wrought on the wheels. V. 4. And the vessel was marred, that he wrought in clay, in the hand of the potter; then he made again another vessel of it, as seemed good to the potter to make. V. 5. Then came the word of Jahveh to me, saying: V. 6. Cannot I do with you as this potter, house of Israel? saith Jahveh. Behold, as the clay in the hand of the potter, so are ye in mine hand, house of Israel. V. 7. Now I speak concerning a people and kingdom, to root it out and pluck up and destroy it. V. 8. But if that people turns from its wickedness, against which I spake, the it repents me of the evil which I thought to do it. V. 9. And now I speak concerning a people and a kingdom, to build and to plant it. V. 10. If it do that which is evil in mine eyes, so that it hearkens not unto my voice, then it repents me of the good which I said I would do unto it.”

By God’s command Jeremiah is to go and see the potter’s treatment of the clay, and to receive thereafter God’s interpretation of the same. Here he has set before his eyes that which suggests a comparison of man to the clay and of God to the potter, a comparison that frequently occurred to the Hebrews, and which had been made to appear in the first formation of man (cf. Job 10:9; 33:6, Isa. 29:16; 45:9; 64:7). This is done that he may forcibly represent to the people, by means of the emblem, the power of the Lord to do according to His will with all nations, and so with Israel too. From the “go down,” we gather that the potteries of Jerusalem lay in a valley near the city. הַאֲבָנִים are the round frames by means of which the potter moulded his vessels. This sig. of the word is well approved here; but in Ex. 1:16, where too it is found, the meaning is doubtful, and it is a question whether the derivation is from אָבֵן or from אֹפֶן, wheel. The *perfecta consec.* וְנִשְׁחַח and וְשָׁב designate, taken in connection with the participle עֹשֶׂה, actions that

were possibly repeated: “and if the vessel was spoiled, he made it over again;” cf. Ew. § 342, *b*. עֹשֶׂה בַחֶמֶר, working in clay, of the material in which men work in order to make something of it; cf. Ex. 31:4.

**Jeremiah 18:6–10.** In vv. 6–10 the Lord discloses to the prophet the truth lying in the potter’s treatment of the clay. The power the potter has over the clay to remould, according to his pleasure, the vessel he had formed from it if it went wrong; the same power God possesses over the people of Israel. This unlimited power of God over mankind is exercised according to man’s conduct, not according to a *decretum absolutum* or unchangeable determination. If He pronounces a people’s overthrow or ruin, and if that people turn from its wickedness, He repeals His decree (v. 7f.); and conversely, if He promises a people welfare and prosperity, and if that people turn away from Him to wickedness, then too He changes His resolve to do good to it (v. 9f.). Inasmuch as He is even now making His decree known by the mouth of the prophet, it follows that the accomplishment of Jeremiah’s last utterances is conditioned by the impression God’s word makes on men. רָגַע, *adv.*, in the moment, forthwith, and when repeated = now ... now, now ... again. Näg. maintains that the arrangement here is paratactic, so that the רָגַע does not belong to the nearest verb, but to the main idea, i.e., to the apodosis in this case. The remark is just; but the word does not mean suddenly, but immediately, and the sense is: when I have spoken against a people, and this people repents, then immediately I let it repent me. נָחַם עַל as in Joel 2:13, etc. With “to pluck up,” etc., “to build,” etc., cf. 1:10. “Against which I spake,” v. 8, belongs to “that people,” and seems as if it might be dispensed with; but is not therefore spurious because the LXX have omitted it. For הִרְעָה the *Keri* has הִרְעָה, the most usual form, v. 7:30, Num. 32:13, Judg. 2:11, etc.; but the *Chet.* is called for by the following הִטּוּבָה and מִרְעוּתוֹ. לְהִיטִיב הִטּוּבָה, to show kindness, cf. Num. 10:32.

The emblematical interpretation of the potter with the clay lays a foundation for the prophecy that follows, vv. 11–17, in which the people are told that it is only by reason of their stiffnecked persistency in wickedness that they render threatened judgment certain, whereas by return to their God they might prevent the ruin of the kingdom.

**Jeremiah 18:11–17.** *Application of the emblem to Judah.*—V. 11. “And now speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: Thus hath Jahveh said: Behold, I frame against you evil and devise against you a device. Return ye, now, each from his evil way, and better your ways and your doings. V. 12. But they say: There is no use! For our imaginations will we follow, and each do the stubbornness of his evil heart. V. 13. Therefore thus hath Jahveh said: Ask now among the heathen! who hath heard the like? A very horrible thing hath the virgin of Israel done! V. 14. Does the snow of Lebanon cease from the rock of the field? or do strange, cold trickling waters dry up? V. 15. For my people hath forgotten me; to the vanity they offer odours; they have made them to stumble upon their ways, the everlasting paths, to walk in by-paths, a way not cast up. V. 16. To make their land a dismay, a perpetual hissing, every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and shake his head. V. 17. Like the east wind I will scatter them before the enemy; with the back and not with the face will I look upon them in the day of their ruin.”

**Jeremiah 18:11, 12.** In vv. 11 and 12 what was said at v. 6ff. is applied to Judah. יָצַר, from in sense of prepare (cf. Isa. 22:11; 37:26), is chosen with special reference to the potter (יוֹצֵר). מַחְשְׁבָהּ, the thought, design, here in virtue of the parallelism: evil plot, as often both with and without רָעָה; cf. Esth. 8:3, 5; 9:25, Ezek. 38:10. The call to repentance runs much as do 35:15 and 7:3.—But this call the people reject disdainfully, replying that they are resolved to abide by their evil courses. וַאֲמָרוּ, not: they said, but: they say; the *perf. consec.* of the action repeating itself at the present time; cf. Ew. 342,

b. 1. נוֹאֵץ as in 2:25; on “stubbornness of their evil heart,” cf. 3:17. By this answer the prophet makes them condemn themselves out of their own mouth; cf. Isa. 28:15; 30:10f.

**Jeremiah 18:13.** Such obduracy is unheard of amongst the peoples; cf. a like idea in 2:10f. שְׁעָרָהּ = שְׁעָרָהּ, 5:30. מָאֵד belongs to the verb: horrible things hath Israel very much done = very horrible things have they done. The idea is strengthened by Israel’s being designated a virgin (see on 14:17). One could hardly believe that a virgin could be guilty of such barefaced and determined wickedness. In v. 14f. the public conduct is further described; and first, it is illustrated by a picture drawn from natural history, designed to fill the people with shame for their unnatural conduct. But the significance of the picture is disputed. The questions have a negative force: does it forsake? = it does not forsake. The force of the first question is conditioned by the view taken of שְׂדֵי; מְצוֹר שְׂדֵי may be either genitive to צוֹר, or it may be the accusative of the object, and be either a poetic form for שְׂדֵה, or plural *c. suff.* 1. *pers.* (my fields). Chr. B. Mich., Schur., Ros., Maur., Neum. translate according to the latter view: Does the snow of Lebanon descending from the rock forsake my fields? i.e., does it ever cease, flowing down from the rock, to water my fields, the fields of my people? To this view, however, it is to be opposed, a. that “from the rock” thus appears superfluous, at least not in its proper place, since, according to the sense given, it would belong to “snow of Lebanon;” b. that the figure contains no real illustrative truth. The watering of the fields of God’s people, i.e., of Palestine or Judah, by the snow of Lebanon could be brought about only by the water from the melting snow of Lebanon soaking into the ground, and so feeding the springs of the country. But this view of the supply for the springs that watered the land cannot be supposed to be a fact of natural history so well known that the prophet could found an argument on it. Most recent commentators therefore join מְצוֹר שְׂדֵי, and translate: does the

snow of Lebanon cease from the rock of the field (does it disappear)? The use of עֵזָב with מִן is unexampled, but is analogous to עֵזָב הֶסְדִּים מֵעַם, Gen. 24:27, where, however, עֵזָב is used transitively.

But even when translated as above, “rock of the field” is variously understood. Hitz. will have it to be Mount Zion, which in 17:3 is called my mountain in the field, and 21:13, rock of the plain; and says the trickling waters are the waters of Gihon, these being the only never-drying water of Jerusalem, the origin of which has never been known, and may have been commonly held to be from the snow of Lebanon. Graf and Näg., again, have justly objected that the connection between the snow of Lebanon and the water-springs of Zion is of too doubtful a kind, and does not become probable by appeal to Ps. 133:3, where the dew of Hermon is said to descend on the mountains of Zion. For it is perfectly possible that a heavy dew after warm days might be carried to Jerusalem by means of the cool current of air coming down from the north over Hermon (cf. Del. on Ps. 133:3); but not that the water of the springs of Jerusalem should have come from Lebanon. Like Ew., Umbr., Graf, and Näg., we therefore understand the rock of the field to be Lebanon itself. But it is not so called as being a detached, commanding rocky mountain, for this is not involved in the sig. of שָׂדֵי (see on 17:3); nor as bulwark of the field (Näg.), for צֹר does not mean bulwark, and the change of מְצֹר into מְצֹר, from מְצֹר, a hemming in, siege, would give a most unsuitable figure. We hold the “field” to be the land of Israel, whence seen, the summit of Lebanon, and especially the peak of Hermon covered with eternal snows might very well be called the rock of the field. Observe the omission of the article before Lebanon, whereby it comes about that the name is joined appellatively to “snow:” the Lebanon-snow. And accordingly we regard the waters as those which trickle down from Hermon. The wealth of springs in Lebanon is well known, and the

trickling water of Lebanon is used as an illustration in Cant. 4:15. יִנְתְּשׁוּ, are rooted up, strikes us as singular, since “root up” seems suitable neither for the drying up of springs, nor for: to be checked in their course. Dav. Kimchi thought, therefore, it stood for יִנְתְּשׁוּ, *omittuntur*; but this word has not this signification. Probably a transposition has taken place, so that we have יִנְתְּשׁוּ for יִנְתְּשׁוּ, since for נִשְׁתָּה in Niph. the sig. dry up is certified by Isa. 19:5. The predicate, too, זָרִים is singular. Strange waters are in 2 Kings 19:24 waters belonging to others; but this will not do here. So Ew. derives זָר from זָרַר, press, urge, and correspondingly, קָרִים from קוּר, spring, well up: waters pouring forth with fierce pressure. In this case, however, the following נוֹזְלִים would be superfluous, or at least feeble. Then, מְזִים קָרִים, Prov. 25:25, is cold water; and besides, זָרַר means *constinxit, compressit*, of which root-meaning the sig. to press forth is a contradiction. There is therefore nothing for it but to keep to the sig. strange for זָרִים; strange waters = waters coming from afar, whose springs are not known, so that they could be stopped up. The predicate cold is quite in keeping, for cold waters do not readily dry up, the coldness being a protection against evaporation. Such, then, will be the meaning of the verse: As the Lebanon-snow does not forsake the rock, so the waters trickling thence do not dry up. From the application of this general idea, that in inanimate nature faithfulness and constancy are found, to Israel's bearing towards God arises a deeper significance, which shows why this figure was chosen. The rock in the field points to the Rock of Israel as the everlasting rock, rock of ages (Isa. 30:29 and 26:4), and the cold, i.e., refreshing waters, which trickle from the rock of the field, point to Jahveh, the fountain of living water, 2:13 and 17:13. Although the snow does not forsake Lebanon, Israel has forgotten

the fountain of living water from which water of life flows to it; cf. 2:13.

**Jeremiah 18:15.** The application at v. 15 is introduced by a causal כִּי. Ew. wrongly translates: that my people forgot me. כִּי means for; and the causal import is founded on the main idea of v. 13: A very horrible thing hath Israel done; for it hath done that which is unheard of in the natural world, it hath forsaken me, the rock of safety; cf. 2:32. They burn odours, i.e., kindle sacrifices, to the vanity, i.e., the null gods, cf. Ps. 31:7, i.e., to Baal, 7:9; 11:13, 17. The subject to יִכְשְׁלוּם may be most simply supplied from the idea of “the vanity:” the null gods made them to stumble; cf. for this idea 2 Chron. 28:23. This seems more natural than to leave the subject indefinite, in which case the false prophets (cf. 23:27) or the priests, or other seducers, would be the moving spirits. “The ancient paths” is apposition to “their ways:” upon their ways, the paths of the old time, i.e., not, however, the good old believing times, from whose ways the Israelites have but recently diverged. For עוֹלָם never denotes the time not very long passed away, but always old, immemorial time, here specially the time of the patriarchs, who walked on the right paths of faithfulness to God, as in 6:16. Hitz. and Graf have taken “the ancient paths” as subject: the old paths have made the Israelites to stumble on their ways, which gives a most unnatural idea, while the “paths of the earliest time” is weakened into “the example of their ancestors;” and besides, the parallelism is destroyed. As “by-paths” is defined by the apposition “a way not cast up,” so is “on their ways” by “the ancient paths.” The *Chet.* שְׁבוּלֵי is found only here; the *Keri* is formed after Ps. 77:20. A way not cast up is one on which one cannot advance, reach the goal, or on which one suffers hurt and perishes.—In v. 16 the consequences of these doings are spoken of as having been wrought out by themselves, in order thus to bring out the God-ordained causal nexus between actions and their consequences. To make their land an object of horror to all

that set foot on it. שְׁרוּקוֹת occurs only here, while the *Keri* שְׁרִיקוֹת is found only in Judg. 5:16 for the piping of shepherds, from שָׁרַק, to hiss, to pipe. In connection with שָׁמָּה as expression of horror or amazement, Jeremiah elsewhere uses only שָׁרַקָה, cf. 19:8; 25:9, 18; 29:18; 51:37, so that here the vowelings should perhaps be שְׁרוּקָה. The word does not here denote the hissing = hissing down or against one, by way of contempt, but the sound midway between hissing and whistling which escapes one when one looks on something appalling. On “every one that passeth by shall be dismayed,” cf. 1 Kings 9:8. הִנֵּי־רָאִשׁוּ only here = הִנֵּי־רָאִשׁ, to move the head to and fro, shake the head; a gesture of malicious amazement, cf. Ps. 22:8; 109:25, like מְנוּד־רָאִשׁ, Ps. 44:15.—In v. 17 the Lord discloses the coming punishment. Like an east wind, i.e., a violent storm-wind (cf. Ps. 48:8), will I scatter them, cf. 13:24. Because they have turned to Him the back and not the face (cf. 2:27), so will He turn His back on them in the day of their ruin, cf. Ezek. 35:5.

**Jeremiah 18:18–23.** *Enmity displayed against the prophet by the people for this discourse, and prayer for protection from his enemies.—V. 18. “Then said they: Come and let us plot schemes against Jeremiah; for law shall not be lost to the priest, and counsel to the wise, and speech to the prophet. Come and let us smite him with the tongue and not give heed to all his speeches. V. 19. Give heed to me, Jahveh, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me! V. 20. Shall evil be repaid for good, that they dig a pit for my soul? Remember how I stood before Thee to speak good for them, to turn away Thy wrath from them! V. 21. Therefore give their sons to the famine and deliver them to the sword, that their wives become childless and widows, and their men slaughtered by death, their young men smitten by the sword in battle. V. 22. Let a cry be heard from their houses, when Thou bringest troops upon them suddenly; for they have digged a pit to take me and laid snares for my feet. V. 23. But Thou Jahveh knowest all their counsels*

*against me for death: forgive not their iniquity and blot not out their sin from before Thy face, that they be overthrown before Thee; in the time of Thine anger deal with them."*

Even the solemn words (vv. 15–17) of the prophet were in vain. Instead of examining themselves and reforming their lives, the blinded sinners resolve to put the troublesome preacher of repentance out of the way by means of false charges. The subject of "and they said" is those who had heard the above discourse; not all, of course, but the infatuated leaders of the people who had. They call on the multitude to plot schemes against him, cf. 11:18ff. For they have, as they think, priests, wise men, and prophets to give them instruction out of the law, counsel, and word, i.e., prophecy,—namely, according to their idea, such as advise, teach, and preach otherwise than Jeremiah, who speaks only of repentance and judgment. Recent scholars render תּוֹרָה doctrine, which is right etymologically, but not so when judged by the constant usage, which regards the Torah, the law, as containing the substance of all the doctrine needed by man to tell him how to bear himself towards God, or to make his life happy. The Mosaic law is the foundation of all prophetic preaching; and that the speakers mean תּוֹרָה in this sense is clear from their claiming the knowledge of the Torah as belonging to the priests; the law was committed to the keeping and administration of the priests. The "counsel" is that needed for the conduct of the state in difficult circumstances, and in Ezek. 7:26 it is attributed to the elders; and "speech" or word is the declarations of the prophets. On that subject, cf. 8:8–10. To smite with the tongue is to ruin by slanders and malicious charges, cf. 9:2, 4, 7, where the tongue is compared to a lying bow and deadly arrow, Ps. 64:4f., 59:8, etc. That they had the prophet's death in view appears from v. 23; although their further speech: We will not give heed to his words, shows that in the discourse against which they were so enraged, he had said "nothing that, according to their ideas, was directly and immediately punishable with

death" (Hitz.); cf. 26:6, 11. Against these schemes Jeremiah cries to God in v. 19 for help and protection. While his adversaries are saying: People should give no heed to his speeches, he prays the Lord to give heed to him and to listen to the sayings of his enemies. "My contenders," who contend against me, cf. 35:1, Isa. 49:25.—In support of his prayer he says in v. 20: Shall evil be repaid for good? cf. Ps. 35:12. In his discourses he had in view nothing but the good of the people, and he appeals to the prayers he had presented to the Lord to turn away God's anger from the people, cf. 14:7ff., vv. 19–22. (On "my standing before Thee," cf. 15:1.) This good they seek to repay with ill, by lying charges to dig a pit for his soul, i.e., for his life, into which pit he may fall; cf. Ps. 57:7, where, however, instead of שׁוֹחָה (Jeremiah 2:6; Prov. 22:14; 23:27), we have שְׂיָחָה, as in v. 22, *Chet*.—He prays the Lord to requite them for this wickedness by bringing on the people that which Jeremiah had sought to avert, by destroying them with famine, sword, and disease. The various kinds of death are, v. 21, distributed rhetorically amongst the different classes of the people. The sons, i.e., children, are to be given up to the famine, the men to the sword, the young men to the sword in war. The suffix on הַגֵּרִים refers to the people, of which the children are mentioned before, the men and women after. On הִגֵּר עַל יְדֵי חָרֶב, cf. Ezek. 35:5, Ps. 63:11. "Death," mentioned alongside of sword and famine, is death by disease and pestilence, as in 15:2.

**Jeremiah 18:22.** To the terrors of the war and the siege is to be added the cry rising from all the houses into which hostile troops have burst, plundering and massacring. To lay snares, as in Ps. 140:6; 142:4. פֶּחַ is the spring of the bird-catcher.

**Jeremiah 18:23.** Comprehensive summing up of the whole prayer. As the Lord knows their design against him for his death, he prays Him not to forgive their sin, but to punish it. The form תִּמְחֵי instead of תִּמַּח (Neh. 13:14) is the

Aramaic form for תִּמְחָהּ, like תִּזְנֶי, 3:6; cf. Ew. § 224, c. The *Chet.* וְהָיִי is the regular continuation of the imperative: and let them be cast down before Thee. The *Keri* וְהָיִי would be: that they may be cast down before Thee. Hitz. wrongly expounds the *Chet.*: but let them be fallen before Thee (in Thine eyes), i.e., morally degraded sinners; for the question is not here one of moral degradation, but of the punishment of sinners. In the time of Thine anger, i.e., when Thou lettest loose Thy wrath, causest Thy judgments to come down, deal with them, i.e., with their transgressions. On עֲשֵׂה בָּ, cf. Dan. 11:7.

On this prayer of the prophet to God to exterminate his enemies Hitz. remarks: "The various curses which in his bitter indignation he directs against his enemies are at bottom but the expression of the thought: Now may all that befall them which I sought to avert from them." The *Hirschberg Bible* takes a deeper grasp of the matter: "It is no prayer of carnal vengeance against those that hated him, vv. 18, 23, Ps. 9:18; 55:16; but as God had commanded him to desist (Jeremiah 14:11, 12) from the prayers he had frequently made for them, v. 20, and as they themselves could not endure these prayers, v. 18, he leaves them to God's judgments which he had been already compelled to predict to them, 11:22; 14:12, 16, without any longer resisting with his entreaties, Luke 13:9, 2 Tim. 4:14." In this observation that clause only is wrong which says Jeremiah merely leaves the wicked to God's judgments, since he, on the other hand, gives them up thereto, prays God to carry out judgment on them with the utmost severity. In this respect the present passage resembles the so-called cursing psalms (Ps. 35:4-10; 109:6-20; 59:14-16; 69:26-29, etc.); nor can we say with Calvin: *hanc vehementiam, quoniam dictata fuit a spiritu sancto, non posse damnari, sed non debere trahi in exemplum, quia hoc singulare fuit in propheta*. For the prophet's prayer is no inspired יְהוָה דְּבַר, but the wish and utterance of his heart, for the fulfilment of which he cries to

God; just as in the psalms cited. On these imprecations, cf. Del. on Ps. 35 and 109; as also the solid investigation of this point by Kurtz: *Zur Theologie der Ps. IV. die Fluch- und Rache psalmen* in the *Dorpat Ztschr. f. Theol. u. Kirche*, vii. (1865), S. 359ff. All these curses are not the outcome and effusions of personal vengeance against enemies, but flow from the pure spring of a zeal, not self-regarding at all, for the glory of God. The enemies are God's enemies, despisers of His salvation. Their hostility against David and against Jeremiah was rooted in their hostility against God and the kingdom of God. The advancement of the kingdom of God, the fulfilment of the divine scheme of salvation, required the fall of the ungodly who seek the lives of God's servants. In this way we would seek to defend such words of cursing by appealing to the legal spirit of the Old Testament, and would not oppose them to the words of Christ, Luke 9:55. For Christ tells us why He blamed the Elias-like zeal of His disciples in the words: "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." In keeping with this, the peculiar end of Christ's coming on earth, we find no curses from Him against His enemies and the enemies of the kingdom of God. But just as the word, "I am not come," etc. (Luke 9:56), does not exclude the truth that the Father hath given all judgment to Him, so, as Kurtz very justly remarks, "from our hearing no word of cursing from the mouth of Christ during His life on earth we cannot infer the absolute inadmissibility of all such; still less can we infer that Christ's apostles and disciples could not at all be justified in using any words of cursing." And the apostles have indeed uttered curses against obdurate enemies: so Peter against Simon the Magian, Acts 8:20; Paul against the high priest Ananias, Acts 23:3, against the Jewish false teachers, Gal. 1:9 and 5:12, and against Alexander the coppersmith, 2 Tim. 4:14. But these cases do not annihilate the distinction between the Old and the New Testaments. Since grace and truth have been revealed in Christ, the Old Testament standpoint of retribution according to the rigour of the law cannot be for us the standard



of our bearing even towards the enemies of Christ and His kingdom.

### Jeremiah 19

**Jeremiah 19:1–13.** The Broken Pitcher.—V. 1. *“Thus said Jahveh: Go and buy a potter’s vessel, and take of the elders of the people and of the elders of the priests, V. 2. And go forth into the valley of Benhinnom, which is before the gate Harsuth, and proclaim there the words which I shall speak unto thee, V. 3. And say: Hear the word of Jahveh, ye kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus hath said Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth his ears shall tingle. V. 4. Because they have forsaken me, and disowned this place, and burnt incense in it to other gods whom they knew not, they, and their fathers, and the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents, V. 5. And have built high places for Baal, to burn their sons in the fire as burnt-offerings to Baal, which I have neither commanded nor spoken, nor came it into my heart. V. 6. Therefore, behold, days come, saith Jahve, that this place shall no longer be called Tophet and Valley of Benhinnom, but Valley of Slaughter. V. 7. And I make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of them that seek their lives, and give their carcasses to be food for the fowls of the heaven and the beast of the earth. V. 8. And make this city a dismay and a scoffing; every one that passeth thereby shall be dismayed and hiss because of all her strokes; V. 9. And make them eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and each shall eat his neighbour’s flesh in the siege and straitness wherewith their enemies and they that seek after their lives shall straiten them.— V. 10. And break the pitcher before the eyes of the men that go with thee, V. 11. And say to them: Thus hath Jahve of hosts said: Even so will I break this people and this city as one breaketh this potter’s vessel, that it cannot be made whole again; and in Tophet shall they bury them, because there is no room to bury. V. 12. Thus will I do unto this place, saith Jahveh, and its inhabitants, to make*

*this city as Tophet. V. 13. And the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah shall become, as the place Tophet, unclean, all the houses upon whose roofs they have burnt incense to the whole host of heaven and poured out drink-offerings to other gods.”*

The purpose for which Jeremiah was to buy the earthen jar is told in v. 10, and the meaning of breaking it in the valley of Benhinnom is shown in vv. 11–13. בִּקְבֵק, from בָּקַק, to pour out, is a jar with a narrow neck, so called from the sound heard when liquid is poured out of it, although the vessel was used for storing honey, 1 Kings 14:3. The appellation יוֹצֵר הָרֶשֶׁת, former of earthen vessels, i.e., potter, is given to denote the jar as one which, on being broken, would shiver into many fragments. Before “of the elders of the people” a verb seems to be awaiting, for which cause many supply וְלָקַחְתָּ (according to 41:12; 43:10, etc.), rightly so far as sense is concerned; but we are hardly entitled to assume a lacuna in the text. That assumption is opposed by the וְ before מִזְקֵנֵי; for we cannot straightway presume that this וְ was put in after the verb had dropped out of the text. In that case the whole word would have been restored. We have here rather, as Schnur saw, a bold *constructio praegnans*, the verb “buy” being also joined in zeugma with “of the elders:” buy a jar and (take) certain of the elders; cf. similar, only less bold, zeugmatic constr. in Job 4:10; 10:12, Isa. 58:5. “Elders of the priests,” as in 2 Kings 19:2, probably identical with the “princes (שָׂרִי) of the priests,” 2 Chron. 36:14, are doubtless virtually the same as the “heads (רֹאשֵׁי) of the priests,” Neh. 12:7, the priests highest in esteem, not merely for their age, but also in virtue of their rank; just as the “elders of the people” were a permanent representation of the people, consisting of the heads of tribes, houses or septs, and families; cf. 1 Kings 8:1–3, and my *Bibl. Archäol.* ii. S. 218. Jeremiah was to take elders of the people and of the priesthood, because it was most readily to be expected of them that the word of God to be

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proclaimed would find a hearing amongst them. As to the valley of Benhinnom, see on 7:31. שַׁעַר הַחַרְסוֹת, not Sun-gate (after חַרְס, Job 9:7, Judg. 8:13), but Pottery or Sherd-gate, from חַרְס = חַרְשׁ, in rabbin. חַרְסִית, potter's clay. The *Chet*. חַרְסוֹת is the ancient form, not the modern (Hitz.), for the *Keri* is adapted to the rabbinical form. The clause, "which is before the *Harsuth* - gate," is not meant to describe more particularly the locality, sufficiently well known in Jerusalem, but has reference to the act to be performed there. The name, gate of חַרְסוֹת, which nowhere else occurs, points no doubt to the breaking to shivers of the jar. Hence we are rather to translate Sherd-gate than Pottery-gate, the name having probably arisen amongst the people from the broken fragments which lay about this gate. Comm. are not at one as to which of the known city gates is meant. Hitz. and Kimchi are wrong in thinking of a gate of the court of the temple—the southern one. The context demands one of the city gates, two of which led into the Benhinnom valley: the Spring- or Fountain-gate at the south-east corner, and the Dung-gate on the south-west side of Zion; see on Neh. 3:13–15. One of these two must be meant, but which of them it cannot be decided. there Jeremiah is to cry aloud the words which follow, vv. 3–8, and which bear on the kings of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. "Kings" in the plural, as in 13:13, because the matter concerned not the reigning king only, but his successors too, who had been guilty of the sins to be punished.

**Jeremiah 19:3–5.** In vv. 3–5 the threatening is summarily set forth. Horrible evil will the Lord bring on this place, i.e., Jerusalem. The ears of every one that hears it will tingle, so utterly stunning will the news of it turn out to be; cf. 2 Kings 21:12 and 1 Sam. 3:11, where we find תִּצְלִינָה; cf. Ew. § 197, *a*. This they have brought on themselves by their dreadful sins. They have forsaken Jahveh, disowned this place; נָכַר, prop. find strange, Deut. 32:27, then treat as strange, deny, Job 21:29. In substance: they have not

treated Jerusalem as the city of the sanctuary of their God, but, as it mentioned after, they have burnt incense in it to other (strange) gods. The words: they and their fathers, and the kings of Judah, are not the subject to "knew not," as is "they and their," etc., in 9:15; 16:13, but to the preceding verb of the principal clause. "And have filled the city with the blood of innocents." This Grot. and others understand by the blood of the children slain for Moloch; and for this, appeal is made to Ps. 106:37f., where the pouring out of innocent blood is explained to be that of sons and daughters offered to idols. But this passage cannot be the standard for the present one, neither can the statement that here we have to deal with idolatry alone. This latter is *petitio principii*. If shedding the blood of innocents had been said of offerings to Moloch, then v. 5 must be taken as epexegetis. But in opposition to this we have not only the parallelism of the clauses, but also and especially the circumstance, that not till v. 5 is mention made of altars on which to offer children of Moloch. We therefore understand the filling of Jerusalem with the blood of innocents, according to 7:6, cf. 2:34 and 22:3, 17, of judicial murder or of bloody persecution of the godly; and on two grounds: 1. because alongside of idolatry we always find mentioned as the chief sin the perversion of justice to the shedding of innocent blood (cf. the passages cited), so that this sin would not likely be omitted here, as one cause of the dreadful judgment about to pass on Jerusalem; 2. because our passage recalls the very wording of 2 Kings 21:16, where, after mentioning his idolatry, it is said of Manasseh: Also innocent blood hath he shed, until he made Jerusalem full (מְלֵא) to the brink. The climax in the enumeration of sins in these verses is accordingly this: 1. The disowning of the holiness of Jerusalem as the abode of the Lord by the public practice of idolatry; 2. the shedding of innocent blood as extremity of injustice and godless judicial practices; 3. as worst of all abominations, the building of altars for burning their own children to Moloch. That the Moloch-sacrifices are mentioned last, as

being worst of all, is shown by the three relative clauses: which I have not commanded, etc., which by an impassioned gradation of phrases mark God's abomination of these horrors. On this subject cf. 7:31 and 32:35.

**Jeremiah 19:6–13.** In vv. 6–13 the threatened punishment is given again at large, and that in two strophes or series of ideas, which explain the emblematical act with the pitcher. The first series, vv. 6–9, is introduced by בְּקוֹתַי, which intimates the meaning of the pitcher; and the other, vv. 10–13, is bound up with the breaking of the pitcher. But both series are, v. 6, opened by the mention of the locality of the act. As v. 5 was but an expansion of 7:31, so v. 6 is a literal repetition of 7:32. The valley of Benhinnom, with its places for abominable sacrifices (תַּפְתֵּי, see on 7:32), shall in the future be called Valley of Slaughter; i.e., at the judgment on Jerusalem it will be the place where the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah will be slain by the enemy. There God will make void (בְּקוֹתַי, playing on בְּקִבְבֵךְ), i.e., bring to nothing; for what is poured out comes to nothing; cf. Isa. 19:3. There they shall fall by the sword in such numbers that their corpses shall be food for the beasts of prey (cf. 7:33), and the city of Jerusalem shall be frightfully ravaged (v. 8, cf. 18:16; 25:9, etc.). מַכְתָּהָ (plural form of suffix without *Jod*; cf. Ew. § 258, *a*), the wounds she has received.—In v. 9 is added yet another item to complete the awful picture, the terrible famine during the siege, partly taken from the words of Deut. 28:53ff. and Lev. 26:29. That this appalling misery did actually come about during the last siege by the Chaldeans, we learn from Lam. 4:10.—The second series, vv. 10–13, is introduced by the act of breaking the pitcher. This happens before the eyes of the elders who have accompanied Jeremiah thither: to them the explanatory word of the Lord is addressed. As the earthen pitcher, so shall Jerusalem—people and city—be broken to pieces; and that irremediably. This is implied in: as one breaks a potter's vessel, etc. (הִרְפָּא לְהִרְפָּה). The next clause: and in Tophet they shall bury, etc., is omitted by the LXX as a

repetition from 7:32, and is object to by Ew., Hitz., and Graf, as not being in keeping with its context. Ew. proposes to insert it before "as one breaketh;" but this transposition only obscures the meaning of the clause. It connects very suitably with the idea of the incurable breaking in sunder. Because the breaking up of Jerusalem and its inhabitants shall be incurable, shall be like the breaking of a pitcher dashed into countless fragments, therefore there will be lack of room in Jerusalem to bury the dead, and the unclean places of Tophet will need to be used for that purpose. With this the further thought of vv. 12 and 13 connects simply and suitably. Thus (as had been said at v. 11) will I do unto this place and its inhabitants, וְלָהֵט, and that to make the city as Tophet, i.e., not "a mass of sherds and rubbish, as Tophet now is" (Graf); for neither was Tophet then a rubbish-heap, nor did it so become by the breaking of the pitcher. But Josiah had turned all the place of Tophet in the valley of Benhinnom into an unclean region (2 Kings 23:10). All Jerusalem shall become an unclean place like Tophet. This is put in so many words in v. 13: The houses of Jerusalem shall become unclean like the place Tophet, namely, all houses on whose roofs idolatry has been practised. The construction of הַטְּמֵאִים causes some difficulty. The position of the word at the end disfavors our connecting it with the subject בְּתֵי, and so does the article, which does not countenance its being taken as predicate. To get rid of the article, J. D. Mich. and Ew. sought to change the reading into תַּפְתֵּי, after Isa. 30:33. But תַּפְתֵּי means a Tophet-like place, not Tophet itself, and so gives no meaning to the purpose. No other course is open than to join the word with "the place Tophet:" like the place Tophet, which is unclean. The plural would then be explained less from the collective force of מְקוֹם than from regard to the plural subject. "All the houses" opens a supplementary definition of the subject: as concerning all houses; cf. Ew. § 310, *a*. On the worship of the stars by sacrifice on the housetops, transplanted by Manasseh to

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Jerusalem, see the expos. of Zeph. 1:5 and 2 Kings 21:3. וְהָסֵדּוּ גְגִי, coinciding literally with 7:18; the *inf. absol.* being attached to the *verb. finit.* of the former clause (Ew. § 351, c.).—Thus far the word of the Lord to Jeremiah, which he was to proclaim in the valley of Benhinnom.—The execution of the divine commission is, as being a matter of course, not expressly recounted, but is implied in v. 14 as having taken place.

**Jeremiah 19:14–20:6.** The Prophet Jeremiah and the Temple-Warden Pashur.—V. 14f. When Jeremiah, having performed the divine command, returned from Tophet to the city, he went into the court of the house of God and spoke to the people assembled there, v. 15: “Thus hath said Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I bring upon this city, and all its cities, all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they stiffened their necks not to hear my words.” “All the people” is the people present in the court of the temple as distinguished from the men who had accompanied Jeremiah into the valley of Benhinnom (v. 10). מְבִי, the ♂ having dropped off, as in 39:16, 1 Kings 21:21, 29, 2 Sam. 5:2, and often. “All its cities” are the towns that belonged to Jerusalem, were subject to it (Jeremiah 34:1); in other words, the cities of Judah, 1:15; 9:10, etc. All the evil that I have pronounced against it, not merely in the valley of Benhinnom (vv. 3–13), but generally up till this time, by the mouth of Jeremiah. If we limit the reference of this view to the prophecy in Tophet, we must assume, with Näg., that Jeremiah repeated the substance of it here; and besides, that prophecy is not in keeping with “all its cities,” inasmuch as it (vv. 3–13) deals with Jerusalem alone. Apparently Jeremiah must have said more than is written in the verse, and described the evil somewhat more closely; so that the new matter spoken by him here consists in the “Behold I bring,” etc., i.e., in his forewarning them of the speedy fulfilment of the threatenings against Jerusalem and Judah, as was the case with the prophecy in the valley of Benhinnom, which also, v. 3, begins

with הִגְנִי מְבִיא. On “they stiffened their necks,” etc., cf. 17:23; 7:26.

## Jeremiah 20

**Jeremiah 20:1, 2.** When the chief overseer of the temple, Pashur, heard this prophecy, he had the prophet beaten, and put him over-night in the stocks at the upper gate of Benjamin in the temple. *Pashur* is by the appellation: son of *Immer*, distinguished from other priests of this name, e.g., Pashur, son of Malchijah, 1 Chron. 9:12. It cannot be determined whether *Immer* is here the name of the 16th class of priests (1 Chron. 24:14) or of one of the greater priestly clans (Ezra 2:37; Neh. 7:40). Pashur held the office of פְּקִיד נְגִיד, chief overseer in the house of God. נְגִיד is an official name attached to פְּקִיד to explain it. In the latter word lies the idea of overseeing, while the former denotes the official standing or rank of the overseer. The position of נְגִיד was a high one, as may be seen from the fact that the priest Zephaniah, who, according to 29:26, held this post, is quoted in 52:24 (2 Kings 25:18) as next to the high priest. The compound expression without article implies that there were several נְגִידִים of the temple. In 2 Chron. 35:8 there are three mentioned under Josiah; which is not contradicted by 2 Chron. 31:13, 1 Chron. 9:11, Neh. 11:11, where particular persons are called נְגִיד בַּיִת ה'. As chief overseer of the temple, Pashur conceived it to be his duty to take summary magisterial steps against Jeremiah, for his public appearance in the temple. To put this procedure of the priest and temple-warden in its proper light, Jeremiah is designated by the name of his office, הַנְּבִיא. In virtue of the summary authority which belonged to him (cf. 29:26), Pashur smote the prophet, i.e., caused him to be beaten with stripes, perhaps according to the precept Deut. 25:3, cf. 2 Cor. 11:24, and then threw him into prison till the following day, and put him in the stocks. מַהֲפֶכֶת, twisting, was an instrument of torture by which the body was forced into a distorted, unnatural

posture; the culprit's hands and feet were presumably bound, so as to keep the position so; see on 2 Chron. 16:10, cf. with Acts 16:24. The upper gate of Benjamin in the house of Jahveh is the northern gate at the upper, i.e., inner court of the temple, the same with the upper gate or the gate of the inner court, looking northwards, Ezek. 9:2 and 8:3. By the designation "which is in the house," etc., it is distinguished from the city gate of like name, 37:13; 38:7.—When on the next day Pashur released the prophet from imprisonment, the latter made known to him the divine punishment for his misdeed: "Not Pashur will Jahveh call thy name, but Magor-Missabib" (i.e., Fear round about). The name is expressive of the thing. And so: Jahveh will call the name, is, in other words, He will make the person to be that which the name expresses; in this case, make Pashur to be an object of fear round about. Under the presumption that the name *Magor-Missabib* conveyed a meaning the most directly opposed to that of *Pashur*, comm. have in various ways attempted to interpret פֶּשֶׁחֹר. It is supposed to be composed of פּוּשׁ, Chald. *augeri*, and חוֹר, *nobilitas*, with the force: *abundantia claritatis* (Rashi); or after Arab. *fs'*, *gloriatu est de nobilitate* (Simonis); or from Arab. *hsh*, *amplu fuit locus*, and the Chald. קַחֹר, *circumcirca: de securitate circumcirca*; or finally, by Ew., from פָּשׁ from פּוּשׁ, spring, leap, rejoice (Mal. 3:20), and חוֹר = חוּל, joy round about. All these interpretations are arbitrary. פּוּשׁ sig. leap and gallop about, Mal. 3:20 and Hab. 1:8, and in Niph. Nah. 3:18, to be scattered (see on Hab. 1:8); and פֶּשַׁח sig. in Lam. 3:11 to tear. But the syllable חוֹר can by no means have the sig. of מְסַבֵּיב claimed for it. Nor are there, indeed, sufficient grounds for assuming that Jeremiah turned the original name upside down in an etymological or philological reference. The new name given by Jeremiah to Pashur is meant to intimate the man's destiny. On "Fear round about," see on 6:25. What the words of the new name signify is explained in vv. 4–6.

**Jeremiah 20:4–6.** V. 4. "For thus hath Jahveh said: Behold, I make thee a terror to thyself and to all thy friends, and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies and thine eyes behold it; and all Judah will I give into the hand of the king of Babylon, that he may carry them captive to Babylon and smite them with the sword. V. 5. And I will give all the stores of this city, and all its gains, and all its splendour, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, who shall plunder them and take and bring them to Babylon. V. 6. And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity, and to Babylon shalt thou come, and there die, and there be buried, thou and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lyingly."—Pashur will become a fear or terror to himself and all his friends, because of his own and his friend's fate; for he will see his friends fall by the sword of the enemy, and then he himself, with those of his house and his friends not as yet slain, will go forth into exile to Babylon and die there. So that not to himself merely, but to all about him, he will be an object of fear. Näg. wrongly translates נִתְּנָה לְמִגּוֹר, I deliver thee up to fear, and brings into the text the contrast that Pashur is not to become the victim of death itself, but of perpetual fear of death. Along with Pashur's friends, all Judah is to be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and be partly exiled to Babylon, partly put to death with the sword. All the goods and gear of Jerusalem, together with the king's treasures, are to be plundered and carried off by the enemy. We must not press "all thy friends" in vv. 4 and 6; and so we escape the apparent contradiction, that while in v. 4 it is said of all the friends that they shall die by the sword, it is said of all in v. 6 that they shall go into exile. The friends are those who take Pashur's side, his partisans. From the last clause of v. 6 we see that Pashur was also of the number of the false prophets, who prophesied the verse of Jeremiah's prediction, namely, welfare and peace (cf. 23:17; 14:13).—This saying of Jeremiah was most probably fulfilled at the taking of Jerusalem under Jechoniah, Pashur

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and the better part of the people being carried off to Babylon.

**Jeremiah 20:7-18.** The Prophet's Complaints as to the Sufferings Met with in his Calling.— This portion contains, first, a complaint addressed to the Lord regarding the persecutions which the preaching of God's word draws down on Jeremiah, but the complaint passes into a jubilant cry of hope (vv. 7-13); secondly, a cursing of the day of his birth (vv. 13-18). The first complaint runs thus:

**Jeremiah 20:7-13.** *"Thou hast persuaded me, Jahveh, and I let myself be persuaded; Thou hast laid hold on me and hast prevailed. I am become a laughter the whole day long, every one mocketh at me. V. 8. For as often as I speak, I must call out and cry violence and spoil, for the word of Jahveh is made a reproach and a derision to me all the day. V. 9. And I said, I will not more remember nor speak more in His name; then was it in my heart as burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I become weary of holding out, and cannot. V. 10. For I heard the talk of many: Fear round about! Report, and let us report him! Every man of my friendship lies in wait for my downfall: Peradventure he will let himself be enticed, that we may prevail against him and take our revenge on him. V. 11. But Jahveh stands by me as a mighty warrior; therefore shall my persecutors stumble and not prevail, shall be greatly put to shame, because they have not dealt wisely, with everlasting disgrace which will not be forgotten. V. 12. And, Jahveh of hosts that trieth the righteous, that seeth reins and heart, let me see Thy vengeance on them, for to Thee have I committed my cause. V. 13. Sing to Jahveh, praise Jahveh, for He saves the soul of the poor from the hand of the evil-doers."*

This lament as to the hatred and persecution brought upon him by the preaching of the word of the Lord, is chiefly called forth by the proceedings, recounted in vv. 1, 2, of the temple-warden Pashur against him. This is clear from the *מְגֹרֵי מִסְבִּיב*; for, as Näg. truly remarks, the use of this expression *against* the prophet may certainly be most easily explained by the use he had so pregnantly made of it

against one so distinguished as Pashur. Besides, the bitterness of the complaint, rising at last to the extent of cursing the day of his birth (v. 14ff.), is only intelligible as a consequence of such ill-usage as Pashur had already inflicted on him. For although his enemies had schemed against his life, they had never yet ventured positively to lay hands on his person. Pashur first caused him to be beaten, and then had him kept a whole night long in the torture of the stocks. From torture like this his enemies might proceed even to taking his life, if the Lord did not miraculously shield him from their vengeance.—The complaint, vv. 7-13, is an outpouring of the heart to God, a prayer that begins with complaint, passes into confidence in the Lord's protection, and ends in a triumph of hope. In vv. 7 and 8 Jeremiah complains of the evil consequences of his labours. God has persuaded him to undertake the office of prophet, so that he has yielded to the call of God. The words of v. 7a are not an upbraiding, nor are they given in an upbraiding tone (Hitz.); for *פָּתָהּ* does not mean befool, but persuade, induce by words to do a thing. *הִזְקָה* used transitively, but not as 1 Kings 16:22, overpower (Ros., Graf, etc.); for then it would not be in keeping with the following *וְתִוְכַל*, which after "overpower" would seem very feeble. It means: lay hold of; as usually in the Hiph., so here in Kal. It thus corresponds to *הִזְקָהּ*, Isa. 8:11, denoting the state of being laid hold of by the power of the Spirit of God in order to prophesy. *תִּוְכַל*, not: Thou hast been able, but: Thou hast prevailed, conquered. A sharp contrast to this is presented by the issue of his prophetic labours: I am become a laughing-stock all the day, i.e., incessantly. *כָּלֵהָ*, its (the people's) entirety = all the people.—In v. 8 "call" is explained by "cry out violence and spoil:" complain of the violence and spoliation that are practised. The word of Jahveh is become a reproach and obloquy, i.e., the proclamation of it has brought him only contempt and obloquy. The two cases of *כִּי* are co-ordinate; the two clauses give two reasons

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for everybody mocking at him. One is objective: so often as he speaks he can do nothing but complain of violence, so that he is ridiculed by the mass of the people; and one is subjective: his preaching brings him only disgrace. Most comm. refer "violence and spoiling" to the ill-usage the prophet experiences; but this does not exhaust the reference of the words.

**Jeremiah 20:9.** After such bitter experiences, the thought arose in his soul: I will remember Him (Jahveh) no more, i.e., make no more mention of the Lord, nor speak in His name, labour as a prophet; but it was within him as burning fire. The subject is not expressed, but is, as Ros. and Hitz. rightly say, the word of Jahveh which is held back. "Shut up in my bones" is apposition to "burning fire," for שָׂאָ occurs elsewhere also as *masc.*, e.g., 48:45, Job 20:26, Ps. 104:4. The word of God dwells in the heart; but from there outwards it acts upon his whole organism, like a fire shut up in the hollow of his bones, burning the marrow of them (Job 21:24), so that he can no longer bear to keep silence. The perfects "and I said," "and (then) it was," "and I became weary," are to be taken as preterites, expressing events that have several times been repeated, and so the final result is spoken in the *imperf.* I cannot.

**Jeremiah 20:10.** V. 10 gives the reason for the resolution, adopted but not carried out, of speaking no more in the name of the Lord. This was found in the reports that reached his ears of schemes against his life. The first clause is a verbal quotation from Ps. 31:14, a lament of David in the time of Saul's persecutions. דִּבְרָה, base, backbiting slander. The phrase: Fear round about, indicates, in the form of a brief popular saying, the dangerous case in which the prophet was, which his adversaries prepare for him by their repeating: Report him, we will report him. Report: here, report to the authorities as a dangerous man. Even those who are on friendly terms with him lie in wait for his fall. This phrase too is formed of phrases from the Psalms. On "am of my peace," cf. Ps. 41:10; on צִלְעִי, Ps. 35:15; 38:18; and on שָׁמַר, watch, lie in wait for, Ps. 56:7; 71:10.

"Peradventure"—so they said—"he may let himself be enticed," sc. to say something on which a capital charge may be founded (Graf). With "that we may prevail against him," cf. 1:19; 15:20.—At v. 11 the lament rises into confidence in the Lord, springing from the promise given to him by God at his call. אֹתִי (for אֶתִּי יהוה recalls 1:19; 15:20. The designation of God as גְּבוּרַת עֲרִיצִים is formed after 15:21. Because the Lord has promised to deliver him out of the hand of the עֲרִיצִים, violent, he now calls him a hero using violence, and on this founds his assurance that his persecutors will accomplish nothing, but will come to a downfall, to shame, and be covered with never-dying, never-to-be-forgotten disgrace. Because they have dealt not wisely, i.e., foolishly, see on 10:21; not: because they did not prosper, which would give a weak, superfluous idea, since their not prospering lies already in בּוֹשׁ, *spe frustrari*. This disgrace will befall the persecutors, because the Lord of hosts will, as Searcher of hearts, take the part of the righteous, and will take vengeance on their foes. This is the force of v. 12, which, with a few changes, is repeated from 11:20.—In this trustfulness his soul rises to a firm hope of deliverance, so that in v. 13 he can call on himself and all the godly to praise God, the Saviour of the poor. Cf. Ps. 31:8; 35:9, 10, 28, etc.

**Jeremiah 20:14–18.** *The day of his birth cursed.—V. 14. "Cursed be the day wherein I was born! The day my mother bare me, let it not be blessed! V. 15. Cursed be the man that brought the good tidings to my father, saying: A man-child is born to thee, who made him very glad. V. 16. Let that man be as the cities which Jahveh overthrew without repenting; let him hear crying in the morning and a war-cry at noon-tide, V. 17. Because he slew me not from the womb, and so my mother should have been my grave, and her womb should have been always great. V. 18. Wherefore am I come forth out of the womb to see hardship and sorrow, and that my days should wear away in shame?"*

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Inasmuch as the foregoing lamentation had ended in assured hope of deliverance, and in the praise rendered to God therefor, it seems surprising that now there should follow curses on the day of his birth, without any hint to show that at the end this temptation, too, had been overcome. For this reason Ew. wishes to rearrange the two parts of the complaint, setting vv. 14–18 before vv. 7–12. This transposition he holds to be so unquestionably certain, that he speaks of the order and numbering of the verses in the text as an example, clear as it is remarkable, of displacement. But against this hypothesis we have to consider the improbability that, if individual copyists had omitted the second portion (vv. 14–18) or written it on the margin, others should have introduced it into an unsuitable place. Copyists did not go to work with the biblical text in such an arbitrary and clumsy fashion. Nor is the position occupied by the piece in question so incomprehensible as Ew. imagines. The cursing of the day of his birth, or of his life, after the preceding exaltation to hopeful assurance is not psychologically inconceivable. It may well be understood, if we but think of the two parts of the lamentation as not following one another in the prophet's soul in such immediate succession as they do in the text; if we regard them as spiritual struggles, separated by an interval of time, through which the prophet must successively pass. In vanquishing the temptation that arose from the plots of his enemies against his life, Jeremiah had a strong support in the promise which the Lord gave him at his call, that those who strove against him should not prevail against him; and the deliverance out of the hand of Pashur which he had just experienced, must have given him an actual proof that the Lord was fulfilling His promise. The feeling of this might fill the trembling heart with strength to conquer his temptation, and to elevate himself again, in the joyful confidence of faith, to the praising of the Lord, who delivers the soul of the poor from the hand of the ungodly. But the power of the temptation was not finally vanquished by the

renewal of his confidence that the Lord will defend him against all his foes. The unsuccess of his mission might stir up sore struggles in his soul, and not only rob him of all heart to continue his labours, but excite bitter discontent with a life full of hardship and sorrow,—a discontent which found vent in his cursing the day of his birth.

The curse uttered in vv. 14–18 against the day of his birth, while it reminds us of the verses, Jeremiah 3:3ff., in which Job curses the day of his conception and of his birth, is markedly distinguished in form and substance from that dreadful utterance of Job's. Job's words are much more violent and passionate, and are turned directly against God, who has given life to him, to a man whose way is hid, whom God hath hedged round. Jeremiah, on the other hand, curses first the day of his birth (v. 14), then the man that brought his father the joyful news of the birth of a son (vv. 15–17), because his life is passing away in hardship, trials, sorrow, and shame, without expressly blaming God as the author of that life.

**Jeremiah 20:14.** The day on which I was born, let it be cursed and not blessed, sc. because life has never been a blessing to me. Job wishes that the day of his birth and the night of his conception may perish, be annihilated.

**Jeremiah 20:15.** In the curse on the man that brought the father the news of the birth, the stress lies on the clause, "who made him very glad," which goes to strengthen בְּשֵׂר, εὐαγγελίσεισθαι, a clause which is subordinated to the principal clause without any grammatical connection (cf. Ew. § 341, *b*). The joy that man gave the father by his news is become to the son a source of bitter grief.

**Jeremiah 20:16.** He wishes the fate of Sodom (Gen. 19:25), namely ruin, to befall that man. וְלֹא יִתְקַח, and may He (Jahveh) not let it repent Him, is adverbially used: without feeling compunction for the destruction, i.e., without pity. In v. 16*b* destruction is depicted under the figure of the terrors of a town beleaguered by enemies and suddenly taken. וְתִקְוָה, the wailing



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cry of the afflicted townspeople; תְּרוּעָה, the war-cry of the enemies breaking in; cf. 15:8.

**Jeremiah 20:17.** tells why the curse should fall on that man: because (אֲשֶׁר, causal) he slew me not from the womb, i.e., according to what follows: while yet in the womb, and so (וְתִהְיֶה with *consec.*) my mother would have become my grave. Logically considered, the subject to מוֹתֵתִי can only be the man on whom the curse of v. 15 is pronounced. But how could the man kill the child in the mother's womb? This consideration has given occasion to various untenable renderings. Some have taken "from the womb," according to Job 3:11, in the sense: immediately after birth, *simul ac ex utero exiissem* (Ros.). This is grammatically fair enough, but it does not fall in with the context; for then the following *Vav consec.* must be taken as having the negative force "or rather," the negation being repeated in the next clause again (Ros., Graf). Both these cases are grammatically inadmissible. Others would supply "Jahveh" as subject to מוֹתֵתִי, or take the verb as with indefinite subject, or as passive. But to supply "Jahveh" is quite arbitrary; and against the passive construction it must be said that thus the causal nexus, indicated by אֲשֶׁר, between the man on whom the curse is to fall and the slaying of the child is done away with, and all connection for the אֲשֶׁר with what precedes would be lost. The difficulty arising from simply accepting the literal meaning is solved by the consideration, that the curse is not levelled against any one particular person. The man that was present at the birth, so as to be able to bring the father the news of it, might have killed the child in the mother's womb. Jeremiah is as little thinking how this could happen as, in the next words, he is of the possibility of everlasting pregnancy. His words must be taken rhetorically, not physiologically. That pregnancy is everlasting that has no birth at the end of it.—In v. 18 a reason for the curse is given, in that birth had brought him only a life of hardship and sorrow. To see hardship,

i.e., experience, endure it. His days pass away, vanish in shame, i.e., shame at the discomfiture of hopes; for his life-calling produces no fruit, his prophetic work is in vain, since he cannot save his people from destruction.

The curse on the day of birth closes with a sigh at the wretchedness of life, without any hint that he again rises to new joyful faith, and without God's reprimanding him for his discontent as in 11:19f. This difficulty the comm. have not touched upon; they have considered only the questions: how at all such a curse in the mouth of a prophet is to be defended; and whether it is in its right place in this connection, immediately after the words so full of hope as v. 11ff. (cf. Näg.). The latter question we have already discussed at the beginning of the exposition of these verses. As to the first, opinions differ. Some take the curse to be a purely rhetorical form, having no object whatsoever. For, it is said, the long past day of his birth is as little an object on which the curse could really fall, as is the man who told his father of the birth of a son,—a man who in all probability never had a real existence (Näg.). To this view, ventured so early as Origen, Cor. a Lap. has justly answered: *obstat, quod dies illa extiterit fueritque creatura Dei; non licet autem maledicere alicui creaturae Dei, sive illa praesens sit sive praeterita*. Others, as Calv., espied in this cursing *quasi sacrilegum furorem*, and try to excuse it on the ground that the *principium hujus zeli* was justifiable, because Jeremiah cursed the day of his birth not because of personal sufferings, sicknesses, poverty, and the like, but *quoniam videret se perdere operam, quum tamen fideliter studeret eam impendere in salutem populi, deinde quum videret doctrinam Dei obnoxiam esse probris et vituperationibus, quum videret impios ita procaciter insurgere, quum videret totam pietatem ita haberi ludibrio*. But the sentence passed, that the prophet *gravissime peccaverit ut esset contumeliosus in Deo*, is too severe one, as is also that of the *Berleburg Bible*, that "Jeremiah therein stands for an example of warning to all faithful witnesses for the truth, showing that they should not be impatient of

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the reproach, contempt, derision, and mockery that befall them on that account, if God's long-suffering bears with the mockers so long, and ever delays His judgments." For had Jeremiah sinned so grievously, God would certainly have reproached him with his wrong-doing, as in 15:19. Since that is not here the case, we are not entitled to make out his words to be a beacon of warning to all witnesses for the truth. Certainly this imprecation was not written fore our imitation; for it is doubtless an *infirmity*, as Seb. Schm. called it,—an outbreak of the striving of the flesh against the spirit. But it should be to us a source of instruction and comfort. From it we should, on the one hand, learn the full weight of the temptation, so that we may arm ourselves with prayer in faith as a weapon against the power of the tempter; on the other hand, we should see the greatness of God's grace, which raises again those that are stumbling to their fall, and does not let God's true servants succumb under the temptation, as we gather from the fact, that the Lord does not cast off His servant, but gives him the needed strength for carrying on the heavy labours of his office.—The difficulty that there is no answer from the Lord to this complaint, neither by way of reprimand nor of consolation, as in 12:5f., 15:10, 19f., is solved when we consider that at his former complainings the Lord had said to him all that was needed to comfort him and raise him up again. A repetition of those promises would have soothed his bitterness of spirit for a time, perhaps, but not permanently. For the latter purpose the Lord was silent, and left him time to conquer from within the temptation that was crushing him down, by recalling calmly the help from God he had so often hitherto experienced in his labours, especially as the time was now not far distant in which, by the bursting of the threatened judgment on Jerusalem and Judah, he should not only be justified before his adversaries, but also perceive that his labour had not been in vain. And that Jeremiah did indeed victoriously struggle against this temptation, we may gather from remembering that hereafter, when, especially during the siege of Jerusalem under

Zedekiah, he had still sorer afflictions to endure, he no longer trembles or bewails the sufferings connected with his calling.

## Jeremiah 21

### II. Special Predictions of the Judgment to Be Accomplished by the Chaldeans, and of the Messianic Salvation—Ch. 21–33

**Jeremiah 21–33.** These predictions are distinguished from the discourses of the first section, in regard to their form, by special headings assigning precisely the occasion and the date of the particular utterances; and in regard to their substance, by the minute detail with which judgment and salvation are foretold. They fall into two groups. In Jeremiah 21–29 is set forth in detail the judgment to be executed upon Judah and the nations by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and in Jeremiah 30–33 the restoration of Judah and Israel on the expiry of the period of punishment.

#### A. The Predictions of Judgment on Judah and the Nations—Ch. 21–29

**Jeremiah 21–29.** Although these prophecies deal first and chiefly with the judgment which the king of Babylon is to execute on Judah, yet they at the same time intimate that a like fate is in store for the surrounding nations. And in them there is besides a foreshadowing of the judgment to come on Babylon after the expiration of the period appointed for the domination of the Chaldeans, and in brief hints, of the redemption of Israel from captivity in Babylon and other lands into which it has been scattered. They consist of three prophetic pieces, of which the middle one only, Jeremiah 25, forms one lengthy continuous discourse, while the two others are composed of several shorter or longer utterances; the latter two being arranged around the former as a centre. In the first piece the necessity of judgment is shown by means of an exposure of the profound corruption of the leaders of the people, the kings and the false prophets, and of the people itself; this being done with a view to

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check the reigning depravity and to bring back Israel to the true God. In the discourse of Jeremiah 25 the judgment is set forth with comprehensive generalness. In the third piece, Jeremiah 26–29, the truth of this declaration is confirmed, and defended against the gainsaying of priests and prophets, by a series of utterances which crush all hopes and all attempts to avert the ruin of Jerusalem and Judah.—This gathering together of the individual utterances and addresses into longer discourse-like compositions, and the grouping of them around the central discourse Jeremiah 25, is evidently a part of the work of editing the book but was doubtless carried out under the direction of the prophet by his assistant Baruch.

#### Ch. 21–24. The Shepherds and Leaders of the People

**Jeremiah 21–24.** Under this heading may be comprehended the contents of these four chapters; for the nucleus of this compilation is formed by the prophecy concerning the shepherds of the people, the godless last kings of Judah and the false prophets, in Jeremiah 22 and 23, while Jeremiah 21 is to be regarded as an introduction thereto, and Jeremiah 24 a supplement. The aim of this portion of prophetic teaching is to show how the covenant people has been brought to ruin by its corrupt temporal and spiritual rulers, that the Lord must purge it by sore judgments, presently to fall on Judah through Nebuchadnezzar's instrumentality. This is to be done in order to root out the ungodly by sword, famine, and pestilence, and so to make the survivors His true people again by means of right shepherds whom He will raise up in the true branch of David. The introduction, Jeremiah 21, contains deliverances regarding the fate of King Zedekiah, the people, and the city, addressed by Jeremiah, at the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, to the men sent to him from the king, in reply to the request for intercession with the Lord; the answer being to the effect that God will punish them according to the fruit of their doings. Then follow in order the discourse against the corrupt rulers,

especially Kings Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jechoniah, Jeremiah 22, with a promise that the remainder of the Lord's flock will be gathered again and blessed with a righteous shepherd (Jeremiah 23:1–8), and next threatenings against the false prophets (Jeremiah 23:9–40); the conclusion of the whole being formed by the vision of the two baskets of figs, Jeremiah 24, which foreshadows the fate of the people carried away to Babylon with Jehoiachin and of those that remained in the land with Zedekiah.—The several long constituent portions of this "word of God," united into a whole by the heading 21:1, belong to various times. The contents of Jeremiah 21 belong to the first period of the Chaldean siege, i.e., the ninth year of Zedekiah; the middle portion, Jeremiah 22 and 23, dates from the reigns of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin; the conclusion, Jeremiah 24, is from the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, not long after Jehoiachin and the best part of the people had been carried off to Babylon.—As to the joining of Jeremiah 22 and 23 with Jeremiah 21, Ew. rightly says that Jeremiah made use of the opportunity furnished by the message of the king to him of speaking plainly out regarding the future destiny of the whole kingdom, as well as in an especial way with regard to the royal house, and the great men and leaders of the people; and that he accordingly gathered into this part of the book all he had hitherto publicly uttered concerning the leaders of the people, both kings and temporal princes, and also prophets and priests. This he did in order to disclose, regardless of consequences, the causes for the destruction of the kingdom of Judah and the city Jerusalem by the Chaldean; while the brief promise of a future gathering again of the remnant of the scattered flock, introduced at 23:1–8, is to show that, spite of the judgment to fall on Judah and Jerusalem, the Lord will yet not wholly cast off His people, but will at a future time admit them to favour again. For the confirmation of this truth there is added in Jeremiah 24 the vision of the two baskets of figs.

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**Jeremiah 21.** The Taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans.—Vv. 1 and 2. *The heading specifying the occasion for the following prediction.* “The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah when King Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Malchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying: Inquire now of Jahveh for us, for Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that the Lord will deal with us according to all His wondrous works, that he may go up from us.” The fighting of Nebuchadrezzar is in v. 4 stated to be the besieging of the city. From this it appears that the siege had begun ere the king sent the two men to the prophet. Pashur the son of Malchiah is held by Hitz., Graf, Näg., etc., to be a distinguished priest of the class of Malchiah. But this is without sufficient reason; for he is not called a priest, as is the case with Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, and with Pashur the son of Immer (Jeremiah 21:1). Nor is anything proved by the circumstance that Pashur and Malchiah occur in several places as the names of priests, e.g., 1 Chron. 9:12; for both names are also used of persons not priests, e.g., Malchiah, Ezra 10:25, 31, and Pashur, Jeremiah 38:1, where this son of Gedaliah is certainly a laic. From this passage, where Pashur ben Malchiah appears again, it is clear that the four men there named, who accused Jeremiah for his speech, were government authorities or court officials, since in 38:4 they are called שָׂרִים. Ros. is therefore right in saying of the Pashur under consideration: *videtur unus ex principibus sive aulicis fuisse*, cf. 38:4. Only Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah is called priest; and he, acc. to 29:25; 37:3; 52:24, held a high position in the priesthood. Inquire for us of Jahveh, i.e., ask for a revelation for us, as 2 Kings 22:13, cf. Gen. 25:22. It is not: pray for His help on our behalf, which is expressed by הִתְפִּיל בְּעַדְנוּ, 37:3, cf. 52:2. In the request for a revelation the element of intercession is certainly not excluded, but it is not directly expressed. But it is on this that the king founds his hope: Peradventure Jahveh will do with us (אֶתְנוּ for אֲוֶתְנוּ) according to all His wondrous works, i.e., in the miraculous

manner in which He has so often saved us, e.g., under Hezekiah, and also, during the blockade of the city by Sennacherib, had recourse to the prophet Isaiah and besought his intercession with the Lord, 2 Kings 19:2ff., Isa. 37:2ff. That he (Nebuch.) may go up from us. עָלָה, to march against a city in order to besiege it or take it, but with נָטַל, to withdraw from it, cf. 37:5, 1 Kings 15:19. As to the name Nebuchadrezzar, which corresponds more exactly than the Aramaic-Jewish Nebuchadnezzar with the *Nebucadurriusur* of the inscriptions ( נְבוּ כַדְרַא אֲצַר, i.e., *Nebo coronam servat*), see *Comm. on Daniel* at Dan. 1:1.

**Jeremiah 21:3–14.** The Lord’s reply through Jeremiah consists of three parts: *a.* The answer to the king’s hope that the Lord will save Jerusalem from the Chaldeans (vv. 4–7); *b.* The counsel given to the people and the royal family as to how they may avert ruin (vv. 8–12); *c.* The prediction that Jerusalem will be punished for her sins (vv. 13 and 14).

**Jeremiah 21:3–7.** *The answer.*—V. 3. “And Jeremiah said to them: Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah: V. 4. Thus hath Jahveh the God of Israel said: Behold, I turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and gather them together into the midst of this city. V. 5. And I fight against you with outstretched hand and strong arm, and with anger and fury and great wrath, V. 6. And smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; of a great plague they shall die. V. 7. And afterward, saith Jahveh, I will give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his servants, and the people—namely, such as in this city are left of the plague, of the sword, and of the famine—into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek after their life, that he may smite them according to the sharpness of the sword, not spare them, neither have pity nor mercy.” This answer is intended to disabuse the king and his servants of all hope of help from God. So far from saving them from

the Chaldeans, God will fight against them, will drive back into the city its defenders that are still holding out without the walls against the enemy; consume the inhabitants by sword, pestilence, famine; deliver the king, with his servants and all that survive inside the lines of the besiegers, into the hand of the latter, and unsparingly cause them to be put to death. "I make the weapons of war turn back" is carried on and explained by "I gather them into the city." The sense is: I will bring it about that ye, who still fight without the walls against the beleaguers, must turn back with your weapons and retreat into the city. "Without the walls" is not to be joined to **בְּמִקְוֵה**, because this is too remote, and **מִחֻזֵּי** is by usage locative, not ablative. It should go with "wherewith ye fight," etc.: wherewith ye fight without the walls against the beleaguering enemies. The siege had but just begun, so that the Jews were still trying to hinder the enemy from taking possession of stronger positions and from a closer blockade of the city. In this they will not succeed, but their weapons will be thrust back into the city.

**Jeremiah 21:7.** The Lord will make known His almighty power not for the rescue but for the chastisement of Judah. The words "with outstretched hand and strong arm" are a standing figure for the miraculous manifestation of God's power at the release of Israel from Egypt, Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 26:8. This power He will now exercise upon Israel, and execute the punishment threatened against apostasy at the renewal of the covenant by Moses in the land of Moab. The words **בְּיָמֵי** ... **נְדָוָה** are from Deut. 29:27. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are to perish during the siege by pestilence and disease, and the remainder, including the king and his servants, to be mercilessly massacred. "Great pestilence" alone is mentioned in v. 6, but in v. 7 there are sword and famine along with it. The **וְאֵת** before **הַנְּשָׂאָרִים** seems superfluous and unsuitable, since besides the king, his servants and the people, there could be none others left. The LXX

have therefore omitted it, and Hitz., Ew., Graf, and others propose to erase it. But the **ו** may be taken to be explicative: namely, such as are left, in which case **וְאֵת** serves to extend the participial clause to all the persons before mentioned, while without the **וְאֵת** the **הַנְּשָׂאָרִים** **וְגֵרֵי** could be referred only to **הָעָם**. "Into the hand of their enemies" is rhetorically amplified by "into the hand of those that seek," etc., as in 19:7, 9; 34:20, etc.; **לְפִי הַרְבֵּב**, according to the sharpness (or edge) of the sword, i.e., mercilessly (see on Gen. 34:26; in Jeremiah only here), explained by "not spare them," etc., cf. 13:14.

**Jeremiah 21:8-12.** *The counsel given to the people and royal family how to escape death.—V. 8. "And unto the people thou shalt say: Thus hath Jahveh said: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. V. 9. He that abideth in this city shall die by sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he that goeth out and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and have his soul for a prey. V. 10. For I have set my face on this city for evil and not for good, saith Jahveh; into the hand of the king of Babylon shall it be given, who shall burn it with fire. V. 11. And to the house of the king of Judah: Hear the word of Jahveh: V. 12. House of David! thus hath Jahveh said: Hold judgment every morning, and save the despoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury break forth as fire, and burn unquenchably, because of the evil of your doings."* What the prophet is here to say to the people and the royal house is not directly addressed to the king's envoy, but is closely connected with the answer he was to give to the latter, and serves to strengthen the same. We need not be hampered by the assumption that Jeremiah, immediately after that answer, communicated this advice, so that it might be made known to the people and to the royal house. The counsel given in vv. 8-12 to the people was during the siege repeatedly given by Jeremiah both to the king and to the people, cf. 38:1ff., 38:17ff., and 27:11ff., and many of the people acted by his advice, cf. 38:19; 39:9;

52:15. But the defenders of the city, the authorities, saw therein treason, or at least a highly dangerous discouragement to those who were fighting, and accused the prophet as a traitor, 38:4ff., cf. 37:13. Still Jeremiah, holding his duty higher than his life, remained in the city, and gave as his opinion, under conviction attained to only by divine revelation, that all resistance is useless, since God has irrevocably decreed the destruction of Jerusalem as a punishment for their sins. The idea of v. 7 is clothed in words taken from Deut. 30:15, cf. 11:26. יָשַׁב, v. 9, as opposed to יָצַד, does not mean: to dwell, but: to sit still, abide. To fall to the Chaldeans, i.e., to go over to them, cf. 37:14; 39:9, 2 Kings 25:11; עָל is interchanged with אָל, 37:13; 38:19; 52:15. The *Chet*. יָחִיָּה is right, corresponding to יָמוּת; the *Keri*. וְחָיָה is wrong. His life shall be to him for a prey, i.e., he shall carry it thence as a prey, i.e., preserve it. V. 10 gives the reason for the advice given. For I have set my face, cf. 44:11, recalls Amos 9:4, only there we have עֵינַי for פָּנַי, as in 24:6. To set the face or eye on one means: to pay special heed to him, in good (cf. 39:12) or in evil sense; hence the addition, “for evil,” etc.

**Jeremiah 21:11f.** The kingly house, i.e., the king and his family, under which are here comprehended not merely women and children, but also the king’s companions, his servants and councillors; they are counselled to hold judgment every morning. דִּין מְשַׁפֵּט = דִּין דִּין, 5:28; 22:16, or שֹׁפֵט מְשַׁפֵּט, Lam. 3:59, 1 Kings 3:28. לְבִקְרָה distributively, every morning, as Amos 4:4. To save the despoiled out of the hand of the oppressor means: to defend his just cause against the oppressor, to defend him from being despoiled; cf. 22:3. The form of address; House of David, which is by a displacement awkwardly separated from שְׁמֵעוּ, is meant to remind the kingly house of its origin, its ancestor David, who walked in the ways of the Lord.—The second half of the verse, “lest my fury,” etc., runs like 4:4.

**Jeremiah 21:13, 14.** *The chastisement of Jerusalem.*—V. 13. “Behold, I am against thee, inhabitress of the valley, of the rock of the plain, saith Jahveh, ye who say: Who shall come down against us, and who shall come into our dwellings? V. 14. And will visit you according to the fruit of your doings, saith Jahveh, and kindle a fire in her forest, that it may devour all her surroundings.” This threatening is levelled against the citizens of Jerusalem, who vaunted the impregnableness of their city. The inhabitress of the valley is the daughter of Zion, the population of Jerusalem personified. The situation of the city is spoken of as עֲמֻק, ravine between mountains, in respect that Jerusalem was encircled by mountains of greater height (Ps. 125:2); and as rock of the plain, i.e., the region regarded as a level from which Mount Zion, the seat of the kingdom, rose, equivalent to rock of the field, 17:3. In the “rock” we think specially of Mount Zion, and in the “valley” of the so-called lower city. The two designations are chosen to indicate the strong situation of Jerusalem. On this the inhabitants pride themselves, who say: Who shall come down against us? יָחַת for יָנַחַת, from נָחַת; cf. Ew. § 139, c. Dwellings, cf. 25:30, not cities or refuge or coverts of wild animals; מְעוֹן has not this force, but can at most acquire it from the context; see Del. on Ps. 26:8. The strength of the city will not shield the inhabitants from the punishment with which God will visit them. “According to the fruit,” etc., cf. 17:10. I kindle fire in her forest. The city is a forest of houses, and the figure is to be explained by the simile in 22:6, but was not suggested by מְעוֹן = *lustra ferarum* (Hitz.). All her surroundings, how much more then the city itself!

## Jeremiah 22

**Jeremiah 22:1–23:8.** Rebuke of the Ungodly Kings Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, and Promise of a Righteous Branch of David.—This discourse begins with an exhortation to the king, his servants, and the people to do right and justice, and to eschew all unrighteousness, and with the

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warning, that in case of the contrary the royal palace will be reduced to ruins and Jerusalem destroyed by fire. After touching briefly on the fate of Jehoahaz, who has been deported to Egypt (vv. 10–12), the discourse turns against Jehoiakim, rebukes his tyranny, in that he builds his house with unrighteousness and schemes only bloodshed and violence, and threatens him with ignominious ruin (vv. 13–19). Then, after a threatening against Jerusalem (vv. 20–23), it deals with Jechoniah, who is told he shall be carried to Babylon never to return, and without any descendant to sit on his throne (vv. 24–30). Next, after an outcry of grief at the wicked shepherds, follows the promise that the Lord will gather the remnant of His flock out of all the lands whither they have been driven, that He will restore them to their fields and multiply them, and that He will raise up to them a good shepherd in the righteous branch of David (Jeremiah 23:1–8).—According to 21:1, Jeremiah spoke these words in the house of the king of Judah; whence we see that in this passage we have not merely ideas and scraps of addresses gathered together, such as had been on various occasions orally delivered by the prophet. It further appears from v. 10 and vv. 13–17, that the portion of the discourse addressed to Jehoiakim was uttered in the first year of his reign; and from v. 24, where Jechoniah is addressed as king, that the utterance concerning him belongs to the short period (only three months long) of his reign. But the utterance concerning Jechoniah is joined with that concerning Jehoiakim on account of the close relationship in matter between them. The exhortation and warning against injustice, forming the introduction, as regards its contents, fits very well into the time of Jehoiakim (cf. v. 17 with v. 3). The promise with which the discourse concludes was apparently not spoken till the time of Jechoniah, shortly before his being taken to Babylon. So that we have here the discourses of Jeremiah belonging to the times of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin respectively, joined into one continuous whole.

**Jeremiah 22:1–9.** *The king is warned against injustice, and the violent oppression of the poor and defenceless.—V. 1. “Thus said Jahveh: Go down to the house of the king of Judah and speak there this word, V. 2. And say: Hear the word of Jahveh, thou king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people, that go in by these gates. V. 3. Thus hath Jahveh said: Do ye right and justice, and save the despoiled out of the hand of the oppressor; to stranger, orphan, and widow do no wrong, no violence; and innocent blood shed not in this place. V. 4. For if ye will do this word indeed, then by the gates of this place there shall come in kings that sit upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people. V. 5. But if ye hearken not to these words, by myself have I sworn, saith Jahve, that this house shall become a desolation. V. 6. For thus hath Jahveh said concerning the house of the king of Judah: A Gilead art thou to me, a head of Lebanon; surely I will make thee a wilderness, cities uninhabited; V. 7. And will consecrate against thee destroyers, each with his tools, who shall hew down the choice of thy cedars and cast them into the fire. V. 8. And there shall pass many peoples by this city, and one shall say to the other: Wherefore hath Jahveh done thus unto this great city? V. 9. And they will say: Because they have forsaken the covenant of Jahveh their God, and worshipped other gods and served them.”*

Go down into the house of the king. The prophet could go down only from the temple; cf. 36:12 and 26:10. Not only the king is to hear the word of the Lord, but his servants too, and the people, who go in by these gates, the gates of the royal castle. The exhortation: to do right and justice, etc., is only an expansion of the brief counsel at 21:12, and that brought home to the heart of the whole people in 7:6, cf. Ezek. 22:6f. The form עֲשׂוּקָא for עֲשׂוּקָא, 21:12, occurs only here, but is formed analogously to גְּדוּלָא, and cannot be objected to. אֶל-תִּגְנוּ is strengthened by “do no violence.” On “kings riding,” etc., cf. 17:25.—With v. 5 cf. 17:27, where, however,

the threatening is otherwise worded. **בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי**, cf. Gen. 22:16. **כִּי** introduces the contents of the oath. "This house" is the royal palace. **לְחֵרֶבָה** as in 7:34, cf. 27:17. The threatening is illustrated in v. 6 by further description of the destruction of the palace. The royal castle is addressed, and, in respect of its lofty situation and magnificence, is called a Gilead and a head of Lebanon. It lay on the north-eastern eminence of Mount Zion (see on 1 Kings 7:12, note 1), and contained the so-called forest-house of Lebanon (1 Kings 7:2–5) and various other buildings built of cedar, or, at least, faced with cedar planks (cf. vv. 14, 23); so that the entire building might be compared to a forest of cedars on the summit of Lebanon. In the comparison to Gilead, Gilead can hardly be adduced in respect of its great fertility as a pasturing land (Num. 32:1; Mic. 7:14), but in virtue of the thickly wooded covering of the hill-country of Gilead on both sides of the Jabbok. This is still in great measure clothed with oak thickets and, according to Buckingham, the most beautiful forest tracts that can be imagined; cf. C. v. Raumer, *Pal.* S. 82. **אִם לֹא** is a particle of asseveration. This glorious forest of cedar buildings is to become a **מִדְבָּר**, a treeless steppe, cities uninhabited. "Cities" refers to the thing compared, not to the emblem; and the plural, as being the form for indefinite generality, presents no difficulty. And the attachment thereto of a singular predicate has many analogies in its support, cf. Ew. § 317, a. The *Keri* **נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי** is an uncalled for emendation of the *Chet*. **נִשְׁבַּחְתִּי**, cf. 6:5.—"I consecrate," in respect that the destroyers are warriors whom God sends as the executors of His will, see on 6:4. With "a man and his weapons," cf. Ezek. 9:2. In keeping with the figure of a forest, the destruction is represented as the hewing down of the choicest cedars; cf. Isa. 10:34.—Thus is to be accomplished in Jerusalem what Moses threatened, Deut. 29:33; the destroyed city will become a monument of God's wrath against the transgressors of His covenant. V. 8 is modelled upon Deut. 29:23ff., cf. 1 Kings 9:8f., and made

to bear upon Jerusalem, since, along with the palace, the city too is destroyed by the enemy. From v. 10 onwards the exhortation to the evil shepherds becomes a prophecy concerning the kings of that time, who by their godless courses hurried on the threatened destruction. The prophecy begins with King Jehoahaz, who, after a reign of three months, had been discrowned by Pharaoh Necho and carried captive to Egypt; 2 Kings 23:30–35, 2 Chron. 36:1–4.

**Jeremiah 22:10–12.** *On Jehoahaz.*—V. 10. "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; weep rather for him that is gone away, for he shall no more return and see the land of his birth. V. 11. For thus saith Jahveh concerning Shallum, the son of Josiah king of Judah, who became king in his father Josiah's stead, and who went forth from this place: He shall not return thither more; V. 12. but in the place whither they have carried hi captive, there shall he die and see this land no more." The clause: weep not for the dead, with which the prophecy on Shallum is begun, shows that the mourning for King Josiah was kept up and was still heartily felt amongst the people (2 Chron. 35:24ff.), and that the circumstances of his death were still fresh in their memory. **לִמָּוֶת** without the article, although Josiah, slain in battle at Megiddo, is meant, because there was no design particularly to define the person. Him that goes or is gone away. He, again, is defined and called Shallum. This Shallum, who became king in his father Josiah's place, can be none other than Josiah's successor, who is called Joahaz in 2 Kings 23:30ff., 2 Chron. 36:1; as was seen by Chrysost. and Aben-Ezra, and, since Grotius, by most commentators. The only question is, why he should here be called Shallum. According to Frc. Junius, Hitz., and Graf, Jeremiah compares Joahaz on account of his short reign with Shallum in Israel, who reigned but one month (2 Kings 15:13), and ironically calls him Shallum, as Jezebel called Jehu, *Zimri* murderer of his lord, 2 Kings 9:31. This explanation is unquestionably erroneous, since irony of such a sort is inconsistent with what Jeremiah says of Shallum. More plausible seems Hgstb.'s opinion, *Christ.* ii. p. 401, that



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Jeremiah gives Joahaz the name Shallum, i.e., the requited (cf. שָׁלַם, 1 Chron. 6:13, = שָׁלַם, 1 Chron. 9:11), as *nomen reale*, to mark him out as the man the Lord had punished for the evil of his doings. But this conjecture too is overthrown by the fact, that in the genealogy of the kings of Judah, 1 Chron. 3:15, we find among the four sons of Josiah the name שָׁלֻם instead of Joahaz. Now this name cannot have come there from the present passage, for the genealogies of Chronicles are derived from old family registers. That this is so in the case of Josiah's sons, appears from the mention there of a fourth, Johanan, over and above the three known to history, of whom we hear nothing more. In the genealogical tables persons are universally mentioned by their own proper names, not according to "renamings" or surnames, except in the case that these have received the currency and value of historical names, as e.g., Israel for Jacob. On the ground of the genealogical table 1 Chron. 3 we must accordingly hold that Joahaz was properly called Shallum, and that probably at his accession he assumed the name יְהוֹאָחָז, "Jahveh sustains, holds." But Jeremiah might still have used the name Shallum in preference to the assumed *Joahaz*, because the former had verified itself in that king's fate. With v. 11b and 12, cf. 2 Kings 23:33–35.—The brief saying in regard to Joahaz forms the transition from the general censure of the wicked rulers of Judah who brought on the ruin of the kingdom, to the special predictions concerning the ungodly kings Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, in whose time the judgment burst forth. In counselling not to weep for the dead king (Josiah), but for the departed one (Joahaz), Jeremiah does not mean merely to bewail the lot of the king carried prisoner to Egypt, but to foreshadow the misery that awaits the whole people. From this point of view Calv. well says: *si lugenda est urbis hujus clades, potius lugendi sunt qui manebunt superstites quam qui morientur. Mors enim erit quasi requies, erit portus ad finienda omnia mala: Vita autem longior nihil aliud erit quam continua miseriarum series*; and further, that in

the words: he shall no more return and see the land of his birth, Jeremiah shows: *exilium fore quasi tabem, quae paulatim consumat miseros Judaeos. Ita mors fuisset illis dulcior longe, quam sic diu cruciari et nihil habere relaxationis*. In the lot of the two kings the people had to recognise what was in store for itself.

**Jeremiah 22:13–19.** *The woe uttered upon Jehoiakim.*—V. 13. "Woe unto him that buildeth his house with unrighteousness and his upper chambers with wrong, that maketh his fellow labour for nought, and giveth him not his hire; V. 14. That saith: I will build me a wide house and spacious upper chambers, and cutteth him out many windows, and covereth it with cedars, and painteth it with vermilion. V. 15. Art thou a king of thou viest in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink, and do right and justice? Then it went well with him. V. 16. He did justice to the poor and wretched, then it was well. Is not this to know me? saith Jahveh. V. 17. For on nothing are thine eyes and thy heart set but on gain and on the blood of the innocent, to shed it, and on oppression and violence, to do them. V. 18. Therefore thus saith Jahveh concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah: They shall not mourn for him, saying: Alas, my brother! and alas, sister! they shall not mourn for him: Alas, lord! and alas for his glory! V. 19. An ass's burial shall his burial be, dragged and cast far away from the gates of Jerusalem."

The prediction as to Jehoiakim begins with a woe upon the unjust oppression of the people. The oppression consisted in his building a magnificent palace with the sweat and blood of his subjects, whom he compelled to do forced labour without giving the labourers wages. The people must have felt this burden all the more severely that Jehoiakim, to obtain the throne, had bound himself to pay to Pharaoh a large tribute, the gold and silver for which he raised from the population according to Pharaoh's own valuation, 2 Kings 23:33ff. With "Woe to him that buildeth," etc., cf. Hab. 2:12, Mic. 3:10. "That maketh his fellow labour," lit., through his neighbour he works, i.e., he causes the work to be done by his neighbour (fellow-man) for nought, without giving him wages, forces him to

unpaid statute-labour. עָבַד בּ as in Lev. 25:39, 46. פָּעַל, labour, work, gain, then wages, cf. Job 7:2. Jehoiakim sought to increase the splendour of his kingship by palace-building. To this the speech points, put in his mouth at v. 14: I will build me מְדוֹת, a house of extensions, i.e., a palace in the grand style, with spacious halls, vast chambers. מְרוּחַ from רוּחַ, to find vent, cheer up, 1 Sam. 16:23; not airy, but spacious, for quite a modest house might have airy chambers. וְקָרַע is a continuation of the participle; literally: and he cuts himself out windows, makes huge openings in the walls for windows. This verb is used in 4:30 of opening up the eyes with paint. חִלּוֹנֵי presents some difficulty, seeing that the suffix of the first person makes no sense. It has therefore been held to be a contracted plural form (Gesen. *Lehrgeb.* S. 523) or for a dual (Ew. § 177, a), but without any proof of the existence of such formations, since גּוֹבֵי, Amos 7:1, Nah. 3:17, is to be otherwise explained (see on Amos 7:1). Following on the back of J. D. Mich., Hitz., Graf, and Böttcher (*ausf. Gramm.* § 414) propose to connect the ו before חִלּוֹנֵי with this word and to read חִלּוֹנֵי: and tears open for himself his windows; in support of which it is alleged that one *cod.* so reads. But this one *cod.* can decide nothing, and the suffix *his* is superfluous, even unsuitable, seeing that there can be no thought of another person's building; whereas the copula cannot well be omitted before חִלּוֹנֵי. For the rule adduced for this, that the manner of the principal action is frequently explained by appending infinitives *absoll.* (Ew. § 280, a), does not meet the present case; the covering with cedar, etc., does not refer to the windows, and so cannot be an explanation of the cutting out for himself. We therefore hold, with Böttcher (*Proben*, S. 40), that חִלּוֹנֵי is an adjective formation, with the force of: abundant in windows, since this formation is completely accredited by כִּילֵי and חֲרֵי (cf. Ew. § 164, c); and the objection alleged against this by Graf, that

then no object is specified for "cutteth out," is not of much weight, it being easy to supply the object from the preceding "house:" and he cuts it out for himself abounding in windows. There needs be no change of חִלּוֹנֵי into חִלּוֹנֵי. For although the *inf.* *absoll.* would be quite in place as continuation of the *verb. fin.* (cf. Ew. § 351, c), yet it is not necessary. The word is attached in zeugma to וְקָרַע or חִלּוֹנֵי: and he covers with cedar, to: faces or overlays, for this verb does not mean to plank or floor, for which צָפַח is the usual word, but hide, cover, and is used 1 Kings 6:9; 7:3, for roofing. The last statement is given in *inf.* *absoll.*: וּמָשׁוּחַ, and besmears it, paints it (the building) with שֵׁשֶׁר, red ochre, a brilliant colour (LXX μίλτος, i.e., acc. to Kimchi, red lead; see Gesen. *thess s.v.*).

**Jeremiah 22:15.** In v. 15 Jeremiah pursues the subject: kingship and kingcraft do not consist in the erection of splendid palaces, but in the administration of right and justice. The reproachful question הֲתִמְלִיךְ has not the meaning: wilt thou reign long? or wilt thou consolidate thy dominion? but: dost thou suppose thyself to be a king, to show thyself a king, if thy aim and endeavour is solely fixed on the building of a stately palace? "Viest," as in 12:5. בְּאֶרְזוֹ, not: with the cedar, for תַּחְרָה is construed with the accus. of that with which one vies, but: in cedar, i.e., in the building of cedar palaces. It was not necessary to say with whom he vied, since the thought of Solomon's edifices would suggest itself. The LXX have changed בְּאֶרְזוֹ by a pointless *quid pro quo* into באַחַז, ἐν Ἀχαζ, for which *Cod. Alex.* and *Arabs* have ἐν Ἀγαάβ. The fact that Ahab had built a palace veneered with ivory (1 Kings 22:39) is not sufficient to approve this reading, which Ew. prefers. Still less cause is there to delete בְּאֶרְזוֹ as a gloss (Hitz.) in order to obtain the rendering, justified neither by grammar nor in fact, "if thou contendest with thy father." To confirm what he has said, the prophet sets before the worthless king the example of his

godly father Josiah. “Thy father, did not he eat and drink,” i.e., enjoy life (cf. Eccles. 2:24; 3:13)? yet at the same time he administered right and justice, like his forefather David; 2 Sam. 8:15. Then went it well with him and the kingdom. אָז טוב, v. 16, is wider than לוֹ טוב: in respect that he did justice to the poor and wretched, things went well, were well managed in the kingdom at large. In so doing consists “the knowing of me.” The knowledge of Jahveh is the practical recognition of God which is displayed in the fear of God and a pious life. The infinitive *nomin.* דַּעַת has the article because a special emphasis lies on the word (cf. Ew. § 277, c), the true knowledge of God required to have stress laid on it.—But Jehoiakim is the reverse of his father. This thought, lying in v. 16, is illustrated in v. 17. For thine eyes are set upon nothing but gain. בְּצַעַ, gain with the suggestion of unrighteousness about it, cf. 6:13; 8:10. His whole endeavour was after wealth and splendour. The means of attaining this aim was injustice, since he not only withheld their wages from his workers (v. 13), but caused the innocent to be condemned in the judgment that he might grasp their goods to himself, as e.g., Ahab had done with Naboth. He also put to death the prophets who rebuked his unrighteousness, 26:23, and used every kind of lawless violence. “Oppression” is amplified by הַמְרוּצָה (from רָצַץ, cf. Deut. 28:33, 1 Sam. 12:3), crushing, “what we call flaying people” (Hitz.); cf. on this subject, Mic. 3:3.

**Jeremiah 22:18f.** As punishment for this, his end will be full of horrors; when he dies he will not be bemoaned and mourned for, and will lie unburied. To have an ass’s burial means: to be left unburied in the open field, or cast into a flaying-ground, inasmuch as they drag out the dead body and cast it far from the gates of Jerusalem. The words: Alas, my brother! alas, etc.! are *ipsissima verba* of the regular mourners who were procured to bewail the deaths of men and women. The LXX took objection to the “alas, sister,” and left it out, applying the words literally to Jehoiakim’s death; whereas the

words are but a rhetorical individualizing of the general idea: they will make no death-laments for him, and the omission destroys the parallelism. His glory, i.e., the king’s. The idea is: neither his relatives nor his subjects will lament his death. The *infinn. absol.* סָחַב וְהִשְׁלָךְ, dragging forth and casting (him), serve to explain: the burial of an ass, etc. In 36:30, where Jeremiah repeats this prediction concerning Jehoiakim, it is said: His dead body shall be cast out (exposed) to the heat by day and to the cold by night, i.e., rot unburied under the open sky.

As to the fulfilment of this prophecy, we are told, indeed, in 2 Kings 24:6 that Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, and Jehoiachin, his son, was king in his stead. But the phrase “to sleep with his fathers” denotes merely departure from this life, without saying anything as to the manner of the death. It is not used only of kings who died a peaceful death on a sickbed, but of Ahab (1 Kings 22:40), who, mortally wounded in the battle, died in the war-chariot. There is no record of Jehoiakim’s funeral obsequies or burial in 2 Kings 24, and in Chron. there is not even mention made of his death. Three years after the first siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and after he had become tributary to the king of Babylon, Jehoiakim rose in insurrection, and Nebuchadnezzar sent against him the troops of the Chaldeans, Aramaeans, Moabites, and Ammonites. It was not till after the accession of Jehoiachin that Nebuchadnezzar himself appeared before Jerusalem and besieged it (2 Kings 24:1, 2, and 10). So it is in the highest degree probable that Jehoiakim fell in battle against the Chaldean-Syrian armies before Jerusalem was besieged, and while the enemies were advancing against the city; also that he was left to lie unburied outside of Jerusalem; see on 2 Kings 24:6, where other untenable attempts to harmonize are discussed. The absence of direct testimony to the fulfilment of the prophecy before us can be no ground for doubting that it was fulfilled, when we consider the great brevity of the notices of the last kings’ reigns given by the

authors of the books of Kings and Chronicles. Graf's remark hereon is excellent: "We have a warrant for the fulfilment of this prediction precisely in the fact that it is again expressly recounted in Jeremiah 36, a historical passage written certainly at a later time (Jeremiah 36:30 seems to contain but a slight reference to the prediction in 22:18, 19, 30); or, while 22:12, 25ff. tallies so completely with the history, is 22:18f. to be held as contradicting it?"

**Jeremiah 22:20–23.** *The ruin about to fall on Judah.*—V. 20. "Go up on Lebanon and cry, and lift up thy voice in Bashan and cry from Abarim; for broken are all thy lovers. V. 21. I spake to thee in thy prosperity; thou saidst: I will not hear; that was thy way from thy youth up, that thou hearkenedst not to my voice. V. 22. All thy shepherds the wind shall sweep away, and thy lovers shall go into captivity; yea, then shalt thou be put to shame and ashamed for all thy wickedness. V. 23. Thou that dwellest on Lebanon and makest thy nest on cedars, how shalt thou sigh when pangs come upon thee, pain as of a woman in travail!"—It is the people personified as the daughter of Zion, the collective population of Jerusalem and Judah, that is addressed, as in 7:29. She is to lift up her wailing cry upon the highest mountains, that it may be heard far and near. The peaks of the mountain masses that bordered Palestine are mentioned, from which one would have a view of the land; namely, Lebanon northwards, the mountains of Bashan (Ps. 86:16) to the north-east, those of Abarim to the south-east, amongst which was Mount Nebo, whence Moses viewed the land of Canaan, Num. 27:12, Deut. 32:49. She is to lament because all her lovers are destroyed. The lovers are not the kings (Ros., Ew., Neum. Näg.), nor the idols (Umbr.), but the allied nations (J. D. Mich., Maur., Hitz.), for whose favour Judah had intrigued (Jeremiah 4:30)—Egypt (Jeremiah 2:36) and the little neighbouring states (Jeremiah 27:3). All these nations were brought under the yoke by Nebuchadnezzar, and could not longer give Judah help (Jeremiah 28:14; 30:14). On the form צַעֲקִי, see Ew. 41, c.

**Jeremiah 22:21.** The cause of this calamity: because Judah in its prosperity had not hearkened to the voice of its God. שְׁלוֹת, from שְׁלוּחַ, security, tranquillity, state of well-being free from anxiety; the plur. denotes the peaceful, secure relations. Thus Judah had behaved from youth up, i.e., from the time it had become the people of God and been led out of captivity; see 2:2, Hos. 2:17.—In v. 22 תִּרְעָה is chosen for the sake of the word-play with רֵעִידָה, and denotes to depasture, as in 2:16. As the storm-wind, especially the parching east wind, depastures, so to speak, the grass of the field, so will the storm about to break on Judah sweep away the shepherds, carry them off; cf. 13:24, Isa. 27:8, Job 27:21. The shepherds of the people are not merely the kings, but all its leaders, the authorities generally, as in 10:21; and "thy shepherds" is not equivalent to "thy lovers," but the thought is this: Neither its allies nor its leaders will be able to help; the storm of calamity will sweep away the former, the latter must go captive. So that there is no need to alter רֵעִידָה into רֵעִידָה (Hitz.). With the last clause cf. 2:36. Then surely will the daughter of Zion, feeling secure in her cedar palaces, sigh bitterly. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are said to dwell in Lebanon and to have their nests in cedars in reference to the palaces of cedar belonging to the great and famous, who at the coming destruction will suffer most. As to the forms יִשְׁבְּתִי and מִקְנֵי־תִי, see on 10:17. The explanation of the form גְּחֵנִתִי is disputed. Ros., Ges., and others take it for the Niph. of חָנַן, with the force: to be compassionated, thus: who deserving of pity or compassion wilt thou be! But this rendering does not give a very apt sense, even if it were not the case that the sig. to be worthy of pity is not approved by usage, and that it is nowhere taken from the Niph. We therefore prefer the derivation of the word from אָנַח, Niph. גָּאָחָה, contr. גָּחָה, a derivative founded on the LXX rendering: τὴ καταστενάξεις, and Vulg. *quomodo congemuisti*. The only question that

then remains is, whether the form **יְהוֹיָכִן** has arisen by transposition from **יְהוֹיָחִין**, so as to avoid the coming together of the same letter at the beginning (Ew., Hitz., Gr.); or whether, with Böttch. *ausf. Gramm.* § 1124, B, it is to be held as a reading corrupted from **יְהוֹיָחִין**. With “pangs,” etc., cf. 13:21; 6:24.

**Jeremiah 22:24–30.** *Against Jehoiachin or Jechoniah.*—V. 24. “As I live, saith Jahveh, though Conjahu, the son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, were a signet ring on my right hand, yet would I pluck him thence, V. 25. And give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them of whom thou art afraid, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans; V. 26. And will cast thee and thy mother that bare thee into another land where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. V. 27. And into the land whither they lift up their soul to return, thither shall they not return. V. 28. Is this man Conjahu a vessel despised and to be broken, or an utensil wherein one has no pleasure? V. 29. O land, land, land, hear the word of Jahveh! V. 30. Thus hath Jahveh said: Write down this man as childless, as a man that hath no prosperity in his life; for no man of his seed shall prosper that sitteth upon the throne of David and ruleth widely over Judah.”

The son and successor of Jehoiakim is called in 2 Kings 24:6ff., 2 Chron. 36:8f., Jeremiah 52:31, *Jehojachin*, and in Ezek. 1:2, *Jojachin*; here, vv. 24, 28, and 37:1, *Conjahu*; in 24:1, *Jeconjahu*; and in 27:20; 28:4; 29:2, Esth. 2:6, 1 Chron. 3:16, *Jeconjah*. The names Jeconjahu and abbreviated Jeconjah are equivalent to Jojachin and Jehojachin, i.e., Jahveh will establish. Jeconjah was doubtless his original name, and so stands in the family register, 1 Chron. 3:16, but was at his accession to the throne changed into Jehojachin or Jojachin, to make it liker his father’s name. The abbreviation of Jeconjahu into Conjahu is held by Hgstb. *Christol.* ii. p. 402, to be a change made by Jeremiah in order by cutting off the **י** (*will establish*) to cut off the hope expressed by the name, to make “a Jechoniah without the J, a ‘God will establish’

without the *will*.” For two reasons we cannot adopt this as the true view: 1. The general reason, that if Jeremiah had wished to adumbrate the fate of the three kings (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin) by making changes in their names, he would then have changed the name of Jehoiakim in like manner as he did that of Jehoahaz into Shallum, and that of Jehoiachin into Conjahu. The argument by which Hgstb. seeks to justify the exception in the one case will not hold its own. Had Jeremiah thought it unseemly to practise a kind of conceit, for however solemn a purpose, on the name of the then reigning monarch, then neither could he have ventured on the like in the case of Jehoiachin; for the present prediction was not, as Hgstb. assumed, uttered before his accession, but, as may be seen from the title king of Judah, v. 24, after he had ascended the throne, was actually king. Besides. 2. the name Conjahu occurs also at 37:1, in a historical heading, as of equal dignity with Jeconjahu, 29:2; 28:4, etc., where a name proper only to prophetic discourse would not have been in place. The passages in which the prophets express the character and destiny of a person in a name specially formed for the purpose, are of another kind. There we have always: they shall call his name, or: his name shall be; cf. 33:16, Isa. 9:5; 62:4, Ezek. 48:35. That the name *Jeconjah* has not merely the prophet’s authority, is vouched for by 1 Chron. 3:15, Esth. 2:6, and by the historical notices, Jeremiah 24:1; 27:20; 28:4; 29:2. And the occurrence of the name Jojachin only in 2 Kings 24, 2 Chron. 36, Jeremiah 52:31, and Ezek. 1:2 is in consequence of the original documents used by the authors of these books, where, so to speak, the official names were made use of; whereas Jeremiah preferred the proper, original name which the man bore as the prince-royal and son of Jehoiakim, and which was therefore the current and best known one. The utterance concerning Jechoniah is more distinct and decided than that concerning Jehoiakim. With a solemn oath the Lord not only causes to be made known to him that he is to be cast off and taken into exile, but further,

that his descendants are debarred from the throne for ever. Nothing is said of his own conduct towards the Lord. In 2 Kings 24:9 and 2 Chron. 36:9 it is said of him that he did that which was displeasing to the Lord, even as his father had done. Ezekiel confirms this sentence when in 19:5–9 he portrays him as a young lion that devoured men, forced widows, and laid cities waste. The words of Jahveh: Although Conjahu were a signet ring on my right hand, convey no judgment as to his character, but simply mean: Although he were as precious a jewel in the Lord's eyes as a signet ring (cf. Hag. 2:23), the Lord would nevertheless cast him away. כִּי before אִם introduces the body of the oath, as in v. 5, and is for rhetorical effect repeated before the apodosis, as in 2 Sam. 3:9; 2:27, etc. Although he were, sc. what he is not; not: although he is (Graf); for there is no proof for the remark: that as being the prince set by Jahveh over His people, he has really as close a connection with Him. Hitz.'s explanation is also erroneous: "even if, seeking help, he were to cling so closely to me as a ring does to the finger." A most unnatural figure, not supported by reference to Cant. 8:6. As to אֶתְקַנְךָ, from תִּקַּח with *epenth.*, cf. Ew. § 250, *b.*—From v. 25 on, the discourse is addressed directly to Jechoniah, to make his rejection known to him. God will deliver him into the hand of his enemies, whom he fears, namely, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, and cast him with his mother into a strange land, where he shall die. The mother was called *Nehushta*, 2 Kings 24:8, and is brought forward in 29:2 as גְּבִירָה. On the fulfilment of this threatening, see 2 Kings 24:12, 15, Jeremiah 24:1; 29:2. The construction אֶתְקַנְךָ אֶתְקַנְךָ is like that of נִבְרִיָה הַגָּפֶן, 2:21; and the absence of the article from אֶתְקַנְךָ is no sufficient reason for holding it to be a gloss (Hitz.), or for taking the article in אֶתְקַנְךָ to be a slip caused by אֶתְקַנְךָ, v. 27. To lift up their souls, i.e., to direct their longings, wishes, towards a thing, cf. Deut. 24:15, Hos. 4:8, etc.—The further sentence on Jechoniah was not

pronounced after he had been carried captive, as Näg. infers from the perfects הוֹטְלוּ and הִשְׁלָכוּ. The perfects are prophetic. The question: Is this man a vessel despised and to be broken (עֵצָב, *vas fictile*)? is an expression of sympathising regret on the part of the prophet for the unhappy fate of the king; but we may not hence conclude that Jeremiah regarded him as better than his father. The prophet's sympathy for his fate regarded less the person of the unfortunate king than it did the fortunes of David's royal seed, in that, of Jechoniah's sons, none was to sit on the throne of David (v. 30). Ew. has excellently paraphrased the sense: "Although there is many a sympathising heart in the land that bitterly laments the hard fate of the dear young king, who along with his infant children has been (? will be) dragged away, yet it is God's unchangeable decree that neither he nor any of his sons shall ascend the throne of David." גְּבוּיָךְ, not: broken, but: that shall be broken (cf. Ew. § 335, *b*). Wherefore are they—he and his seed—cast out? At his accession Jehoiachin was eighteen years old, not eight, as by an error stands in 2 Chron. 36:9, see on 2 Kings 24:8; so that when taken captive, he might well enough have children, or at least one son, since his wives are expressly mentioned in the account of the captivity, 2 Kings 24:15. That the sons mentioned in 1 Chron. 3:16 and 17 were born to him in exile, cannot be inferred from that passage, rightly understood, see on that passage. The fact that no sons are mentioned in connection with the carrying captive is simply explained by the fact that they were still infants.

**Jeremiah 22:29.** The land is to take the king's fate sore to heart. The triple repetition of the summons: Land, gives it a special emphasis, and marks the following sentence as of high importance; cf. 7:4, Ezek. 21:32, Isa. 6:3. Write him down, record him in the family registers, as childless, i.e., as a man with whom his race becomes extinct. This is more definitely intimated in the parallel member, namely, that he will not have the fortune to have any of his posterity sit on the throne of David. This does

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not exclude the possibility of his having sons; it merely implies that none of them should obtain the throne. עָרִירִי sig. lit., solitary, forsaken. Thus a man might well be called who has lost his children by death. Acc. to 1 Chron. 3:16f., Jechoniah had two sons, Zedekiah and Assir, of whom the former died childless, the second had but one daughter; and from her and her husband, of the line of Nathan, was born Shealtiel, who also died childless; see the expos. of 1 Chron. 3:16f. Jechoniah was followed on the throne by his uncle Mattaniah, whom Nebuchadnezzar installed under the name of Zedekiah. He it was that rose in insurrection against the king of Babylon, and after the capture of Jerusalem was taken prisoner while in flight; and being carried before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, saw his sons put to death before his eyes, was then made blind, thrown in chains, and carried a prisoner to Babylon, 2 Kings 25:4ff.

### Jeremiah 23

**Jeremiah 23:1–8.** *The gathering again of the flock, scattered by the evil shepherds, by meant of the righteous branch from the stock of David.—* V. 1. *“Woe to shepherds that destroy and scatter the flock of my pasturing! saith Jahveh. V. 2. Therefore thus saith Jahveh, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds that feed my people: Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and not visited them; behold, I will visit on you the evil of your doings, saith Jahveh. V. 3. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all lands whither I have driven them, and bring them back to their pasture, that they may be fruitful and increase; V. 4. And will raise up over them shepherds that shall feed them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor be lacking, saith Jahveh. V. 5. Behold, days come, saith Jahveh, that I raise up unto David a righteous branch, that shall reign as king, and deal wisely, and do right and justice in the land. V. 6. In his days Judah shall have welfare, and Israel dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jahveh our Righteousness. V. 7. Therefore, behold, days come, saith Jahveh, that*

*they shall no more say: By the life of Jahveh who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt, V. 8. But: By the life of Jahveh who brought up and led forth the seed of the house of Israel out of the land towards midnight, and out of all the lands whither I had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land.”*

This portion is the conclusion of the prophecy concerning the shepherds of Israel, Jeremiah 22. In vv. 1 and 2 what has been foretold concerning the last kings of Judah is condensed into one general sentence, so as thus to form a point of connection for the declaration of salvation which follows at v. 3, consisting in the gathering again of the people, neglected and scattered by the evil shepherds, by means of the righteous branch of David. The Lord cries woe upon the shepherds. רָעִים without article, because the matter concerns all evil shepherds, and is not applied till v. 2 to the evil rulers of Judah. Venema rightly says: *Generale vae pastoribus malis praemittitur, quod mox ad pastores Judae applicatur.* It is so clear from the context as to have been generally admitted by recent comm., that by shepherds are meant not merely the false prophets and priests, nor even these along with the kings; cf. on 3:15; 25:34ff., and Ezek. 34. The flock of my pasturing, in other words, the flock, which I feed; for מְרִעִית sig. both the feeding (cf. Hos. 13:6) and the place where the flock feeds, cf. 25:36, Ps. 74:1. Israel is called the flock of Jahveh’s pasturing inasmuch as He exerts a special care over it. The flock bad shepherds, the ungodly monarchs on the throne of David, have brought to ruin and scattered. The scattering is in v. 2, cf. with v. 3, called a driving out into the lands; but the “destroying” must be discovered from the train of thought, for the clause: ye have not visited them (v. 2), intimates merely their neglect of the sheep committed to their charge. What the “destroying” more especially is, we may gather from the conduct of King Jehoiakim, described in 22:13ff.; it consists in oppression, violence, and the shedding of innocent blood; cf. Ezek. 34:2, 3. With לָכֵן, v. 2, is made the application of the general sentence, v. 1, to the shepherds of

Israel. Because they are such as have scattered, driven away, and not visited the flock of the Lord, therefore He will punish in them the wickedness of their doings. In the **לֹא פָקְדָתָם אֹתָם** is summed up all that the rulers have omitted to do for the flock committed to their care; cf. the specification of what they have not done, Ezek. 34:4. It was their duty, as Ven. truly says, to see *ut vera religio, pabulum populi spiritualé, recte et rite exerceretur*. Instead of this, they have, by introducing idolatry, directly encouraged ungodliness, and the immorality which flows therefrom. Here in “ye have not visited them” we have the negative moment made prominent, so that in v. 3 may follow what the Lord will do for His scattered flock. Cf. the further expansion of this promise in Ezek. 34:12ff. We must note “I have driven them,” since in v. 2 it was said that the bad shepherds had driven the flock away. The one does not exclude the other. By their corrupting the people, the wicked shepherds had occasioned the driving out; and this God has inflicted on the people as punishment. But the people, too, had their share in the guilt; but to this attention is not here directed, since the question deals only with the shepherds.

**Jeremiah 23:4.** When the Lord shall gather His people out of the dispersion, then will He raise up shepherds over them who will so feed them that they shall no longer need to fear or to be dismayed before enemies who might be strong enough to subjugate, slay, and carry them captive. The figurative expressions are founded on the idea that the sheep, when they are neglected by the shepherds, are torn and devoured by wild beasts; cf. Ezek. 34:8. They shall not be lacking; cf. for **לֹא יִפְקְדוּ** with this force, 1 Sam. 25:7; in substance = not be lost. **לֹא יִפְקְדוּ** is chosen with a view to **לֹא פָקְדָתָם אֹתָם** (v. 2): because the shepherds did not take charge of the sheep, therefore the sheep are scattered and lost. Hereafter this shall happen no more. The question as to how this promise is to be accomplished is answered by vv. 5 and 6. The substance of these verses is indeed introduced

by the phrase: behold, days come, as something new and important, but not as something not to happen till after the things foretold in v. 4. According to Jeremiah’s usage throughout, that phrase does not indicate any progress in time as compared with what precedes, but draws attention to the weightiness of what is to be announced. There is also a suggestion of “the contrast between the hope and the existing condition of affairs, which does not itself justify that hope. However gloomy the present is, yet there is a time coming” (Hgsth.). The promise: I make to arise (raise up) to David a righteous branch, rests upon the promise, 2 Sam. 7:12, 1 Chron. 17:12: I raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons—which the Lord will hereafter fulfil to David. Graf tries to show by many, but not tenable arguments, that **יִצְחָק** has here a collective force. That he is wrong, we may see from the passages Zech. 3:8 and 6:12, where the same “branch” foretold by Jeremiah is called the man whose name is **יִצְחָק**; and even without this we may discover the same from the context of the present passage, both from “He shall reign as king,” and still more from: they shall call his name *Jahveh Tsidkenu*. Neither of these sayings can be spoken of a series of kings. Besides, we have the passages 30:9 and Ezek. 34:23f, 37:24, where the servant to be raised up to David by Jahveh is called “my servant David.” Although then **יִצְחָק** has a collective force when it means a plant of the field, it by no means follows that “it has always a collective force” in its transferred spiritual signification. And the passage, 33:17, where the promise is explained by: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of Israel (cf. 33:21), does not prove that the branch of David is a collective grouping together of all David’s future posterity, but only that this one branch of David shall possess the throne for ever, and not, like mortal men, for a series of years only; 2 Sam. 7:16. **יִצְחָק** denotes the Messiah, and this title is formed from **יִצְחָק** **יְהוָה**, Isa. 4:2 (see Del. on this passage). Nor does the mention of shepherds in the plural, v. 4, at



all oppose this. An untenable rendering of the sense is: first I will raise up unto you shepherds, then the Messiah; or: better shepherds, *in primis unum, Messiam* (Ch. B. Mich.). The two promises are not so to be joined. First we have the raising up of good shepherds, in contrast to the evil shepherds that have destroyed the people; then the promise is further explained to the effect that these good shepherds shall be raised up to David in the "righteous branch," i.e., in the promised "seed" of his sons. The good shepherds are contrasted with the evil shepherds, but are then summed up in the person of the Messiah, as being comprised therein. The relation of the good shepherds to the righteous branch is not so, that the latter is the most pre-eminent of the former, but that in that one branch of David the people should have given to them all the good shepherds needed for their deliverance. The Messiah does not correspond to the series of David's earthly posterity that sit upon his throne, in that He too, as second David, will also have a long series of descendants upon His throne; but in that His kingdom, His dominion, lasts for ever. In the parallel passage, 33:15, where the contrast to the evil shepherds is omitted, we therefore hear only of the one branch of David; so in Ezek. 34, where only the *one* good shepherd, the servant of the Lord, David, stands in contrast to the evil shepherds (v. 23). Hence neither must we seek the fulfilment of our prophecy in the elevation of the Maccabees, who were not even of the race of David, nor understand, as Grot., Zerubbabel to be the righteous branch, but the Messiah, as was rightly understood by the *Chald.* He is צַדִּיק in contrast to the then reigning members of the house of David, and as He who will do right and justice in His realm; cf. 22:15, where the same is said of Josiah as contrasted with his ungodly son Jehoiakim. מְלֶכְךָ is subjoined to מְלֶכְךָ to bespeak His rule as kingship in the fullest sense of the word. *Regnabit rex, i.e., magnifice regnabit, ut non tantum appareant aliquae reliquiae pristinae dignitatis, sed ut rex floreat et vigeat et obtineat*

*perfectionem, qualis fuit sub Davide et Salomone ac multo praestantior* (Calv.). הַשְׂכִּיל, deal prudently, rule wisely, as in 3:15, not: be fortunate, prosperous. Here the context demands the former rendering, the only one justified by usage, since the doing of right and justice is mentioned as the fruit and result of the הַשְׂכִּיל. These words, too, point back to David, of whom it is in 2 Sam. 8:15 said, that he as king did right and justice to all his people. **Jeremiah 23:6.** V. 6 exhibits the welfare which the "branch" will, by His wise and just rule, secure for the people. Judah shall be blessed with welfare (נוֹשָׁע), and Israel dwell safely; that blessing will come into fulfilment which Moses set before the people's view in Deut. 33:28f. יְהוּדָה as the totality of the inhabitants is construed as feminine, as in 3:7; 14:2, etc. *Israel* denotes the ten tribes. Under the just sceptre of the Messiah, all Israel will reach the destiny designed for it by the Lord, will, as God's people, attain to full dignity and glory. This is the name by which they shall call Him, the branch of David: Jahveh our Righteousness. The suffix in יְקָרְאוּ refers to "righteous branch." Instead of the 3 *pers. sing.* יְקָרְאוּ with the suffix וּ, some *codd.* have the plur. יְקָרְאוּ. This some polemical authors, such as Raim., Martini, Galatin, hold to be the true reading; and they affirmed the other had proceeded from the Jews, with the design of explaining away the deity of the Messiah. The Jews translated, they said: This is the name whereby Jahveh will call him: Our Righteousness; which is indeed the rendering of R. Saad. Gaon *apud* Aben Ezra, and of Menasse ben Israel. But this rendering is rejected by most Jewish comm. as being at variance with the accents, so that the impugned reading could not well have been invented by the Jews for polemical purposes. יְקָרְאוּ is attested by most *codd.*, and is rendered by the LXX, so that the sense can be none other than: they will call the righteous branch of David "Jahveh our Righteousness." Most comm., including even Hitz., admit that the suffix refers

to  $\text{יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$ , the principal person in both verses. Only Ew., Graf, and Näg. seek to refer it to Israel, because in 33:16 the same name is given to Jerusalem. But the passage cited does not prove the case. To call any one by a name universally denotes in the prophetic usage: to set him forth as that which the name expresses; so here: the branch of David will manifest Himself to the people of Israel as Jahve Tsidkenu. This name is variously expounded. The older Christian comm. understand that the Messiah is here called Jehovah, and must therefore be true God, and that He is called our righteousness, inasmuch as He justifies us by His merit. But the rabbinical interpreters, headed by the Chald., take the name to be an abbreviation of a sentence; so e.g., Kimchi: *Israel vocabit Messiam hoc nomine, quia ejus temporibus Domini justitia nobis firma, jugis et non recedet*. They appeal to 33:17 and to other passages, such as Ex. 17:15, where Moses calls the altar "Jahveh my Banner," and Gen. 33:20, where Jacob gives to the altar built by him the name *El elohe Jisrael*. Hgstb. has rightly pronounced for this interpretation. The passages cited show who in such names an entire sentence is conveyed. "Jahveh my Banner" is as much as to say: This altar is dedicated to Jahveh my banner, or to the Almighty, the God of Israel. So all names compounded of *Jahveh*; e.g., *Jehoshua* = Jahveh salvation, brief for: he to whom Jahveh vouchsafes salvation. So *Tsidkijahu* = Jahve's righteousness, for: he to whom Jahveh deals righteousness. To this corresponds *Jahveh Tsidkenu*: he by whom Jahveh deals righteousness. We are bound to take the name thus by the parallel passage, 33:16, where the same name is given to Jerusalem, to convey the thought, that by the Messiah the Lord will make Jerusalem the city of Righteousness, will give His righteousness to it, will adorn and glorify it therewith.

$\text{יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$  is not to be referred, as it is by the ancient Church comm., to justification through the forgiveness of sins. With this we have not here to do, but with personal righteousness, which consists in deliverance from all

unrighteousness, and which is bound up with blessedness. Actual righteousness has indeed the forgiveness of sins for its foundation, and in this respect justification is not to be wholly excluded; but this latter is here subordinate to actual righteousness, which the Messiah secures for Israel by the righteousness of His reign. The unrighteousness of the former kings has brought Israel and Judah to corruption and ruin; the righteousness of the branch to be hereafter raised up to David will remove all the ruin and mischief from Judah, and procure for them the righteousness and blessedness which is of God.—"What Jeremiah," as is well remarked by Hgstb., "sums up in the name Jehovah Tsidkenu, Ezekiel expands at length in the parallel 34:25–31: the Lord concludes with them a covenant of peace; rich blessings fall to their lot; He breaks their yoke, frees them from bondage; they do not become the heathen's prey." These divine blessings are also to be conferred upon the people by means of the righteous branch. What the ancient Church comm. found in the *name* was true as to the *substance*. For as no man is perfectly righteous, so no mere earthly king can impart to the people the righteousness of Jahveh in the full sense of the term; only He who is endowed with the righteousness of God. In so far the Godhead of this King is contained *implicite* in the name; only we must not understand that he that bore the name is called Jahveh. But that righteousness, as the sum of all blessing, is set before the people's view, we may gather from the context, especially from vv. 7 and 8, where it is said that the blessings to be conferred will outshine all former manifestations of God's grace. This is the sense of both verses, which, save in the matter of a trifling change in v. 8, are verbally repeated from 16:14 and 15, where they have already been expounded.

**Jeremiah 23:9–40.** Against the False Prophets.—Next to the kings, the pseudo-prophets, who flattered the people's carnal longings, have done most to contribute to the fall of the realm. Therefore Jeremiah passes directly from his discourse against the wicked kings to rebuking the false prophets; and if we

may presume from the main substance, the latter discourse belongs to the same time as the former. It begins

**Jeremiah 23:9–15.** *With a description of the pernicious practices of these persons.—V. 9. “Concerning the prophets. Broken is mine heart within me; all my bones totter. I am become like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of Jahveh and because of His holy words. V. 10. For of adulterers the land is full, for because of the curse the land withereth, the pastures of the wilderness dry up; and their course is become evil, and their strength not right. V. 11. For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in mine house found I their wickedness, saith Jahveh. V. 12. Therefore their way shall be to them as slippery places in darkness, they shall be thrown down and fall therein; for I bring evil upon them, the year of their visitation, saith Jahveh. V. 13. In the prophets of Samaria saw I folly; they prophesied in the name of Baal, and led my people Israel astray. V. 14. But in the prophets of Jerusalem saw I an horrible thing, committing adultery and walking in falsehood, and they strengthen the hands of the wicked, that none returneth from his wickedness. They are all become to me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah. V. 15. Therefore thus saith Jahveh of hosts concerning the prophets: Behold, I feed them with wormwood, and give them to drink water of bitterness; for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth over all the land.”*

“Concerning the prophets” is the heading, as in 46:2; 48:1; 49:1, 7, 23, 28; and corresponds to the woe uttered against the wicked shepherds, v. 1. It refers to the entire portion vv. 9–40, which is thus distinguished from the oracles concerning the kings, Jeremiah 21 and 22. It might indeed be joined, according to the accents, with what follows: because of the prophets is my heart broken; but as the cause of Jeremiah’s deep agitation is given at the end of the second half-verse: because of Jahveh, etc., it is not likely the seer would in one sentence have given two different and quite separate reasons. The brokenness of his heart denotes the profoundest inward emotion yet not

despondency by reason of sin and misery, like “a broken heart” in Ps. 34:19; 51:19, etc., but because of God’s wrath at the impious lives of the pseudo-prophets. This has overcome him, and this he must publish. This wrath had broken his heart and seized on all his bones, so that they nervelessly tremble, and he resembles a drunken man who can no longer stand firm on his feet. He feels himself inwardly quite downcast; he not only feels the horrors of the judgment that is to befall the false prophets and corrupt priests who lead the people astray, but knows well the dreadful sufferings the people too will have to endure. The verb *חָרַךְ* occurs only twice in the Piel besides in the present passage; in Gen. 1:2, of the Spirit of God that in the beginning of creation brooded over the waters of the earth, and Deut. 32:11, of the eagle that flutters over her young,—in Arabic *rchf*, to be soft. The root meaning of the word is doubtless: to be flaccid; here accordingly, to totter, to sway to and fro. “Because of Jahveh” is more fully explained by “because of the words of His holiness,” i.e., the words which God as holy has made known to him regarding the unholy ongoings of the pseudo-prophets.—From v. 10 onwards come the sayings of God which have so terribly agitated the prophet. The land is full of adulterers. Adultery in the literal sense is mentioned by way of example, as a reckless transgression of God’s commands, then much in vogue, whereby the moral foundations of the kingdom were broken up. In v. 14 the prophets are said to commit adultery and walk in lying, cf. 29:23 and 5:7. By reason of this vice a curse lies on the land, under which it is withering away. The clause “for because of the curse,” etc., is not to be taken as parenthesis (Näg.), but as co-ordinate with the previous clause, giving the second, or rather the chief ground, why Jeremiah is so deeply distressed. The reason of this is not so much the prevailing moral corruption, as the curse lying on the land because of the moral corruption of its inhabitants. *אָלֶיךָ* is not perjury (Chald., Rashi, Kimchi), but the curse wherewith God punishes the transgression of His covenant laws, cf. 11:3,

8, Deut. 28:15ff., 29:19ff. The words are modelled after Isa. 24:4ff.; and הָאָרֶץ is not the population, but the land itself, which suffers under God's curse, and which is visited with drought; cf. 12:4. The next words point to drought. נְאוֹת מְדָבָר as in 9:9. By וְתָהִי the further description of the people's depravity is attached to the first clause of the verse. Their course is become evil; their running or racing, i.e., the aim and endeavour of the ungodly. The suffix on this word מְרוֹצְתָם refers not to "adulterers," but *ad sensum* to the inhabitants of the land. Their strength is not-right, i.e., they are strong, valiant in wrong; cf. 9:2. For—so goes v. 11—both prophets and priests, who should lead the people in the right way, are profane, and desecrate by their wickedness even the house of God, presumably by idolatry; cf. 32:34. There is no reason for thinking here, as Hitz. does, of adultery practised in the temple.

**Jeremiah 23:12.** For this the Lord will punish them. Their way shall be to them as slippery places in darkness. This threatening is after the manner of Ps. 35:6, where וְחַלְקֵלְקוֹת שֶׁחַח are joined, changed by Jeremiah to the words in the text. The passage cited shows that we may not separate בְּאִפְלָה from חַלְקֵלְקוֹת, as Ew. does, to join it to the following יְדָחוּ. Their way shall resemble slippery places in the dark, when one may readily slip and fall. Besides, they are to be thrust, pushed, so that they must fall on the slippery path (יְדָחוּ from דָּחַח = דָּחָה, Ps. 35:5; "therein" to be referred to "their way"). The clause: "for I bring evil," etc., is formed after 11:23.

**Jeremiah 23:13f.** To display the vileness of the prophets, these are parallelized with the prophets of Samaria. The latter did foolishly (תִּפְלָה, prop. of that which is unsalted, insipid, Job 6:6, hence irrational, *insulsum*), since they prophesied, being inspired by Baal the no-god, and by such prophesying led the people into error; cf. 1 Kings 18:19ff. Much more horrible is the conduct of the prophets of Jerusalem, who

commit adultery, walk in lying, and strengthen the wicked in their wickedness, not merely by their delusive pretences (cf. v. 17, 6:14; 14:13), but also by their immoral lives, so that no one turns from his wickedness, cf. Ezek. 13:22. לְבַלְתִּי is here and in 27:18, as in ex. 20:20, construed, contrary to the usage everywhere else, not with the *infin.*, but with the *verb. fin.* As the prophets, instead of converting the wicked, only confirmed them in their sins, therefore all the inhabitants of Judah or Jerusalem are become as corrupt as Sodom and Gomorrah. "They all" are not the prophets, but the inhabitants of Judah or Jerusalem; and "the inhabitants thereof" are those of the capital, cf. Deut. 32:32, Isa. 1:10. On the seducers the Lord will therefore inflict punishment, because impiety has gone forth from them over the whole land. With the punishment threatened in v. 15, cf. 9:14.

**Jeremiah 23:16–22.** *Warning against the lying prophecies of the prophets.*—V. 16. "Thus saith Jahveh of hosts: Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you! They deceive you; a vision of their heart they speak, not out of the mouth of Jahveh. V. 17. They say still unto my despisers: 'Jahveh hath spoken: Peace shall ye have;' and unto every one that walketh in the stubbornness of his heart they say: 'There shall no evil come upon you.' V. 18. For who hath stood in Jahveh's counsel, that he might have seen and heard His word? who hath marked my word and heard it? V. 19. Behold a tempest from Jahveh, fury goeth forth, and eddying whirlwind shall hurl itself upon the head of the wicked. V. 20. The anger of God shall not turn till He have done and till He have performed the thoughts of His heart. At the end of the days shall ye be well aware of this. V. 21. I have not sent the prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. V. 22. But if they had stood in my counsel, they would publish my words to my people and bring them back from their evil way and from the evil of their doings."

The warning against these prophets is founded in v. 16 on the fact that they give out the thoughts of their own hearts to be divine

revelation, and promise peace and prosperity to all stiff-necked sinners. מְהַבְלִים, lit., they make you vain, i.e., make you to yield yourselves to vain delusion, seduce you to false confidence. This they do by their speaking visions, i.e., revelations of their heart, not what God has spoken, revealed to them. As an illustration of this, v. 17 tells that they prophesy continued peace or well-being to the despisers of God. The *infin. abs.* אָמַר after the *verb. fin.* intimates the duration or repetition of the thing. דְּבַר יְהוָה are words of the false prophets, with which they give out that their prophesyings are God's word. Since we nowhere else find sayings of Jahveh introduced by דְּבַר יְהוָה, but usually by בְּה אָמַר, the LXX have taken offence at that formula, and, reading דְּבַר, join the words with לְמִנְאֻצִּי: τοῖς ἀπωθουμένοις τὸν λόγον κυρίου. To this reading Hitz. and Gr. give the preference over the Masoretic; but they have not noticed that they thus get an unsuitable sense. For דְּבַר יְהוָה in prophetic language never denotes the Mosaic law or the "moral law" (Hitz.), but the word of God published by the prophets. By their view of "word of Jahveh" they would here obtain the self-inconsistent thought: to the despisers of divine revelation they proclaim as revelation. The Masoretic reading is clearly right; and Jeremiah chose the unusual introductory formula to distinguish the language of the pseudo-prophets from that of the true prophets of the Lord. וְכָל-הַלֵּךְ ב' is prefixed absolutely: and as concerning every one that walks ... they say, for: and to every one ... they say. On the "stubbornness of their heart," see on 3:17. With the speech of the false prophets, cf. 14:13 and 6:14.—In v. 18 a more comprehensive reason is given to show that these prophets are not publishing God's decrees. The question: Who hath stood? has negative force = None hath stood. By this Jeremiah does not deny the possibility of this universally, but only of the false prophets (Hitz.). This limitation of the words is suggested by the context. To the true prophets the Lord

reveals His סוּד, Amos 3:7. וַיִּרְא וַיִּשְׁמַע are not to be taken jussively: let him see and hear (Hitz.), for the foregoing interrogation is not a conditional clause introducing a command. The imperfects with ו are clauses of consequence or design, and after a preceding perfect should be rendered in English by the conditional of the pluperfect. Seeing the word of God refers to prophetic vision. The second question is appended without at all conveying any inference from what precedes; and in it the second verb (with ו consec.) is simply a strengthening of the first: who hath hearkened to my word and heard it? The Masoretes have quite unnecessarily changed the *Chet*. דְּבַרִּי into דְּבַרְוֹ. In the graphic representation of the prophets, the transition to the direct speech of God, and conversely, is no unusual thing. The change of וַיִּשְׁמַע into וַיִּשְׁמַע, unnecessary and even improper as it is, is preferred by Graf and Näg., inasmuch as they take the interrogative מִי in both clauses in the sense of *quisquis* and understand the verse thus: He who has but stood in the counsel of the Lord, let him see and hear His word (i.e., he must see and hear His word); and he that hath marked my word, let him publish it (i.e., he must publish it). This exposition becomes only then necessary, if we leave the context out of view and regard the question as being to the effect that no one has stood in God's counsel—which Jeremiah could not mean. Not to speak of the change of the text necessary for carrying it through, this view does not even give a suitable sense. If the clause: He that has stood in the counsel of the Lord, he must proclaim His word, is to be regarded as having a demonstrative force, then the principal idea must be supplied, thus namely: "and it is impossible that it should be favourable to those who despise it." In v. 19 Jeremiah publishes a real word of the Lord, which sounds very differently from the words of the false prophets. A tempest from Jahveh will burst over the heads of the evil-doers, and the wrath of God will not cease until it has accomplished the divine decree. "A tempest

from Jahveh” is defined by “fury” in apposition as being a manifestation of God’s wrath; and the whole first clause is further expanded in the second part of the verse. The tempest from Jahveh goes forth, i.e., breaks out, and as whirling tornado or eddying whirlwind bursts over the head of the wicked. יְהוָה is to be taken in accordance with מְתַחֲוֹלֵל: twist, whirl, cf. 2 Sam. 3:29. “The thoughts of His heart” must not be limited to what God has decreed *de interitu populi* (Calv.); it comprehends God’s whole redemptive plan in His people’s regard—not merely the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah, but also the purification of the people by means of judgments and the final glorification of His kingdom. To this future the next clause points: at the end of the days ye shall have clear knowledge of this. “The end of the days” is not merely the completion of the period in which we now are (Hitz., Gr. Næg., etc.), but, as universally, the end of the times, i.e., the Messianic future, the last period of the world’s history which opens at the close of the present aeon; see on Gen. 49:1, Num. 24:14, etc. הַיְהוּבֹנֵן strengthened by בִּינָה: attain to insight, come to clearer knowledge.

**Jeremiah 23:21f.** From the word of the Lord proclaimed in v. 19f. it appears that the prophets who prophesy peace or well-being to the despisers of God are not sent and inspired by God. If they had stood in the counsel of God, and so had truly learnt God’s word, they must have published it and turned the people from its evil way. This completely proves the statement of v. 16, that the preachers of peace deceive the people. Then follows—

**Jeremiah 23:23–32.** Vv. 23–32, in continuation, an intimation *that God knows and will punish the lying practices of these prophets.*—V. 23. “Am I then a God near at hand, saith Jahveh, and not a God afar off? V. 24. Or can any hide himself in secret, that I cannot see him? saith Jahveh. Do not I will the heaven and the earth? saith Jahveh. V. 25. I have heard what the prophets say, that prophesy falsehood in my name, saying: I have dreamed, I have dreamed. V.

26. How long? Have they it in their mind, the prophets of the deceit of their heart, V. 27. Do they think to make my people forget my name by their dreams which they tell one to the other, as their fathers forgot my name by Baal? V. 28. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word in truth. What is the straw to the corn? saith Jahveh. V. 29. Is not thus my word—as fire, saith Jahveh, and as a hammer that dasheth the rock in pieces? V. 30. Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets that steal my words one from the other. V. 31. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith Jahveh, that take their tongues and say: God’s word. V. 32. Behold, I am against the prophets that prophesy lying dreams, saith Jahve, and tell them, and lead my people astray with their lies and their boasting, whom yet I have not sent nor commanded them, and they bring no good to this people, saith Jahveh.”

The force of the question: Am I a God at hand, not afar off? is seen from what follows. Far and near are here in their local, not their temporal signification. A god near at hand is one whose domain and whose knowledge do not extend far; a God afar off, one who sees and works into the far distance. The question, which has an affirmative force, is explained by the statement of v. 24: I fill heaven and earth. Hitz. insists on understanding “near at hand” of temporal nearness, after Deut. 32:17: a God who is not far hence, a newly appeared God; and he supposes that, since in the east, from of old, knowledge is that which is known by experience, therefore the greatness of one’s knowledge depends on one’s advancement in years (Job 15:7, 10; 12:12, etc.); and God, he says, is the Ancient of days, Dan. 7:9. But this line of thought is wholly foreign to the present passage. It is not wealth of knowledge as the result of long life or old age that God claims for Himself in v. 24, but the power of seeing into that which is hidden so that none can conceal himself from Him, or omniscience. The design with which God here dwells on His omniscience and omnipresence too (cf. 1 Kings 8:27, Isa. 66:1) is shown in v. 25. The false prophets went so far with their lying predictions, that it might appear as if God did

not hear or see their words and deeds. The Lord exposes this delusion by calling His omniscience to mind in the words: I have heard how they prophesy falsehood in my name and say, I have dreamed, i.e., a dream sent by God, have had a revelation in dreams, whereas according to v. 26 the dream was the deceit of their heart—"spun out of their own heart" (Hitz.). V. 26 is variously interpreted. Hitz. supposes that the interrogative הֲ (in הֲיִשִּׁי) is made subordinate in the clause, and that the question is expressed with a double interrogative. He translates: How long still is there anything left in the heart of the prophets? as much as to say: how long have they materials for this? But there is a total want of illustrations in point for this subordination and doubling of the interrogative; and the force given to the יִשִּׁי is quite arbitrary, since we should have had some intimation of what it was that was present in their hearts. Even the repetition of the interrogative particles is unexplained, and the connecting of יִשִּׁי with a participle, instead of with the infinitive with לֵ, cannot be defended by means of passages where הֲהִיִּל is joined with an adjective and the idea "to be" has to be supplied. L. de Dieu, followed by Seb. Schmidt, Ch. B. Mich., Ros., Maur., Umbr., Graf, was right in taking "How long" by itself as an aposiopesis: how long, sc. shall this go on? and in beginning a new question with הֲיִשִּׁי, a question continued and completed by the further question: "Do they think," etc., v. 27. Is it in the heart of the prophets, i.e., have the prophets a mind to prophesy falsehood? do they mean to make men forget my name? Against holding v. 27 as a resumption of the question there is no well-founded objection. Näg. affirms that after הֲהִשָּׁבִימִי we must in that case have here הֲמָ as recapitulation of the subject; but that is rendered unnecessary by the subject's being contained in the immediately preceding words. The conjecture propounded by Näg., to change הֲיִשִּׁי into הֲאֵשׁ: how long still is the fire in the heart of the prophets? needs no refutation. To

make to forget the name of the Lord is: so to banish the Lord, as seen in His government and works, from the people's heart, that He is no longer feared and honoured. By their dreams which they relate one to the other, i.e., not one prophet to the other, but the prophet to his fellow-man amongst the people. בְּבַעַל, because of the Baal, whom their fathers made their god, cf. Judg. 3:7, 1 Sam. 12:9f.—These lies the prophets ought to cease. V. 28. Each is to speak what he has, what is given him. He that has a dream is to tell the dream, and he that has God's word should tell it. Dream as opposed to word of the Lord is an ordinary dream, the fiction of one's own heart; not a dream-revelation given by God, which the pseudo-prophets represented their dreams to be. These dreams are as different from God's word as straw is from corn. This clause is supported, v. 29, by a statement of the nature of God's word. It is thus (כֹּה), namely, as fire and as a hammer that smashes the rocks. The sense of these words is not this: the word of God is strong enough by itself, needs no human addition, or: it will burn as fire the straw of the man's word mixed with it. There is here no question of the mixing of God's word with man's word. The false prophets did not mingle the two, but gave out their man's word for God's. Nor, by laying stress on the indwelling power of the word of God, does Jeremiah merely give his hearers a characteristic by which they may distinguish genuine prophecy; he seeks besides to make them know that the word of the Lord which he proclaims will make an end of the lying prophets' work. Thus understood, v. 29 forms a stepping-stone to the threatenings uttered in vv. 30–32 against the lying prophets. The comparison to fire does not refer to the reflex influence which the word exerts on the speaker, so as that we should with Rashi and Ros. cf. 20:9; the fire comes before us as that which consumes all man's work that will not stand the test; cf. 1 Cor. 3:12ff. The comparison to a hammer which smashes the rock shows the power of God, which overcomes all that is earthly, even what is firmest and hardest; cf.

Heb. 4:12. Its effect and accomplishment nothing can hinder.

**Jeremiah 23:30–32.** Threatening of punishment. לָכֵן does not connect with v. 29, but with the main idea of the previous verses, the conduct of the false prophets there exposed. הִנְנִי עָלָי, behold, I will be against them, will come upon them as an enemy; cf. Ezek. 5:8. The practice of these prophets is characterized in three ways, yet without marking out three classes of unworthy men. One habit of theirs is that of stealing the word of God one from another. Not inspired of God themselves, they tried to appropriate words of God from other prophets in order to give their own utterances the character of divine oracles. Another is: they take their tongues and say, God's word, i.e., they use their tongues to speak pretended words from God. The verb יִנְאֲמוּ occurs only here; elsewhere only the participle נֹאֲמִים, and that almost always joined with יהוה in the sig. *effatum Domini*; here without it, but in the same sense. The root meaning of נֹאֲמִים is disputed.

Connected etymologically with הַמָּה, נִהַם, it doubtlessly denotes originally, that which is whispered, Jahveh's secret confidential communication; but it is constantly used, not for the word of God as silently inspired by God, but as softly uttered by the prophet. The meaning is not: their prophesying is "mere wagging of the tongue, talk according to their own caprice" (Graf); but: they give out their sayings for God's, whereas God speaks neither to nor by them. Finally, their third way of doing consists in feigning revelations by means of dreams, which are but deceptive dreams. At this point the discourse falls back on the description in v. 26. The words "and lead my people astray" refer to all their three ways of acting before characterized. פְּהִיזוּת is their boasting of revelations from God. Then comes **Jeremiah 23:33–40.** *A rebuke of their mockery at Jeremiah's threatening predictions.*—V. 33. "And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest ask thee, saying: What is the burden of Jahveh?"

*then say to them: What the burden is—now I will cast you off, saith Jahveh. V. 34. And the prophet, the priest, and the people that shall say: burden of Jahveh, on that man will I visit it and on his house. V. 35. Thus shall ye say each to the other, and each to his brother: What hath Jahveh answered, and what hath Jahveh spoken? V. 36. But burden of Jahveh shall ye mention no more, for a burden to every one shall his own word be; and ye wrest the words of the living God Jahveh of hosts, our God. V. 37. Thus shalt thou say to the prophet: What hath Jahveh answered thee, and what hath He spoken? V. 38. But if ye say: burden of Jahveh, therefore thus saith Jahveh: Because ye say this word: burden of Jahveh, and yet I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say: burden of Jahveh; V. 39. Therefore, behold, I will utterly forget you, and cast away from my face you and this city that I gave you and your fathers, V. 40. And will lay upon you everlasting reproach, and everlasting, never-to-be-forgotten disgrace."*

The word מְשָׂא, from נָשָׂא, lift up, bear, sig. burden, and, like the phrase: lift up the voice, means a saying of weighty or dread import. The word has the latter sig. in the headings to the prophecies of threatening character; see on Nah. 1:1, where this meaning of the word in the headings is asserted, and the widespread opinion that it means *effatum* is refuted. Jeremiah's adversaries—as appears from these verses—used the word "burden" of his prophetic sayings by way of mockery, meaning burdensome prophecies, in order to throw ridicule on the prophet's speeches, by them regarded as offensive. Thus if the people, or a prophet, or a priest ask: What is the burden of Jahveh, i.e., how runs it, or what does it contain? he is to answer: The Lord saith: I will cast you off, i.e., disburden myself of you, as it were—the idea of "burden" being kept up in the answer to the question. The article on the word prophet is used to show that the word is used generally of the class of prophets at large. The נֹאֲמִים in the answering clause is *nota accus.*, the following phrase being designedly repeated from the question; and hence the unusual combination



אָתֶּמָּה. The sense is: as regards the question what the burden is, I will cast you away. There is no reason to alter the text to fit the LXX translation: ὑμεῖς ἐστὲ τὸ λῆμμα, or Vulg.: *vos estis onus*, as Cappell., J. D. Mich., Hitz., Gr., etc., do. The LXX rendering is based, not on another reading, but on another division of the words, viz., אַתֶּם הַמְשָׂא.—In v. 34 the meaning of this answer is more fully explained. On every one that uses the word “burden” in this sneering way God will avenge the sneer, and not only on his person, but on his house, his family as well. In v. 35 they are told how they are to speak of prophecy. V. 36. They are no longer to make use of the phrase “burden of Jahveh,” “for the burden shall his word be to each one,” i.e., the word “burden” will be to each who uses it a burden that crushes him down. “And ye wrest,” etc., is part of the reason for what is said: *and ye have = for ye have wrested the words of the living God.* The clause is properly a corollary which tells what happens when they use the forbidden word.

**Jeremiah 23:38–40.** In case they, in spite of the prohibition, persist in the use of the forbidden word, i.e., to not cease their mockery of God’s word, then the punishment set forth in v. 33 is certainly to come on them. In the threat נִשְׂיִי אֶתְכֶם נָשָׂא there is a manifestly designed word-play on נִשְׂאָה. LXX, Vulg., Syr. have therefore rendered as if from נִשְׂיִי (or נִשְׂאָה) instead: ἐγὼ λαμβάνω, *ego tollam vos portans*. One *cod.* gives נִשְׂאָה, and Ew., Hitz., Graf, Näg., etc., hold this reading to be right; but hardly with justice. The Chald. has expressed the reading of the text in its אָרְטוּשׁ יְתָבוּן מְרַטְשׁ *et relinquam vos relinquendo*. And the form נִשְׂיִי is explained only by reading נִשְׂאָה (נִשְׂאָה); not by נִשְׂאָה, for this verb keeps its אַ everywhere, save with the one exception of נִשְׂיִי, Ps. 32:1, formed after the parallel כָּסִי. The assertion that the reading in the text gives no good sense is unfounded. I will utterly forget you is much more in keeping

than: I will utterly lift you up, carry you forth.—With v. 40, cf. 20:11.

### Jeremiah 24

**Jeremiah 24.** The Two Fig Baskets—an emblem of the future of Judah’s people.—V. 1. “*Jahveh caused me to see, and behold two baskets of figs set before the temple of Jahveh, after Nebuchadrezzar had carried captive Jechoniah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, and the work-people and the smiths from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.* V. 2. *One basket had very good figs like the early figs, the other basket very bad figs, which could not be eaten for badness.* V. 3. *And Jahveh said to me: What seest thou, Jeremiah? and I said: Figs; the good figs are very good, and the bad figs very bad, which cannot be eaten for badness.* V. 4. *Then came the word of Jahveh unto me, saying: V. 5. Thus saith Jahveh, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so will I look on the captives of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans, for good; V. 6. And I will set mine eye upon them for good, and will bring them back again to this land, and build them and not pull down, and plant them and not pluck up.* V. 7. *And I give them an heart to know me, that I am Jahveh; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they will return unto me with their whole heart.* V. 8. *And as the bad figs, which cannot be eaten for badness, yea thus saith Jahveh, so will I make Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes and the residue of Jerusalem, them that are left remaining in this land and them that dwell in Egypt.* V. 9. *I give them up for ill-usage, for trouble to all kingdoms of the earth, for a reproach and a by-word, for a taunt and for a curse in all the places whither I shall drive them.* V. 10. *and I send among them the sword, the famine, and the plague, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave to them and to their fathers.”*

This vision resembles in form and substance that in Amos 8:1–3. The words: Jahveh caused me to see, point to an inward event, a seeing with the eyes of the spirit, not of the body. The

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time is, v. 1, precisely given: after Nebuchadnezzar had carried to Babylon King Jehoniah, with the princes and a part of the people; apparently soon after this deportation, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, the king set up by Nebuchadnezzar over Judah. Cf. 2 Kings 24:14–17.—The Lord caused the prophet to see in spirit two baskets of figs (דִּוְדָאִים, from דִּוְדָא, equivalent to דִּוְדָא, v. 2), מוֹעֲדִים (from יָעַד) in the place appointed therefor (מוֹעֵד) before the temple. We are not to regard these figs as an offering brought to Jahveh (Graf); and so neither are we to think here of the place where first-fruits or tithes were offered to the Lord, Ex. 23:19f., Deut. 26:2. The two baskets of figs have nothing to do with first-fruits. They symbolize the people, those who appear before the Lord their God, namely, before the altar of burnt-offering; where the Lord desired to appear to, to meet with His people (גִּוְעַד, Ex. 29:42f.), so as to sanctify it by His glory, Ex. 29:43. מוֹעֲדִים therefore means: placed in the spot appointed by the Lord for His meeting with Israel.

**Jeremiah 24:2.** “The one basket very good figs” is short for: the basket was quite full of very good figs; cf. Friedr. W. M. Philippi, *on the Nature and Origin of the Status constr. in Hebrew* (1871), p. 93. The comparison to early figs serves simply to heighten the idea of very good; for the first figs, those ripened at the end of June, before the fruit season in August, were highly prized dainties. Cf. Isa. 28:4, Hos. 9:10.

**Jeremiah 24:3.** The question: what seest thou? serves merely to give the object seen greater prominence, and does not imply the possibility of seeing wrong (Näg.).

**Jeremiah 24:4ff.** The interpretation of the symbol. V. 5. Like the good figs, the Lord will look on the captives in Chaldea for good (“for good” belongs to the verb “look on them”). The point of resemblance is: as one looks with pleasure on good figs, takes them and keeps them, so will I bestow my favour on Judah’s captives. Looking on them for good is explained, v. 6: the Lord will set His eye on

them, bring them back into their land and build them up again. With “build them,” etc., cf. 1:10. The building and planting of the captives is not to consist solely in the restoration of their former civil well-being, but will be a spiritual regeneration of the people. God will give them a heart to know Him as their God, so that they may be in truth His people, and He their God. “For they will return,” not: when they return (Ew., Hitz.). The turning to the Lord cannot be regarded as the condition of their receiving favour, because God will give them a heart to know Him; it is the working of the knowledge of the Lord put in their hearts. And this is adduced to certify the idea that they will then be really the Lord’s people.

**Jeremiah 24:8–10.** And as one deals with the bad uneatable figs, i.e., throws them away, so will the Lord deliver up to ignominious ruin Zedekiah with his princes and the remainder of the people, both those still staying in the land and those living in Egypt. This, the fate awaiting them, is more fully described in vv. 9 and 10. In v. 8 the “yea, thus saith,” is inserted into the sentence by way of repetition of the “thus saith,” v. 5. כֵּן אָתֵּן is resumed and expanded by וַיִּנְתְּתֵם in v. 9. The “princes” are Zedekiah’s courtiers. Those in Egypt are they who during the war had fled thither to hide themselves from judgment. From the beginning of v. 9 to הָאֶרֶץ is verbally the same as 15:4, save that לְרַעָה is added to make more marked the contrast to לְטוֹבָה, v. 5—the evil, namely, that is done to them. Hitz., Ew., Umbr., Gr., following the LXX, delete this word, but without due cause. The further description of the ill-usage in “for a reproach,” etc., is based on Deut. 28:37; and is intensified by the addition of “and for an object of cursing,” to show that in their case the curse there recorded will be fulfilled. From the last words, according to which disgrace will light on them in all the lands they are driven into, it appears that captivity will fall to the lot of such as are yet to be found in the land. But captivity involves new hostile invasions, and a repeated siege and capture of Jerusalem; during

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which many will perish by sword, famine, and plague. Thus and by deportation they shall be utterly rooted out of the land of their fathers. Cf. 29:17ff., where Jeremiah repeats the main idea of this threatening.

## Jeremiah 25

### The Judgment on Judah and All Nations

**Jeremiah 25.** The prediction of this chapter is introduced by a full heading, which details with sufficient precision the time of its composition. V. 1. *"The word that came (befell) to (על for לָא) Jeremiah concerning the whole people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that is, the first year of Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon; V. 2. Which Jeremiah the prophet spake to the whole people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying."*—All the discourses of Jeremiah delivered before this time contain either no dates at all, or only very general ones, such as 3:6: In the days of Josiah, or: at the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 26:1). And it is only some of those of the following period that are so completely dated, as 28:1; 32:1; 36:1; 39:1, etc. The present heading is in this further respect peculiar, that besides the year of the king of Judah's reign, we are also told that of the king of Babylon. This is suggested by the contents of this prediction, in which the people are told of the near approach of the judgment which Nebuchadnezzar is to execute on Judah and on all the surrounding nations far and near, until after seventy years judgment fall on Babylon itself. The fourth year of Jehoiakim is accordingly a notable turning-point for the kingdom of Judah. It is called the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, because then, at the command of his old and decrepit father Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar had undertaken the conduct of the war against Pharaoh Necho of Egypt, who had penetrated as far as the Euphrates. At Carchemish he defeated Necho (Jeremiah 46:2), and in the same year he came in pursuit of the fleeing Egyptians to Judah, took Jerusalem, and made King Jehoiakim tributary. With the first taking of Jerusalem by

Nebuchadnezzar in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, i.e., in 606 B.C., begins the seventy years' Babylonian bondage or exile of Judah, foretold by Jeremiah in v. 11 of the present chapter. Nebuchadnezzar was then only commander of his father's armies; but he is here, and in 2 Kings 24:1, Dan. 1:1, called king of Babylon, because, equipped with kingly authority, he dictated to the Jews, and treated them as if he had been really king. Not till the following year, when he was at the head of his army in Farther Asia, did his father Nabopolassar die; whereupon he hastened to Babylon to mount the throne; see on Dan. 1:1 and 1 Kings 24:1.—In v. 2 it is again specified that Jeremiah spoke the word of that Lord that came to him to the whole people and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem (על for לָא again).

There is no cogent reason for doubting, as Graf does, the correctness of these dates. Ch. 36:5 tells us that Jeremiah in the same year caused Baruch to write down the prophecies he had hitherto delivered, in order to read them to the people assembled in the temple, and this because he himself was imprisoned; but it does not follow from this, that at the time of receiving this prophecy he was prevented from going into the temple. The occurrence of Jeremiah 36 falls in any case into a later time of Jehoiakim's fourth year than the present chapter. Ew., too, finds it very probable that the discourse of this chapter was, in substance at least, publicly delivered. The contents of it tell strongly in favour of this view.

It falls into three parts. In the first, vv. 3–11, the people of Judah are told that he (Jeremiah) has for twenty-three years long unceasingly preached the word of the Lord to the people with a view to their repentance, without Judah's having paid any heed to his sayings, or to the exhortations of the other prophets, so that now all the kings of the north, headed by Nebuchadnezzar, will come against Judah and the surrounding nations, will plunder everything, and make these lands tributary to the king of Babylon; and then, vv. 12–14, that after seventy years judgment will come on the

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king of Babylon and his land. In the second part, vv. 15–29, Jeremiah receives the cup of the Lord's wrath, to give it to all the people to drink, beginning with Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, proceeding to the Egyptians and the nationalities in the west and east as far as Elam and Media, and concluding with the king of Babylon. Then in the third part, vv. 30–38, judgment to come upon all peoples is set forth in plain statement.—The first part of this discourse would have failed of its effect if Jeremiah had only composed it in writing, and had not delivered it publicly before the people, in its main substance at least. And the two other parts are so closely bound up with the first, that they cannot be separated from it. The judgment made to pass on Judah by Nebuchadnezzar is only the beginning of the judgment which is to pass on one nation after another, until it culminates in judgment upon the whole world. As to the import of the judgment of the Babylonian exile, cf. the remm. in the Comm. on Daniel, Introd. § 2. The announcement of the judgment, whose beginning was now at hand, was of the highest importance for Judah. Even the proclamations concerning the other peoples were designed to take effect in the first instance on the covenant people, that so they might learn to fear the Lord their God as the Lord of the whole world and as the Ruler of all the peoples, who by judgment is preparing the way for and advancing the salvation of the whole world. The ungodly were, by the warning of what was to come on all flesh, to be terrified out of their security and led to turn to God; while by a knowledge beforehand of the coming affliction and the time it was appointed to endure, the God-fearing would be strengthened with confidence in the power and grace of the Lord, so that they might bear calamity with patience and self-devotion as a chastisement necessary to their well-being, without taking false views of God's covenant promises or being overwhelmed by their distresses.

**Jeremiah 25:3–11.** *The seventy years' Chaldean bondage of Judah and the peoples.*—V. 3. "From the thirteenth year of Josiah, son of Amon king of Judah, unto this day, these three and twenty

*years, came the word of Jahveh to me, and I spake to you, from early morn onwards speaking, but ye hearkened not. V. 4. And Jahveh sent to you all His servants, the prophets, from early morning on sending them, but ye hearkened not, and inclined not your ear to hear. V. 5. They said: Turn ye now each from his evil way and from the evil of your doings, so shall ye abide in the land which Jahveh hath given to your fathers from everlasting to everlasting. V. 6. And go not after other gods, to serve them and to worship them, that ye provoke me not with the work of your hands, and that I do you no evil. V. 7. But ye hearkened not to me, to provoke me by the work of your hands, to your own hurt. V. 8. Therefore thus hath said Jahveh of hosts: Because ye have not heard my words, V. 9. Behold, I send and take all the families of the north, saith Jahveh, and to Nebuchadrezzar my servant (I send), and bring them upon this land, and upon its inhabitants, and upon all these peoples round about, and ban them, and make them an astonishment and a derision and everlasting desolations, V. 10. And destroy from among them the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the mill and the light of the lamp. V. 11. And this land shall become a desert, a desolation, and these peoples shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."*

The very beginning of this discourse points to the great crisis in the fortunes of Judah. Jeremiah recalls into the memory of the people not merely the whole time of his own labours hitherto, but also the labours of many other prophets, who, like himself, have unremittingly preached repentance to the people, called on them to forsake idolatry and their evil ways, and to return to the God of their fathers—but in vain (vv. 3–7). The 23 years, from the 13th of Josiah till the 4th of Jehoiakim, are thus made up: 19 years of Josiah and 4 years of Jehoiakim, including the 3 months' reign of Jehoahaz. The form אֲשַׁבְּיִם might be an Aramaism; but it is more probably a clerical error, since we have אֲשַׁבְּיִם everywhere else; cf. v. 4, 7:13; 35:14, etc., and Olsh. *Gramm.* § 191, g. For syntactical reasons it cannot be 1st pers. *imperf.*, as Hitz.

thinks it is. On the significance of this *infin. abs.* see on 7:13. As to the thought of v. 4 cf. 7:25f. and 11:7ff. לְאִמֹר introduces the contents of the discourses of Jeremiah and the other prophets, though formally it is connected with וְשָׁלַח, v. 4. As to the fact, cf. 35:15. וְשָׁבוּ, so shall ye dwell, cf. 7:7.—With v. 6 cf. 7:6; 1:16, etc. (אָרַע, imperf. *Hiph.* from רָעַע וְנִי cannot be the reading of its *Chet.*, for the 3rd person will not do. The ו seems to have found its way in by an error in writing and the *Keri* to be the proper reading, since לְמַעַן is construed with the infinitive.

**Jeremiah 25:8.** For this obstinate resistance the Lord will cause the nations of the north, under Nebuchadrezzar's leadership, to come and lay Judah waste. "All the families of the north" points back to all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, 1:14. וְאֵל נְבוּדָךְ cannot be joined with "and take," but must depend from שָׁלַח in such a way that that verb is again repeated in thought. Ew. proposes to read וְאֵת according to some *codd.*, especially as Syr., Chald., Vulg. have rendered by an accusative. Against this Graf has justly objected, that then Nebuchadnezzar would be merely mentioned by the way as in addition to the various races, whereas it is he that brings these races and is the instrument of destruction in God's hand. Ew.'s reading is therefore to be unhesitatingly rejected. No valid reason appears for pronouncing the words: and to Nebuchadrezzar ... my servant, to be a later interpolation (Hitz., Gr.) because they are not in the LXX. There is prominence given to Nebuchadnezzar by the very change of the construction, another "send" requiring to be repeated before "to Nebuchadrezzar." God calls Nebuchadnezzar His servant, as the executor of His will on Judah, cf. 27:6 and 43:10. The "them" in "and bring them" refers to Nebuchadnezzar and the races of the north. "This land" is Judah, the הַזֹּאת being δεικτικῶς; so too the corresponding הָאֵלֶּה, "all these peoples round about;" so that we need have no doubt of the genuineness of the

demonstrative. The peoples meant are those found about Judah, that are specified in vv. 19–25. הַחֲרִמָּתַיִם, used frequently in Deuteronomy and Joshua for the extirpation of the Canaanites, is used by Jeremiah, besides here, only in the prophecy against Babylon, 50:21, 26; 51:3. With וְלִשְׁמָהּ וְלִשְׂרָקָה cf. 19:8; 18:16; the words cannot be used of the peoples, but of the countries, which have been comprehended in the mention of the peoples. With "everlasting desolations," cf. 49:13, Isa. 58:12; 61:4.—With v. 10 cf. 16:9; 7:34. But here the thought is strengthened by the addition: the sound of the mill and the light of the lamp. Not merely every sound of joyfulness shall vanish, but even every sign of life, such as could make known the presence of inhabitants.

**Jeremiah 25:11.** The land of Judah shall be made waste and desolate, and these peoples shall serve the king of Babylon for seventy years. The time indicated appertains to both clauses. "This land" is not, with Näg., to be referred to the countries inhabited by all the peoples mentioned in v. 9, but, as in v. 9, to be understood of the land of Judah; and "all these peoples" are those who dwelt around Judah. The meaning is unquestionably, that Judah and the countries of the adjoining peoples shall lie waste, and that Judah and these peoples shall serve the king of Babylon; but the thought is so distributed amongst the parallel members of the verse, that the desolation is predicated of Judah only, the serving only of the peoples—it being necessary to complete each of the parallel members from the other.

The term of seventy years mentioned is not a so-called round number, but a chronologically exact prediction of the duration of Chaldean supremacy over Judah. So the number is understood in 2 Chron. 36:21, 22; so too by the prophet Daniel, when, Dan. 9:2, in the first year of the Median king Darius, he took note of the seventy years which God, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, would accomplish for the desolation of Jerusalem. The seventy years may be reckoned chronologically. From the 4th year of Jehoiakim, i.e., 606 B.C., till the 1st year of the

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sole supremacy of Cyrus over Babylon, i.e., 536 B.C., gives a period of 70 years. This number is arrived at by means of the dates given by profane authors as well as those of the historians of Scripture. Nebuchadnezzar reigned 43 years, his son Evil-Merodach 2 years, Neriglissor 4 years, Labrosoarchad (according to Berosus) 9 months, and Naboned 17 years (43 + 2 + 4 + 17 years and 9 months are 66 years and 9 months). Add to this 1 year,—that namely which elapsed between the time when Jerusalem was first taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and the death of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar's accession,—add further the 2 years of the reign of Darius the Mede (see on Dan. 6:1), and we have 69 3/4 years. With this the biblical accounts also agree. Of Jehoiakim's reign these give 7 years (from his 4th till his 11th year), for Jehoiachin's 3 months, for the captivity of Jehoiachin in Babylon until the accession of Evil-Merodach 37 years (see 2 Kings 25:27, according to which Evil-Merodach, when he became king, set Jehoiachin at liberty on the 27th day of the 12th months, in the 37th year after he had been carried away). Thus, till the beginning of Evil-Merodach's reign, we would have 44 years and 3 months to reckon, thence till the fall of the Babylonian empire 23 years and 9 months, and 2 years of Darius the Mede, i.e., in all 70 years complete.—But although this number corresponds so exactly with history, it is less its arithmetical value that is of account in Jeremiah; it is rather its symbolical significance as the number of perfection for God's works. This significance lies in the contrast of seven, as the characteristic number for works of God, with ten, the number that marks earthly completeness; and hereby prophecy makes good its distinguishing character as contrasted with soothsaying, or the prediction of contingent matters. The symbolical value of the number comes clearly out in the following verses, where the fall of Babylon is announced to come in seventy years, although it took place two years earlier.

**Jeremiah 25:12–14.** *The overthrow of the king of Babylon's sovereignty.*—V. 12. "But when

*seventy years are accomplished, I will visit their iniquity upon the king of Babylon and upon that people, saith Jahveh, and upon the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it everlasting desolations. V. 13. And I bring upon that land all my words which I have spoken concerning it, all that is written in this book, that Jeremiah hath prophesied concerning all peoples. V. 14. For of them also shall many nations and great kings serve themselves, and I will requite them according to their doing and according to the work of their hands."*

The punishment or visitation of its iniquity upon Babylon was executed when the city was taken, after a long and difficult siege, by the allied Medes and Persians under Cyrus' command. This was in B.C. 538, just 68 years after Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar for the first time. From the time of the fall of Babylon the sovereignty passed to the Medes and Persians; so that the dominion of Babylon over Judah and the surrounding nations, taken exactly, last 68 years, for which the symbolically significant number 70 is used. The Masoretes have changed the *Chet* הַבְּאֵתִי into הַכְּרִיתִי (*Keri*), because the latter is the usual form and is that which alone elsewhere occurs in Jeremiah, cf. 3:14; 36:31; 49:36f.; whereas in v. 9 they have pointed הַבְּאֵתִים, because this form is found in Isa. 56:7, Ezek. 34:13, and Neh. 1:9.—The second half of the 13th verse, from "all that is written" onwards, was not, of course, spoken by Jeremiah to the people, but was first added to explain "all my words," etc., when his prophecies were written down and published.

**Jeremiah 25:14.** The perfect עָבַדוּ is to be regarded as a prophetic present. עָבַד בְּ, impose labour, servitude on one, cf. 22:13, i.e., reduce one to servitude. גַּם הֵמָּה is an emphatic repetition of the pronoun בָּם, cf. Gesen. § 121, 3. Upon them, too (the Chaldeans), shall many peoples and great kings impose service, i.e., they shall make the Chaldeans bondsmen, reduce them to subjection. With "I will requite

them," cf. 50:29; 51:24, where this idea is repeatedly expressed.

**Jeremiah 25:15–29.** *The cup of God's fury.*—V. 15. "For thus hath Jahveh, the God of Israel, said to me: Take this cup of the wine of fury at my hand, and give it to drink to all the peoples to whom I send thee, V. 16. That they may drink, and reel, and be mad, because of the sword that I send amongst them. V. 17. And I took the cup at the hand of Jahveh, and made all the peoples drink it to whom Jahveh had sent me: V. 18. Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and her kings, her princes, to make them a desolation and an astonishment, an hissing and a curse, as it is this day; V. 19. Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people; V. 20. And all the mixed races and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod; V. 21. Edom, and Moab, and the sons of Ammon; V. 22. All the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the islands beyond the sea; V. 23. Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all with the corners of their hair polled; V. 24. And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mixed races that dwell in the wilderness; V. 25. All the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of Media; V. 26. And all the kings of the north, near and far, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth; and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them. V. 27. And say to them: Thus hath Jahveh, the God of Israel, said: Drink and be drunken, and spue, and fall and rise not up again, because of the sword which I send among you. V. 28. And if it be that they refuse to take the cup out of thine hand to drink, then say to them: Thus hath Jahveh of hosts said: Drink ye shall. V. 29. For, behold, on the city upon which my name is named I begin to bring evil, and ye think to go unpunished? Ye shall not go unpunished; for I call the sword against all inhabitants of the earth, saith Jahveh of hosts."

To illustrate more fully the threatening against Judah and all peoples, v. 9ff., the judgment the Lord is about to execute on all the world is set forth under the similitude of a flagon filled with

wrath, which the prophet is to hand to all the kings and peoples, one after another, and which he does give them to drink. The symbolical action imposed upon the prophet and, acc. to v. 17, performed by him, serves to give emphasis to the threatening, and is therefore introduced by כִּי; of which Graf erroneously affirms that it conveys a meaning only when vv. 11b -14 are omitted. Giving the peoples to drink of the cup of wrath is a figure not uncommon with the prophets for divine chastisements to be inflicted; cf. 49:12; 51:7, Isa. 51:17, 22, Ezek. 23:31ff., Hab. 2:15, Ps. 60:5; 75:9, etc. The cup of wine which is wrath (fury). הַחֶמֶץ is an explanatory apposition to "wine." The wine with which the cup is filled is the wrath of God. הַחֶמֶץ belongs to כּוֹס, which is fem., cf. Ezek. 23:32, 34, Lam. 4:21, whereas אֶרְוֹתוֹ belongs to the wine which is wrath. In v. 16, where the purpose with which the cup of wrath is to be presented is given, figure is exchanged for fact: they shall reel and become mad because of the sword which the Lord sends amidst them. To reel, sway to and fro, like drunken men. הִתְהַלְלֵהוּ, demean oneself insanely, be mad. The sword as a weapon of war stands often for war, and the thought is: war with its horrors will stupefy the peoples, so that they perish helpless and powerless.

**Jeremiah 25:17.** This duty imposed by the Lord Jeremiah performs; he takes the cup and makes all peoples drink it. Here the question has been suggested, how Jeremiah performed this commission: whether he made journeys to the various kings and peoples, or, as J. D. Mich. thought, gave the cup to ambassadors, who were perhaps then in Jerusalem. This question is the result of an imperfect understanding of the case. The prophet does not receive from god a flagon filled with wine which he is to give, as a symbol of divine wrath, to the kings and peoples; he receives a cup filled with the wrath of God, which is to intoxicate those that drink of it. As the wrath of God is no essence that may be drunk by the bodily act, so manifestly the cup is no material cup, and the drinking of it no

act of the outer, physical reality. The whole action is accordingly only emblematical of a real work of God wrought on kings and peoples, and is performed by Jeremiah when he announces what he is commanded. And the announcement he accomplished not by travelling to each of the nations named, but by declaring to the king and his princes in Jerusalem the divine decree of judgment.

The enumeration begins with Judah, v. 18, on which first judgment is to come. Along with it are named Jerusalem, the capital, and the other cities, and then the kings and princes; whereas in what follows, for the most part only the kings, or, alternating with them, the peoples, are mentioned, to show that kings and peoples alike must fall before the coming judgment. The plural "kings of Judah" is used as in 19:3. The consequence of the judgment: to make them a desolation, etc., runs as in vv. 9, 11, 19:8; 24:9. הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה has here the force: as is now about to happen.

**Jeremiah 25:19ff.** The enumeration of the heathen nations begins with Egypt and goes northwards, the peoples dwelling to the east and west of Judah being ranged alongside one another. First we have in v. 20 the races of Arabia and Philistia that bordered on Egypt to the east and west; and then in v. 21 the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites to the east, and, v. 22, the Phoenicians with their colonies to the west. Next we have the Arabian tribes of the desert extending eastwards from Palestine to the Euphrates (vv. 23, 24); then the Elamites and Medes in the distant east (v. 25), the near and distant kings of the north, and all kingdoms upon earth; last of all the king of Babylon (v. 26). כְּלִי-עֵרֶב, LXX: πάντα τοὺς συμμίκτους, and Jerome: *cunctusque qui non est Aegyptius, sed in ejus regionibus commoratur*. The word means originally a mixed multitude of different races that attach themselves to one people and dwell as strangers amongst them; cf. Ex. 12:38 and Neh. 13:3. Here it is races that in part dwelt on the borders of Egypt and were in subjection to that people. It is rendered accordingly "vassals" by Ew.; an interpretation that suits the present

verse very well, but will not do in v. 24. It is certainly too narrow a view, to confine the reference of the word to the mercenaries or Ionian and Carian troops by whose help Necho's father Psammetichus acquired sole supremacy (Graf), although this be the reference of the same word in Ezek. 30:5. The land of Uz is, acc. to the present passage and to Lam. 4:21, where the daughter of Edom dwells in the land of Uz, to be sought for in the neighbourhood of Idumaea and the Egyptian border. To delete the words "and all the kings of the land of Uz" as a gloss, with Hitz. and Gr., because they are not in the LXX, is an exercise of critical violence. The LXX omitted them for the same reason as that on which Hitz. still lays stress—namely, that they manifestly do not belong to this place, but to v. 23. And this argument is based on the idea that the land of Uz (Αυσίτις) lies much farther to the north in Arabia Deserta, in the Hauran or the region of Damascus, or that it is a collective name for the whole northern region of Arabia Deserta that stretches from Idumaea as far as Syria; see Del. on Job 1:1, and Wetzstein in Del.'s Job, S. 536f. This is an assumption for which valid proofs are not before us. The late oriental legends as to Job's native country do not suffice for this. The kings of the land of the Philistines are the kings of the four towns next in order mentioned, with their territories, cf. Josh. 13:3, 1 Sam. 6:4. The fifth of the towns of the lords of the Philistines, Gath, is omitted here as it was before this, in Amos 1:7f. and Zeph. 2:4, and later in Zech. 9:5, not because Gath had already fallen into premature decay; for in Amos' time Gath was still a very important city. It is rather, apparently, because Gath had ceased to be the capital of a separate kingdom or principality. There is remaining now only a remnant of Ashdod; for after a twenty-nine years' siege, this town was taken by Psammetichus and destroyed (Herod. ii. 157), so that thus the whole territory great lost its importance. V. 21. On Edom, Moab, and the Ammonites, cf. Jeremiah 49:7–22; 48:1; 49:1–6. V. 22. The plural: "kings of Tyre and Sidon," is to be understood as in v. 18. With them are



mentioned "the kings of the island" or "of the coast" land, that is, beyond the (Mediterranean) Sea. אִי is not Κύπρος (Cyprus), but means, generally, the Phoenician colonies in and upon the Mediterranean. Of the Arabian tribes mentioned in v. 23, the Dedanites are those descended from the Cushite *Dedan* and living ear Edom, with whom, however, the Abrahamite Dedanite had probably mingled; a famous commercial people, Isa. 21:13, Ezek. 27:15, 20; 38:13, Job 6:19. *Tema* is not *Têmâ* beyond the Hauran (Wetzst. *Reiseber.* S. 21 and 93ff.; cf. on the other hand, the same in Del.'s Job, S. 526), but *Temâ* situated on the pilgrims' route from Damascus to Mecca, between *Tebûk* and *Wadi el Kora*, see Del. on Isa. 21:14; here, accordingly, the Arabian tribe settled there. *Buz* is the Arabian race sprung from the second son of Nahor. As to "hair-corners polled," see on 9:25.—The two appellations עֲרַב and "the mixed races that dwell in the wilderness" comprehend the whole of the Arabian races, not merely those that are left after deducting the already (v. 23) mentioned nomad tribes. The latter also dwelt in the wilderness, and the word עֲרַב is a general name, not for the whole of Arabia, but for the nomadic Arabs, see on Ezek. 27:21, whose tribal chieftains, here called kings, are in Ezek. called נְשִׂאִים. In v. 25 come three very remote peoples of the east and north-east: *Zimri*, Elamites, and Medes. The name *Zimri* is found only here, and has been connected by the Syr. and most comm. with *Zimran*, Gen. 25:2, a son of Abraham and Keturah. Accordingly זִמְרִי would stand for זִמְרָנִי, and might be identified with Ζαβράμ, Ptol. vi. 7, § 5, a people which occupied a territory between the Arabs and Persians—which would seem to suit our passage. The reference is certainly not to the Ζεμβρίται in Ethiopia, in the region of the later priestly city Meroë (Strabo, 786). On *Elam*, see on 49:34ff.

Finally, to make the list complete, v. 26 mentions the kings of the north, those near and those far, and all the kingdoms of the earth.

הַמְּלָכֹת with the article in *stat. constr.* against the rule. Hence Hitz. and Graf infer that הַאֲרָץ may not be genuine, it being at the same time superfluous and not given in the LXX. This may be possible, but it is not certain; for in Isa. 23:17 we find the same pleonastic mode of expression, and there are precedents for the article with the *nomen regens*. "The one to (or with) the other" means: according as the kingdoms of the north stand in relation to one another, far or near.—After the mention of all the kings and peoples on whom the king of Babylon is to execute judgment, it is said that he himself must at last drink the cup of wrath. שֵׁשׁ is, according to 51:41, a name for Babylon, as Jerome states, presumably on the authority of his Jewish teacher, who followed the tradition. The name is formed acc. to the Canon *Atbash*, in virtue of which the letters of the alphabet were put one for the other in the inverse order (ת for א, ש for ב, etc.); thus ש would correspond to ב and ד to ל. Cf. Buxtorf, *Lex. talm. s.v. אַתבש* and *de abbreviaturis hebr.* p. 41. A like example is found in 51:1, where כְּשִׁדִּים is represented by לְבִקְמִי. The assertion of Gesen. that this way of playing with words was not then in use, is groundless, as it also Hitz.'s, when he says it appeared first during the exile, and is consequently none of Jeremiah's work. It is also erroneous when many comm. remark, that Jeremiah made use of the mysterious name from the fear of weakening the impression of terror which the name of Babylon ought to make on their minds. These assumptions are refuted by v. 12, where there is threatening of the punishment of spoliation made against the king of Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans; and by 51:41, where alongside of *Sheshach* we find in parallelism Babylon. The *Atbash* is, both originally and in the present case, no mere playing with words, but a transposition of the letters so as to gain a significant meaning, as may plainly be seen in the transposition to לְבִקְמִי, 51:1. This is the case with *Sheshach* also,

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which would be a contraction of שָׁכַבְשָׁ (see Ew. § 158, c), from שָׁכַב, to sink (of the water, Gen. 8:1), to crouch (of the bird-catcher, Jeremiah 5:26). The sig. is therefore a sinking down, so that the threatening, 51:64: Babel shall sink and not rise again, constitutes a commentary on the name; cf. Hgstb. *Christ.* iii. p. 377. The name does not sig. humiliation, in support of which Graf has recourse partly to שָׁחָה, partly to the Arabic usage. For other arbitrary interpretations, see in Ges. *thes.* p. 1486.

**Jeremiah 25:27ff.** From v. 27 onwards the commission from God (v. 15f.) is still more completely communicated to Jeremiah, so that the record of its fulfilment (vv. 17–26), together with the enumeration of the various peoples, is to be regarded as an explanatory parenthesis. These might the less unsuitably be inserted after v. 16, inasmuch as what there is further of the divine command in vv. 27–29 is, if we examine its substance, little else than an enforcement of the command. The prophet is not merely to declare to them what is the meaning of this drinking of wrath (Hitz.), but is to tell them that they are to drink the cup of wrath to the bottom, so that they shall fall for drunkenness and not be able to stand again (v. 27); and that they must drink, because when once Jahveh has begun judgment on His own people, He is determined not to spare any other people. קָיָה from קָיָה = קוֹא serves to strengthen the שָׁכַבְשָׁ; in the second hemistich the figurative statement passes into the real, as at v. 16. In v. 28 שָׁתוּ תִשְׁתוּ is a peremptory command; ye shall = must drink. V. 29 gives the reason; since God spares not His own people, then the heathen people need not count on immunity. “And ye think to go unpunished” is a question of surprise. Judgment is to be extended over all the inhabitants of the earth.

As to the fulfilment of this prophecy, see detail in the exposition of the oracles against the nations, Jeremiah 46–51. Hence it appears that most of the nations here mentioned were subject to Nebuchadnezzar. Only of *Elam* is no express mention there made; and as to *Media*,

Jeremiah has given no special prophecy. As to both these peoples, it is very questionable whether Nebuchadnezzar ever subdued them. For more on this, see on 49:34–39. Although it is said in v. 9 of the present chapter and in Jeremiah 27:5ff. that God has given all peoples, all the lands of the earth, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, yet it does not follow thence that Nebuchadnezzar really conquered all. The meaning of the prophetic announcement is simply that the king of Babylon will obtain dominion over the world for the coming period, and that when his time is run, he too must fall beneath the judgment. The judgment executed by Nebuchadnezzar on the nations is the beginning of that upon the whole earth, before which, in course of time, all inhabitants of the earth fall, even those whom Nebuchadnezzar’s sword has not reached. In the beginning of the Chaldean judgment the prophet sees the beginning of judgment upon the whole earth.

**Jeremiah 25:30–38.** “*But do thou prophesy to them all these words, and say unto them: Jahveh will roar from on high, and from His holy habitation let His voice resound; He will roar against His pasture, raise a shout like treaders of grapes against all the inhabitants of the earth. V. 31. Noise reacheth to the end of the earth, for controversy hath Jahveh with the nations; contend will He with all flesh; the wicked He gives to the sword, is the saying of Jahveh. V. 32. Thus saith Jahveh of hosts: Behold, evil goeth forth from nation to nation, and (a) great storm shall raise itself from the utmost coasts of the earth. V. 33. And the slain of Jahveh shall lie on that day from one end of the earth unto the other, shall not be lamented, neither gathered nor buried; for dung shall they be upon the ground. V. 34. Howl, ye shepherds, and cry! and sprinkle you (with ashes), ye lordliest of the flock! For your days are filled for the slaughter; and I scatter you so that ye shall fall like a precious vessel. V. 35. Lost is flight to the shepherds, and escape to the lordliest of the flock. V. 36. Hark! Crying of the shepherds and howling of the lordliest of the flock; for Jahveh layeth waste their pasture. V. 37. Desolated are the pastures of peace because of the heat of*

*Jahveh's anger. V. 38. He hath forsaken like a young lion his covert; for their land is become a desert, because of the oppressing sword, and because of the heath of His anger."*

In this passage the emblem of the cup of the Lord's anger (vv. 25–29) is explained by a description of the dreadful judgment God is to inflict on all the inhabitants of the earth. This is not the judgment on the world at large as distinguished from that proclaimed in vv. 15–29 against the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world, as Näg. supposes. It is the nature of this same judgment that is here discussed, not regard being here paid to the successive steps of its fulfilment. Vv. 30 and 31 are only a further expansion of the second half of v. 29. "All these words" refers to what follows. The clause "Jahveh will roar" to "let His voice resound" is a reminiscence from Joel 4:16 and Amos 1:2; but instead of "out of Zion and out of Jerusalem" in those passages, we have here "from on high," i.e., heaven, and out of His holy habitation (in heaven), because the judgment is not to fall on the heathen only, but on the theocracy in a special manner, and on the earthly sanctuary, the temple itself, so that it can come only from heaven or the upper sanctuary. Jahveh will roar like a lion against His pasture (the pasture or meadow where His flock feeds, cf. 10:25); a name for the holy land, including Jerusalem and the temple; not: the world subject to Him (Ew.). הִיָּדָד וּגוֹ, He will answer *Hedad* like treaders of grapes; i.e., raise a shout as they do. Answer; inasmuch as the shout or warty-cry of Jahveh is the answer to the words and deeds of the wicked. Grammatically הִיָּדָד is *accus.* and object to the verb: *Hedad* he gives as answer. The word is from הִדָּד, crash, and signifies the loud cry with which those that tread grapes keep time in the alternate raising and thrusting of the feet. Ew. is accordingly correct, though far from happy, in rendering the word "tramping-song;" see on Isa. 16:9f. As to the figure of the treader of grapes, cf. Isa. 63:3.

**Jeremiah 25:31.** שִׁאוֹן is the din of war, the noise of great armies, cf. Isa. 17:12f., etc. For the

Lord conducts a controversy, a cause at law, with the nations, with all flesh, i.e., with all mankind; cf. 2:9, 35.—הִרְשָׁעִים is for the sake of emphasis put first and resumed again in the suffix to נָתַתָּם. "Give to the sword" as in 15:9.

**Jeremiah 25:32f.** As a fierce storm (cf. 23:19) rises from the ends of the earth on the horizon, so will evil burst forth and seize on one nation after another. Those slain by Jahveh will then lie, unmourned and unburied, from one end of the earth to the other; cf. 8:2; 16:4. With "slain of Jahveh," cf. Isa. 66:16. Jahveh slays them by the sword in war.

**Jeremiah 25:34.** No rank is spared. This is intimated in the summons to howl and lament addressed to the shepherds, i.e., the kings and rulers on earth (cf. 10:21; 22:22, etc.), and to the lordly or glorious of the flock, i.e., to the illustrious, powerful, and wealthy. With "sprinkle you," cf. 6:26. Your days are full or filled for the slaughter, i.e., the days of your life are full, so that ye shall be slain; cf. Lam. 4:18. וְתִפְּצוּתֵיכֶם is obscure and hard to explain. It is so read by the Masora, while many *codd.* and *editt.* have וְתִפְּצוּתֵיכֶם. According to this latter form, Jerome, Rashi, Kimchi, lately Maur. and Umbr., hold the word for a substantive: your dispersions. But whether we connect this with what precedes or what follows, we fail to obtain a fitting sense from it. Your days are full and your dispersions, for: the time is come when ye shall be slain and dispersed, cannot be maintained, because "dispersions" is not in keeping with "are full." Again: as regards your dispersions, ye shall fall, would give a good meaning, only if "your dispersions" meant: the flock dispersed by the fault of the shepherds; and with this the second pers. "ye shall fall" does not agree. The sig. of fatness given by Ew. to the word is wholly arbitrary. Hitz., Gr. and Näg. take the word to be a Tiphil (like תהרה, 12:5; 22:15), and read וְתִפְּצוּתֵיכֶם, I scatter you. This gives a suitable sense; and there is no valid reason for attaching to the word, as Hitz. and Gr. do, the force of פָּצַץ or נָפַץ, smite in pieces.

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The thought, that one part of the flock shall be slain, the other scattered, seems quite apt; so also is that which follows, that they are scattered shall fall and break like precious, i.e., fine, ornamental vases. Hence there was no occasion for Ew.'s conjectural emendation, בְּכָרִי, like precious lambs. Nor does the LXX rendering: ὠσπερ οἱ κριοὶ οἱ ἐλακτοί, give it any support; for כָּרִים does not mean rams, but lambs. The similar comparison of Jechoniah to a worthless vessel (Jeremiah 22:28) tells in favour of the reading in the text (Graf).—In v. 35 the threatening is made more woeful by the thought, that the shepherds shall find no refuge, and that no escape will be open to the sheep.

**Jeremiah 25:36f.** The prophet is already hearing in spirit the lamentation to which in v. 34 he has called them, because Jahveh has laid waste the pastures of the shepherds and their flocks, and destroyed the peaceful meadows by the heat of His anger.—In v. 38, finally, the discourse is rounded off by a repetition and expansion of the thought with which the description of the judgment was begun in v. 30. As a young lion forsakes his covert to seek for prey, so Jahveh has gone forth out of His heavenly habitation to hold judgment on the people; for their (the shepherds') land becomes a desert. The perff. are prophetic. כִּי has grounding force. The desolation of the land gives proof that the Lord has arisen to do judgment. חָרוֹן הַיּוֹנָה seems strange, since the adjective הַיּוֹנָה never occurs independently, but only in connection with חָרָב (Jeremiah 46:16; 50:16, and with עֵיר, Zech. 3:1). חָרוֹן, again, is regularly joined with אָרִי, and only three times besides with a suffix referring to Jahveh (Ex. 15:7; Ps. 2:5; Ezek. 7:14). In this we find justification for the conjecture of Hitz., Ew., Gr., etc., that we should read with the LXX and Chald. חָרָב הַיּוֹנָה. The article with the adj. after the subst. without one, here and in 46:16; 50:16, is to be explained by the looseness of connection between the participle and its noun; cf. Ew. § 335, a.

## Jeremiah 26

### Accusation and Acquittal of Jeremiah in the Matter of His Propheying Threatenings. The Prophet Urijah Put to Death.

**Jeremiah 26.** This chapter is separated from the discourses that precede and follow by a heading of its own, and dates from the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim; whereas the following Jeremiah 27–29 fall into the earlier years of Zedekiah's reign. In point of matter, however, the present chapter is closely connected with these latter, though the connection between them is certainly not that held to exist by Ew. His view is, that Jeremiah 27–29 furnish "three historical supplements regarding true and false prophethood," in each of which we are told in the first place how the prophet himself acted, the account being concluded with notices of prophets who either prophesied what was directly false, or who vindicated the truth with but insufficient steadfastness. As again this, Graf justly observes, "that this is in keeping neither with the real contents of Jeremiah 27–29 nor with Jeremiah 26; for Micah was far from being a false prophet, and Urijah was as little wanting in courage as was Jeremiah, who hid himself from Jehoiakim, 36:19, 26."—Ch. 27–29 are related in the closest possible manner to Jeremiah 25; for all that is said by Jeremiah in these chapters has manifestly for its aim to vindicate the truth of his announcement, that Judah's captivity in Chaldea would last seventy years, as against the false prophets, who foretold a speedy return of the exiles into their fatherland. To this the contents of Jeremiah 26 form a sort of prelude, inasmuch as here we are informed of the attitude assumed by the leaders of the people, by the priests and prophets, and by King Jehoiakim towards the prophet's announcement of judgment about to fall on Judah. Thus we are put in a position to judge of the opposition on the part of the people and its leaders, with which his prophecy of the seventy years' bondage of Judah was likely to meet. For

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this reason Jeremiah 26, with its historical notices, is inserted after 25 and before 27–29.

**Jeremiah 26:1–19.** Accusation and Acquittal of Jeremiah.—Vv. 1–7. His prophecy that temple and city would be destroyed gave occasion to the accusation of the prophet.—V. 1. *“In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah king of Judah, came this word from Jahveh, saying: V. 2. Thus said Jahveh: Stand in the court of the house of Jahveh, and speak to all the cities of Judah which come to worship in Jahveh’s house, all the words that I have commanded thee to speak to them; take not a word therefrom. V. 3. Perchance they will hearken and turn each from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil which I purpose to do unto them for the evil of their doings. V. 4. And say unto them: Thus saith Jahveh: If ye hearken not to me, to walk in my law which I have set before you, V. 5. To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets whom I sent unto you, from early morning on sending, but ye have not hearkened. V. 6. Then I make this house like Shiloh, and this city a curse to all the peoples of the earth. V. 7. And the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of Jahveh.”*

In the discourse of Jeremiah 7, where he was combating the people’s false reliance upon the temple, Jeremiah had already threatened that the temple should share the fate of Shiloh, unless the people turned from its evil ways. Now, since that discourse was also delivered in the temple, and since vv. 2–6 of the present chapter manifestly communicate only the substance of what the prophet said, several comm. have held these discourses to be identical, and have taken it for granted that the discourse here referred to, belonging to the beginning of Jehoiakim’s reign, was given in full in Jeremiah 7, while the history of it has been given in the present chapter by way of supplement (cf. the introductory remarks to Jeremiah 7). But considering that it is a peculiarity of Jeremiah frequently to repeat certain of the main thoughts of his message, the saying of God, that He will do to the temple as He has done to Shiloh, is not sufficient to warrant this assumption. Jeremiah frequently

held discourses in the temple, and more than once foretold the destruction of Jerusalem; so that it need not be surprising if on more than one occasion he threatened the temple with the fate of Shiloh. Between the two discourses there is further this distinction: Whereas in Jeremiah 7 the prophet speaks chiefly of the spoliation or destruction of the temple and the expulsion of the people into exile, here in brief incisive words he intimates the destruction of the city of Jerusalem as well; and the present chapter throughout gives the impression that by this, so to speak, peremptory declaration, the prophet sought to move the people finally to decide for Jahveh its God, and that he thus so exasperated the priests and prophets present, that they seized him and pronounced him worthy of death.—According to the heading, this took place in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. The like specification in the heading of Jeremiah 27 does not warrant us to refer the date to the fourth year of this king. “The beginning” intimates simply that the discourse belongs to the earlier period of Jehoiakim’s reign, without minuter information as to year and day. “To Jeremiah” seems to have been dropped out after “came this word,” v. 1. The court of the house of God is not necessarily the inner or priests’ court of the temple; it may have been the outer one where the people assembled; cf. 19:14. All the “cities of Judah” for their inhabitants, as in 11:12. The addition: “take not a word therefrom,” cf. Deut. 4:2; 13:1, indicates the peremptory character of the discourse. In full, without softening the threat by the omission of anything the Lord commanded him, i.e., he is to proclaim the word of the Lord in its full unconditional severity, to move the people, if possible, to repentance, acc. to v. 3. With v. 3b, cf. 18:8, etc.—In vv. 4–6 we have the contents of the discourse. If they hearken not to the words of the prophet, as has hitherto been the case, the Lord will make the temple as Shiloh, and this city, i.e., Jerusalem, a curse, i.e., an object of curses (cf. 24:9), for all peoples. On this cf. 7:12ff. But ye have not hearkened. The *Chet.* הִזְאָתָה Hitz. holds to be an error of transcription; Ew. § 173, g, and Olsh.

*Gramm.* § 101, c, and 133, a paralogically lengthened form; Böttcher, *Lehrb.* § 665. iii. and 897, 3, a toneless appended suffix, strengthening the demonstrative force: *this* (city) *here*.

**Jeremiah 26:8–19.** *The behaviour of the priests, prophets, and princes of the people towards Jeremiah on account of this discourse.*—Vv. 7–9. *When the priests and prophets and all the people present in the temple had heard this discourse, they laid hold of Jeremiah, saying, "Thou must die. Wherefore prophesiest thou in the name of Jahveh, saying, Like Shiloh shall this house become, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant? And all the people gathered to Jeremiah in the house of Jahveh."* This last remark is not so to be understood, when compared with vv. 7 and 8, as that all the people who, according to v. 7, had been hearing the discourse, and, according to v. 8, had with the priests and prophets laid hold on Jeremiah, gathered themselves to him now. It means, that after one part of the people present had, along with the priests and prophets, laid hold on him, the whole people gathered around him. "All the people," v. 9, is accordingly to be distinguished from "all the people," v. 8; and the word כל, all, must not be pressed, in both cases meaning simply a great many. When it is thus taken, there is no reason for following Hitz., and deleting "all the people" in v. 8 as a gloss. Jeremiah's special opponents were the priests and prophets after their own hearts. But to them there adhered many from among the people; and these it is that are meant by "all the people," v. 8. But since these partisans of the priests and pseudo-prophets had no independent power of their own to pass judgment, and since, after Jeremiah was laid hold of, all the rest of the people then in the temple gathered around him, it happens that in v. 11 the priests and prophets are opposed to "all the people," and are mentioned as being alone the accusers of Jeremiah.—When the princes of Judah heard what had occurred, they repaired from the king's house (the palace) to the temple, and seated themselves in the entry

of the new gate of Jahve, sc. to investigate and decide the case. The new gate was, according to 36:10, by the upper, i.e., inner court, and is doubtless the same that Jotham caused to be built (2 Kings 15:35); but whether it was identical with the upper gate of Benjamin, 20:2, cannot be decided. The princes of Judah, since they came up into the temple from the palace, are the judicial officers who were at that time about the palace. the judges were chosen from among the heads of the people; cf. my *Bibl. Archäol.* ii. § 149.

**Jeremiah 26:10.** Before these princes, about whom all the people gathered, Jeremiah is accused by the priests and prophets: "*This man is worthy of death;*" literally: a sentence of death (cf. Deut. 19:6), condemnation to death, is due to this man; "*for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.*" With these last words they appeal to the people standing round who had heard the prophecy, for the princes had not reached the temple till after Jeremiah had been apprehended. V. 12. To this Jeremiah answered in his own defence before the princes and all the people: "*Jahveh hath sent me to prophesy against (לְאֵל for עַל) this house and against this city all the words which ye have heard.* V. 13. *And now make your ways good and your doings, and hearken to the voice of Jahveh your God, and Jahveh will repent Him of the evil that He hath spoken against you.* V. 14. *But I, behold, I am in your hand; do with me as seemeth to you good and right.* V. 15. *Only ye must know, that if ye put me to death, ye bring innocent blood upon you, and upon this city, and upon her inhabitants; for of a truth Jahveh hath sent me to you to speak in your ears all these words.*"—As to "make your ways good," cf. 7:3. This defence made an impression on the princes and on all the people. From the intimation that by reform it was possible to avert the threatened calamity, and from the appeal to the fact that in truth Jahveh had sent him and commanded him so to speak, they see that he is a true prophet, whose violent death would bring blood-guiltiness upon the city and its inhabitants. They therefore declare to the accusers, v. 16: "*This*

*man is not worthy of death, for in the name of Jahveh our God hath he spoken unto us."*

**Jeremiah 26:17–19.** To justify and confirm this sentence, certain of the elders of the land rise and point to the like sentence passed on the prophet Micah of Moresheth-Gath, who had foretold the destruction of the city and temple under King Hezekiah, but had not been put to death by the king; Hezekiah, on the contrary, turning to prayer to the Lord, and thus succeeding in averting the catastrophe. The "men of the elders of the land" are different from "all the princes," and are not to be taken, as by Graf, for representatives of the people in the capacity of assessors at judicial decisions, who had to give their voice as to guilt or innocence; nor are they necessarily to be regarded as local authorities of the land. They come before us here solely in their character as elders of the people, who possessed a high authority in the eyes of the people. The saying of the Morasthite Micah which they cite in v. 18 is found in Mic. 3:12, verbally agreeing with v. 18; see the exposition of that passage. The stress of what they say lies in the conclusion drawn by them from Micah's prophesy, taken in connection with Hezekiah's attitude towards the Lord, v. 19: "*Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear Jahveh and entreat Jahveh, and did not Jahveh repent Him of the evil which He had spoken concerning them? and we would commit a great evil against our souls?*" Neither in the book of Micah, nor in the accounts of the books of Kings, nor in the chronicle of Hezekiah's reign are we told that, in consequence of that prophecy of Micah, Hezekiah entreated the Lord and so averted judgment from Jerusalem. There we find only that during the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians, Hezekiah besought the help of the Lord and protection from that mighty enemy. The elders have combined this fact with Micah's prophecy, and thence drawn the conclusion that the godly king succeeded by his prayer in averting the mischief. Cf. the remarks on this passage at Mic. 4:10. הָלָה אֶת־פָּנָי ׀, lit., stroke the face of Jahveh, i.e., entreat Him,

cf. Ex. 32:11. "And we would commit," are thinking of doing, are on the point of doing a great evil against our souls; inasmuch as by putting the prophet to death they would bring blood-guiltiness upon themselves and hasten the judgment of God.—The acquittal of Jeremiah is not directly related; but it may be gathered from the decision of the princes: This man is not worthy of death.

**Jeremiah 26:20–24.** *The prophet Urijah put to death.*—While the history we have just been considering gives testimony to the hostility of the priests and false prophets towards the true prophets of the Lord, the story of the prophet Urijah shows the hostility of King Jehoiakim against the proclaimers of divine truth. For this purpose, and not merely to show in how great peril Jeremiah then stood (Gr., Näg.), this history is introduced into our book. It is not stated that the occurrence took place at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, nor can we infer so much from its being placed directly after the events of that time. The time is not specified, because it was irrelevant for the case in hand. V. 20. *A man, Urijah the son of Shemaiah—both unknown—from Kirjath-Jearim, now called Kuriyet el 'Enab, about three hours to the north-west of Jerusalem, on the frontiers of the tribe of Benjamin (see on Josh. 9:17), prophesied in the name of Jahveh against Jerusalem and Judah very much in the same terms as Jeremiah had done. When King Jehoiakim and his great men heard this, discourse, he sought after the prophet to kill him. Urijah, when he heard of it, fled to Egypt; but the king sent men after him, Elnathan the son of Achbor with some followers, and had him brought back thence, caused him to be put to death, and his body to be thrown into the graves of the common people.* Hitz. takes objection to "all his mighty men," v. 21, because it is not found in the LXX, and is nowhere else used by Jeremiah. But these facts do not prove that the words are not genuine; the latter of the two, indeed, tells rather in favour of their genuineness, since a glossator would not readily have interpolated an expression foreign to the rest of the book. The "mighty men" are the distinguished soldiers who were about the

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king, the military commanders, as the “princes” are the supreme civil authorities. *Elnathan* the son of *Achbor*, according to 36:12, 25, one of Jehoiakim’s princes, was a son of Achbor who is mentioned in 2 Kings 22:12–14 as amongst the princes of Josiah. Whether this Elnathan was the same as the Elnathan whose daughter Nehushta was Jehoiachin’s mother (2 Kings 24:8), and who was therefore the king’s father-in-law, must remain an undecided point, since the name Elnathan is of not unfrequent occurrence; of Levites, Ezra 8:16. עַבְדֵי הָעָם (see on 17:19) means the common people here, as in 2 Kings 22:6. The place of burial for the common people was in the valley of the Kidron; see on 2 Kings 22:6.

**Jeremiah 26:24.** The narrative closes with a remark as to how, amid such hostility against the prophets of God on the part of king and people, Jeremiah escaped death. This was because the hand of *Ahikam* the son of *Shaphan* was with him. This person is named in 2 Kings 22:12, 14, as one of the great men sent by King Josiah to the prophetess Hulda to inquire of her concerning the book of the law recently discovered. According to Jeremiah 39:14; 40:5, etc., he was the father of the future Chaldean governor Gedaliah.

## Jeremiah 27

### Ch. 27–29. The Yoke of Babylon Upon Judah and the Neighbouring Peoples

**Jeremiah 27–29.** These three chapters are closely connected with one another. They all belong to the earlier period of Zedekiah’s reign, and contain words of Jeremiah by means of which he confirms and vindicates against the opposition of false prophets his announcement of the seventy years’ duration of the Chaldean supremacy over Judah and the nations, and warns king and people patiently to bear the yoke laid on them by Nebuchadnezzar. The three chapters have besides an external connection. For Jeremiah 28 is attached to the event of 27 by its introductory formula: And it came to pass in *that year*, at the beginning, etc.,

as 29 is to 28 by וְאֵלֶּיךָ. To this, it is true, the heading handed down in the Masoretic text is in contradiction. The date: In the beginning of the reign of *Jehoiakim*, the son of Josiah king of Judah, came this word to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 27:1), is irreconcilable with the date: And it came to pass in *that year*, in the beginning of the reign of *Zedekiah* king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month. The name “Jehoiakim the son of Josiah” in 27:1 is erroneous. It is without doubt the blunder of a copyist who had in his mind the heading of the 26th chapter, and should have been “Zedekiah;” for the contents of Jeremiah 27 carry us into Zedekiah’s time, as plainly appears from vv. 3, 12, and 20. Hence the Syr. translation and one of Kennicott’s codd. have substituted the latter name.

**Jeremiah 27.** The Yoke of Babylon.—In three sections, connected as to their date and their matter, Jeremiah prophesies to the nations adjoining Judah (vv. 2–11), to King Zedekiah (vv. 12–15), and to the priests and all the people (vv. 16–22), that God has laid on them the yoke of the king of Babylon, and that they ought to humble themselves under His almighty hand.

**Jeremiah 27:1.** According to the (corrected) heading, the prophecy was given in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah. If we compare Jeremiah 28 we find the same date: “in that year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah,” more fully defined as the fourth year of his reign. Graf has made objection, that in the case of a reign of eleven years, one could not well speak of the fourth year as the beginning of the reign. But the idea of beginning is relative (cf. Gen. 10:10), and does not necessarily coincide with that of the first year. The reign of Zedekiah is divided into two halves: the first period, or beginning, when he was elevated by Nebuchadnezzar, and remained subject to him, and the after or last period, when he had rebelled against his liege lord.

**Jeremiah 27:2–11.** *The yoke of the king of Babylon upon the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon.*—V. 2. “Thus said Jahveh to me: Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon



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thy neck, V. 3. And send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the sons of Ammon, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon, by the hand of the messengers that are come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. V. 4. And command them to say unto their masters, Thus hath Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel, said: Thus shall ye say unto your masters: V. 5. I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched hand, and give it to whom it seemeth meet unto me. V. 6. And how have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field also have I given him to serve him. V. 7. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the time of his land come, and many nations and great kings serve themselves of him. V. 8. And the people and the kingdom that will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and that will not put its neck into the yoke of the king of Babylon, with sword, with famine, and with pestilence I will visit that people, until I have made an end of them by his hand. V. 9. And ye, hearken not to your prophets, and your soothsayers, and to your dreams, to your enchanters and your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying: Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon. V. 10. For they prophesy a lie unto you, that I should remove you far from your land, and that I should drive you out and ye should perish. V. 11. But the people that will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and will serve him, that will I let remain in its land, saith Jahveh, to till it and to dwell therein."

The yoke Jeremiah is to make and lay on his neck is a plain emblem of the Babylonian yoke the nations are to bear. The words "bonds and yokes" denote together one yoke. מִטּוֹת are the two wooden beams or poles of the yoke, which were fastened together by means of the מוֹסְרוֹת, bonds, ropes, so that the yoke might be laid on the beast's neck; cf. Lev. 26:13. That Jeremiah really put such a yoke on his neck and wore it, we see from 28:10, 12, where a false prophet breaks it for him. He is to send the yoke to the

kings of Edom, Moab, etc., by means of envoys of those kings, who were come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah. And since Jeremiah laid a yoke on his own neck, and so carried out the commanded symbolical action in objective reality, there is no reason to doubt that he made yokes for the five kings named and gave them to their respective envoys. Chr. B. Mich., Hitz., Graf, hold this to be improbable, and suppose that Jeremiah only made a yoke for himself and put it on his neck; but by appearing abroad with it, he set before the eyes of the ambassadors, the yoke that was to be laid on their kings, and, in a certain sense, emblematically gave it to them. But even though this might have sufficed to accomplish the aim of the prophecy, it is difficulty to reconcile it with the wording of the text; hence Hitz. seeks arbitrarily to change שְׁלַחְתָּם into שְׁחַתְּתָם. And it is a worthless argument that Jeremiah cannot possibly have believed that the envoys would carry the yokes with them and deliver them to their masters. Why should not he have believed they would do so? And if they did not, it was their concern. The plur. "bands and yokes" may indeed mean a single yoke, but it may also mean many; and the verbs שְׁחַתְּתָם and שְׁלַחְתָּם, both with plural suffixes, indicate clearly that he was to make not merely one yoke for himself, but yokes for himself and the kings. In Jeremiah 28:10 and 12, where *one* yoke is spoken of, the singular הַמִּוֹטָה is used; while, v. 13, "yokes of wood hast thou broken," does not prove that this plural has the same force as the singular. We are not told for what purpose ambassadors from the kings named had come to Jerusalem; but we can discover what it was from the message Jeremiah gives them for their lords. From this it appears, without a doubt, that they were come to take counsel as to a coalition with the view of throwing off the Chaldean supremacy. By God's command Jeremiah opposes this design with the announcement, that the God of Israel, the Creator of the world and of all creatures, has given all these lands (those of the kings named in v. 3) into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar; that men, and even beasts,

should serve him, i.e., that he might exercise unbounded dominion over these lands and all that belonged to them, cf. 28:14. "My servant," as in 25:9. All nations are to serve him, his son and his grandson. These words simply express the long duration of the king of Babylon's power over them, without warranting us in concluding that he was succeeded on the throne by his son and his grandson, cf. Deut. 6:2; 4:25. For, as we know, Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach; then came his brother-in-law Neriglissar, who murdered Evil-Merodach, who was followed by his son Laborosoarchod, a child, murdered after a nine months' reign by conspirators. Of these latter, Neboned ascended the throne of Babylon; and it was under his reign that the time for his land came that it should be made subject by many nations and great kings, cf. 25:14. הוּא גַם הוּא serves to strengthen the suffix on אֶרְצוֹ; and the suffix, like בּוֹ, refers to Nebuchadnezzar. What is said in vv. 6 and 7 is made sterner by the threatening of v. 8, that the Lord will punish with sword, famine, and pestilence the people and kingdom that will not serve Nebuchadnezzar. וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר introduces a second relative clause, the אֵת being here quite in place, since "the people and the kingdom" are accusatives made to precede absolutely, and resumed again by the עַל הַגּוֹי הַזֶּה, which belongs directly to the verb "visit." With עֲדִיתֵמִי, cf. 24:10 and עֲדִי-כְלוּתִי אֶתֶם, corresponding in meaning, in 9:15.

**Jeremiah 27:9f.** Therefore they must not hearken to their prophets, soothsayers, and sorcerers, that prophesy the contrary. The mention of dreams between the prophets and soothsayers on the one hand, and the enchanters and sorcerers on the other, strikes us as singular. It is, however, to be explained from the fact, that prophets and soothsayers often feigned dreams and dream-revelations (cf. 23:25); and other persons, too, might have dreams, and could give them out as significant. Cf. 29:8, where dreams are expressly

distinguished from the discourse of the prophets and soothsayers. Whether the reckoning of five kinds of heathen prophecy has anything to do with the naming of five kings (Hitz.), appears to us to be questionable; but it is certain that Jeremiah does not design to specify five different, i.e., distinct and separate, kinds of heathen divination. For there was in reality no such distinction. Heathen prophecy was closely allied with sorcery and soothsaying; cf. Deut. 18:9f., and Oehler on the *Relation of Old Testament Prophecy to Heathen Divination* (Tüb. 1861). The enumeration of the multifarious means and methods for forecasting the future is designed to show the multitude of delusive schemes for supplying the lack of true and real divine inspiration. בְּשִׁפְיָם, equivalent to מִכְשָׁפִים, the same which in Deut. 18:10 is used along with מְעוֹנֵן. The explanation of the last-mentioned word is disputed. Some take it from עָנָן, cloud = cloud-maker or storm-raiser; others from עֵין, eye = fascinator, the idea being that of bewitching with the evil eye; see on Lev. 19:26. The use of the word along with מְנַחֵשׁ וּמְכַשֵּׁף, Deut. 18:10, favours the latter rendering, whereas no passage in which the word is used in the Old Testament supports the sig. storm-raiser. "That I should remove you," as is shown by the continuation of the infinitive by וְהִדְחֵתִי. The false prophets delude the people, inducing them to rise in rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, contrary to God's will, and thus simply bringing about their expulsion from their land, i.e., removal into banishment. לְמַעַן shows, as frequently, that the inevitable consequence of these persons' proceedings is designed by them.

**Jeremiah 27:11.** The people, on the other hand, that bends under the yoke of the king of Babylon shall remain in its own land. For the great Asiatic conquerors contented themselves, in the first place, with thoroughly subjecting the vanquished nations and imposing a tribute; only in the case of stubborn resistance or of insurrection on the part of the conquered did

they proceed to destroy the kingdoms and deport their populations. This Zedekiah and the ambassadors that had come to him might have learnt from Nebuchadnezzar's course of action after the capture of Jerusalem under Jehoiachin, as compared with that in Jehoiakim's time, had they not been utterly infatuated by the lying spirit of the false prophets, whose prophecies accommodated themselves to the wishes of the natural heart.

**Jeremiah 27:12–15.** To King Zedekiah Jeremiah addressed words of like import, saying: *“Bring your necks into the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and ye shall live. V. 13. Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by sword, famine, and pestilence, as Jahveh hath spoken concerning the people that will not serve the king of Babylon? V. 14. And hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you: Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon; for they prophesy a lie unto you. V. 15. For I have not sent them, saith Jahveh, and they prophesy in my name falsely, that I might drive you out and ye might perish, ye and the prophets that prophesy unto you.”*—The discourse addressed to the king in the plural, “bring your necks,” etc., is explained by the fact that, as v. 13 shows, in and along with the king of his people are addressed. The imperative יִיָּיִ intimates the consequence of the preceding command. V. 13 gives the application of the threat in v. 8 to King Zedekiah and his people; and v. 14f. gives the warning corresponding to vv. 9 and 10 against the sayings of the lying prophets; cf. Jeremiah 14:14 and 23:16, 21.

**Jeremiah 27:16–22.** The priests and all the people are warned to give no belief to the false prophesings of a speedy restoration of the vessels carried off to Babylon.—V. 16. *“Thus hath Jahveh said: Harken not to the sayings of your prophets that prophesy unto you: Behold, the vessels of Jahveh's house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon; for they prophesy a lie unto you. V. 17. Harken not unto them; serve the king of Babylon and live; wherefore should this city become a desert? V. 18. But if they be prophets, and if the word of Jahveh be with them,*

*let them now make intercession to Jahveh of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of Jahveh, and in the king's house, and in Jerusalem, go not to Babylon. V. 19. For thus saith Jahveh of hosts concerning the pillars and the [brazen] sea and the frames, and concerning the other vessels that are left in this city, V. 20. Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not away when he carried away captive Jechoniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem. V. 21. For thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that are left in the house of Jahveh, and in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem: V. 22. To Babylon shall they be brought, and there shall they remain until the day that I visit them, saith Jahveh, and carry them up, and bring them back to this place.”*

Here Jeremiah gives King Zedekiah warning that the prophecies of a speedy end to Chaldean bondage are lies, and that confidence in such lies will hurry on the ruin of the state. He at the same time disabuses the priests of the hope raised by the false prophets, that the vessels of the temple and of the palace that had been carried off at the time Jechoniah was taken to Babylon will very soon be restored; and assures them that such statements can only procure the destruction of the city, since their tendency is to seduce king and people to rebellion, and rebellion against the king of Babylon means the destruction of Jerusalem,—a prophecy that was but too soon fulfilled. The vessels of the temple, v. 16, are the golden vessels Solomon caused to be made (1 Kings 7:48f.), which Nebuchadnezzar had carried to Babylon, 2 Kings 24:13. מִבְּבָבֶלָה, from towards Babylon, i.e., from Babylon, whither they had been taken; cf. Ew. § 216, b. “Now shortly,” lit., hastily or speedily, i.e., ere long, cf. 28:3, where the prophet Hananiah foretells the restoration of them within two years, in opposition to Jeremiah's affirmation that the exile will last seventy years. To show more clearly the irreconcilableness of his own position with that of the false prophets, Jeremiah further tells

what true prophets, who have the word of Jahveh, would do. They would betake themselves in intercession to the Lord, seeking to avert yet further calamity or punishment, as all the prophets sent by God, including Jeremiah himself, did, cf. 7:16. They should endeavour by intercession to prevent the vessels that are still left in Jerusalem from being taken away. The extraordinary expression **בְּבִלְתִּי בָאוּ** has probably come from the omission of Jod from the verb, which should be read **יָבִאוּ**. As it stands, it can only be imperative, which is certainly not suitable. **לְבִלְתִּי** is usually construed with the infinitive, but occasionally also with the *temp. fin.*; with the imperf., which is what the sense here demands, in Ex. 20:20; with the perf., Jeremiah 23:14.—Of the temple furniture still remaining, he mentions in v. 19 as most valuable the two golden pillars, *Jachin* and *Boaz*, 1 Kings 7:15ff, the brazen sea, 1 Kings 7:23ff., and **הַמְּכֻנּוֹת**, the artistic waggon frames for the basins in which to wash the sacrificial flesh, 1 Kings 7:27ff.; and he declares they too shall be carried to Babylon, as happened at the destruction of Jerusalem, 2 Kings 25:13ff. (**בְּהִגְלוֹתוֹ** for **בְּגִלוֹתוֹ**)

### Jeremiah 28

**Jeremiah 28.** Against the False Prophet Hananiah.—Vv. 1–4. This man’s prophecy. At the same time, namely in the fourth year of Zedekiah (cf. rem. on 27:1. The *Chet.* **בְּשָׁנָה** is supported by 46:2 and 51:59; the *Keri* **בְּשָׁנָה** is an unnecessary alteration), in the fifth month, spake *Hananiah* the son of *Azur*,—a prophet not otherwise known, belonging to Gibeon, a city of the priests (Josh. 21:17; now *Jib*, a large village two hours north-west of Jerusalem; see on Josh. 9:3), possibly therefore himself a priest,—in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests and people assembled there, saying: V. 2. “*Thus hath Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel, said: I break the yoke of the king of Babylon.* V. 3. *Within two years I bring again into this place the vessels of the house of Jahveh, which*

*Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon took away from this place and carried them to Babylon.* V. 4. *And Jechoniah, the son of Jehoiakim the king of Judah, and all the captives of Judah that went into Babylon, bring I again to this place, saith Jahveh; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.*”—The false prophet endeavours to stamp on his prediction the impress of a true, God-inspired prophecy, by copying the title of God, so often used by Jeremiah, “Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel,” and by giving the utmost definiteness to his promise: “within two years” (in contrast to Jeremiah’s seventy years). “Two years” is made as definite as possible by the addition of **יָמִים**: two years in days, i.e., in two full years. See on Gen. 41:1, 2 Sam. 13:23.

**Jeremiah 28:5–11.** *Jeremiah’s reply.*—First Jeremiah admits that the fulfilment of this prediction would be desirable (v. 6), but then reminds his opponent that all the prophets of the Lord up till this time have prophesied of war and calamity (vv. 7 and 8). So that if a prophet, in opposition to these witnesses of God, predicts nothing but peace and safety, then nothing short of the fulfilment of his prediction can make good his claim to be a true prophet (v. 9).—Jeremiah’s answer is to this effect: V. 6. “*Amen (i.e., yea), may Jahveh so do! may Jahveh perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of Jahveh’s house and all the captives from Babylon into this place.* V. 7. *Only hear now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people.* V. 8. *The prophets that were before me and before thee from of old, they prophesied concerning many lands and great kingdoms, of war, and of trouble, and of pestilence.* V. 9. *The prophet that prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet cometh to pass, shall be known as the prophet that Jahveh hath truly sent.*”—As to **אָמֵן**, *yea*, see on 11:5. The scope of this assent is straightway defined in “may Jahveh so do.” But in order that the hearers may not misunderstand his assent, Jeremiah proceeds to show that hitherto only threatening predictions have carried with them the presumption of their being true prophecies, inasmuch as it is

these alone that have been in harmony with the predictions of all previous prophets. וַיִּנְבְּאוּ (v. 8) is explained by the fact that “the prophets” with the accompany relative clause is made to precede absolute-wise. In the same absolute manner the clause “the prophet ... peace” is disposed so that after the verb יִדְעַתְּ the word הַנְּבִיאַ is repeated. For לְרֶעָה many MSS have לְרֶעָב; manifestly an adaptation to passages like 14:12; 21:9; 24:10; 27:8, 13; 29:17f., where sword, famine, and pestilence are mentioned together as three modes of visitation by God; whereas only the general word רֶעָה seems in place here, when mentioned alongside of “war.” For this very reason Hitz. rejects רֶעָב as being the least difficult reading, while Ew. takes it under his protection on account of the parallel passages, not considering that the train of thought is different there.—The truth expressed in v. 9 is based on the Mosaic law concerning prophecy, Deut. 18:21f., where the fulfilment of the prediction is given as the test of true, God-inspired prophecy.

**Jeremiah 28:10f.** Had Hananiah been sent by the Lord, he might have been satisfied with Jeremiah’s opinion, and have contentedly awaited the issue. But instead of this, he seeks by means of violence to secure credence for his prophesying. He takes the yoke from off the neck of the prophet, and breaks it in pieces, as he repeats before the people his former prediction: “Thus hath Jahveh said: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within two years.”—Thereupon Jeremiah went his way without answering a word, calmly entrusting to the Lord the vindication of the truth of His own word.

**Jeremiah 28:12–17.** *The Lord’s testimony against Hananiah.*—Apparently not long after Jeremiah had departed, he received from the Lord the commission to go to Hananiah and to say to him: V. 13. “Thus saith Jahveh: Yokes of wood hast thou broken, but hast made in place of them yokes of iron. V. 14. For thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: A yoke of iron I lay upon

*the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they shall serve him; and the beasts of the field also have I given him.*—When the prophet says: Yokes of wood hast thou broken, etc., we are not to understand him as speaking of the breaking of the wooden yoke Jeremiah had been wearing; he gives the deeper meaning of that occurrence. By breaking Jeremiah’s wooden yoke, Hananiah has only signified that the yoke Nebuchadnezzar lays on the nations will not be so easily broken as a wooden one, but is of iron, i.e., not to be broken. The plural “yokes” is to be explained by the emblematical import of the words, and is not here to be identified, as it sometimes may be, with the singular, v. 10. V. 14 shows in what sense Hananiah put an iron yoke in the place of the wooden one: Jahveh will lay iron yokes on all nations, that they may serve the king of Babel. Hananiah’s breaking the wooden yoke does not alter the divine decree, but is made to contribute to its fuller revelation. With the last clause of v. 14, cf. 27:6.—Hereupon Jeremiah forewarns the false prophets what is to be God’s punishment on them for their false and audacious declarations. V. 15. “Hear now, Hananiah: Jahveh hath not sent thee, and thou hast made this people to believe a lie. V. 16. Therefore thus saith Jahveh: Behold, I cast thee from off the face of the earth; this year shalt thou die, for thou hast spoken rebellion against Jahveh.” “The year” = this year, as in Isa. 37:30. The words “for thou hast spoken,” etc., recall Deut. 13:6. They involve an application to Hananiah’s case of the command there given to put such a prophet to death, and show how it can with justice be said that the Lord will cast him from off the face of the earth. The verb מְשַׁלְחֶנּוּ is chosen for the sake of the play on לֹא שְׁלַחְתָּהוּ. God has not sent him as prophet to His people, but will send him away from off the earth, i.e., cause him to die.—In v. 17 it is recorded that this saying was soon fulfilled. Hananiah died in the seventh month of that year, i.e., two months after his controversy with Jeremiah (cf. v. 1).

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## Jeremiah 29

**Jeremiah 29.** A Letter from Jeremiah to the Captives in Babylon, together with Threatenings against their False Prophets.—As in Jerusalem, so too in Babylon the predictions of the false prophets fostered a lively hope that the domination of Nebuchadnezzar would not last long, and that the return of the exiles to their fatherland would soon come about. The spirit of discontent thus excited must have exercised an injurious influence on the fortunes of the captives, and could not fail to frustrate the aim which the chastisement inflicted by God was designed to work out, namely, the moral advancement of the people. Therefore Jeremiah makes use of an opportunity furnished by an embassy sent by King Zedekiah to Babel, to address a letter to the exiles, exhorting them to yield with submission to the lot God had assigned to them. He counsels them to prepare, by establishing their households there, for a long sojourn in Babel, and to seek the welfare of that country as the necessary condition of their own. They must not let themselves be deceived by the false prophets' idle promises of a speedy return, since God will not bring them back and fulfil His glorious promises till after seventy years have passed (vv. 4–14). Then he tells them that sore judgments are yet in store for King Zedekiah and such as have been left in the land (vv. 15–20); and declares that some of their false prophets shall perish miserably (vv. 21–32).

**Jeremiah 29:1–3. Heading and Introduction.**—The following circular is connected, in point of outward form, with the preceding discourses against the false prophets in Jerusalem by means of the words: *“And these are the words of the letter,”* etc. The words of the letter, i.e., the main contents of the letter, since it was not transcribed, but given in substance. *“Which the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders of the captives, and to the priests and prophets, and to the whole people, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon.”* “The residue of the elders,” Hitz. and Graf understand of those

elders who were not at the same time priests or prophets. On this Näg. pronounces: “It is impossible that they can be right, for then ‘the residue of the elders of the captivity’ must have stood after the priests and prophets.” And though we hear of elders of the priests, there is no trace in the O.T. of elders of the prophets. Besides, the elders, whenever they are mentioned along with the priests, are universally the elders of the people. Thus must we understand the expression here also. “The residue of the elders” can only be the remaining, i.e., still surviving, elders of the exiles, as יָתֵר is used also in 39:9 for those still in life. But there is no foundation for the assumption by means of which Gr. seeks to support his interpretation, namely, that the place of elders that died was immediately filled by new appointments, so that the council of the elders must always have been regarded as a whole, and could not come to be a residue or remnant. Jeremiah could not possibly have assumed the existence of such an organized governing authority, since in this very letter he exhorts them to set about the establishment of regular system in their affairs. The date given in v. 2: *“after that Jechoniah the king, and the sovereign lady, and the courtiers, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, the workmen and smiths, were gone away from Jerusalem,”* points to the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, to the first or second year of it. With this the advice given to the captives in the letter harmonizes well, namely, the counsel to build houses, plant gardens, etc.; since this makes it clear that they had not been long there. The despatch of this letter is usually referred to the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign, because in 28:1 this year is specified. But the connection in point of matter between the present chapter and Jeremiah 28 does not necessarily imply their contemporaneousness, although that is perfectly possible; and the fact that, according to 51:59, Zedekiah himself undertook a journey to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign, does not exclude the possibility of an embassy thither in the same year. The going away from Jerusalem is the emigration to Babylon; cf. 24:1,

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2 Kings 24:15. הַגְּבִירָה, the queen-mother, see on 13:18. סְרִיסִים are the officials of the court; not necessarily eunuchs. Both words are joined to the king, because these stood in closest relations to him. Then follows without copula the second class of emigrants, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, i.e., the heads of the tribes, septs, and families of the nation. The artisans form the third class. This disposes of the objections raised by Mov. and Hitz. against the genuineness of the words “princes of Judah and Jerusalem,” their objections being based on the false assumption that these words were an exposition of “courtiers.” Cf. against this, 2 Kings 24:15, where along with the סְרִיסִים the heads of tribes and families are comprehended under the head of אֲוֵלֵי הָאָרֶץ. V. 3. “By the hand” of *Elasah* is dependent on “sent,” v. 1. The men by whom Jeremiah sent the letter to Babylon are not further known. *Shaphan* is perhaps the same who is mentioned in 26:24. We have no information as to the aim of the embassy.

**Jeremiah 29:4–14.** At v. 4 the contents of the letter begin. Jeremiah warns the people to prepare for a lengthened sojourn in Babylonia, and exhorts them to settle down there. V. 5. *“Build houses and dwell (therein), and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them.* V. 6. *Take wives and beget sons and daughters, and take for your sons wives and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and increase there and not diminish.* V. 7. *And seek the safety of the city whither I have carried you captive, and pray for it to Jahveh, and in its safety shall be safety to you.”* The imperatives “increase and not diminish” give the consequence of what has been said just before. “The city whither I have carried you captive” is not precisely Babylon, but every place whither separate companies of the exiles have been transported. And pray for the city whither you are come, because in this you further your own welfare, instead of looking for advantage to yourselves from the fall of the Chaldean empire, from the calamity of your heathen fellow-citizens.—With this is suitably

joined immediately the warning against putting trust in the delusive hopes held out by the false prophets. *“For thus saith Jahve of hosts, the God of Israel: Let not your prophets, that are in the midst of you, and your soothsayers, deceive you, and hearken not to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed; for falsely they prophesy to you in my name; I have not sent them, saith Jahveh.”*

מְחַלְמִים is somewhat singular, since we have no other example of the Hiph. of חָלַם in its sig. dream (in Isa. 38:16 the Hiph. of the same root means to preserve in good health); but the Hiph. may here express the people’s spontaneity in the matter of dreams: which ye cause to be dreamed for you (Hitz.). Thus there would be no need to alter the reading into חֲלָמִים; a precedent for the defective spelling being found in מְעַזְרִים, 2 Chron. 28:23. What the false prophets gave out is not expressly intimated, but may be gathered from the context v. 10, namely, that the yoke of Babylon would soon be broken and captivity come to an end.—This warning is justified in vv. 10–14, where God’s decree is set forth. The deliverance will not come about till after seventy years; but then the Lord will fulfil to His people His promise of grace. V. 10. *“For thus saith Jahveh: When as seventy years are fulfilled for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform to you my good word, to bring you back to this place.* V. 11. *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith Jahveh, thoughts of peace and not for evil, to give you (a) destiny and hope.* V. 12. *And ye will call upon me, and go and pray unto me, and I will hear you.* V. 13. *And ye will seek me, and find me, if ye search for me with all your heart.* V. 14. *And I will let myself be found of you, saith Jahve, and will turn your captivity, and gather you out of all the peoples and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith Jahveh, and will bring you again to the place whence I have carried you away.”*—לְפִי קִלְאֵת, according to the measure of the fulfilment of seventy years for Babel. These words point back to Jeremiah 25:11f., and we must reckon from the date of that prediction.

פָּקַד c. *accus.* sig. to visit in a good sense, to look

favourably on one and take his part. "My good word" is expounded by the following infinitive clause. V. 11. "I know my thoughts" is not to be taken, as by Jerome, J. D. Mich., etc., as in contrast with the false prophets: I know, but they do not. This antithesis is not in keeping with what follows. The meaning is rather: Although I appoint so long a term for the fulfilment of the plan of redemption, yet fear not that I have utterly rejected you; I know well what my design is in your regard. My thoughts toward you are thoughts of God, not of evil. Although now I inflict lengthened sufferings on you, yet this chastisement but serves to bring about your welfare in the future (Chr. B. Mich., Graf, etc.).—To give you אָחֲרַיִת, lit., last, i.e., issue or future, and hope. For this sig. cf. Job 8:7, Prov. 5:4, etc. This future destiny and hope can, however, only be realized if by the sorrows of exile you permit yourselves to be brought to a knowledge of your sins, and return penitent to me. Then ye will call on me and pray, and I will hear you. "And ye will go," v. 12, is not the apodosis to "ye will call," since there is no further explanation of it, and since the simple הָלַךְ can neither mean to go away satisfied nor to have success. "Go" must be taken with what follows: go to the place of prayer (Ew., Umbr., Gr. Næg.). In v. 13 אָחֵי is to be repeated after "find." Vv. 12 and 13 are a renewal of the promise, Deut. 4:29, 30; and v. 14 is a brief summary of the promise, Deut. 30:3–5, whence is taken the graphic expression שׁוּב אֶת־שְׁבוּת; see on that passage.—Thereafter in

**Jeremiah 29:15–20.** Jeremiah informs the captives of the judgments that is to gall on such as are still left in the land. V. 15. *"If ye say: Jahveh hath raised us up prophets in Babylon—* V. 16. *Yea, thus saith Jahveh of the king that sitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity,* V. 17. *Thus saith Jahveh of hosts: Behold, I send amongst them the sword, famine, and pestilence, and make them like horrible figs, that cannot be eaten for badness,* V. 18. *And hunt after them*

*with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and give them to be abused to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and a hissing, and a reproach among all the peoples whither I have driven them;* V. 19. *Inasmuch as they have not hearkened to my words, saith Jahveh, wherewith I sent to them my servants the prophets, from early morning on sending them, and ye have not hearkened, saith Jahveh.* V. 20. *But ye, hear the word of Jahveh, all ye captives whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon.*"—The design with which Jeremiah tells the captives of this judgment may be gathered from the terms of v. 15, with which this prophecy is introduced: God had raised up to us prophets in Babel (בְּבָבֶלָה, lit., as far as Babel, i.e., extending His agency so far beyond the bounds of Judah). Hence it is clear that the announcement of judgment to come on those left in the land is in direct opposition to the predictions of the prophets that had appeared in Babylon. these prophesied a swift end to Chaldean domination and an immediate return of the exiles to their fatherland. So long as one of David's posterity sat on his throne in Jerusalem, and so long as the kingdom of Judah was maintained, the partial captivity of the people and removal of the plundered treasures of the temple would appear as a calamity which might soon be repaired. The false prophets in Babylon laid, therefore, great stress on the continued existence of the kingdom, with its capital and the temple, in their efforts to obtain belief amongst the exiles. As Næg. justly remarks, it was to take this ground from beneath their feet that Jeremiah predicted expulsion and destruction against the people of Jerusalem. The prophecy does indeed bear upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "but not in the first reference; its immediate purpose was to overthrow the foundations on which the false prophets of the exile stood" (Næg.). Taken thus, these verses form an integral part of the message sent by Jeremiah to the exiles, which was of no small weight for quieting the excitement, nourished by the false prophets, which reigned amongst them. One is struck by the want of connection between vv. 15 and 16.



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The beginning of v. 16, "Yea, thus saith," comes directly after the end of v. 15 without any joining link. Näg. holds the יָ to be the pleonastic יָ which often introduces a saying. But its position before the "thus saith" makes this impossible. Here it serves to strengthen the asseveration: *yea*, thus fitly introducing what Jahveh says to the contrary; and vv. 15 and 16 are, tersely and immediately, set over against one another. "If ye say" means: as regards your saying that Jahveh hath raised you up prophets in Babylon, the answer is: Thus hath Jahveh said. This is the connection of v. 16 with v. 15. "Your brethren that," etc., is co-ordinate with "all the people." The words: "I make them like horrible figs," make allusion to the vision in Jeremiah 24:2ff., but do not imply that this vision was known to the exiles, for they are quite intelligible to him who knows nothing of Jeremiah 24 (Näg.). The adjct. שֹׁעֵר is found only here, from שָׁעַר, shudder; horrible, that on tasting which one shudders. With v. 18, cf. 24:9. "Wherewith I sent my servants," i.e., commissioned them. This verb construed with double accus. as in 2 Sam. 11:22, Isa. 55:11. "Ye have not hearkened," the 2nd pers. instead of the 3rd, is hardly to be explained by the fact that the prophet here cites in full an often quoted saying (Hitz., Näg., etc.). The reason is that the prophet is thinking of the exiles also as having been equal to their brethren remaining in Judah in the matter of not hearkening. Thus the way is prepared for the summons: But ye, hear, v. 20.

**Jeremiah 29:21–23.** After having set forth the divine determination, the prophet's letter addresses itself specially against the false prophets and tells them their punishment from God. V. 21. "Thus saith Jahveh, the God of hosts, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who prophesy to you in my name falsely: Behold, I give them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, that he may smite them before your eyes. V. 22. And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the exiles of Judah that are in Babylon, saying: Jahveh make

*thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire, V. 23. Because they have done folly in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken in my name lying words which I have not commanded them. But I know it and am witness, saith Jahveh.*"—Beyond what is here told, we know nothing of these two pseudo-prophets.

The name אֶהְיֶה is written in v. 20 without א; thus the Kametz comes to be under the ה, and in consequence of this the Pathach is changed into a Seghol "Smite," i.e., slay. The manner of their death is called, probably with allusion to the name *Kolaiah*, קֹלָיָה, roast, burn in a heated furnace; a mode of execution usual in Babylon, acc. to Dan. 3:6. This punishment is to fall on them because of two kinds of sin: 1. Because they have done folly in Israel, namely, committed adultery with their neighbours' wives; 2. Because they have prophesied falsely in the name of Jahveh. Except in Josh. 7:15, the phrase: commit folly in Israel, is always used of the grosser sins of uncleanness; see on Gen. 34:7. So here also.—The *Chet*. הוֹיִדַע is

expounded in the *Keri* by הוֹיִדַע, according to which there has been a transposition of the letters ו and י, as in 2:25; 8:6, etc. Still the article here is extraordinary, since יֵד has none.

Therefore J. D. Mich., Ew., Hitz., Graf suppose we should read הוֹי יֵדַע, the א having been dropped from הוֹי in *scriptio continua*, as it often is, especially after י, in הַבִּיִּא and other words, cf.

19:15; 39:16, 1 Kings 21:29, etc. הוֹי is then the copula between subject and predicate, as in Isa. 43:25; cf. Ew. § 297, b.

**Jeremiah 29:24–32.** *Threatening against the false prophet Shemaiah.*—Jeremiah's letter to the exiles (vv. 1–23) had excited great indignation among the false prophets in Babylon, who predicted speedy restoration. One of them, named *Shemaiah*, wrote accordingly letters to Jerusalem addressed to the people, and especially to the priest *Zephaniah*, who held the highest place in the

management of the temple, insisting that he should immediately take steps to punish Jeremiah and check his labours (vv. 24–28). When Zephaniah read this letter to Jeremiah, the latter received from God the commission to tell the pseudo-prophet of the punishment awaiting him, that and his race should perish and not survive Israel's liberation (vv. 29–32).—This threatening accordingly dates from a somewhat later time than the letter, vv. 1–23, since it was its arrival and influence upon the exiles that led Shemaiah to write to Jerusalem that letter, to which the threatening of the present verse is the reply. But on account of their historical connection, the letter of Jeremiah and that of Shemaiah were, at the publication of Jeremiah's prophecies, placed the one after the other.—From the introductory clause of v. 24: "And to Shemaiah the Nehelamite thou shalt speak thus," we might conclude, with Graf, that what Jeremiah had to say was not addressed by letter to Shemaiah himself; and hold it to have sufficed that he should read it, like all the exiles, in the letter which doubtless found its way to Babylon. But this is incompatible with the command of God, v. 31: Send to all the captives, saying, etc. For it was only by writing that Jeremiah could send to the exiles the sentence from God on Shemaiah that follows in v. 31. The introductory clause is therefore interposed by the author of the book to form a link of connection between the two utterances regarding the pseudo-prophets at Babylon. We cannot make sure whether "the Nehelamite" refers the man to a family or to a place of which we know nothing else. V. 25. Next the introduction to the divine sentence comes (from "Because thou" on) a statement of the occasion that called for it, which extends to v. 28. Then in vv. 29–31 we are told that Zephaniah read to Jeremiah the letter he had received from Shemaiah in Babylon, and that Jeremiah was then commissioned by God to intimate to Shemaiah the punishment to be sent on him by God for his false and seducing prophecies. Then, again, attached to the preliminary statement by "therefore," the

introductory phrase "Thus saith Jahveh" is repeated, and what the Lord said follows.

**Jeremiah 29:25.** "Because thou hast sent in thy name (without divine commission) letters to all the people in Jerusalem, and to Sephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying." סְפָרִים may be a single letter, cf. 2 Kings 10:1, 2; but since these were sent to the people, the priest Zephaniah, and all the people, the word doubtless means here letters in the plural. As to Zephaniah ben Maaseiah, see at 21:1.—In vv. 26–28 follows the main substance of the letter: "Jahveh hath set thee to be priest in the stead of the priest Jehoiada, that there should be officers in the house of Jahveh for every man that is mad and prophesieth, that thou shouldst put him in the stocks and in neck-irons. V. 27. And, now, why hast thou not restrained Jeremiah of Anathoth, that prophesieth to you? V. 28. For therefore hath he sent to us to Babylon (a letter) to the effect: It will last long; build houses and dwell (therein), and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them." Zephaniah occupied, acc. to v. 26, the post of a chief officer of the temple, was a chief warden, as Pashur had been before him, 21:1, who had charge of the police regulations of the temple. In the stead of the priest Jehoiada. These words Grot., Hitz., and Gr. refer to the high priest Jehoiada under King Joash, 2 Kings 11:18, who set up officers (פְּקֻדֹת) over the temple. But this view cannot be reconciled with the words of the text: "Jahveh hath set thee to be priest in Jehoiada's stead, that there should be officers;" since from these ambiguous words, Zephaniah filled the same post as Jehoiada had done, and was his successor in office. The other well-known Jehoiada was high priest, who appointed officers; Zephaniah, on the other hand was only "the second priest," and as such had charge of the temple arrangements and of public order there. Nor is there any hint here or elsewhere that Zephaniah was the immediate successor of Pashur in this office, nor any indication to make it unlikely that Jehoiada held the post after Pashur and that Zedekiah succeeded him. The plural "officers" is general: that at all times

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there should be officers. "For every man that is mad an prophesieth." מְשֻׁגָּע, the deranged or mad person, is here closely associated with מְתַנַּבֵּא, him that bears himself as prophet. The former word is used in the evil sense of the apparently deranged behaviour of the man on whom the Spirit of God has laid hold, 2 Kings 9:11, Hos. 9:7. The idea is not: for (or against) every prophet, but: for every madman that plays the prophet. The temple, i.e., the outer court of the temple, was the usual place for prophets to take their stand. Shemaiah accordingly means that it was the duty of the chief warden of the temple to repress attempts to speak in the temple on the part of pretended prophets, by putting such persons in stocks and irons. As to מְהַפְּכֵת, see on 20:2. צִיּוֹק is ἄπ. λεγ. It certainly does not mean prison after צִנֵּק, in Samaritan = *clausit*; but apparently neck-irons after Arab. *znâq*, necklace, ring. Since both words are used together here, and since the meaning is apparently that Jeremiah should be put into both instruments at once, Hitz. conjectures that both together were needed to make the stocks complete, but that each had its own proper name, because it was possible to fix in the neck, leaving hands and feet free, or conversely, as in 20:2.—גָּעַר, rebuke, check by threats, restrain, cf. Ruth 2:16, Mal. 3:11, etc. "For therefore," sc. just because thou hast not restrained him from prophesying he has sent to Babylon. לְאָמַר with שְׁלַח following, send to say, means: to send a message or letter as follows. הָיָא לְאָמַר אֶרְכָּה הִיא Hitz. renders: for he thought: it (Babylon) is far away; Jeremiah's meaning being, that in Jerusalem they would know nothing about his letter he was sending to Babylon. But such a hidden purpose is utterly foreign to the character of the prophet. He had publicly predicted in Jerusalem the long seventy years' duration of the exile; and it was not likely to occur to him to wish to make a secret of the letter of like import which he sent to Babylon. Besides, Hitz.'s interpretation is forced. Since there is no לְאָמַר before בְּתַיִם,

the לְאָמַר before אֶרְכָּה can only be introductory to the contents of the letter. For אֶרְךָ used of duration in time, cf. 2 Sam. 3:1, Job 11:9. "Long-lasting it is," sc. your sojourn in Babylon. These words give the burden of his prophecy, that on which he founded his counsel: build houses, etc.

**Jeremiah 29:29.** Zephaniah read aloud to Jeremiah the letter he had received from Babylon. With what design, we are not told; probably simply to inform him of the proceedings of the pseudo-prophets in Babylon. If we may judge by 21:1 and 37:3, Zephaniah seems to have been friendly to Jeremiah.

**Jeremiah 29:30ff.** In consequence of this, Jeremiah received from the Lord the commission to predict to Shemaiah his punishment at the hand of God, and to send the prediction to all that are in Babylon in banishment. With v. 31b, cf. 28:15. The punishment is this: Shemaiah shall have no posterity among his people, i.e., of his children none shall be left amongst the people, nor shall he see, i.e., experience, have any share in the blessings which the Lord will yet bestow upon His people. The extinction of his race and his own exclusion from the privilege of seeing the day of Israel's redemption are the punishment that is to fall on him for his rebellion against the commandment of the Lord. With כִּי סָרָה ד' cf. 28:16.

### Jeremiah 30

#### B. The Announcement of Deliverance for All Israel—Ch. 30–33.

**Jeremiah 30–33.** In view of the impending fall of the kingdom of Judah, Jeremiah seeks to present the godly with a strong anchor of hope in the realization of God's gracious promises, which were to be fulfilled after the appointed season of punishment had passed. For this purpose, after predicting the ills of exile times, the prophet gives a comprehensive statement concerning the deliverance which the Lord will vouchsafe to His people in the future, and gathers together the repeated briefer promises regarding the restoration and glorious

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condition of Israel and Judah, so as to give a full description of the deliverance intended for all the covenant people under the sceptre of the future David. This detailed announcement of the deliverance consists of a pretty long prophetic address (which Hengstenberg very properly designates “the triumphal hymn of Israel’s salvation,” Jeremiah 30 and 31), and two pieces confirmatory of this address, viz.: (1) one recording a symbolical act performed by the prophet at God’s command,—the sale of a piece of hereditary property in land during the last siege of Jerusalem, shortly before the breaking up of the kingdom, which commenced with the taking of the city,—together with a message from God explaining this act, Jeremiah 32; and (2) another passage giving, in prophetic language, a renewed promise that Jerusalem and Judah would be restored with the blissful arrangements connected with the Davidic monarchy and the Levitical priesthood, Jeremiah 33. According to the headings given in 32:1 and 33:1, these two latter pieces belong to the tenth year of Zedekiah’s reign; the address contained in Jeremiah 30 and 31, on the other hand, belongs to a somewhat earlier period, and was not uttered publicly before the people, but simply composed in writing, and meant to be preserved for future use. As regards the exact time of its composition, the views of modern expositors are very dissimilar. While Hengstenberg, with many others, places it in the same period with the allied chapters 32 and 33, viz., in the time when Jerusalem was being besieged, immediately before the capture and destruction of the city, Nägelsbach reckons this address among the oldest portions of the whole book, and assigns its composition to the times of King Josiah, to which 3:11–25 belongs. But the arguments adduced in support of this view are quite insufficient to establish it. It does not by any means follow from the substantial agreement of the address with that in Jeremiah 3, so far as it exists, that they were both composed at the same time; and if (as Nägelsbach thinks) the fact that there is no mention made of the Chaldeans *were* taken as a criterion of composition before the fourth year

of Jehoiakim, then, too, would the address in Jeremiah 33 be put down as having been composed before that year, but in glaring contradiction to the inscription given 33:1. And as little reason is there for inferring, with Hengstenberg, from 30:5–7, that the final catastrophe of Jeremiah’s time is represented as still imminent; for these verses do not refer at all to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. That learned writer is, however, quite correct in his remark, that the prophet takes his stand-point within the period of the catastrophe, as if it had already begun, but that this time is an ideal present, so that we must not allow ourselves to be deceived as to the time of composition by the circumstance that, generally, Judah no less than Israel appears to be already in a state of exile, far from the land of the Lord. The time of composition cannot be made out with perfect certainty. Yet there is nothing against the assumption that it is the tenth year of Zedekiah.

#### **Ch. 30 and 31. Israel’s Deliverance and Glorious Condition in the Future**

**Jeremiah 30–31.** A great day of judgment, before which all the world trembles, will bring to Israel deliverance from the yoke imposed on them. The Lord will bring them out of the land of their captivity (Jeremiah 30:4–11). He will bind up and heal the wounds which He inflicted on them because of their sins; will render to those who oppressed and chastised them according to their deeds (vv. 12–17); will again build up His kingdom, and render His people glorious, both in temporal and spiritual respects (vv. 18–22). The wrath of the Lord will be poured forth upon all evil-doers like a tempest, till He has performed the thoughts of His heart at the end of the days (vv. 23, 24). At that time the Lord will become the God of all the families of Israel, and show them favour as His own people (Jeremiah 31:1–6); He will also gather the remnant of Israel out of the land of the north, lead them back into their inheritance, and make them glad and prosperous through His blessing (vv. 7–14); the sorrow of Ephraim will He change to joy, and He will perform a

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new thing in the land (vv. 15–22). In like manner will He restore Judah, and make want to cease (vv. 23–26). Israel and Judah shall be raised to new life (vv. 27–30), and a new covenant will be made with them, for the Lord will write His law in their heart and forgive their sins (vv. 31–34). Israel shall for ever remain the people of God, and Jerusalem be built anew to the honour of the Lord, and, as a holy city, shall no more be laid waste for ever (vv. 35–40).

This address forms a united whole which divides into two halves. In Jeremiah 30:4–22 it is the deliverance of Israel in general that is set forth; while in the passage from Jeremiah 30:23 on to the end of Jeremiah 31 it is deliverance, more especially in reference to Israel and Judah, that is portrayed. As there is no doubt about its unity, so neither is there any well-founded doubt regarding its genuineness and integrity. Hence the assertion of Hitzig, that, as a whole, it exhibits such a want of connection, such constant alternation of view-point, so many repetitions, and such irregularity in the structure of the verses, that there seems good ground for suspecting interpolation,—such an assertion only shows the inability of the expositor to put himself into the course of thought in the prophetic word, to grasp its contents properly, and to give a fair and unprejudiced estimate of the whole. Hitzig would reject 31:38–40, and Nägelsbach 30:20–24, as later additions, but in neither case is this admissible; and Kueper (*Jeremias*, p. 170ff.) and Graf, in his Commentary, have already so well shown with what little reason Movers and Hitzig have supposed they had discovered so many “interpolations,” that, in our exposition, we merely intend to take up in detail some of the chief passages.

**Jeremiah 30:1–3.** Introduction, and Statement of the Subject—V. 1. *“The word which came to Jeremiah from Jahveh, saying: V. 2. Thus hath Jahveh the God of Israel said: Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book; V. 3. For, behold, days come, saith Jahveh, when I shall turn the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith Jahve, and I shall bring them back to*

*the land which I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.”*

**Jeremiah 30:1.** Ver. 1 contains the heading not merely of vv. 2 and 3, as Hitzig erroneously maintains, but of the whole prophecy, in Jeremiah 30 and 31. Vv. 2 and 3 form the introduction. Jeremiah is to write the following word of God in a book, because it refers to times still future,—regards the deliverance of Israel and Judah from exile, which will not take place till afterwards. In assigning the reason for the command to write down the word of God that had been received, there is at the same time given the subject of the prophecy which follows. From this it is further evident that the expression “all the words which I have spoken to thee” cannot, like 36:2, be referred, with J. D. Michaelis, to the whole of the prophecies which Jeremiah had up till that time received; it merely refers to the following prophecy of deliverance. The perfect דְּבַרְתִּי is thus not a preterite, but only expresses that the address of God to the prophet precedes the writing down of the words he received. As to the expression שׁוּב שְׁבוּת, see on 29:14.

**Jeremiah 30:4–11.** *The judgment on the nations for the deliverance of Israel.—V. 4. “And these are the words which Jahveh spake concerning Israel and Judah: V. 5. For thus saith Jahveh: We have heard a cry of terror, fear, and no peace. V. 6. Ask now, and see whether a male bears a child? Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in childbirth, and every face turned to paleness? V. 7. Alas! for that day is great, with none like it, and it is a time of distress for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it. V. 8. And it shall come to pass on that day, saith Jahveh of hosts, that I will break his yoke from upon thy neck, and I will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more put servitude on him; V. 9. But they shall serve Jahveh their God, and David their king, whom I shall raise up to them. V. 10. But fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith Jahveh, neither be confounded, O Israel; for, behold, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be at rest, and be secure,*

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*and there shall be none making him afraid. V. 11. For I am with thee, saith Jahveh, to save thee; for I will make an end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, yet of thee will I not make an end, but I will chastise thee properly and will not let thee go quite unpunished."*

With v. 4 is introduced the description of Israel's restoration announced in v. 3. This introduction is not absolutely necessary, but neither is it for that reason spurious and to be expunged, as Hitzig seeks to do; it rather corresponds to the breadth of Jeremiah's representation. The כִּי in v. 5 is explicative: "Thus, namely, hath Jahveh spoken." With the lively dramatic power of a poet, the prophet at once transports the hearers or readers of his prophecy, in thought, into the great day to come, which is to bring deliverance to all Israel. As a day of judgment, it brings terror and anguish on all those who live to see it. קוֹל תְּרִדָּה, "A voice (sound) of trembling (or terror) we hear," viz., the people, of whom the prophet is one. פֶּחַד does not depend on שָׁמַעְנוּ, but forms with וְאִין שְׁלוֹם an independent clause: "There is fear and not peace" (or safety). V. 6. What is the cause of this great horror, which makes all men, from convulsive pains, hold their hands on their loins, so as to support their bowels, in which they feel the pangs, and which makes every countenance pale? In v. 7 the cause of this horror is declared. It is the great day of judgment that is coming. "That (not *hits*) day" points to the future, and thus, even apart from other reasons, excludes the supposition that it is the day of the destruction of Jerusalem that is meant. The words "that day is great" refer to Joel 2:11, and "there is none like it" is an imitation of Joel 2:2; in the latter passage the prophet makes use of a judgment which he had seen passed on Judah,—its devastation by locusts,—and for the first time presents, as the main element in his prophecy, the idea of the great day of judgment to come on all nations, and by which the Lord will perfect His kingdom on this earth. This day is for Jacob also, i.e., for all Israel, a time of distress; for the judgment

falls not merely on the heathen nations, but also on the godless members of the covenant people, that they may be destroyed from among the congregation of the Lord. The judgment is therefore for Israel as well as for other nations a critical juncture, from which the Israel of God, the community of the faithful, will be delivered. This deliverance is described more in detail in v. 8ff. The Lord will break the yoke imposed on Israel, free His people from all bondage to strangers, i.e., the heathen, so that they may serve only Him, the Lord, and David, His king, whom He will raise up. The suffix in עָלוּ is referred by several expositors (Hitzig, Nägelsbach) to the king of Babylon, "as having been most clearly before the minds of Jeremiah and his contemporaries;" in support of this view we are pointed to Isa. 10:27, as a passage which may have been before the eyes of Jeremiah. But neither this parallel passage nor צָוֹאֲרָךְ (with the suffix of the second person), which immediately follows, sufficiently justifies this view. For, in the second half also of the verse, the second person is interchanged with the third, and מוֹסְרוֹתֶיךָ, which is parallel with עָלוּ, requires us to refer the suffix in the latter word to Jacob, so that "his yoke" means "the yoke laid on him," as in 1 Kings 12:4, Isa. 9:3. It is also to be borne in mind that, throughout the whole prophecy, neither Babylon nor the king of Babylon is once mentioned; and that the judgment described in these verses cannot possibly be restricted to the downfall of the Babylonian monarchy, but is the judgment that is to fall upon all nations (v. 11). And although this judgment begins with the fall of the Babylonian supremacy, it will bring deliverance to the people of God, not merely from the yoke of Babylon, but from every yoke which strangers have laid or will lay on them.

**Jeremiah 30:9.** Then Israel will no longer serve strangers, i.e., foreign rulers who are heathens, but their God Jahveh, and David the king who will be raised up to them, i.e., the Messiah, the righteous sprout that Jahveh will raise up to David; cf. 23:5. The designation of this sprout as

“David their king,” i.e., the king of the Israelites, points us back to Hos. 3:5.

**Jeremiah 30:10f.** Israel the servant of Jahveh, i.e., the true Israel, faithful and devoted to God, need thus fear nothing, since their God will deliver them from the land of their captivity, and stand by them as their deliverer, so that they shall be able to dwell in peace and undisturbed security in their own land. For Jahveh will make a complete end of all the nations among whom Israel has been scattered; Israel, on the other hand, He shall certainly chastise, but **לְמִשְׁפָּט** (according to what is right, in due measure), that they may be made better by their punishment. As to the expression **יִסַּר** **לְמִשְׁפָּט**, see on 10:24; for **לֹא עָשָׂה כְּלָהּ**, see on 4:27 and 5:18 (**אֶתְּךָ** for **אֶתְּךָ**, 5:18); and lastly, on **לֹא אֲנִיִּקְדֶּה**, cf. Ex. 34:47, Num. 14:18, Nah. 1:3.

**Jeremiah 30:10, 11.** Vv. 10 and 11 are repeated in 46:27, 28, though with some slight changes.

**Jeremiah 30:12–17.** *Because Israel has been severely chastised for his sins, the Lord will now punish his enemies, and heal Israel.—V. 12. “For thus saith Jahveh: It is ill with thy bruise, thy wound is painful. V. 13. There is none to judge thy cause; for a sore, healing-plaster there is none for thee. V. 14. All thy lovers have forgotten thee, thee they seek not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, the chastisement of a cruel one, because of the multitude of thine iniquity, [because] thy sins were numerous. V. 15. Why criest thou over thy bruise,—[because] thy wound is bad? Because of the multitude of thine iniquity, [because] thy sins were numerous, have I done these things to thee. V. 16. Therefore all those who devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine oppressors, they shall all go into captivity; and they who spoiled thee shall become a spoil, and those that plundered thee I will give up for plunder. V. 17. For I will put a plaster on thee, and will heal thee of thy wounds, saith Jahveh; for they call thee an outcast, [and say], Zion is she [whom] none seeketh after.”*

This strophe is only a fuller expression of the idea set forth in v. 11, that the Lord certainly

chastises Israel, but will not make an end of him. The chastisement has commenced. From the wounds and blows which Israel has received, he lies motionless and helpless, getting neither sympathy nor aid from his lovers. The feminine suffix and the mention of lovers show that the address turns to the daughter of Zion. On the expression **אֲנוּשׁ לְשִׁבְרֶךָ**, “it is ill with thy bruise,” cf. 15:18. **נִתְּלָהּ מַכָּה**, “bad, incurable is the stroke which thou hast received,” as in 10:19; 14:17. **דִּין דִּין**, “to execute justice;” cf. 5:28; 22:16. Hitzig well explains the meaning: “thy claims against thy heathen oppressors.” **לְמִזוּר**, although connected by the accents with what precedes, does not agree well with **דִּין דִּינֶיךָ**; for **מִזוּר** has not the meaning which has been attributed to it, of a “bandage,” but, as derived from the verb **זָרַר**, “to press a wound,” signifies the wound that has been pressed together; see on Hos. 5:13. Neither does the figure of the wound agree with the expression, “there is none to judge thy cause,” so that we might, with Umbreit, render the passage, “No one gives thee thy due, in pressing thy wounds;” while, as Graf says, **רַפְאוֹת** dissociated from **לְמִזוּר** forms a useless synonym with **תְּעָלָהּ**,” and in 46:11, where the thought is repeated, it is separated from the latter word. Accordingly, with Hitzig and Graf, we connect **רַפְאוֹת לְמִזוּר** into one clause: “for the wound, there is no healing (or medicine)—no plaster.” **תְּעָלָהּ** is what is laid upon the wound, a plaster. “All thy lovers,” i.e., the nations which were once allied with thee (cf. 22:20 and 22), do not trouble themselves about thee, because I have smitten thee so heavily on account of the multitude of thy transgressions; cf. 5:6; 13:22. **עַל עֲצָמוֹ** still depends on the preposition **עַל**, which continues its force, but as a conjunction. The idea that the Israelites have richly deserved their sufferings is still more plainly presented in v. 15: “Why criest thou, because thou hast brought this suffering on thee through thy sins?” **אֲנוּשׁ** also depends on **עַל**, which continues

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to exert its power in the sentence as a conjunction.

**Jeremiah 30:16f.** Therefore (i.e., because Israel, although punished for his sins, is destitute of help) will the Lord take pity on him. He will recompense to his oppressors and spoilers according to their deeds, and will heal his wounds. The enemies of Zion will now meet the fate which they have prepared for Zion. Those who, like rapacious animals, would devour Israel (see on 2:3), shall be devoured, and all his oppressors shall go into captivity; cf. 22:22. The *Kethib* שְׂאֲסִיךְ is the Aramaic form of the participle from שָׂאֵס for שָׂסַ; the *Qeri* substitutes the Hebrew form שָׂסִיךְ, after 50:11, Isa. 17:14. אָרְכָה, to put on a bandage, lay on a plaster. אָרְכָה signifies, primarily, not a bandage, but, like the Arabic *arīkah* (according to Fleischer in Delitzsch on Isa. 58:8), the new skin which forms over a wound as it heals, and (as is shown by the expression of Isaiah, אָרְכָה-תִּצְמַח) proves the healing of the wound. Against the direct transference of the meaning of the word in Arabic to the Hebrew אָרְכָה, without taking into consideration the passage in Isaiah just referred to, there is the objection that the word is always used in connection with עָלָה, “to be put on” (cf. 8:22, 2 Chron. 24:13, Neh. 4:1), or הֶעֱלָה, “to put on” (here and in 33:6), which is not the proper verb to be used in speaking of the formation of a new skin over a wound after suppuration has ceased. Hence the word in Hebrew seems to have received the derived sense of “a healing-plaster;” this is confirmed by the employment of the word תֶּעֱלֶה, “plaster,” in v. 13 and 46:11.—The second כִּי, v. 17, is subordinate to the clause which precedes. “Because they called thee one rejected,” i.e., because the enemies of Zion spoke of her contemptuously, as a city that has been forsaken of God, and the Lord will heal her wounds.

**Jeremiah 30:18–22.** *Further explanation of the deliverance promised to Zion.*—V. 18. “Thus saith

*Jahveh: Behold, I will turn the captivity of the tents of Jacob, and will take pity on his dwellings; and the city shall be built again upon its own hill, and the palace shall be inhabited after its own fashion.* V. 19. *And there shall come forth from them praise and the voice of those who laugh; and I will multiply them, so that they shall not be few, and I will honour them, so that they shall not be mean.* V. 20. *And his sons shall be as in former times, and his congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress him.* V. 21. *And his leader shall spring from himself, and his ruler shall proceed from his midst; and I will bring him near, so that he shall approach to me; for who is he that became surety for his life in drawing near to me? saith Jahveh.* V. 22. *And ye shall become my people, and I will be your God.”*

The dwellings of Israel that have been laid waste, and the cities that have been destroyed, shall be restored and inhabited as formerly, so that songs of praise and tones of joy shall resound from them (v. 18f.). “The captivity of the tents of Jacob” means the miserable condition of the dwellings of Jacob, i.e., of all Israel; for “to turn the captivity” has everywhere a figurative sense, and signifies the turning of adversity and misery into prosperity and comfort; see on 29:14. Hitzig is quite wrong in his rendering: “I bring back the captives of the tents of Jacob, i.e., those who have been carried away out of the tents.” That “tents” does not stand for those who dwell in tents, but is a poetic expression for “habitations,” is perfectly clear from the parallel “his dwellings.” To “take pity on the dwellings” means to “restore the dwellings that have been destroyed” (cf. 9:18). The anarthrous עִיר must not be restricted to the capital, but means every city that has been destroyed; here, the capital naturally claims the first consideration. “Upon its hills” is equivalent to saying on its former site, cf. Josh. 11:13; it does not mean “on the mound made by its ruins,” in support of which Nägelsbach erroneously adduces Deut. 13:17. אָרְמוֹן in like manner stands, in the most general way, for every palace. עַל-מִשְׁפָּטוֹ does not mean “on the



proper place," i.e., on an open, elevated spot on the hill (Hitzig), neither does it mean "on its right position" (Ewald); both of these renderings are against the usage of the words: but it signifies "according to its right" (cf. Deut. 17:11), i.e., in accordance with what a palace requires, after its own fashion. יָשַׁב, to be inhabited, as in 17:6, etc. "Out of them" refers to the cities and palaces. Thence proceeds, resounds praise or thanksgiving for the divine grace shown them (cf. 33:11), and the voice, i.e., the tones or sounds, of those who laugh (cf. 15:17), i.e., of the people living in the cities and palaces, rejoicing over their good fortune. "I will increase them, so that they shall not become fewer," cf. 29:6; "I will bring them to honour (cf. Isa. 8:23), so that they shall not be lightly esteemed."—In v. 20f. the singular suffixes refer to Jacob as a nation (v. 18). "His sons" are the members of the nation; they become as they were previously, in former times,—*sicut olim sub Davide et Salmonoe, florentissimo rerum statu*. "The congregation will be established before me," i.e., under my survey (תִּבְּוֶן as in Ps. 102:29), i.e., they shall no more be shaken or moved from their position.

**Jeremiah 30:21.** The expression "his prince will be out of him" is explained by the parallel clause, "his ruler will proceed from him." The meaning is, that the people will no longer be ruled or subdued by foreign masters, but be ruled by glorious princes, i.e., leaders endowed with princely glory, and these out of the midst of themselves. Herein is contained the truth, that the sovereignty of Israel, as restored, culminates in the kingdom of the Messiah. Yet the words employed are so general that we cannot restrict אֲדִירוּ and מְשֻׁלוֹ to the person of the Messiah. The idea is to be taken in a more general way: As Israel was ruled by princes of the house of David, whom God had chosen, so will it again in the future have its own rulers, whom God will raise out of their midst and exalt gloriously. This is clear from the further statement, "I will cause him to approach, and he shall come near unto me." To affirm that these words do not refer to the ruler, but to the

people, is a mistake that could be made only by those expositors who view the "ruler" as being none else than the Messiah. Yet the LXX and the Chaldee paraphrase understood the words as referring to the people; and in support of this view, it may be asserted that, in the Messianic period, Israel is to become a holy people (Jeremiah 3:17), and attain its destiny of being a nation of priests (Ex. 19:6), in reference to which it is called עַם קָרְבָּו, Ps. 148:14. But the context evidently requires us to refer the words to the king, with regard to whom one here looks for a further statement. The verb הִקְרִיב is the regular expression employed in reference to the approach on the part of the priests to Jahveh, cf. Num. 16:5; and נִגַּשׁ in Ex. 24:2 denotes the approach of Moses to Jahveh on Mount Sinai. The two verbs thus signify a bringing near and a coming near, which, under the old covenant, was the prerogative of those persons who were consecrated by the Lord to be servants in His sanctuary, but was denied the common people. As to the kings of Israel, in regard to this matter, the ordinance proclaimed concerning Joshua held good in reference to them also: "he shall stand before Eleazar, who shall inquire for him in a matter of Urim before Jahveh" (Num. 27:21). Even a David could not approach into the immediate presence of the Lord to ask His will. This prerogative of the priests the Lord will, in the future, vouchsafe also to the princes of Israel, i.e., He will then put them in such a relation to Himself as no one may now presume to occupy, except at the risk of his life. This is shown by the succeeding sentence, which assigns the reason: "For who is there that stands surety for his heart, i.e., with his heart answers for the consequences of approaching me?" לֵב and not נֶפֶשׁ is named, as the seat of physical life, in so far as the heart is the place where the soul is alone with itself, and becomes conscious of all it does and suffers as its own (Oehler in Delitzsch's *Psychology*, p. 296 of Clark's Translation). The meaning is, that nobody will stake his spiritual-moral life on any attempt to draw near to God, because a sinful man is destroyed before the holiness of the

Divine Being. Whoever approaches into the presence of Jahveh must die; Num. 8:19; Ex. 19:21; 34:3, etc.

**Jeremiah 30:22.** Then Israel shall really become the people of the Lord, and the Lord shall be their God; thus the end of their divine calling shall be attained, and the salvation of Israel shall be complete; see on 7:23.

**Jeremiah 30:23, 24.** *The wicked shall be destroyed by the fire of God's anger.—V. 23. "Behold, a whirlwind of Jahveh,—wrath goeth forth,—a sweeping whirlwind; it shall hurl down on the head of the wicked. V. 24. The heat of Jahveh's anger shall not return till He hath done and till He hath established the purpose of His heart; in the end of the days ye shall consider it."* These two verses have been already met with in Jeremiah 23:19 and 20, with a few variations. Instead of *מתחולל* we have here *מתגורר*, and *חרון* is here strengthened by prefixing *אף-יהוה*; on the other hand, *בינה*, which is added in the preceding passage to intensify *התבוננו*, is here omitted. The first of these changes is more of a formal than a real kind; for by the substitution of *מתגורר* for *מתחולל*, the play in the latter word on *חול* is merely disturbed, not "destroyed," since *ר* and *ל* are kindred sounds. *התגורר* has been variously rendered. The meaning of "abiding," which is founded on 1 Kings 17:20, is here unsuitable. Equally inappropriate is the meaning of "crowding together," or assembling in troops, which we find in Hos. 7:14. It is more correct to derive it from *גור*, either in the sense of sweeping away or that of blustering, which are meanings derived from the fundamental one of producing harsh sounds in the throat, and transferred to the rushing sound made by the storm as it carries everything along with it. The second and third changes affect the sense. For, by the addition of *חרון* to *אף*, the idea of a judgment in wrath is intensified; and by dropping *בינה*, less is made of the acuteness of perception. Both of these variations correspond to differences in the context of both passages.

In Jeremiah 23, where the words are applied to the false prophets, it was important to place emphasis on the statement that these men would, by experience, come to a full knowledge of the reality of that judgment they denied; in this chapter, on the other hand, the idea of judgment in wrath must be expressly set aside. There is thus no good ground for considering these verses a later interpolation into the text, as Movers, Hitzig, and Nägelsbach think. Hitzig rejects these verses as spurious on the false ground that the judgment threatened in this chapter refers merely to the fall of the kingdom of Babylon, which Jeremiah could not have been able to know beforehand; Nägelsbach rejects them on the ground of other erroneous assumptions.—The only doubtful point regarding these verses is, whether they are to be connected, as Hengstenberg thinks, with what precedes, or with what follows, as Ewald supposes. In the former case, to the promise for the true Israel would be added a threat against those who only seemed to be Israel,—like the declaration in Isaiah, "There is no peace to the wicked:" this addition would thus be made, lest those for whom the promise was not intended should unwarrantably apply it to themselves. But, however well-founded the thought is, that every increasing manifestation of grace is invariably accompanied by an increased manifestation of righteousness, and though all the prophets clearly testify that the godless members of the covenant people have no share in the promised salvation, but instead are liable to judgment; yet there has not been such preparation made for the introduction of this thought as that we might be able at once to join these two verses to what precedes. The exclamation "Behold!" with which the words are introduced, rather form a sign that a new addition is to be made to the prophecy. We therefore view the threat in this verse as a resumption of the threat of judgment made in v. 5ff., to which is attached, in 31:1, the further development of the announcement of deliverance; but we refer the threat made in the verse not merely to the heathen as such, but to all "wicked ones," in such a way that it at the

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same time applies to the godless members of the covenant people, and signifies their exclusion from salvation.

**Jeremiah 31.** The Salvation for all the Families of Israel.—Ewald has well stated the connection of this chapter with the conclusion of the preceding, as follows: “In order that the old form of blessing, found in the books of Moses, and here given in v. 22, may be fulfilled, the whirlwind of Jahveh, which must carry away all the unrighteous, will at last discharge itself, as has been already threatened, 23:19; this must take place in order that there may be a fulfilment of that hope to *all* the tribes of Israel (both kingdoms).” V. 1. announces deliverance for all the families of Israel, but afterwards it is promised to both divisions of the people separately,—first, in vv. 2–22, to the ten tribes, who have been exiles the longest; and then, in a more brief statement, vv. 23–26, to the kingdom of Judah: to this, again, there is appended, vv. 27–40, a further description of the nature of the deliverance in store for the two houses of Israel.

### Jeremiah 31

**Jeremiah 31:1–6.** *The deliverance for all Israel, and the readmission of the ten tribes.*—V. 1. “At that time, saith Jahveh, will I be a God to all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. V. 2. Thus saith Jahveh: A people escaped from the sword found grace in the wilderness. Let me go to give him rest, even Israel. V. 3. From afar hath Jahve appeared unto me, and with everlasting love have I loved thee; therefore have I continued my favour towards thee. V. 4. Once more will I build thee up, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel; once more shalt thou adorn [thyself] with thy tabrets, and go forth in the dance of those that make merry. V. 5. Once more shalt thou plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria; planters will plant them, and apply them to common use. V. 6. For there is a day [when] watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim: Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, to Jahveh our God!”

The expression “At that time” refers to 30:24, “in the end of the days,” which means the

Messianic future. The announcement of deliverance itself is continued by resumption of the promise made in 30:22; the transposition of the two portions of the promise is to be remarked. Here, “I will be a God to them” stands first, because the restoration and perfection of Israel have their only foundation in the love of God and in the faithfulness with which He keeps His covenant, and it is only through this gracious act that Israel again becomes the people of God. “All the families of Israel” are the families of the whole twelve tribes,—of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, separated since the death of Solomon. After this announcement of deliverance for the whole of Israel, the address turns first to Israel of the ten tribes, and continues to treat longest of them, “because, judging from appearances, they seem irrecoverably lost—for ever rejected by the Lord” (Hengstenberg). V. 2a is variously explained. Ewald, following Raschi and others, refers the words *אֶתֵּן וְגַרְיָא* to the leading of Israel out of Egypt: once on a time, in the Arabian desert, the people that had just barely escaped the sword of the Egyptians nevertheless found grace, when Jahveh, as it were, went to make a quiet dwelling-place for them. The love which He displayed towards them at that time He has since continued, and thus He will now once more bring back His people out of the midst of strangers. This view of the passage is supported by the use of the perfects in vv. 2 and 3, in contrast with the imperfect, “again will I build thee,” v. 4, and the employment of the expression “in the desert;” cf. 2:2, Hos 13:4, 5. But “the people of those who have escaped the sword” is an expression that cannot be reconciled with it. Rashi, indeed, understands this as referring to the sword of the Egyptians and Amalekites; but the thought that Israel, led out of Egypt through the Arabian desert, was a people that had survived or escaped the sword, is one met with nowhere else in the Old Testament, and is quite inapplicable to the condition of the people of Israel when they were led out of Egypt. Although Pharaoh wished to exterminate the people of Israel through hard servile labour,

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and through such measures as the order to kill all male children when they were born, yet he did not make an exhibition of his wrath against Israel by the sword, neither did he show his anger thus at the Red Sea, where he sought to bring Israel back to Egypt by force. There God shielded His people from the attack of Pharaoh, as He did in the battle against the Amalekites, so that Israel was led through the desert as a whole people, not as a remnant. The designation, "a people escaped from the sword," unconditionally requires us to refer the words to the deliverance of the Israelites from exile; these were only a remnant of what they had formerly been, since the greater portion of them perished, partly at the downfall of the kingdom, and partly in exile, by the sword of the enemy. Hence the perfects in vv. 2 and 3 are prophetic, and used of the divine counsel, which precedes its execution in time. By using the expression "in the desert," Jeremiah makes an allusion to Israel's being led through the Arabian desert. The restoration of Israel to Canaan, from their exile among the nations, is viewed under the figure of their exodus from Egypt into the land promised to their fathers, as in Hos. 2:16f.; and the exodus from the place of banishment is, at the same time, represented as having already occurred, so that Israel is again on the march to his native land, and is being safely conducted through the desert by his God. There is as little ground for thinking that there is reference here made to the desert lying between Assyria or Babylon and Palestine, as there is for Hitzig's referring שְׂרִידֵי הָרֶבֶץ to the sword of the Medes and Persians.—The inf. abs. הִלְוֶה is used instead of the first person of the imperative (cf. 1 Kings 22:30), to express a summons addressed by God to Himself: "I will go." [see Gesenius, § 131, 4, b, γ.] The suffix in הִרְגִיעֵנּוּ points out the object (Israel) by anticipation: "to bring him to rest." רָגַע in the Hiphil usually means to be at rest, to rest (Deut. 28:65); here, to give rest, bring to rest.

**Jeremiah 31:3.** The people already see in spirit how the Lord is accomplishing His purpose, v.

2b. "From afar (the prophet speaks in the name of the people, of which he views himself as one) hath Jahveh appeared unto me." So long as Israel languished in exile, the Lord had withdrawn from him, kept Himself far off. Now the prophet sees Him appearing again. "From afar," i.e., from Zion, where the Lord is viewed as enthroned, the God of His people (Ps. 14:7), sitting there to lead them back into their land. But the Lord at once assures the people, who have been waiting for Him, of His everlasting love. Because He loves His people with everlasting love, therefore has He kept them by His grace, so that they were not destroyed. מְשַׁךְ, to draw, keep, restrain; hence מְשַׁךְ מְשַׁךְ, *prolongare gratiam*, Ps. 36:11; 109:12, but construed with לְ of a person; here, with a double accusative, to restrain any one, to preserve him constantly by grace.

**Jeremiah 31:4.** Israel is now to be built up again, i.e., to be raised to a permanent condition of ever-increasing prosperity; cf. 12:16. The additional clause, "and thou shalt be built," confirms this promise. The "virgin of Israel" is the congregation of Israel; cf. 14:17. A new and joyful phase in the life of the people is to begin: such is the meaning of the words, "with tabrets shalt thou adorn thyself, and thou shalt go forth in the dance of those who make merry." In this manner were the popular feasts celebrated in Israel; cf. Judg. 11:34, Ps. 66:26.

**Jeremiah 31:5.** "The mountains of Samaria," i.e., of the kingdom of Ephraim (1 Kings 13:22; 2 Kings 17:24), shall again be planted with vineyards, and the planters, too, shall enjoy the fruits in peace,—not plant for strangers, so that enemies shall destroy the fruits; cf. Isa. 62:8f., 65:21f. The words "planters plant and profane" (i.e., those who plant the vineyards are also to enjoy the fruit of them) are to be explained by the law in Lev. 19:23f., according to which the fruits of newly planted fruit trees, and according to Judg. 9:27, vines also, were not to be eaten during the first three years; those of the fourth year were to be presented as a thank-offering to the Lord; and only those of the fifth year were to be applied to common

use. This application to one's own use is expressed in Deut. 20:6 by *הָלַל*, properly, to make common.

**Jeremiah 31:6.** V. 6 is attached to the foregoing by *כִּי*, which introduces the reason of what has been stated. The connection is as follows: This prosperous condition of Ephraim is to be a permanent one; for the sin of Jeroboam, the seduction of the ten tribes from the sanctuary of the Lord, shall not continue, but Ephraim shall once more, in the future, betake himself to Zion, to the Lord his God. "There is a day," i.e., there comes a day, a time, when watchmen call. *נֹצְרִים* here denotes the watchmen who were posted on the mountains, that they might observe and given notice of the first appearance of the crescent of the moon after new-moon, so that the festival of the new-moon and the feasts connected with it might be fixed; cf. Keil's *Bibl. Archäol.* ii. § 74, Anm. 9 [see also the articles *Mond* and *Neumond* in Herzog's *Real-Encykl.* vols. ix. and x.; *New-moon* in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, vol. ii.]. *עָלָה*, to go up to Jerusalem, which was pre-eminent among the cities of the land as to spiritual matters.

**Jeremiah 31:7-14.** *The restoration of Israel.*— V. 7. "For thus saith Jahveh: Shout for joy over Jacob, and cry out over the head of the nations! Make known, praise, and say, I Jahveh, save Thy people, the remnant of Israel! V. 8. Behold, I will bring them out of the land of the north, and will gather them from the sides of the earth. Among them are the blind and lame, the woman with child and she that hath born, together; a great company shall they return hither. V. 9. With weeping shall they come, and with supplications will I lead them: I will bring them to streams of water, by a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born. V. 10. Hear the word of Jahveh, ye nations, and declare among the islands far off, and say: He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd his flock. V. 11. For Jahveh hath redeemed Israel and ransomed him out of the hand of one stronger than he. V. 12. And they shall come and sing with

*joy on the height of Zion, and come like a flood to the goodness of Jahveh, because of corn, and new wine, and fresh oil, and the young of the flock and the herd; and their soul shall be like a well-watered garden, neither shall they pine away any more. V. 13. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and young men and old men together; and I will turn their mourning to joy, and will comfort them, and will cause them to rejoice after their sorrow. V. 14. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fat, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith Jahveh."*

In order to set forth the greatness of the salvation which the Lord will prepare for Israel, so long outcast, Israel is commanded to make loud jubilation, and exhorted to approach the Lord with entreaties for the fulfilment of His purpose of grace. The statement regarding this salvation is introduced by *כִּי*, "for," since the description, given in this strophe, of Israel's being led back and re-established, furnishes the actual proof that the nation shall be built up again. The summons to rejoice comes from Jahveh (since, by His gracious dealings, He gives the people material for praise), and is addressed to the members of the nation. These are to rejoice over Jacob, i.e., over the glorious destiny before the people. *צְהִלּוּ בְּרֹאשׁ הַגּוֹיִם* is translated by Hitzig: "shout at the head of the nations," i.e., making a beginning among them all; but this is incorrect and against the context. The thought that many other enslaved nations besides Israel will rejoice over the fall of their oppressors, has not the least foundation in this passage. The summons to the nations, which follows in v. 19, is simply a command to make known God's purpose regarding the deliverance of Israel. Of course, *בְּרֹאשׁ*, taken literally and by itself, may be rendered "at the head" (1 Kings 21:12; Amos 6:7, etc.); but in this place, the expression of which it forms the first word is the object of *צְהִלּוּ*, which is construed with *בְּ*, "to rejoice over something," Isa. 24:4. "The head of the nations" signifies "the first of the nations" (*רֹאשִׁית הַגּוֹיִם*, Amos 6:1), i.e., the most exalted among the nations. Such is the designation

given to Israel, because God has chosen them before all the nations of the earth to be His peculiar people (Deut. 7:6; 2 Sam. 7:23f.), made them the highest over (עָלִיוֹן עַל, Deut. 26:19) all nations. This high honour of Israel, which seemed to have been taken from him by his being delivered over to the power of heathen nations, is now to appear again. הַשְׁמִיעוּ הַלְלוּ, “make to be heard, sing praise,” are to be combined into one thought, “sing praise loudly” (so that people may hear it). The words of praise, “Save Thy people, O Jahveh,” form rather the expression of a wish than of a request, just as in many psalms, e.g., Ps. 20:10; 28:9, especially 118:25 in הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא, with which Jesus was greeted on His entry into Jerusalem, Matt. 21:9 (Graf).—To the rejoicing and praise the Lord replies with the promise that He will lead back His people out of the most distant countries of the north,—every one, even the feeble and frail, who ordinarily would not have strength for so long a journey, “Hither,” i.e., to Palestine, where Jeremiah wrote the promise; cf. 3:18; 16:15.

“With weeping,” i.e., with tears of joy, and with contrition of heart over favour so undeserved, they come, and God leads them with weeping, “amidst earnest prayers to the God they have found again, as a lost son returns to the arms of his father” (Umbreit). Hitzig and Graf would connect בְּתַחֲנוּגִים with what precedes, and combine “I will lead them, I will bring them;” by this arrangement, it is said, the careful guidance of God, in leaving nothing behind, is properly set forth. But the symmetry of the verse is thereby destroyed; and the reason assigned for this construction (which is opposed by the accents), viz., that תַּחֲנוּגִים does not mean *miseratio, clementia*, will not stand the test. As in Isa. 55:12 it is the being brought בְּשִׂמְחָה that is the chief point, so here, it is the bringing בְּתַחֲנוּגִים, amidst weeping, i.e., fervent prayer. At the same time, the Lord will care like a father for their refreshment and nurture; He will lead them to brooks of water, so that they shall not

suffer thirst in the desert (Isa. 48:21), and guide them by a straight (i.e., level) road, so that they shall not fall. For He shows Himself again to Israel as a father, one who cares for them like a father (cf. 3:19, Deut. 32:6, Isa. 63:6), and treats Ephraim as His first-born. “The first-born of Jahveh,” in Ex. 4:22, means the people of Israel as compared with the other nations of the earth. This designation is here transferred to Ephraim as the head and representative of the ten tribes; but it is not likely that there is in this any allusion to the preference which Jacob displayed for the sons of Joseph, Gen. 49:22ff. compared with v. 4 (Venema, J. D. Michaelis, Nägelsbach),—the advantage they obtained consisting in this, that Ephraim and Manasseh were placed on an equal footing with Jacob’s sons as regards inheritance in the land of Canaan; in other words, they were elevated to the dignity of being founders of tribes. There is no trace in this prophecy of any preference given to Ephraim before Judah, or of the ten tribes before the two tribes of the kingdom of Judah. That the deliverance of Ephraim (Israel) from exile is mentioned before that of Judah, and is further more minutely described, is simply due to the fact, already mentioned, that the ten tribes, who had long languished in exile, had the least hope, according to man’s estimation, of deliverance. The designation of Ephraim as the first-born of Jahveh simply shows that, in the deliverance of the people, Ephraim is in no respect to be behind Judah,—that they are to receive their full share in the Messianic salvation of the whole people; in other words, that the love which the Lord once displayed towards Israel, when He delivered them out of the power of Pharaoh, is also to be, in the future, displayed towards the ten tribes, who were looked on as lost. The nature of fatherhood and sonship, as set forth in the Old Testament, does not contain the element of the Spirit’s testimony to our spirit, but only the idea of paternal care and love, founded on the choosing of Israel out of all the nations to be the peculiar people of God; see on Ex. 4:22 and Isa.

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63:16; 64:7. בְּכָרִי is substantially the same as בָּן יְקָרִי and יְלֵד שְׁטֵטָעִים in v. 20.

**Jeremiah 31:10f.** The most remote of the heathen, too, are to be told that Jahveh will free His people from their hands, gather them again, and highly favour them, lest they should imagine that the God of Israel has not the power to save His people, and that they may learn to fear Him as the Almighty God, who has given His people into their power, not from any inability to defend them, but merely for the purpose of chastising them for their sins. אֲיִים are the islands in, and countries lying along the coast of, the Mediterranean Sea; in the language of prophecy, the word is used as a designation of the distant countries of the west; cf. Ps. 72:10, Isa. 41:1, 5; 42:12, etc. On v. 10b, cf. 23:3, Ex. 34:12ff, Isa. 40:11. "Stronger than he," as in Ps. 35:10; the expression is here used of the heathen master of the world.

**Jeremiah 31:12–14.** Thus led by the Lord through the wilderness (v. 9), the redeemed shall come rejoicing to the sacred height of Zion (see on 17:12), and thence go in streams, i.e., scatter themselves over the country like a stream, for the goodness of the Lord, i.e., for the good things which He deals out to them in their native land. "To the goodness of Jahveh" is explained by "because of corn," etc. (אֶל for עַל), cf. Hos. 3:5. As to the good things of the country, cf. Deut. 8:8. Their soul will be like a well-watered garden, an emblem of the fulness and freshness of living power; cf. Isa. 58:11.

**Jeremiah 31:13.** Then shall young men and old live in unclouded joy, and forget all their former sorrow. "In the dance" refers merely to the virgins: to "young men and old together," only the notion of joy is to be repeated from the context.

**Jeremiah 31:14.** The priests and the people will refresh themselves with the fat, i.e., the fat pieces of the thank-offerings, because numerous offerings will be presented to the Lord in consequence of the blessing received from Him.

**Jeremiah 31:15–22.** *Changing of sorrow into joy, because Ephraim will turn to the Lord, and the Lord will lead him back.—V. 15. "Thus saith Jahveh: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, bitter weeping, Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not. V. 16. Thus saith Jahveh: Restrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for there is a reward for thy work, saith Jahveh, and they shall return from the land of the enemy. V. 17. And there is hope for thy latter end, saith Jahveh, that children shall return to thy border. V. 18. I have certainly heard Ephraim complaining, Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised, like a calf not tamed. Turn me that I may turn, for Thou, O Jahveh, art my God. V. 19. For, after I return I repent, and after I have been taught I smite upon [my] thigh; I am ashamed, yea, and confounded, because I bear the reproach of my youth. V. 20. Is Ephraim a son dear to me, or a child of delight, that, as often as I speak against him, I do yet certainly remember him? Therefore my bowels move for him; I shall surely pity him, saith Jahveh. V. 21. Set thee up way-marks, put up posts for thyself; set thine heart to the highway, the road [by which] thou camest: return, O virgin of Israel, return to these cities of thine. V. 22. How long wilt thou wander about, O backsliding daughter? For Jahveh hath created a new [thing] in the earth: a woman shall encompass a man."*

In this strophe the promise is further confirmed by carrying out the thought, that Israel's release from his captivity shall certainly take place, however little prospect there is of it at present. For Israel will come to an acknowledgment of his sins, and the Lord will then once more show him His love. The hopeless condition of Israel is dramatically set forth in v. 15f.: Rachel, the mother of Joseph, and thus the ancestress of Ephraim, the chief tribe of the Israelites who had revolted from the royal house of David, weeps bitterly over the loss of her children, the ten tribes who have been carried away into exile; and the Lord addresses consolation to her, with the promise that they shall return out of the land of the enemy. "A voice is heard"

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(נִשְׁמָע, participle, to show *duration*). The “voice” is more fully treated of in the second part of the verse: loud lamentation and bitter weeping. There is a difficulty connected with בְּרָמָה. The LXX took it to be the name of the city *Ramah*, now called *er-Râm*, in the tribe of Benjamin, five English miles north from Jerusalem, on the borders of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel (1 Kings 15:17), although this city is elsewhere written with the article (הַרְרָמָה), not only in the historical notices found in 40:1, Josh. 18:25, Judg. 4:5, etc., but also in prophetic addresses, as in Hos. 6:8, Isa. 10:29. In this passage it cannot be a mere appellative (“on a height”), as in 1 Sam. 22:6, Ezek. 16:24; nor can we think of Ramah in Naphtali (Josh. 19:36, also הַרְרָמָה), for this latter city never figures in history like the Ramah of Samuel, not far from Gibeah; see on Josh. 18:25 and 1 Sam. 1:1. But why is the lamentation of Rachel heard at Ramah? Most expositors reply, because the tomb of Rachel was in the divinity of Ramah; in support of this they cite 1 Sam. 10:2. Nägelsbach, who is one of these, still maintains this view with the utmost confidence. But this assumption is opposed to Gen. 35:16 and 19, where it is stated that Rachel died and was buried on the way to Bethlehem, and not far from the town (see on Genesis, *l.c.*), which is about five miles south from Jerusalem, and thus far from Ramah. Nor is any support for this view to be got from 1 Sam. 10:2, except by making the groundless assumption, that Saul, while seeking for the asses of his father, came to Samuel *in his native town*; whereas, in the account given in that chapter, he is merely said to have sought for Samuel in a certain town, of which nothing more is stated, and to have inquired at him; see on 1 Sam. 10:2. We must therefore reject, as arbitrary and groundless, all attempts to fix the locality of Rachel’s sepulchre in the neighbourhood of Ramah (Nägelsbach); in the same way we must treat the assertion of Thenius, Knobel, Graf, etc., that the Ephratah of Gen. 35:16, 19, is the same as the Ephron of 2 Chron. 13:19, which was situated near Bethel; so, too, must we deal with the statements, that

Ephratah, i.e., Bethlehem, is to be expunged from the text of Gen. 35:9 and 48 as a false gloss, and that the tradition, attested in Matt. 2:18, as to the situation of Rachel’s sepulchre in the vicinity of Bethlehem, is incorrect. Nor does the passage of Jeremiah now before us imply that Rachel’s sepulchre was near Ramah. Rachel does not weep at Ramah over her lost children, either because she had been buried there, or because it was in Ramah of Benjamin that the exiles were assembled, according to Jeremiah 40:1 (Hitzig, and also Delitzsch on Gen. 35:20). For it was the Jews who were to be carried away captive that were gathered together at Ramah, whereas it was over Israelites or Ephraimites that had been carried into exile that Rachel weeps. The lamentation of Rachel is heard at Ramah, as the most loftily situated border-town of the two kingdoms, whence the wailing that had arisen sounded far and near, and could be heard in Judah. Nor does she weep because she has learned something in her tomb of the carrying away of the people, but as their common mother, as the beloved spouse of Jacob, who in her married life so earnestly desired children. Just as the people are often included under the notion of the “daughter of Zion,” as their ideal representative, so the great ancestress of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh is here named as the representative of the maternal love shown by Israel in the pain felt when the people are lost. The sing. כִּי אֵינְנִי signifies, “for not one of them is left.”—This verse is quoted by Matthew (Matt. 2:18), after relating the story of the murder of the children at Bethlehem, with the introductory formula, τότε ἐπληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἰερεμίου: from this the older theologians (cf. *Calovii Bibl. illustr. ad Jeremiah l.c.*) conclude that Jeremiah directly prophesied that massacre of the children committed by Herod. But this inference cannot be allowed; it will not fit in with the context of the prophecy. The expression ἐπληρώθη, used by Matthew, only shows that the prophecy of Jeremiah received a new fulfilment through that act of Herod. Of course, we must not reduce the typical reference of the prophecy to that event at Bethlehem simply to this, that the



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wailing of the mothers of Bethlehem over their murdered children was as great as the lamentation made when the people were carried into exile. Typology rather assumes a causal connection between the two events. The destruction of the people of Israel by the Assyrians and Chaldeans is a type of the massacre of the infants at Bethlehem, in so far as the sin which brought the children of Israel into exile laid a foundation for the fact that Herod the Idumean became king over the Jews, and wished to destroy the true King and Saviour of Israel that he might strengthen his own dominion. Cf. Fr. Kleinschmidt, *die typolog. Citate der vier Evangelien*, 1861, S. 10ff.; [Fairbairn's *Typology*, fifth edition, vol. i. pp. 452-3.]

The Lord will put an end to this wailing. "Cease thy weeping," He cries to the sorrowing ones, "for there is a reward for thy labour" (almost identical with 2 Chron. 15:7). פִּעֲלָהּ is the maternal labour of birth and rearing of children. The reward consists in this, that the children shall return out of the land of the enemy into their own land. V. 17 states the same thing in parallel clauses, to confirm the promise. On the expression "hope for thy latter end," cf. 29:11. בְּיָמַי without the article, as in Hos. 11:10, etc.; cf. Ewald, § 277, b. This hope is grounded on the circumstance that Israel will become aware, through suffering, that he is punished for his sins, and, repenting of these sins, will beseech his God for favour. The Lord already perceives this repentant spirit and acknowledgment of sin. וְאֶנְסֶה does not mean "I had myself chastised," or "I learned chastisement" (Hitzig), but "I was chastised," like an untamed calf, i.e., one not trained to bear the yoke and to endure labour. On this figure, cf. Hos. 10:11. The recognition of suffering as chastisement by God excites a desire after amelioration and amendment. But since man cannot accomplish these through his own powers, Israel prays, "Lead me back," sc. from my evil way, i.e., turn me. He finds himself constrained to this request, because he feels

regret for his apostasy from God. אָחֲרַי שׁוּבִי in this connection can only mean, "after I turned," sc. from Thee, O Lord my God; on this meaning of שׁוּב, cf. 8:4. הִנְדַּעַת, to be brought to understanding through punishment, i.e., to become wise. To smite the thighs is a token of terror and horror; cf. Ezek. 21:17. On בְּשָׂתַי וְגַם בְּנִלְמָתִי cf. Isa. 45:16. "The shame of my youth" is that which I brought on myself in my youth through the sins I then committed. On this confession generally, cf. the similar one in 3:21ff.—Thereafter the Lord replies, v. 20, with the question, whether Ephraim is so dear a son to Him that, as often as He has spoken against him, i.e., uttered hard words of condemnation, He still, or again, thinks of him. וְיֵלֵד שְׂעֻשְׁעִים, "a child of delight," whom one fondles; cf. Isa. 5:7. The clause explanatory of the question, "for as often as," etc., is taken in different ways. דִּבֶּר בּוֹ may signify, "to speak about one," or "to speak against one," or "to pay addresses to one," i.e., to court him: 1 Sam. 25:39; Cant. 8:8. Hitzig applies the last meaning to the expression, and translates, "as often as I have paid my suit to him;" according to this view, the basis of the representation of Jahveh's relation to the people is that of a husband to his wife. But this meaning of the verb does not by any means suit the present context, well established though it is by the passages that have been adduced. Ephraim is here represented as a son, not a virgin to whom Jahveh could pay suit. Hence we must take the expression in the sense of "speaking against" some one. But what Jahveh says against Ephraim is no mere threatening by words, but a reprimand by deeds of judgment. The answer to the question is to be inferred from the context: If the Lord, whenever He is constrained to punish Ephraim, still thinks of him, then Ephraim must be a son dear to Him. But this is not because of his conduct, as if he caused Him joy by obedience and faithful attachment, but in consequence of the unchangeable love of God, who cannot leave His son, however much grief he causes his Father. "Therefore," i.e., because he is a son to whom

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Jahveh shows the fulness of His paternal love, all His kindly feelings towards him are now excited, and He desires to show compassion on him. On *הָמוּ מְעִי* cf. Isa. 16:11 and 63:15. Under “bowels” are included especially the heart, liver, reins, the noblest organs of the soul. The expression is strongly anthropopathic, and denotes the most heartfelt sympathy. This fellow-feeling manifests itself in the form of pity, and actually as deliverance from misery. The Lord desires to execute this purpose of His everlasting love. V. 21. Israel is required to prepare himself for return, and to go home again into his own cities. “Set thee up way marks.” *צִיּוֹן*, in 2 Kings 23:17 and Ezek. 39:15, “a tombstone,” probably a stone pillar, which could also serve as a way-mark. *תְּמָרוֹת* is not from *מָרַר* as in v. 15, but from *תָּמַר*, and has the same meaning as *תִּימְרָה*, Joel 3:3, Talm. *תַּמּוּר*, a pillar, Arab. *t’âmîrun*, pl., *cippi, signa in desertis*. “Set thy heart,” i.e., turn thy mind to the road, the way you have gone (on *הִלַּכְתִּי* see 2:20), not, that you may not miss it, but because it leads thee home. “Return to these cities of thine.” “These” implies that the summons issues from Palestine. Moreover, the separate clauses of this verse are merely a poetic individualization of the thought that Israel is to think seriously of returning; and, inasmuch as this return to Palestine presupposes return to the Lord, Israel must first turn with the heart to his God. Then, in v. 22, follows the exhortation not to delay. The meaning of *הִתְחַמַּק* is deduced from Cant. 5:6, where *חַמַּק* signifies to turn one’s self round; hence the Hithpael means to wander about here and there, uncertain what to do. This exhortation is finally enforced by the statement, “Jahveh creates a new thing on earth” (cf. Isa. 43:19). This novelty is, “a woman will encompass a man.” With regard to the meaning of these words, about which there is great dispute, this much is evident from the context, that they indicate a transformation of things, a new arrangement of the relations of life. This new arrangement of things which Jahveh brings

about is mentioned as a motive which should rouse Ephraim (= Israel) to return without delay to the Lord and to his cities. If we keep this in mind, we shall at once set aside as untenable such interpretations as that of Luther in his first translation of 1532–38, “those who formerly behaved like women shall be men,” which Ewald has revived in his rendering, “a woman changing into a man,” or that of Schnurrer, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Maurer, “the woman shall protect the man,” or that of Nägelsbach, “the woman shall turn the man to herself.” The above-mentioned general consideration, we repeat, is sufficient to set aside these explanations, quite apart from the fact that none of them can be lexically substantiated; for *סוּבַב* neither means to “turn one’s self, *vertere*,” nor to “protect,” nor to “cause to return” (as if *סוּבַב* were used for *שׁוּבַב*). Deut. 32:10 is adduced to prove the meaning of protection; but the word there means to go about fondling and cherishing. Neither the transmutation of the female into a male, or of a weak woman into a strong man, nor the protection of the man by a woman, nor the notion that the strong succumbs to the weak, forms an effectual motive for the summons to Israel to return; nor can we call any of them a new creative act effected by Jahveh, or a new arrangement of things. But we must utterly reject the meaning of the words given by Castle, le Clerc, and Hitzig, who apply them to the unnatural circumstance, that a woman makes her suit to a man, even where by the woman is understood the virgin of Israel, and by the man, Jahveh. Luther gave the correct rendering in his editions of 1543 and 1545, “the woman shall encompass the man,”—only, “embrace” (Ger. *umfassen*) might express the sense better than “encompass” (Ger. *umgeben*). *נָקְבָה* is *nomen sexus*, “*femella*, a female;” *גִּבּוֹר*, a “man,” also “*proles mascula*,” not according to the sexual relation (= *זָכָר*), but with the idea of strength. Both in the choice of these words and by the omission of the article, the relation is set forth in its widest generality; the attention is thereby

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steadily directed to its fundamental nature. The woman, the weak and tender being, shall lovingly embrace the man, the strong one. Hengstenberg reverses the meaning of the words when he renders them, “the strong one shall again take the weak into his closest intercourse, under his protection, loving care.” Many expositors, including Hengstenberg and Hitzig of moderns, have rightly perceived that the general idea has been set forth with special reference to the relation between the woman, Israel, and the man, Jahveh.

Starting with this view, which is suggested by the context, the older expositors explained the words of the conception and birth of Christ by a virgin; cf. Corn. a Lapide, *Calovii Bibl. ill.*, Cocceius, and Pfeiffer, *dubia vex.* p. 758ff. Thus, for example, the Berleburger Bibel gives the following explanation: “A woman or virgin—not a married woman—will encompass, i.e., carry and contain in her body, the man who is to be a vanquisher of all and to surpass all in strength.” This explanation cannot be set aside by the simple remark, “that here there would be set forth the very feature in the birth of Christ by a virgin which is not peculiar to it as compared with others;” for this “superficial remark” does not in the least touch the real point to be explained. But it may very properly be objected, that סֹבֵב has not the special meaning of conceiving in a mother’s womb. On this ground we can also set down as incorrect the other explanation of the words in the Berleburger Bibel, that the text rather speaks of “the woman who is the Jewish Church, and who, in the spirit of faith, is to bear Christ as the mighty God, Isa. 9:6, in the likeness of a man, Rev. 12:1, 2.” However, these explanations are nearer the truth than any that have been offered since. The general statement, “a woman shall encompass (the) man,” i.e., lovingly embrace him,—this new relation which Jahveh will bring about in place of the old, that the man encompasses the wife, loving, providing for, protecting her,—can only be referred, agreeably to the context, to change of relation between Israel and the Lord. סֹבֵב, “to

encompass,” is used tropically, not merely of the mode of dealing on the part of the Lord to His people, the faithful,—of the protection, the grace, and the aid which He grants to the pious ones, as in Ps. 32:7, 10, Deut. 32:10, —but also of the dealings of men with divine things.

סֹבֵב, Ps. 26:6, does not mean, “I will go round Thine altar,” in a circle or semicircle as it were, but, “I will keep to Thine altar,” instead of keeping company with the wicked; or more correctly, “I will surround Thine altar,” making it the object of my care, of all my dealings,—I will make mine own the favours shown to the faithful at Thine altar. In the verse now before us, סֹבֵב signifies to encompass with love and care, to surround lovingly and carefully,—the natural and fitting dealing on the part of the stronger to the weak and those who need assistance. And the new thing that God creates consists in this, that the woman, the weaker nature that needs help, will lovingly and solicitously surround the man, the stronger. Herein is expressed a new relation of Israel to the Lord, a reference to a new covenant which the Lord, v. 31ff., will conclude with His people, and in which He deals so condescendingly towards them that they can lovingly embrace Him. This is the substance of the Messianic meaning in the words. The conception of the Son of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary is not expressed in them either directly or indirectly, even though we were allowed to take סֹבֵב in the meaning of “embrace.” This new creation of the Lord is intended to be, and can be, for Israel, a powerful motive to their immediate return to their God.

**Jeremiah 31:23-26.** *The re-establishment and blessing of Judah.*—V. 23. “Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Once more shall they say this word in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I turn their captivity: ‘Jahveh bless thee, O habitation of righteousness, O mountain of holiness!’ V. 24. And there shall dwell in it, [in] Judah and all its cities together, husbandmen and [those who] move about with the flock. V. 25. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have filled every languishing soul. V. 26. Because of

*this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was sweet unto me.*"

The prophecy which treats of Judah alone is condensed, but states much in few words,—not merely the *restitutio in statum integritatis*, but also rich blessing thereafter. "May Jahveh bless thee" is a benediction, equivalent to "may you be blessed;" cf. Ps. 128:5; 134:3. נְוָה צְדָקָה does not mean "habitation of salvation," but "habitation of righteousness;" cf. Isa. 1:21, where it is said of Jerusalem that righteousness formerly dwelt in it. This state of matters is again to exist; Jerusalem is again to become a city in which righteousness dwells. "The holy mountain" is Zion, including Moriah, where the Lord had set up His throne. That the designation "the holy mountain" was applied to the whole of Jerusalem cannot be made out from Ps. 2:6; 48:2ff., Isa. 11:9; 27:13, which have been adduced to prove the assertion. The prayer for the blessing implies that Zion will again be the seat of the Divine King of His people. V. 24. "There dwell in it (in the land of Judah) Judah and all his towns," i.e., the population of Judah and of all its towns, as "husbandmen and (those who) pasture flocks," i.e., each one pursuing undisturbed his own peaceful employment, agriculture and cattle-rearing, and (v. 25) so blessed in these callings that they are kept from every need and want. הִבְרַחֲךָ may either be viewed as the perfect, before which the relative is to be supplied, or an adjectival form imitated from the Aramaic participle, masc. בְּרַחֲךָ.

**Jeremiah 31:26.** Thereupon the prophet awoke from his ecstatic sleep, and said, "My sleep was pleasant" (cf. Prov. 3:24). Very many expositors, including Rosenmüller, Umbreit, and Neumann among the moderns, understand the words, "therefore (or, because of this) I awoke," etc., as referring to God, because in what precedes and follows Jahveh speaks, and because God is sometimes, in the Psalms, called on to awake, e.g., Ps. 7:7; 35:23; 44:24, etc. But it has been properly objected to this, that the words, "my sleep was sweet" (pleasant), are inappropriate as utterances of God, inasmuch

as He does not sleep; nowhere in Scripture is sleep attributed to God, and the summons to awake merely implies the non-interference on the part of God in the affairs of His people. Moreover, we would need to refer the sleeping of God, mentioned in this verse, to His dealing towards Israel during the exile, in such a way that His conduct as a powerful judge would be compared to a sweet sleep,—which is inconceivable. As little can the verse be supposed to contain words of the people languishing in exile, as Jerome has taken them. For the people could not possibly compare the time of oppression during the exile to a pleasant sleep. There is thus nothing left for us but to take this verse, as the Targum, Raschi, Kimchi, Venema, Dahler, Hitzig, Hengstenberg, and others have done, as a remark by the prophet regarding his feelings when he received this revelation; and we must accept something like the paraphrase of Tholuck (*die Propheten*, S. 68): "Because of such glorious promises I awoke to reflect on them, and my ecstatic sleep delighted me." This view is not rendered less tenable by the objection that Jeremiah nowhere says God had revealed Himself to him in a dream, and that, in what precedes, there is not to be found any intimation that what he sets forth appeared to him as a vision. For neither is there any intimation, throughout the whole prophecy, that he received it while in a waking state. The command of God, given 30:2 at the first, to write in a book the words which Jahveh spoke to him, implies that the prophecy was not intended, in the first instance, to be publicly read before the people; moreover, it agrees with the assumption that he received the prophecy in a dream. But against the objection that Jeremiah never states, in any other place, in what bodily condition he was when he received his revelations from God, and that we cannot see why he should make such an intimation here,—we may reply, with Nägelsbach, that this prophecy is the only one in the whole book which contains unmixed comfort, and that it is thus easy to explain why he could never forget that moment when,

awaking after he had received it, he found he had experienced a sweet sleep. Still less weight is there in the objection of Graf, that one cannot comprehend why this remark stands here, because the description is evidently continued in what follows, while the dream must have ended here, when the prophet awoke. For this is against the assumption that the hand of the Lord immediately touched him again, and put him back into the ecstatic state. One might rather urge the consideration that the use of the word שָׁנָה, "sleep," does not certainly prove that the prophet was in the ecstatic state, from the fact that the LXX render תִּרְדָּמָה, in Gen. 2:21 and 15:2, by ἕκστασις. But wherever divine revelations were made in dreams, these of course presuppose sleep; so that the ecstatic state might also be properly called "sleep." Jeremiah adds, "And I looked," to signify that he had been thoroughly awakened, and, in complete self-consciousness, perceived that his sleep had been pleasant.

**Jeremiah 31:27–30.** *The renovation of Israel and Judah.*—V. 27. "Behold, days are coming, saith Jahveh, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with seed of men and seed of beasts. V. 28. And it shall be that, just as I have watched over them to pluck up and to break down, to pull down and to destroy and to hurt, so shall I watch over them to build and to plant, saith Jahveh. V. 29. In those days they shall no more say, 'Fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the teeth of the children become blunt;' V. 30. But each man shall die for his own iniquity: every man who eats the sour grapes, his own teeth shall become blunted."

After announcement has been made, in what preceded, that both portions of the covenant people will be led back into their own land and re-established there, both are now combined, since they are again, at the restoration, to be united under one king, the sprout of David (cf. 3:15, 18), and to both there is promised great blessing, both temporal and spiritual. The house of Israel and the house of Judah, as separate nations, are represented as a fruitful field, which God will sow with men and cattle.

בְּהֵמָה, "cattle," the tame domestic animals, contribute to the prosperity of a nation. That this seed will mightily increase, is evident from the fact that God sows it, and (as is further stated in v. 28) will watch over it as it grows. Whereas, hitherto, He has watched for the purpose of destroying and annihilating the people, because of their apostasy, He will in time to come watch for the purpose of planting and building them up. The prophet has hitherto been engaged in fulfilling, against the faithless people, the first part of the commission given him by the Lord when he was called to his office (Jeremiah 1:10); hereafter, he will be engaged in building up. As certainly as the first has taken place,—and of this the people have had practical experience,—so certainly shall the other now take place.

**Jeremiah 31:29.** The proverb, which Ezekiel also (Ezek. 18:2f.) mentions and contends against, cannot mean, "The fathers have begun to eat sour grapes, but not till the teeth of their sons have become blunted by them" (Nägelsbach); the change of tense is against this, for, by the perfect אָכְלוּ and the imperfect תִּקְהֶינָה, the blunting of the children's teeth is set down as a result of the fathers' eating. The proverb means, "Children atone for the misdeeds of their fathers," or "The sins of the fathers are visited on their innocent children." On this point, cf. the explanations given in Ezek. 18:2ff. "Then shall they no more say" is rightly explained by Hitzig to mean, "They shall have no more occasion to say." But the meaning of the words is not yet made plain by this; in particular, the question how we must understand v. 30 is not settled. Graf, referring to 23:7, 8, supplies יִאָּמְרוּ after כִּי־אֵם, and thus obtains the meaning, Then will they no more accuse God of unrighteousness, as in that wicked proverb, but they will perceive that every one has to suffer for his own guilt. Hitzig and Nägelsbach have declared against this insertion,—the former with the remark that, in 23:7, 8, because both members of the sentence begin with protestations, the whole is clear,

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while here it is not so,—the latter resting on the fact that the dropping of the proverb from current use certainly implies a correct knowledge of the righteousness of God, but one which is very elementary and merely negative; while, on the other hand, the whole connection of the passage now before us shows that it is intended to describe a period when the theocratic life is in a most flourishing condition. Then expositors take v. 30 as the utterance of the prophet, and as embodying the notion that the average level of morality shall be so high at this future period, that only some sins will continue to be committed, and these as isolated exceptions to the rule. Taken all in all, Israel will be a holy people, in which the general spirit pervading them will repress the evil in some individuals, that would otherwise manifest itself. But we cannot imagine how these ideas can be supposed to be contained in the words, “Every man shall die for his own sins,” etc. V. 30 unquestionably contains the opposite of v. 29. The proverb mentioned in v. 29 involves the complaint against God, that in punishing sin He deals unjustly. According to this view, v. 30 must contain the declaration that, in the future, the righteousness of God is to be revealed in the punishment of sins. As we have already remarked on Ezek. 18:3f., the verse in question rather means, that after the re-establishment of Israel, the Lord will make known to His people His grace in so glorious a manner that the favoured ones will fully perceive the righteousness of His judgments. The experience of the unmerited love and compassion of the Lord softens the heart so much, that the favoured one no longer doubts the righteousness of the divine punishment. Such knowledge of true blessedness cannot be called elementary; rather, it implies a deep experience of divine grace and a great advance in the life of faith. Nor does the verse contain a judgment expressed by the prophet in opposition to that of his contemporaries, but it simply declares that the opinion contained in that current proverb shall no longer be accepted then, but the favoured people will recognise in the death of the sinner the punishment due to them for

their own sin. Viewed in this manner, these verses prepare the way for the following announcement concerning the nature of the new covenant.

**Jeremiah 31:31–40.** *The new covenant.*—V. 31. “Behold, days are coming, saith Jahveh, when I will make with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant; V. 32. Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I laid hold of their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which covenant of mine they broke, though I had married them to myself, saith Jahveh; V. 33. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jahveh: I will put my law within them, and on their heart will I write it; and I will become to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. V. 34. And they shall no more teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know ye Jahveh, for all of them shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith Jahveh; for I will pardon their iniquity, and their sins will I remember no more. V. 35. Thus saith Jahveh, [who] gives the sun for light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and stars for light by night, who rouses the sea so that its waves roar, Jahveh of hosts is His name: V. 36. If these ordinances move away from before me, saith Jahveh, then also will the seed of Israel cease to be a people before me for ever. V. 37. Thus saith Jahveh: If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be searched out, then will I also reject all the seed of Israel because of all that they have done, saith Jahveh. V. 38. Behold, days come, saith Jahveh, when the city shall be built for Jahveh, from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner, V. 39. And the measuring-line shall once more go out straight over the hill of Gareb, and turn round towards Goah. V. 40. And all the valley of the corpses and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the valley of Kidron, unto the corner of the gate of the horses towards the east, [shall be] holiness to Jahveh; it shall not be plucked up nor pulled down again for ever.”

The re-establishment of Israel reaches its completion in the making of a new covenant,

according to which the law of God is written in the hearts of the people; thereby Israel becomes in truth the people of the Lord, and the knowledge of God founded on the experience of the forgiveness of sins is such that there is no further need of any external means like mutual teaching about God (vv. 31–34). This covenant is to endure for ever, like the unchangeable ordinances of nature (vv. 35–37); and in consequence of this, Jerusalem shall be guilty as the holy city of God, which shall never be destroyed again (vv. 38–40).

**Jeremiah 31:31.** כָּרַת בְּרִית does not mean “to make an appointment,” but “to conclude a covenant,” to establish a relation of mutual duties and obligations. Every covenant which God concludes with men consists, on the side of God, in assurance of His favours and actual bestowal of them; these bind men to the keeping of the commands laid on them. The covenant which the Lord will make with all Israel in the future is called “a new covenant,” as compared with that made with the fathers at Sinai, when the people were led out of Egypt; this latter is thus implicitly called the “old covenant.” The words, “on the day when I took them by the hand,” etc., must not be restricted, on the one side, to the *day* of the exodus from Egypt, nor, on the other, to the *day* when the covenant was solemnly made at Sinai; they rather refer to the whole time of the exodus, which did not reach its termination till the entrance into Canaan, though it culminated in the solemn admission of Israel, at Sinai, as the people of Jahveh; see on 7:22. (On the punctuation of הַחֲזִיקִי, cf. Ewald, § 238, *d*, Olshaus. *Gramm.* § 191, *f*.) אֲשֶׁר is not a conjunction, “*quod*, because,” but a relative pronoun, and must be combined with אֶת־בְּרִיתִי, “which my covenant,” i.e., which covenant of mine. “They” stands emphatically in contrast with “though I” in the following circumstantial clause, which literally means, “but I have married them to myself,” or, “I was their husband.” As to בְּעַלְתִּי, see on 3:14.

Hengstenberg wrongly takes the words as a

promise, “but I will marry them to myself;” this view, however, is incompatible with the perfect, and the position of the words as a contrast with “they broke.” The two closely connected expressions indicate why a new covenant was necessary; there is no formal statement, however, of the reason, which is merely given in a subordinate and appended clause. For the proper reason why a new covenant is made is not that the people have broken the old one, but that, though Jahveh had united Israel to Himself, they have broken the covenant and thereby rendered it necessary to make a new one. God the Lord, in virtue of His unchangeable faithfulness, would not alter the relation He had Himself established in His love, but simply found it anew in a way which obviated the breaking of the covenant by Israel. For it was a defect connected with the covenant made with Israel at Sinai, that it could be broken on their part. This defect is not to exist in the new covenant which God will make in after times. The expression “after those (not *these*) days” is remarkable; הָהֵם is not the same as הָאֵלֶּה, and yet the days meant can only be the “coming days;” accordingly, it is “those days” (as in v. 29) that are to be expected. The expression “after these days” is inexact, and probably owes its origin to the idea contained in the phrase “in the end of the days” (בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים, cf. 23:20).

**Jeremiah 31:33.** The character of the new covenant: “I (Jahveh) give (will put) my law within them, and write it upon their heart.” בְּקִרְבָּם is the opposite of לְפָנֵיהֶם, which is constantly used of the Sinaitic law, cf. 9:12, Deut. 4:8; 11:32, 1 Kings 9:6; and the “writing on the heart” is opposed to writing on the tables of stone, Ex. 31:18, cf. 32:15f., 34:8, Deut. 4:13; 9:11; 10:4, etc. The difference, therefore, between the old and the new covenants consists in this, that in the old the law was laid before the people that they might accept it and follow it, receiving it into their hearts, as the copy of what God not merely required of men, but offered and vouchsafed to them for their happiness; while in the new it is put within, implanted into the heart and soul by the Spirit

of God, and becomes the animating life-principle, 2 Cor. 3:3. The law of the Lord thus forms, in the old as well as in the new covenant, the kernel and essence of the relation instituted between the Lord and His people; and the difference between the two consists merely in this, that the will of God as expressed in the law under the old covenant was presented externally to the people, while under the new covenant it is to become an internal principle of life. Now, even in the old covenant, we not only find that Israel is urged to receive the law of the Lord his God into his heart,—to make the law presented to him from without the property of his heart, as it were,—but even Moses, we also find, promises that God will circumcise the heart of the people, that they may love God the Lord with all their heart and all their soul (Deut. 30:6). But this circumcision of heart and this love of God with the whole soul, which are repeatedly required in the law (Deut. 6:5; 10:12, 16), are impossibilities, unless the law be received into the heart. It thus appears that the difference between the old and the new covenants must be reduced to this, that what was commanded and applied to the heart in the old is given in the new, and the new is but the completion of the old covenant. This is, indeed, the true relation between them, as is clearly shown by the fact, that the essential element of the new covenant, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people,” was set forth as the object of the old; cf. Lev. 26:12 with Ex. 29:45. Nevertheless the difference is not merely one of degree, but one of kind. The demands of the law, “Keep the commandments of your God,” “Be ye holy as the Lord your God is holy,” cannot be fulfilled by sinful man. Even when he strives most earnestly to keep the commands of the law, he cannot satisfy its requirements. The law, with its rigid demands, can only humble the sinner, and make him beseech God to blot out his sin and create in him a clean heart (Ps. 51:11ff.); it can only awaken him to the perception of sin, but cannot blot it out. It is God who must forgive this, and by forgiving it, write His will on the heart. The forgiveness of sin, accordingly, is mentioned, v. 34, at the

latter part of the promise, as the basis of the new covenant. But the forgiveness of sins is a work of grace which annuls the demand of the law against men. In the old covenant, the law with its requirements is the impelling force; in the new covenant, the grace shown in the forgiveness of sins is the aiding power by which man attains that common life with God which the law sets before him as the great problem of life. It is in this that the qualitative difference between the old and the new covenants consists. The object which both set before men for attainment is the same, but the means of attaining it are different in each. In the old covenant are found commandment and requirement; in the new, grace and giving. Certainly, even under the old covenant, God bestowed on the people of Israel grace and the forgiveness of sins, and, by the institution of sacrifice, had opened up a way of access by which men might approach Him and rejoice in His gracious gifts; His Spirit, moreover, produced in the heart of the godly ones the feeling that their sins were forgiven, and that they were favoured of God. But even this institution and this working of the Holy Spirit on and in the heart, was no more than a shadow and prefiguration of what is actually offered and vouchsafed under the new covenant, Heb. 10:1. The sacrifices of the old covenant are but prefigurations of the true atoning-offering of Christ, by which the sins of the whole world are atoned for and blotted out.

In v. 34a are unfolded the results of God's putting His law in the heart. The knowledge of the Lord will then no longer be communicated by the outward teaching of every man to his fellow, but all, small and great, will be enlightened and taught by the Spirit of God (Isa. 54:13) to know the Lord; cf. Joel 3:1f., Isa. 11:9. These words do not imply that, under the new covenant, “the office of the teacher of religion must cease” (Hitzig); and as little is “disparity in the imparting of the knowledge of God silently excluded” in v. 33. The meaning simply is this, that the knowledge of God will then no longer be dependent on the communication and instruction of man. The knowledge of Jahveh, of



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which the prophet speaks, is not the theoretic knowledge which is imparted and acquired by means of religious instruction; it is rather knowledge of divine grace based upon the inward experience of the heart, which knowledge the Holy Spirit works in the heart by assuring the sinner that he has indeed been adopted as a son of God through the forgiveness of his sins. This knowledge, as being an inward experience of grace, does not exclude religious instruction, but rather tacitly implies that there is intimation given of God's desire to save and of His purpose of grace. The correct understanding of the words results from a right perception of the contrast involved in them, viz., that under the old covenant the knowledge of the Lord was connected with the mediation of priests and prophets. Just as, at Sinai, the sinful people could not endure that the Lord should address them directly, but retreated, terrified by the awful manifestation of the Lord on the mountain, and said entreatingly to Moses, "Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Ex. 20:15); so, under the old covenant economy generally, access to the Lord was denied to individuals, and His grace was only obtained by the intervention of human mediators. This state of matters has been abolished under the new covenant, inasmuch as the favoured sinner is placed in immediate relation to God by the Holy Spirit. Heb. 4:16; Eph. 3:12.

In order to give good security that the promise of a new covenant would be fulfilled, the Lord, in v. 35f., points to the everlasting duration of the arrangements of nature, and declares that, if this order of nature were to cease, then Israel also would cease to be a people before Him; i.e., the continuance of Israel as the people of God shall be like the laws of nature. Thus the eternal duration of the new covenant is implicitly declared. Hengstenberg contests the common view of vv. 35 and 36, according to which the reference is to the firm, unchangeable continuance of God's laws in nature, which everything must obey; and he is of opinion that, in v. 35, it is merely the omnipotence of God that is spoken of, that this proves He is God and

not man, and that there is thus formed a basis for the statement set forth in v. 35, so full of comfort for the doubting covenant people; that God does not live, that He can never repent of His covenant and His promises. But the arguments adduced for this, and against the common view, are not decisive. The expression "stirring the sea, so that its waves roar," certainly serves in the original passage, Isa. 51:15, from which Jeremiah has taken it, to bring the divine omnipotence into prominence; but it does not follow from this that here also it is merely the omnipotence of God that is pointed out. Although, in rousing the sea, "no definite rule that we can perceive is observed, no uninterrupted return," yet it is repeated according to the unchangeable ordinance of God, though not every day, like the rising and setting of the heavenly bodies. And in v. 36, under the expression "these ordinances" are comprehended the rousing of the sea as well as the movements of the moon and stars; further, the departure, i.e., the cessation, of these natural phenomena is mentioned [as impossible], to signify that Israel cannot cease to exist as a people; hence the emphasis laid on the immutability of these ordinances of nature. Considered in itself, the putting of the sun for a light by day, and the appointment of the moon and stars for a light by night, are works of the almighty power of God, just as the sea is roused so that its waves roar; but, that these phenomena never cease, but always recur as long as the present world lasts, is a proof of the immutability of these works of the omnipotence of God, and it is this point alone which here receives consideration. "The ordinances of the moon and of the stars" mean the established arrangements as regards the phases of the moon, and the rising and setting of the different stars. "From being a nation before me" declares not merely the continuance of Israel as a nation, so that they shall not disappear from the earth, just as so many others perish in the course of ages, but also their continuance before Jahveh, i.e., as His chosen people; cf. 30:20.—This positive promise regarding the continuance of Israel is

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confirmed by a second simile, in v. 37, which declares the impossibility of rejection. The measurement of the heavens and the searching of the foundations, i.e., of the inmost depths, of the earth, is regarded as an impossibility. God will not reject *the whole* seed of Israel: here כל is to be attentively considered. As Hengstenberg correctly remarks, the hypocrites are deprived of the comfort which they could draw from these promises. Since the posterity of Israel are not all rejected, the rejection of the dead members of the people, i.e., unbelievers, is not thereby excluded, but included. That the whole cannot perish "is no bolster for the sin of any single person." The prophet adds: "because of all that they have done," i.e., because of their sins, their apostasy from God, in order to keep believing ones from despair on account of the greatness of their sins. On this, Calvin makes the appropriate remark: *Consulto propheta hic proponit scelera populi, ut sciamus superiorem fore Dei clementiam, nec congeriem tot malorum fore obstaculo, quominus Deus ignoscat.* If we keep before our mind these points in the promise contained in this verse, we shall not, like Graf, find in v. 37 merely a tame repetition of what has already been said, and be inclined to take the verse as a superfluous marginal gloss.

**Jeremiah 31:38–40.** Then shall Jerusalem be built up as a holy city of God, and be no more destroyed. After יְמִים, the Masoretic text wants בָּאִים, which is supplied in the *Qeri*.

Hengstenberg is of opinion that the expression was abbreviated here, inasmuch as it has already occurred before, several times, in its full form (vv. 27 and 31); but Jeremiah does not usually abbreviate when he repeats an expression, and בָּאִים has perhaps been dropped merely through an error in transcription. "The city shall be built for Jahveh," so that it thenceforth belongs to Him, is consecrated to Him. The extent of the new city is described as being "from the tower of Hananeel to the gate of the corner." The tower of Hananeel, according to Neh. 3:1 and Zech. 4:10, was

situated on the north-east corner of the city wall; the gate of the corner was at the north-west corner of the city, to the north or north-west of the present "Jaffa Gate;" see on 2 Kings 14:13, 2 Chron. 26:9; cf. Zech. 14:10. This account thus briefly describes the whole north side. v. 39. The measuring-line (קְוָה) as found here, 1 Kings 7:23 and Zech. 1:16, is the original form, afterwards shortened into קו, the *Qeri*) further goes out וַיֵּצֵא, "before itself," i.e., straight out over the hill Gareb. עַל does not mean "away towards, or on" (Hitzig); nor is the true reading עַד, "as far as, even to," which is met with in several codices: the correct rendering is "away over," so that a part, at least, of the hill was included within the city bounds. "And turns towards Goah." These two places last named are unknown. From the context of the passage only this much is clear, that both of them were situated on the west of the city; for the starting-point of the line spoken of is in the north-west, and the valley of Ben-hinnom joins in at the end of it, in the south, v. 40. גָּרַב means "itching," for גָּרַב in Lev. 21:20; 22:22 means "the itch;" in Arabic also "the leprosy." From this, many expositors infer that the hill Gareb was the hill where lepers were obliged to dwell by themselves, outside the city. This supposition is probable; there is no truth, however, in the assumption of Schleussner, Krafft (*Topogr. von Jerus.* S. 158), Hitzig, and Hengstenberg, that the hill Bezetha, included within the city bounds by the third wall of Agrippa, is the one meant; for the line described in v. 39 is not to be sought for on the north side of the city. With Graf, we look for the hill Gareb on the mount which lies westward from the valley of Ben-hinnom and at the end of the valley of Rephaim, towards the north (Josh. 15:8; 18:16), so that it is likely we must consider it to be identical with "the top of the mountain" mentioned in these passages. This mountain is the rocky ridge which bounds the valley of Ben-hinnom on the west, and stretches northwards, on the west side of the valley of Gihon and the Lower Pool (*Birket es Sultân*), to near the high road to Jaffa, where it

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turns off towards the west on the under (i.e., south) side of the Upper Pool (*Birket el Mamilla*); see on Josh. 15:8. It is not, as Thenius supposes (*Jerusalem before the Exile*, an appendix to his commentary on the Books of Kings), the bare rocky hill situated on the north, and overhanging the Upper Pool; on this view, Goah could only be the steep descent from the plateau into the valley of Kidron, opposite this hill, towards the east. Regarding Goah, only this much can be said with certainty, that the supposition, made by Vitringa and Hengstenberg, of a connection between the name and Golgotha, is untenable; lexical considerations and facts are all against it. Golgotha was situated in the north-west: Goah must be sought for south-west from Jerusalem. The translation of the Chaldee, "cattle-pond," is a mere inference from גָּעָה, "to bellow." But, in spite of the uncertainty experienced in determining the positions of the hill Gareb and Goah, this much is evident from the verse before us, that the city, which is thus to be built anew, will extend to the west beyond the space occupied by old Jerusalem, and include within it districts or spots which lay outside old (i.e., pre- and post-exile) Jerusalem, and which had been divided off from the city, as unclean places.

**Jeremiah 31:40.** In v. 40, without any change of construction, the southern border is described. "The whole valley of the corpses and of the ashes ... shall be holy to Jahveh," i.e., be included within the space occupied by the new city. By "the valley of the corpses and of the ashes" expositors generally and rightly understand the valley of Ben-hinnom (פְּגָרִים) are the carcasses of animals that have been killed, and of men who have been slain through some judgment of God and been left unburied). Jeremiah applies this name to the valley, because, in consequence of the pollution by Josiah of the place where the abominations had been offered to Moloch (2 Kings 23:10), it had become a sort of slaughtering-place or tan-yard for the city. According to Lev. 6:3, דָּשָׁן means the ashes of the burnt-offerings consumed on the altar. According to Lev. 4:12 and 6:4, these

were to be carried from the ash-heap near the altar, out of the city, to a clean place; but they might also be considered as the gross deposit of the sacrifices, and thus as unclean. Hence also it came to pass that all the sweepings of the temple were probably brought to this place where the ashes were, which thus became still more unclean. Instead of הַשְּׂרָמוֹת, the *Qeri* requires הַשְּׂדָמוֹת, and, in fact, the former word may not be very different from שְׂדָמוֹת קִדְרוֹן, 2 Kings 23:4, whither Josiah caused all the instruments used in idolatrous worship to be brought and burned. But it is improbable that הַשְּׂרָמוֹת is a mere error in transcription for שְׂדָמוֹת. The former word is found nowhere else; not even does the verb שָׂרַם occur. The latter noun, which is quite well known, could not readily be written by mistake for the former; and even if such an error had been committed, it would not have gained admission into all the MSS, so that even the LXX should have that reading, and give the word as Ἀσαραμῶθ, in Greek characters. We must, then, consider הַשְּׂרָמוֹת as the correct reading, and derive the word from Arab. *srm*, or *šrm*, or *šrm*, "to cut off, cut to pieces," in the sense of "ravines, hollows" (Arab. *šarm*), or *loca abscissa*, places cut off or shut out from the holy city. "Unto the brook of Kidron," into which the valley of Ben-hinnom opens towards the east, "unto the corner of the horse-gate towards the east." The horse-gate stood on the site of the modern "Dung-gate" (*Bâb el Moghâriebh*), in the wall which ran along from the south-east end of Zion to the western border of Ophel (see on Neh. 3:28), so that, in this verse before us, it is the south and south-eastern boundaries of the city that are given; and only the length of the eastern side, which enclosed the temple area, on to the north-eastern corner, has been left without mention, because the valley of the Kidron here formed a strong boundary.

The extent of the new city, as here given, does not much surpass that of old Jerusalem. Only in the west and south are tracts to be included

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within the city, and such tracts, too, as had formerly been excluded from the old city, as unclean places. Jeremiah accordingly announces, not merely that there will be a considerable increase in the size of Jerusalem, but that the whole city shall be holy to the Lord, the unclean places in its vicinity shall disappear, and be transformed into hallowed places of the new city. As being sacred to the Lord, the city shall no more be destroyed.

From this description of Jerusalem which is to be built anew, so that the whole city, including the unclean places now outside of it, shall be holy, or a sanctuary of the Lord, it is very evident that this prophecy does not refer to the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the exile, but, under the figure of Jerusalem, as the centre of the kingdom of God under the Old Testament, announces the erection of a more spiritual kingdom of God in the Messianic age. The earthly Jerusalem was a holy city only in so far as the sanctuary of the Lord, the temple, had been built in it. Jeremiah makes no mention of the rebuilding of the temple, although he had prophesied the destruction, not only of the city, but also of the temple. But he represents the new city as being, in its whole extent, the sanctuary of the Lord, which the temple only had been, in ancient Jerusalem. Cf. as a substantial parallel, Zech. 14:10, 11.—The erection of Jerusalem into a city, within whose walls there shall be nothing unholy, implies the vanquishment of sin, from which all impurity proceeds; it is also the ripe fruit of the forgiveness of sins, in which the new covenant, which the Lord will make with His people in the days to come, consists and culminates. This prophecy, then, reaches on to the time when the kingdom of God shall have been perfected: it contains, under an old Testament dress, the outlines of the image of the heavenly Jerusalem, which the seer perceives at Patmos in its full glory. This image of the new Jerusalem thus forms a very suitable conclusion to this prophecy regarding the restoration of Israel, which, although it begins with the deliverance of the covenant people from their exile, is yet thoroughly Messianic. Though clothed in an Old

Testament dress, it does not implicitly declare that Israel shall be brought back to their native land during the period extending from the time of Cyrus to that of Christ; but, taking this interval as its stand-point, it combines in one view both the deliverance from the exile and the redemption by the Messiah, and not merely announces the formation of the new covenant in its beginnings, when the Christian Church was founded, but at the same time points to the completion of the kingdom of God under the new covenant, in order to show the whole extent of the salvation which the Lord will prepare for His people who return to Him. If these last verses have not made the impression on Graf's mind, that they could well have formed the original conclusion to the prophecy which precedes, the reason lies simply in the theological inability of their expositor to get to the bottom of the sacred writings.

## **Jeremiah 32**

### **The Purchase of a Field as a Symbol of the Restoration of Judah After the Exile**

**Jeremiah 32.** This chapter, after an introduction (vv. 1-5) which accurately sets forth the time and circumstances of the following event, contains, first of all (vv. 6-15), the account of the purchase of a hereditary field at Anathoth, which Jeremiah, at the divine command, executes in full legal form, together with a statement of the meaning of this purchase; then (vv. 16-25) a prayer of the prophet for an explanation as to how the purchase of the field could be reconciled with the delivering up of the people and the city of Jerusalem to the Chaldeans; together with (vv. 26-35) the Lord's reply, that He shall certainly give up Jerusalem to the Chaldeans, because Israel and Judah, by their sins and their idolatries, have roused His wrath; but (vv. 36-44) that He shall also gather again His people out of all the lands whither they have been scattered, and make an everlasting covenant with them, so that they shall dwell safely and happily in the land in true fear of God.

**Jeremiah 32:1-5.** *The time and the circumstances of the following message from God.*—The message came to Jeremiah in the tenth year of Zedekiah, i.e., in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar (cf. 25:1 and 52:12), when the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah was kept in confinement in the fore-court of the royal palace. These historical data are inserted (vv. 2-5) in the form of circumstantial clauses: וְאֵזְרוּ וְיָגוּר, “for at that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem.” The siege had begun in the ninth year of Zedekiah (Jeremiah 39:1; 52:4), and was afterwards raised for a short time, in consequence of the approach of an auxiliary corps of Egyptians; but, as soon as these had been defeated, it was resumed (Jeremiah 37:5, 11). Jeremiah was then kept confined in the court of the prison of the royal palace (cf. Neh. 3:25), “where Zedekiah, king of Judah, had imprisoned him, saying: Why dost thou prophesy, ‘Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, so that he shall take it; V. 4. And Zedekiah, the king of Judah, shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall assuredly be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and his mouth shall speak with his mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes; V. 5. And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the Lord. Though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not succeed?’ ”—We have already found an utterance of like import in Jeremiah 21, but that is not here referred to; for it was fulfilled at the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem, and did not bring on Jeremiah the consequences mentioned here. From Jeremiah 37 we learn that Jeremiah, during the siege of Jerusalem, on till the time when it was raised through the approach of the Egyptian army, had not been imprisoned, but went freely in and out among the people (Jeremiah 37:4ff.). Not till during the temporary raising of the siege, when he wanted to go out of the city into the land of Benjamin, was he seized and thrown into a dungeon, on the pretence that he intended to go over to the

Chaldeans. There he remained many days, till King Zedekiah ordered him to be brought, and questioned him privately as to the issue of the conflict; when Jeremiah replied, “Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.” On this occasion Jeremiah complained to the king of his imprisonment, and requested that he might not be sent back into the dungeon, where he must soon perish; the king then ordered him (Jeremiah 37:11-24) to be taken into the court of the prison-house (חֶצֶר הַמְּטֹרָה, 37:21), where he remained in confinement till the city was taken (Jeremiah 38:13, 28; 39:14). The statement in our verses as to the cause of this imprisonment does not contradict, but agrees with the notice in Jeremiah 37, as soon as we perceive that this account contains merely a brief passing notice of the matter. The same holds true of the utterance of the prophet in vv. 3-5. Jeremiah, even at the beginning of the siege (Jeremiah 21:3ff.), had sent a message of similar import to the king, and repeated the same afterwards: 34:3-5; 37:17; 38:17-23. The words of our verses are taken from these repeated utterances; v. 4 agrees almost verbatim with 34:3; and the words, “there shall he remain עַד־פִּקְדֵי אֲתוֹ, till I regard him with favour,” are based upon the clearer utterance as to the end of Zedekiah, 34:4, 5.—The circumstances under which Jeremiah received the following commission from the Lord are thus exactly stated, in order to show how little prospect the present of the kingdom of Judah offered for the future, which was portrayed by the purchase of the field. Not only must the kingdom of Judah inevitably succumb to the power of the Chaldeans, and its population go into exile, but even Jeremiah is imprisoned, in so hopeless a condition, that he is no longer sure of his life for a single day.

**Jeremiah 32:6-15.** *The purchase of the field.*—In v. 6, the introduction, which has been interrupted by long parentheses, is resumed with the words, “And Jeremiah said,” etc. The word of the Lord follows, v. 7. The Lord said to him: “Behold, Hanameël, the son of Shallum, thine uncle, cometh to thee, saying, ‘Buy thee

my field at Anathoth, for thou hast the redemption-right to purchase it.' " According to a mode of construction common elsewhere, אָדִי might be taken as in apposition to הַנְּמָאֵל: "Hanameël, son of Shallum, thine uncle." But vv. 8, 9, in which Jeremiah calls Hanameël בְּנֵי אֲדִי, son of my uncle, show that אָדִי is in apposition to שָׁלֹם: "son of Shallum, [who is] thine uncle." The right of redemption consisted in this, that if any one was forced through circumstances to sell his landed property, the nearest blood-relation had the right, or rather was obliged, to preserve the possession for the family, either through pre-emption, or redemption from the stranger who had bought it (Lev. 25:25). For the land which God had given to the tribes and families of Israel for a hereditary possession could not be sold, so as to pass into the hands of strangers; and for this reason, in the year of jubilee, what had been sold since the previous jubilee reverted, without payment of any kind, to the original possessor or his heirs. (Cf. Lev. 25:23–28, and Keil's *Bibl. Archäol.* ii. § 141, p. 208ff.)

**Jeremiah 32:8.** What had been announced to the prophet by God took place. Hanameël came to him, and offered him his field for sale. From this Jeremiah perceived that the proposed sale was the word of the Lord, i.e., that the matter was appointed by the Lord. V. 9. Jeremiah accordingly bought the field, and weighed out to Hanameël "seven shekels and ten the silver" (הַכֶּסֶף is definite, as being the amount of money asked as price of purchase). But the form of expression is remarkable: "seven shekels and ten" instead of "seventeen" (שֶׁבַע וְעֶשְׂרֵת שֶׁקֶלִי) (הַכֶּסֶף). The Chaldee consequently has "seven manehs and ten shekels of silver;" and J. D. Michaelis supposes that the seven shekels which are first named, and are separated from the ten, were shekels of gold: "seven shekels of gold, and seven shekels of silver." But both assumptions are gratuitous, and perhaps only inferences, not merely from the unusual separation of the numerals, but likewise from

the fact that seventeen silver shekels (less than two pounds sterling) was too small a price for an arable field. The supposition of Hitzig has more in its favour, that the mode of expression "seven shekels and ten (shekels) of silver" was a law form. Some have sought to explain the smallness of the price on the ground that the seller was compelled to part with his property through poverty, and that the land had become depreciated in consequence of the war. Both may be true; but, as Nägelsbach has already remarked, neither explains the smallness of the price. For instances have very properly been adduced from Roman history (Livy, xxvi. 11, and Florus, ii. 6) which show that occupation of a country by an enemy did not lessen the value of ground-property. It is rather to be taken into consideration, that in the first place we do not know the real value of arable land among the Hebrews; and secondly, the sale of portions of land was, correctly speaking, only the sale of the harvests up till the year of jubilee, for then the property returned to the former possessor of his heirs. In the case of a sale, then, the nearer the jubilee-year, the smaller must be the price of purchase in the alienation of the land.

**Jeremiah 32:10ff.** The purchase was concluded in full legal form. "I wrote it (the necessary terms) in the letter (the usual letter of purchase), and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed out the money on the balance" (it was then and still is the custom in the East to weigh money). הִתָּם means here, not to append a seal instead of subscribing the name, or for attestation (cf. 1 Kings 21:8, Neh. 10; 2), but to seal up, make sure by sealing (Isa. 29:11, etc.). For, from vv. 11, 12, we perceive that two copies of the bill of purchase were prepared, one sealed up, and the other open; so that, in case the open one were lost, or were accidentally or designedly injured or defaced, a perfect original might still exist in the sealed-up copy. Then "Jeremiah took the bill of purchase, the sealed one,"—the specification and the conditions,— "and the open one." The words אֶת־סֵפֶר וגו' are in apposition with הַמְצִיחַ וְהַחֲקִים. The Vulgate renders *stipulationes et rata*;

Jerome, *stipulatione rata*, which he explains by *stipulationibus et sponsionibus corroborata*. מִצְוָה, usually “a command, order,” is probably employed here in the general sense of “specification,” namely, the object and the price of purchase; הַקִּיּוֹם, “statutes,” the conditions and stipulations of sale. The apposition has the meaning, “containing the agreement and the conditions.” Both copies of this bill, the prophet,—before the eyes of Hanameël, his cousin (יְדִיד, either in the general sense of a near relation, since the relationship has been stated exactly enough already, or יְדִיד has been inadvertently omitted), and before the eyes of, i.e., in the presence of “the witnesses, who wrote in the letter of purchase,” i.e., had subscribed it as witnesses in attestation of the matter, and in the eyes of all the Jews who were sitting in the court of the prison, and in whose presence the transaction had been concluded,—delivered up to his attendant Baruch, son of Nerijah, the son of Mahsejah, with the words, v. 14: “Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these letters, this sealed-up letter of purchase and this open letter, and put them into an earthen vessel, that they may remain a long time [there]. V. 15. For thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses, and fields, and vineyards shall still be bought in this land.”—The second utterance of the Lord (v. 15) declares the reason why the letters were to be preserved in an earthen vessel, in order to protect them from damp, decay, and destruction, namely, because one could make use of them afterwards, when sale of property would still be taking place. There is also implied the intimation, that the present desolation of the land and the transportation of its inhabitants will only last during their time; and then the population of Judah will return, and enter again on the possession of their land. The purchase of the field on the part of Jeremiah had this meaning; and for the sake of this meaning it was announced to him by God, and completed before witnesses, in the presence of the Jews who happened to be in the court of the prison.

**Jeremiah 32:16–25.** *The prayer of Jeremiah.*—Although Jeremiah has declared, in the words of the Lord, v. 14f., the meaning of the purchase of the field to the witnesses who were present at the transaction, yet the intimation that houses, fields, and vineyards would once more be bought, seemed so improbable, in view of the impending capture and destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, that he betakes himself to the Lord in prayer, asking for further disclosures regarding the future of the people and the land, less for his own sake than for that of the people, who could with difficulty rise to such confidence of faith. The prayer runs thus, v. 17: “Ah, Lord Jahveh! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and Thine outstretched arm; to Thee nothing is impossible. V. 18. Thou showest mercy unto thousands, and repayest the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, Thou great and mighty God, whose name is Jahveh of hosts. V. 19. Great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of men, to give unto every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his works: V. 20. Thou who didst signs and wonders in the land of Egypt until this day, both in Israel and among [other] men, and madest for Thyself a name, as it is this day; V. 21. And didst lead Thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, and with strong hand and outstretched arm, and with great terror, V. 22. And didst give them this land, which Thou hast sworn to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey; V. 23. And they came and took possession of it, but they hearkened not to Thy voice and walked not in Thy law: all that Thou commandedst them to do they did not, therefore didst Thou cause all this evil to come against them. V. 24. Behold, the besiegers’ mounds are come to the city, to take it, and the city will be given into the hands of the Chaldeans, who fight against it, because of the sword, hunger, and pestilence; and what Thou didst speak is come to pass, and, behold, Thou seest it. V. 25. Yet Thou hast said to me, O Lord Jahveh, ‘Buy thee the field for money, and take

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witnesses,' while the city is being delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans."

This prayer contains a laudation of the omnipotence of the Lord and the justice of His dealing among all men (vv. 17–19), and especially in the guidance of the people Israel (vv. 20–23), with the view of connecting with it the question, how the divine command to buy the field is to be reconciled with the decreed deliverance of the city into the power of the Chaldeans (vv. 24, 25). V. 17. God proclaims His omnipotence in the creation of the heaven and the earth, cf. 27:5. From this it is plain that nothing is too wonderful for God, i.e., is impossible for Him, Gen. 18:14. As Creator and Ruler of the world, God exercises grace and justice. The words of v. 18 are a reminiscence and free imitation of the passages Ex. 20:5ff. and 34:7, where the Lord so depicts His dealings in the guidance of men. To "recompense iniquity into the bosom" (see Isa. 65:6, cf. Ps. 79:12), i.e., to pour into the bosom of the garment the reward for iniquity, so that it may be carried away and borne; cf. Ruth 3:15, Prov. 17:23. "The great and mighty God," as in Deut. 10:17. On "Jahveh of hosts is His name," cf. 10:16; 31:35. *יְשׁוּ* is to be explained thus: "O Thou great God, whose name is Jahveh of hosts."

**Jeremiah 32:19.** God shows His greatness and might in the wisdom with which He regards the doings of men, and in the power with which He executes His decrees, so as to recompense to every one according to his deeds. On 19a cf. Isa. 28:29, Ps. 66:5. "To give to every one," etc., is repeated, word for word, from 17:10.

**Jeremiah 32:20–22.** The Lord has further shown this omnipotence and righteousness in His guidance of Israel, in His leading them out of Egypt with wonders and signs; cf. Deut. 6:22; 34:11. "Until this day" cannot mean that the wonders continue in Egypt until this day,—still less, that their glorious remembrance continues till this day (Calvin, Rosenmüller, etc.). Just as little can we connect the words with what follows, "until this day, in Egypt and among men," as Jerome supposed; although the idea *et*

*in Israel et in cunctis mortalibus quotidie tua signa complentur* is in itself quite right.

Logically considered, "until this day" belongs to the *verb.* *וְיִשְׁמַתָּ וְגו'*, and the construction is pregnant, as in 11:7: "Thou hast done wonders in Egypt, and hast still been doing them until this day in Israel and among other men." "Men," in contrast to "Israel," are mankind outside of Israel,—other men, the heathen; on the expression, cf. Judg. 18:7, Isa. 43:4, Ps. 73:5. "As at this day:" cf. 11:5; 25:18. Through signs and wonders the Lord wrought, leading Israel out of Egypt, and into the land of Canaan, which had been promised to their fathers. V. 21 is almost exactly the same as Deut. 26:8, cf. 4:34. *מוֹרָא גְדוֹל* refers to the terror spread among the neighbouring nations, Ex. 15:14ff., by the wonders, especially the slaying of the first-born among the Egyptians, Ex. 12:30f., and the miracle at the Red Sea. On "a land flowing with milk and honey," cf. Ex. 3:8.

**Jeremiah 32:23.** These wonders of grace which the Lord wrought for His people, Israel requited with base unthankfulness. When they had got into possession of the land, they did not listen to the voice of their God, and did the reverse of what He had commanded. (The *Kethib* *בַּתְרוּתָהּ* might be read as a plural. But since *תּוֹרָה* in the plural is always written elsewhere *תּוֹרוֹת* (cf. Gen. 26:5, Ex. 16:28; 18:20, Lev. 26:46, etc.), and the omission of the *י* in plural suffixes is unusual (cf. 38:22), the word rather seems to have been incorrectly written for *בְּתוֹרָתָהּ* (cf. 26:4; 44:10, 23), i.e., the *ו* seems to have been misplaced. Therefore the Lord brought on them this great calamity, the Chaldean invasion (*תְּקִירָה* for *תְּקִירָא*); cf. 13:22, Deut. 31:29. With this thought, the prophet makes transition to the questions addressed to the Lord, into which the prayer glides. In v. 24, the great calamity is more fully described. The ramparts of the besieging enemy have come to the city (*בּוֹיָא* with *acc.*), to take it, and the city is given (*נְתִיבָהּ*, *prophetic perfect*) into the hands of



the Chaldeans. "Because of the sword;" i.e., the sword, famine, and pestilence (cf. 14:16; 25:16, etc.) bring them into the power of the enemy. "What Thou spakest," i.e., didst threaten through the prophets, "is come to pass; and, behold, Thou seest it (viz., what has happened), and yet (וְאֵתְּרָה adversative) Thou sayest to me, 'Buy the field,' " etc. The last clause, וְהָעִירָךְ, is a "circumstantial" one, and is not a part of God's address, but is added by Jeremiah in order to give greater prominence to the contrast between the actual state of matters and the divine command regarding the purchase. The prayer concludes with this, which is for men an inexplicable riddle, not (as Nägelsbach thinks) for the purpose of leaving to the reader the solution of the problem, after all aids have been offered him,—for Jeremiah would not need to direct his question to God for that purpose,—but in order to ask from God an explanation regarding the future. This explanation immediately follows in the word of the Lord, which, from v. 26 onwards, is addressed to the prophet.

**Jeremiah 32:26–44.** *The answer of the Lord.—Behold, I am Jahveh, the God of all flesh; is there anything impossible to me? V. 28. Therefore, thus saith Jahveh: Behold, I give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, that he may take it. V. 29. The Chaldeans that fight against this city shall come, and shall set fire to this city, and burn it and the houses on whose roofs you have burned incense to Baal and poured out libations to other gods, to provoke me. V. 30. For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only what is evil in mine eyes from their youth; for the children of Israel have only provoked me with the work of their hands, saith Jahveh. V. 31. For this city has been to me [a burden] upon mine anger and upon my wrath from the day that it was built till this day, that I might remove it from before my face; V. 32. Because of all the wickedness of the children of Israel and the children of Judah, which they have done, to provoke me,—they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their*

*prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. V. 33. They turned to me the back and not the face; and though they were constantly being taught, they would not hear so as to receive instruction. V. 34. And they placed their abominations in the house which is called by my name, in order to defile it; V. 35. And built high places to Baal in the valley of Ben-hinnom, to devote their sons and their daughters of Moloch,—which I did not command them, nor did it come into my mind that they would do such abomination,—that they might lead Judah to sin. V. 36. And now, therefore, thus saith Jahveh, the God of Israel, concerning this city, of which ye say, 'It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, through the sword, famine, and pestilence:' V. 37. Behold, I shall gather them out of all lands whither I have driven them in my wrath, and in mine anger, and in great rage, and shall bring them back to this place, and make them dwell safely. V. 38. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. V. 39. And I will give them one heart and one way, to fear me always, for good to them and to their children after them. V. 40. And I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I shall not turn aside from doing them good; and I will put my fear in their heart, that they may not depart from me. V. 41. And I shall rejoice over them, to do them good, and shall plant them in this land, in truth, with my whole heart and my whole soul. V. 42. For thus saith Jahveh: 'Just as I have brought all this great evil on this people, so shall I bring on them all the good of which I speak regarding them.' V. 43. And fields shall be bought in this land, of which ye say, It is a desolation, without man or beast, and it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans. V. 44. They shall buy fields for money, and write it in the letter, and seal it up, and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, and in the places round Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the hill-country, and in the cities of the plain, and in the cities of the south; for I shall turn again their captivity, saith Jahveh."*

The Lord replies to the three points touched on in the prayer of the prophet. First, in v. 27, He emphatically confirms the acknowledgment

that to Him, as Creator of heaven and earth, nothing is impossible (v. 17), and at the same time points out Himself as the God of all flesh, i.e., the God on whom depend the life and death of all men. This description of God is copied from Num. 16:22; 27:16, where Jahveh is called "the God of the spirits of all flesh." "All flesh" is the name given to humanity, as being frail and perishing.—Then God reaffirms that Jerusalem will be given into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, and be burned by the Chaldeans (v. 28ff.), because Israel and Judah have always roused His wrath by their idolatry and rebellion against His commands (vv. 30–35). The substance of these verses has been often given before. On *וְהָעִתִּי* cf. 21:10; 37:8; on *אֲשֶׁר קָטְרוּ וּגִי* cf. 19:13 with 7:9, 18. The mention of the children of Israel in connection with the children of Judah is not to be understood as if the destruction of Jerusalem was partly owing to the former; but it is here made, to signify that Judah can expect no better fate than the Israelites, whose kingdom has been destroyed long before, and who have for a long time now been driven into exile. *הָיוּ אֲדָ עֹשִׂים*, "they were only doing," i.e., doing nothing else than what is displeasing to the Lord. In v. 30*b* "the children of Israel" is a designation of the whole covenant people. The whole sentence has reference to Deut. 31:29. "The work of their hands" is not the idols, but signifies the whole conduct and actions of the people. V. 31. The difficult construction *עַל־אֲפִי ... הִיָּתְהִלִּי* is most easily explained from the employment of *עַל הִיָּה* with reference to the superincumbency of a duty or burden lying on one. "This city became to me a burden on my wrath," an object which lay upon my wrath, called it forth. No other explanation can be vindicated. The passages 52:3 and 2 Kings 24:3, 20, are of a different character, and the meaning *juxta, secundum* for *עַל*, after 6:14 (Hitzig), is quite unsuitable. The words, "from the day when it was built," are not to be referred to the earliest founding of Jerusalem, but to that time when the Israelites first built it; and even in reference to this, they are not to be

pressed, but to be viewed as a rhetorically strong expression for, "from its earliest times." Even so early as David's time, opposition against Jahveh showed itself in the conspiracy of Absalom; and towards the end of Solomon's reign, idolatry had been introduced into Jerusalem, 1 Kings 11:5ff. After the words "to remove it from before my face," there follows once more, in v. 32, the reason of the rejection; cf. 7:12; 11:17, and for enumeration of the several classes of the population, 2:26; 17:25. The sins are once more specified, vv. 33–35; in v. 33, as a stiff-necked departure from God, and in v. 34f. the mention of the greatest abomination of idolatry, the setting up of idols in the temple, and of the worship of Moloch. With 33*a* cf. 2:27. The inf. abs. *וְלִמַּד* stands with special emphasis instead of the finite tense: though they were taught from early morn, yet they were inattentive still. On this point cf. 2:13, 25; 25:3, 4. On *לְקַחַת מוֹסֵר* cf. 17:23; 7:28. Vv. 34, 35 are almost identical with 7:30, 31. *לְעֹשׂוֹת וּגִי* does not belong to the relative clause *אֲשֶׁר לֹא וּגִי* (Nägelsbach), but is parallel to *לְהַעֲבִיר וּגִי*, continuing the main clause: "that they should commit these abominations, and thereby cause Judah to sin," i.e., bring them into sin and guilt. *וְהִקְטִי* with *א* dropped; see 19:15.—After setting forth the sin for which Judah had drawn on herself the judgment through the Chaldeans, the Lord proclaims, v. 36ff., the deliverance of the people from exile, and their restoration; thus He answers the question which had been put to Him, v. 25. *וְעַתָּה*, "but now," marks what follows as the antithesis to what precedes. "Therefore, thus saith Jahveh," in v. 36, corresponds to the same words in v. 28. Because nothing is impossible to the Lord, He shall, as God of Israel, gather again those who have been scattered through every land, and bring them back into their own country. "To this city,"—namely, of which ye speak. The suffix of *מִקְבָּצָם* refers to *הָעִיר*, whose inhabitants are meant. Jerusalem, as the capital, represents the whole kingdom. "The dispersed" are thus, in

general, the inhabitants of Judah. Hence, too, from the nature of the case, "this place" is the kingdom of Judah. On this point cf. Ezek. 36:11, 33, Hos. 11:11.

**Jeremiah 32:38, 39.** Vv. 38, 39 are to be understood like 31:33. They must in very deed become the people of the Lord, for God gives them one heart and one way [of life], to fear Him always, i.e., through His Spirit He renews and sanctifies them (Jeremiah 31:33; 24:7; Ezek. 11:19). "One heart and one way" that they may all with one mind and in one way fear me, no longer wander through many wicked ways (Jeremiah 26:3; Isa. 53:6). יִרְאַהּ is an infinitive, as often in Deut., e.g., 4:10, from which the whole sentence has been derived, and 6:24, to which the expression לְטוֹב לָהֶם points. The everlasting covenant which the Lord wishes to conclude with them, i.e., the covenant-relationship which He desires to grant them, is, in fact, the new covenant, 31:33ff. Here, however, only the eternal duration of it is made prominent, in order to comfort the pious in the midst of their present sufferings. Consequently, only the idea of the עוֹלָם is mainly set forth: "that I shall not turn away from them, to do them good,—no more withdraw from them my gracious benefits;" but the uninterrupted bestowal of these implies also faithfulness to the Lord on the part of the people. The Lord desires to establish His redeemed people in this condition by putting His fear in their heart, namely, through His Spirit; see 31:33, 34. וְשִׂחִי, "And I shall rejoice over them, by doing them good," as was formerly the case (Deut. 28:63), and is again to be, in time to come. בְּצִדְקָתָא, in truth, properly, "in faithfulness." This expression is strengthened by the addition, "with my whole heart and my whole soul."—So much for the promise of restoration and renewal of the covenant people. This promise is confirmed, vv. 42–44, by the assurance that the accomplishment of deliverance shall follow as certainly as the decree of the calamity has done; the change is similar to that in 31:38. Finally, vv. 43, 44, there is the application made of this

to the purchase of the field which the prophet had been commanded to fulfil; and the signification of this purchase is thus far determined, that after the restoration of Judah to their own land, fields shall once more be bought in full legal form: with this, the discourse returns to its starting-point, and finishes. The article is used generically in הַשָּׂדֶה; hence, on the repetition of the thought, v. 44, the plural שָׂדוֹת is employed instead. The enumeration of the several regions of the kingdom, as in 17:26, is a rhetorical individualization for strengthening the thought. The land of Benjamin is here made prominent in relation to the field purchased by Jeremiah at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. The final sentence כִּי אָשִׁיב וְגו' also serves for further proof. The Hiphil in this expression does not mean the same as the usual אָשׁוּב: "I turn the captivity," i.e., I change the adversity into prosperity. אָשִׁיב expresses *restitutio in statum incolumitatis seu integritatis* more plainly than שׁוּב,—not merely the change of misfortune or misery; but it properly means, to lead back or restore the captivity, i.e., to remove the condition of adversity by restoration of previous prosperity. The expression is analogous to בָּנֶה הָרְבוֹתוֹת or קוֹמֵם, to build or raise ruins, Isa. 44:26; 58:12; 61:4, and קוֹמֵם שְׂמֻמּוֹת, to raise up desolate places, Isa. 61:4, which does not mean to restore ruins or desolate places, but to build them up into inhabitable places (cf. Isa. 61:4), to remove ruins or desolations by the building and restoration of cities.

### Jeremiah 33

#### Renewed Promise of the Restoration and Glorious Condition of the People of God

**Jeremiah 33:1.** While Jeremiah was still in confinement in the court of the prison belonging to the palace (see 32:2), the word of the Lord came to him the second time. This word of God is attached by שְׁנִיטָא to the promise

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of Jeremiah 32. It followed, too, not long, perhaps, after the other, which it further serves to confirm.—After the command to call on Him, that He might make known to him great and hidden things (vv. 2, 3), the Lord announces that, although Jerusalem shall be destroyed by the Chaldeans, He shall yet restore it, bring back the captives of Judah and Israel, purify the city from its iniquities, and make it the glory and praise of all the people of the earth (vv. 4–9), so that in it and in the whole land joy will again prevail (vv. 10–13). Then the Lord promises the restoration of the kingdom through the righteous sprout of David,—of the priesthood, too, and sacrificial worship (vv. 14–18); He promises also the everlasting duration of these two ordinances of grace (vv. 19–22), because His covenant with the seed of Jacob and David shall be as enduring as the natural ordinance of day and night, and the laws of heaven and earth (vv. 23–26).—The promises thus fall into two parts. First, there is proclaimed the restoration of the people and kingdom to a new and glorious state of prosperity (vv. 4–13); then the re-establishment of the monarchy and the priesthood to a new and permanent condition (vv. 14–26). In the first part, the promise given in Jeremiah 32:36–44 is further carried out; in the second, the future form of the kingdom is more plainly depicted.

**Jeremiah 33:2, 3.** *Introduction.*—V. 2. “Thus saith Jahveh who makes it, Jahveh who forms it in order to establish it, Jahveh is His name: V. 3. Call on me and I will answer thee, and tell thee great and hidden things which thou knowest not.” The reference of the suffixes in עֲשֶׂה, אֹתָהּ, and הִכְיֶנָּה is evident from the contents of the propositions: the Lord does what He says, and forms what He wants to make, in order to accomplish it, i.e., He completes what He has spoken and determined on. יָצַר, *to frame*, namely, in the mind, as if to think out, just as in 18:11: the expression is parallel with הָשֵׁב מִחֲשָׁבָה; in this sense also we find Isa. 46:11. הִכְיֶנָּה, *to establish, realize what has been*

determined on, prepare, is also found in Isa. 9:6; 40:20, but more frequently in Jeremiah (Jeremiah 10:12; 51:12, 15), and pretty often in the Old Testament generally. On the phrase “Jahveh is His name,” cf. 31:35. The idea contained in v. 2 reminds us of similar expressions of Isaiah, as in Is. 22:11; 37:26; 46:11, etc.; but this similarity offers no foundation for the doubts of Movers and Hitzig regarding the genuineness of this verse. The same holds as regards v. 3. The first proposition occurs frequently in the Psalms, e.g., Ps. 4:4; 28:1; 30:9, also in Jeremiah 7:27; 11:14; but קָרָא with אֵל is unusual in Isaiah. The words בְּצִרּוֹת לֵא נְצִרּוֹת וְלֵא יִדְעֶתֶם are certainly an imitation of נְצִרּוֹת וְלֵא יִדְעֶתֶם, Isa. 48:6; but they are modified, in the manner peculiar to Jeremiah, by the change of נְצִרּוֹת into בְּצִרּוֹת. The combination נְצִרּוֹת וְגִדְלוֹת is elsewhere used only of the strong cities of the Canaanites, Deut. 1:28; 9:1, Josh. 14:12, cf. Num. 13:28; here בְּצִרּוֹת is transferred to things which lie beyond the limits of human power to discover, and become known to men only through divine revelation. There is no good reason for Ewald’s change of בְּצִרּוֹת in accordance with Isa. 48:6.—On the contents of these verses Hengstenberg remarks: “It may seem strange that, though in the opening part the prophet is promised a revelation of greater, unknown things, for which he is to call on God, yet the succeeding announcement contains scarcely anything remarkable or peculiar.” Graf also adds the remark of Hitzig, that the command to pray, addressed to Jeremiah, cannot have the effect of keeping us from the conclusion that the verses are an addition by a later hand. Nägelsbach replies that the mode of expression presents nothing specially unlike Jeremiah, and that what is most calculated to give the impression of being unlike Jeremiah’s, namely, this introduction in itself, and especially the peculiar turn of v. 3, “Call unto me,” etc., is occasioned by the prayer of the prophet, 32:16–25. To this prayer the prophet had received an answer, 32:36–44; but he is here admonished to approach the Lord more

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frequently with such a request. The God who has the power to execute as well as make decrees is quite prepared to give him an insight into His great thoughts regarding the future; and of this a proof is at once given. Thus, vv. 1–3 must be viewed as the connecting link between Jeremiah 32, 33.

Yet these remarks are not sufficient to silence the objections set forth against the genuineness of vv. 2, 3; for the specializing title of our chapter, in v. 1, is opposed to the close connection which Nägelsbach maintains between Jeremiah 32, 33. The fact that, in Jeremiah 32, Jeremiah addresses the Lord in prayer for further revelation regarding the purchase of the field, as commanded, and that he receives the information he desired regarding it, gives no occasion for warning to the prophet, to betake himself more frequently to God for disclosures regarding His purposes of salvation. And Nägelsbach has quite evaded the objection that Jeremiah does not obey the injunction. Moreover, the succeeding revelation made in vv. 4–26 is not of the nature of a “proof,” for it does not contain a single great leading feature in God’s purposes as regards the future.—Hengstenberg also points out the difficulty, “that the Scripture everywhere refuses to recognise a dead knowledge as true knowledge, and that the hope of restoration has an obstacle in the natural man, who strives to obscure and to extinguish it; that, consequently, the promise of restoration is always new, and the word of God always great and grand;” but what he adduces for the solution of the difficulty contained in the command, “Call on me, and I will show thee great and unknown things,” is insufficient for his purpose. The objection which expositors have taken to these verses has arisen from an improper application of them; the words **קרא אלי** have been understood as referring to the request that God should give some revelation regarding the future, or His purposes of deliverance, and **ענה** as referring to the communication of His purposes for increasing our knowledge of them. But “to call on God” rather signifies to pray to

God, i.e., to beseech Him for protection, or help, or deliverance in time of need, cf. Ps. 3:5; 28:1; 30:9; 55:17, etc.; and to “answer” is the reply of God made when He actually vouchsafes the aid sought for; cf. e.g., Ps. 55:17, “I call on God, and Jahveh answers me (saves me);” Ps. 4:2, 4; 18:7; 27:7, etc. Consequently, also, “to make known” (**הגיד**) is no mere communication of knowledge regarding great and unknown things, no mere letting them be known, but a making known by deeds. The words **עשה** and **יוצר אותה**, ascribed to the Lord, suggest and require that the words should be thus understood. With the incorrect reference of these words to knowing and making known there is connected the further error, that the command, “Call unto me,” is directed to the person of the prophet, and gives an admonition for his behaviour towards God, for which the text affords no foundation whatever; for it does not run: “Thus saith Jahveh to me” (**אלי**), and the insertion of this **אלי** is unwarranted, and inconsistent with the use of **כי** which introduces the announcement.

Hitzig, Graf, and others have passed by this **כי** without remark; and what Nägelsbach says about it is connected with his view, already refuted, as to the essential unity of Jeremiah 32, 33. Lastly, Ewald has enclosed v. 3 within parentheses, and considers that the introductory formula of v. 2 is resumed in v. 4: “Yea, thus saith Jahveh.” This is a conclusion hastily formed by one who is in difficulty, for v. 3 has not the nature of a parenthesis. If we allow the arbitrary addition “to me” after the words, “Thus saith the Lord,” v. 2, and if we take the words in their simplest sense,—the invocation of the Lord as a call to God for help in need,—then vv. 2, 3 do not contain a mere prelude to the revelation which follows, but an exhortation to the people to betake themselves to the Lord their God in their calamity, when He will make known to them things unattainable by human discernment; for (**כי**, v. 4) He announces, in reference to the ruined houses of the city, that He will repair their injuries.

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**Jeremiah 33:4–13.** *Repair of the injuries and renewal of the prosperity of Jerusalem and Judah.—V. 4. “For thus saith Jahveh, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are broken down because of the besiegers’ mounds and because of the sword, V. 5. While they come to fight with the Chaldeans, and to fill them with the corpses of men, whom I have slain in my wrath and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hidden my face from this city: V. 6. Behold, I will apply a bandage to it and a remedy, and will heal them, and will reveal to them abundance of peace and truth. V. 7. And I will turn again the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel, and will build them up as at the first. V. 8. And I will purify them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against me, and will pardon all their iniquities, by which they have sinned and have transgressed against me. V. 9. And it (the city) shall become to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honour among all the people of the earth that shall hear all the good which I do them, and shall tremble and quake because of all the good and because of all the prosperity that I show to it. V. 10. Thus saith Jahveh: Again shall there be heard in this place,—of which ye say, ‘It is desolate, without man and without beast,’—in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, which are laid waste, without men, and without inhabitants, and without beasts, V. 11. The voice of gladness and the voice of joy, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say, ‘Praise Jahveh of hosts, for Jahveh is good, for His mercy is for ever,’ who bring thank-offerings into the house of Jahveh. For I will turn again the captivity of the land, as in the beginning, saith Jahveh. V. 12. Thus saith Jahveh of hosts: In this place, which is laid waste, without man and beast, and in all its cities, there will yet be pasture-ground for shepherds making their flocks lie down in. V. 13. In the cities of the hill-country, in the cities of the plain, and in the cities of the south, in the land of Benjamin, and in the environs of Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the flock shall yet pass under the hand of one who counts them, saith Jahveh.”*

With v. 4 begins the statement concerning the great and incomprehensible things which the Lord will make known to His people; it is introduced by כִּי, which marks the ground or reason,—so far as the mere statement of these things gives reason for the promise of them. The word of the Lord does not follow till v. 6 and onwards. In vv. 4 and 5 are mentioned those whom the word concerns,—the houses of Jerusalem (v. 4), and the people that defend the city (v. 5). Corresponding to this order, there comes first the promise to the city (v. 6), and then to the people. Along with the houses of the city are specially named also the houses of the kings of Judah; not, perhaps, as Hitzig thinks, because these, being built of stone, afforded a more suitable material for the declared object,—for that these alone were built of stone is an unfounded supposition,—but in order to show that no house or palace is spared to defend the city. “Which are broken down” refers to the houses, not only of the kings, but also of the city. They are broken, pulled down, according to Isa. 22:10, in order to fortify the walls of the city against the attacks of the enemy, partly to strengthen them, partly to repair the damage caused by the battering-rams directed against them. This gives the following meaning to the expression אֶל-הַסְּלִלוֹת וְאֶל-הַחֲרָב: in order to work against the mounds, i.e., the earthworks erected by the enemy, and against the sword. The sword is named as being the chief weapon, instead of all the instruments of war which the enemy employs for reducing the city; cf. Ezek. 26:9. It is against the laws of grammar to understand נִתְּשִׁים as referring to the destruction of the enemy by the siege material; for, on such a supposition, אֶל- would require to designate the efficient cause, i.e., to stand for מִפְּנֵי (cf. 4:26), but neither אֶל- nor עַל can mean this.—The first half of v. 5 is difficult, especially בְּאִים, which the LXX have omitted, and which Movers and Hitzig would expunge, with the absurd remark, that it has come here from 31:38; this is an easy and frivolous method of setting aside difficulties. All other

ancient translations have read בָּאִים, and have attempted to point out how its genuineness is ascertained on critical grounds. To connect בָּאִים closely with what precedes is impossible; and to understand it as referring to the houses, *quae dirutae adhibentur ad dimicandum cum Chaldaeis* (C. B. Michaelis), is incompatible with the idea contained in בּוֹא. Still more inadmissible is the view of L. de Dieu, Venema, Schnurrer, Dahler, and Rosenmüller: *venientibus ad oppugnandum cum Chaldaeis*; according to this view, אֶת־כְּשָׁדִים must be the nominative or subject to בָּאִים. לְהִלָּחֵם אֶת־הַכְּשָׁדִים בָּאִים can only signify, “to contend with the Chaldeans” (against them); cf. 32:5. According to this view, only the Jews can be the subject of בָּאִים. “They come to make war with the Chaldeans, and to fill them (the houses) with the dead bodies of men, whom I (the Lord) slay in my wrath.” The subject is not named, since it is evident from the whole scope of the sentence what is meant. We take the verse as a predication regarding the issues of the conflict,—but without a copula; or, as a statement added parenthetically, so that the participle may be rendered, “while they come,” or, “get ready, to fight.” בּוֹא, used of the approach of an enemy (cf. Dan. 1:1), is here employed with regard to the advance of the Jews to battle against the besiegers of the city. The second infinitival clause, “to fill them,” represents the issue of the struggle as contemplated by the Jews, in order to express most strongly its utter fruitlessness; while the relative clauses, “whom I have slain,” etc., bring out the reasons for the evil consequences. Substantially, the statement in v. 5 is parallel to that in v. 4, so that we might supply the preposition עַל (עַל): “and concerning those who come to fight,” etc. Through the attachment of this second predication to the first by means of the participle, the expression has become obscured. In the last clause, אֶשֶׁר is to be connected with עַל־רַעְתֶּם.

In view of the destruction of Jerusalem now beginning, the Lord promises, v. 6, “I will apply to it (the city) a bandage (see 30:17) and a remedy,” i.e., a bandage which brings healing, “and heal them” (the inhabitants); for, although the suffix in רַפְּאוֹתֵיהֶם might be referred to the houses, yet the following clause shows that it points to the inhabitants. Hitzig takes גְּלִיתִי in the meaning of גָּלַל, “I roll to them like a stream,” and appeals to Am. 5:24, Isa. 48:18; 66:12, where the fulness of prosperity is compared to a stream, and the waves of the sea; but this use of גָּלַל is as uncertain here as in 11:20. We keep, then, to the well-established sense of revealing, making known (cf. Ps. 98:2, where it is parallel with הוֹדִיעַ), without any reference to the figure of sealed treasure-chambers (Deut. 28:12), but with the accessory notion of the unfolding of the prosperity before all nations (v. 9), as in Ps. 98:2. עֲתָרַת is here to be taken as a noun, “fulness, wealth,” from עָתַר, an Aramaizing form for עָשַׁר, to be rich (Ezek. 35:13). שְׁלוֹם וְאֱמֶת does not mean “prosperity and stability,” but “peace and truth;” but this is not to be toned down to “true peace,” i.e., real, enduring happiness (Nägelsbach). אֱמֶת is the truth of God, i.e., His faithfulness in His promises and covenants, as in Ps. 85:11, 12, where mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, are specified as the gracious benefits with which the Lord blesses His people.

**Jeremiah 33:7.** The attainment of this prosperity consists in the change of the wretchedness and misery of Judah and Israel (the whole covenant people) into permanent happiness, and their being built up,—i.e., the firm establishment of their civil prosperity through the secure possession and enjoyment of the good things of the land,—as in the beginning, i.e., the time previous to the rending of the state through the falling away of the people into idolatry; cf. Isa. 1:26, 1 Kings 13:6. For הָשִׁיב אֶת שְׁבוֹת see 32:44.

**Jeremiah 33:8.** This prosperity gains stability and permanence through the people's being cleansed from their sins by their being forgiven, which, according to 31:34, will form the basis of the new covenant. Regarding the anomalous form לְכוֹל for לְכָל, Hitzig supposes that in the *scriptio continua* a transcriber wished to keep the two datives מִהַיְתוּנוֹסֶעַל לְךָ separate by inserting the ו. But the form כּוֹלִים, 31:34, is equally irregular, except that there the insertion of the ו may be explained in this, or in some similar way.

**Jeremiah 33:9.** In consequence of the renovation of Israel externally and internally, Jerusalem will become to the Lord a name of delight, i.e., a name which affords joy, delight. שֵׁם here signifies, not fame, but a name. But the name, as always in Scripture, is the expression of the essential nature; the meaning therefore is, "she will develop into a city over which men will rejoice, whenever her name is mentioned." On the following words, "for praise and for glory," i.e., for a subject of praise, etc., cf. 13:11. לְכָל-גּוֹיִם, "to all," or "among all nations." How far Jerusalem becomes such is shown by the succeeding clauses: "who shall hear ... and tremble and quake because of the good," i.e., not from fear "because they are seized with terror through these proofs of the wonderful power of God in contrast with the helplessness of their idols, and through the feeling of their miserable and destitute condition as contrasted with the happiness and prosperity of the people of Israel" (Graf). Against this usual view of the words, it has already been remarked in the Berleburger Bible, that it does not agree with what precedes, viz., with the statement that Jerusalem shall become a name of joy to all nations. Moreover, רָגַז and פָּחַד, in the sense of fear and terror, are construed with מִן or מִכִּי; here, they signify to shake and tremble for joy, like פָּחַד in Isa. 60:5, cf. Hos. 3:5, i.e., as it is expressed in the Berleburger Bible, "not with a slavish fear, but with the filial fear of penitents, which will also draw and drive them to the

reconciled God in Christ, with holy fear and trembling." Calvin had previously recognised this Messianic idea, and fitly elucidated the words thus: *haec duo inter se conjuncta, nempe pavor et tremor, qui nos humiliet coram Deo, et fiducia quae nos erigat, ut audeamus familiariter ad ipsum accedere.* אֶתְהֵם may be for אֵתְהֵם, cf.

1:16; but probably עֲשֵׂה is construed with a double accusative, as in Isa. 42:16.

The prosperity which the Lord designs to procure for His people, is, vv. 10–13, further described in two strophes (vv. 10–11 and 12–13); in vv. 10, 11, the joyous life of men. In the land now laid waste, gladness and joy shall once more prevail, and God will be praised for this. The description, "it is desolate," etc., does not imply the burning of Jerusalem, 52:12ff., but only the desolation which began about the end of the siege. "In this place" means "in this land;" this is apparent from the more detailed statement, "in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem." "The voice of gladness," etc., forms the subject of the verb יִשְׁמַע. On the expression see 7:34; 16:9; 25:10. There is here added: "the voice of those who say, 'Praise the Lord,'" etc.—the usual liturgic formula in thanksgiving to God; cf. 2 Chron. 5:13; 7:3, Ezra 3:11, Ps. 106:1. תּוֹדָה, praise and thanks in word and deed; see 17:26. On אָשִׁיב אֶת-שְׁבוֹת see 32:44. The rendering, "I shall bring back the captives of the land" (here as in v. 7), is both grammatically indefensible, and further, unsuitable: (a) inappropriate, on account of כְּבָרָאשְׁנָה, for no previous restoration of captives had taken place; the leading of the people out of Egypt is never represented as a bringing back from captivity. And (b) it is grammatically untenable, because restoration to Canaan is expressed either by הֵבִיא אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, after Deut. 30:5; or by הָשִׁיב, with the mention of the place (אֶל-הָאָרֶץ); cf. Jeremiah 16:15; 24:6; 32:37, etc.

**Jeremiah 33:12, 13.** In the land which is now laid waste, and emptied of men and beasts, shepherds, with their flocks, shall again move about and lie down. "This place," is specified by



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the mention of the several parts of the land, as in 32:44; 17:26. על-ידי מונה, at the hands, i.e., under the guidance, of him who counts them, viz., the shepherd, who counted the sheep when he took them out to the pasture as well as when he brought them back into the fold; cf. Virgil, *Ecl.* iii. 34.

**Jeremiah 33:14–26.** *The re-establishment of the Davidic monarchy and of the Levitical priesthood.*— V. 14. “Behold, days are coming, saith Jahveh, when I will perform the good word which I have spoken to the house of Israel, and concerning the house of Judah. V. 15. In those days and at that time will I cause to sprout unto David a sprout of righteousness, and he shall do judgment and righteousness in the land. V. 16. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is how she shall be called, ‘Jahveh our righteousness.’ V. 17. For thus saith Jahveh: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. V. 18. Nor shall the Levitical priests want a man before me to offer a burnt-offering, to burn a meat-offering, or to perform sacrifice every day.

V. 19. “And the word of Jahveh came unto Jeremiah, saying: V. 20. Thus saith Jahveh, If ye shall be able to break my covenant (with) the day and my covenant (with) the night, so that there shall not be day and night in their proper time, V. 21. Then also shall my covenant with David my servant be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign upon his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, my ministers. V. 22. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites who serve me. V. 23. “And the word of Jahveh came to Jeremiah, saying: V. 24. Hast thou not seen what this people have spoken, saying, ‘The two families which the Lord hath chosen, these He hath rejected?’ and my people they have despised, so that they are no longer a nation before them. V. 25. Thus saith Jahveh: If my covenant with day and night doth not exist, if I have not appointed the laws of heaven and earth, V. 26. Then also will I reject the seed of Jacob and David my servant, so as not to take any of his seed as rulers

*over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will turn their captivity, and take pity on them.”*

**Jeremiah 33:14–18.** Vv. 14–18 contain the promise of the restoration of the monarchy and the priesthood. Vv. 19–26 further present two special messages from God, in the form of supplements, which guarantee the eternal continuance of these institutions. The promise in vv. 14–16 has already been given in substance in Jeremiah 23:5, 6, and in our verses it is only formally extended, and thereby made more prominent. In v. 14 it is designated as the establishment, i.e., the realization, of the good word which the Lord has spoken concerning Israel and Judah. “The good word” is, according to Deut. 28:1–14, the blessing which the Lord has promised to His people if they obey His commands; cf. 1 Kings 8:56. Here also must “the good word” be taken in the same general meaning; for our verse forms the transition from the promise of the restoration and blessing of Israel in the future (vv. 6–13) to the special promise of the renewal and completion of the Davidic monarchy (v. 15ff.). In 29:10, on the contrary, “the good word” is specially referred, by the following infinitival clause, to the deliverance of the people from Babylon. But it is unlikely that “the good word” refers to the “sprout” of David, which is expressly promised in 23:5ff., and repeated here, v. 15f.; for here a like promise to the Levites follows, while there is none in Jeremiah 23, and it is here so closely linked with the promise regarding David, that it must be viewed as a portion of the “good word.” In the change from אָל to עַל in v. 14, we must not, with Hengstenberg, seek a real difference; for in Jeremiah these prepositions often interchange without any difference of meaning, as in 11:2; 18:11; 23:35, etc. The blessing promised to the people in the “good word” culminates in the promise, v. 15f., that the Lord will cause a righteous sprout to spring up for David. On the meaning of this promise, see the remarks on 23:5, 6. The difference made in the repetition of that promise is really unimportant. אָצְמִיָּה instead of הִקְמֵתִי does not change the sense. הִצְמִיָּה, to cause to sprout of

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grow, corresponds to the figure of the *צֶמַח*, under which the Messiah is represented in both passages. *צֶמַח צְדִיקָה* is only a more sonorous expression for *צֶמַח צְדִיק*. The words "He shall rule as king and deal wisely," which in 23:5 bring into prominence the contrast between the kingdom of the Messiah and that of the godless shepherd of the people, were unnecessary for the connection of our passage. Besides, in 23:6 Israel is named together with Judah, instead of which, we have here, in v. 16, Jerusalem; accordingly, the name "*Jahveh Tsidkenu*" is referred to Jerusalem, while in 23:6 it is predicated of the sprout of David. The mention of Jerusalem instead of Israel is connected with the general scope of our prophecy, viz., to comfort the covenant people over the destruction of Jerusalem (v. 4f.). But that, through the mention simply of Judah and its capital, the ten tribes are not to be excluded from participation in the coming prosperity, may be seen even from v. 14, where "the good word" is referred to Israel and Judah, and still more plainly from vv. 24, 26, where this promise is made sure to the whole seed of Israel. The transference of the name *Jahveh Tsidkenu* from the sprout of David to the city of Jerusalem is connected with the fact, that the name only expresses what the Messiah will bring to the people (see 23:6); the righteousness which He works in and on Jerusalem may, without changing the substance of the thought, be attributed to Jerusalem itself, inasmuch as Jerusalem reflects the righteousness which is bestowed on her by the Messiah.

This promise is, v. 17, further confirmed by the renewal of that which the Lord had given King David, through Nathan the prophet, 2 Sam. 7:12–16, and that, too, in the form in which David himself had expressed it in his address to Solomon, shortly before his death, 1 Kings 2:4, and in which Solomon had repeated it, 1 Kings 8:25 and 9:5. The formula *לֹא יִכָּרֵת וְגו'*, "there never will be cut off from David one sitting," etc., has the meaning, David will never want a

descendant to occupy his throne; or, the posterity of David will possess the kingdom for ever. A temporary loss of the throne is not thereby excluded, but only such a permanent loss as would be caused by the family of David becoming extinct, or by the kingdom in Israel either passing over to some other family, or in some way or other coming to an end; see on 1 Kings 2:4.—The very same promise is given to the Levitical priests, i.e., the priests of the tribe or family of Levi (*כֹּהֲנֵי הַלְוִיִּים*) as in Deut. 17:9, 18; 18:1, etc.). They shall never want one to bring and prepare an offering before the Lord. Burnt-offering, meat-offering, and sin-offering are the three species of sacrifice which were to be brought, according to the law, as in 17:26. By means of the apposition "the Levites," the priests are designated as the legitimate priesthood, established as such in virtue of God's choice of the tribe of Levi, in contrast with priests such as Jeroboam appointed, out of the common people, for the worship set up by him. Not only shall Israel have priests, but priests out of the tribe of Levi, which was chosen by God for the sacerdotal office, as the medium of communicating His gracious gifts. The designation of the priests as "the Levites" corresponds, accordingly, to the kings of the family of David. Such a view explains this addition to our passage, to which critics such as Hitzig have taken objection. The Davidic kingdom and the Levitical priesthood were the two pillars and bases of the Old Testament theocracy, on which its existence and continuance depended. The priesthood formed the medium of approach for the people into divine favour. The kingdom assured them of the divine guidance. Both of these pillars were broken with the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple; the theocracy the appeared to have ceased to exist. At this time, when the kingdom, with its ordinances of justice and of grace, bestowed by God, was being dissolved, the Lord, in order to keep His people from despair, declares that these two institutions, in accordance with His promise, shall not fall to the ground, but shall stand for ever. By this, God's own people received a pledge for the re-

establishment and renovation of the kingdom of God. Such is the object of this promise.—As to the kind and mode of reinstatement of both of these ordinances, which were abolished when the state came to ruin, the prophecy now before us gives no explanation; but in the emphatic confirmation of the prophecy which follows, we find brief indications which clearly show that the restoration spoken of will not be a reinstatement of the old form which is now perishing, but a renovation of it, in its essential features, to a permanent existence.

The confirmations of these promises, which follow them in vv. 19–26, are each introduced by separate headings, perhaps not merely to render them more prominent, but because the Lord revealed them separately to the prophet; but it by no means follows from this that they are later additions, without any connection. V. 20f. “If ye shall break my covenant with the day, ... then also will my covenant with David ... be broken.” This *if* betokens the impossible; man cannot alter the arrangement in nature for the regular alternation of day and night. הַיּוֹם and הַלַּיְלָה are in apposition to בְּרִיתִי, “my covenant the day—the night,” for “my covenant with regard to the day and the night, which is this, that day and night shall return at their appointed times.” The ׀ before לְבִלְתִּי is explanatory. יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה are adverbs, “day and night,” for “the regular alternation of day and night.” These divine arrangements in nature are called a *covenant*; because God, after the flood, gave a pledge that they should uninterruptedly continue, in a covenant made with the human race; cf. Gen. 9:9 with 8:22. As this covenant of nature cannot be broken by men, so also the covenant of grace of the Lord with David and the Levites cannot be broken, i.e., annulled. The covenant with David consisted in the promise that his kingdom should endure for ever (see v. 17); that with the Levites, in the eternal possession of the right to the priesthood. The institution of the priesthood is certainly not represented in the law as a covenant; it consisted merely in the choice of Aaron and his

sons as priests by God, Ex. 28:1. But, inasmuch as they were thereby brought into a peculiar relation to the Lord, and thus had vouchsafed to them not merely privileges and promises, but also had laid on them duties, the fulfilment of which was a condition of receiving the privileges, this relation might be called a covenant; and indeed, in Num. 25:11ff., the promise given to Phinehas, that he should have the priesthood as an eternal possession, is called a covenant of peace and an eternal covenant of priesthood. This promise concerned the whole priesthood in the person of Phinehas, and the Levites also, inasmuch as the Levites were given to the priests; hence there is mention made in Mal. 2:4, 8, of a covenant with Levi. In this prophecy, too, mention is made of the priests alone. The general idea contained in the words “the Levites,” placed first, is more clearly defined by the apposition “the priests,” and restricted to the priests of the tribe of Levi.

**Jeremiah 33:22.** In order to make still more impressive the pledge given, that the covenant with David and the Levitical priesthood can never be broken, the Lord adds the promise of a numerous increase of the seed of David and the Levites. כַּאֲשֶׁר as correlative to בֵּן stands for אֲשֶׁר; for in the accusative lies the general reference to place, time, kind, and manner; cf. Ew. § 360a, 333a. The comparison with the innumerable host of stars and the immeasurable quantity of the sand reminds us of the patriarchal promises, Gen. 15:5; 22:17. In this way, the promises that apply to all Israel are specially referred to the family of David and the Levites (“the Levites,” v. 22, is abbreviated from “the Levites, the priests,” v. 21). This transference, however, is not a mere hyperbole which misses the mark; for, as Jahn observes, an immense increase of the royal and priestly families would only have been a burden on the people (Graf). The import of the words of the verse is simply that the Lord purposes to fulfil the promise of His blessing, made to the patriarchs in favour of their whole posterity, in the shape of a numerous increase; but this promise will

now be specially applied to the posterity of David and to the priests, so that there shall never be wanting descendants of David to occupy the throne, nor Levites to perform the service of the Lord. The question is not about a “change of the whole of Israel into the family of David and the tribe of Levi” (Hengstenberg); and if the increase of the family of David and the Levites correspond in multitude with the number of all the people of Israel, this increase cannot be a burden on the people. But the question, whether this promise is to be understood literally, of the increase of the ordinary descendants of David and the Levites, or spiritually, of their spiritual posterity, cannot be decided, as Hengstenberg and Nägelsbach think, by referring to the words of the Lord in Ex. 19:6, that all Israel shall be a kingdom of priests, and to the prophetic passages, Isa. 66:6; 66:23ff., according to which the whole people shall be priests to God, while Levites also shall be taken from among the heathen. For this prophecy does not treat of the final glory of the people of God, but only of the innumerable increase of those who shall attain membership in the family of David and the Levitical priests. The question that has been raised is rather to be decided in accordance with the general promises regarding the increase of Israel; and in conformity with these, we answer that it will not result from the countless increase of the descendants of Jacob according to the flesh, but from the incorporation, among the people of God, of the heathen who return to the God of Israel. As the God-fearing among the heathen will be raised, for their piety, to be the children of Abraham, and according to the promise, Isa. 66:20ff., even Levitical priests taken from among them, so shall the increase placed in prospect before the descendants of David and Levi be realized by the reception of the heathen into the royal and sacerdotal privileges of the people of God under the new covenant. This view of our verse is confirmed by the additional proof given of the promised restoration of Israel, vv. 23–26; for here there is assurance given to the seed of Jacob and David, and therefore to all Israel, that they shall be

kept as the people of God. The occasion of this renewed confirmation was the allegation by the people, that the Lord had rejected the two families, i.e., Israel and Judah (cf. 31:27, 31; 32:20), called, Isa. 8:14, the two houses of Israel. With such words they despised the people of the Lord, as being no longer a people before them, i.e., in their eyes, in their opinion. That those who spoke thus were Jews, who, on the fall of the kingdom of Judah, despaired of the continuance of God’s election of Israel, is so very evident, that Hengstenberg may well find it difficult to understand how several modern commentators could think of heathens,—Egyptians (Schnurrer), Chaldeans (Jahn), Samaritans (Movers), or neighbours of the Jews and of Ezekiel on the Chebar (Hitzig). The verdict pronounced on what these people said, “they despise, or contemn, my people,” at once relieves us from any need for making such assumptions, as soon as we assign the full and proper force to the expression “my people” = the people of Jahveh. Just as in this passage, so too in 29:32, “this people” is interchanged with “my people” as a designation of the Jews. Moreover, as Graf correctly says, the expression “this people” nowhere occurs in the prophets of the exile as applied to the heathen; on the contrary, it is very frequently employed by Jeremiah to designate the people of Judah in their estrangement from the Lord: 4:10; 5:14, 23; 6:19; 7:33; 8:5; 9:14; 13:10; 14:10; 15:1, 20, and often elsewhere. “My people,” on the other hand, marks Judah and Israel as the people of God. In contrast with such contempt of the people of God, the Lord announces, “If my covenant with day and night does not stand, if I have not appointed the laws of heaven and earth, then neither shall I cast away the seed of Jacob.” The אֱלֹהִים is repeated a second time before the verb. Others take the two antecedent clauses as one: “If I have not made my covenant with day and night, the laws of heaven and earth.” This construction also is possible; the sense remains unchanged. בְּרִיתִי יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה is imitated from v. 20. “The laws of heaven and earth” are the whole order of nature; cf. 31:35.

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The establishment, institution of the order of nature, is a work of divine omnipotence. This omnipotence has founded the covenant of grace with Israel, and pledged its continuance, despite the present destruction of the kingdom of Judah and the temporary rejection of the guilty people. But this covenant of grace includes not merely the choosing of David, but also the choosing of the seed of Jacob, the people of Israel, on the ground of which David was chosen to be the ruler over Israel. Israel will therefore continue to exist, and that, too, as a nation which will have rulers out of the seed of David, the servant of the Lord. "The mention of the three patriarchs recalls to mind the whole series of the promises made to them" (Hengstenberg). The plural מְשָׁלִים does not, certainly, refer directly to the promise made regarding the sprout of David, the Messiah, but at the same time does not stand in contradiction with it; for the revival and continued existence of the Davidic rule in Israel culminates in the Messiah. On כִּי אָשׁוּב וגו' cf. 31:23; 30:3, 18, and the explanations on 32:44. The *Qeri* אָשׁוּב rests on v. 11, but is unnecessary; for אָשׁוּב makes good enough sense, and corresponds better to וְרָחֲמָתִים, in so far as it exactly follows the fundamental passage, Deut. 30:3, where רָחַם is joined with אֶת־שְׁבוּת.

### III. The Labour and Suffering of the Prophet Before and After the Conquest and Destruction of Jerusalem—Ch. 34–45

#### Jeremiah 34

**Jeremiah 34–45.** Under this title may be placed the whole of the contents of these twelve chapters, which fall into three divisions. For Jeremiah 34–36 contain partly utterances of Jeremiah in the early part of the siege of Jerusalem under Zedekiah, partly matters of fact in Jehoiakim's time. Next, mention is made, in Jeremiah 37–39, of the toils and sufferings of the prophet during that siege, until the fall of the city; then, in Jeremiah 40–44, is depicted his active labour among the people who had been

left behind in the land by the Chaldeans, and who afterwards fled to Egypt; finally, as an appendix to the account of his labours among the people, we find, in Jeremiah 45, the words of comfort addressed to Baruch by Jeremiah. The second of these divisions is marked by a historical introduction, Jeremiah 37:1, 2, and the third by a somewhat lengthened prophetic heading. Only Jeremiah 34–36, which we regard as the first division, seems to be without an external bond of unity. Graf, Ewald, Nägelsbach, and others have consequently marked them as appendixes; but in this way neither their position nor their connection is at all accounted for. The relation of Jeremiah 34 to the following is analogous to that of Jeremiah 21. Just as the collection of special announcements regarding judgment and deliverance, Jeremiah 21, was introduced by the utterances of the prophet in the beginning of the last siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; so too, in our third division, the collected evidences of the labours of Jeremiah before and after the destruction of Jerusalem, are introduced, Jeremiah 34, by the utterances which predict quite definitely what shall be the issue of the siege of the city and the fate of the king and people. The first of these utterances is set in a frame of historical statements regarding the siege (vv. 1, 7); this setting marks it out as an introduction to the notices following. But the second utterance, vv. 8–22, refers to the fact of the manumission of the Hebrew men- and maid-servants during the siege, and the cancelling of that measure afterwards. The following chs., 35, 36, furnish two proofs of the activity of the prophet under Jehoiakim, which, on account of their historical nature, could not be introduced till now, since they would not admit of being inserted in the collection of the particular prophecies of coming judgment, Jeremiah 21–29.

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### A. Prophecies Delivered Under Zedekiah, and Events of Jehoiakim's Time—Ch. 34–36

#### Concerning Zedekiah and the Emancipation of the Men- and Maid-Servants

**Jeremiah 34.** This chapter contains two prophecies of the time of the siege of Jerusalem under Zedekiah, of which the first, vv. 1–7, announces to the king the fruitlessness of resistance to the power of the Chaldeans; the second, vv. 8–22, threatens the princes and people of Judah with severe judgments for annulling the manumission of the Hebrew men- and maid-servants. Both of these utterances belong to the first period of the siege, probably the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah.

**Jeremiah 34:1–7.** *The message to Zedekiah* is regarded by Hitzig, Ewald, Graf, Nägelsbach, etc. as a supplement to Jeremiah 32:1ff., and as giving, in its complete form, the prophecy to which Jeremiah 32:3ff. was referred, as the reason of the confinement of Jeremiah in the court of the prison. Certainly it is so far true that Jeremiah, in vv. 2–5, expresses himself more fully regarding the fate of King Zedekiah at the fall of Jerusalem into the hands of the Chaldeans than in Jeremiah 32:3–5; 21:3ff., and 37:17; but we are not warranted in drawing the inference that this message forms a historical appendix or supplement to Jeremiah 32:3ff., and was the occasion or reason of Jeremiah's imprisonment. See, on the contrary, the remarks on 32:3ff. It is not given here as an appendix to explain the reason of the prophet's imprisonment, but as a prophecy from which we may see how King Zedekiah was forewarned, from the very beginning of the siege, of what its issue would be, that he might frame his conduct accordingly. Nor does it belong to the period when Nebuchadnezzar, after beating off the Egyptians who had come to the relief of the beleaguered city, had returned to the siege of Jerusalem, but to the earliest period of the siege, when Zedekiah might still cherish the hope of defeating and driving off the Chaldeans through the help of the Egyptians.—According to v. 1, the word of the Lord came to

Jeremiah when “Nebuchadnezzar and,” i.e., with, “all his host, and all the kingdoms of the land of the dominion of his hand, and all the nations, were fighting against Jerusalem and all her towns.” The words are multiplied to represent the strength of the Chaldean army, so as to deepen the impression of overpowering might, against which resistance is vain. The army consists of men drawn from all the kingdoms of the territory he rules, and of all nations. אֲרָץ מְמִשְׁלָתוֹ יְדוּ מְמִשְׁלָתוֹ, 51:28, the territory over which his dominion, which includes many kingdoms, extends. The LXX have omitted “all the nations” as superfluous. See a like conglomeration of words in a similar description, Ezek. 26:7. “All her towns” are the towns of Judah which belong to Jerusalem; see 19:15. According to v. 7, the strong towns not yet taken are meant, especially those strongly fortified, *Lachish* and *Azekah* in the plain (Josh. 15:39, 35), the former of which is shown still under the name *Um Lakhis*, while the latter is to be sought for in the vicinity of *Socho*; see on Josh. 10:3, 10, and 2 Chron. 11:9.—Jeremiah is to say to the king:

**Jeremiah 34:2b.** *“Thus saith Jahveh: Behold, I will deliver this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, that he may burn it with fire. V. 3. And thou shalt not escape from his hand, but shalt certainly be seized and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall see the eyes of the king of Babylon, and his mouth shall speak with thy mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon. V. 4. But hear the word of Jahveh, O Zedekiah, king of Judah. Thus saith Jahveh concerning thee: Thou shalt not die by the sword. V. 5. In peace shalt thou die; and as with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings who were before thee, so shall they make a burning for thee, and they shall wail for thee, [crying,] ‘Alas, lord!’ for I have spoken the word, saith Jahveh.”*—On vv. 2, 3, cf. 32:3–5. “But hear,” v. 4, introduces an exception to what has been said before; but the meaning of vv. 4, 5 is disputed. They are usually understood in this say: Zedekiah shall be carried into exile to Babylon, but shall not be killed with the sword, or executed, but shall die a peaceful death, and

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be buried with royal honours. But C. B. Michaelis, Venema, Hitzig, and Graf take the words as an exception that will occur, should Zedekiah follow the advice given him to deliver himself up to the king of Babylon, instead of continuing the struggle. Then what is denounced in v. 3 will not happen; Zedekiah shall not be carried away to Babylon, but shall die as king in Jerusalem. This view rests on the hypothesis that the divine message has for its object to induce the king to submit and give up himself (cf. 38:17f.). But this supposition has no foundation; and what must be inserted, as the condition laid before Zedekiah, "if thou dost willingly submit to the king of Babylon," is quite arbitrary, and incompatible with the spirit of the word, "But hear the word of Jahveh," for in this case v. 4 at least would require to run, "Obey the word of Jahveh" (שָׁמַע בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה), as 38:20. To take the words שָׁמַע דְּבַר in the sense, "Give ear to the word, obey the word of Jahveh," is not merely inadmissible grammatically, but also against the context; for the word of Jahveh which Zedekiah is to hear, gives no directions as to how he is to act, but is simply an intimation as to what the end of his life shall be: to change or avert this does not stand in his power, so that we cannot here think of obedience or disobedience. The message in vv. 4, 5 states more in detail what that was which lay before Zedekiah: he shall fall into the hands of the king of Babylon, be carried into exile in Babylon, yet shall not die a violent death through the sword, but die peacefully, and be buried with honour,—not, like Jehoiakim, fall in battle, and be left unmourned and unburied (Jeremiah 22:18f.). This intimation accords with the notices given elsewhere as to the end of Zedekiah (Jeremiah 32:5; 39:5–7). Although Zedekiah died a prisoner in Babylon (Jeremiah 52:11), yet his imprisonment would not necessarily be an obstacle in the way of an honourable burial after the fashion of his fathers. When Jehoiachin, after an imprisonment of thirty-seven years, was raised again to royal honours, then also might there be accorded not merely a

tolerably comfortable imprisonment to Zedekiah himself, but to the Jews also, at his death, the permission to bury their king according to their national custom. Nor is anything to be found elsewhere contrary to this view of the words. The supposition that Zedekiah caused the prophet to be imprisoned on account of this message to him, which Nägelsbach has laboured hard to reconcile with the common acceptance of the passage, is wholly devoid of foundation in fact, and does not suit the time into which this message falls; for Jeremiah was not imprisoned till after the time when the Chaldeans were obliged for a season to raise the siege, on the approach of the Egyptians, and that, too, not at the command of the king, but by the watchman at the gate, on pretence that he was a deserter. "Thou shalt die in peace," in contrast with "thou shalt die by the sword," marks a peaceful death on a bed of sickness in contrast with execution, but not (what Graf introduces into the words) in addition, his being deposited in the sepulchre of his fathers. "With the burnings of thy fathers," etc., is to be understood, according to 2 Chron. 16:14; 21:19, of the burning of aromatic spices in honour of the dead; for the burning of corpses was not customary among the Hebrews: see on 2 Chron. 16:14. On "alas, lord!" see 22:18. This promise is strengthened by the addition, "for I have spoken the word," where the emphasis lies on the אָנֹכִי: I the Lord have spoken the word, which therefore shall certainly be fulfilled.—In vv. 6, 7 it is further remarked in conclusion, that Jeremiah addressed these words to the king during the siege of Jerusalem, when all the cities of Judah except Lachish and Azekah were already in the power of the Chaldeans. עָרֵי מְבֻצָּר is not in apposition to יְהוּדָה, but belongs to נְשֻׂאָרוֹ: "they were left among the towns of Judah as strong cities;" i.e., of the strong cities of Judah, they alone had not yet been conquered.

**Jeremiah 34:8–22.** Threatening because of the Re-enslavement of the Liberated Hebrew Men and Maid-servants.—Vv. 8–11 describe the occasion of the word of the Lord, which follows

in vv. 12–22. It came to Jeremiah “after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty to them, that every one should send away his man-servant, or his maid-servant, being a Hebrew or Hebrewess, so that none should impose servitude on any one of them who was a Jew, his brother. V. 10. And all the princes and all the people who entered into the covenant obeyed, each one setting free his man-servant and his maid-servant, and not imposing servitude on them any more: they obeyed and each one set them free. V. 11. But they turned round afterwards, and brought back the servants and the handmaids whom they had set free, and brought them under subjection, for servants and for handmaids.” The covenant which Zedekiah concluded with all the people at Jerusalem, according to what follows, consisted in a solemn vow made before the Lord in the temple, probably confirmed by sacrifices, to set free the male and female slaves of Hebrew descent, in conformity with the law, Ex. 21:1–4, Deut. 15:12. The law required the gratuitous manumission of these after seven years of service. This time, indeed, is not mentioned in our verses, but it is assumed as well known through the law. But, in the general departure of the people from the Lord and His commandments, the observance of this law had probably long been intermitted, so that, in consequence of the solemn engagement to obey it once more, a great number of Hebrew male and female slaves received their freedom, inasmuch as very many had served longer than seven years; however, we need not suppose that all bond men and women were liberated at once. The resolution, v. 9, that every one should liberate his Hebrew man- or maid-servant, and that no one should continue to impose servitude on a Jew, his brother, i.e., compel him any longer to serve as a slave, is conditioned by the law, which is assumed as well known: this also accords with the expression לְבִלְתִּי עֲבָד־בָּם, which is used in a general way of the treatment of Hebrew men- and maid-servants, Lev. 25:39. However, it is also possible that a liberation of all bond men and women took place without regard to the duration of their servitude, partly

for the purpose of averting, by such obedience to the law, the calamity now threatening the city, and partly also to employ the liberated slaves in the defence of the city; for, according to v. 21f., the emancipation took place during the siege of Jerusalem, and after the departure of the Chaldeans the solemn promise was revoked. The expression קָרָא דְרוֹר, “to proclaim liberty,” is taken from Lev. 25:10, but it does not prove that the manumission took place on a sabbath- or jubilee-year. לָהֶם refers *ad sensum* to those who were bondmen and had a right to be set free. The general expression is explained by שְׁלַח הַפְּשִׁים, and this again is more closely defined by לְבִלְתִּי עֲבָד־בָּם (cf. Lev. 25:39). בִּיהוּדִי אִישׁ אֶחָיוּ אִישׁ, (that no one should labour) “though a Jew, who is his brother,” i.e., a fellow-countryman; i.e., that no one should impose servitude on a Jew, as being a compatriot. “To enter into a covenant” is to assume its obligation; cf. 2 Chron. 15:12, Ezek. 16:8. The *Kethib* יִכְבִּישׁוּם receives, in the *Qeri*, the vowels of the Kal, since the Hiphil of this verb does not occur elsewhere, only the Kal, cf. 2 Chron. 28:10; but the alteration is unnecessary,—the Hiphil may intensify the active meaning.

**Jeremiah 34:12–22.** *The threat of punishment.*—V. 12. “Then came the word of Jahveh to Jeremiah from Jahveh, saying: V. 13. Thus saith Jahveh, the God of Israel, ‘I made a covenant with your fathers in the day when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from a house of bondmen, saying, V. 14. At the end of seven years shall ye set free each man his brother, who is a Hebrew that sold himself to thee; and he shall serve thee six years, then shalt thou send him away from thee free: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear. V. 15. But you had turned just now, and had done what is right in mine eyes, because each man proclaimed liberty to his neighbour, ad ye had made a covenant before me in the house on which my name is called. V. 16. But ye turned again and profaned my name, and each one made his man-servant and his handmaid, whom he had sent away free, at their pleasure, to



return, and ye brought them into subjection, to be men- and maid-servants to you. V. 17. Therefore, thus saith Jahveh, Ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty each man to his brother, and each man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith Jahveh, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to famine, and I will deliver you up for maltreatment to all the kingdoms of the earth. V. 18. And I shall make the men who have transgressed my covenant, that have not kept the words of the covenant which they concluded before me, like the calf which they cut in two, and between whose pieces they passed. V. 19. The princes of Judah and the princes of Jerusalem, the courtiers, and the priests, and all the people of the land, who passed through between the pieces of the calf, V. 20. Them will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those who seek their life, so that their corpses shall be for food to the birds of heaven and to the beasts of the earth. V. 21. And Zedekiah, king of Judah, and his princes will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those who seek their life, and into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon, that has departed from against you. V. 22. Behold, I will command, saith Jahveh, and will make them return to this city, and they shall fight against it, and shall take it, and shall burn it with fire; and the cities of Judah will I make a desolation, without an inhabitant."

**Jeremiah 34:13–16.** In vv. 13–16 the Lord sets before the people and their rulers their new offence; in vv. 17–22 He announces to them the punishment for this new deed by which the covenant is broken. In order to place the transgression in its proper light, He mentions, first of all, that, when He led Israel out of Egypt, He concluded with them a covenant to the effect that every one of them should set free his Hebrew servant at the end of seven years; He also mentions that their fathers had transgressed this covenant (vv. 13, 14). The designation of Egypt as a house of bondmen, as in Ex. 13:3, 14; 20:2, Deut. 6:12, etc., possesses a special emphasis, and points to what is mentioned in Deut. 15:15 as the motive for obeying the law referred to in the address.

Because Israel was a servant in Egypt, and the Lord has redeemed him out of this house of bondmen, therefore must they not treat as slaves their brethren who had fallen into poverty, but set them free after six years of service. The expression "at the end (after the lapse) of seven years" is to be understood in the same way as the expression "after eight days." As this just means "when seven days are completed," so also, according to the law, Ex. 21:2, Deut. 15:12, the emancipation was to follow in the seventh year, after six full years of service. "Who sold himself to thee" is an expression copied from Deut. 15:12.—From this sin of their fathers they had now for a little turned away, and, in a solemn covenant, resolved to free the bondmen, as the law decreed (v. 15); but they have immediately profaned the name of the Lord again by revoking this decree, viz., by breaking the covenant made before God. לְנַפְשָׁם, "according to their pleasure," like לְנַפְשָׁהוּ, Deut. 21:14.

**Jeremiah 34:17ff.** The announcement of punishment. Because ye have not hearkened, by proclaiming, every one, liberty to his bondman (this certainly had been done, but was again undone by annulling the decree), therefore I proclaim liberty for you; i.e., you, who have hitherto been my servants (Lev. 25:55), I discharge from this relation,—deliver you up to your fate as regards the sword, etc., that the sword, famine, and pestilence may have power over you. For לְזוּעָה see 15:4.—In v. 18 the construction is disputed. Many, including Luther, take הָעֵגְלָה as the second object to יַתְּתִי: "I will make the men ... the calf," i.e., like the calf. But, though נָתַן is frequently construed with a double accusative with the meaning of making some thing another thing (cf. e.g., v. 22, Gen. 17:5, Ex. 7:1), yet in such a case the predicative-object does not readily take the article. Moreover, נָתַן, in the sense required here, to make like = treat as, is joined with כִּי, as in Isa. 41:2, Ezek. 28:2, 6, Gen. 42:30, 1 Kings 10:27, etc. Finally, Rosenmüller objects: *continuata*

*versu 19 personarum descriptio et repetitio verbi וְנָתַתִּי v. 20 vix permittunt, propositionem hoc versu absolvi.* For these reasons, L. de Dieu, Rosenmüller, Ewald, and Graf have taken הַעֲגָלָה as being in apposition to הַבְּרִית, and the enumeration “princes of Judah,” etc., v. 19, as a continuation or exposition of הַאֲנָשִׁים, v. 18, and וְנָתַתִּי אוֹתָם, v. 20, as a resumption of the same words in v. 18. According to this view, vv. 18–20 would form a series of appositions: “I will give the men ... that have not kept the words of the covenant which they concluded before me ... the princes of Judah who passed between the parts of the calf,—these will I give into the hands of their enemies.” But, apart from the consideration that the enumeration of the covenant-breakers (viz., the princes of Judah, etc.), which is added by way of apposition in v. 19, ought not to come in till after the apposition to הַבְּרִית, which would be a harsh and complicated arrangement of the members of the sentence, this construction seems untenable for the following reasons: (a) “The calf that they cut,” etc., which forms the explanatory apposition to “the covenant,” is separated from it by the intervening clause, “which they made before me.” And (b), even though we might modify this harshness by repeating אֶת־דְּבַר־יְהוָה before הַעֲגָלָה, yet the mode of expression, “they have not performed the words of the calf which they cut in two, and between whose parts they passed,” would be a very stiff and unnatural one for “they have not performed what they vowed or swore in presence of the parts of the calf which they had halved, and when they passed through between these pieces.” With Maurer and Hitzig, therefore, we abide by the older view, which takes הַעֲגָלָה as the second object to וְנָתַתִּי: “I will make the men ... the calf,” or, better, “like the calf which they cut in two,” etc. The article is used with הַעֲגָלָה because this predicate is more exactly determined by relative clauses, and הַעֲגָלָה stands for הַבְּעֵגָלָה, since, as often happens, the ךְ of likeness is dropped to

give more point to the idea. We make v. 19 begin a new sentence, and take the names of this verse as objects absolute, which, by אוֹתָם following וְנָתַתִּי, are subordinated to the verb: “As for the princes of Judah ... them shall I give ...”—From v. 18 we see that, when alliances were entered into, the contracting parties slaughtered an עֲגָלָה, “calf,” i.e., a young bullock, cut it in two halves, and went through between the pieces that were placed opposite one another. See on Gen. 15:10 for details regarding this most ancient custom and its meaning: according to the account of Ephraem Syrus, it is of Chaldean origin. Thus are explained the phrases used to signify the making of a covenant. כָּרַת בְּרִית, *to cut a covenant*, ὄρακα τέμνειν, *faedus ferire*, i.e., *ferienda hostia faedus facere*. We cannot with certainty infer, from the threatening pronounced in this passage, that this rite originally signified nothing more than that he who broke his promise would be treated like the animal that had been slaughtered. For the threatening is merely a conclusion drawn from the sacred act; but this does not exclude a deeper meaning of the rite. **Jeremiah 34:19–22.** Vv. 19–22 give the real explanation of the threatening attached to the ritual of the covenant. Princes, officers of the court, priests and people, who have transgressed the covenant, shall die by the hand of the enemy, and perish ignominiously. On v. 20b, cf. 7:33; 16:4, etc. On סָרְסָרִים see on Gen. 37:36. King Zedekiah also, with his princes, his retinue, shall fall into the hand of his enemies, ay, into the hands of the Chaldeans, who have now withdrawn from Jerusalem (on עָלָה מְעַל see on 21:2). See also 37:5–8.

## Jeremiah 35

### The Example of the Rechabites

**Jeremiah 35.** By the command of God, Jeremiah brings the family of the Rechabites (who had fled for refuge to Jerusalem before the approach of the Chaldeans) into one of the chambers of the temple, and sets before them

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some wine to drink (vv. 1–5). They decline to drink, because the head of their family had forbidden them the use of wine, as well as the possession of houses and the cultivation of the soil, and had commanded them to live in tents (vv. 6–11). Jeremiah is to put this before the people of Judah. The Rechabites faithfully observe the command of their ancestor, while the people of Judah transgress the commands of their God, which are continually presented to them (vv. 12–16). Therefore the threatened calamity shall fall upon Judah; but the house of Rechab, as a reward for their faithfulness to the injunctions of their ancestor, shall continue for ever (vv. 17–19).

According to v. 1, this word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, and, according to v. 11, previous to the arrival of Nebuchadnezzar and his host before Jerusalem; therefore perhaps in the summer of the year 606 B.C., for Jerusalem was taken for the first time by Nebuchadnezzar in the ninth month (December) of that year.

**Jeremiah 35:1–11.** *Jeremiah's dealings with the Rechabites*—V. 2. Jeremiah is to go to the house, i.e., the family, of the Rechabites, speak with them, and bring them into tone of the chambers of the temple, and set before them wine to drink. בֵּית הַרְקָבִים, vv. 2, 3, 18, is exchanged for בְּנֵי בֵּית הַרְקָבִים, v. 5, from which it is apparent that “the house of the Rechabites” does not mean their dwelling-place, but the family, called in 1 Chron. 2:55 בֵּית־רֶקֶב. According to this passage, the Rechabites were a branch of the Kenites, i.e., descendants of the *Kenite*, the father-in-law of Moses (Judg. 1:16), who had gone to Canaan with the Israelites, andwelt among them, partly in the wilderness on the southern frontier of the tribe of Judah (1 Sam. 15:6; 27:10; 30:29), partly at Kadesh in Naphtali (Judg. 4:11, 17; 5:24). Their ancestor, or father of the tribe, was Rechab, the father of Jonadab, with whom Jehu made a friendly alliance (2 Kings 10:15, 23). Jonadab had laid on them the obligation to live in the special manner mentioned below, in order to keep them in the simplicity of nomad life observed

by their fathers, and to preserve them from the corrupting influences connected with a settled life. לְשֻׁבוֹת, “cells of the temple,” were additional buildings in the temple fore-courts, used partly for keeping the stores of the temple (1 Chron. 28:12), partly as dwellings for those who served in it, and as places of meeting for those who came to visit it; see Ezek. 40:17.

**Jeremiah 35:3.** In executing the command of the Lord, Jeremiah took (went for) Jaazaniah, son of Jeremiah, son of Habaziah, and all his brethren, and sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites, and brought them into the temple-chamber of the sons of Hanan. Jaazaniah was probably the then chief of the Rechabites. The chamber of the sons of Hanan was situated next the princes' chamber, which stood over that of Maaseiah the door-keeper. Nothing further is known about Hanan the son of Jigdaliah; here he is called “the man of God,” an honourable title of the prophets,—see e.g., 1 Kings 12:22,—for, according to the usual mode of

construction, אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים does not belong to *Jigdaliah*, but to *Hanan*, cf. 28:1, Zech. 1:1. “The chamber of the princes” is the chamber where the princes, the chiefs of the people, used to assemble in the temple. Its position is more exactly described by מִמַּעַל לְלִי, “over the chamber of Maaseiah,” but not very clearly for us, since the buildings of the temple fore-courts are nowhere else more exactly described; however, see on 36:10. Maaseiah was שֹׁמֵר הַסֶּף, “keeper of the threshold,” i.e., overseer of the watchmen of the temple gates, of which, according to 52:24 and 2 Kings 25:18, there were three, who are there mentioned along with the high priest and his substitute Maaseiah is probably the same whose son Zephaniah was בֶּהֱן הַמִּשְׁנָה, cf. 52:24 with 37:3; 29:25, and 21:1.

**Jeremiah 35:5f.** There, Jeremiah caused bowls filled with wine to be set before the Rechabites, and commanded them to drink. (גְּבִיעִים are large goblets, bowls, out of which drinking-cups [כַּסֹּת] were filled.) But they explained that they did not drink wine, because their father, i.e.,

their ancestor, Jonadab had forbidden them and their posterity to drink wine for ever, as also to build houses, to sow seed, and to plant vineyards, i.e., to settle themselves down in permanent dwellings and to pursue agriculture.

וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לְכֶם, “And there shall not be to you,” sc. what has just been named, i.e., ye must not possess houses, growing-crops, or vineyards (cf. v. 9), but ye are to dwell in tents all your life, that ye may live long, etc. This promise is an imitation of that found in Ex. 20:12.

**Jeremiah 35:8–10.** This command of their forefather they observe in all points, and therefore dwell in tents; and only because of Nebuchadnezzar’s arrival in the country have they come to Jerusalem, in order to find refuge for a time from the army of the Chaldeans and that of Aram (the Arameans). The special mention of the army of *Aram* in connection with that of the Chaldeans is perhaps due to the frequent predatory incursions made, at an earlier period, on Israel and Judah by the Syrians. According to 2 Kings 24:2, after Jehoiakim had rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, hostile bands of Arameans invaded Judah for the purpose of laying waste the country.

**Jeremiah 35:12–19.** *The example of the Rechabites is one for Judah.*—Jeremiah is to proclaim the word of the Lord to the people of Judah, as follows: V. 13. “Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Go and say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction by listening to my words? saith Jahveh. V. 14. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, who commanded this sons not to drink wine, are performed, and they have drunk no wine to this day, but have obeyed the command of their father. But I have spoken unto you, rising up early and speaking, yet ye have not listened unto me. V. 15. And I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Turn ye, now, every one from his evil way, and do good deeds, and do not go after other gods, to serve them; then shall ye dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers. But ye did not incline your ear,

nor hearken unto me. V. 16. Yea, the children of Jonadab the son of Rechab have observed the commandment of their father which he commanded them, while this people have not hearkened unto me. V. 17. Therefore, thus saith Jahveh, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring upon Judah and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil which I have uttered regarding them, because I spake unto them and they did not hear, and I called unto them, but they did not answer. V. 18. And to the house of the Rechabites Jeremiah said: Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have listened to the command of Jonadab your father, and have kept all his commandments, and have done according to all that he commanded you, V. 19. Therefore, thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.”

The command, “Go and speak to the men of Judah,” etc., shows that it was not in the chamber of the temple, in presence of the Rechabites, but probably in one of the temple fore-courts, that Jeremiah addressed the following word of the Lord to the people assembled there. In order to shame the Jews thoroughly, he shows them the faithfulness with which the Rechabites observe the ordinances of their ancestor Jonadab. The character of the address, as one intended to rouse feelings of shame, is indicated even at the beginning of v. 13: “Will ye not receive instruction by hearkening to the words of the Lord?” The Hoph. הִיָּקַם is construed as a passive with the accus.; in the older writers we frequently find this construction, in which the passive is used impersonally, hence the sing. is here employed: cf. Ges. § 143, 1, Ew. § 295, b. “To this day”—now for nearly 300 years without interruption; for Jonadab was already held in high esteem when Jehu ascended the throne, 883 B.C. (2 Kings 10:15). Judah, on the contrary, does not listen to the commandments which his God unceasingly inculcates on him, but rather wanders after other gods, to serve them. On v. 15 cf. 25:4, 5. אֶל־יְהוָה אֲדַמָּה stands for עַל־יְהוָה אֲדַמָּה, 25:5.—In v. 16, where the

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introductory  $\text{וַי}$ , *imo*, indicates a culmination, the idea is once more briefly expressed. Nägelsbach incorrectly renders  $\text{וַי}$  “because,” and makes v. 16 the protasis to v. 17. “Such a protasis with *because* (*quia*), without any connection with what precedes, is contrary to the use of language” (Hitzig). On the threat of punishment in v. 17, see 11:11.

**Jeremiah 35:18.** The declaration concerning the Rechabites is introduced by the formula, “And to the house of the Rechabites Jeremiah said;” thereby, too, it is shown that the statement does not form an integral portion of the preceding address, but was uttered by Jeremiah perhaps at the close of his transactions with them (v. 11). But it is not given till now, in order to signify to the people of Judah that even fidelity to paternal commands has its own rewards, to make the threat uttered against Judah all the more impressive. On the promise v. 19, cf. 33:18. Since  $\text{עָמַד לְפָנַי}$  denotes the standing of a servant before his master, and in 7:10 is used of the appearance of the people before the Lord in the temple,  $\text{עָמַד לְפָנַי}$  seems here also to express not merely the permanence of the family, but in addition, their continuance in the service of the Lord, without, of course, involving sacerdotal service; cf. on the other hand, 33:18, where this service is more exactly described. The acknowledgment of the Lord on the part of the Rechabites is a necessary result of their connection with Israel.

### Jeremiah 36

#### Jeremiah’s Discourses are Written Down, and Read in the Temple

**Jeremiah 36.** In the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, bidding him commit to writing all the addresses he had previously delivered, that Judah might, if it were possible, still regard the threatenings and return (vv. 1–3). In accordance with this command, he got all the words of the Lord written down in a book by

his attendant Baruch, with the further instruction that this should be read on the fast-day in the temple to the people who came out of the country into Jerusalem (vv. 4–8). When, after this, in the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim, a fast was appointed, Baruch read the prophecies to the assembled people in the chamber of Gemariah in the temple. Michaiah the son of Gemariah mentioned the matter to the princes who were assembled in the royal palace; these then sent for Baruch with the roll, and made him read it to them. But they were so frightened by what was read to them that they deemed it necessary to inform the king regarding it (vv. 9–19). At their advice, the king had the roll brought and some of it read before him; but scarcely had some few columns been read, when he cut the roll into pieces and threw them into the pan of coals burning in the room, at the same time commanding that Baruch and Jeremiah should be brought to him; but God hid them (vv. 20–26). After this roll had been burnt, the Lord commanded the prophet to get all his words written on a new roll, and to predict an ignominious fate for King Jehoiakim; whereupon Jeremiah once more dictated his addresses to Baruch (vv. 27–32).

Since Jeremiah, according to vv. 3, 6, 7, is to get his addresses written down that Baruch may be able to read them publicly on the fast-day, now at hand, because he himself was prevented from getting to the temple, the intention of the divine command was not to make the prophet put down in writing and gather together all the addresses he had hitherto given, but the writing down is merely to serve as a means of once more presenting to the people the whole contents of his prophecies, in order to induce them, wherever it was possible, to return to the Lord. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar, after vanquishing the Egyptians at the Euphrates, advanced against Judah, took Jerusalem, and made Jehoiakim tributary. In the same year, too, Jeremiah had delivered the prophecy regarding the giving up of Judah and all nations for seventy years into the power of the king of Babylon (Jeremiah 25); this was before he had been bidden write down

all his addresses. For, that he did not receive this command till towards the end of the fourth year, may be gathered with certainty from the fact that the public reading of the addresses, after they were written down, was to take place on the fast-day, which, according to v. 9, was not held till the ninth month of the fifth year. The only doubtful point is, whether they were written down and read before or after the first capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Most modern commentators take the former view; e.g., Hitzig says, briefly and decidedly, "According to v. 29, the Chaldeans had not as yet appeared in the country." But this is not mentioned in v. 29. The threatening in this verse, "The king of Babylon shall come and destroy this land, and exterminate men and beasts from it," does not prove that the king of Babylon had not yet come to Judah, but merely that the country had not yet been destroyed, and men and cattle exterminated from it. When Jerusalem was first taken, Nebuchadnezzar contented himself with subjecting Jehoiakim under his supreme authority and requiring the payment of tribute, as well as carrying away some of the vessels of the temple and some hostages. The devastation of Judah and the extirpation of men and beasts did not commence till the second subjugation of Jerusalem under Jehoiakim, and was completed when the city was utterly destroyed, in Zedekiah's time, on its third subjugation. The settlement of the question that has been raised depends on the determination of the object for which the special fast-day in the fifth year was appointed, whether for averting the threatened invasion by the Chaldeans, or as a memorial of the first capture of Jerusalem. This question we have already so far decided in the Commentary on *Daniel*, at 1:1, where it is stated that the fast was held in remembrance of that day in the year when Jerusalem was taken for the first time by Nebuchadnezzar; we have also remarked in the same place, that Jehoiakim either appointed or permitted this special fast "for the purpose of rousing the popular feeling against the Chaldeans, to whom they were in subjection,—to evoke in the people a religious

enthusiasm in favour of resistance; for Jehoiakim keenly felt the subjugation by the Chaldeans, and from the first thought of revolt." However, every form of resistance to the king of Babylon could only issue in the ruin of Judah. Accordingly, Jeremiah made Baruch read his prophecies publicly to the people assembled in the temple on that day, "by way of counterpoise to the king's desire;" the prophet also bade him announce to the king that the king of Babylon would come, i.e., return, to destroy the land, and to root out of it both men and beasts. These circumstances give the first complete explanation of the terror of the princes when they listened to the reading of the book (v. 16), as well as of the wrath of the king, exhibited by his cutting the book in pieces and throwing it into the fire: he saw that the addresses of the prophet were more calculated to damp those religious aspirations of the people on which he based his hopes, than to rouse the nation against continued submission to the Chaldeans. Not till now, too, when the object of the appointment of the fast-day was perceived, did the command given by God to the prophet to write down his prophecies appear in its proper light. Shortly before, and in the most earnest manner, Jeremiah had reminded the people of their opposition to the word of God preached by him for twenty-three years, and had announced to them, as a punishment, the seventy years' subjugation to the Chaldeans and the desolation of the country; yet this announcement of the fearful chastisement had made no deeper or more lasting impression on the people. Hence, so long as the threatened judgment was still in the distance, not much could be expected to result from the reading of his addresses in the temple on the fast-day, so that the command of God to do so should appear quite justified. But the matter took a considerably different from when Nebuchadnezzar had actually taken Jerusalem and Jehoiakim had submitted. The commencement of the judgments which had been threatened by God was the proper moment for laying before the hearts of the people, once more, the intense earnestness of

the divine message, and for urging them to deeper penitence. Just at this point the reading of the whole contents of the prophecies delivered by Jeremiah appears like a final attempt to preserve the people, on whom judgment has fallen, from complete destruction.

**Jeremiah 36:2–8.** The word of the Lord to Jeremiah was to this effect: *“Take thee a book-roll, and write on it (עֲלֶיָהּ for אֲלֶיָהּ) all the words that I have spoken unto thee concerning Israel and Judah, and concerning all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah till this day. V. 3. Perhaps the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I meditate doing to them, that they may return every one from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.”* יִשְׁמְעוּ here means, to hear correctly and lay to heart; cf. 26:3. Hitzig views the command as meaning, not that Jeremiah is now for the first time to write down his addresses (which would be an impossibility for the most faithful memory), but that he is merely to write them down together in one book, out of the several scattered leaves and scraps. Graf has already refuted this view, though more fully than was necessary. It is not a copying, word for word, of every separate address that is meant, but merely a writing down of the essential contents of all his oral discourses. This is quite clear, not merely from what is stated in v. 3 as the object of this command, but also from the character of these collected addresses, as they are preserved to us. That the expression “all the words” is not to be understood in the most rigid sense, follows from the very fact that, when Jeremiah anew wrote down his prophecies, v. 32, he further added “many similar words” to what had been contained in the first book-roll, which was burned by Jehoiakim. But Jeremiah might perhaps be able to retain in his memory the substance of all the addresses he had delivered during the twenty-three years, since all of them treated of the same subjects—reproof of prevailing sins, threat of punishment, and promises.

**Jeremiah 36:4.** Jeremiah carries out the divine command by making Baruch write down on a

book-roll all the words of the Lord, out of his mouth (מִפִּי יְרֵם, i.e., at the dictation of Jeremiah); and since he himself is prevented from getting to the house of the Lord, he bids him read the words he had written down in the ears of the people in the temple on the fast-day, at the same time expressing the hope, v. 7: “Perhaps their supplication will fall down before the Lord, and they will return each one from his wicked way; for great is the wrath and the anger which the Lord hath expressed concerning this people.” Baruch, who is mentioned so early as 32:12ff. as the attendant of the prophet, was, according to the passage now before us, his amanuensis, and executed his commissions. אָנִי עָצוּר, according to 33:1 and 39:15, might mean, “I am in prison;” but this does not accord with the request of the princes, v. 19, that Jeremiah should hide himself. Moreover, עָצוּר does not mean “seized, *captus*,” but “stopped, restrained, hindered;” see on Neh. 6:10. The cause of hindrance is not mentioned, as being away from the purpose of the narrative. “To read in the roll in the ears of the people,” i.e., to read to the people out of the book. בְּיֹם צוֹם does not mean “on any fast-day whatever,” but, “on the fast-day.” The article is omitted because there was no need for defining the fast-day more exactly. The special fast-day mentioned in v. 9 is intended. תִּפֹּל תְּהַנְּתֶם וְגוֹ, “their supplication will fall down before the Lord,” i.e., reach unto God, as if it were laid before His feet. נָפַל is transferred from the posture of the suppliant—his falling down before God—to his supplication. Hence, in Hiphil, to make the supplication fall down before the Lord is equivalent to laying the request at His feet; 38:26; 42:9, Dan. 9:18, 20. If the supplication actually comes before God, it is also heard and finds success. This success is pointed out in וַיִּשְׁבוּ וְגוֹ, “that they may repent.” If man, in a repentant spirit, supplicates God for grace, God grants him power for conversion. But the return of the people from their wicked way is indispensable, because the wrath which God has expressed concerning it is great, i.e.,

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because God has threatened a heavy judgment of wrath.

**Jeremiah 36:8.** Baruch executes his commission.

**Jeremiah 36:9–19.** *The reading of the book in the temple.*—V. 9. In the fifth year of Jehoiakim, in the ninth month, “they proclaimed a fast before the Lord,—all the people in Jerusalem, and all the people who had come out of the cities of the Judah to Jerusalem.” קָרָא צוֹם, to call, declare, appoint a fast; cf. 1 Kings 21:9, 12, 2 Chron. 20:3. From the tenor of the words, the people who lived in Jerusalem and those who had come thither out of the country might seem to have called the fast. But this is impossible; for the people from the cities of Judah evidently came to Jerusalem only in consequence of the fast being appointed. Hence Graf is of opinion that קָרָא צוֹם seems here used in a general way of the keeping of such a fast. This view is not confirmed by any parallel instances. The expression is inexact, and the inexactness has arisen from the effort to attain greater conciseness of expression. The meaning is this: a fast was proclaimed, and all the people in Jerusalem and out of the cities of Judah came to worship the Lord in the temple. It remains doubtful with whom the appointment originated,—whether with the king, or with the high priest and the priesthood. The ninth month corresponds to our December, and consequently came round with the cold season; cf. v. 22f. The fast-day was a special one; for in the law only the day of atonement, in the seventh month, was prescribed as a fast-day. On the object of this measure, see *supra*, p. 316f.

**Jeremiah 36:10.** On this day Baruch read the addresses of Jeremiah out of the book to the people who had come to the temple, in the “chamber of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, the scribe, in the upper forecourt, at the entrance of the new gate of the house of the Lord.” Gemariah the son of Shaphan was one of the king’s private scribes, a secretary of state. For, according to v. 12, he belonged to the princes, and was probably a brother of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, who had already shown himself,

before this, a protector of the prophet (Jeremiah 26:24). The chamber which he had in the temple was situated in the upper forecourt, at the entrance of the new gate, whose position we cannot exactly determine (see on 26:10), but which led from the outer to the inner court of the priests, which rose higher than the others.

**Jeremiah 36:11.** Micaiah, a son of Gemariah, was also listening to the reading; and he it was who brought the news into the palace. He made of the room, i.e., the office, of Elishama, the secretary of state, where the princes, viz., Elishama, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor (cf. 26:22), Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, had just met for a consultation; and he mentioned to them what he had heard.

**Jeremiah 36:14.** On this information the princes sent Jehudi (perhaps one of the under-officers of the secretary of state) to Baruch, to bring him, with the book from which he had read. From the designation, “Jehudi son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah, son of Cushi,” Hitzig and Graf conclude that the first and last are not proper names, but appellatives, “the Jew” and “the Cushite,” and account for the use of them on the ground that, through the application of the law given in Deut. 23:7, 8 to Cushites as well as Egyptians, the ancestor was a Cushite, and only his great-grandson became a Jew, or Jewish citizen, and was called “Jehudi.” But this view is opposed (1) by the fact that the names of the father and the grandfather are true proper names, and these, moreover, contain the name *Jah* (*Jahveh*),—hence are genuine proper names of Israelites; moreover, (2) even in olden times *Jehudith* occurs as a woman’s name, Gen. 26:34. According to this, *Jehudi* is a true proper name, and at the most, *Cushi* is but a surname of the great-grandfather, given him because of his descent from the Cushites. Further, the law, Deut. 23:7, applies only to the posterity of the Edomites and Egyptians, that these should not be received into the congregation of the Lord till the third generation; this ordinance was based on



grounds which did not permit of its application to other nations. These might be naturalized even in the first generation on undergoing circumcision, with the exception of Canaanites, Ammonites, and Moabites, who were not to be admitted into the Israelitish community even in the tenth generation, Deut. 23:3.

**Jeremiah 36:15.** When Baruch came, the princes, in token of friendly and respectful treatment, bade him sit down and read to them out of the book he had brought with him. V. 16. But when they heard all the words read, "they were afraid one at another;" i.e., by looks, gestures, and words, they gave mutual expression of their fear, partly because of the contents of what had been read. Although they were generally acquainted with the sense and the spirit of Jeremiah's addresses, yet what had now been read made a powerful impression on them; for Baruch plainly had read, both to the people in the temple and to the princes, not the whole book, but only the main portions, containing the sternest denunciations of sin and the strongest threats of punishment. The statement, "he read in (out of) the book the words of Jeremiah" (v. 10), does not mean that he read the whole book; this would only have wearied the people and weakened the impression made. But they were partly also terrified, perhaps, by the boldness of a declaration which so decidedly opposed the desires and hopes of the king; for the thought of the event mentioned in 26:20ff. would at once suggest to them the danger that might arise to the life of Jeremiah and Baruch from the despotic character of the king. They said therefore to Baruch, "We must tell the king all these things." For it was clear that the matter could not long remain concealed from the king, after the public reading in the temple. Hence they dared not, agreeably to their official relation to the king, hide from him what had taken place.

**Jeremiah 36:17.** Meanwhile, in order to inform themselves more exactly regarding what had happened, they ask Baruch, "Tell us, how hast thou written all these words at his mouth?" Thereupon Baruch replied, "He used to call

aloud these words to me," i.e., he used to dictate them to me by word of mouth, "and I wrote them in the book with ink." The imperfect expresses the repeated or continued doing of anything; hence יְקַרְא here means to dictate, which requires considerable time. In the following circumstantial clause is found the participle וְאָנִי כֹתֵב, while I was writing; and so I myself was doing nothing else all the time than writing down what was dictated. Some commentators have found a stumbling-block in מִפִּי in the question of the princes (v. 17); the LXX and Ewald omit this word, inasmuch as Baruch does not explain till afterwards that he had written down the words from the mouth of Jeremiah. Others, like Venema, take מִפִּי as a question = הֲמִפִּי. Both explanations are arbitrary and unnecessary. The princes knew quite well that the substance of the book was from the mouth of Jeremiah, i.e., contained his addresses; but Baruch, too, might have composed the book from the oral discourses of the prophet without being commissioned by him, without his knowledge also, and against his will. Accordingly, to attain certainty as to the share of the prophet in this matter, they ask him, and Baruch answers that Jeremiah had dictated it to him.

**Jeremiah 36:19.** Thereupon the princes advised Baruch to hide himself and Jeremiah; for they know beforehand that Jehoiakim would put to death the witnesses of the truth.

**Jeremiah 36:20-26.** *The reading of the book before the king.*—V. 20. The princes betook themselves to the king הִצְרָה, into the inner fore-court (leaving the book-roll in the chamber of the secretary of state), and gave him an account of the matter. הִצְרָה is the inner court of the palace, in which the royal dwelling-apartments are situated. הִפְקִיד, to entrust a thing or person to any one (Jeremiah 40:7), hence to deposit, preserve, Isa. 10:28.

**Jeremiah 36:21.** Thereupon the king makes Jehudi fetch the book, and causes it to be read

before himself and the assembled princes. עמד ממעל, to stand over, since the one who is standing before his master, while the latter is sitting, overtops him; cf. Gen. 18:8. The king was sitting, as is stated in v. 22 by way of preparation for what follows, in the winter-house, i.e., in that portion of the palace which was erected for a winter residence, in the ninth month, i.e., during the winter, and the pot of coals was burning before him. The rooms of eastern houses have no stoves, but in the middle of the floor there is a depression, in which is placed a sort of basin with burning coals, for the purpose of heating the apartment: cf. Keil's *Bibl. Archäol.* ii. § 95, S. 7. For the expression וְאֶת־הַפֶּתַח, "and as for the fire-pot, it was burning before him," cf. Ewald, § 277, d.

**Jeremiah 36:23.** Now, "when Jehudi had read three or four columns, he [the king] cut it [the book-roll] with a pen-knife and threw [the pieces] into the fire, in the pot of coals, till the whole roll was consumed on the fire in the pot of coals." דְּלִתוֹת, properly "doors," are not leaves, but divisions of a book. The opinion of Hitzig, that leaves are to be understood, and that the *Megillah*, therefore, was not a roll, properly speaking, but a book with leaves, cannot be substantiated. In the synagogues, the Jews even at the present day, according to the ancient custom, use real rolls, which are rolled up on a stick. On these the Scripture text is written, though not in lines which occupy the whole breadth of the roll; the whole space is divided into parts. "Scribebatur," says Buxtorf in *Institutione epistolari Hebr.* p. 4, "volumen lineis, non per longitudinem totius chartae aut pergamenti deductis, sed in plures areas divisus, quomodo sunt latera paginarum in libris complicatis. Istae propterea voce metaphoricâ vocantur דְּלִתוֹת januae valvae, quod figuram januae referent." The subject of יִקְרַע is not Jehudi, as Hitzig thinks, but the king, and the word does not signify "he cut it out," but "he cut it in pieces" (the suffix refers to הַמְּגִלָּה). We are not, with many expositors, to view the conduct

of the king in such a way as to think that, whenever Jehudi had read some portions, he cut these off and threw them into the fire, so that the book was, with these interruptions, read through to the end, and at the same time gradually destroyed. Such conduct Graf justly characterizes as trifling and silly, and not in harmony with the anger of a king having a violent disposition. But we cannot see how the imperfect יִקְרַע (in Nägelsbach's opinion) proves that Jehudi read the whole, when the text states that only three or four columns were read. The meaning, peculiar to the imperfect, of the continuation or repetition of an act, is fully made out by supposing that the king cut down the roll bit by bit, and threw the pieces into the fire one after the other. Neither does the expression עַד־תָּם כָּל־הַמְּגִלָּה imply that the whole book was read; for תָּם does not denote the completion of the reading, but the completion of the burning; hence the words are to be translated, "till the whole roll had completely got upon the fire," i.e., was completely burnt; cf. תָּם־אֵל, Gen. 47:18. The inf. absol. וְהִשְׁלַךְ is a continuation of the finite verb, as frequently occurs, e.g., in 14:5; 32:44.

**Jeremiah 36:24f.** In order to characterize the conduct of the king, the writer remarks, "Yet the king and his servants who heard all these words (which Jehudi had read) were not afraid, nor did they rend their garments (in token of deep sorrow); and even when Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah addressed the king, requesting him not to burn the roll, he did not listen to them." So hardened was the king, that he and his servants neither were terrified by the threatenings of the prophet, nor felt deep sorrow, as Josiah did in a similar case (2 Kings 22:11, cf. 1 Kings 21:27), nor did they listen to the earnest representations of the princes. עֲבָדָיו are the court-attendants of the king in contrast with the princes, who, according to v. 16, had been alarmed by what they heard read, and wished, by entreaties, to keep the king from the commission of such a wicked act as the destruction of the book. Ewald, on the contrary,

has identified עֲבָדָיו with the princes, and thereby marred the whole account, while he reproaches the princes with “acting as the wretched instruments of what they knew to be the sentiments prevailing at court.”

**Jeremiah 36:26.** Not content with destroying the book, Jehoiakim also wished to get Baruch and Jeremiah out of the way; for he ordered the king’s son Jerahmeel and two other men to go for Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet; “but the Lord hid them,” i.e., graciously kept them out of the sight of the spies. בְּיָהֳמַיִל is not the son of Jehoiakim,—if so, we would find simply אֶת־בְּנוֹ; but a royal prince is meant, cf. 38:6, 1 Kings 22:26, 2 Kings 11:1, 2, Zeph. 1:8.

**Jeremiah 36:27–32.** *The punishment which is to come on Jehoiakim for his wicked act.—V. 27ff.* After the burning of the roll by the king, Jeremiah received from the Lord the command to get all that had been on the former roll written on another, and to announce the following to Jehoiakim the king: V. 29. *“Thus saith Jahveh: Thou hast burned this roll, whilst thou sayest, Why hast thou written thereon, The king of Babylon shall surely come and destroy this land, and root out man and beast from it? V. 30. Therefore thus saith Jahveh regarding Jehoiakim the king of Judah: He shall not have one who sits upon the throne of David, and his corpse shall be cast forth to the heat by day and to the frost by night. V. 31. And I shall punish him, his servants, and his seed for their iniquity, and bring on them and on all the inhabitants of Judah and all the men of Judah all the evil which I have spoken to them; but they did not hear.”* On the meaning of v. 29b see p. 316, *supra*. The threatening expressed in v. 30f. is really only a repetition of what is given in 22:18, 19, and has already been explained there. “There shall not be to him one who sits upon the throne of David,” i.e., he is not to have a son that shall occupy the throne of David after him. This does not contradict the fact that, after his death, his son Jehoiachin ascended the throne. For this ascension could not be called a sitting on the throne, a reign, inasmuch as he was immediately besieged in Jerusalem by

Nebuchadnezzar, and compelled to surrender after three months, then go into exile to Babylon. On v. 31 cf. 35:17; 19:15.

**Jeremiah 36:22.** Thereupon Jeremiah made his attendant Baruch write all the words of the former roll on a new one, “out of his mouth,” i.e., at his dictation; and to these he added many other words like them. כְּהֵמָּה, i.e., of like import with those on the previous roll. Hence we perceive that on the first roll there were written down not all the several addresses fully, but only the most important parts of his oral announcements.

### Jeremiah 37

#### B. Experiences and Utterances of Jeremiah During the Siege and Capture of Jerusalem—Ch. 37–39

##### Declaration Regarding the Issue of the Siege; Imprisonment of Jeremiah and Conversation with the King

**Jeremiah 37:1–10.** The account of what befell Jeremiah and what he did during the last siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, until the taking of the city, is introduced, vv. 1 and 2, with the general remark that Zedekiah,—whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had made king in the land of Judah in place of Coniah (on which name see on 22:24),—when he became king, did not listen to the words of the Lord through Jeremiah, neither himself, nor his servants (officers), nor the people of the land (the population of Judah). Then follows, vv. 3–10, a declaration of the prophet regarding the issue of the siege, which he sent to the king by the messengers who were to beseech him for his intercession with the Lord. Vv. 3–5. The occasion of this declaration was the following: Zedekiah sent to Jeremiah two of his chief officers, Jehucal the son of Shelemiah (see on 38:1), and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest (see 21:1 and 29:25), with this charge: “Pray now for us to Jahveh our God.” This message was sent to Jeremiah while he still went in and out among the people, and had not

yet been put in prison (כְּלִיאָ, v. 4 and 52:31, an unusual form for כְּלִיאָ, vv. 15 and 18, for which the *Qeri* would have us in both instances read כְּלִיאָ); the army of Pharaoh (Hophra, 44:30), too, had marched out of Egypt to oppose the Chaldeans; and the latter, when they heard the report of them (שִׁמְעֵם, the news of their approach), had withdrawn from Jerusalem (עָלָה, see on 21:2), viz., in order to repulse the Egyptians. Both of these circumstances are mentioned for the purpose of giving a clear view of the state of things: (a) Jeremiah's freedom to go in and out, not to prepare us for his imprisonment afterwards, but to explain the reason why the king sent two chief officers of the realm to him, whereas, after his imprisonment, he caused him to be brought (cf. v. 17 with 38:14); and (b) the approach of the Egyptians joined with the raising of the siege, because this event seemed to afford some hope that the city would be saved.—This occurrence, consequently, falls within a later period than that mentioned in Jeremiah 21.

**Jeremiah 37:6.** Then came the word of the Lord to this effect: V. 7. *“Thus saith Jahveh, the God of Israel: Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah who hath sent you to me to ask at me, Behold, the army of Pharaoh, which marched out to your help, will return to Egypt, their own land. V. 8. And the Chaldeans shall return and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire. V. 9. Thus saith Jahveh: Do not deceive yourselves by thinking, The Chaldeans will quite withdraw from us; for they will not withdraw. V. 10. For, even though he had beaten the whole army of the Chaldeans who are fighting with you, and there remained of them only some who had been pierced through and through, yet they would rise up, every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.”* In order to cut off every hope, the prophet announces that the Egyptians will bring no help, but withdraw to their own land before the Chaldeans who went out to meet them, without having accomplished their object; but then the Chaldeans will return, continue the siege, take the city and burn it. To

assure them of this, he adds: “Ye must not deceive yourselves with the vain hope that the Chaldeans may possibly be defeated and driven back by the Egyptians. The destruction of Jerusalem is so certain that, even supposing you were actually to defeat and repulse the Chaldeans, and only some few grievously wounded ones remained in the tents, these would rise up and burn the city.” In הֲלוֹךְ יֵלְכוּ the inf. abs. is to be observed, as strengthening the idea contained in the verb: “to depart wholly or completely;” הֲלֹךְ is here to “depart, withdraw.”

אֲנָשִׁים in contrast with חַיִּים are separate individuals. מִדָּקָר, pierced through by sword or lance, i.e., grievously, mortally wounded.

**Jeremiah 37:11–15.** *The imprisonment of Jeremiah.*—During the time when the Chaldeans, on account of the advancing army of pharaoh, had withdrawn from Jerusalem and raised the siege, “Jeremiah went out of the city to go to the land of Benjamin, in order to bring thence his portion among the people.” וְהָיָה, in accordance with later usage, for וַיְהִי, as in 3:9; cf. Ewald, § 345, b. מִשָּׂם לְחֵלֶק is explained in various ways. לְחֵלֶק for לְחֵלֶק לִי can scarcely have any other meaning than to share, receive a share; and in connection with מִשָּׂם, “to receive a portion thence,” not, to receive an inheritance (*Syr., Chald., Vulg.*), for מִשָּׂם does not suit this meaning. The LXX render τοῦ ἀγοράσαι ἐκείθεν, which Theodoret explains by πρίασθαι ἄρτους. All other explanations have still less in their favour. We must connect הָעַם הַבְּתוֹךְ with וְגַם לְלֶכֶת וְגַם, since it is unsuitable for מִשָּׂם לְחֵלֶק.

**Jeremiah 37:13.** When he was entering the gate of Benjamin, where Jeriah the son of Shelemiah kept watch, the latter seized him, saying, “Thou desirest to go over to the Chaldeans” (נָפְלֵ-אֶל, see on 21:9). The gate of Benjamin (Jeremiah 38:7; Zech. 14:10) was the north gate of the city, through which ran the road to Benjamin and Ephraim; hence it was also called the gate of Ephraim, 2 Kings 14:13,

Neh. 8:16. בעל פקדת, “holder of the oversight,” he who kept the watch, or commander of the watch at the gate. “The accusation was founded on the well-known views and opinions of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 21:9); but it was mere sophistry, for the simple reason that the Chaldeans were no longer lying before the city” (Hitzig).

**Jeremiah 37:14.** Jeremiah replied: “A lie [= not true; cf. 2 Kings 9:12]; I am not going over to the Chaldeans. But he gave no heed to him; so Jeriah seized Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes. V. 15. And the princes were angry against Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison, in the house of Jonathan the scribe; for they had made it the prison,”—probably because it contained apartments suitable for the purpose. From v. 16 we perceive that they were subterranean prisons and vaults into which the prisoners were thrust; and from v. 28 and 38:26, it is clear that Jeremiah was in a confinement much more severe and dangerous to his life. There he sat many days, i.e., a pretty long time.

**Jeremiah 37:16–21.** Examination of the prophet by the king, and alleviation of his confinement.—V. 16ff. “When Jeremiah had got into the dungeon and into the vaults, and had sat there many days, then Zedekiah the king sent and fetched him, and questioned him in his own house (palace) secretly,” etc. V. 16 is by most interpreters joined with the foregoing, but the words בָּא בְּכִי do not properly permit of this. For if we take the verse as a further confirmation of וַיִּקְצְפוּ הַשָּׂרִים, “the princes vented their wrath on Jeremiah, beat him,” etc., “for Jeremiah came ...,” then it must be acknowledged that the account would be very long and lumbering. בָּא בְּכִי is too widely separated from וַיִּקְצְפוּ. Hence the LXX have καὶ ἤλθον,—some codices, indeed, ὅτι ἤλθον; and Ewald, Hitzig, and Graf would change בָּא בְּכִי into וַיָּבֵא. But the passages, 1 Sam. 2:21, where בְּכִי פָקֵד is supposed to stand for וַיִּפְקֵד, and Isa. 39:1, where וַיִּשְׁמַע is thought to have arisen out of בְּכִי שָׁמַע, 2 Kings 20:12, are not

very strong proofs, since there, as here, no error in writing is marked. The Vulgate has *itaque ingressus*; many therefore would change בְּכִי into בָּנָ; but this also is quite arbitrary. Accordingly, with Rosenmüller, we connect v. 16 with the following, and take בְּכִי as a temporal particle; in this, the most we miss is וְ copulative, or וַיְהִי. In the preceding sentence the prison of the prophet is somewhat minutely described, in order to prepare us for the request that follows in v. 20. Jeremiah was in a בַּיִת-בּוֹר, “house of a pit,” cf. Ex. 12:29, i.e., a subterranean prison, and in הַחֲנִיּוֹת. This word only occurs here; but in the kindred dialects it means vaults, stalls, shops; hence it possibly signifies here subterranean prison-cells, so that אֶל-הַחֲנִיּוֹת more exactly determines what בַּיִת-הַבּוֹר is. This meaning of the word is, at any rate, more certain than that given by Eb. Scheid in Rosenmüller, who renders חֲנִיּוֹת by *flexa, curvata*; then, supplying *ligna*, he thinks of the stocks to which the prisoners were fastened.—The king questioned him בְּסֵתֶר, “in secret,” namely, through fear of his ministers and court-officers, who were prejudiced against the prophet, perhaps also in the hope of receiving in a private interview a message from God of more favourable import. To the question of the king, “Is there any word from Jahveh?” Jeremiah replies in the affirmative; but the word of God is this, “Thou shalt be given into the hand of the king of Babylon,” just as Jeremiah had previously announced to him; cf. 32:4; 34:3.—Jeremiah took this opportunity of complaining about his imprisonment, saying, v. 18, “In what have I sinned against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? V. 19. And where are your prophets, who prophesied to you, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land?” Jeremiah appeals to his perfect innocence (v. 18), and to the confirmation of his prediction by its event. The interview with the king took place when the Chaldeans, after driving the Egyptians out of the country, had

recommenced the siege of Jerusalem, and, as is evident from v. 21, were pressing the city very hard. The *Kethib* אִי is to be read אִי, formed from אִיָּה with the suffix י; the idea of the suffix has gradually become obscured, so that it stands here before a noun in the plural. The *Qeri* requires אִיָּה. The question, Where are your prophets? means, Let these prophets come forward and vindicate their lying prophecies. Not what these men had prophesied, but what Jeremiah had declared had come to pass; his imprisonment, accordingly, was unjust.— Besides thus appealing to his innocence, Jeremiah, v. 20, entreats the king, “*Let my supplication come before thee, and do not send me back into the house of Jonathan the scribe, that I may not die there.*” For תִּפְּלֵנָּא ת see on 36:7. The king granted this request. “*He commanded, and they put Jeremiah into the court of the watch [of the royal palace, see on 32:2], and gave him a loaf of bread daily out of the bakers’ street, till all the bread in the city was consumed;*” cf. 52:6. The king did not give him his liberty, because Jeremiah held to his views, that were so distasteful to the king (see on 32:3). “*So Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.*”

### Jeremiah 38

#### Jeremiah in the Miry Pit. Last Interview with the King

**Jeremiah 38.** In this chapter two events are mentioned which took place in the last period of the siege of Jerusalem, shortly before the capture of the city by the Chaldeans. According to v. 4, the number of fighting men had now very much decreased; and according to v. 19, the number of deserters to the Chaldeans had become large. Moreover, according to v. 9, famine had already begun to prevail; this hastened the fall of the city.

**Jeremiah 38:1–13.** Jeremiah is cast into a miry pit, but drawn out again by Ebedmelech the Cushite. Vv. 1–6. Being confined in the court of the guard attached to the royal palace, Jeremiah

had opportunities of conversing with the soldiers stationed there and the people of Judah who came thither (cf. v. 1 with 32:8, 12), and of declaring, in opposition to them, his conviction (which he had indeed expressed from the beginning of the siege) that all resistance to the Chaldeans would be fruitless, and only bring destruction (cf. 21:9f.). On this account, the princes who were of a hostile disposition towards him were so embittered, that they resolved on his death, and obtain from the king permission to cast him into a deep pit with mire at the bottom. In v. 1 four of these princes are named, two of whom, Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, are known, from 37:3 and 21:1, as confidants of the king; the other two, Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, are not mentioned elsewhere. Gedaliah was probably a son of the Pashur who had once put Jeremiah in the stocks (Jeremiah 20:1, 2). The words of the prophet, vv. 2, 3, are substantially the same as he had already uttered at the beginning of the siege, 21:9 (יחיה as in 21:9). V. 4. The princes said to the king, “*Let this man, we beseech thee, be put to death [for the construction, see on 35:14]; for therefore [i.e., because no one puts him out of existence,—על־כֵּן as in 29:28] he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking words like these to them; for this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their ill.*” מְרַפֵּא for מְרַפֵּה, to cause the hands of any one to be relaxed, i.e., to make him dispirited; cf. Ezra 4:4, Isa. 35:3. דָּרַשׁ with לְ, as Job 10:6, Deut. 12:30, 1 Chron. 22:19, etc., elsewhere with the accusative אֵת; cf. 29:7 *et passim*. On this point cf. 29:7. The allegation which the princes made against Jeremiah was possibly correct. The constancy with which Jeremiah declared that resistance was useless, since, in accordance with the divine decree, Jerusalem was to be taken and burnt by the Chaldeans, could not but make the soldiers and the people unwilling any longer to sacrifice their lives in defending the city. Nevertheless

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the complaint was unjust, because Jeremiah was not expressing his own personal opinion, but was declaring the word of the Lord, and that, too, not from any want of patriotism or through personal cowardice, but in the conviction, derived from the divine revelation, that it was only by voluntary submission that the fate of the besieged could be mitigated; hence he acted from a deep feeling of love to the people, and in order to avert complete destruction from them. The courage of the people which he sought to weaken was not a heroic courage founded on genuine trust in God, but carnal obstinacy, which could not but lead to ruin.

**Jeremiah 38:5.** *The king said, "Behold, he is in your hand, for the king can do nothing alongside of you."* This reply indicates not merely the weakness and powerlessness of the king against his princes, but also his inward aversion to the testimony of the man of God. "That he would like to save him, just as he afterwards does (v. 10)," is not implied in what he says, with which he delivers up the prophet to the spite of his enemies. Though the princes had at once put Jeremiah to death, the king would not even have been able to reproach them. The want of courage vigorously to oppose the demand of the princes did not spring from any kindly feeling towards the prophet, but partly from moral weakness of character, partly from inward repugnance to the word of God proclaimed by Jeremiah. On the construction אֵין יִבֹּל instead of the participle from יִבֹּל, which does not occur, cf. Ewald, § 321, a. אֲתָכֶם is certainly in form an accusative; but it cannot be such, since דָּבָר follows as the accusative: it is therefore either to be pointed אֲתָכֶם or to be considered as standing for it, just as אֹתָךְ often occurs for אִתָּךְ, "with," i.e., "along with you."

**Jeremiah 38:6.** The princes (שָׂרִים) now cast Jeremiah into the pit of the king's son (בְּיַם־מֶלֶךְ, see on 36:26) Malchiah, which was in the court of the prison, letting him down with ropes into the pit, in which there was no water, but mud;

into this Jeremiah sank. The act is first mentioned in a general way in the words, "they cast him into the pit;" then the mode of proceeding is particularized in the words, "and they let him down," etc. On the expression הַבּוֹר מַלְכִּיָּהוּ, "the pit of Malchiah," cf. Ewald, § 290, d: the article stands here before the *nomen regens*, because the *nomen rectum*, from being a proper name, cannot take it; and yet the pit must be pointed out as one well known and definite. That it was very deep, and that Jeremiah must have perished in it if he were not soon taken out again, is evident from the very fact that they were obliged to use ropes in letting him down, and still more so from the trouble caused in pulling him out (vv. 10–12). That the princes did not at once put the prophet to death with the sword was not owing to any feeling of respect for the king, because the latter had not pronounced sentence of death on him, but because they sought to put the prophet to a final death, and yet at the same time wished to silence the voice of conscience with the excuse that they had not shed his blood.

**Jeremiah 38:7–13.** The deliverance of Jeremiah. Ebedmelech the Cushite, a eunuch, heard of what had happened to Jeremiah. אִישׁ קָרִים signifies a eunuch: the אִישׁ shows that קָרִים is here to be taken in its proper meaning, not in the metaphorical sense of an officer of the court. Since the king had many wives (v. 22f.), the presence of a eunuch at the court, as overseer of the harem, cannot seem strange. The law of Moses, indeed, prohibited castration (Deut. 23:2); but the man was a foreigner, and had been taken by the king into his service as one castrated. עֶבֶד מֶלֶךְ is a proper name (otherwise it must have been written הַמֶּלֶךְ); the name is a genuine Hebrew one, and probably may have been assumed when the man entered the service of Zedekiah.—On hearing of what had occurred, the Ethiopian went to the king, who was sitting in the gate of Benjamin, on the north wall of the city, which was probably the point most threatened by the besiegers, and said to him, V. 9, "My lord, O king, these men

have acted wickedly in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the pit; and he is dying of hunger on the spot, for there is no more bread in the city. הָרְעוּ אֶת־אֲשֶׁר הָרְעוּ אֶת־אֲשֶׁר הָרְעוּ, lit.: "they have done wickedly what they have done." וַיָּמָת cannot be translated, "and he died on the spot," for Ebedmelech wishes to save him before he dies of hunger. But neither does it stand for וַיָּמָת, "so that he must die." The imperfect with Vav consecutive expresses the consequence of a preceding act, and usually stands in the narrative as a historic tense; but it may also declare what necessarily follows or will follow from what precedes; cf. Ewald, § 342, a. Thus וַיָּמָת stands here in the sense, "and so he is dying," i.e., "he must die of hunger." וַיָּמָת, "on his spot," i.e., on the place where he is; cf. 2 Sam. 2:23. The reason, "for there is no longer any bread (הַלֶּחֶם with the article, the necessary bread) in the city," is not to be taken in the exact sense of the words, but merely expresses the greatest deficiency in provisions. As long as Jeremiah was in the court of the prison, he received, like the officers of the court, at the king's order, his ration of bread every day (Jeremiah 37:21). But after he had been cast into the pit, that royal ordinance no longer applied to him, so that he was given over to the tender mercies of others, from whom, in the prevailing scarcity of bread, he had not much to hope for.

**Jeremiah 38:10.** *Then the king commanded the Ethiopian, "Take hence thirty men in thine hand, and bring up Jeremiah out of the pit before he dies."* בְּיָדְךָ, "in thine hand," i.e., under your direction; cf. Num. 31:49. The number thirty has been found too great; and Ewald, Hitzig, and Graf would read שְׁלֹשָׁה, because the syntax requires the singular אִישׁ after שְׁלֹשִׁים, and because at that time, when the fighting men had already decreased in number (v. 4), thirty men could not be sent away from a post in danger without difficulty. These two arguments are quite invalid. The syntax does not demand אִישׁ;

for with the tens (20–90) the noun frequently follows in the plural as well as in the singular, if the number precede; cf. 2 Sam. 3:20, 2 Kings 2:16, etc.; see also Gesenius' *Grammar*, § 120, 2. The other argument is based on arbitrary hypotheses; for the passage neither speaks of fighting men, nor states that they would be taken from a post in danger. Ebedmelech was to take thirty men, not because they would all be required for drawing out the prophet, but for making surer work in effecting the deliverance of the prophet, against all possible attempts on the part of the princes or of the populace to prevent them.

**Jeremiah 38:11.** *Ebedmelech took the men at his hand, went into the king's house under the treasury, and took thence rags of torn and of worn-out garments, and let them down on ropes to Jeremiah into the pit, and said to him, "Put, I pray thee, the rages of the torn and cast-off clothes under thine arm-pits under the ropes."* Jeremiah did so, and then they drew him out of the pit by the ropes. תַּחַת הָאוֹצָר is a room under the treasury. בְּלוּי, in v. 12 בְּלוּאִים, from בָּלָה, to be worn away (of clothes), are rags. סְחָבוֹת (from סָחַב, to drag, drag about, tear to pieces) are torn pieces of clothing. מְלָחִים, worn-out garments, from מָלַח, in Niph'al, Isa. 51:6, to vanish, dissolve away. The article at הַסְחָבוֹת is expunged from the *Qeri* for sake of uniformity, because it is not found with מְלָחִים; but it may as well be allowed to stand as be removed. אֲצִילוֹת יָדַיִם, properly the roots of the hands, are not the knuckles of the hand, but the shoulders of the arms. מִתַּחַת לְחַבְלָיִם, under the ropes; i.e., the rags were to serve as pads to the ropes which were to be placed under the arm-pits, to prevent the ropes from cutting the flesh. When Jeremiah had been drawn out in this way from the deep pit of mire, he remained in the court of the prison.

**Jeremiah 38:14–28.** *Conversation between the king and the prophet.*—V. 14. King Zedekiah was desirous of once more hearing a message of God from the prophet, and for this object had



him brought into the third entrance in the house of the Lord. Nothing further is known about the situation and the nature of this entrance; possibly it led from the palace to the temple, and seems to have been an enclosed space, for the king could carry on a private conversation there with the prophet. The king said to him, "I ask you about a matter, do not conceal anything from me." He meant a message from God regarding the final issue of the siege, cf. 37:7. Jeremiah, knowing the aversion of the king to the truth, replies, v. 15: "If I tell thee [sc. the word of the Lord], wilt thou not assuredly kill me? And if I were to give thee advice, thou wouldst not listen to me." V. 16. Then the king sware to him secretly, "As Jahveh liveth, who hath made us this soul, I shall certainly not kill thee, nor deliver thee into the hand of these men who seek thy life." אַתְּ אִשְׁרָא, as in 27:8, properly means, "with regard to Him who has created us." The *Qeri* expunges אַתְּ.

"These men" are the princes mentioned in v. 1. **Jeremiah 38:17f.** After this solemn asseveration of the king, Jeremiah said to him, "Thus saith Jahveh, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: If thou wilt assuredly go out to the princes of the king of Babylon [i.e., wilt surrender thyself to them, cf. 2 Kings 18:31; 24:12], then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire, and thou and thy house shall live. But if thou dost not go out to the princes of the king of Babylon, then this city will be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand." The word of God is the same that Jeremiah had already repeatedly announced to the king, cf. 34:2-5; 32:4; 21:4-10. The princes (chiefs, generals) of the king of Babylon are named, because they commanded the besieging army (Jeremiah 39:3, 13); Nebuchadnezzar himself had his headquarters at Riblah, 39:5.

**Jeremiah 38:19ff.** Against the advice that he should save his life by surrendering to the Chaldeans, Zedekiah suggests the consideration, "I am afraid of the Jews, who have deserted [אֶל אֲשֶׁר as in 37:13] to the Chaldeans, lest they give me into their hands

and maltreat me." הִתְעַלֵּל בִּי, *illudere alicui*, to abuse any one by mockery or ill-treatment; cf. Num. 22:29, 1 Chron. 10:4, etc. Jeremiah replies, v. 20f., "They will not give thee up. Yet, pray, listen to the voice of Jahveh, in that which I say to thee, that it may be well with thee, and that thy soul may live. V. 21. But if thou dost refuse to go out [i.e., to surrender thyself to the Chaldeans], this is the word which the Lord hath shown me [has revealed to me]: V. 22. Behold, all the women that are left in the house of the king of Judah shall be brought out to the princes of the king of Babylon, and those [women] shall say, Thy friends have misled thee and have overcome thee; thy feet are sunk in the mud, they have turned away back. V. 23. And all thy wives and thy children shall they bring out to the Chaldeans, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand; for thou shalt be seized by the hand of the king of Babylon, and thou shalt burn this city with fire."—After Jeremiah had once more assured the king that he would save his life by voluntary surrender, he announces to him that, on the other alternative, instead of his becoming the sport of the deserters, the women of his harem would be insulted. The women who remain in the king's house, as distinguished from "thy wives" (v. 23), are the women of the royal harem, the wives of former kings, who remain in the harem as the concubines of the reigning king. These are to be brought out to the generals of the Chaldean king, and to sing a satire on him, to this effect: "Thy friends have misled thee, and overpowered thee," etc. The first sentence of this song is from Obad. v. 7, where הַשִּׂיאוּהוּ stands instead of הִסִּיתוּהוּ. The friends (אֲנָשֵׁי שְׂלֹמֹה, cf. 20:10) are his great men and his false prophets. Through their counsels, these have led him astray, and brought him into a bog, in which his feet stick fast, and then they have gone back; i.e., instead of helping him out, they have deserted him, leaving him sticking in the bog. The expression is figurative, and the meaning of the figure is plain (רְגֵלָה is plural). בִּץ, ὄπ. λεγ., is equivalent to בַּצָּה, a bog, Job 8:11.

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Moreover, the wives and children of Zedekiah are to fall into the hand of the Chaldeans. מוֹצֵאִים, the participle, is used instead of the finite tense to express the notion of indefinite personality: "they bring them out." תִּתְּפֹשׂ בְּיָד, properly, "to be seized in the hand," is a pregnant construction for, "to fall into the hand and be held fast by it." "Thou shalt burn this city," i.e., bring the blame of burning it upon thyself. Ewald, Hitzig, and Graf, following the LXX, Syr., and Chald., would change תִּתְּפֹשׂ into תִּשְׂרֹף, but needlessly.

**Jeremiah 38:24–27.** From the king's weakness of character, and his dependence on his evil counsellors, neither could this interview have any result. Partly from want of firmness, but chiefly from fear of the reproaches of his princes, he did not venture to surrender himself and the city to the Chaldeans. Hence he did not wish that his interview with the prophet should be known, partly for the purpose of sparing himself reproaches from the princes, partly also, perhaps, not to expose the prophet to further persecutions on the part of the great men. Accordingly, he dismissed Jeremiah with this instruction: "Let no man know of these words, lest thou die." But if the princes should learn that the king had been speaking with him, and asked him, "Tell us, now, what thou hast said to the king, do not hide it from us, and we will not kill thee; and what did the king say to thee?" then he was to say to them, "I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not send me back to the house of Jonathan, to die there." As to the house of Jonathan, see on 37:15. מִפִּיל תִּחַנְתִּי On cf. 36:7; 37:20.

**Jeremiah 38:27, 28.** What the king had supposed actually occurred, and Jeremiah gave the princes, who asked about the conversation, the reply that the king had prepared for him. יָחַרְשׁוּ מִמֶּנּוּ, they went away in silence from him, and left him in peace; cf. 1 Sam. 7:8. כִּי לֹא נִשְׁמַע, for the matter, the real subject of the conversation did not become known. So Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison till

the day of the capture of Jerusalem.—The last sentence of v. 28 belongs to the following chapter, and forms the introductory sentence of the passage whose conclusion follows in 39:3.

## Jeremiah 39

### Capture of Jerusalem; Fate of Zedekiah and Jeremiah. Consolatory Message to Ebedmelech

**Jeremiah 39:1–14.** In vv. 1–14 the events which took place at the taking of Jerusalem are summarily related, for the purpose of showing how the announcements of Jeremiah the prophet have been fulfilled.

**Jeremiah 39:1–3.** "And it came to pass, when Jerusalem had been taken (in the ninth year of Zedekiah the king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadrezzar and all his army had come against Jerusalem and besieged it; in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth of the month, was the city broken into), then came all the princes of the king of Babylon and sat down at the middle gate,—Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, chief chamberlain, Nergal-sharezer, chief magician, and all the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon." These three verses, to which the last clause of Jeremiah 38:28 belongs, form one period, broken up by a pretty long piece inserted in it, on the beginning and duration of the siege of Jerusalem; so that, after the introductory clause וַיָּהִי בַּאֲשֶׁר (= וַיְהִי as in 37:11), Jeremiah 38:28, the conclusion does not come till the word וַיָּבֵאוּ, v. 3. In the parenthesis, the length of the siege, as stated, substantially agrees with 52:4–7a and 2 Kings 25:1–4a, only that in these passages the time when the siege began is further determined by the mention of the day of the month, בְּעָשׂוֹר לְחֹדֶשׁ, which words are omitted here. The siege, then, lasted eighteen months, all but one day. After the besiegers had penetrated into the city through the breaches made in the wall, the princes, i.e., the chief generals, took up their position at "the gate of the midst." וַיֵּשְׁבוּ, "they sat down," i.e., took up a position, fixed their quarters. "The

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gate of the midst," which is mentioned only in this passage, is supposed, and perhaps rightly, to have been a gate in the wall which divided the city of Zion from the lower city; from this point, the two portions of the city, the upper and the lower city, could most easily be commanded.

With regard to the names of the Babylonian princes, it is remarkable (1) that the name Nergal-sharezer occurs twice, the first time without any designation, the second time with the official title of chief magician; (2) that the name Samgar-nebo has the name of God (Nebo or Nebu) in the second half, whereas in all other compounds of this kind that are known to us, Nebu forms the first portion of the name, as in Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan, Nebushasban (v. 13), Naboned, Nabonassar, Nabopolassar, etc.; (3) from this name, too, is omitted the title of office, while we find one with the following name. Moreover (4) in v. 13, where the Babylonian grandees are again spoken of, instead of the four names, only three are given, but every one of them with a title of office; and only the third of these, Nergal-sharezer, the chief magician, is identical with the one who is named last in v. 3; while Nebushasban is mentioned instead of the Sarsechim of v. 3 as רב־סָרִיס, chief of the eunuchs (high chamberlain); and in place of Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, we find Nebuzaradan as the commander of the body-guards (רב־טַבָּחִים). On these four grounds, Hitzig infers that v. 3, in the passage before us, has been corrupted, and that it contained originally only the names of three persons, with their official titles. Moreover, he supposes that סָמְגָר is formed from the Persian *jâm* and the derivation-syllable *kr*, Pers. *war*, and means "he who has or holds the cup," the cup-bearer; thus corresponding to רב־שָׁקָה, Rabshakeh, "chief cup-bearer," 2 Kings 18:17, Isa. 36:2. He also considers שְׂרָסְכִים a Hebraizing form of סָרִיס; רב־סָרִיס; רב־סָרִיס, "to cut," by transposition from חָצָה, Arab. *chsy*, from which comes *chasiyun*, "a eunuch," = סָרִיס, plur. סָרִיס;

hence שְׂרָסְכִים = רב־סָרִיס, of which the former has been a marginal gloss, afterwards received into the text. This complicated combination, however, by which Hitzig certainly makes out two official titles, though he retains no more than the divine name *Nebu* as that of *Rabsaris*, is founded upon two very hazardous conjectures. Nor do these conjectures gain much support from the renewal of the attempt, made about fifty years since by the late P. von Bohlen, to explain from the Neo-Persian the names of persons and titles occurring in the Assyrian and Old-Babylonian languages, an attempt which has long since been looked upon as scientifically unwarranted. Strange as it may seem that the two persons first named are not further specified by the addition of an official title, yet the supposition that the persons named in v. 3 are identical with those mentioned in v. 13 is erroneous, since it stands in contradiction with 52:12, which even Hitzig recognises as historically reliable. According to 52:12, Nebuzaradan, who is the first mentioned in v. 13, was not present at the taking of Jerusalem, and did not reach the city till four weeks afterwards; he was ordered by Nebuchadnezzar to superintend arrangements for the destruction of Jerusalem, and also to make arrangements for the transportation of the captives to Babylon, and for the administration of the country now being laid waste. But in v. 3 are named the generals who, when the city had been taken by storm, took up their position within it.—Nor do the other difficulties, mentioned above, compel us to make such harsh conjectures. If Nergal-sharezer be the name of a person, compounded of two words, the divine name, *Nergal* (2 Kings 17:30), and *Sharezer*, probably *dominator tuebitur* (see Delitzsch on Isa. 37:38), then Samgar-Nebu-Sarsechim may possibly be a proper name compounded of three words. So long as we are unable with certainty to explain the words סָמְגָר and שְׂרָסְכִים out of the Assyrian, we can form no decisive judgment regarding them. But not even does the hypothesis of Hitzig account for the occurrence twice over of

the name Nergal-sharezer. The Nergal-sharezer mentioned in the first passage was, no doubt, the commander-in-chief of the besieging army; but it could hardly be maintained, with anything like convincing power, that this officer could not bear the same name as that of the chief magician. And if it be conceded that there are really errors in the strange words סַמְגַר־נְבוֹ and שְׂרָפְכִים, we are as yet without the necessary means of correcting them, and obtaining the proper text.

**Jeremiah 39:4–7.** In vv. 4–7 are narrated the flight of Zedekiah, his capture, and his condemnation, like what we find in 52:7–11 and 2 Kings 25:4–7. *“When Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them (the Chaldean generals who had taken up their position at the mid-gate), they fled by night out of the city, by the way of the king’s garden, by a gate between the walls, and he went out by the way to the Arabah. V. 5. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the steppes of Jericho, and captured him, and brought him to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, to Riblah, in the land of Hamath; and he pronounced judgment on him.”* Hitzig and Graf consider that the connection of these events, made by כַּאֲשֶׁר רָאָם, is awkward, and say that the king would not have waited till the Chaldean generals took up their position at the mid-gate, nor could he see these in the night-time; that, moreover, he would hardly have waited till the city was taken before he fled. These objections are utterly worthless. If the city of Zion, in which the royal palace stood, was separated from the lower city by a wall, then the king might still be quite at ease, with his men of war, in the upper city or city of Zion, so long as the enemy, who were pushing into the lower city from the north, remained at the separating wall, near the middle gate in it; and only when he saw that the city of Zion, too, could no longer be held, did he need to betake himself to flight with the men of war around him. In actual fact, then, he might have been able to see the Chaldean generals with his own

eyes, although we need not press רָאָם so much as to extract this meaning from it. Even at this juncture, flight was still possible through the south gate, at the king’s garden, between the two walls. Thenius, on 2 Kings 25:4, takes חֲמַתִּים to mean a double wall, which at the southern end of Ophel closed up the ravine between Ophel and Zion. But a double wall must also have had two gates, and Thenius, indeed, has exhibited them in his plan of Jerusalem; but the text speaks of but one gate (שַׁעַר). “The two walls” are rather the walls which ran along the eastern border of Zion and the western border of Ophel. The gate between these was situated in the wall which ran across the Tyropoean valley, and united the wall of Zion and that of Ophel; it was called the horse-gate (Neh. 3:28), and occupied the position of the modern “dung-gate” (*Bab-el Moghâribeh*); see on Neh. 3:27, 28. It was not the “gate of the fountain,” as Thenius (*Bücher der Kön. S. 456*), Nägelsbach, and others imagine, founding on the supposed existence of the double wall at the south end of Ophel. Outside this gate, where the valley of the Tyropoeon joined with the valley of the Kidron, lay the king’s garden, in the vicinity of the pool of Siloam; see on Neh. 3:15. The words וַיֵּצֵא וְגוֹ’ introduce further details as to the king’s flight. In spite of the preceding plurals וַיֵּצְאוּ וַיִּבְרְחוּ, the sing. יֵצֵא is quite suitable here, since the narrator wishes to give further details with regard to the flight of the king alone, without bringing into consideration the warriors who fled along with him. Nor does the following אֶחָדֵיהֶם militate against this view; for the Chaldean warriors pursued the king and his followers, not to capture these followers, but the king. Escaped from the city, the king took the direction of the עֲרֵבָה, the plain of the Jordan, in order to escape over Jordan to Gilead. But the pursuing enemy overtook him in the steppes of Jericho (see *Comm. on Joshua* on Josh. 4:13), and thus before he had crossed the Jordan; they led him, bound, to Riblah, before the king of Babylon. “Riblah in the land of

Hamath” is still called *Ribleh*, a wretched village about 20 miles S.S.W. from *Hums* (Emesa) on the river el Ahsy (Orontes), in a large fertile plain in the northern portion of the *Bekâa*, on the great caravan-track which passes from Palestine through Damascus, Emesa, and Hamath to Thapsacus and Carchemish on the Euphrates; see Robinson’s *Bibl. Res.* iii. 545, and on *Comm. on Kings* at 2 Kings 23:33.—On דִּבֵּר מִשְׁפָּטִים, to speak judgment, pronounce sentence of punishment, see on 1:16. Nebuchadnezzar caused the sons of Zedekiah and all the princes of Judah (חֲרִים, nobles, lords, as in 27:30) to be slain before the eyes of the Jewish king; then he put out his eyes and bound him with brazen fetters, to carry him away to Babylon (לְבַיִת לְהִבְיָא), where, according to 52:11, he remained in confinement till his death.

**Jeremiah 39:8–10.** Vv. 8–10 contain a brief notice regarding the fate of the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, joined on to the passage preceding, in order to prepare the way for a short account of the treatment which Jeremiah experienced at the same time. From the more detailed notice regarding the fate of the city, given in 52:12ff., 2 Kings 25:8ff., we see that the destruction of the city and the carrying away of the people took place one month after their fall, and that the king of Babylon had appointed Nebuzaradan, the commander of his body-guards, to go to Jerusalem for the purpose of carrying out these matters. In these verses of ours, also, Nebuzaradan is mentioned as the one who carried out the judgment that had been pronounced (v. 10ff.); but the fact of his being sent from Riblah and the date of the execution of his commission are here omitted, so that it appears as if it had all occurred immediately after the capture of the city, and as if Nebuzaradan had been always on the spot. For the writer of this chapter did not need to give a historically exact account of the separate events; it was merely necessary briefly to mention the chief points, in order to place in proper light the treatment experienced by the

prophet. The Chaldeans burned the king’s house (the palace) and בֵּית־הַקֶּטֶם. This latter expression, taken in connection with “the king’s house,” signifies the rest of the city apart from the king’s palace; hence בֵּית is used in a collective sense. the temple is not mentioned, as being of no consequence for the immediate purpose of this short notice.

**Jeremiah 39:9.** “*And the rest of the people that had remained in the city, and the deserters who had deserted to him, and the rest of the people that remained, Nebuzaradan, the chief of the body-guards, led captive to Babylon.* V. 10. *But of the poorest of the people, who had nothing, Nebuzaradan left some in the country, and he gave them vineyards and arable fields at the same time.*” עֲלִיּוֹ after נִפְלְאוֹ refers, *ad sensum*, to the king of Babylon; his name, certainly, is not given in the immediate context, but it is readily suggested by it. In 52:15 we find אֶל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל instead of עֲלִיּוֹ; yet we might also refer this last-named word to the following subject, Nebuzaradan, as the representative of the king. רִב־טַבָּחִים, properly, chief of the slayers, i.e., of the executioners, is the chief of the king’s body-guard, who occupied the first place among the royal attendants; see on Gen. 37:36. By the addition of the words בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, on that day, i.e., then, the more general account regarding Jerusalem and its inhabitants is concluded, for the purpose of attaching to it the notice regarding the fate of the prophet Jeremiah, vv. 11–14.

**Jeremiah 39:11–14.** Nebuchadnezzar gave orders regarding Jeremiah, through Nebuzaradan, the chief of the body-guards: “*Take him, and set thine eyes upon him, and do him no harm; but, just as he telleth thee, so do with him.*” In obedience to this command, “*Nebuzaradan, the chief of the body-guards, sent,—and Nebushasban the head chamberlain, and Nergal-sharezer the chief magician, and all (the other) chief men of the king of Babylon,—they sent and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and delivered him over to Gedaliah*

*the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to take him out to the house. Thus he dwelt among the people.*—On the names of the Chaldean grandees, see on v. 3. Instead of the chief chamberlain (רַב־סָרְסִיִּם) Sarsechim, there is here named, as occupying this office, Nebushasban, who, it seems, along with Nebuzaradan, was not sent from Riblah till after the taking of Jerusalem, when Sarsechim was relieved. We cannot come to any certain conclusion regarding the relation in which the two persons or names stand to one another, since Nebushasban is only mentioned in v. 13, just as Sarsechim is mentioned only in v. 3. Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the man who had already on a former occasion given protection to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26:24), was, according to 40:5, placed by the king of Babylon over the cities of Judah, i.e., was nominated the Chaldean governor over Judah and the Jews who were left in the land. To him, as such, Jeremiah is here (v. 14) delivered, that he may take him into the house. בַּיִת is neither the temple (Hitzig) nor the palace, the king's house (Graf), but the house in which Gedaliah resided as the governor; and we find here הַבַּיִת, not בְּבַיִתוֹ, since the house was neither the property nor the permanent dwelling-place of Gedaliah.—According to this account, Jeremiah seems to have remained in the court of the prison till Nebuchadnezzar came, to have been liberated by Nebuzaradan only at the command of the king, and to have been sent to Gedaliah the governor. But this is contradicted by the account in 40:1ff., according to which, Nebuzaradan liberated the prophet in Ramah, where he had been kept, confined by manacles, among the captives of Judah that were to be carried to Babylon: Nebuzaradan sent for him, and gave him his liberty. This contradiction has arisen simply from the intense brevity with which, in this verse, the fate of Jeremiah at the capture and destruction of Jerusalem is recorded; it is easy to settle the difference in this way:—When the city was taken, those inhabitants, especially males, who had not carried arms, were seized by the Chaldeans and

carried out of the city to Ramah, where they were held prisoners till the decision of the king regarding their fate should be made known. Jeremiah shared this lot with his fellow-countrymen. When, after this, Nebuzaradan came to Jerusalem to execute the king's commands regarding the city and its inhabitants, at the special order of his monarch, he sent for Jeremiah the prophet, taking him out from among the crowd of prisoners who had been already carried away to Ramah, loosed him from his fetters, and gave him permission to choose his place of residence. This liberation of Jeremiah from his confinement might, in a summary account, be called a sending for him out of the court of the prison, even though the prophet, at the exact moment of his liberation, was no longer in the court of the prison of the palace at Jerusalem, but had been already carried away to Ramah as a captive.

**Jeremiah 39:15–18.** *Jeremiah's message of comfort to Ebedmelech.*—V. 15. "Now to Jeremiah there had come the word of the Lord, while he remained shut up in the court of the prison, as follows: V. 16. Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Cushite, saying, Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring my words against this city for evil and not for good, and they shall take place before thee on that day. V. 17. But I will deliver thee on that day, saith Jahveh; neither shalt thou be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid. V. 18. For I will surely save thee, neither shalt thou fall by the sword, and thine own life shall be thy spoil, because thou hast trusted me, saith Jahveh."—This word of God for Ebedmelech came to the prophet, no doubt, very soon after his deliverance from the miry pit by this pious Ethiopian; but it is not given till now, and this by way of supplement, lest its introduction previously should break the chain of events which occurred at the time of that deliverance, Jeremiah 38:14–39:13. Hence הִיָּה, v. 15, is to be translated as a pluperfect. "Go and say," etc., is not inconsistent with the fact that Jeremiah, from being in confinement, could not leave the

court of the prison. For Ebedmelech could come into the prison, and then Jeremiah could go to him and declare the word of God. "Behold, I will bring my words against this city," i.e., I shall cause the evil with which I have threatened Jerusalem and its inhabitants to come, or, to be accomplished (עָלָה with א dropped, as in 19:15, and עָלָה for אָלָה). וְהָיוּ לְפָנַי, "and these words are to take place before thy face," i.e., thou shalt with thine own eyes behold their fulfilment, בְּיוֹם אֲהַיָּהוּ, i.e., at the time of their occurrence. But thou shalt be saved, not fall into the hands of the enemy and be killed, but carry away thy body out of it all as booty; cf. 21:9; 38:2. "Because thou hast trusted me;" i.e., through the aid afforded to my prophet thou hast continued thy faith in me.

### C. Jeremiah's Predictions and Experiences After the Destruction of Jerusalem—Ch. 40–45

#### Jeremiah 40

#### Ch. 40 and 41. Liberation of Jeremiah. Murder of Gedaliah by Ishmael, and Its Results

**Jeremiah 40:1–6.** The liberation of Jeremiah by Nebuzaradan, the chief of the body-guards.—The superscription, "The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, after that Nebuzaradan, the captain of the body-guard, had let him go from Ramah," does not seem to be appropriate; for in what follows there is no word of God declared by Jeremiah, but first, 2–6, we are told that Jeremiah was liberated and given in charge to Gedaliah; then is told, 40:7–41:18, the story of the murder of Gedaliah the governor by Ishmael, together with its consequences; and not till 42:7ff. is there communicated a word of God, which Jeremiah uttered regarding the Jews who wished to flee to Egypt, and had besought him for some revelation from God (Jeremiah 42:1–6). The heading of our verse cannot refer to this prophecy, not merely for the reason that it is too far removed, but still more because it has a historical notice introducing it, 42:1–6. Our superscription rather refers to 1:1–3; and

דְּבַר here, as well as there, means, not a single prophecy, but a number of prophecies. Just as דְּבַר יְהוָה in 1:2 forms the heading for all the prophecies uttered by Jeremiah from the thirteenth year of Josiah till the destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away of the people in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, so the words וְהָיוּ לְפָנַי of this verse form the superscription for the prophecies which Jeremiah uttered after the destruction of Jerusalem, i.e., to the section formed by Jeremiah 40–45, although Jeremiah 44, 45 have headings of their own; these, however, are subordinate to the heading of this chapter, in the same way as the titles in 7:1; 11:11; 14:1, etc. fall under the general title given in 1:2, 3.—Regarding Nebuzaradan and the discharge of Jeremiah at Ramah (i.e., *er Râm*, see on 31:15), cf. the explanations given on 39:13 (p. 335 of this volume). In what follows, from בְּקִרְחָתוֹ onwards, further details are given regarding Jeremiah's liberation. "When he (Nebuzaradan) sent for him, he (Jeremiah), bound with fetters, was among all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being carried away to Babylon." Those who were to be carried away had been gathered together to Ramah, which lies about five miles north from Jerusalem; thence they were to set out for Babylon. אֲזָקִים (= זָקִים, Job 36:8, Isa. 45:14), "fetters,"—here, according to v. 4, "manacles," by which, perhaps, two or more prisoners were fastened to one another.

**Jeremiah 40:2–4.** When Jeremiah had been brought, the commander of the guards said to him, "The Lord thy God hath declared this evil against this place, and the Lord hath brought it on (brought it to pass), and hath done as He spake; for ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not hearkened to His voice: thus hath this thing happened to you." The mode of expression is that of Jeremiah; but Nebuzaradan may have expressed the *thought*, that now there had been fulfilled what Jeremiah had predicted in the name of God, because the people, by their rebellion, had broken the oath

they had sworn before their God (cf. Ezek. 17:13ff.), and had thereby sinned against Him. The article before דָּבַר, required by the *Qeri*, is unnecessary; cf. Ewald, § 293, *a*; Gesenius, § 112, 2, *a*.

**Jeremiah 40:4.** *Nebuzaradan then declared him free: "And now, behold, I free thee this day from the shackles on thine hands. If it please thee to come with me to Babylon, then come, and I will set mine eye upon thee (i.e., take thee under my protection, cf. 39:12). But if it please thee not to come with me to Babylon, then let it be so. See, the whole country is before thee (cf. Gen. 13:9; 20:5, etc.); whithersoever it pleases thee, and seems right to thee to go, go."* V. 5. *And because Jeremiah had not yet returned, he said, "Go back to Gedaliah, ... whom the king of Babylon hath set over the cities of Judah, and remain with him among the people; or go wherever it seemeth right to thee to go."* And the commander of the guard gave him what provisions he required and a present, and sent him away; thereafter Jeremiah went to Gedaliah to Mizpah, and remained there among the people who had been left behind in the land (v. 6). The words וְעֵדְנִי לֹא יָשׁוּב were certainly misunderstood by the old translators, who made various conjectures as to their meaning; even yet, Dahler, Movers, Graf, and Nägelsbach are of opinion that "it is impossible to understand" this sentence, and that the text is plainly corrupt. Luther renders: "for no one will any longer return thither." Hitzig considers this translation substantially correct, and only requiring to be a little more exactly rendered: "but there, no one returns home again." Apart, however, from the consideration that on this view וְעֵדְנִי, which stands at the head of the sentence, does not get full justice paid to it, the thought does not accord with what precedes, and the reference of the suffix to the indefinite "person" or "one" is extremely forced. According to what goes before, in which Nebuzaradan gives the prophet full liberty of choosing whether he would go with him to Babylon or remain in the country, in whatever part he likes, and from the

following advice which he gives him, "Go, or return, to Gedaliah," the words וְעֵדְנִי לֹא יָשׁוּב, on account of the third person (יָשׁוּב), cannot certainly be an address of the chief captain to Jeremiah, and as little can they contain a remark about going to Babylon. The words are evidently, both as to their form and their contents, a circumstantial clause, containing a statement regarding the relation of Jeremiah to the proposal of the chief captain (and this is the view taken long ago by Kimchi), i.e., a parenthetical remark of the narrator, according to which Nebuzaradan demands that he shall remain with Gedaliah, in the sense, "and yet he was not going back," or, still better, on account of the imperfect יָשׁוּב, "because he was still unwilling to go back," namely, to this or that place indefinitely; then Nebuzaradan further said, "Return, then, to Gedaliah." If we supply וַיֵּאמֶר before וְשׁוּבָה וְגו', with which Nebuzaradan brings the matter to a close, the meaning is quite clear. It is evident from v. 4 that Nebuzaradan stopped a little in order to let Jeremiah decide; but since the prophet did not return, i.e., neither decided in the one way nor the other, he adds וְשׁוּבָה וְגו', and thereby puts an end to the indecision. אֶרְחָקָה means a portion of food, or victuals; cf. 52:34 and Prov. 15:17. Mizpah, where Gedaliah had taken up his position, is the Mizpah of the tribe of Benjamin, where Samuel judged the people and chose Saul to be king (1 Sam. 7:15ff., 10:17); doubtless the modern *Neby Samwil*, five miles north-west from Jerusalem, a short distance south-west from Ramah; see on Josh. 18:26.

**Jeremiah 40:7-12.** *Return of those who had been dispersed: they gather round Gedaliah.*— Whilst the country and its capital were being conquered, many of the men of war had dispersed here and there through the land, and fled for refuge to regions difficult of access, where they could not be reached by the Chaldeans; others had even escaped into the territory of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites. When these heard that now, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away



of the captives, the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah as governor over the few people who had been left behind in the country, they returned from their several places of refuge, and came to Mizpah to Gedaliah, who promised them protection and safety, on condition that they would recognise the authority of the king of Babylon and peaceably cultivate the soil. שְׂרֵי הַיְלִים, “leaders of the forces, captains.” בַּשָּׂדֶה, “in the country,” as opposed to the city; שָׂדֶה, “fields,” as in 17:3. אַנְשֵׁיהֶם, “their men,” the troops under the captains. כִּי הִפְקִיד אֹתוֹ, “that he had committed to his oversight and care.” “Men,” viz., old, weak, infirm men; “women and children,” whose husbands and fathers had perished; “and some of the poor of the country, of those who had not been carried captive to Babylon” (מִן partitive), i.e., the poor and mean people whom the Chaldeans had left behind in the country (Jeremiah 39:10).

**Jeremiah 40:8ff.** These captains came to Mizpah, namely (י explicative), Ishmael the son of Nethaniah (according to 41:1, the grandson of Elishama, and of royal blood), Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah (cf. v. 13 and 41:11, 16; 42:1ff.; the name Jonathan is omitted in 2 Kings 25:23; see on this passage), Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite (from Netophah in the vicinity of Bethlehem, 1 Chron. 2:54, Ezra 2:22), Jezaniah (יְזַנְיָהוּ; but in 2 Kings 25:23 יְזַנְיָהוּ), the Maachathite, from Maachah, a district in Syria near Hermon, Deut. 3:14, Josh. 12:5. These men, who had borne arms against the Chaldeans, were concerned for their safety when they returned into the country. Gedaliah swore to them, i.e., promised them on oath, “Be not afraid to serve the Chaldeans; remain in the country and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. And as for me, behold, I shall remain at Mizpah to stand before the Chaldeans who will come to us,” i.e., as lieutenant of the king of Babylon, to represent you before the Chaldean officers and armies, to

maintain your rights and interests, so that you may be able to settle down where you choose, without anxiety, and cultivate the land. “And as for yourselves, father ye wine and fruit (קִיץ, see on 2 Sam. 16:1) and oil, and put them in your vessels.” אָסַף is used of the ingathering of the fruits of the ground. It was during the fifth or sixth month (2 Kings 25:8), the end of July or beginning of August, that grapes, figs, and olives became ripe; and these had grown so plentifully in comparison with the small number of those who had returned, that they could gather sufficient for their wants. “And dwell in your cities, cities which ye seize,” i.e., which you shall take possession of. V. 11ff. Those Jews also who had fled, during the war, into the neighbouring countries of Moab, Ammon, Edom, etc., returned to Judah when they learned that the king of Babylon had left a remnant, and placed Gedaliah over them; they came to Mizpah and Gedaliah, who appointed them places to dwell in, and they gathered much wine and fruit, i.e., made a rich vintage and fruit harvest. נָתַן שְׂאֵרִית, “to give a remainder,” as it were to leave a remainder (הוֹתִיר שׁ, 44:7, or שׁוּם שׁ, Gen. 45:7).

**Jeremiah 40:13–16.** *Gedaliah is forewarned of Ishmael's intention to murder him.*—After the return of those who had taken refuge in Moab, etc., Johanan the son of Kareah, together with the rest of the captains who were scattered here and there through the country, came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, to say to him: “Dost thou know indeed that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to take thy life?” The words “that were in the country” are neither a gloss, nor a thoughtless repetition by some scribe from v. 7 (as Hitzig and Graf suppose), but they are repeated for the purpose of distinguishing plainly between the captains with their men from the Jews who had returned out of Moab, Ammon, and Edom. הַכּוֹת נַפְשׁ, “to strike the soul, life” = to kill; cf. Gen. 37:21, Deut. 19:6. What induced the king of Ammon to think of assassination,—whether it was personal hostility towards Gedaliah, or the hope of

destroying the only remaining support of the Jews, and thereby perhaps putting himself in possession of the country,—cannot be determined. That he employed Ishmael for the accomplishment of his purpose, may have been owing to the fact that this man had a personal envy of Gedaliah; for Ishmael, being sprung from the royal family (Jeremiah 40:1), probably could not endure being subordinate to Gedaliah.—The plot had become known, and Gedaliah was secretly informed of it by Johanan; but the former did not believe the rumour. Johanan then secretly offered to slay Ishmael, taking care that no one should know who did it, and urged compliance in the following terms: “Why should he slay thee, and all the Jews who have gathered themselves round thee be scattered, and the remnant of Judah perish?” Johanan thus called his attention to the evil consequences which would result to the remnant left in the land were he killed; but Gedaliah replied, “Do not this thing, for thou speakest a lie against Ishmael.” The *Qeri* needlessly changes אֶל-הַתַּעֲשֶׂה into אֶל-הַתַּעֲשֶׂה; cf. 39:12.

### Jeremiah 41

**Jeremiah 41:1–10.** *Murder of Gedaliah and his followers, as well as other Jews, by Ishmael.*—Vv. 1–3. The warning of Johanan had been only too well founded. In the seventh month,—only two months, therefore, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the appointment of Gedaliah as governor,—Ishmael came with the men to Mizpah, and was hospitably received by Gedaliah and invited to his table. Ishmael is here more exactly described as to his family descent, for the purpose of throwing a stronger light upon the exceeding cruelty of the murders afterwards ascribed to him. He was the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama,—perhaps the secretary of state mentioned 36:12, or more likely the son of David who bore this name, 2 Sam. 5:6, 1 Chron. 3:8; 14:7; so that Ishmael would belong to a lateral branch of the house of David, be of royal extraction, and one of the royal lords. וְרַבֵּי הַמְּלָכִים cannot be joined with

Ishmael as the subject, because in what follows there is no further mention made of the royal lords, but only of Ishmael and his ten men; it belongs to what precedes, מִזְרַע הַמְּלֹכִים, so that we must repeat מִן before רַבֵּי. The objections of Nägelsbach to this view will not stand examination. It is not self-evident that Ishmael, because he was of royal blood, was therefore also one of the royal nobles; for the רַבִּים certainly did not form a hereditary caste, but were perhaps a class of nobles in the service of the king, to which class the princes did not belong simply in virtue of their being princes. But the improbability that Ishmael should have been able with ten men to overpower the whole of the Jewish followers of Gedaliah, together with the Chaldean warriors, and (according to v. 7) out of eighty men to kill some, making prisoners of the rest, is not so great as to compel us to take רַבֵּי הַמְּלָכִים in such a meaning as to make it stand in contradiction with the statement, repeated twice, over, that Ishmael, with his ten men, did all this. Eleven men who are determined to commit murder can kill a large number of persons who are not prepared against such an attempt, and may also keep a whole district in terror. “And they did eat bread there together,” i.e., they were invited by Gedaliah to his table. While at meat, Ishmael and his ten men rose and slew Gedaliah with the sword. On account of וַיִּמָּת אֹתוֹ, which comes after, Hitzig and Graf would change וַיִּבְנוּ into וַיִּבְנוּ, *he slew him*, Gedaliah; this alteration is possibly warranted, but by no means absolutely necessary. The words וַיִּמָּת אֹתוֹ וגו', “and he killed him,” contain a reflection of the narrator as to the greatness of the crime; in conformity with the facts of the case, the murder is ascribed only to the originator of the deed, since the ten men of Ishmael’s retinue were simply his executioners. Besides Gedaliah, Ishmael killed “all the Jews that were with him, with Gedaliah in Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, the men of war.” The very expression shows that, of the Jews, only those are meant who were present in the house with Gedaliah,

and, of the Chaldean soldiers, only those warriors who had been allowed him as a guard, who for the time being were his servants, and who, though they were not, as Schmidt thinks, *hausto liberalius vino inebriati*, yet, as Chr. B. Michaelis remarks, were *tunc temporis inermes et imparati*. The Jews of post-exile times used to keep the third day of the seventh month as a fast-day, in commemoration of the murder of Gedaliah; see on Zech. 7:3.

**Jeremiah 41:4ff.** On the next day after the murder of Gedaliah, “when no man knew it,” i.e., before the deed had become known beyond Mizpah, “there came eighty men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria,” having all the tokens of mourning, “with their beards shaven, their clothes rent, and with cuts and scratches on their bodies (מִתְדַּבְּרִים, see on 16:6), and a meat-offering and frankincense in their hand, to bring them into the house of Jahveh.” The order in which the towns are named is not geographical; for Shiloh lay south from Shechem, and a little to the side from the straight road leading from Shechem to Jerusalem. Instead of יָשׁוּ, the LXX (*Cod. Vat.*) have Σαλήμ; they use the same word as the name of a place in Gen. 33:18, although the Hebrew שָׁלֵם is there an adjective, meaning *safe*, in *good condition*. According to Robinson (*Bibl. Res.* iii. 102), there is a village named *Sâlim* three miles east from *Nablûs* (Shechem); Hitzig and Graf, on the strength of this, prefer the reading of the LXX, to preserve the order of the names in the text. But Hitzig has renounced this conjecture in the second edition of his Commentary, “because *Sâlim* in Hebrew would be שׁוֹלֵם, not שָׁלֵם.” There is absolutely no foundation for the view in the LXX and in Gen. 33:18; the supposition, moreover, that the three towns are given in their topographical order, and must have stood near each other, is also unfounded. Shechem may have been named first because the greater number of these men came from that city, and other men from Shiloh and Samaria accompanied them. These men were pious descendants of the

Israelites who belonged to the kingdom of Israel; they dwelt among the heathen colonists who had been settled in the country under Esarhaddon (2 Kings 17:24ff.), but, from the days of Hezekiah or Josiah, had continued to serve Jahveh in Jerusalem, where they used to attend the feasts (2 Chron. 34:9, cf. 30:11). Nay, even after the destruction of Jerusalem, at the seasons of the sacred feasts, they were still content to bring at least unbloody offerings—meat-offerings and incense—on the still sacred spot where these things used to be offered to Jahveh; but just because this could now be done only on the ruins of what had once been the sanctuary, they appeared there with all the signs of deep sorrow for the destruction of this holy place and the cessation of sacrificial worship. In illustration of this, Grotius has adduced a passage from Papinian’s *instit. de rerum divis. § sacrae*: “*Locus in quo aedes sacrae sunt aedificatae, etiam diruto aedificio, sacer adhuc manet.*”

**Jeremiah 41:6.** Ishmael went out from Mizpah to meet these men, always weeping as he went (הֵלֵךְ הַלֵּךְ וּבֹכֶה, cf. Ges. § 131, *a* ; Ew. § 280, *b*). If they came from Ephraim by way of Gibeon (el *Jîb*), the road on to Jerusalem passed close by Mizpah. When Ishmael met them, he asked them to come to Gedaliah (to Mizpah). But when they had entered the city, “Ishmael slew them into the midst of the pit” (which was there), i.e., killed them and cast their corpses into the pit.

**Jeremiah 41:8.** Only ten men out of the eighty saved their lives, and this by saying to Ishmael, “Do not kill us, for we have hidden stores in the field—wheat, and barley, and oil, and honey.” מְטַמְּנִים are excavations in the form of cisterns, or subterranean storehouses in the open country, for keeping grain; the openings or entrances to these are so concealed that the eye of a stranger could not perceive them. Such places are still universally employed in Palestine at the present day (Robinson’s *Palestine*, i. pp. 324–5), and are also to be found in other southern countries, both in ancient and modern times; see proofs of this in

Rosenmüller's *Scholia ad hunc locum*. It is remarked, in v. 9, of the pit into which Ishmael threw the corpses, that it was the same that King Asa had made, i.e., had caused to be made, against, i.e., for protection against, Baasha the king of Israel. In the historical books there is no mention made of this pit in the account of the war between Asa and Baasha, 1 Kings 15:16–22 and 2 Chron. 16:1–6; it is only stated in 1 Kings 15:22 and 2 Chron. 16:6 that, after Baasha, who had fortified Ramah, had been compelled to return to his own land because of the invasion of Benhadad the Syrian king, whom Asa had called to his aid, the king of Judah ordered all his people to carry away from Ramah the stones and timber which Baasha had employed in building, and therewith fortify Geba and Mizpah. The expression *בְּעֵשֶׂא כַּפְנֵי* certainly implies that the pit had been formed as a protection against Baasha, and belonged to the fortifications raised at that time. However, *הַבּוֹר* cannot mean the burial-place belonging to the city (Grotius), but only a cistern (cf. 2 Kings 10:14); and one such as could contain a considerable store of water was as necessary as a wall and a moat for the fortification of a city, so that it might be able to endure a long siege (Graf). Hitzig, on the other hand, takes *בוֹר* to mean a long and broad ditch which cut off the approach to the city from Ephraim, or which, forming a part of the fortifications, made a break in the road to Jerusalem, though it was bridged over in times of peace, thus forming a kind of tunnel. This idea is certainly incorrect; for, according to v. 7, the "ditch" was inside the city (*בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר*). The expression *בְּיַד גְּדַלְיָהוּ* is obscure, and cannot be explained with any of certainty. *בְּיַד* cannot mean "through the fault of" Gedaliah (Raschi), or "because of" Gedaliah—for his sake (Kimchi, Umbreit), or "*coram*" Gedaliah (Venema), but must rather be rendered "by means of, through the medium of," or "at the side of, together with." Nägelsbach has decided for the rendering "by means of," giving as his reason the fact that Ishmael had made use of the name of Gedaliah

in order to decoy these men into destruction. He had called to them, "Come to Gedaliah" (v. 6); and simply on the authority of this name, they had followed him. But the employment of the name as a means of decoy can hardly be expressed by *בְּיַד*. We therefore prefer the meaning "at the hand = at the side of" (following the Syriac, L. de Dieu, Rosenmüller, Ewald), although this signification cannot be established from the passages cited by Rosenm. (1 Sam. 14:34; 16:2, Ezra 7:23), nor can the meaning "together with" (Ewald) be shown to belong to it. On the other hand, a passage which is quite decisive for the rendering "by the hand of, beside," is Job 15:23: "there stands ready at his hand (*בְּיָדוֹ*, i.e., close to him) a day of darkness." If we take this meaning for the passage now before us, then *בְּיַד גְּדַלְיָהוּ* cannot be connected with *אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה*, in accordance with the Masoretic accents, but with *הַשְּׁלִיךְ שָׁם*, "where Ishmael cast the bodies of the men whom he had slain, by the side of Gedaliah;" so that it is not stated till here and now, and only in a casual manner, what had become of Gedaliah's corpse. Nothing that admits of being proved can be brought against this view. The *הוּא* which follows is a predicate: "the ditch wherein ... was that which Asa the king had formed."

The motive for this second series of assassinations by Ishmael is difficult to discover. The supposition that he was afraid of being betrayed, and for this reason killed these strangers, not wishing to be troubled with them, is improbable, for the simple reason that these strangers did not want to go to Mizpah, but to Jerusalem. For the supposition of Thenius (on 2 Kings 25:23) and of Schmieder, that the people had intended going to Mizpah to a house of God that was there, is very properly rejected by Hitzig, because no mention is made in history of a place of worship at Mizpah; and, according to the express statement of v. 6ff., Ishmael had enticed them into this city only by inviting them to come and see Gedaliah. Had Ishmael wished merely to conceal the murder

of Gedaliah from these strangers, he ought to have done anything but let them into Mizpah. As little can we regard this deed (with Graf) as an act of revenge on these Israelites by Ishmael for the murder of his relations and equals in rank by Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 52:10), because these men, who had now for a long time been living together with heathens, were Assyrian and Chaldean subjects. For we cannot comprehend how he could look on these Israelites as friends of the Chaldeans, and vent his anger against the Chaldean rule by murdering them; the mournful procession which they formed, and the offerings they were carrying to present, proclaimed them faithful adherents of Judah. Nägelsbach, accordingly, is of opinion that Ishmael had simply intended robbery. As it is evident that he, a rough and wild man, had assassinated the noble Gedaliah from personal jealousy, and in order to further the political interest of his Ammonite patron, he must have been seeking to put himself in the position of his victim, or to flee. "When we find, moreover, that he soon murdered a peaceable caravan of pilgrims, and preserved the lives only of a few who offered to show him hidden treasures; when, finally, we perceive that the whole *turba imbellis* of Mizpah were seized and carried off into slavery, Ishmael proves himself a mere robber." But, though the fact that Ishmael spared the lives of the ten men who offered to show him hidden treasures seems to support this view, yet the supposition that nothing more than robbery was intended does not suffice to explain the double murder. The two series of assassinations plainly stand in the closest connection, and must have been executed from one and the same motive. It was at the instigation of the Ammonite king that Ishmael murdered Gedaliah; moreover, as we learn from the report brought to Gedaliah by Johanan (Jeremiah 40:15), the crime was committed in the expectation that the whole of Judah would then be dispersed, and the remnant of them perish. This murder was thus the work of the Ammonite king, who selected the royally-descended Ishmael as his instrument simply because he could

conveniently, for the execution of his plans, employ the personal envy of one man against another who had been preferred by the king of Babylon. There can be no doubt that the same motive which urged him to destroy the remnant of Judah, i.e., to frustrate the attempt to gather and restore Judah, was also at work in the massacre of the pilgrims who were coming to the temple. If Ishmael, the leader of a robber-gang, had entered into the design of the Ammonite king, then everything that might serve for the preservation and consolidation of Judah must have been a source of pain to him; and this hatred of his towards Judah, which derived its strength and support from his religious views, incited him to murder the Jewish pilgrims to the temple, although the prospect of obtaining treasures might well cooperate with this in such a way as to make him spare the ten men who pretended they had hidden stores. With this, too, we can easily connect the hypocritical dealing on the part of Ishmael, in going forth, with tears, to meet these pious pilgrims, so that he might deceive them by making such a show of grief over the calamity that had befallen Judah; for the wicked often assume an appearance of sanctity for the more effectual accomplishment of their evil deeds. The LXX evidently did not know what to make of this passage as it stands; hence, in v. 6, they have quite dropped the words "from Mizpah," and have rendered הָלַךְ וּבָכָה by αὐτοὶ ἐπορεύοντο καὶ ἔκλαιον. Hitzig and Graf accept this as indicating the original text, since Ishmael had no ostensible ground for weeping. But the reasons which are supposed to justify this conjecture are, as Nägelsbach well remarks, of such a nature that one can scarcely believe they are seriously held.

**Jeremiah 41:10.** After executing these murderous deeds, Ishmael led away into captivity all the people that still remained in Mizpah, the king's daughters and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had committed to the care of Gedaliah, intending to go over with them to the Ammonites. As the object of וַיִּשְׁבּוּ is very far removed through the intervention of a

relative clause, the connection is resumed by וַיִּשְׁבּוּם. “The king’s daughters” are not only the daughters of Zedekiah, but female members generally of the royal house, princesses, analogous to בֶּן־מֶלֶךְ, king’s son = prince, 36:26; 38:6.

**Jeremiah 41:11–18.** *The struggle against Ishmael; intended flight to Egypt.*—V. 11ff. When Johanan and the rest of the captains heard of what had taken place in Mizpah, they marched out with all their men to fight Ishmael, and came on him at the great water at Gibeon, i.e., by the pool at Gibeon which is mentioned 2 Sam. 2:13, one of the large receptacles for water which are still found there; see on 2 Sam. 2:13. Gibeon, now called *el Jib* (see on Josh. 9:3), was situated only about two miles north from Mizpah; from which we may conclude that it was soon known what had happened, and the captains quickly assembled their men and marched after Ishmael.

**Jeremiah 41:13ff.** When those who had been carried off by Ishmael saw these captains, they were glad, since they had followed their captor merely because they were forced to do so. They all turned, and went over to Johanan; but Ishmael escaped from Johanan, with eight men,—having thus lost two in the fight with Johanan,—and went to the Ammonites.

**Jeremiah 41:16ff.** After the escape of Ishmael, it was to be feared that the Chaldeans would avenge the murder of the governor, and make the Jews who remained atone for the escape of the murderer by executing them or carrying them away to Babylon. Accordingly, Johanan and the other captains determined to withdraw to Egypt with the men, women, and children that had been carried off by Ishmael; these they conducted first to Bethlehem, where they encamped for the purpose of deliberating as to the rest of the journey, and taking due precautions. The account given in v. 16 is clumsily expressed, especially the middle portion, between “whom he had brought back” and “the son of Ahikam;” and in this part the words “from Mizpah” are particularly troublesome in breaking the connection:

“whom he (Johanan) had brought back from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, after he (Ishmael) had slain Gedaliah,” while it is more correctly stated in the second relative clause, “whom he had brought back from Gibeon.” Hitzig and Graf accordingly suppose that, originally, instead of אֲשֶׁר הָשִׁיב מֵאֵת, there stood in the text אֲשֶׁר שָׁבָה, “whom he (Ishmael) had led captive from Mizpah, after he had slain Gedaliah.” Thus the whole becomes clear. Against this conjecture there only stands the fact that the LXX translate οὗς ἀπέστρεψεν ἀπὸ Ἰσμαήλ; they must thus have read אֲשֶׁר הָשִׁיב מֵאֵת, and omitted merely הַמְצַפָּה as unsuited to the passage. However, the error may be even older than the LXX, and אֲשֶׁר הָשִׁיב מֵאֵת may easily have arisen through a scribe having glanced at the words אֲשֶׁר הָשִׁיב of the last clause. The words from “men” to “chamberlains” form the more exact specification of the general expression “all the remnant of the people:” “men, viz., men of war, women (including the king’s daughters, v. 10), and children and chamberlains” (סְרִיסִים, guardians and servants of the female members of the royal family).

**Jeremiah 41:17.** “They marched and stopped (made a half) at the inn if Chimham, which is near Bethlehem.” גִּרְוֹת, ἄπ. λεγ., considered etymologically, must mean *diversorium*, *hospitium*, an inn, khan, or caravanserai. Instead of the *Kethib* כְּמוֹהֶם, many codices read כְּמֵהֶם (like the *Qeri*); nor, have any of the old translators read ו or ו in the word. The *Qeri* is evidently correct, and we are to read כְּמֵהֶם, the name of a son of Barzillai the rich Gileadite, 2 Sam. 19:38, 41, who is supposed to have built or founded this caravanserai for the convenience of travellers. The words “because of the Chaldeans” in the beginning of v. 18 depend on “to go to Egypt” at the end of the preceding verse: “to go to Egypt for fear of the Chaldeans,” on account of the murder of Gedaliah by Ishmael.

**Jeremiah 42****The Word of God Concerning the Flight to Egypt**

**Jeremiah 42.** At the halting-place near Bethlehem the captains and the people whom they led deem it necessary to inquire through Jeremiah as to the will of God regarding their intention; they betake themselves to the prophet with the request that he would address God in prayer for them regarding this matter, and they promise that they will, in any case, comply with the message that he may receive from God (vv. 1–6). Whereupon, after ten days, the word of the Lord came to the prophet, vv. 7–22, to the effect that, if they remained in the country, the Lord would take pity on them and protect them from the Chaldeans, and establish them; but, should they go to Egypt, against the will of the Lord, then the evil which they feared would follow them thither, so that they would perish by the sword, hunger, and pestilence.

**Jeremiah 42:1–6.** *“And there drew near all the captains, namely, Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people, from little to great, V. 2. And said to Jeremiah the prophet, Let our supplication come before thee, and pray for us to Jahveh thy God, for all this remnant (for we are left a few out of many, as thine eyes see us); V. 3. That Jahveh thy God may tell us the way in which we should go, and the thing that we should do.”* Of the captains, two, viz., Johanan and Jezaniah, are mentioned as the leaders of the people and the directors of the whole undertaking, who also, 42:1ff., insolently accuse the prophet of falsehood, and carry out the proposed march to Egypt. Jezaniah is in 40:8 called the Maachathite; here he is named in connection with his father, “the son of Hoshaiah;” while in 43:2, in conjunction with Johanan the son of Kareah, Azariah the son of Hoshaiah is mentioned, which name the LXX also have in v. 1 of this chapter. Hitzig, Ewald, etc., are consequently of the opinion that זִנְיָהּ in our verse has been written by mistake for עֲזַרְיָהּ. But more probable is the supposition that the error is in the עֲזַרְיָהּ of 43:2, inasmuch as there

is no reason to doubt the identity of Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah with the Jezaniah descended from Maacha (Jeremiah 40:8); and the assumption that זִנְיָהּ is incorrect in two passages (Jeremiah 42:1 and 40:8) is highly improbable. They go to the prophet Jeremiah, whom they had taken with them from Mizpah, where he was living among the people, with the rest of the inhabitants of the place (Jeremiah 41:16). תִּפְלֵנָּא תַחַד as in 37:20; see on 36:7. The request made to the prophet that he would intercede for them with the Lord, which they further urge on the ground that the number left out of the whole people is small, while there is implied in this the wish that God may not let this small remnant also perish;—this request Nägelsbach considers a piece of hypocrisy, and the form of asking the prophet “a mere farce,” since it is quite plain from 43:1–6 that the desire to go to Egypt was already deeply rooted in their minds, and from this they would not allow themselves to be moved, even by the earnest warning of the prophet. But to hypocrites, who were playing a mere farce with the prophet, the Lord would have probably replied in a different way from what we find in vv. 8–22. As the Searcher of hearts, He certainly would have laid bare their hypocrisy. And however unequivocally the whole address implies the existence of disobedience to the voice of God, it yet contains nothing which can justify the assumption that it was only in hypocrisy that they wished to learn the will of God. We must therefore assume that their request addressed to the prophet was made in earnest, although they expected that the Lord’s reply would be given in terms favourable to their intention. They wished to obtain from God information as to which way they should go, and what they should do,—not as to whether they should remain in the country or go to Egypt. “The way that we should go” is, of course, not to be understood literally, as if they merely wished to be told the road by which they would most safely reach Egypt; neither, on the other hand, are the words to be understood in a merely figurative sense, of the mode of

procedure they ought to pursue; but they are to be understood of the road they ought to take in order to avoid the vengeance of the Chaldeans which they dreaded,—in the sense, whither they ought to go, in order to preserve their lives from the danger which threatened them.

**Jeremiah 42:4.** Jeremiah replies: *“I have heard (i.e., acceded to your request); behold, I will pray to Jahveh your God, according to your words; and it shall come to pass that whatever Jahveh answers you I will tell you, I will not keep anything from you.”* V. 5. *They said further: “Let Jahveh be a true and faithful witness against us, if we do not just according to all the word which Jahveh thy God shall send thee (to declare) unto us. V. 6. Whether it be good or bad, we shall obey the voice of Jahveh our God, to whom we send thee, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of Jahveh our God.”* עַד אֲמַתָּה, Prov.

14:25, and נִאֲמַתָּה, Isa. 8:2, Ps. 89:38. Both predicates occupy emphatic positions. God is to be a faithful witness, not in regard to the truth of what they say, but as regards the fulfilment of their promise, so that, if they would not obey His word, He might come forward to punish them. יִשְׁלַחְךָ is construed with a double accusative: to send away a person with something, i.e., to give him a commission. After “whether it be good or evil,” there is no need for supplying “in our eyes” (בְּעֵינֵינוּ), as Hitzig and Graf allege: “whether it please us or not;” the subject is הַדְּבָרָה: “we will obey the word, whether it be good or evil,” i.e., whether it announce good or evil to come (cf. Eccles. 12:14). The *Kethib* אָנוּ occurs only in this passage in the Old Testament; the *Qeri* accordingly substitutes אֲנֵנוּ: the former, however, is taken from the vulgar tongue, and should not be altered here. כִּי נִשְׁמָעַע does not mean “because we obey,” but “when we obey.” The hearing is the condition, not the cause of the prosperity.

**Jeremiah 42:7–22.** *The word of the Lord.*—At the end of ten days, the reply that had been asked for came from the Lord. Hitzig and Graf

think that Jeremiah had lingered ten days with the answer, in order to obtain strong and clear conviction, “matured through his own meditation, probably also in part confirmed by the arrival of further news.” This opinion is characterized by Nägelsbach as “in harmony with modern science, but unhistorical;” it should rather be called unscriptural, as resting on a denial of divine inspiration. The reason why the Lord did not make known His will to the prophet for ten days was a disciplinary one. By waiting, those who asked would get time for bethinking themselves, and for quietly considering the situation of affairs, so that they might be able, calmly and collectedly, to receive and obey the answer of God, which was far from satisfying the fears and wishes of their heart. V. 8. Jeremiah called the captains and all the people together, and announced to them as follows: V. 9. *“Thus saith Jahveh, the God of Israel, to whom ye have sent me, that I might bring your supplication before Him: V. 10. If ye will indeed abide in this land, then will I build you up and not pull down; and I will plant you, but not root out; for I repent of the evil that I have done to you. V. 11. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, whom ye fear, be not afraid of him, saith Jahveh; for I am with you to save you and to deliver you out of his hand. V. 12. And I will get pity for you, so that he shall take pity on you, and bring you back to your land. V. 13. But if ye say, We will not remain in this land, so that ye will not obey the voice of Jahveh your God, V. 14. Saying, Nay, but we will go to the land of Egypt, that we may not see war nor hear the wound of a trumpet, and we shall not hunger after bread, and we will dwell there.—V. 15. Now therefore hear the word of Jahveh, ye remnant of Judah: Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel, If ye do indeed set your face to go to Egypt, and go to sojourn there, V. 16. Then shall the sword, of which ye are afraid, overtake you there, in the land of Egypt, and hunger, which ye dread, shall there follow hard after you, in Egypt, and there shall ye die. V. 17. And all the men who have set their face to go to Egypt, to sojourn there, shall die by the sword, and through hunger, and from the plague; nor shall they have any one left or*



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escaped from the evil which I will bring on them. V. 18. For thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: As mine anger and my wrath were poured out upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so shall my wrath be poured out upon you when ye go to Egypt, and ye shall become an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach, and ye shall not see this place again.—V. 19. Jahveh hath spoken to you, O remnant of Judah. Go not to Egypt: ye shall know for certain that I have warned you to-day. V. 20. For ye err at the risk of your souls when ye sent me to Jahveh your God, saying, Pray for us to Jahveh our God, and according to all that Jahveh our God shall say to us, so tell us, and we will do it. V. 21. Now I have told you to-day, and ye have not obeyed the voice of Jahveh your God, nor in anything for which He hath sent me unto you. V. 22. Now, therefore, ye must surely know that ye shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place whither ye have been pleased to go to sojourn.”

The Lord’s reply extends as far as v. 18; the last four verses (19–22) form an epilogue, a further address by the prophet, in which he once more specially impresses God’s resolution on the minds of the people. The answer of God consists (1) in the promise that, if they will remain in the land, the Lord is willing to build them up, and protect them from the wrath of the king of Babylon (vv. 9–12); and (2) the threat that, if they will go to Egypt against the advice and will of the Lord, they shall certainly perish there by the sword, famine, and pestilence (vv. 13–18). On the expression הפליה, see on 36:7. שׁוּב (v. 10) can only be inf. abs. of יָשׁוּב, for יִשׁוּב; if we view it as coming from שׁוּב, we get no suitable meaning, for the thought *si revertendo illuc manseritis in hac terrâ* (C. B. Michaelis) could not be expressed by שׁוּב תִּשְׁבוּ. Certainly there is no other instance of such a form as שׁוּב being used for יִשׁוּב; in a verb like יָשׁוּב, however, which drops the ם in the inf. constr., a like omission in the inf. abs. is quite conceivable, while the supposition of some injury having been done to the text (Olshausen,

Gram. § 89) is less probable. On the expression, “I will build you,” etc., cf. 24:6; 31:4; 33:7. “I repent of the evil” is an anthropopathic expression for the cancelling of a penal sentence: cf. Joel 2:14, etc.—In v. 11, the repetition of the words “do not fear him” produces special emphasis.

**Jeremiah 42:12.** “I shall give you compassion,” i.e., obtain it for you, so that the king of Babylon will show pity on you; cf. Gen. 43:14, 1 Kings 8:50. J. D. Michaelis, Hitzig, Ewald, and Graf, following the LXX, Vulgate, and Syriac, would change הוֹשִׁיב into הַשִּׁיב (make you dwell); but there is no necessity for this, since הַשִּׁיב makes good enough sense, provided we refer it, not to the return of those who had been exiled to Babylon, but, as the connection requires, to the departure from Mizpah, after the half near Bethlehem, in the intended flight to Egypt; we must, besides, view this departure as a complete forsaking of their country, and the leaders in this emigration as being fugitives who had fled before the Chaldeans, and had returned only a short time before, for the purpose of settling down again in the country.

**Jeremiah 42:13–18.** The threatening if, in spite of warning and against God’s will, they should still persist in going to Egypt. The protasis of the conditional sentence begun in v. 13, “If ye say,” etc., extends onwards through v. 14; the apodosis is introduced co-ordinately with the commencement of v. 15, “Now therefore,” etc. קוֹל שׁוֹפָר, “the sound of war-trumpet,” as in 4:19.

On “hungering after bread,” cf. Amos 8:11. הַלֶּחֶם (with the article) is the bread necessary for life. “The remnant of Judah” is to be understood of those who still remained in the land, as is shown by v. 2; see also v. 19, 43:5; 44:12, 14. The warning given in v. 16 contains the idea that the very evil which they feared would come on them in Judah will befall them in Egypt. There they shall perish by sword, famine, and plague, since Nebuchadnezzar will conquer Egypt; cf. 43:8–13.

**Jeremiah 42:17.** וְיָהִי, used instead of the impersonal וְיָהִי, is referred to the following subject by a rather unusual kind of attraction; cf. Ewald, § 345, *b*. All the men who set their faces, i.e., intend, to go to Egypt shall perish; not a single one shall escape the evil; for the same judgment of wrath which has befallen Jerusalem shall also come on those who flee to Egypt; cf. 7:20. On the expression “ye shall become a curse,” etc., cf. 24:9; 25:18; 29:18.

Taking for granted that the leaders of the people will not obey, Jeremiah appends to the word of the Lord an earnest address, in which several points are specially insisted on, viz., that the Lord had spoken to them, that He had forbidden them to go to Egypt, and that he (the prophet), by proclaiming the word of the Lord, had warned them (הָעֵיד בָּ, to testify, bear witness against a person, i.e., warn him of something, cf. 11:7). Thus he discloses to them the dangerous mistake they are in, when they first desire some expression of the mind of the Lord regarding their intentions, and, in the hope that He will accede to their request, promise unconditional obedience to whatever He may direct, but afterwards, when they have received a message from the Lord, will not obey it, because it is contrary to what they wish. The *Kethib* הִתְעַתִּים has been incorrectly written for הִתְעַתְּתֶם, the Hiphil from הָעָה, to err; here, as in Prov. 10:17, it means to make a mistake. בְּנַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם, not, “you mislead *your own selves*,” *deceperitis animas vestras* (Vulg.), nor “in your souls,”—meaning, in your thoughts and intentions (Nägelsbach),—but “at the risk of your souls,” your life; cf. 17:21. וְלִכְלֹל אֶשֶׁר (v. 21), “and that in regard to all that for which Jahveh has sent me to you,” points back to their promise, v. 5, that they would do “according to all the word.” By employing the perfect in vv. 20, 21, the thing is represented as quite certain, as if it had already taken place. V. 22 concludes the warning with a renewed threat of the destruction which shall befall them for their disobedience.

## Jeremiah 43

### The Flight to Egypt: The Conquest of Egypt Predicted

**Jeremiah 43:1–7.** *The march of the people to Egypt.—When Jeremiah had thus ended all the words which the Lord had announced to him for the people, then came forward Azariah (probably an error for Jezaniah, see on 42:1) the son of Hoshaiiah, Johanan the son of Kareah, and the rest of the insolent men, and said to Jeremiah, “Thou dost utter falsehood; Jahveh our God hath not sent thee unto us, saying, Ye must not go to Egypt to sojourn there; V. 3. But Baruch the son of Neriah inciteth thee against us, in order to give us into the hand of the Chaldeans, to kill us, and to take us captive to Babylon.”*

כָּל־הָאֲנָשִׁים is not the predicate to אֶמְרִים, but forms a resumption of וַיֹּאמֶר, with which it thus serves to connect its object, Jeremiah, and from which it would otherwise be pretty far removed. Azariah (or, more correctly, Jezaniah) occupies the last place in the enumeration of the captains, 40:8, and in 42:1 is also named after Johanan, who is the only one specially mentioned, in what follows, as the leader on the march. From this we may safely conclude that Jezaniah was the chief speaker and the leader of the opposition against the prophet. To avoid any reference to the promise they had made to obey the will of God, they declare that Jeremiah’s prophecy is an untruth, which had been suggested to him, not by God, but by his attendant Baruch, with the view of delivering up the people to the Chaldeans.

**Jeremiah 43:4–7.** Thereupon Johanan and the other captains took “*all the remnant of Judah, that had returned from all the nations whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah,—the men and women and children, the king’s daughters, and all the souls whom Nebuzaradan, chief of the body-guard, had committed to Gedaliah ... and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah,—and went to the land of Egypt—for they did not hearken to the voice of Jahveh—and came to Tahpanhes.*” In this enumeration of those who

were conducted to Egypt, Hitzig, Graf, and others distinguish two classes: (1) the men, women, children, etc., who had been in Mizpah with Gedaliah, and had been led to Gibeon, after the murder of the latter, by Ishmael, but had afterwards been brought to Bethlehem by Johanan and the other captains (v. 6, cf. 40:7; 41:10, 16); (2) those who had returned from the foreign countries whither they had fled, but who had hitherto lived in the country, scattered here and there, and who must have joined the company led by Johanan to Bethlehem during the ten days of halt at that resting-place (v. 5, cf. 40:11, 12). There is no foundation, however, for this distinction. Neither in the present chapter is there anything mentioned of those who had been dispersed through the land joining those who had marched to Bethlehem; nor are the Jews who had returned from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and other countries to their own home distinguished, in Jeremiah 40 and 41, as a different class from those who had been with Gedaliah in Mizpah; but on the other hand, according to 40:12, these returned Jews also came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered grapes and fruit. Besides, in these verses the distinction can only be made after the insertion into the text of the conjunction ׀ before

אֶת־הַנְּבָרִים. To “all the remnant of Judah who had returned from the nations” belong the men, women, children, etc., whom Nebuzaradan had committed to the care of Gedaliah. The enumeration in v. 6 gives only one specification of the “whole remnant of Judah,” as in 41:16. “And all the souls;” as if it were said, “and whoever else was still left alive;” cf. Josh. 10:28. Tahpanhes was a frontier town of Egypt on the Pelusian branch of the Nile, and named Δάφναι by the Greeks; see on 2:16. Here, on the borders of Egypt, a halt was made, for the purpose of coming to further resolutions regarding their residence in that country. Here, too, Jeremiah received a revelation from God regarding the fate now impending on Egypt.

**Jeremiah 43:8–13.** *Prediction regarding Egypt.*—V. 8. “And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, V. 9. Take in

*thine hand large stones, and hide them in the clay in the brick-kiln, which is at the entrance to the house of Pharaoh in Taphanhes, in the eyes of the Jews; V. 10. And say to them: Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will place his throne over these stones which I have hidden, and he shall stretch his tapestry over them. V. 11. And he shall come and smite the land of Egypt, (he who is) for death, to death,— (he who is) for captivity, to captivity,— (he who is) for the sword, to the sword. V. 12. And I will kindle fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them and carry them away; and he shall wrap the land of Egypt round him as the shepherd wraps his cloak round him, and thence depart in peace. V. 13. And he shall destroy the pillars of Beth-shemesh, which is in the land of Egypt, and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire.”*

This prophecy is introduced by a symbolical action, on which it is based. But in spite of the fact that the object of the action is stated in the address which follows, the action itself is not quite plain from the occurrence of בְּמִלְבֵּן, whose usual meaning, “brick-kiln” (cf. Nah. 3:14), does not seem suitable here. Eichhorn and Hitzig think it absurd that there should be found before the door of a royal habitation a brick-kiln on which a king was to place his throne. From the Arabic *malbin*, which also signifies a rectangular figure like tile or brick, and is used of the projecting entablature of doors,—from the employment, also, in the Talmud of the word מִלְבֵּן to signify a quadrangular tablet in the form of a tile,—Hitzig would claim for the word the meaning of a *stone floor*, and accordingly renders, “and insert them with mortar into the stone flooring.” But the entablatures over doors, or quadrangular figures like bricks, are nothing like a stone flooring or pavement before a palace. Besides, in the way of attaching to the word the signification of a “brick-kiln,”—a meaning which is well established,—or even of a brickwork, the difficulties are not so great as to compel us to accept interpretations that have

no foundation. We do not need to think of a brick-kiln or brickwork as being always before the palace; as Neumann has observed, it may have indeed been there, although only for a short time, during the erecting of some part of the palace; nor need it have been just at the palace gateway, but a considerable distance away from it, and on the opposite side. Alongside of it there was lying mortar, an indispensable building material. טָמַן, "to hide," perhaps means here not merely to embed, but to embed in such a way that the stones could not very readily be perceived. Jeremiah was to press down the big stones, not into the brick-kiln, but into the mortar which was lying at (near) the brick-kiln,—to put them, too, before the eyes of the Jews, inasmuch as the meaning of this act had a primary reference to the fate of the Jews in Egypt. The object of the action is thus stated in what follows: Jahveh shall bring the king of Babylon and set his throne on these stones, so that he shall spread out his beautiful tapestry over them. שְׁפָרוּר (שְׁפָרִיר *Qeri*), an intensive form of שָׁפַר, שְׁפָרָה, "splendour, beauty," signifies a glittering ornament,—here, the decoration of the throne, the gorgeous tapestry with which the seat of the throne was covered. The stones must thus form the basis for the throne, which the king of Babylon will set up in front of the palace of the king of Egypt at Tahpanhes. But the symbolical meaning of this action is not thereby exhausted. Not merely is the laying of the stones significant, but also the place where they are laid,—at the entrance, or opposite Pharaoh's palace. This palace was built of tiles or bricks: this is indicated by the brick-kiln and the mortar. The throne of the king of Babylon, on the contrary, is set up on large stones. The materials of which the palace and the throne are formed, shadow forth the strength and stability of the kingdom. Pharaoh's dominion is like crumbling clay, the material of bricks; the throne which Nebuchadnezzar shall set up opposite the clay-building of the Pharaohs rests on large stones,—his rule will be powerful and permanent. According to Jeremiah's further development of the symbol

in v. 11ff., Nebuchadnezzar will come to Egypt (the *Kethib* בָּאָה is to be read בָּאָה, "he came down," to Egypt, בּוֹא being construed with the accus.), and will smite the land together with its inhabitants, so that every man will receive his appointed lot, viz., death by pestilence, imprisonment, and the sword, i.e., death in battle. On the mode of representation here, cf. 15:2.

**Jeremiah 43:12.** He shall burn the temples of the gods of Egypt, and carry away the idols. The first person הַצֹּתִי, for which LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate have the third, must not be meddled with; it corresponds to שָׂמַתִּי in v. 10. What Nebuchadnezzar does as Jahveh's servant (עַבְדִּי, v. 10) is done by God. The suffixes in שְׁרָפָם and שָׂבָם are assigned in such a way that the one is to be referred to the temples, the other to the idols; see on 48:7.—וְעָטָה has been variously interpreted. עָטָה with the accus. שְׁלֵמָה or מְעִיל means the envelope one's self with a garment, put on a garment, wrap the cloak round; cf. 1 Sam. 28:14, Ps. 109:19, Isa. 59:17, etc. This is the meaning of the verb here, as is shown by the clause expressing the comparison. The point of likeness is the easiness of the action. Ewald has very well explained the meaning of the whole: "As easily as any shepherd in the open field wraps himself in his cloak, so will he take the whole of Egypt in his hand, and be able to throw it round him like a light garment, that he may then, thus dressed as it were with booty, leave the land in peace, without a foe,—a complete victor." Other explanations of the word are far-fetched, and lexically untenable.

**Jeremiah 43:13.** In conclusion, mention is further made of the destruction of the famous temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, to show the fulfilment of the prophecy that all Egypt would fall under the power of Nebuchadnezzar. בֵּית שֶׁשֶׁשׁ, "House of the Sun," is the Hebrew rendering of the Egyptian *Pe-râ*, i.e., House of the Sun, the sacred name of the city vulgarly called *On*; see on Gen. 41:45. It lay north-east

from Cairo, near the modern village of Matarieh, and thus pretty far inland; it was renowned for its magnificent temple, dedicated to *Râ*, the Sun-god. At the entrance to this building stood several larger and smaller obelisks, of which the two larger, added to the two older ones by Pheron the son of Sesostris, were about 150 feet high. One of these the Emperor Augustus caused to be brought to Rome; the other was thrown down in the year 1160; while one of the more ancient but smaller obelisks still stands in its original position, raising its head in the midst of a beautiful garden over a mass of dense foliage. These obelisks are signified by *מַצְבּוֹת*. The additional clause, "which is in the land of Egypt," does not belong to Beth-shemesh, as if it were appended for the purpose of distinguishing the city so named from Beth-shemesh in the land of Judah; the words are rather connected with *מַצְבּוֹת*, and correspond with *אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם* in the parallel member of the verse. The obelisks of the most famous temple of the Egyptian Sun-god are well known as the most splendid representatives of the glory of the Egyptian idolatry: the destruction of these monuments indicates the ruin of all the sanctuaries of the ancient kingdom of the Pharaohs. The last clause is a kind of re-echo from v. 12*a*; *יִשְׂרָאֵל* is strengthened by the addition of *בְּאֵשׁ* for the purpose of giving a sonorous ending to the whole.—The king of Egypt is not named in the prophecy, but according to 44:30 it is *Pharaoh-Hophra*, who is to be given into the power of Nebuchadnezzar.

When we inquire as to the fulfilment of this prediction, we find M. Duncker, in his *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i. 841, giving a reply in these words: "Nebuchadnezzar did not fulfil these expectations (of Jeremiah, Jeremiah 43:8–13; 44:30, and of Ezekiel, Ezek. 29:32). He contented himself with having repelled the renewed attack of Egypt. The establishment of his dominion in Syria did not depend on his conquering Egypt; but Syria must obey him, throughout its whole extent. The capture of

Jerusalem followed the siege of the island-town of Tyre (B.C. 586), the last city that had maintained its independence. The army of the Chaldean slay thirteen years before Tyre without being able to bring the king Ethbaal (Ithobal) under subjection. At last, in the year 573, a treaty was concluded, in which the Tyrians recognised the supremacy of the king of Babylon." That Tyre was brought into subjection is inferred by Duncker (in a note, p. 682), first, from the generally accepted statement of Berossus, that the whole of Phoenicia was subdued by Nebuchadnezzar (Josephus' *Ant.* x. 11. 1, and *contra Ap.* i. 19); secondly, from Josephus' statement (*contra Ap.* i. 21), that the kings Merbal and Hiram had been brought by the Tyrians from Babylon; and lastly, from the fact that, with the close of the siege, the reign of Ithobal ends and that of Baal begins. "It would thus appear that Ithobal was removed, and his family carried to Babylon." These facts, which are also acknowledged by Duncker, sufficiently show (what we have already pointed out in Ezekiel) that the siege of Tyre ended with the taking of this island-city. For, unless the besieged city had been taken by storm, or at least compelled to surrender, the king would not have let himself be dethroned and carried to Babylon.—But whence has Duncker derived the information that Nebuchadnezzar had no concern with the subjugation of Egypt, but merely with the establishment of his authority in Syria? Although Nebuchadnezzar began the siege of the island-city of Tyre soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, and required thirteen years to reduce it, yet it does not by any means follow from this that he had only to do with the strengthening of his authority in Syria, and no connection with the subjugation of Egypt; all that we can safely infer is, that he thought he could not attempt the conquest of Egypt with any certain prospect of success until he had subdued the whole of Syria. Besides, so long as such an one as Pharaoh-Hophra occupied the throne of Egypt,—who had not only sent an army to Zedekiah king of Judah to raise the siege of Jerusalem, but also (according to

Herodotus, ii. 161, who draws from Egyptian sources) led an army to Sidon and fought a naval battle with the Tyrians; who (as Diod. Sic. i. 68 relates, also following Egyptian tradition) set out for Cyprus with abundant war-material and a strong army and fleet, and took Sidon by storm, while the rest of the towns submitted through fear; who, moreover, had defeated the Phoenicians and Cyprians in a naval engagement, and had returned to Egypt with immense spoil;—how could Nebuchadnezzar possibly think that his rule in Syria was firmly established? Such statements as those now referred to even Duncker does not venture to reject. We must, however, view them with a regard to the usual exaggerations by which the Egyptians were accustomed to extol the deeds of their Pharaohs; but after making all due allowance, we are led to this, that, after the fall of Tyre, Hophra sought to prevent the island of Cyprus as well as Tyre from becoming a dependency of Nebuchadnezzar. Could Nebuchadnezzar leave unmolested such an enemy as this, who, on the first suitable opportunity, would attempt to wrest the whole of Syria from him? So short-sighted a policy we could not attribute to such a conqueror as Nebuchadnezzar. Much more considerate is the judgment previously expressed regarding this by Vitrina, on Is. 19: *“Etiam si omnis historia hic sileret, non est probabile, Nebuchadnezzarem magnum dominatorem gentium, post Palaestinam et Phoeniciam subactam, non tentasse Aegyptum, et si tentaverit, tentasse frustra; et quâ parte Aegyptum occupavit, eam non vastasse et desolasse.”*

It is also to be borne in mind that the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, which is denied by Hitzig and Graf as well as Duncker, as it formerly was by Volney, is vouched for by the trustworthy testimony of Berosus (in Josephus, *contra Ap.* i. 19), who says that Nebuchadnezzar took Egypt (κρατῆσαι Αἰγύπτου Ἀραβίας κ.τ.λ.); the denial, too, rests on a mere inference from the account given by Herodotus from the traditions of the priests regarding the reign of Apriës (Hophra). If the witness of Berosus regarding the conquest of Syria and Phoenicia

be trustworthy, why should his testimony concerning Egypt be unreliable? The account of Josephus (*Ant.* x. 9. 7), that Nebuchadnezzar, in the fifth year after the capture of Jerusalem, and the twenty-third year of his reign, invaded Egypt, killed the king (Hophra), put another in his place, and led captive to Babylon the Jews that had fled to Egypt,—this account will not admit of being brought forward (as has often been attempted, and anew, of late, by Mrc. von Niebuhr, *Assur und Babel*, S. 215) as sufficient testimony for a successful campaign carried on by Nebuchadnezzar against Egypt during the siege of Tyre. The difficulty in the way of proving that such a campaign actually took place is not so much that the death of Hophra in battle with Nebuchadnezzar, or his execution afterwards, contradicts all authenticated history, as that the particular statements of Josephus regarding this campaign, both as to the date and the carrying away to Babylon of the Jews that had fled to Egypt, are simply conclusions drawn from a combination of Jeremiah 43:8–13 and 44:30 with Jeremiah 52:20; besides, the execution of King Hophra by Nebuchadnezzar is foretold neither by Jeremiah nor by Ezekiel. Ezekiel, in Ezek. 29–32, merely predicts the decline of the Egyptian influence, the breaking of the arm of Pharaoh, i.e., of his military power, and his fall into Sheol; but he does it in so ideal a manner, that even the words of 30:13, “there shall be no more a prince out of the land of Egypt,”—i.e., Egypt shall lose all her princes, just as her idols have been destroyed,—even these words cannot well be applied to the execution of Pharaoh-Hophra. But Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 43 and in 46:13ff., predicts merely the downfall of the pride and power of Pharaoh, and the conquest, devastation, and spoiling of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar. And even in the words of 44:30, “I (Jahveh) will deliver Pharaoh-Hophra into the hand of his enemies, and of those who seek his life, just as I delivered Zedekiah the king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar his enemy, and of those who sought after his life,” there is nothing definitely stated regarding Hophra’s being executed by Nebuchadnezzar,

or killed in battle with him. Such a reference cannot be made out from the words, even though we lay no emphasis on the plural "his enemies," in contrast with the expression "Nebuchadnezzar his enemy," and, according to 46:26, understand Nebuchadnezzar and his servants as being included under the "enemies;" for certainly Zedekiah was not killed by Nebuchadnezzar, but merely taken prisoner and carried to Babylon. Besides, there was no need of special proof that the prophecies of Jeremiah regarding Egypt declare much more important matters than merely an expedition of Chaldean soldiers to Egypt, as well as the plunder of some cities and the carrying away of the Jews who resided there; and that, in Jeremiah 44, what the Jews who went to Egypt against the will of God are threatened with, is not transportation to Babylon, but destruction in Egypt by sword, hunger, and pestilence, until only a few individuals shall escape, and these shall return to Judah (Jeremiah 44:14, 27, 28). But if we compare with the prophecy of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 43:8-13, and in 46:13-26, that of Ezekiel in Ezek. 29:17-21, which was uttered or composed in the twenty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin, i.e., in the year 573, it becomes abundantly evident that Nebuchadnezzar cannot have invaded and conquered Egypt before that year, and not till after the fall of Tyre, which immediately ensued. And that this was actually the case, is put beyond doubt by the statement of Herodotus, ii. 161ff., regarding Apriës, that he lost his throne and his life in consequence of being defeated in battle with the Cyrenians. What Herodotus assigns as the cause of the fall of Apriës, is insufficient to account for the unhappy end of this king. Herodotus himself states, ii. 169, that the Egyptians were filled with the most intense hatred against Apriës; the monuments also bear witness to this fact. This bitter feeling must have had a deeper source than merely the unsuccessful issue of a war with Cyrene; it receives its explanation only when we find that Apriës, by his attempts against Nebuchadnezzar, had deserved and brought on the subjugation of Egypt by the king

of Babylon; cf. Hävernick on Ezekiel, p. 500. By sending an auxiliary army to Judah, for the purpose of driving back the Chaldeans, and by forming an expedition to Cyprus and the cities of Phoenicia, which was evidently directed against the establishment of the Chaldean power in Phoenicia, Apriës had so provoked the king of Babylon, that the latter, immediately after the subjugation of Tyre, entered on the campaign against Egypt, which he invaded, subdued, and spoiled, without, however, killing the king; him he preferred allowing to rule on, but as his vassal, and under the promise that he would recognise his authority and pay tribute, just as had been done with King Jehoiakim when Jerusalem was first taken. If all this actually took place (which we may well assume), Apriës might probably have begun another war against Cyrene, after the Chaldeans had departed, in the hope of procuring some small compensation to the Egyptians for the defeat they had suffered from the Chaldeans, by subduing that province in the west; in this war the king might have lost his life, as Herodotus relates, through want of success in his attempt. In this say, the account of Herodotus regarding the death of Apriës quite agrees with the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar. But that Herodotus makes no mention of the conquest of Egypt, is sufficiently accounted for when we remember that he derived his information from the stories of the priests, who carefully omitted all mention of a struggle between Egypt and the power of Chaldea, since this had ended in the humiliation of Egypt; hence also mention was made only of the victories and mighty deeds of Necho II, while his defeat at Carchemish was passed over in silence.

#### Jeremiah 44

##### Warning Against Idolatry, and Intimation of Its Punishment

**Jeremiah 44.** When the Jews had settled down in Egypt in different places, they betook themselves zealously to the worship of the queen of heaven; to this they were probably

induced by the example of the heathen round about them, and by the vain expectation of thereby promoting their interests as members of the community (cf. v. 17ff.). Accordingly, when all the people who were living here and there through the country had assembled in Upper Egypt (v. 15) for the celebration of the festival, the prophet seized the opportunity of setting before them, in an earnest manner, the ruinous consequences of their doings. First of all, he reminds them of the judgments which they and their fathers, by their continued apostasy from the Lord, and by their idolatry, had brought on Jerusalem and Judah (vv. 2–7); and he warns them not to bring destruction on the remnant of Judah still left, by continuing in their idolatry (vv. 8–10). The threatening also is expressed, that the Lord will destroy all those who marched to Egypt with the sword, famine, and pestilence (vv. 11–14). But the whole assembly declare to him that they will not obey his word, but persist in worshipping the queen of heaven; alleging that their fathers prospered so long as they honoured her, and war and famine had come on them only after they ceased to do so (vv. 15–19). Jeremiah refutes this false notion (vv. 20–23), and once more solemnly announces to them the sentence of destruction by sword and famine in Egypt. As a sign that the Lord will keep His word, he finally predicts that King Hophra shall be delivered into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

**Jeremiah 44:1.** *“The word that came to Jeremiah regarding all the Jews who were living in the land of Egypt, who dwelt in Migdol, in Tahpanhes, in Noph, and in the land of Pathros.”* From this heading we perceive that those who (according to Jeremiah 43) had gone to Egypt, had settled there in various parts of the country, and that the following denunciations, which at the same time form his last prophecy, were uttered a long time after that which is given in 43:8–13 as having been delivered at Tahpanhes. The date of it cannot, indeed, be determined exactly. From the threatening that King Hophra shall be delivered over to the power of Nebuchadnezzar (vv. 24–30), only this much is clear, that Egypt was not yet occupied

by the Chaldeans, which, as we have shown above (p. 353), did not take place before the year 572. But it by no means follows from this that Jeremiah did not utter these words of threatening till shortly before this event. He may have done so even five or ten years before, in the period between 585 and 580, as we have already observed on p. 12. The Jews had settled down, not merely in the two northern frontier towns, *Migdol* (i.e., *Magdolo*, Μαγδῶλος, according to the *Itiner. Anton.*, twelve Roman miles from Pelusium, Copt. *Meschtôl*, Egypt. *Ma’ktr*, the most northerly place in Egypt; see on Ezek. 29:10) and *Tahpanhes* (i.e., *Daphne*, see on 43:7), but also in more inland places, in *Noph* (i.e., *Memphis*, see on 2:16) and the land of *Pathros* (LXX Παθούρης, Egypt. *Petorês*, i.e., *Southland*, viz., Upper Egypt, the *Thebais* of the Greeks and Romans; see on Ezek. 29:14). The word of the Lord runs as follows:—

**Jeremiah 44:2–14.** *The warning and threatening.*—*“Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Ye yourselves have been all the evil which I have brought on Jerusalem, and on all the cities of Judah; and, behold, they are a desolation this day, and there is no inhabitant in them; V. 3. Because of their wickedness which they have done, by provoking me through going to burn incense, (and) to serve other gods whom they knew not, (neither) they (nor) ye, nor your fathers. V. 4. And I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending (them), to say, Do not this abominable thing which I hate. V. 5. But they did not hear, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, by not burning incense to other gods. V. 6. Therefore my wrath and mine anger poured itself out, and burned up the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem; so that they have become a desolation and a waste, as at this day. V. 7. Now therefore thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Why do ye great evil against your souls, by cutting off from yourselves man and women, child and suckling, out of the midst of Judah, so leaving no remnant for yourselves; V. 8. Through provoking me by the works of your hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye have gone to sojourn, that ye might bring destruction*



on yourselves, and that ye might become a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? V. 9. Have ye forgotten the evil deeds of your fathers, and the evil deeds of the kings of Judah, and the evil deeds of their wives, and your own evil deeds, and the evil deeds of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and on the streets of Jerusalem? V. 10. They have not been contrite to this day, and are not afraid, nor do they walk in my law, and in my statutes, which I have set before you and before your fathers. V. 11. Therefore thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah. V. 12. And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go to the land of Egypt in order to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed; in the land of Egypt shall they fall, by sword and famine shall they be consumed; small and great, by sword and famine shall they die, and they shall become an execration and an astonishment, and a curse and a reproach. V. 13. And I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I punished Jerusalem, by sword, and famine, and pestilence. V. 14. There shall not be one escaped or left to the remnant of Judah that came to sojourn there in the land of Egypt, so as to return to the land of Judah, whither they long to return and dwell; for they shall not return except [as] escaped ones."

**Jeremiah 44:2–6.** In order to make an impression on the people by his warning against idolatry, Jeremiah begins his address with a reference to the great calamity which the fathers have brought on the kingdom of Judah through their continued idolatry (vv. 2–6). "Ye have seen all the evil," etc.; all the cities are laid waste and depopulated, because their inhabitants have roused the anger of the Lord, and have not let themselves be dissuaded by the admonitions of the prophets whom God has sent. "This day," i.e., now, at present. On v. 3, cf. 11:17; 19:4; 32:32, etc.; and as to the meaning of קטר, see on 1:16. In v. 3b the address becomes more direct, through the change into the second person, "ye;" the audience then present only continue these sins of their

fathers. On v. 4, cf. 7:25; 25:4, etc. דבר התעבה הזאת, "the thing of this abomination," which is equivalent to "this abominable idolatry." דבר serves to render the subject more prominent, as in Judg. 19:24. On v. 6, cf. 42:18; 7:20. The wrath of God burned in the cities, for the fire of destruction was a manifestation of the divine wrath. As to היום הזה, see on 11:5.

**Jeremiah 44:7–10.** In vv. 7–10 follows the application of what has been said to those present, who are asked how they come to continue in the old sins, to their own destruction, "doing evil in regard to your souls," i.e., for the injury, destruction of your souls, yourself; cf. 26:19, where על-ך stands for א-ל-ך. This is immediately afterwards more exactly specified by להכרית וגו', to exterminate the whole of you, without an exception. As to the enumeration "man and woman," etc., cf. 1 Sam. 15:3; 22:19. The infs. להכעיסני and לקטר are used as gerundives: "inasmuch as (through this that) ye provoke me." For the expression "the works of your hands," see on 1:16. In v. 8, an object must be supplied from v. 7 for the expression למען הכרית לכם; for, to take לכם (with Hitzig) in a reflexive sense is a very harsh construction. On לקללה וגו', cf. 42:18; 26:6. The answer to the question now asked follows in vv. 9 and 10, in the form of the further question, whether they have forgotten those former sins, and that these sins have been the cause of the evil which has befallen the land. The interrogation expresses the reproach that they have been able to forget both, as is evidenced by their continuance in sin. In v. 9, the expression "the evil deeds of his wives" (נשי) is remarkable. Hitzig and Nägelsbach, following Kimchi, refer the suffix to the kings, since there was always but one king at a time. But this is an unnatural explanation; the suffix refers to Judah as a nation, and is used in order to comprehend the wives of the fathers and of the kings together. It is quite arbitrary in Ewald and Graf to change נשי to שרי, following the LXX τῶν ἀρχόντων ὑμῶν; for

these translators have mutilated the text by the omission of the following רָעוּת נָשָׁיו. וְאֵת רָעוּתֵיכֶם is not merely conserved, but even required, by וְאֵת רָעוּת נָשִׁיכֶם. But the prophet gives special prominence to the evil deeds of the wives, since it was they who were most zealous in worshipping the queen of heaven; cf. vv. 15 and 19. לֹא דָכְאוּ, "they have not been crushed," viz., by repentance and sorrow for these sins. The transition to the third person is not merely accounted for by the fact that the subject treated of is the sins of the fathers and of the present generation,—for, as is shown by the expression "till this day," the prophet has chiefly his own contemporaries in view; but he speaks of these in the third person, to signify the indignation with which he turns away from men so difficult to reform. On the expression, "they had not walked in my law," cf. 26:4; 9:12. For this the Lord will punish them severely, vv. 11–14. All those who have fled to Egypt, with the intention of remaining there, will be quite exterminated. On "Behold, I will set my face," etc., cf. 21:10. "For evil" is more exactly defined by "to cut off all Judah," i.e., those of Judah who are in Egypt, not those who are in Babylon. This limitation of the words "all Judah" is necessarily required by the context, and is plainly expressed in v. 12, where "Judah" is specified as "the remnant of Judah that were determined to go to Egypt." לְקַחְתִּי has the meaning of taking away, as in 15:15. כָּל וְתָמוּ are to be taken by themselves; and בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, as is shown by the accents, is to be attached to what follows, on which, too, the emphasis is placed; in like manner, וְגַם בְּחֶרֶב are to be attached to the succeeding verb. The arrangement of the words, like the accumulation of sentences all expressing the same meaning, reveals the spirit of the address in which God vents His wrath. On "they shall become an execration," etc., see 42:18. In vv. 13, 14, the threatened extermination is further set forth. Those who dwelling Egypt shall be punished with sword, famine, and plague, like Jerusalem. The inhabitants of Egypt generally are meant; and

by the judgment which is to fall on that country, the remnant of Judah there shall be so completely destroyed, that none shall escape. The leading member of the sentence is continued by וְלָשׁוּבוּ, "and that they should return to the land of Judah, after which their soul longs, that they may live there." A reason is further assigned, and with this the address, reduced within becoming limits, concludes: "for there shall return none except (כִּי אֵם) fugitives," i.e., except a few individual fugitives who shall come back. This last clause shows that we are not to understand the declaration "none shall escape" in the strictest meaning of the words. Those who escape and return to Judah shall be so few, in comparison with those who shall perish in Egypt, as to be quite inconsiderable. Cf. the like instance of a seeming contradiction in vv. 27, 28. On נִשְׂאָ אֶת־נִפְשָׁם cf. 22:27.

**Jeremiah 44:15–19.** *The answer of the people to this threatening address.*—V. 15. "Then all the men who knew that their wives burned incense to other gods, and all the women standing [there], a great multitude, and all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, V. 16. [As for] the word which thou hast spoken unto us in the name of Jahveh, we will not hearken unto thee: V. 17. But we will certainly perform every word that has proceeded out of our own mouth, by burning incense to the queen of heaven, and pouring out libations to her, just as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; and we were filled with bread, and became prosperous, and saw no evil. V. 18. But since we ceased to offer incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out libations to her, we have been in want of everything, and are consumed by sword and famine. V. 19. And when we [women] have been burning incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out libations to her, have we made cakes to her without our husbands, making an image of her, and offering libations to her?" To the word of the prophet the men and women oppose their pretended experience, that the adoration of the queen of heaven has brought them comfort and

prosperity, while the neglect of this worship, on the other hand, has brought want and misfortune. No doubt they inferred this, by the argument *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, from the fact that, after idolatry had been rooted out by Josiah, adversity had befallen the land of Judah; while, up till that time, the kingdom of Judah had been independent, and, for more than a century before, had been spared the suffering of misfortune. Thus, through their blindness, peculiar to the natural man, they had overlooked the minor transient evils with which the Lord visits His people when they sin. Not till near the end of Josiah's reign did misfortune fall on Judah: this was when the Egyptian army, under Pharaoh-Necho, marched through Palestine; Josiah was slain in the battle he had lost, the land was laid waste by the enemy, and its inhabitants perished by sword and famine. In v. 15, those who are represented speaking are all the men who knew of their wives' idolatry, i.e., who permitted it, and all the women, "a great company," i.e., gathered together in great numbers, and all the rest of the people who lived in Egypt. The specification "in Pathros" is not in apposition to the words "in the land of Egypt," but belongs to the verb וַיִּטְנוּ; it tells where the gathering took place, viz., in a district of Upper Egypt. From the presence of a large number of women, we may conclude that the assembly was a festival in honour of the queen of heaven. The former portion of v. 16 forms an absolute clause, from בָּשֵׁם to הִדְבָּר "as regards the word which ... we will not listen to thee," i.e., with regard to this word we obey thee not. The expression, "the word which has gone forth out of our mouth," points to the uttering of vows: cf. Num. 30:13; Deut. 23:24. כָּל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר וּגַר means "all that we have uttered as a vow," every vow to offer incense, etc., i.e., to present meat and drink offerings to the queen of heaven,—that shall we keep, fulfil, as we and our fathers have done in the land of Judah. On this mode of worship, cf. 7:17f., and the remarks there made. "And we were satisfied with bread," i.e., in consequence of this

worship we had amply sufficient food. טוֹבִים, "good," well, comfortable; cf. 22:16. מִן אֵז, "from that time" = since. תָּמְנוּ is for תָּמְנוּ, from תָּמַם, as in Num. 17:28; cf. Ewald, § 197, a. To this statement on the part of the men, the women further add, v. 19, that they do not engage in this sacrificial worship or prepare the sacrificial cakes without their husbands, i.e., without their knowledge and approval. This is put forward by the women in the way of self-vindication; for, according to the law, Num. 30:9ff., the husband could annul, i.e., declare not binding, any vow which had been made by his wife without his knowledge. Although it is women who are speaking, the *masc.* מְקַטְרִים is used as being the gender which most commonly occurs; it also pretty often stands for the feminine. The *inf. constr.* וְלִהְיֶה (with לְ) is here employed, in conformity with later usage, instead of the *inf. abs.*, for the finite verb, by way of continuation; cf. Ewald, § 351, c, where, however, many passages have been set down as falling under this rule that demand a different explanation. The meaning of לְהַעֲצֹבָהּ is disputed; the final ה is a suffix, written with Raphe, though Mappik also occurs in some MSS. The Hiphil of this verb is found elsewhere only in Ps. 78:40, and there in the signification of vexing, grieving, like the Piel in Isa. 63:10, Ps. 66:6. Ewald translates "in order to move her," i.e., make her well-disposed,—but quite arbitrarily, for to provoke is the very opposite of rendering propitious. The verb עָצַב also signifies "to form, shape," Job 10:8; and in this sense the Hiphil is used here, "in order to put them into shape," i.e., to form the moon-goddess (queen of heaven) in or on the sacrificial cakes (Kimchi, Raschi, Dahler, Maurer, Graf, etc.). The sacrificial cakes (כְּוֹנִים, see on 7:18) probably had the form of a crescent, or even of the full moon, like the σελήνα of the Greeks, which used to be offered in Athens at the time of the full moon in the month of Munychion, to Artemis, as goddess of the moon; cf. Hermann, *gottesdienstliche*

*Alterthümer der Griechen*, 2 Ausg. S. 146, Anm. 13, u. S. 414.

**Jeremiah 44:20–23.** *Refutation of these statements of the people.*—V. 20. “And Jeremiah spake to all the people, to the men and women, and to all the people that had given him answer, saying, V. 21. Did not the incense-burning which he performed in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye and your fathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land,—did not Jahveh remember them, and did it not arise in His mind? V. 22. And Jahveh could no longer endure it, because of the wickedness of your deeds, because of the abominations which ye committed; thus your land became a desolation, and a waste, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day. V. 23. Because ye burned incense and sinned against Jahveh, and did not hearken to the voice of Jahveh, and in His law, in His statutes, and in His testimonies ye walked not; therefore this evil hath befallen you, as at this day.” Jeremiah answers them that their idol-worship, by which they have provoked the Lord their God, is the very cause of the misfortune that has befallen them, because God could no longer endure this abomination which they would not forsake. **הַקִּטֹּר** is a noun, “the burning of incense,” which includes, besides, all the other elements of idolatrous worship hence the word is resumed, at the close, under the plur. **אֵלֶּיךָ**, “these things.” **וַתֵּעַל** is 3rd pers. sing. neut., lit., “it has come into His mind,” i.e., He has carefully considered it, and that in the way of punishment, for He could no longer endure such abomination. The imperf. **יִבֹּל** is used for the historic tense (imperf. with **ו** consec.), because the **ו** would necessarily be separated from the verb by the **לָא**; and it is employed instead of the perfect, which we would be inclined to expect after the preceding **זָכַר**, since that which is treated of is something that endures for a considerable time; cf. Ewald, § 346, *b*. On the expression “because of the evil,” etc., cf. 21:12; 4:4, etc.; on the last clause in v. 22, cf. vv. 6 and 12.

**Jeremiah 44:23.** V. 23 is an emphatic and brief repetition of what has already been said. **קִרְיָה** is for **קִרְיָה**, as in Deut. 31:29; cf. Gesenius, § 74, note 1; Ewald, § 194, *b*.

**Jeremiah 44:24–30.** *Announcement of the punishment for this idolatry.*—V. 24. “And Jeremiah said unto all the people, and unto all the women, Hear the word of Jahveh, all of Judah that are in the land of Egypt; V. 25. Thus saith Jahve of hosts, the God of Israel: Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouth, and fulfilled it with your hands, saying, We will assuredly perform our vows which we have vowed, by burning incense to the queen of heaven, and by pouring out libations to her: ye will by all means perform your vows, and carry out your vows. V. 26. Therefore hear the word of Jahveh, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt: Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith Jahveh, truly my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah, saying, ‘As the Lord Jahveh liveth,’ in all the land of Egypt. V. 27. Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good; and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, till they are annihilated. V. 28. And those who escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt to the land of Judah, a small number; and all the remnant of Judah, that went to the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose word shall stand, mine or theirs. V. 29. And this shall be the sign to you, saith Jahveh, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely rise up against you for evil: V. 30. Thus hath Jahveh spoken, Behold, I will give Pharaoh-Hophra into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of those who seek his life, just as I have given Zedekiah the king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, who was his enemy, and sought his life.”

After refuting the false assertion of the people, Jeremiah once more announces to them, on behalf of God, in the most solemn manner, the punishment of extermination by sword and famine in Egypt; this he does for the purpose of giving the greatest possible emphasis to his

warning against persevering in idolatry. For substance, this announcement is similar to that of vv. 11–14, but the expression is stronger. Even in the summary account of their offences, v. 25, the words are so chosen and arranged as to bring out clearly the determination of the people to persevere in worshipping the queen of heaven. “As for you and your wives, ye have spoken with your mouth and fulfilled it with your hand” (on the *Vav consec.* attached to תִּדְבַּרְנָה, cf. Ewald, § 344, *b*), i.e., ye have uttered vows and then carried them out; for ye say, We must keep the vows that we have vowed. It is to be observed that the verbs תִּדְבַּרְנָה, and in the concluding portion תִּקְיִמְנָה and תִּעֲשֶׂינָה, are feminine, since the address chiefly applies to the wives, who clung most tenaciously to idolatry. In the clause וְגַם תִּקְיִמְנָה וְגַם תִּעֲשֶׂינָה, “ye will make your vows and perform them,” there is unmistakable irony, in which the reference is to the wilfulness of the people in this idolatry. This ἐθέλωσθησκαία is shown by the inf. abs. תִּקְיִמְנָה, which strengthens תִּקְיִמְנָה. “To establish vows,” i.e., to make them, was not a thing commanded, but left to one’s free determination. Hence, also, no appeal to the maxim that vows which have been made or uttered must be fulfilled, can justify the making of the vows. The form תִּקְיִמְנָה for תִּקְיִמְנָה is an unusual one; and the ם which the Hirik takes after it is occasioned by the form תִּקְיִמְנָה; cf. Ewald, § 196, *c*.—The announcement of the punishment is introduced by a solemn oath on the part of God. Jahveh swears by His great name, i.e., as the one who has shown Himself God by His mighty deeds—who has the power of keeping His word. The name is, of course, only a manifestation of His existence. ם as a particle used in swearing = certainly not. His name shall no more be named in the mouth of any Jew in the land of Egypt, i.e., be used in asseverations, because all the Jews in Egypt shall be exterminated. On the expression, “Behold, I will watch over them,” etc., cf. 31:28 and 21:10. In v. 28, it is more exactly stated that

only a few individuals shall escape the sword and return to Judah; thus, no one shall remain behind in Egypt. By this judgment, all the remnant of Judah that went to Egypt shall find out whose word—Jahveh’s or theirs—will endure, i.e., prove true. מִמֶּנִּי וּמִהֶם properly depends on דְּבַר, “the word from me or from them” (the people).

**Jeremiah 44:29.** In confirmation of this threatening, the Lord gives them another sign which, when it is fulfilled, will let them know that the destruction announced to them shall certainly befall them. The token consists in the giving up of King Hophra into the hand of his enemies. As certainly as this shall take place, so certainly shall the extermination of the Jews in Egypt ensue. The name הִפְרָע is rendered Οὐάφρις in Manetho, in the classical writers Ἀπρίης, ἀπρίς, who, according to Herodotus (ii. 161), reigned twenty-five years, but nineteen according to Manetho (cf. Boeckh, *Manetho*, etc., p. 341ff.). His death took place in the year 570 B.C. This date is reached by a comparison of the following facts:—Cambyses conquered Egypt in the year 525; and in the preceding year Amasis had died, after a reign of forty-four years (Herod. iii. 10). Hence Amasis—who took Apriës prisoner, and gave him up to the common people, who killed him (Herod. ii. 161–163, 169)—must have commenced his reign in the year 570. On the death of Apriës, or Hophra, cf. the explanation given on p. 353f., where we have shown that the words, “I will give him into the hand of his enemies, and of those who seek his life,” when compared with what is said of Zedekiah, “into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar his enemy,” do not require us to assume that Hophra was killed by Nebuchadnezzar, and can very well be harmonized with the notice of Herodotus regarding the death of this king. Hitzig and Graf have taken objection to this sign given by Jeremiah, and regard vv. 29, 30 as a spurious *vaticinium ex eventu*, the work of another hand. The reasons they urge are, that it is scarcely possible Jeremiah could have lived till 570; that v. 29f. would be the only place where Jeremiah offered such a criterion; and

that, even as it is, these verses contain nothing original, but, by their stiff and lifeless parallelism, are easily seen to be an artificial conclusion. Of these three arguments, the last can prove nothing, since it is merely a subjective opinion on an aesthetic point. The second, again, rather declares for than against the genuineness. For "if it were not Jeremiah's usual, elsewhere, to offer some criterion, then such an interpolation would have been all the more carefully avoided" (Nägelsbach). Of course we do not find any other signs of this kind in Jeremiah; but it does not follow from this that he could not offer such a thing in a special case. Yet the ground taken up by Nägelsbach, as sufficient to establish this position, seems quite untenable, viz., that the announcement of the fate in store for the king must have been the answer of the true God to the presumptuous boast of Apriës, mentioned by Herodotus, "that even God could not dethrone him, so firmly did he think he was established:" this view of the matter seems too remote from the object of Jeremiah's address. And finally, the first-named objection receives importance only on the supposition that "an event which was intended to serve as תִּיָּא, a sign or criterion, must be something that was to happen immediately, or within a brief appointed period of time, so that a person might be able, from the occurrence of the one, to conclude that what had been foretold about a later period would as certainly take place" (Graf). But there are no sufficient grounds for this hypothesis. If no definite time be fixed for the occurrence of this sign, then it may not appear till a considerable time afterwards, and yet be a pledge for the occurrence of what was predicted for a still later period. That Jeremiah lived till the year 570 is certainly not inconceivable, but it is not likely that he uttered the prophecy now before us at the advanced age of nearly eighty years. Now, if his address is allowed to be a real prophecy, and not a mere *vaticinium ex eventu*, as Hitzig, looking from his dogmatic standpoint, considers it, then it must have been uttered before the year 570; but whether this was two, or five, or ten years

before, makes no material difference. The address itself contains nothing to justify the assumption of Graf, that it is closely connected with the prophecy in 43:8-13, and with the warning against the migration into Egypt, Jeremiah 42. That the Jews spoken of had not been long in Egypt, cannot be inferred from vv. 8, 12, and 18; on the contrary, the fact that they had settled down in different parts of Egypt, and had assembled at Pathros for a festival, shows that they had been living there for a considerable time before. Nor does it follow, from the statement in v. 14 that they longed to return to Judah, that they had gone to Egypt some months before. The desire to return into the land of their fathers remains, in a measure, in the heart of the Jew even at the present day. After all, then, no valid reason can be assigned for doubting the genuineness of these verses.

On the fulfilment of these threatenings Nägelsbach remarks: "Every one must be struck on finding that, in Jeremiah 44, the extermination of the Jews who dwelt in Egypt is predicted; while some centuries later, the Jews in Egypt were very numerous, and that country formed a central point for the Jewish exiles (cf. Herzog, *Real-Encycl.* xvii. S. 285). Alexander the Great found so many Jews in Egypt, that he peopled with Jews, in great measure, the city he had founded and called after himself (cf. Herzog, i. S. 235). How did these Jews get to Egypt? Whence the great number of Jews whom Alexander found already in Egypt? I am inclined to think that we must consider them, for the most part, as the descendants of those who had come into the country with Jeremiah. But, according to this view of the matter, Jeremiah's prophecy has not been fulfilled." Nägelsbach therefore thinks we must assume that idolatrous worship, through time, almost entirely ceased among the exiled Jews in Egypt as it did among those in Babylon, and that the Lord then, in return, as regards the penitents, repented of the evil which He had spoken against them (Jeremiah 26:13, 19). But this whole explanation is fundamentally wrong, since the assertion, that Alexander the Great found so many Jews in Egypt, that with them

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mainly he peopled the city of Alexandria which he had founded, is contrary to historic testimony. In Herzog (*Real-Encycl.* i. S. 235), to which Nägelsbach refers for proof on the point, nothing of the kind is to be found, but rather the opposite, viz., the following: "Soon after the foundation of Alexandria by Alexander the Great, this city became not merely the centre of Jewish Hellenism in Egypt, but generally speaking the place of union between Oriental and Occidental Jews. The external condition of the Jews of Alexandria must, on the whole, be characterized as highly prosperous. The first Jewish settlers had, indeed, been compelled by Alexander the Great to take up their residence in the city (Josephus, Antt. xv. 3. 1); so, too, were other Jews, by Ptolemy I. or Lagi (*ibid.* xii. 2. 4). But both of these monarchs granted them the same rights and privileges as the Macedonians, including Greek citizenship; and in consequence of the extremely advantageous position of the city, it speedily increased in importance. A still larger number, therefore, soon went thither of their own accord, and adopted the Greek language." In this account, the quotation from Josephus, Antt. xv. 3. 1, is certainly incorrect; for neither is there in that passage any testimony borne to the measures attributed to Alexander, nor are there any other historical testimonies given from antiquity. But as little can we find any proofs that Alexander the Great found so many Jews in Egypt that he could, to a large extent, people with them the city he had founded. It is merely testified by Josephus (Antt. xi. 8. 5), and by Hecataeus in Josephus (contra Ap. i. 22; p. 457, ed. Haverc.), that Alexander had Jewish soldiers in his army; it is further evident, from a notice in Josephus, de bell. Jud. ii. 18. 7, contra Ap. ii. 4) cf. Curtius Rufus, iv. 8), that the newly founded city, even under Alexander, immediately after it was commenced, and still more under Ptolemy Lagi (cf. Josephus, Antt. xii. 1, and Hecataeus in Jos. contra Ap. i. 22, p. 455), attracted a constantly increasing multitude of Jewish immigrants. This same Ptolemy, after having subdued Phoenicia and Coele-Syria in the year 320, and taken Jerusalem also, it would seem, by a stratagem

on a Sabbath day, transported many captives and hostages out of the whole country into Egypt; many, too, must have been sold at that time as slaves to the inhabitants of such a wealthy country as Egypt: see a statement in the book of *Aristeas*, at the end of Havercamp's edition of Josephus, ii. p. 104. In the same place, and in Josephus' Antt. xii. 1, Ptolemy is said to have armed 30,000 Jewish soldiers, placed them as garrisons in the fortresses, and granted them all the rights of Macedonian citizens (*ισοπολιτεία*). Ewald well says, *History of the People of Israel*, vol. iv. of second edition, p. 254: "When we further take into consideration, that, in addition to all other similar disasters which had previously befallen them, many Jews were removed to Egypt (especially by Ochus, after Egypt had been reconquered), we can easily explain how Ptolemy Philadelphus can be said to have liberated 100,000 Egyptian Jews. *Aristeas' Book*, p. 105." This much, at least, is proved by these various notices,—that, in order to understand how such a vast increase took place in the number of the Jews in Egypt, we do not need to regard them as the descendants of those who removed thither with Jeremiah, and so to question the fulfilment of the prophecy now before us. Jeremiah does not, of course, threaten with destruction all those Jews who live in Egypt, but only those who at that time went thither against the divine will, and there persevered in their idolatry. We do not know how great may have been the number of these immigrants, but they could hardly exceed two thousand,—perhaps, indeed, there were not so many. All these, as had been foretold them, may have perished in the conquest of Egypt by the Chaldeans, and afterwards, through the sword, famine, and pestilence; for the myriads of Jews in Egypt at the time of Ptolemy Lagi could easily have removed thither during the period of 250 years intermediate between the immigration in Jeremiah's time and the foundation of Alexandria, partly as prisoners and slaves, partly through voluntary settlement.

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## Jeremiah 45

### A Promise Addressed to Baruch

**Jeremiah 45:1–5.** *“The word which Jeremiah the prophet spake to Baruch the son of Neriah, when he wrote these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, V. 2. Thus saith Jahveh, the God of Israel, to thee, O Baruch: V. 3. Thou saidst, Woe to me now! for Jahveh hath added sorrow to my pain: I am weary with sighing, and no rest do I find. V. 4. Thus shalt thou say unto him, Thus saith Jahveh: Behold, what I have built I will destroy, and what I have planted I will pluck up, and that is the whole earth. V. 5. And thou seekest great things for thyself: seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil on all flesh, saith Jahveh; but I will give thy life unto thee for booty in all places whither thou shalt go.”*

From the superscription in v. 1, it appears that this word of God came to Baruch through Jeremiah the prophet, in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, when Baruch was writing out, or had written out, in a book-roll the prophecies that had been uttered by Jeremiah up till that time. It is not necessarily implied in the infin. בְּכַתְּבוֹ that the word of God came during the transcription, while he was still engaged in writing; it may also mean, “when he was ready with the writing,” had got done with it; and Hitzig is wrong when he rejects as “misleading” the view which Movers takes—“when he had written.” The writing down of the addresses of Jeremiah in the year mentioned is related in Jeremiah 36; thus the substance of this chapter and that of Jeremiah 36 agree. “These words” can only be the addresses (words) of Jeremiah which Baruch was then writing down. From this, Hitzig, Graf, Nägelsbach, and others, infer that this small piece was the last in the copy of Jeremiah’s prophecies originally prepared under Jehoiakim,—if not of the first one which was intended to be read in the temple, at least of the second copy which was made after the former one had been destroyed; and that it was only

after the collection had been enlarged to the extent of the collection handed down to us, that this portion was affixed as an appendix to the end of the prophecies of Jeremiah which relate to his own country. But this inference is not a valid one. “These words” are the addresses of the prophet in general, which Baruch wrote down; and that only those which were uttered up to the fourth year of Jehoiakim are intended, is implied, not in the demonstrative “these,” but in the date given afterwards, by which “these” is further specified. In v. 1 it is merely stated that at that time the word of God, given below, came to Jeremiah, and through Him to Baruch, but not that Baruch wrote down this also on that occasion, and appended it to the roll of Jeremiah’s prophecies which had been prepared at his dictation. It may have been written down much later, possibly not till the whole of Jeremiah’s prophecies were collected and arranged in Egypt. Moreover, the position occupied by this chapter in the collection shows that this message of comfort to Baruch was added as an appendix to those predictions of Jeremiah which concern Judah and Israel.

The occasion for this message of comfort addressed to the prophet’s attendant is pointed out in v. 3, in the words which Baruch had uttered: “Woe to me! for Jahveh adds sorrow to my pain.” Baruch felt “pain,” i.e., pain of soul, at the moral corruption of the people, their impenitence and obduracy in sin and vice, just like the prophet himself, 15:18. To this pain God adds sorrow, by threatening the judgment which shall fall on Judah for sin, and which was even then beginning to break over the land; cf. 8:18ff. Baruch sighs over this till he is wearied, and finds no rest; cf. Lam. 5:5. “I am weary with my sighing,” is a reminiscence from Ps. 6:7. This sorrow in addition to his pain was not caused in him for the first time by writing down the discourses of the prophet, but was rather thus freshened and increased. The answer of the Lord to this sighing is of a stern character, yet soothing for Baruch. The sentence of destruction has been determined on. What the Lord has built He will now destroy: it is not said why, since the reason was sufficiently known



from the prophet's utterances. As to the expression in v. 4, cf. 1:10; 31:28. The destruction regards the whole earth, **וְאֶת-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ הִיא**, lit., "and as regards the whole earth, it is it," namely that I destroy. On the employment of **אֶת** in introducing the subject, cf. Dan. 9:13, Hag. 2:5, and Ewald, § 277 *d*. **כָּל-הָאָרֶץ** does not mean "the whole land," but "the whole earth;" this is indubitably evident from the parallel "upon all flesh," v. 5, i.e., the whole of humanity, as in 25:31. The sentence is passed on all the earth, in accordance with the announcement made in Jeremiah 25:15ff.

**Jeremiah 45:5.** But when the judgment extends over the whole of humanity, an individual man cannot ask for anything great. "To seek for great things," i.e., to ask for things which in general or under certain circumstances are unattainable (cf. Ps. 131:1), is here used with reference to worldly prosperity. When the whole world is visited with judgment, an individual man must not make great demands, but be content with saving his life. This is promised to Baruch in v. 5*b*, to alleviate his pain and sorrow. "To give life to any one for booty," means to let him escape with his life; cf. 21:9; 38:2; 39:18. In the words, "in all places whither thou shalt go," it is intimated that he will be obliged to avoid destruction by flight, but will thereby save his life.

#### **IV. Prophecies Directed Against Foreign Nations—Ch. 46–51**

##### **Jeremiah 46**

**Jeremiah 46–51.** Like Amos, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, Jeremiah has uttered predictions concerning a number of heathen nations, and incorporated them with the collection of his prophecies regarding Judah and Israel. But while in Amos the utterances regarding six nations round about the kingdom of God, as representatives of the whole heathen world, merely pave the way for announcing judgment on Judah and Israel, and are given for the purpose of teaching the necessity for judgment

on the whole world that is opposed to God, in order that the kingdom of God may be advanced; Isaiah, on the other hand, when the power of Assyria appeared against the kingdom of God, brought forward the thought, in a pretty long series of oracles against the nations, Is. 13–23, that all kingdoms and peoples, cities and men of the world that had apostatized from God, and still continued in apostasy, shall be humbled, and compelled by judgments inflicted on them to seek refuge with the God of Israel,—to submit to Him, and to offer their gifts for the establishment of His kingdom; and he concludes this announcement with an apocalyptic description of the judgment on the whole earth, and the consummation of the kingdom of God in glory, Is. 24–27. The object aimed at by Ezekiel and Jeremiah in their oracles against the heathen nations is more specific. Ezekiel, in view of the destruction of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah, directs a series of oracles against seven nations; and in these addresses he predicts the destruction of the heathen world, and the fall of all heathen powers into Sheol, in order that these may not exult over the fall of the people of God, but rather, in the judgment on Israel, recognise the omnipotence and justice of the Lord, the Judge of all the earth. And Jeremiah, in his addresses to the nations, Jeremiah 46–51, merely brings out more fully the execution of that sentence which he had already proclaimed (Jeremiah 25) to all the peoples and kingdoms of the earth, shortly before the appearance of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign. The multitude of nations and tribes, far and near, to which, in 25:17–26, he gives the cup of the divine wrath out of Jahveh's hand, is in Jeremiah 46–51 reduced to nine nations; and these are named in such order, that here, as there (Jeremiah 25), Egypt heads the list (Jeremiah 46), while Babylon closes it (Jeremiah 50, 51). Of the rest of these nations, those related to Israel, viz., Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, have special prophecies addressed to them, Jeremiah 48 and 49:1–22; but the others are more summarily addressed. Thus, in the oracle

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pronounced against the Philistines, the Phoenicians also (Tyre and Sidon) are threatened with extermination (Jeremiah 47); the many Arabian tribes severally named in Jeremiah 25 are comprehended under the general designations “Kedar” and “the kingdoms of Hazor” (Jeremiah 49:28–33); while the kingdoms of the north are represented by Damascus (Jeremiah 49:23–27), and the distant nations of the east (Media and Elam) by Elam, 49:34–39.

Ewald, Hitzig, Graf, and Nägelsbach would account for several smaller nations being taken together in one prophecy, on the ground that the prophet wished to make out the significant number seven,—just as Amos (Amos 1:1–2:5) brings forward seven kingdoms before his address is directed to Israel, and as Ezekiel also has arranged his prophecies against the nations in accordance with the number seven. But though the number seven plainly appears in Amos and Ezekiel, such an assumption cannot be established in the case of Jeremiah. To make out this number, the oracles against Elam and Babylon are viewed as later additions, on the ground that both of them are connected with the first years of the reign of Zedekiah. But the assertion that the first seven belong to the fourth year of Jehoiakim cannot be proved. The second prophecy regarding Egypt (Jeremiah 46:14–28), and that against the Philistines (Jeremiah 47), contain, in their headings, indications of the time of composition, which do not point to the fourth year of Jehoiakim. With this also accords the remark further brought to bear on the alleged composition of those seven prophecies in the fourth year of Jehoiakim,—that this follows, not merely from the general agreement of their contents with Jeremiah 46 as well as with Jeremiah 25, but also from the fact that “the same expressions which the prophet uses in Jeremiah 25 with reference to the judgment of all nations, are re-echoed in Jeremiah 46–49:33: e.g., cf 25:31, 34, with 46:10; 25:35 with 46:5, 6; 25:29, 31, with 47:6, 7; and particularly 25:28, 29, with 49:12 (Caspary on Obadiah, p. 16): cf. also 25:27 with 48:26; 25:30 with 48:33; 25:34 with 49:20;

25:38 with 49:19 and 46:16.” For, of all these passages, none belongs to the second prophecy against Egypt (Jeremiah 46:14–28), and to that against the Philistines (Jeremiah 47), except the last-quoted passage, 46:16, in which the expression *הַיְזָנָה הַחֲרָב* agrees with 25:38, if in the latter passage we read *חֲרוֹן חֲרָב*. But this expression is also repeated in the oracle against Babylon, 50:16; so that no proof can be drawn, from a consideration of the language employed, to show that the prophecies against Egypt (Jeremiah 46:14–28) and against the Philistines (Jeremiah 47) belong to the same time, as has been supposed. And the assertion that the prophecy against Elam forms an appendix to those which precede, could have been made only by a mind in a state of perplexity. Its position, after that against the Arabian tribes, and before that against Babylon, exactly agrees with the place occupied by Elam in 25:5.

When we examine the contents of these nine oracles, we find that the one against Babylon differs from all the preceding in this, that it announces not merely the ruin of Babylon, but also the salvation of Israel; but this peculiarity is the very point in which it agrees with the prophecies against Egypt, of which the second ends with a promise in Israel’s favour (Jeremiah 46:27, 28). This correspondence shows us that we cannot separate the prophecy regarding Babylon from the others, or even place it in contrast with them. Egypt and Babylon were, at that time, the two great powers of this world which sought to oppress and destroy the kingdom of God. The fall of one or the other of these powers was thus for Israel a pledge that they would be preserved and saved. In the remaining oracles, the reference to the theocracy is quite placed in the background. Only in that against Ammon do we meet with the complaint that it had taken possession of the cities of Israel, as if Israel had no heir (Jeremiah 49:1). In the others there is no mention made of offence against the theocracy, but only of pride, arrogance, and carnal reliance on their earthly power, for which they shall be humbled and punished. Further, it is to be

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observed that the oracles against Egypt, Moab, Ammon, and Elam conclude with the promise of restoration at the end of the days, i.e., in the Messianic future (cf. 46:26; 48:47; 49:6 and 39). All these things plainly show that these oracles against the people merely repeat, in greater detail, the sentence already pronounced, Jeremiah 25, against all nations: God the Lord has appointed the king of Babylon to execute this sentence, and for this end will give him, in the immediate future, and till his appointed time shall end, supremacy over the nations; after that, Babylon also shall succumb to the sentence of ruin passed on it; and for Israel, with the deliverance from Babylon, there will arise a state of prosperity in which all nations will afterwards participate. In giving details with regard to these announcements of judgment, Jeremiah throughout falls back on the expressions of the older prophet, just as he does in his prophecies regarding Israel and Judah; these expressions he reproduces in a manner suited to the circumstances of his time, and still further develops. Cf. the collection of these references in Kueper on Jeremiah, p. 79ff.; see further the proofs given in the following commentary on each particular case.

**Jeremiah 46:1, 2. Superscriptions.**—V. 1 contains the title for the whole collection of prophecies regarding the nations (הַגּוֹיִם, as contrasted with Israel, mean the heathen nations), Jeremiah 46–51. As to the formula, “What came as the word of Jahveh to Jeremiah,” etc., cf. the remarks on 14:1.—In v. 2, the special heading of this chapter begins with the word לְמִצְרָיִם. לְמִצְרָיִם is subordinated by לְ to the general title,—properly, “with regard to Egypt:” cf. לְמוֹאָב, etc., 48:1; 49:1, 7, 23, 28, also 23:9.

This chapter contains two prophecies regarding Egypt, vv. 2–12, and vv. 13–28. לְמִצְרָיִם refers to both. After this there follows an account of the occasion for the first of these two prophecies, in the words, “Concerning the army of Pharaoh-Necho, the king of Egypt, which was at the river Euphrates, near Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon smote in

the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah.” נָבִיא, as in 2 Chron. 35:20, or נָבִיָּה, as in 2 Kings 23:29, in LXX Νεχαώ; Egyptian, according to Brugsch (*Hist. d’Egypte*, i. p. 252), *Nekāou*; in Herodotus Νεκώς,—is said by Manetho to have been the sixth king of the twenty-sixth (Sa•te) dynasty, the second Pharaoh of this name, the son of Psammetichus I, and grandson of Necho I. Brugsch says he reigned from 611 to 595 B.C. See on 2 Chron. 23:29. The two relative clauses are co-ordinate, i.e., אֲשֶׁר in each case depends on הָיָל. The first clause merely states where Pharaoh’s army was, the second tells what befall it at the Euphrates. It is to this that the following prophecy refers. Pharaoh-Necho, soon after ascending the throne, in the last year of Josiah’s reign (610 B.C.), had landed in Palestine, at the bay of Acre, with the view of subjugating Hither Asia as far as the Euphrates, and had defeated the slain King Josiah, who marched out against him. He next deposed Jehoahaz, whom the people had raised to the throne as Josiah’s successor, and carried him to Egypt, after having substituted Eliakim, the elder brother of Jehoahaz, and made him his vassal-king, under the name of Jehoiakim. When he had thus laid Judah under tribute, he advanced farther into Syria, towards the Euphrates, and had reached Carchemish on that river, as is stated in this verse: there his army was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim (606 B.C.); see on 2 Kings 23:29f. *Carchemish* is Καρκήσιον, *Circesium*, or *Cercusium* of the classical writers, Arabic *karqîsîyat*, a fortified city at the junction of the Chebar with the Euphrates, built on the peninsula formed by the two rivers (Ammian. Marc. xxiii. 5, Procop. *bell. Pers.* ii. 5, and Maras. under *Karkesija*). All that now remains of it are ruins, called by the modern Arabs *Abu Psera*, and situated on the Mesopotamian side of the Euphrates, where that river is joined by the Chebar (Ausland, 1864, S. 1058). This fortress was either taken, or at least besieged, by Necho. The statement, “in the fourth year of Jehoiakim,” can be referred exegetically only to

the time of the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish, or the year of the battle, and is actually so understood by most interpreters. No one but Niebuhr (*Gesch. Ass. u. Babl.* S. 59, 86, 370ff.) alters the date of the battle, which he places in the third year of Jehoiakim, partly from consideration of Dan. 1:1, partly from other chronological calculations; he would refer the date given in our verse to the time when the following song was composed or published. But Dan. 1:1 does not necessarily require us to make any such assumption (see on that passage), and the other chronological computations are quite uncertain. Exegetically, it is as impossible to insert a period after “which Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon smote” (Nieb. p. 86, note 3), as to connect the date “in the fourth year of Jehoiakim” with “which word came to Jeremiah” (v. 10). The title in v. 1 certainly does not refer specially to the prophecy about Egypt, but to עַל־הַגּוֹיִם. But if we wished to make the whole of v. 2 dependent on אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְבַר יְהוָה, which would, at all events, be a forced, unnatural construction, then, from the combination of the title in v. 1 with the specification of time at the end of v. 2, it would follow that all the prophecies regarding the nations had come to Jeremiah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim,—which would contradict what is said in the heading to the oracle against Elam (Jeremiah 49:34), not to mention the oracle against Babylon.

Moreover, there is nothing to prevent us from assuming that the first prophecy against Egypt was revealed to Jeremiah, and uttered by him, in the same fourth year of Jehoiakim in which Necho was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar. In this way, the argument brought forward by Niebuhr in support of his forced interpretation, viz., that all specifications of time in the addresses of Jeremiah refer to the period of composition, loses all its force. In 45:1 also, and in 51:9, the time when the event occurred coincides with the time when the utterance regarding it was pronounced. Although we assume this to hold in the case before us, yet it by no means follows that what succeeds, in vv. 3–12, is not a

prophecy, but a song or lyric celebrating so important a battle, “the picture of an event that had already occurred,” as Niebuhr, Ewald, and Hitzig assume. This neither follows from the statement in the title, “which Nebuchadnezzar in the fourth year of Jehoiakim smote,” nor from the contents of the succeeding address. The superscription does not naturally belong to what Jeremiah has said or uttered, but must have been prefixed, for the first time, only when the address was committed to writing and inserted in the collection, and this not till after the battle had been fought; but it is evident that the address is to be viewed as substantially a prophecy (see vv. 6b and 10b), although Jeremiah depicts, in the most lively and dramatic way, not merely the preparation of the mighty host, v. 3, and its formidable advance, vv. 7–9, but also its flight and annihilation, in v. 5 and in vv. 10–12.

**Jeremiah 46:3.** *“Prepare shield and target, and advance to the battle. V. 4. Yoke the horses [to the chariots]; mount the steeds, and stand with helmets on; polish the spears, put on the armour. V. 5. Why do I see? they are terrified and turned back, and their heroes are beaten, and flee in flight, and do not turn: terror is round about, saith Jahveh. V. 6. Let not the swift one flee, nor let the hero escape; towards the north, by the side of the river Euphrates, they stumble and fall. V. 7. Who is this that cometh up like the Nile? his waters wave like the rivers. V. 8. Egypt cometh up like the Nile, [his] waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, I will cover the earth; I will destroy the city, and those who dwell in it. V. 9. Go up, ye horses; and drive furiously, ye chariots; and let the heroes go forth; Cushites and Phutites, bearing the shield; and Lydians, handling [and] bending the bow. V. 10. But that day [belongs] to the Lord Jahveh of hosts, a day of vengeance for avenging Himself on His enemies: and the sword shall devour and be satisfied, and shall drink its fill of their blood; for the Lord Jahveh of hosts holdeth a slaying of sacrifices in the land of the north at the river Euphrates. V. 11. Go up to Gilead, and take balsam, O virgin, daughter of Egypt: in vain hast thou multiplied medicines; cure there is none for*

*thee. V. 12. The nations have heard of thine ignominy, and thy cry hath filled the earth: for heroes stumble against heroes, both of them fall together."*

This address falls into two strophes, vv. 3–6 and 7–12. In both are depicted in a lively manner, first the advance of the Egyptian host to the battle, then their flight and destruction. The whole has been arranged so as to form a climax: in the first strophe, the admirable equipment of the armies, and their sudden flight and defeat, are set forth in brief sentences; in the second, there is fully described not merely the powerful advance of the host that covers the earth, but also the judgment of inevitable destruction passed on them by God: the reason for the whole is also assigned. V. 3f. In order to represent the matter in a lively way, the description begins with the call addressed to the army, to make ready for the battle. "Make ready shield and target," the two main pieces of defensive armour. מִגָּן was the small [round] shield; צָנָה, *scutum*, the large shield, covering the whole body. "Advance to the fight," i.e., go forward into the battle. Then the address turns to the several portions of the army: first to those who fight from chariots, who are to yoke the horses; then to the horsemen, to mount the steeds. פָּרָשִׁים are not horsemen, but riding-horses, as in 1 Kings 5:6; 10:26, Ezek. 27:14. עָלָה is construed with the accus., as in Gen. 49:4. The rendering given by Dahler and Umbreit, "Mount, ye horsemen," and that of Hitzig, "Advance, ye horsemen," are against the parallelism; and the remark of the last-named writer, that "Mount the steeds" would be רָכְבוּ, does not accord with 1 Sam. 30:17. Next, the address is directed to the foot-soldiers, who formed the main portion of the army. These are to take up their position with helmets on, to polish the spears, i.e., to sharpen them, and to put on the pieces of armour, in order to be arrayed for battle. מָרַק, to rub, polish, remove rust from the spear, and thereby sharpen it.

שָׂרִיזָן, here and in 51:3 for שָׂרִיזָן, a coat of mail, pieces of armour.

**Jeremiah 46:5, 6.** Thus well arrayed, the host advances to the fight; but suddenly the seer perceives the magnificent army terror-stricken, retreating, and breaking out into a disorderly flight. The question, "Why (wherefore) do I see?" points to the unexpected and incomprehensible turn in the progress of events. הִמָּה חֲתִים is not an accus. dependent on רָאִיתִי, but an independent clause: "What do I see? They are terror-stricken" (חֲתִים, terrified, broken-spirited through terror). יָבִתוּ, Hoph. from בָּתַת, to be broken, here and in Job 4:20 applied to persons. מָנוֹס is added to the verb instead of the inf. abs., to give emphasis to the idea contained in the word; cf. Ewald, § 281, *a*. מְגוֹר מִסְבִּיב, "horror, terror around" (cf. 6:25), is taken by Ewald as the reply of Jahveh to the question, "Wherefore is this? On every side there is danger;" and this is appropriately followed by the imperatives in v. 6, "Let no one, then, attempt to flee; not one shall escape to Egypt, but they must fall at the Euphrates." The perfects כָּשְׁלוּ וְנָפְלוּ are prophetic; the stumbling and falling are as certain as if they had already happened. The second strophe commences at v. 7. The description begins anew, and that with a question of astonishment at the mighty host advancing like the Nile when it bursts its banks and inundates the whole country. יָאֵר is the name of the Nile, taken from the Egyptian into the Hebrew language; cf. Gen. 41ff., Ex. 1:22, etc. הִתְנַעַשׂ, dash about (Jeremiah 5:22), wave backwards and forwards: the Hithpa. is here interchanged with the Hithpo. without any difference of meaning.

**Jeremiah 46:8.** brings the answer to the question of astonishment: "Egypt approaches, its hosts cover the land like the waves of the Nile, to destroy cities and men." On the form אֲבִידָה (with א contracted from אָא), cf. Ewald, § 192, *d*; Gesenius, § 68, Rem. 1. עִיר is used in an

indefinite general sense, “cities,” as in 8:16.—In v. 9, the imperat. stands as in v. 3f.: “Let the formidable army approach,—cavalry, chariots, and infantry, with all their splendidly equipped auxiliaries,—nevertheless it shall perish.” עָלוּ הַסּוּסִים does not here mean “Mount the steeds,” which is against the parallelism, but “Get up (i.e., prance), ye horses;” this meaning is guaranteed by the Hiphil מַעֲלָה, as used in Nah. 3:3. הַתְּהַלְלוּ הַרְקָב is an imitation of Nah. 2:5. As auxiliaries, and very brave ones too (גְּבוּרִים), are mentioned “Cush,” i.e., the Ethiopians; “Phut,” the Libyans; and “Ludim,” i.e., Hamitic, African Lydians, as in Ezek. 30:5. On the double construct in תַּפְּשִׂי דְרָכֵי קֶשֶׁת, “holding, bending bows,” cf. Ew. § 280, c.

**Jeremiah 46:10.** This formidable army shall perish; for the day of the battle is the day of the Lord of hosts, on which He will take vengeance upon His enemies. Among these enemies are the Egyptians, who have grievously sinned against Israel, the people of the Lord, not merely of late, by making war upon and killing King Josiah, by carrying away Jehoahaz, and making Jehoiakim his vassal, but also from the earliest times. For this, Egypt is now to be brought low. The sword shall devour and be refreshed by drinking the blood of the Egyptians. For the Lord is preparing for a slaying of sacrifices (זִבְחָה) in the north, at the Euphrates. Isa. 34:6 forms the basis of these words.

**Jeremiah 46:11.** The blow which shall there come on the Egyptians is one from which they shall never recover, and the wound shall be one not to be healed by any balm. As to the balm of Gilead, see on 8:22; on רַפְאוֹת and תְּעָלָה, see 30:13. “Virgin daughter of Egypt” is equivalent to virgin-like people of Egypt, i.e., not hitherto forced, but now ravished, violated, so that all nations shall hear of the dishonour done them, and their cry shall fill the whole earth, for (as at the conclusion, the threat is added by way of confirmation) all the heroes of Egypt stumble and fall. גְּבוּרַת בְּגִבּוֹר, “hero against hero,” i.e., one

against another, or over the others, as usually happens in a flight where confusion reigns; cf. Jeremiah 26:37.

**Jeremiah 46:13–28.** *The second prophecy regarding Egypt, with a message for Israel attached to it, was uttered after the preceding.* This is evident even from the superscription, v. 13: “The word which Jahveh spake to Jeremiah the prophet of the coming of Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon to smite the land of Egypt.” The formula, “The word which,” etc., agrees with that in 50:1; and דִּבְרָה, in contrast with הִיָּה, the word usually met with in headings, perhaps means that this prophecy, like that concerning Babylon, was not uttered in public by Jeremiah, but only written down. לְבוֹא is used in reference to the coming of Nebuchadrezzar to smite the land. Graf puts down this heading as an addition, not made till a late edition of the prophecies was brought out, and even then added through a mistake on the part of the compiler. In support of this, he urges that the announcement in vv. 14–26 does not form an independent prophecy, but merely constitutes the second portion of the description given in vv. 3–12 of the defeat of the Egyptians. But the ground assigned for this view, viz., that if this prophecy formed a separate and distinct piece, written at another time, then Jeremiah would have predicted the conquest of the other countries, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, etc., in consequence of the battle of Carchemish; and as regards Egypt, would have contented himself with a triumphal song over its fall—which is in itself unlikely: this argument is utterly null. It has no meaning whatever; for vv. 3–12 contain, not a triumphal song over a defeat that had already taken place, but a prophecy regarding the defeat about to take place. To this the prophet added a second prophecy, in which he once more announces beforehand to Egypt that it shall be conquered. In this way, more is foretold regarding Egypt than the neighbouring countries, because Egypt was of much greater consequence, in relation to the theocracy, than Philistia, Moab, etc. According to the superscription, this second prophecy refers to

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the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar. According to 37:5, this did not take place so long as Zedekiah was king; and according to 43:8ff., it was foretold by Jeremiah, after the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Jews were fleeing to Egypt after the murder of Gedaliah. From this, one might conclude, with Nägelsbach, that the piece now before us is contemporaneous with 43:8ff. But this inference is not a valid one. The threat uttered in 43:8ff. of a conquest to befall Egypt had a special occasion of its own, and we cannot well regard it in any other light than as a repetition of the prophecy now before us, for the Jews; for its contents seem to show that it was composed not long after that in vv. 3–12, or soon after the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish. This address also falls into two strophes, vv. 14–19 and vv. 20–26, while vv. 27, 28 form an additional message for Israel. The line of thought is this: Egypt may arm herself as she chooses, but her power shall fall, and her auxiliaries shall flee (vv. 14–16). Pharaoh's fall is certain; the enemy shall come in force, and turn all Egypt into a desert (vv. 17–19). The destroyer comes from the north, the mercenaries flee, and the enemy hews down countless hosts of men like trees in a forest (vv. 20–23). Egypt will be given into the hand of the people out of the north; for Jahveh will punish gods, princes, and people, and deliver up Egypt to the king of Babylon. But afterwards, Egypt will again be inhabited as it was before (vv. 24–26). On the other hand, Israel need fear nothing, for their God will lead them back out of their captivity (vv. 27, 28).

**Jeremiah 46:14.** *“Tell ye it in Egypt, and make it to be heard in Migdol, and make it be heard in Noph and Tahpanhes: say, Stand firm, and prepare thee; for the sword hath devoured around thee. V. 15. Why hath thy strong one been swept away? he stood not, for Jahveh pushed him down. V. 16. He made many stumble, yea, one fell on another; and they said, Arise, and let us return to our own people, and to the land of our birth, from before the oppressing sword. V. 17. They cried there, Pharaoh the king of Egypt is undone; he hath let the appointed time pass. V. 18. As I*

*live, saith the King, whose name is Jahveh of hosts, Surely as Tabor among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, shall he come. V. 19. Prepare thee things for exile, O daughter dwelling in Egypt: for Noph will become a desolation, and be destroyed by fire, without an inhabitant.”*

Like the last prophecy, this one also begins with the summons to arms (v. 14), in order to prepare the way for the description given immediately afterwards of the defeat (v. 15ff.). The summons to make the proclamation is addressed to some persons not named, who are to announce through the country, particularly in the frontier towns and in the northern capital of Egypt, that the foe, in his devastating career, has advanced to the borders of the land. This is evident from the clause which states the reason: “The sword hath devoured what lay round thee.” Regarding Migdol, i.e., *Magdolos*, and Tahpanhes, i.e., *Daphne*, the two frontier towns in the north, and Noph, i.e., *Memphis*, the northern capital of the kingdom, see on 2:16 and 54:1. הַתְּיָצֵב, to take up one's position for the fight; cf. v. 4. סְבִיבָיָהּ, “thy surroundings,” are the frontier countries, but especially those on the north,—Judah, Philistia, Edom,—since the enemy comes from the north. However, we cannot with certainty infer from this, that by that time the kingdom of Judah had already fallen, and Jerusalem been laid waste. Immediately after Necho had been vanquished at the Euphrates, Nebuchadnezzar marched after the fugitive foe, pursuing him as far as the borders of Egypt; hence we read, in 2 Kings 24:7, “The king of Egypt went no more out of his land; for the king of Babylon had taken all that had belonged to the king of Egypt, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates.” Even at that time, in the fourth and fifth years of Jehoiakim, it could be said, “His sword hath devoured the countries contiguous to Egypt.” And Nebuchadnezzar was prevented on that occasion from advancing farther, and penetrating into Egypt itself, only by hearing of his father's death at Babylon, in consequence of which he was compelled to return to Babylon

as speedily as possible, for the purpose of assuming the reins of government, and to let his army with the prisoners follow him at their leisure (Berosus in Josephus, *contra Ap.* i. 19).

**Jeremiah 46:15.** The prophet in spirit looks on the power of Egypt as already broken. This is shown by the question of astonishment, **מִדּוֹעַ נִסְחָף אַבְיָרִים**, which has been variously rendered. **אַבְיָרִים**, “strong ones,” is used in Jeremiah 8:16; 47:3, and 50:11, of stallions, but elsewhere as an epithet of bulls, especially the strong bulls of Bashan; see on 8:16. In the present passage the reference may be to the mighty men of war, who do not maintain their position (Chald. and most of the old interpreters); the verb in the singular forms no sufficient objection to this view, the irregularity being due to the fact that the verb precedes its subject [see Ewald, § 316, *t*; Gesenius, § 147]. It is more difficult to combine with this the singulars of the verbs **עָמַד** and **הִדְפּוּ** which follow; these, and especially the suffix in the singular, appear to indicate that **אַבְיָרִים** really refers to a noun in the singular. But the form of this noun seems against such a view; for the words adduced in support of the position that singular nouns sometimes assume plural suffixes, are insufficient for the purpose: thus, **תְּהַלְלֶתְיָהּ**, Ps. 9:15, and **שָׁנְאֶתְיָהּ**, Ezek. 35:11, are plainly nouns in the singular. And in support of the averment that, in pausal forms with Segol, the **י** is a mere *mater lectionis*, only **כַּפְּיָהּ**, Prov. 6:1, can be adduced: the other instances brought forward by Hitzig fail to establish his position. For **אַיִבָּיָהּ**, Deut. 28:48, may be plural; **בְּיָיָהּ**, Gen. 16:5, is far from being a case in point, for the preposition often takes plural suffixes; and even in the case of **חֲסִידָיָהּ**, Ps. 16:10, the **י** is marked in the *Qeri* as superfluous; most codices, too, rather give the form **חֲסִידָיָהּ**. But even in the verse now before us, many codices, according to Kennicott and de Rossi, read **אַבְיָרִים**, so that the word should perhaps be taken as a singular. The singulars,

however, which occur in the following clauses do not form conclusive proofs of this, since they may be taken in a distributive sense; and more generally the address often suddenly changes from the plural to the singular. In connection with the possibility of taking **אַבְיָרִים** as a singular, the paraphrase of the LXX deserves mention and consideration, **ὁ μόνος ὁ ἄλλετός σου**, to which a gloss adds **ὁ ἄλλος**. But we cannot agree with Kennicott, J. D. Michaelis, Ewald, Hitzig, Graf, and Nägelsbach, in holding this as certainly the correct rendering; nor can we give to **אַבְיָרִים** the sense of “bull,” for this meaning is not made out for the singular simply because the plural is used of strong bulls: this holds especially in Jeremiah, who constantly applies the plural to strong steeds. Still less ground is there for appealing to the fact that Jahveh is repeatedly called **אַבְיָרִים יְשׁוּאַל** or **אַבְיָרִים יַעֲקֹב**, Gen. 49:24, Isa. 1:24; 39:26 etc.; for this epithet of Jahveh (who shows Himself in or towards Israel as the Mighty One) cannot be applied to the helpless images of Apis. In Ps. 68:31, **אַבְיָרִים** means “strong ones”—bulls as emblems of kings. If the word be used here with such a reference, it may be singular or plural. In the former case it would mean the king; in the latter, the king with his princes and magnates. Against the application of the word to the images of Apis, there is the fact that Apis, a symbol of Osiris, was neither the only nor the chief god of Egypt, but was worshipped nowhere except in Memphis (Herodotus, ii. 153); hence it was not suited to be the representative of the gods or the power of Egypt, as the context of the present passage requires.

**Jeremiah 46:16.** As the mighty one of Egypt does not stand, but is thrust down by God, so Jahveh makes many stumble and fall over one another, so that the strangers return to their own home in order to escape the violence of the sword. The subject of **וַיֵּאמְרוּ** is indefinite; the speakers, however, are not merely the hired soldiers or mercenaries (v. 11), or the allied nations (Ezek. 30:5), but strangers generally,



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who had been living in Egypt partly for the sake of commerce, partly for other reasons (Hitzig, Graf). As to חֶרֶב הַיּוֹנָה, see on 25:38.

**Jeremiah 46:17.** In v. 17, “they cry there” is not to be referred to those who fled to their native land; the subject is undefined, and “there” refers to the place where one falls over the other, viz., Egypt. “There they cry, ‘Pharaoh the king of Egypt is שָׁאוֹן, desolation, destruction, ruin.’” for this meaning, cf. 25:31, Ps. 40:3; the signification “noise, bustle,” is unsuitable here. The meaning of הַמּוֹעֵד הַמְּעַבִּיר also is disputed; it is quite inadmissible, however, to join the words with שָׁאוֹן, as Ewald does, for the purpose of making out a name. No suitable meaning can be extracted from them. Neither שָׁאוֹן nor הַמּוֹעֵד can be the subject of הַמְּעַבִּיר; the translation given by Schnurrer, “devastation that goes beyond all bounds,” is still more arbitrary than that of Ewald given in the note. Since the Hiphil הַמְּעַבִּיר is never used except with a transitive meaning, the subject can be none else than Pharaoh; and the words הַמּוֹעֵד הַמְּעַבִּיר must be intended to give the reason for this becoming a desolation: they are thus to be rendered, “he has allowed הַמּוֹעֵד to pass by,” not “the precise place,” as Rosenmüller explains it (“he did not stop in his flight at the place where the army could be gathered again, on the return”), but “the precise time.” The reference, however, is not to the suitable time for action, for self-defence and for driving off the enemy (Grotius, C. B. Michaelis, Maurer, Umbreit), because the word does not mean suitable, convenient time, but appointed time. As Hitzig rightly perceived, the time meant is that within which the desolation might still be averted, and after which the judgment of God fell on him (Isa. 10:25; 30:18),—the time of grace which God had vouchsafed to him, so that Nebuchadnezzar did not at once, after the victory at Carchemish, invade and conquer Egypt. Pharaoh let this time pass by; because, instead of seeing in that defeat a judgment from God, he provoked the anger of Nebuchadnezzar by his repeated

attacks on the Chaldean power, and brought on the invasion of Egypt by the king of Babylon (see above, p. 354).—In v. 18f. there is laid down a more positive foundation for the threat uttered in v. 17. With an oath, the Lord announces the coming of the destroyer into Egypt. Like Tabor, which overtops all the mountains round about, and like Carmel, which looks out over the sea as if it were a watch-tower, so will he come, viz., he from whom proceeds the devastation of Egypt, the king of Babylon. the power of Nebuchadnezzar, in respect of its overshadowing all other kings, forms the point of comparison. Tabor has the form of a truncated cone. Its height is given at 1805 feet above the level of the sea, or 1350 from the surface of the plain below; it far surpasses in height all the hills in the vicinity, and affords a wide prospect on every side; cf. Robinson’s *Phys. Geogr. of Palestine*, p. 26f. Carmel stretches out in the form of a long ridge more than three miles wide, till it terminates on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, as a bold, lofty promontory, which rises in an imposing manner at least 500 feet above the sea; cf. Robinson, p. 26f. Then the inhabitants of Egypt will be driven into exile. כְּלֵי גּוֹלָה, “vessels of wandering;” outfit for an exile, as in Ezek. 12:3. “Daughter of Egypt” is not a personification of the country, whose inhabitants are the people, but of the population, which is viewed as the daughter of the country; it stands in apposition to יוֹשְׁבֵת, like בְּתוּלַת בֵּית מִצְרַיִם, v. 11. For Noph, i.e., Memphis, the capital, is laid waste and burned, so as to lose its inhabitants. With v. 20 begins the second strophe, in which the fate impending on Egypt is still more plainly predicted.

**Jeremiah 46:20.** *“Egypt is a very beautiful young heifer; a gadfly from the north comes—comes. V. 21. Her mercenaries, too, in her midst, are like fatted calves; for they also turn their backs, they flee together: they do not stand, for the day of her destruction is some on her, the time of her visitation. V. 22. Its sound is like [that of] the serpent [as it] goes; for they go with an army, and come against her with axes, like*

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hewers of trees. V. 23. They cut down her forest, saith Jahveh, for it is not to be searched; for they are more numerous than locusts, and they cannot be numbered. V. 24. The daughter of Egypt is disgraced; she is given into the hand of the people of the north. V. 25. Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel, saith, Behold, I will visit Amon of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, her gods, and her kings; Pharaoh, and all those who trust in him. V. 26. And I will give them into the hand of those who seek their life, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants; but afterwards it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith Jahveh."

**Jeremiah 46:20.** In v. 20 the address begins afresh, in order to carry out further, under new images, the description of the desolation already threatened. Egypt is a very beautiful heifer; עֵגְלָה; this feminine is chosen with a regard to "the daughter of Egypt." יְפֵה־פִיָּה is an adjective formed from the Peal of יָפָה, "very beautiful," not "coquetting" (Hitzig, who follows the κεκαλλωπισμένη of the LXX). A very beautiful heifer is the people when carefully and abundantly fed in their beautiful and fertile land (Hitzig). Upon this heifer there comes from the north קָרַץ. This ἄπ. λεγ. is variously rendered. קָרַץ means, in the Hebrew, to pinch, nip (Job 33:6), to compress together, as in winking (Ps. 35:19), to bring the lips closely together (Prov. 16:30), and to nip off; cf. Arab. *qarāṣa* to pinch, nip, cut off. Hence A. Schultens (*Orig. Heb.* ii. 34ff.), after Cocceius, and with a reference to Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 147, has rendered קָרַץ by *morsus vellicans oestri*. Hitzig (with whom Roediger, in his additions to Gesenius' *Thesaurus*, agrees) takes Arab. *qārṣ*, *insectum cimici simile* as his warrant for rendering it by *oestrus*, "the gadfly," which gives a more suitable meaning. Ewald, on the contrary, compares קָרַץ with Arab. *qrṣ*, and translates it "whale," a huge sea-monster; but this is quite arbitrary, for קָרַץ does not correspond to the Arabic *qrṣ*, and the whale or shark does not afford any figure that would be suitable for the

context: e.g., v. 21, "her mercenaries *also* flee," shows that the subject treated of is not the devouring or destruction, but the expulsion of the Egyptians out of their land; this is put as an addition to what is said about exile in v. 19. Still less suitable is the general rendering *excidium*, destruction (Rabbins, Gesenius, Umbreit); and there is no lexical foundation for the Vulgate translation *stimulator*, nor for "taskmaster," the rendering of J. D. Michaelis and Rosenmüller. The old translators have only made guesses from the context. The figure of the gadfly corresponds to the bee in the land of Assyria, Isa. 7:18. The repetition of אָרַץ gives emphasis, and points either to the certainty of the coming, or its continuance.

**Jeremiah 46:21.** The mercenaries, also, of the daughter of Egypt, well fed, like fatted calves, betake themselves to flight. שְׂכָרִים are "mercenaries," as distinguished from the allies mentioned in v. 9. It was Carians and Ionians through whom Psammetichus attained the supremacy over all Egypt: these had settled down in στρατόπεδα of their own, between Bubastis and Pelusium, on both banks of the eastern arm of the Nile (Herodotus, ii. 152, 154), and were very well cared for, since the king relied on them (Herod. ii. 152, 163). Hence the comparison with fatted calves, which, moreover, are co-ordinated with the subject, as is shown by the resumption of the subject in אָרַץ. הַקָּהָה stands in the middle of the sentence, with an asseverative meaning: "Yea, these also turn their back, they flee together, do not stand; for the day of their destruction is come." "The day of their destruction" is used as in 18:17. On "the time of their visitation" (which stands in apposition to the preceding expression (cf. 11:23; 23:12: it is not an accusative of time (Graf), for this always expresses the idea of continuance during a space of time.

**Jeremiah 46:22, 23.** In vv. 22, 23, the annihilation of the power of Egypt is portrayed under another figure. A difficult expression is קוֹלָהּ בְּנֶחֱשׁ יִלְדָּה, "her (viz., that of the daughter of Egypt) voice is like (the voice of) the serpent

(which) goes.” יָלַד must be taken as part of a relative sentence, since this verb is nowhere used of a voice or sound; hence it cannot be so joined here. Ewald, following the σαρξίζοντος of the LXX, would read שֵׁרֶק, “hissing,” instead of יָלַד, and translates, “it makes a noise like the hissing serpent.” He more fully defines the meaning thus: “Even though Egypt were hidden like a serpent in a thicket, yet it would be heard in its flight, like a nasty serpent hissing fiercely, while it hurries away from the axe of the woodcutter.” But, apart from the arbitrary change of יָלַד into שֵׁרֶק (the former word is used in Gen. 3:14 of the going, i.e., crawling, of a serpent), Ewald puts into the words an idea altogether foreign to them. The nasty, fierce hissing of the serpent that is forced to flee, is quite unsuitable; for there is no further mention made of the flight of the Egyptians, but Egypt is hewn down like a forest by woodcutters. Moreover, as Graf has already well remarked, Egypt is not compared to a serpent, but only its voice to the voice or hiss of a serpent. For קוֹל signifies, not merely the voice, but any sound, even the rustling and rattling of leaves (cf. Gen. 3:8, Lev. 26:36, 2 Sam. 5:24); hence it may denote the noise caused by a serpent crawling on its belly in the thicket. The comparison, as Graf has correctly observed, is like that in Isa. 29:4. There it is the daughter of Zion, but here it is the daughter of Egypt that lies on the ground, deeply humbled; weeping softly and moaning, making a sound like that of a serpent in a moss among fallen leaves, fleeing before the woodcutters. Thus she lies on the ground, for the enemy comes in force, with axes like woodcutters, to hew down the forest of men in Egypt. The mention of the axes is occasioned by the comparison of the foe to woodcutters; we are not to think of battle-axes as weapons of the Massagetae, Scythians, Persians, and other nations (Herodotus, i. 215, iv. 70, vii. 64; Xenophon, *Cyroped.* i. 2, 9). Axes here form the type of murderous weapons generally. On the comparison of a multitude of people to a forest, cf. 21:14, Isa. 10:18f., 33f. The clause כִּי לֹא יִחָקֵר

is referred by L. de Dieu, J. D. Michaelis, Hitzig, Nägelsbach, etc., to the wood, “for it cannot be explored or penetrated;” thus a road must be made in order to get through it. However, the question is not about the enemy going or marching through Egypt, but about the destruction of Egypt and her powers. Rosenmüller and Graf, with Raschi, are more correct in referring the clause to the hostile army, “for it cannot be investigated,” i.e., it is impossible to learn the number of them. It is no great objection to this interpretation that the verb occurs in the singular: this must be retained as it is, since it is not the individual enemies that cannot be searched out, but it is the number of the whole army that cannot be reckoned. On the employment of חָקַר in the Niphal in connection with the impossibility of counting a multitude, cf. 1 Kings 7:47, and the expression לֹא חָקַר in Job 5:9; 9:10; 36:36. The clauses which follow, and conclude v. 23, explain the thought further: “more numerous than grasshoppers,” i.e., innumerable.

**Jeremiah 46:24f.** In vv. 24f. the result of the overthrow of Egypt, which has hitherto been set forth in figurative language, is stated in words which describe the exact realities: Egypt will be given up to ignominy, delivered into the power of a people from the north, i.e., the Chaldeans. The Lord of hosts, the Almighty God of Israel, punishes it for its sins. He visits, i.e., punishes, *Amon of No*, the chief idol of Egypt; Pharaoh, and the land, with all its gods and its kings, and with Pharaoh, all those who place their trust in his power. Words are accumulated for the purpose of showing that the judgment will be one which shall befall the whole land, together with its gods, its rulers, and its inhabitants. First of all is mentioned *Amon of No*, as in Ezek. 30:14f. אֲמוֹן is an abbreviation of אֲמוֹן מִן, i.e., dwelling of Amon, the sacred name of the royal city in Upper Egypt, famous in antiquity, which the Greeks called Διὸς πόλις, or Θήβη, or Θήβαι it is supposed, after the vulgar Egyptian name *Tapet* or *Tape* (Throne or Seat); see on Nah. 3:8. *Amon*—in Greek Ἄμμων

(Herodotus, ii. 42), Ἄμμων (Plutarch, *de Is.* Jeremiah 9), Ἀμῶν (Jamblichus, *de myst.* 5, 8)—was a sun-god (*Amon-Râ*), probably a symbol of the sun as it appears in the spring, in the sign of the Ram; hence he was represented with rams' horns. By the Greeks he was compared to Jupiter, or Zeus, and named *Jupiter Ammon*. The chief seat of his worship was Thebes, where he had a temple, with a numerous learned priesthood and a famous oracle (cf. Strabo, xvii. 1. 43; Justin. xi. 11), which Cambyses destroyed (Diodorus, Siculus, *Fragm. Lib. x.*). Under the expression "kings of Egypt" we are not to include governors or vassal-kings, but all the kings who ever ruled Egypt; for in the judgment now falling on Egypt, all the kings it ever had, together with all its gods, are punished. In the last part of the verse the name of Pharaoh is once more given, for the purpose of attaching to it the words "and all who trust in him;" these are intended for the Jews who expected help from Egypt. The punishment consists in their being all given into the hand of their enemies, namely (‡ explic.) into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and his servants. This defeat, however, is not to be the end of the Egyptian kingdom. The threat of judgment concludes, in v. 26b, with a promise for the future. "Afterwards, it shall be inhabited, as in the days of yore." שָׁבַת is used in a neuter sense, as in 17:6; 33:16, etc. Since this verb also signifies to settle down, be encamped (Num. 24:2), and to lie quiet, to rest, or keep oneself quiet, inactive (Judg. 5:17; Prov. 7:11), Hitzig and Graf, with Kimchi, give the explanation: "because the power of Egypt shall be broken, it will keep quiet, and remain at home in its own country, instead of marching forth and fighting other nations, as it has lately begun again to do (v. 7) after centuries of peace." But although, in support of this view, we are pointed to Ezek. 29:13, where the restoration of Egypt is predicted, with the further remark, "it will be an abject kingdom," yet this idea is not contained in the words of our verse. To render שָׁבַת by "to keep quiet, be inactive," does not suit the words "as in the days of old." In former

days, Egypt was neither inactive nor remained at home in peace in its own land. From the remotest antiquity, the Pharaohs made wars, and sought to enlarge their dominions by conquest. Add to this, that we must view the concluding portion of this prophecy in a manner analogous to the closing thought of the prophecies regarding Moab (Jeremiah 48:47), Ammon (Jeremiah 49:6), and Elam (Jeremiah 49:39), where the turning of the captivity in the last times is given in prospect to these nations, and "afterwards," in 49:6, alternates with "in the latter days" found in 48:47 and 49:39. From this it follows that, in the verse now before us also, it is not the future in general, but the last time, i.e., the Messianic future, that is pointed out; hence שָׁבַת does not express the peaceful condition of the land, but its being inhabited, in contrast with its depopulation in the immediate future, in consequence of its inhabitants being killed or carried away. On the fulfilment of this threatening, see p. 351ff.

**Jeremiah 46:27, 28.** *A promise for Israel.*—V. 27. "But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, nor be dismayed: for, behold, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be at rest and secure, and no one shall make him afraid. V. 28. Fear thou not, my servant Jacob, saith Jahveh, for I am with thee; for I will make complete destruction of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but of thee will I not make complete destruction: yet I will correct thee in a proper manner, and I will not leave thee wholly unpunished." These verses certainly form no integral portion of the prophecy, but an epilogue; yet they are closely connected with the preceding, and are occasioned by the declaration in v. 26, that the Lord, when He visits Pharaoh, shall also visit all those who trust in Him. This word, which is directed to Judah, might be understood to declare that it is Judah chiefly which will share the fate of Egypt. In order to prevent such a misconception, Jeremiah adds a word for Israel, which shows how the true Israel has another destiny to hope for. Their deliverer is Jahveh, their God, who certainly punishes them for

their sins, gives them up to the power of the heathen, but will also gather them gain after their dispersion, and then grant them uninterrupted prosperity. This promise of salvation at the close of the announcement of judgment on Egypt is similar to the promise of salvation for Israel inserted in the threat of judgment against Babylon, 50:4–7 and 19, 20, 51:5, 6, 10, 35, 36, 45, 46, 50; and this similarity furnishes a proof in behalf of the genuineness of the verse, which is denied by modern critics. For, although what Nägelsbach remarks is quite correct, viz., that the fall of the kingdom of Babylon, through its conquest by Cyrus, directly brought about the deliverance of Israel, while the same cannot be said regarding the conquest of Egypt, yet even Egypt had a much greater importance, in relation to Judah, than the smaller neighbouring nations, against which the oracles in Jeremiah 47–49 are directed; hence there is no ground for the inference that, because there is nothing said in these three chapters of such a connection between Egypt and Israel, it did not really exist. But when Nägelsbach further asks, “How does this agree with the fact that Jeremiah, on other occasions, while in Egypt, utters only the strongest threats against the Israelites—Jeremiah 42–44?”—there is the ready answer, that the expressions in Jeremiah 42–44 do not apply to the whole covenant people, but only to the rabble of Judah that was ripe for the sentence of destruction, that had fled to Egypt against the will of God. What Hitzig and Graf have further urged in another place against the genuineness of the verses now before us, is scarcely worth mention. The assertion that the verses do not accord with the time of the foregoing prophecy, and rather presuppose the exile, can have weight only with those who *à priori* deny that the prophet could make any prediction. But if Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, distinctly announces not merely the carrying away of Judah to Babylon, but also fixes the duration of the exile at seventy years, then he might well speak at the same time, or later, of the restoration of Israel from their captivity.

But there are two other considerations which support the genuineness of these verses: (1) The fact that Hitzig and Graf are obliged to confess it remains a problem how they came to form a part of the oracle against Egypt. The attempt made by the former writer to solve this problem partly rests on the assumption, already refuted by Graf, that the verses were written by the second Isaiah (on this point, see our remarks at p. 263, note), and partly on a combination of results obtained by criticism, in which even their author has little confidence. But (2) we must also bear in mind the nature of the verses in question. They form a repetition of what we find in 30:10, 11, and a repetition, too, quite in the style of Jeremiah, who makes variations in expression. Thus here, in v. 27, נָאֵם יְהוָה is omitted after יַעֲקֹב, perhaps simply because v. 26 concludes with נָאֵם יְהוָה; again, in v. 20, אֶתְּהָ אֶל־תִּירָא עֲבָדֵי יַעֲקֹב, is repeated with נָאֵם יְהוָה, which is wanting in 30:11. On the other hand, לְהוֹשִׁיעַךְ in 30:11a, and אָךְ in 30:11b, have been dropped; הַפְּצוֹתֶיךָ שָׁם (Jeremiah 30:11) has been exchanged for הַדְּחַתֶּיךָ שָׁמָּה. Hence Hitzig has taken the text here to be the better and the original one; and on this he founds the supposition that the verses were first placed here in the text, and were only afterwards, and from this passage, inserted in Jeremiah 30:10, 11, where, however, they stand in the best connection, and even for that reason could not be a gloss inserted there. Such are some of the contradictions in which critical scepticism involves itself. We have already given an explanation of these verses under Jeremiah 30.

## Jeremiah 47

### Concerning the Philistines

**Jeremiah 47:1. Title.**—The word of the Lord against the Philistines came to Jeremiah “before Pharaoh smote Gaza.” If we understand this time-definition in such a way that “the prophecy would refer to the conquest of Gaza

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by Pharaoh," as Graf thinks, and as Hitzig also is inclined to suppose, then this portion of the title does not accord with the contents of the following prophecy; for, according to v. 2, the devastator of Philistia approaches from the north, and the desolation comes not merely on Gaza, but on all Philistia, and even Tyre and Sidon (vv. 4, 5). Hence Graf thinks that, if any one is inclined to consider the title as utterly incorrect, only two hypotheses are possible: either the author of the title overlooked the statement in v. 2, that the hostile army was to come from the north; in which case this conquest might have taken place at any time during the wearisome struggles, fraught with such changes of fortune, between the Chaldeans and the Egyptians for the possession of the border fortresses, during the reign of Jehoiakim (which is Ewald's opinion): or he may possibly have noticed the statement, but found no difficulty in it; in which case, in spite of all opposing considerations (see M. von Niebuhr, *Gesch. Assy. und Bab.* p. 369), it must be assumed that the conquest was effected by the defeated army as it was returning from the Euphrates, when Necho, on his march home, reduced Gaza (Hitzig), and by taking this fortress from the enemy, barred the way to Egypt. Of these two alternatives, we can accept neither as probable. The neglect, on the part of the author of the title, to observe the statement that the enemy is to come from the north, would show too great carelessness for us to trust him. But if he did notice the remark, then it merely follows that Pharaoh must have reduced Gaza on his return, after being defeated at Carchemish. Nor is it legitimate to conclude, as Ewald does, from the statement in 2 Kings 24:7 ("The king of Egypt went no more out of his land; for the king of Babylon had taken all that had belonged to the king of Egypt, from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates"), that the wars between the Chaldeans and the Egyptians for the possession of the border fortresses, such as Gaza, were tedious, and attended with frequent changes of fortune. In the connection in which it stands, this statement merely shows that, after

Nebuchadnezzar had made Jehoiakim his vassal, the latter could not receive any help from Egypt in his rebellion, after he had ruled three years, because Pharaoh did not venture to march out of his own territory any more. But it plainly follows from this, that Pharaoh cannot have taken the fortress of Gaza while retreating before Nebuchadnezzar. For, in this case, Nebuchadnezzar would have been obliged to drive him thence before ever he could have reduced King Jehoiakim again to subjection. The assumption is difficult to reconcile with what Berosus says regarding the campaign of Nebuchadnezzar, viz., that he continued in the field till he heard of the death of his father. Add to this, that, as M. von Niebuhr very rightly says, "there is every military probability against it" (i.e., against the assumption that Gaza was reduced by Necho on his retreat). "If this fortress had stood out till the battle of Carchemish, then it is inconceivable that a routed eastern army should have taken the city during its retreat, even though there were, on the line of march, the strongest positions on the Orontes, in Lebanon, etc., where it might have taken its stand." Hence Niebuhr thinks it "infinitely more improbable either that Gaza was conquered before the battle of Carchemish, about the same time as Ashdod, and that Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 47, predicts the approach of the army which was still engaged in the neighbourhood of Nineveh; or that the capture of the fortress did not take place till later, when Nebuchadnezzar was again engaged in Babylon, and that the prophet announces his return, not his first approach."

Rosenmüller and Nägelsbach have declared in favour of the first of these suppositions. Both of them place the capture of Gaza in the time of Necho's march against the Assyrians under Josiah; Rosenmüller before the battle of Megiddo; Nägelsbach after that engagement, because he assumes, with all modern expositors, that Necho had landed with his army at the Bay of Acre. He endeavours to support this view by the observation that Necho, before marching farther north, sought to keep the way clear for a retreat to Egypt, since

he would otherwise have been lost after the battle of Carchemish, if he did not previously reduce Gaza, the key of the high road to Egypt. In this, Nägelsbach rightly assumes that the heading, "before Pharaoh smote Gaza," was not intended to show the fulfilment of the prophecy in the conquest of Gaza by Necho soon afterwards, but merely states that Jeremiah predicts to the Philistines that they will be destroyed by a foe from the north, at a time when conquest by a foe from the north was impending over them. Rightly, too, does Niebuhr remark that, in support of the view that Gaza was taken after the battle at Carchemish, there is nothing more than the announcement of the attack from the north, and the arrangement of the prophecies in Jeremiah, in which that against the Philistines is placed after that about the battle of Carchemish. Hitzig and Graf lay great weight upon this order and arrangement, and thence conclude that all the prophecies against the nations in Jeremiah 46–49, with the exception of that regarding Elam, were uttered in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. There are no sufficient grounds for this conclusion. The agreement between this prophecy now before us and that in Jeremiah 46, as regards particular figures and expressions (Graf), is too insignificant to afford a proof that the two belong to the same time; nor is much to be made out of the point so strongly insisted on by Hitzig, that after the Egyptians, as the chief nation, had been treated of, the author properly brings forward those who, from the situation of their country, must be visited by war immediately before it is sent on the Egyptians. The main foundation for this view is taken from the notice by Herodotus (ii. 159), that Necho, after the battle at *Magdolos*, took the large Syrian city *Κάδυτις*. *Magdolos* is here taken as a variation of *Megiddo*, and *Kadytis* of *Gaza*. But neither Hitzig nor Stark have proved the identity of *Kadytis* with *Gaza*, as we have already remarked on 2 Kings 23:33; so that we cannot safely draw any conclusion, regarding the time when *Gaza* was taken, from that statement of Herodotus. In consequence of the want of evidence from other sources, the

date of this event cannot be more exactly determined.

From the contents of this prophecy and its position among the oracles against the nations, we can draw no more than a very probable inference that it was not published before the fourth year of Jehoiakim, inasmuch as it is evidently but a further amplification of the sentence pronounced in that year against all the nations, and recorded in Jeremiah 25. Thus all conjectures as to the capture of *Gaza* by Necho on his march to the Euphrates, before the battle at Carchemish, become very precarious. But the assumption is utterly improbable also, that Necho at a later period, whether in his flight before the Chaldeans, or afterwards, while Nebuchadnezzar was occupied in Babylon, undertook an expedition against Philistia: such a hypothesis is irreconcilable with the statement given in 2 Kings 24; 7. There is thus no course left open for us, but to understand, by the Pharaoh of the title here, not Necho, but his successor Hophra: this has been suggested by Rashi, who refers to Jeremiah 37:5, 11, and by Perizonius, in his *Orig. Aegypt.* p. 459, who founds on the notices of Herodotus (ii. 261) and of Diodorus Siculus, i. 68, regarding the naval battle between Apries on the one hand and the Cyprians and Phoenicians on the other. From these notices, it appears pretty certain that Pharaoh-Hophra sought to avenge the defeat of Necho on the Chaldeans, and to extend the power of Egypt in Asia. Hence it is also very probable that he took *Gaza*, with the view of getting into his hands this key of the highway to Egypt. This assumption we regard as the most probable, since nothing has been made out against it; there are no sufficient grounds for the opinion that this prophecy belongs to the same time as that in Jeremiah 46.

*Contents of the Prophecy.*—From the north there pours forth a river, inundating fields and cities, whereupon lamentation begins. Every one flees in haste before the sound of the hostile army, for the day of desolation is come on all Philistia and Phoenicia (vv. 2–4). The cities of Philistia mourn, for the sword of the Lord is incessantly active among them (vv. 5–

7). This brief prophecy thus falls into two strophes: in the first (vv. 2–4), the ruin that is breaking over Philistia is described; in the second (vv. 5–7), its operation on the country and on the people.

**Jeremiah 47:2.** *“Thus saith Jahveh: Behold, waters shall rise up out of the north, and shall become an inundating stream, and they shall inundate the land and its fulness, cities and those who dwell in them; and men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl. V. 3. Because of the sound of the trampling of the hoofs of his strong horses, because of the din of his chariots, the noise of his wheels, fathers to not look back to their children from weakness of hands; V. 4. Because of the day that cometh to destroy all the Philistines, to cut off from Tyre and Zidon every one remaining as a helper; for Jahveh destroyeth the Philistines, the remnant of the coast of Caphtor. V. 5. Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is destroyed, the rest of their plain. How long wilt thou cut thyself? V. 6. O sword of Jahveh, how long wilt thou not rest? Draw thyself back into thy sheath; rest, and be still. V. 7. How canst thou be quiet, when Jahveh hath commanded thee? Against Ashkelon and against the sea-coast, there hath He appointed it.”*

The address opens with a figure. The hostile army that is to devastate Philistia is represented as a stream of water, breaking forth from the north, and swelling to an overflowing winter-torrent, that inundates the country and cities with their inhabitants. The figure is often used: cf. 46:7, 8, where the Egyptian host is compared to the waves of the Nile; and Isa. 8:7, where the Assyrian army is likened to the floods of the Euphrates. The simile is applied here in another way. The figure is taken from a strong spring of water, coming forth in streams out of the ground, in the north, and swelling to an overflowing winter-torrent, that pours out its floods over Philistia, laying it waste. “From the north” is used here as in 46:20, and points back to 1:13, 14. “An inundating stream” is here employed as in Isa. 30:20; “earth and its fulness, a city and those who dwell in it,” as in 8:16. In v. 3 follows the application of the figure. It is a martial host

that overflows the land, and with its mighty noise puts the inhabitants in such terror that they think only of a hasty flight; even fathers do not turn back to save their children. שָׁעֲטָה *š’at*. λεγ., Syriac *s’at*, *incedere, gradi*, hence probably the stamping of hoofs. אַבְּיָרִים, strong horses, as in 8:16. לְרָכְבוֹ, instead of the construct state, has perhaps been chosen only for the sake of introducing a variation; cf. Ewald, § 290, a. הִפְנָה, to turn the back, as in 46:5. “Slackness of hands,” i.e., utter loss of courage through terror; cf. 6:24 (the form רָפְיוֹן only occurs here). In v. 4 the deeper source of fear is mentioned; “because of the day,” i.e., because the day has come to destroy all the Philistines, namely, the day of the judgment determined by the Lord; cf. 46:10. “In order to destroy every remnant helping Tyre and Zidon.” שָׂרִיד עֵזֶר are the Philistines, who could afford help to the Phoenicians in the struggle against the Chaldean power. This implies that the Phoenicians also shall perish without any one to help them. This indirect mention of the Phoenicians appears striking, but it is to be explained partly on the ground that Jeremiah has uttered special prophecies only against the chief enemies of Judah, and partly also perhaps from the historical relations, i.e., from the fact that the Philistines might have afforded help to the Phoenicians in the struggles against the great powers of the world. Hitzig unnecessarily seeks to take לְצַר וּלְצִידוֹן as the object, and to expunge כָּל־שָׂרִיד עֵזֶר as a gloss. The objections which he raises against the construction are groundless, as is shown by such passages as 44:7, Isa. 14:22, 1 Kings 14:10, etc. “The remaining helper” is the expression used, because the other nations that could help the Egyptians, viz., the Syrians and Phoenicians, had already succumbed to the Chaldean power. The destruction will be so great as this, because it is Jahveh who destroys the Philistines, the remnant of the coast of Caphtor. According to Amos 9:7, Deut. 2:23, the Philistines came from Caphtor; hence שְׂאֲרֵית אֵי כַפְתּוֹר can only mean



“what still remains of the people of Philistia who come from the coat of Caphtor,” like “the remnant of the Philistines” in Amos 1:8. Opinions are divided as to *Caphtor*. The prevailing view is that of Lakemacher, that Caphtor is the name of the island of Crete; but for this there are no tenable grounds: see on Zeph. 2:5; and Delitzsch on Genesis, S. 248, Aufl. 4. Dietrich (in *Merx' Archiv*. i. S. 313ff.) and Ebers (*Aegypten u. die Bücher Moses*, i. S. 130ff.) agree in thinking that Caphtor is the shore of the Delta, but they explain the name differently. Dietrich derives it from the Egyptian *Kah-pet-Hôr* (district of Hor), which he takes to be the environs of the city of Buto, and the lake called after it (the modern *Burlos*), not far from the Sebennytic mouth of the Nile; Ebers, following the tablet of Canopus, in which the Egyptian name *Kfa* (*Kaf*) is given as that of Phoenicia, derives the name from *Kaf-t-ur*, i.e., *the great Kefa*, as the ancient seat of the Phoenicians on the shore of the Delta must have been called. But both explanations are still very doubtful, though there is no question about the migration of the Philistines from Egypt into Canaan.

**Jeremiah 47:5–7.** The prophet sees, in the spirit, the threatened desolation as already come upon Philistia, and portrays it in its effects upon the people and the country. “Baldness (a sign of the deepest and most painful sorrow) has come upon Gaza;” cf. Mic. 1:16. נִדְמָתָהּ is rendered by the Vulgate *conticuit*. After this Graf and Nägelsbach take the meaning of being “speechless through pain and sorrow;” cf. Lam. 2:10. Others translate “to be destroyed.” Both renderings are lexically permissible, for נִדְמָה and נִדְמָה have both meanings. In support of the first, the parallelism of the members has been adduced; but this is not decisive, for figurative and literal representations are often interchanged. On the whole, it is impossible to reach any definite conclusion; for both renderings give suitable ideas, and these not fundamentally different in reality the one from the other. שְׂאֵרֵית עַמְקָם, “the rest of their valley” (the suffix referring to Gaza and Ashkelon), is the low country round about

Gaza and Ashkelon, which are specially mentioned from their being the two chief fortresses of Philistia. עַמְקָם is suitably applied to the low-lying belt of the country, elsewhere called שְׁפֵלָה, “the low country,” as distinguished from the hill-country; for עַמְקָם does not always denote a deep valley, but is also sometimes used, as in Josh. 17:16, etc., of the plain of Jezreel, and of other plains which are far from being deeply-sunk valleys. Thus there is no valid reason for following the arbitrary translation of the LXX, καὶ τὰ κατάλοιπα Ἐνακείμ, and changing עַמְקָם into עֲנָקִים, as Hitzig and Graf do; more especially is it utterly improbable that in the Chaldean period Anakim were still to be found in Philistia. The mention of them, moreover, is out of place here; and still less can we follow Graf in his belief that the inhabitants of Gath are the “rest of the Anakim.” In the last clause of v. 5, Philistia is set forth as a woman, who tears her body (with her nails) in despair, makes incisions on her body; cf. 16:6; 41:5. The question, “How long dost thou tear thyself?” forms a transition to the plaintive request, “Gather thyself,” i.e., draw thyself back into thy scabbard. But the seer replies, “How can it rest? for Jahveh hath given it a commission against Ashkelon and the Philistine sea-coast.” For תִּשְׁקָטִי, in v. 7, we must read the 3rd pers. fem. תִּשְׁקָט, as the following הִלֵּךְ shows. The form probably got into the text from an oversight, through looking at תִּשְׁקָטִי in v. 6. חוֹף הַיָּם, “the sea-coast,” a designation of Philistia, as in Ezek. 25:16.

The prophecy concludes without a glance at the Messianic future. The threatened destruction of the Philistines has actually begun with the conquest of Philistia by Nebuchadnezzar, but has not yet culminated in the extermination of the people. The extermination and complete extirpation are thus not merely repeated by Ezekiel, 25:15ff., but after the exile the threats are once more repeated against the Philistines by Zechariah (Zech. 9:5): they only reached their complete fulfilment when, as Zechariah

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announces, in the addition made to Isa. 14:30ff., their idolatry also was removed from them, and their incorporation into the Church of God was accomplished through judgment. Cf. the remarks on Zeph. 2:10.

## Jeremiah 48

### Concerning Moab

**Jeremiah 48.** The Moabites had spread themselves on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, where the Emims dwelt in former times (Deut. 2:10). But previous to the immigration of the Israelites into Canaan, the Amorites, under King Sihon, had already taken forcible possession of the northern portion of this territory as far as the Arnon (Num. 21:13). The Israelites, on their march through the desert, were not to treat the Moabites as enemies, nor touch their territory (Deut. 2:9; cf. Judg. 11:15, 18). But when Sihon, king of the Amorites, had been slain by the Israelites, and his kingdom subdued, the Israelites took possession of the territory north of the Arnon, that had formerly belonged to the Moabites, but had been conquered by Sihon: this was given to the tribe of Reuben for an inheritance (Num. 21:24ff.; Deut. 2:32-36; Josh. 13:15ff.). The Moabites could not get over this loss of the northern half of their country. The victory of the Israelites over the powerful kings of the Amorites, viz., Sihon in Heshbon and Og of Bashan, inspired them with terror for the power of this people; so that their king Balak, while the Israelites were encamped in the steppes of Moab opposite Jericho, fetched Balaam the sorcerer from Mesopotamia, with the design of destroying Israel through the power of his anathema. And when this plan did not succeed, since Balaam was obliged, against his will, to bless Israel instead of cursing them, the Moabites sought to weaken them, and to render them powerless to do any injury, by seducing them to idolatry (cf. Num. 22-25). Such malicious conduct was shown repeatedly afterwards. Not long after the death of Joshua, Eglon the king of Joab, aided by the Ammonites and Amalekites, crossed the Jordan and took Jericho, which he made the centre of operations

for keeping the Israelites under subjection: these were thus oppressed for eighteen years, until they succeeded in defeating the Moabites and driving them back into their own land, after Ehud had assassinated King Eglon (Judg. 3:12ff.). At a later period, Saul made war on them (1 Sam. 14:47); and David completely subdued them, severely chastised them, and made them tributary (2 Sam. 8:2). But after the death of Ahab, to whom King Mesha had paid a very considerable yearly tribute (2 Kings 3:4), they revolted from Israel (2 Kings 1:1; 3:5). In the time of Jehoshaphat, in conjunction with the Ammonites and a portion of the Edomites, they even invaded Judah, with the design of taking Jerusalem; but they ruined themselves through mutual discords, so that Jehoshaphat obtained a glorious victory over them (2 Chron. 20). It was possibly also with the view of taking revenge for this exhibition of malicious spirit that the king of Judah afterwards, in conjunction with Joram king of Israel, carried war into their country, and defeated them (2 Kings 3:6-27). Still later, mention is made of an invasion of Israel by Moabite hosts during the reign of Joash (2 Kings 13:20); and in the time of Hezekiah, we find them once more in possession of their ancient territory to the north of the Arnon, at a time when the trans-Jordanic tribes of Israel had been carried away by the Assyrians into exile.

Judging from these aphoristic notices, the Moabites, on the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death, seem to have remained tributary to the kingdom of the ten tribes until the death of Ahab; then they revolted, but soon afterwards were once more reduced to subjection by Joram and Jehoshaphat. Still later, they certainly made several invasions into Israel, but without permanent result; nor was it till the carrying away of the trans-Jordanic tribes by the Assyrians that they succeeded in regaining permanent possession of the depopulated land of Reuben, their former territory. This account, however, has been modified in several important respects by the recent discovery of an inscription on a monument raised by King Mesha after a victory

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he had gained; this “Moabite stone” was found in the neighbourhood of the ancient Dibon. The deciphering of the long inscription of thirty-four lines on this memorial stone, so far as success has followed the attempts hitherto made, has issued in its giving important disclosures concerning the relation of Moab to Israel. From these we gather that Omri, king of Israel, had taken possession of the district of Medeba, and that the Moabites were heavily oppressed by him and his successor for forty years, until King Mesha succeeded, through the help of his god Chemosh, in regaining the territory that had been seized by the Israelites. We may further with certainty conclude, from various statements in this inscription, that the Moabites were by no means exterminated by the Israelites, when they took possession of the country to the north of the Arnon, which had been seized by the Amorites; they continued to live beside and among the Israelites. Moreover, since the tribe of Reuben was chiefly engaged in the rearing of cattle, and thus appropriated the pastoral districts of the country, the Moabites were not utterly, at least not permanently subdued, but rather took every opportunity of weakening the Israelites, in order not merely to reclaim their old possessions, but also to make themselves independent of Israel. This object they seem to have actually attained, even so soon as immediately after the death of Solomon. They continued independent until the powerful Omri restored the supremacy of Israel in the territory of Reuben; and Moab continued subject for forty years, at the end of which King Mesha again succeeded in breaking the yoke of Israel after the death of Ahab. Thenceforward, Israel never again got the upper hand, though Jeroboam II (as we are entitled to conclude from 2 Kings 14:25) may have disputed the supremacy with the Moabites for a time. Amos (Amos. 2:1-3) and Isaiah (Is. 15 and 16) have already, before Jeremiah, threatened Moab with destruction, because of the acts of hostility against Israel of which they have been guilty. We have no historical notice concerning the fulfilment of these threatenings. Inasmuch as the power of the Assyrians in Eastern Asia

was broken through the defeat of Sennacherib before Jerusalem, the Moabites may possibly have asserted their independence against the Assyrians. Certainly it seems to follow, from the remark in 1 Chron. 5:17 (that the families of Gad were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah), that some of the Israelites on the east of Jordan came for a time under the sway of Judah. But even though this were allowed to hold true of the tribe of Reuben also, such a mastery could not have lasted long, since even towards the end of Jotham’s reign, Pekah the king of Israel joined with Hazael king of Syria in war against Judah (2 Kings 15:37); and during the reign of Ahaz, Rezin invaded Gilead, and penetrating as far as the seaport of Elath, took it from Judah (2 Kings 16:6). At all events, up till the time of Nebuchadnezzar, the threats of Amos and Isaiah had attained only the feeblest beginnings of fulfilment; and (as is abundantly evident from the prophecy in this chapter) the Moabites were then more powerful than ever they had been before, and in undisturbed possession also of that portion of their ancient territory lying north of the Arnon, which had been taken from them by Sihon the Amorite; and after his defeat, the victorious Israelites had again apportioned it to the tribe of Reuben. This prophecy of Jeremiah concerning Moab is to be explained on the ground of these historical relations. The day of ruin was to begin with the appearance of the Chaldeans in Palestine; this day had been predicted not merely by Amos and Isaiah, but even by Balaam, on the occasion of the first conflict of the Moabites with Israel. Jeremiah accordingly takes up anew the utterances of the old prophets regarding Moab which had not yet been fulfilled, but were now about to receive their accomplishment: these he reproduces in his own peculiar manner, taking as his foundation the oracular sentences of Isaiah concerning Moab, and combining these by means of the utterances of Amos and Balaam, not only regarding Moab, but also regarding the whole heathen world now ripe for judgment; and out of all this he frames a comprehensive

announcement of the ruin to fall on this people, so haughty, and so filled with hatred against Israel.

The contents of this announcement are as follow:—The chief cities of Moab are perished, and with them their fame. Plans are being concocted for their destruction. On all sides there is a crying over the devastation, and wailing, and flight; Chemosh, with his priests and princes, wanders into exile, and country and city are laid waste (vv. 1–8). Let Moab escape with wings, in order to avoid the destruction; for although they have, in all time past, lived securely in their own land, they shall now be driven out of their dwellings, and come to dishonour with their god Chemosh, in spite of the bravery of their heroes (vv. 9–15). The destruction of Moab draws near, their glory perishes, the whole country and all its towns are laid waste, and the power of Moab is broken (vv. 16–25). All this befalls them for their pride and loftiness of spirit; because of this they are punished, with the destruction of their glorious vines and their harvest; and the whole land becomes filled with sorrow and lamentation over the desolation, and the extermination of all those who make offerings to idols (vv. 26–35). Meanwhile the prophet mourns with the hapless people, who are broken like a despised vessel (vv. 36–38). Moab becomes the laughing-stock and the horror of all around: the enemy captures all their fortresses, and none shall escape the ruin (vv. 39–44). Fire goes out from Heshbon and destroys the whole land, and the people must go into captivity; but at the end of the days, the Lord will turn the captivity of Moab (vv. 45–47). According to this view of the whole, this prophecy falls into seven strophes of unequal length, of which every one concludes either with יהִנָּחֵם or אָמַר יְהוָה. The middle one, which is also the longest (vv. 26–35), forms an apparent exception, inasmuch as יהִנָּחֵם does not stand at the end, but in the middle of v. 35; while in the second last strophe (vv. 39–44), the last two verses (43 and 44) end with this formula.

**Jeremiah 48:1–8.** *Calamities to come on Moab.*—V. 1. "Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel, Woe to Nebo, for it is laid waste! Kiriathaim is come to dishonour, it is taken: the fortress is come to dishonour and broken down. V. 2. Moab's glory is no more. In Heshbon they have devised evil against her, [saying], Come, and let us cut her off from [being] a nation: thou also, O Madmen, art brought to silence; the sword shall go after thee. V. 3. A sound of crying from Horonaim, desolation and great destruction. V. 4. Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard. V. 5. For they ascend the ascent of Luhith with weeping,—weeping: for on the descent of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction. V. 6. Flee, save your life! and be like one destitute in the wilderness. V. 7. For, because they trust [was] in thy works, and in thy treasures, thou also shalt be taken; and Chemosh shall go into captivity, his priests and his princes together. V. 8. The destroyer shall come to every city, and no city shall escape; and the valley shall perish, and the plain shall be laid waste, as Jahveh hath said."

With the exclamation "Woe!" Jeremiah transports the hearers of the word of God at once into the midst of the catastrophe which is to come on Moab; this is with the view of humbling the pride of this people, and chastening them for their sins. The woe is uttered over Nebo, but holds also of the towns named afterwards. Nebo is not the mountain of that name (Deut. 32:49; 34:1), but the city, which probably did not lie far from the peak in the mountain-range of Abarim, which bore the same name (Num. 32:3, 38; Isa. 15:2), although in the *Onomasticon*, s.v. Ναβαῦ, the situation of the mountain is given as being six Roman miles from Heshbon, towards the west, and s.v. Ναβῶρ, that of the city, eight Roman miles south from Heshbon, for both accounts point to a situation in the south-west. The Arab. name *nbâ* is still applied to some ruins; cf. Robinson's *Palestine*, iii. p. 170. "Kiriathaim is taken." The site of this town, mentioned as early as Gen. 14:5, has been fixed, since the time of Burckhardt, as that of a mass of ruins called *et Teim*, about five miles south of Heshbon; but

Dietrich, in *Merx' Archiv*. i. S. 337ff., has shown this is incorrect. According to Eusebius, in his *Onomasticon*, Kiriathaim lay ten Roman miles to the west of Medeba: this suits not merely the position of *et Teim*, but also the ruins of *Kereyat* south-west from Medeba, on the ridge of Mount Attarus, a little to the south of M'kaur (*Machaerus*), and of Baara in the *Wady Zerka Maein*, where also is the plain mentioned in Gen. 14:5, either in the plain stretching direct east from Kereyat between Wady Zerka Maein and Wady Wal, or south-east in the beautiful plain *el Kura*, described by Burckhardt, p. 371ff., between the Wal and the Mojeb. Nebo and Kiriathaim lay on the eastern border of the high range of mountains, and seem to be comprehended under *הַמְּשָׁנָה*, "the height, the high fortress," in the third clause of v. 1, as the representatives of the mountain country of Moab. Various expositors, certainly, take the word as a proper name designating an elevated region; Graf and Nägelsbach take it to be a name of Kir-Moab (Kir-heres, Kir-haresheth, vv. 31, 36), the chief fortress in the country, the modern *Kerek* in the southern part of Moab; but no valid proof has been adduced. By "the height" Hitzig understands the highlands, which learn of the fall of these towns in the lowlands, and feel this disgrace that has come on Moab, but have not yet themselves been taken. But this view is untenable, because the towns of Nebo and Kiriathaim are not situated in the level country. Again, since *הוֹבִישָׁה* is common to the two clauses, the distinction between *גְּלִיכָדָה* and *הַתָּה* could hardly be pressed so far as to make the latter the opposite of the former, in the sense of being still unconquered. The meaning rather is, that through Nebo's being laid waste, and the capture of Kiriathaim, the fortress on which the Moabites trusted is no more. And to this v. 3 appropriately adds, "the boasting of Moab is gone," i.e., Moab has no more ground for boasting. "In Heshbon they (the enemy, or the conquerors) plot evil against Moab." Heshbon was formerly the capital of the Amorite kingdom of Sihon (Num. 21:26; Deut. 2:24, etc.), and was assigned to the tribe of

Reuben (Josh. 13:17); but because it lay on the boundary of the territory belonging to the tribe, it was given up to the Gadites, and set apart as a Levitical city (Josh. 21:37). It lay ten Roman miles east from the Jordan, opposite Jericho, almost intermediate between the Arnon and the Jabbok, and is still pointed out, though in ruins, under the old name *Heshbân* (see on Num. 32:37). At the time of Jeremiah it was taken possession of by the Ammonites (Jeremiah 49:3), consequently it was the frontier town of the Moabite territory at that time; and being such, it is here named as the town where the enemy, coming from the north, deliberate regarding the conquest of Moab—"meditate evil," i.e., decide upon conquest and devastation. The suffix of *עֲלֵיהָ* refers to Moab as a country, and hence is feminine; cf. v. 4. "We will destroy it (Moab) *מִגּוֹי*, so that it shall no longer be a nation." Just as in *בְּהֶשְׁבוֹן הָשְׁבוּ* there is a play on the words, so is there also in the expression *מִדְּמֵן תִּדְמֵי* which follows. This very circumstance forms an argument for taking Madmen as a proper name, instead of an appellative, as Venema and Hitzig have done, after the example of the LXX: "Yea, thou shalt be destroyed (and made into) a dunghill." In support of this rendering they point to 2 Kings 10:27, Ezra 6:11. But the verb *דָּמַם*, in its meaning, ill accords with *מִדְּמֵן* in the sense of a dung-heap, and in this case there would be no foundation for a play upon the words (Graf). It is no proof of the non-existence of a place called Madmen in Moab, that it is not mentioned elsewhere; Madmena in the tribe of Benjamin (Isa. 10:31), and Madmanna in Judah (Josh. 15:31), are also mentioned but once. These passages rather show that the name *Madmen* was not uncommon; and it was perhaps with reference to this name that Isaiah (Is. 25:10) chose the figure of the dunghill. *דָּמַם*, to be silent, means, in the Niphal, to be brought to silence, be exterminated, perish; cf. 49:26; 25:37; 8:14, etc. As to the form *תִּדְמֵי* instead of *תִּדְמֵי*, cf. Ewald, § 140, *b*; Gesenius, § 67, Rem. 5.

The following clause refers to Madmen: “after thee shall the sword go;” cf. 9:15.

**Jeremiah 48:3.** A cry is heard from Horonaim against violence and destruction. The words שָׁד וְשֹׁבֵר גְדוֹל are to be taken as the cry itself; cf. 4:20; 20:8. The city of Horonaim, mentioned both here and in Isa. 15:5 in connection with Luhith, lay on a slope, it would seem, not far from Luhith. Regarding this latter place we find it remarked in the *Onomasticon: est usque hodie vicus inter Areopolim et Zoaram nomine Luitha* (Λουειθά). As to Ωροναιμ, the *Onomasticon* says no more than πόλις Μωάβ ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ (ed. Lars. p. 376). The destruction over which the outcry is made comes on Moab. By “Moab” Graf refuses to understand the country or its inhabitants, but rather the ancient capital of the country, *Ar-Moab* (Num. 21:28; Isa. 15:1), in the valley of the Arnon, which is also simply called *Ar* in Num. 21:15, Deut. 2:9. But, as Dietrich has already shown (S. 329ff.), the arguments adduced in support of this view are insufficient to prove the point. שָׁבַר, to break,—of a nation or a city (Jeremiah 19:11; Isa. 14:25, etc.), as it were, to ruin,—is here used of the country or kingdom. צְעוּרִיָּה is for צְעִירִיָּה, as in 14:3. The little ones of Moab, that raise a cry, are neither the children (Vulgate, Dahler, Maurer), nor the small towns (Hitzig), nor the people of humble condition, but *cives Moabi ad statum miserum dejecti* (Kueper). The LXX have rendered εἰς Ζογόρα (i.e., צְעוּרָה), which reading is preferred by J. D. Michaelis, Ewald, Umbreit, Graf, Nägelsbach, but without sufficient reason; for neither the occurrence of Zoar in combination with Horonaim in v. 34, nor the parallel passage Isa. 15:5, will prove the point. Isa. 15:5 is not a parallel to this verse, but to v. 34; however, the train of thought is different from that before us here. Besides, Jeremiah writes the name of the town צְעִיר (not צְעוּר), cf. v. 34, as in Isa. 15:5, Deut. 34:3, Gen. 13:10 (צְעוּר occurs only in Gen. 19:22, 30); hence it is unlikely that צְעוּר has been written by mistake for צְעִיר.

**Jeremiah 48:5.** In v. 5 this idea is further elucidated. The inhabitants flee, weeping as they go, towards the south, before the conquering enemy advancing from the north, up the ascent of Luhith, and down the descent of Horonaim. The idea is taken from Isa. 15:5, but applied by Jeremiah in his own peculiar manner; יַעֲלֶה בּוֹ is changed into יַעֲלֶה בְּכִי, and the notion of weeping is thereby intensified. We take בְּכִי as an adverbial accusative, but in fact it is to be rendered like the preceding בְּבְכִי; and יַעֲלֶה stands with an indefinite nominative: “one ascends = they ascend,” not “weeping rises over weeping,” as Hitzig, Graf, and others take it. For, in the latter case, בְּבְכִי could not be separated from בְּכִי, nor stand first; cf. the instances adduced by Graf, שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה and עֵין בְּעֵין. The form הַלְחוּת for הַלְחִית is either an error of transcription or an optional form, and there is no ground for taking the word as appellative, as Hitzig does, “the ascent of boards, i.e., as boards tower one above another, so does weeping rise,”—an unnatural figure, and one devoid of all taste. The last words of the second member of the verse present some difficulty, chiefly on account of צָרִי, which the LXX have omitted, and which Ewald and Umbreit set down as spurious, although (as Graf rightly remarks) they do not thereby explain how it came into the text. To suppose, with the Rabbinical writers, that the construct state צָרִי stands for the absolute, is not only inadmissible, as being against the principles of grammar, but also contrary to the whole scope of the passage. The context shows that the clamour cannot proceed from the enemy, but only from the fugitive Moabites. Only two explanations are possible: either צָרִי must be taken in the sense of *angustiae*, and in connection with צַעֲקוֹת, “straits, distress of crying,” a cry of distress, as De Wette does; or, “oppressors of the cry of distress,” as Nägelsbach takes it. We prefer the former, in spite of the objection of Graf, that the expression “distress of crying,” for “a cry of

distress," would be a strange one: for this objection may be made against his own explanation, that צָרִי means the bursting open of the mouth in making a loud cry; and זַעֲקָה צָרִי is a loud outcry for help.

**Jeremiah 48:6.** Only by a precipitate flight into the desert can the Moabites save even their lives. The summons to flee is merely a rhetorical expression for the thought that there is no safety to be had in the country. To וְתִהְיֶינָהּ in v. 6 we must supply נַפְשׁוֹת as the subject: "your souls shall be." Ewald would change נַפְשְׁכֶם into נַפְשֵׁיכֶם; but this proposal has against it the fact that the plural form נַפְשִׁים is found in but a single case, Ezek. 13:20, and נַפְשׁוֹת everywhere else: besides, נַפֵּשׁ is often used in the singular of several persons, as in 2 Sam. 19:6, and may further be easily taken here in a distributive sense; cf. מְלִטוֹ אִישׁ נַפְשׁוֹ, 51:6. The assumption of C. B. Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Maurer, [and of the translators of our "Authorized" English Version], that תִּהְיֶינָהּ is the second person, and refers to the cities, i.e., their inhabitants, is against the context. עָרוֹעֵר cannot here be the name of a town, because neither Aroer in the tribe of Reuben, which was situated on the Arnon, nor Aroer of the tribe of Gad, which was before Rabbath-Ammon, lay in the wilderness; the comparison, too, of the fugitives to a city is unsuitable. The clause reminds us of 17:6, and עָרוֹעֵר = the עָרְעֵר of that passage; the form found here is either an error of transcription caused by thinking of Aroer, or a play upon the name of the city, for the purpose of pointing out the fate impending over it.

**Jeremiah 48:7.** Moab will not be saved from destruction by any trust on their works or on their treasures. The LXX, Vulgate, and Syriac render מְעֻשָׂיָהּ by fortresses, hence Ewald would read מְעוֹנֵיהָ instead; but there is no ground for the change, since the peculiar rendering alluded to has evidently originated from מְעֻשָׂהּ having

been confounded with מְעוֹז. Others, as Dahler, refer the word to idols; but these are always designated as מְעֻשֵׁי יָד. Graf translates "property," and points to 1 Sam. 25:2, Ex. 23:16; but this meaning also has really nothing to support it, for מְעֻשָׂהּ in these passages denotes only agriculture and its produce, and the combination of the word with אוֹצְרוֹת in this passage does not require such a rendering. We abide by the common meaning of "doings" or "works," not evil deeds specially (Hitzig), but "all that Moab undertakes." Neither their efforts to maintain and increase their power, nor their wealth, will avail them in any way. They shall be overcome. Moab is addressed as a country or kingdom. לָכֵד, to seize, capture; of a land, to take, conquer. Chemosh, with his priests and princes, shall go into exile. כְּמִישׁ is perhaps a mere error of the copyist for כְּמוֹשׁ, Chemosh, the chief deity of the Moabites and Ammonites, worshipped as a king and the war-god of his people: see on Num. 21:29. As in the last-named passage the Moabites are called the people of Chemosh, so here, not merely the priests, but also the princes of Moab, are called his priests and his princes. The Kethib יַחַד is not to be changed, although Jeremiah elsewhere always uses יַחְדָּו, which is substituted in the Qeri; cf. 49:3. In confirmation of this, it is added, in v. 8, that all the cities of Moab, without exception, shall be laid waste, and the whole country, valley and plain, shall be brought to ruin. הַמִּישׁוֹר, "the level," is the table-land stretching from the Arnon to Heshbon, and north-eastwards as far as Rabbath-Ammon, and which originally belonged to the Moabites, hence called "the fields of Moab" in Num. 21:40; but it was taken from them by the Amorites, and after the conquest of the latter was taken possession of by the Israelites (Deut. 3:10; 4:43; Josh. 13:9), but at that time had been taken back once more by the Moabites. הַעֲמֻקָּה is the valley of the Jordan, commonly called הַעֲרַבְיָה, as in Josh. 13:27 and 19; here it is that portion of

the valley towards the west which bounds the table-land. אֲשֶׁר can only be taken in a causal signification, "because," as in 16:13, or in a relative meaning, *quod*, or "as."

**Jeremiah 48:9–15.** *Moab is laid waste, and its inhabitants carried captive.—V. 9. "Give pinions to Moab, for he will flee and get away, and his cities shall become a waste, with no one dwelling in them. V. 10. Cursed is he that doeth the work of Jahveh negligently, and cursed is he that restraineth his sword from blood. V. 11. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and lay still upon his lees; he was not poured out from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity, therefore his taste hath remained in him, and his smell hath not changed. V. 12. Therefore, behold, days come, saith Jahveh, when I will send to him those who pour out, and they shall pour him out; and they shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles. V. 13. And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence. V. 14. How can ye say, We are mighty, and men of valour for the war? V. 15. Moab is laid waste, and people ascend into his cities, and the choice of his young men go down to the slaughter, saith the King, whose name is Jahveh of hosts."*

The devastation will come so suddenly, that Moab, in order to escape it, uses wings for enabling him to flee from it. The request "give" is not ironical, but a mere rhetorical employment of the idea that wings would be necessary in order to escape. יָצַי, which elsewhere means a flower, here signifies wings or waving plumes, as in the Targum on Ps. 139:9, and in the Rabbinical writings. אֲצַי, written with א for the sake of obtaining similarity of sound, stands for אֲצַי = יָצַי, to flee.

**Jeremiah 48:10.** The devastation is a work of the Lord, and those who execute it must carry out the divine decree, so that they may not bring the curse upon themselves. The first clause is taken quite generally: the more exact specification of the work of the Lord follows in the second clause; it is the employment of the sword against Moab. "His sword" does not

mean Jahveh's, but the sword carried by the devastator. רָמִיָהּ is used adverbially, but not in the sense of "deceitfully," rather "carelessly, negligently;" cf. בָּרָר רָמִיָהּ, Prov. 10:4; 12:24. In v. 11 follows the reason why the judgment has necessarily come on Moab. Moab is compared to old wine that has lain long on its lees, and thereby preserved its flavour and smell unchanged. The taste and odour of Moab signify his disposition towards other nations, particularly towards Israel, the people of God. Good wine becomes stronger and more juicy by lying pretty long on its lees (see on Isa. 25:6); inferior wine, however, becomes thereby more harsh and thick. The figure is used here in the latter sense, after Zeph. 1:12. Moab's disposition towards Israel was harsh and bitter; the people were arrogant and proud (v. 29f.; Isa. 16:6), and so hostile towards Israel, that they sought every opportunity of injuring them (see above, p. 385f., and the comments on 2 Sam. 8:2). From his youth, i.e., from the time when Moab, after subduing the Emims (Deut. 2:10), had established himself in his own land, or had become enrolled among the nations of history,—from that time forward had he remained undisturbed in his own land, i.e., without being driven out of it, had not gone into captivity (as is shown by the figure of the wine poured from one vessel into another). In this way there is a qualification made of the general statement that he remains at rest on his lees, and undisturbed. For Moab has often carried on wars, and even suffered many defeats, but has never yet been driven from his own land; nor had the temporary dependence on Israel exercised any transforming influence on the ordinary life of the people, for they were simply made tributary. This quiet continuance in the country is to cease. The God of Israel "will send to them cellarmen (Germ. *Schröter*), who shall bring them out of the cellar" (Germ. *ausschroten*), as Luther translates v. 12. "*Schröter*" are men who bring the wine-casks out of the cellar; for "*schroten*" means to bring out heavy burdens, especially full casks on a strong kind of hand-barrow (Germ.



*Hebrewwerkzeug*), like a ladder in appearance. זָעִים (from זָעָה, to bend, incline) are those who incline a barrel or vessel for the purpose or pouring out its contents. These will not merely empty the vessels, but also break the pitchers; i.e., not merely carry away the Moabites, but also break down their political organization, and destroy their social arrangements.

**Jeremiah 48:13.** In this way Moab will come to dishonour through his god Chemosh, i.e., experience his powerlessness and nothingness, and perish with him, just as Israel (the ten tribes) came to dishonour through Bethel, i.e., through their golden calf at Bethel. As to the form מִבְּטָחָם, with Segol in the pretone, cf.

Ewald, § 70, a; Olshausen, *Gram.* S. 377. Moab will then be no longer able to boast of his valour; this is the meaning of the question in v. 14: on this term in the address, cf. 2:23; 8:8. In v. 15 it is further stated that the result will show this: “Moab is laid waste.” מְעָרְיָהּ עָלָה is variously interpreted. An explanation which has met with much acceptance, but which nevertheless is really untenable, is founded on Judg. 20:40 (“The whole city went up towards heaven” i.e., in smoke and fire): “As for his cities, fire or smoke ascends;” but there is no mention here either of smoke or fire. Kimchi long ago came near the truth when he sought to find the subject שָׂדֵד in שָׂדֵד: “and the devastator comes against his cities.” However, the contrast between עָלָה and יָרַד is not fully brought out in this way: it is better to leave the subject indeterminate: “and his cities they climb” (Kueper), or: “they go up to his cities” (Böttcher, *Neue Aehrenlese*, ii. 163). The enemy who mounts the cities is evidently intended.

The change שָׂדֵד into שָׂדֵד is both unnecessary and unsuitable; but J. D. Michaelis, Ewald, Dahler, Graf, after making the alteration, translate, “The destroyer of Moab and of his cities draws near.” Hitzig justly remarks, in opposition to this conjecture: “There is nothing to justify the mere placing of the subject at the head of the sentence (contrast vv. 8, 18b); besides, one does not see why the cities of

Moab are distinguished from Moab itself; and cf. 20b.” יָרַד לְבִטָּח, “to sink down to the slaughter,” cf. 50:27; and on this use of יָרַד, Isa. 34:7. The enemy *ascends* into the cities, the young soldiers of Moab *descend* to the shambles. This threatening is enforced by the addition, “saith the King,” etc. Jahveh is called the King, in contrast with the belief of the Moabites, that their god Chemosh was the king of his people (see on v. 7). The true King of the Moabites also is Jahveh, the God of hosts, i.e., the Ruler of the whole world.

**Jeremiah 48:16–25.** *Moab's glory is departed.*—V. 16. “The destruction of Moab is near to come, and his trouble hastens rapidly. V. 17. Bewail him, all [ye who are] round about him, and all who know his name! Say, How the rod of strength is broken, the staff of majesty! V. 18. Come down from [thy] glory, and sit in the drought, [thou] inhabitants, daughter of Dibon; for the destroyer of Moab hath come up against thee, he hath destroyed thy strongholds. V. 19. Stand by the way, and watch, O inhabitants of Aroer! ask him who flees, and her that has escaped; say, What has happened? V. 20. Moab is ashamed, for it is broken down: howl and cry out; tell it in Arnon, that Moab is laid waste. V. 21. And judgment hath come upon the country of the plain, upon Holon, and upon Jahzah, and upon Mephaath, V. 22. And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Beth-Diblathaim, V. 23. And upon Kirjathaim, and upon Beth-Gamul, and upon Beth-Meon, V. 24. And upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, those that are far off and those that are near. V. 25. The horn of Moab is cut off, ad his arm is broken, saith Jahveh.”

The downfall of Moab will soon begin. V. 16a is an imitation of Deut. 32:35; cf. Isa. 13:22; 56:1. The fall of the Moabite power and glory will be so terrible, that all the nations, near ad distant, will have pity on him. The summons to lament, v. 17, is not a mockery, but is seriously meant, for the purpose of expressing the idea that the downfall of so mighty and glorious a power will rouse compassion. The environs of Moab are the neighbouring nations, and “those who know

his name” are those who live far off, and have only heard about him. The staff, the sceptre, is the emblem of authority; cf. Ezek. 19:11, 12, 14, and Ps. 110:2.

**Jeremiah 48:18–25.** In vv. 18–25 is further described the downfall of this strong and glorious power. The inhabitants of Dibon are to come down from their glory and sit in misery; those of Aroer are to ask the fugitives what has happened, that they may learn that the whole table-land on to the Arnon has been taken by the enemy; and they are to howl over the calamity. The idea presented in v. 18a is an imitation of that in Isa. 47:1, “Come down, O daughter of Babylon, sit in the dust;” but יִרְדִּי is intensified by the addition of מִכְּבוֹד, and וְשָׁבִי עַל is changed into וְשָׁבִי בְצָמָא (the *Kethib* וְשָׁבִי עַל has evidently been written by mistake for וְשָׁבִי, the *Qeri*). צָמָא elsewhere means “thirst;” but “sit down in the thirst” would be too strange an expression; hence צָמָא must here have the meaning of צָמָא, Isa. 44:3, “the thirsty arid land:” thus it remains a question whether we should point the word צָמָא, or take צָמָא as another form of צָמָא, as חָלָב is of חָלָב, Ezek. 23:19. There is no sufficient reason why Hitzig and Ewald should give the word a meaning foreign to it, from the Arabic or Syriac. Dibon lay about four miles north from the Arnon, at the foot of a mountain, in a very beautiful plain, where, under the name of *Dibân*, many traces of walls, and a well by the wayside, hewn out of the rock, are still to be found (Seetzen, i. S. 409f.). Hence it must have been well provided with water, even though we should be obliged to understand by “the water of Dimon” (Dibon), which Isaiah mentions (Is. 15:9), the river Arnon, which is about three miles off. The command to “sit down in an arid land” thus forms a suitable figure, representing the humiliation and devastation of Dibon. That the city was fortified, is evident from the mention of the fortifications in the last clause. יִשְׁבֹּת בַּת, as in 46:19. Aroer was situated on the north

bank of the Arnon (*Mojob*), where its ruins still remain, under the old name *Arâ'ir* (Burckhardt, p. 372). It was a frontier town, between the kingdom of Sihon (afterwards the territory of the Israelites) and the possession of the Moabites (Deut. 2:36; 3:12; 4:48; Josh. 12:2; 13:9, 16). But after the Moabites had regained the northern portion of their original territory, it lay in the midst of the land. The fugitives here represented as passing by are endeavouring, by crossing the Arnon, to escape from the enemy advancing from the north, and subduing the country before them. נָס וְנִמְלָטָה means fugitives of every kind. The co-ordination of the same word or synonymous terms in the masc. and fem. serves to generalize the idea; see on Isa. 3:1, and Ewald, § 172, c. In נִמְלָטָה the tone is retracted through the influence of the distinctive accent; the form is participial. The question, “What has happened?” is answered in v. 20. כִּי חָתָה, “for (= certainly) it is broken down.” The *Kethib* וְהִלִּילִי וְיַעֲקִי must not be changed. Moab is addressed: with הַגִּידוּ is introduced the summons, addressed to individuals, to proclaim at the Arnon the calamity that has befallen the country to the north of that river.

**Jeremiah 48:21–24.** In vv. 21–24 the general idea of Moab’s being laid waste is specialized by the enumeration of a long list of towns on which judgment has come. They are towns of אֶרֶץ הַמִּישׁוֹר, the table-land to the north of the Arnon, the names of which early all occur in the Pentateuch and Joshua as towns in the tribe of Reuben. But Holon is mentioned only here. According to Eusebius, in the *Onomasticon*, s.v. Ἰεσσαία, Jahzah was situated between Μηδαβῶν (*Medeba*) and Διβουός (*Dibon*); according to Jerome, between *Medeba* and *Debus*, or *Deblathai*; but from Num. 21:23, we conclude that it lay in an easterly direction, on the border of the desert, near the commencement of the Wady *Wale*. Mophaath or Mephaath, where, according to the *Onomasticon*, a Roman garrison was placed, on account of the near proximity of the desert, is to be sought for in

the neighbourhood of Jahzah; see on Josh. 13:18. As to Dibon, see on v. 18; for Nebo, see on v. 1. Beth-Diblathaim is mentioned only in this passage. It is probably identical with Almon-Diblathaim, Num. 33:46, and to be sought for somewhere north from Dibon. For Kirjahthaim see v. 1. Beth-Gamul is nowhere else mentioned; its site, too, is unknown. Eli Smith, in Robinson's *Palestine*, iii. App. p. 153, is inclined to recognise it in the ruins of *Um-el-Jemel*, lying on the southern boundary of the Hauran, about twenty miles south-west from Bozrah; but a consideration of the position shows that they cannot be the same. Beth-Meon, or Baal-Meon (Num. 32:38), or more fully, Beth-Baal-Meon (Josh. 13:17), lay about three miles south from Heshbon, where Burckhardt (p. 365) found some ruins called *Mi-ûn* (Robinson, iii. App. p. 170, *Ma-în*); see on Num. 32:38. Kerioth, vv. 24 and 41, and Amos 2:2, is not to be identified with the ruins called *Kereyath* or *Kreyiath*, mentioned by Burckhardt (p. 367) and Seetzen (*Reisen*, ii. 342, iv. 384), as Ritter has assumed; for this *Kereyath* is more probably Kirjathaim (see on v. 1). Rather, as is pretty fully proved by Dietrich (in *Merx' Archiv*. i. 320ff.), it is a synonym of *Ar*, the old capital of Moab, Num. 22:36; and the plural form is to be accounted for by supposing that *Ar* was made up of two or several large portions. We find two great arguments supporting this position: (1.) When *Ar*, the capital, occurs among the names of the towns of Moab, as in the list of those in Reuben, Josh. 13:16–21, and in the prophecy against Moab in Isaiah, Is. 15 and 16, where so many Moabitic towns are named, we find no mention of Kerioth; and on the other hand, where Kerioth is named as an important town in Moab, Amos 2:2, Jeremiah 48, there is no mention of *Ar*. (2.) Kerioth is mentioned as an important place in the country in Amos 2:2, where, from the whole arrangement of the prophecy, it can only be the capital of Moab; in this present chapter also, v. 24, Kerioth and Bozrah are introduced as two very important towns which maintained the strength of Moab; and immediately afterwards it is added, "The horn of Moab is cut off," etc. Further, in v. 41 the

capture of Kerioth is put on a level with the taking of the fortresses; while it is added, that the courage of the mighty men has failed, just as in 49:22 the capture of Bozrah is coupled with the loss of courage on the part of Edom's heroes. Bozrah is not to be confounded with Bozrah in Edom (Jeremiah 49:13), nor with the later flourishing city of Bostra in Hauran: it is the same with Bezer (בְּצֵר), which, according to Deut. 4:43 and Josh. 20:8, was situated in the Mishor of the tribe of Reuben, but has not yet been discovered; see on Deut. 4:43. For the purpose of completing the enumeration, it is further added, "all the towns of the land of Moab, those which are far off (i.e., those which are situated towards the frontier) and those which are near" (i.e., the towns of the interior, as Kimchi has already explained). Thereby the horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm broken. Horn and arm are figures of power: the horn an emblem of power that boldly asserts itself, and pushes down all that opposes (cf. Ps. 75:5, 11); the arm being rather an emblem of dominion.

**Jeremiah 48:26–35.** *Moab's haughtiness and deplorable fall.*—V. 26. "Make him drunk,—for he hath boasted against Jahveh,—so that Moab shall splash down into his vomit, and himself become a laughing-stock. V. 27. Was not Israel a laughing-stock to thee, or was he found among thieves? for whenever thou spakest of him, thou didst shake thine head. V. 28. Leave the cities and dwell in the rock, ye inhabitants of Moab; and be ye like a dove [that] builds its nest in the sides of the mouth of a pit. V. 29. We have heard the very arrogant pride of Moab, his haughtiness, and his arrogance, and his high-mindedness, and his elation of mind. V. 30. I know, saith Jahveh, his wrath, and the untruthfulness of his words; they have done what is untrue. V. 31. Therefore will I howl over Moab, and for all Moab will I cry; they mourn for the people of Kir-heres. V. 32. I will weep for thee [with more] than the weeping of Jazer, O vine of Sibmah, thou whose tendrils have gone over the sea, have reached even to the sea of Jazer; on thy fruit-harvest and thy vintage a spoiler has fallen. V. 33. And joy and gladness are taken from the garden, and from the land of

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*Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the wine-vats: they shall not tread [with] a shout; the shout shall be no shout. V. 34. From the cry of Heshbon as far as Elealeh, as far as Jahaz, they utter their voice; from Zoar as far as Horonaim and the third Eglath; for even the waters of Nimrim shall become desolations. V. 35. And I will destroy from Moab, saith Jahveh, him that offers on a high place and burns incense to his gods."*

Through his pride, Moab has incurred the sentence of destruction to his power. In arrogance and rage he has exalted himself over Jahveh and His people Israel; therefore must he now be humbled, vv. 26–30. The summons to make Moab drunk is addressed to those whom God has charged with the execution of the sentence; cf. vv. 10 and 21. These are to present to the people of Moab the cup of the divine wrath, and so to intoxicate them, that they shall fall like a drunk man into his vomit, and become a laughing-stock to others (cf. 13:13; 25:15), because they have boasted against Jahveh by driving the Israelites from their inheritance, and by deriding the people of God; cf. Zeph. 2:8. **סָפַק**, to strike, frequently of striking the hands together; here it signifies to fall into his vomit, i.e., to tumble into it with a splash. No other explanation of the word can find support from the language used. Cf. Isa. 19:14 and 25:10f. In the last clause of v. 26, the emphasis lies on **גַּם הוּא**: "he also (Moab, like Israel before) shall become a laughing-stock." This statement is enforced by the question put in v. 27, "Was not Israel a laughing-stock to thee?" **וְאִם-אֵם** shows a double question, like **הֲ-אֵם**; and **וְאִם** in the first clause may be further strengthened by the interrogative **ה** before **שָׁחַק**, as in Gen. 17:17. For other forms of the double question, see Ps. 94:9, Job 21:4, Jeremiah 23:26. On *Dagesh dirimens* in **הַשָּׁחַק**, cf. Ewald, § 104, *b*. There is no sufficient reason for questioning the feminine form **נִמְצָאָה** in the *Qeri*; Israel is personified as a woman, just as Moab in v. 20, where **חַתָּה** is found. On **מִדֵּי דְבָרֶיךָ בּוֹ**, cf. 31:20,

where, however, **דְּבַר** is used in another meaning. **הִתְנַנֵּד**, to shake oneself, is a stronger expression than **הִנִּיד בְּרֹאשׁ**, to shake the head (Jeremiah 18:16), a gesture denoting mockery and rejoicing over another's injury; cf. Ps. 64:9.

**Jeremiah 48:28.** A transition is now made from figurative to literal language, and Moab is summoned to leave the cities and take refuge in inaccessible rocks, because he will not be able to offer resistance to the enemy; cf. vv. 6 and 9. "Like a dove that builds its nest over deep crevices." The reference is to wild pigeons, which occur in large numbers in Palestine, and make their nests in the clefts of high rocks (Song of Sol. 2:14) even at the present day, e.g., in the wilderness of Engedi; cf. Robinson's *Palestine*, ii. 203. **בְּעֵבְרֵי פִי-פֶּחַח**, lit., "on the other side of the mouth of the deep pit," or of the abyss, i.e., over the yawning hollows. **בְּעֵבְרֵי** is a poetic form for **בְּעֵבֶר**, as in Isa. 7:20. The humiliation of Moab finds its justification in what is brought out in v. 29f., his boundless pride and hatred against Israel.

**Jeremiah 48:29, 30.** Vv. 29 and 30 only more fully develop the idea contained in Isa. 16:6. Those who "heard" are the prophet and the people of God. There is an accumulation of words to describe the pride of Moab. Isaiah's expression also, **עֲבָרְתוּ לֹא-יִכֵּן בְּדָיו**, is here expanded into two clauses, and Jahveh is named as the subject. Not only have the people of God perceived the pride of Moab, but God also knows his wrath. **בְּדָיו** belongs to **לֹא-יִכֵּן** as a genitive, as in Isaiah **לֹא-יִכֵּן** means "not right," contrary to actual facts, i.e., untrue.

**Jeremiah 48:31–33.** Vv. 31–33 are also an imitation of Isa. 16:7–10. V. 31 is a reproduction of Isa. 16:7. In v. 7, Isaiah sets forth the lamentation of Moab over the devastation of his country and its precious fruits; and not until v. 9 does the prophet, in deep sympathy, mingle his tears with those of the Moabites. Jeremiah, on the other hand, with his natural softness, at once begins, in the first

person, his lament over Moab. עַל־כֵּן, “therefore,” is not immediately connected with v. 29f., but with the leading idea presented in vv. 26 and 28, that Moab will fall like one intoxicated, and that he must flee out of his cities. If we refer it to v. 30, there we must attach it to the thought implicitly contained in the emphatic statement, “I (Jahveh) know his wrath,” viz., “and I will punish him for it.” The *I* who makes lament is the prophet, as in Isa. 16:9 and 15:5. Schnurrer, Hitzig, and Graf, on the contrary, think that it is an indefinite third person who is introduced as representing the Moabites; but there is no analogous case to support this assumption, since the instances in which third persons are introduced are of a different kind. But when Graf further asserts, against referring the *I* to the prophet, that, according to what precedes, especially what we find in v. 26ff., such an outburst of sympathy for Moab would involve a contradiction, he makes out the prophet to be a Jew thirsting for revenge, which he was not. Raschi has already well remarked, on the other hand, under Isa. 15:5, that “the prophets of Israel differ from heathen prophets like Balaam in this, that they lay to heart the distress which they announce to the nations;” cf. Isa. 21:3f. The prophet weeps for all Moab, because the judgment is coming not merely on the northern portion (vv. 18–25), but on the whole of the country. In v. 31b, Jeremiah has properly changed לֶאֱשֵׁי (cakes of dried grapes) into אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי, the people of Kir-heres, because his sympathy was directed, not to dainties, but to the men in Moab; he has also omitted “surely they are smitten,” as being too strong for his sympathy. יִהְיֶה, to groan, taken from the cooing of doves, perhaps after Isa. 38:15; 59:11. The third person indicates a universal indefinite. Kir-heres, as in Isa. 16:11, or Kir-haresheth in Isa. 16:7, 2 Kings 3:25, was the chief stronghold of Moab, probably the same as Kir-Moab, the modern Kerek, as we may certainly infer from a comparison of Isa. 16:7 with 15:1 see on 2 Kings 3:25, and Dietrich, S. 324.

**Jeremiah 48:32.** מִבְּכֵי יַעֲזָר, “more than the weeping of Jazer,” may signify, “More than Jazer weeps do I weep over thee;” or, “More than over Jazer weeps do I weep over thee;” or, “More than over Jazer do I weep over thee.” However, the former interpretation is the more obvious, and is confirmed by the reading in Isa. 16:9. According to the *Onomasticon*, Jazer was fifteen Roman miles north from Heshbon. Seetzen recognises it in the ruins called *es Szir* at the source of the *Nahr Szir*; see on Num. 21:32. According to Jerome, on Isa. 16:8, Sibmah was only five hundred paces from Heshbon; see on Num. 32:38. Judging from the verse now before us, and from Isa. *l.c.*, the vines of Sibmah must have been famed for the strength and excellence of their clusters. Even now, that region produces excellent grapes in abundance. From Szalt, which lies only ten miles north from Szir, raisins and grapes are carried to Jerusalem, and these of excellent quality (Seetzen, i. S. 399; Burckhardt, p. 350). In what follows, “his tendrils crossed the sea,” etc., the extensive cultivation of the grape is set forth under the figure of a vine whose tendrils stretch out on all sides. “They have crossed over the sea” has reference in Isaiah (Is. 16:8) to the Dead Sea (ים, as in Ps. 68:23, 2 Chron. 20:2); not merely, however, in the sense of the shoots reaching close to the Dead Sea, but also over it, for Engedi was famed for its vines (Cant. 1:14). Jeremiah also has reproduced the words taken from Isaiah in this sense. From the following clause, “they reached to the sea of Jazer,” it does not follow that he has specified “the sea” by “Jazer.” What tells rather the other way is the fact that עָבַר, which means to cross over, cannot possibly be used as equivalent to נָגַע עַד, “to reach to.” “They crossed over the sea” shows extension towards the west, while “they reached to the sea of Jazer” indicates extension towards the north. This latter statement also is an imitation of what we find in Isa. 16:8; and “Jazer” is merely further specified as “the sea of Jazer.” In spite of the most diligent inquiries, Seetzen (i. S. 406) could learn nothing from the people of that region regarding an inland lake;

but in the beautiful green vale in the vicinity of *Szâr* (i.e., Jazer) there were several ponds, which he supposes may possibly be the *mare Jazer*, since this valley lying among the mountains is somewhat depressed, and in ancient times was probably filled with water. The “sea” (יָם) of Solomon’s temple further shows that יָם does not necessarily denote only a large lake, but might also be applied to a large artificial basin of water. So also, at the present day, the artificial water-basins on the streets of Damascus are called *baharat*, “seas;” cf. Wetzstein in Delitzsch on Isa. 16:8. This cultivation of the vine is at an end; for the destroyer has fallen upon the fruit-harvest and the vintage. Jeremiah, by “the destroyer has fallen,” explains the words of Isaiah (Isa. 16:9), “shouting has fallen.”—In v. 33, Isa. 16:10 is reproduced. “Joy and gladness are taken away from the gardens, and from the whole land of Moab.” כְּרִמְלֵי is not here a proper name, for Mount Carmel does not at all suit the present context; it is an appellative, fruit-land, i.e., the fruitful wine-country near Jazer. Jeremiah adds, “and from the land (i.e., the whole land) of Moab.” The pressing of the grapes comes to an end; there is no wine in the vat; no longer is the wine pressed with “Hedad.” הִדָּד is an adverbial accusative. This is further specified by the oxymoron: a “Hedad, and yet not a Hedad.” This word generally signifies any loud shout,—not merely the shout of the wine-pressers as they tread the grapes (see on 25:30), but also a battle-cry; cf. 51:14. Hence the meaning is, “Hedad is heard, but not a merry shout of the wine-pressers.”

**Jeremiah 48:34.** Ver. 34 is based on Isa. 15:4–6. “From the cry of Heshbon is heard the echo as far as Elealeh and Jahaz,” or “from Heshbon to Elealeh and Jahaz is heard a cry, and from Zoar to Horonaim.” Heshbon and Elealeh are only about two miles distant from each other; their ruins are still visible under the names of *Hesbân* (Husban, see on v. 2) and *El Al* (see on Num. 32:37). They were both built on hills; Elealeh in particular was situated on the

summit of a hill whence the whole of the southern Belka may be seen (Burckhardt, p. 365), so that a shout thence emitted could be heard at a great distance, even as far as Jahaz, which is pretty far off to the south-west from Heshbon (see on v. 21). The words “from Zoar to Horonaim” also depend on “they uttered their voice.” Both places lay in the south of the land; see on vv. 3 and 4. The wailing resounds not merely on the north, but also on the south of the Arnon. There is much dispute as to the meaning of עֵגְלַת שְׁלִישִׁיָּהּ, which is here mentioned after Horonaim, but in Isa. 15:5 in connection with, or after Zoar. To take the expression as an appellative, *juvenca tertii anni* (LXX, Vulgate, Targum, Gesenius, etc.), would perhaps be suitable, if it were an apposition to Moab, in which case we might compare with it passages like 46:20; 50:11; but this does not accord with its position after Horonaim and Zoar, for we have no analogy for the comparison of cities or fortresses with a *juvenca tertii anni*, *h. e. indomita jugoque non assueta*; and it cannot even be proved that Zoar and Horonaim were fortresses of Moab. Hence we take עֵגְלַת שְׁ as the proper name of a place, “the third Eglath;” this is the view of Rosenmüller, Drechsler, and Dietrich (in *Merx’ Archiv*. i. S. 342ff.). The main reason for this view, is, that there would be no use for an addition being made, by way of apposition, to a place which is mentioned as the limit of the Moabites’ flight, or that reached by their wailing. The parallelism of the clauses argues in favour of its being a proper name; for, on this view of it, three towns are named in both members, the first one, as the starting-point of the cry of wailing, the other two as points up to which it is heard. The preposition עַד, which is omitted, may be supplied from the parallel member, as in Isa. 15:8. Regarding the position of *Eglath Shelishijah*, it is evident from the context of both passages that we must look for it on the southern frontier of Moab. It is implied in the epithet “the third” that there were three places (villages), not far from one another, all bearing the same name. Dietrich (S. 344f.) has

adduced several analogous cases of towns in the country to the east of the Jordan,—two, and sometimes even three, towns of the same name, which are distinguished from each other by numerals. “The waters of Nimrim also shall become desolations,” because the enemy fill up the springs with earth. Nimrim is not the place called נַמְרִים or בֵּית נַמְרִים mentioned in Num. 32:3, 36, Josh. 13:27, whose ruins lie on the way from Szalt to Jericho, in the Wady Shaib, on the east side of the Jordan (see on Num. 32:36), for this lies much too far to the north to be the place mentioned here. The context points to a place in the south, in Moab proper. where Burckhardt (p. 355), Seetzen (*Reisen*, ii. S. 354), and de Saulcy (*Voyage*, i. 283, ii. 52) have indicated a stream fed by a spring, called *Moiet Numêre* (i.e., brook Nimrah), in the country at the south end of the Dead Sea, and in that wady a mass of ruins called *Numêre* (the *Nimmery* of Seetzen, iii. 18).

**Jeremiah 48:35.** Ver. 35 ends the strophe of which it is a part; here the Lord declares that He will make to cease לְמוֹאָב (for, or from Moab, lit., to Moab), every one who offers on a high place and burns incense to his gods. מַעֲלָה cannot be a substantive, else the parallelism would be destroyed. Nor may we, with Hitzig, render “he who raises a high place,” i.e., builds it, for הֶעֱלָה is not used in this sense.

**Jeremiah 48:36–38.** *Further lamentation over the fall of Moab.*—V. 36. “Therefore my heart sounds like pipes for Moab, and my heart sounds like pipes for the men of Kir-heres; therefore the savings which he has made are perished. V. 37. For every head is baldness, and every beard is shorn; on all hands there are cuts, and on loins sackcloth. V. 38. On all the roofs of Moab, and in its streets, it is all mourning; for I have broken Moab like a vessel, in which there is no pleasure, saith Jahveh.”

The prophet once more lifts up his lamentation over Moab (v. 36 corresponds to v. 31), and gives reason for it in the picture he draws of the deep affliction of the Moabites. V. 36a is an imitation of Isa. 16:11; the thought presented in

v. 36b accords with that found in Isa. 15:7. Isaiah says, “My bowels sound (groan) like the harp,” whose strings give a tremulous sound when struck with the plectrum. Instead of this, Jeremiah puts the sounding of pipes, the instruments used in dirges (Matt. 9:23). Moab and Kir-heres are mentioned together, as in v. 31. עַל־כֵּן, in the second clause, does not stand for כִּי עַל־כֵּן, “on this account that” (Kimchi, Hitzig, Graf, etc.), but is co-ordinated with the first עַל־כֵּן. The idea is not, “Therefore my heart mourns over Moab, because the savings are perished;” but because the sentence of desolation has been passed on the whole of Moab, therefore the heart of the prophet makes lament, and therefore, too, all the property which Moab has acquired is lost. יִתְרָה, as a collective noun, is joined with the plural verb אֶבְדוּ. On the construction עָשָׂה יִתְרָה, cf.

Gesenius, § 123, 3, Rem. 1; Ewald, § 332, c. The proof of this is given by the deep sorrow and wailing of the whole Moabite nation, v. 37f. On all sides are tokens of the deepest sadness,—heads shorn bald, beards cut off, incisions on the hands, sackcloth round the loins.

**Jeremiah 48:37.** V. 37 is formed out of pieces taken from Isa. 15:2, 3. קִרְחָה is a substantive, “baldness,” i.e., quite bald. גְּרוּעָה, *decurtata*, instead of גְּדוּעָה (in Isaiah), is weaker, but more suitable for the present connection. גְּדוּדָה, i.e., cuts or scratches inflicted on the body, as signs of mourning; cf. 16:6; 41:5. כֵּלָה מִסִּפָּד, “It is all wailing;” nothing is heard but wailing, for God has broken Moab in pieces like a useless vessel. On the simile employed, cf. 22:28.

**Jeremiah 48:39–44.** *No escape from destruction.*—V. 39. “How it is broken! they howl. How hath Moab turned the back, for shame! And Moab becomes a laughing-stock and a terror to all his neighbours. V. 40. For thus saith Jahveh: Behold, he shall fly like the eagle, and spread his wings over Moab. V. 41. Kerioth is taken, and the strongholds are seized, and the heart of the heroes of Moab on that day become like the heart

*of a travailing woman. V. 42. And Moab is destroyed from being a people, because he hath boasted against Jahveh. V. 43. Fear, and a pit, and a snare, are against thee, O inhabitants of Moab, saith Jahveh. V. 44. He who flees from the fear shall fall into the pit, and he who goes up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare; for I will bring against it, against Moab, the year of their recompense, saith Jahveh."*

The subject of הַתָּה in v. 39 is Moab viewed as a nation. הַיְלִילוּ might be imperative, but in this case we would be obliged to take בּוֹשׁ also as an imperative (as Hitzig and Graf do). It is simpler to take both forms as perfects: "they howl ... Moab turns the back, is ashamed" (= for shame). On הָיָה לְשׂוֹךְ, cf. v. 26. מְהַתָּה, object of terror, as in 17:17. "All who are round about him," as in v. 17. "For (v. 40) the enemy rushes down upon Moab like an eagle, and seizes Kerioth and all his strongholds." The subject is left unnamed, as in 46:18, but it is Nebuchadnezzar. The figure of the eagle, darting down in flight on its prey, is founded on Deut. 28:49 (on אָל־ for עַל, cf. 49:22). Kerioth, the capital, is taken (see on v. 24); so are the other strongholds or fastnesses of the country. The mere fact that קְרִיּוֹת has the article does not justify any one in taking it as an appellative, "the cities;" this appears from a comparison of Amos 2:2 with this verse. No plural of קְרִיּוֹת occurs anywhere. Then the fear of death falls on the heroes of Moab like a woman in labour. מְצַרָה, partic. Hiphil from צָרַר, *uterum comprimens*, is found only here and in 49:22, where the figure is repeated. Moab is annihilated, so that it is no longer a nation (cf. v. 2), because it has risen up in pride against the God of Israel; cf. v. 26. He who flees from one danger falls into the other. The play on the words פָּחַד, fear, horror, פֶּחַת, pit, and פַּח, spring-trap, as well as the mode in which it is carried out, is taken from Isa. 24:17f.,—a prophecy of the judgment on the world; see a similar idea presented in Amos 5:19, but somewhat

differently expressed. The *Kethib* הִנָּיִס, perfect Hiphil, "he flees," is less suitable than the *Qeri* הִנָּס (after Isaiah). The last clause, "for I will bring," etc., is quite in Jeremiah's peculiar style; cf. 4:23; 23:12. אֶל-מוֹאָב belongs to אֶל-יָהּ: the noun is anticipated by the pronoun, as frequently occurs; cf. 9:14; 41:3; 43:11.

**Jeremiah 48:45–47. Conclusion.**—V. 45. "Under the shadow of Heshbon stand fugitives, powerless; for a fire goes out from Heshbon, and a flame from Sihon, and devours the region of Moab, and the crown of the head of the sons of tumult. V. 46. Woe unto thee, Moab! the people of Chemosh are perished! for thy sons are taken away into captivity, and thy daughters into captivity. V. 47. Yet will I turn the captivity of Moab at the end of the days, saith Jahveh. Thus far is the judgment of Moab."

From Heshbon issued the resolution to annihilate Moab (v. 2); to Heshbon the prophecy finally returns. "In the shadow of Heshbon stand fugitives, powerless' (מְכַת, with מן privative), where, no doubt, they were seeking refuge; cf. Isa. 30:2, 3. The fugitives can only be Moabites. Here it is astonishing that they seek refuge in Heshbon, since the enemy comes from the north, and according to v. 2, it is in Heshbon that the resolution to destroy Moab was formed; and judging from 49:3, that city was then in the hands of the Ammonites. Hence Hitzig and Graf miss the connection. Hitzig thinks that the whole clause was inserted by a glosser, who imagined the town belonged to Moab, perhaps allowing himself to be misled in this by Num. 21:27, "Come to Heshbon." Graf, on the other hand, is of opinion that the fugitives are seeking the protection of the Ammonites in Heshbon, but do not find it: hence he would take the כִּי which follows in the adversative sense of "however" or "rather;" but this is against the use of the word, and cannot be allowed. The tenor of the words, "Fugitives stand under the shadow of Heshbon," does not require us to assume that people had fled to Heshbon out of the whole of Moab. Let us rather think of fugitives from the environs of



Heshbon, who seek refuge in this fortified town, from the enemy advancing from the north, but who find themselves disappointed in their expectation, because from this city there bursts forth the fire of war which destroys Moab. The thought merely serves the purpose of attaching to it the utterances which follow regarding Moab; but from vv. 43 and 44 alone, it is evident that escape will be impossible. In proof of this he mentions the flight to Heshbon, that he may have an opportunity of introducing a portion of the old triumphal songs of the Mosaic age, with which he wished to conclude his prophecy, vv. 45b and 46. The fugitives stand powerless, i.e., exhausted and unable to flee any further, while Heshbon affords them no refuge. For there bursts forth from it the fire that is to destroy the whole of Moab. The words from “for a fire,” etc., on to the end of v. 46, are a free imitation of some strophes out of an ancient song, in which poets of the Mosaic period celebrated the victory of Israel over Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had conquered the greater portion of Moab; but with this here is interwoven a passage from the utterances of Balaam the seer, regarding the fall of Moab, found in Num. 24:17, viz., from וְתֹאכַל בְּנֵי שָׂאוֹן to וְתֹאכַל. These insertions are made for the purpose of showing that, through this judgment which is now coming upon Moab, not only those ancient sayings, but also the prophecy of Balaam, will find their full accomplishment. Just as in the time of Moses, so now also there again proceeds from Heshbon the fire of war which will consume Moab. The words, “for a fire has gone out from Heshbon,” are a verbatim repetition of what we find in Num. 21:28, with the single exception that שָׂאֵ is here, as in Ps. 104:4, construed as masculine, and thus takes יִצָּא instead of יֵצֵא; but this change, of course, does not affect the meaning of the words. The next clause runs, in Numbers, *l.c.*, לְהִבָּהּ מִקְרִית, סִיחוֹן, but here מִבֵּין סִיחוֹן; this change into מִבֵּין is difficult to account for, so that J. D. Michaelis and Ewald would alter it into מִבֵּית.

There is no need for refuting the assumption of Raschi and Nägelsbach, that Sihon stands for the city of Sihon; or the fancy of Morus and Hitzig, that an old glosser imagined Sihon was a town instead of a king. When we consider that the burning of Heshbon by the Israelites, celebrated in that ancient song, was brought on by Sihon the Amorite king, since the Israelites were not to make war on Moab, and only fought against Sihon, who had made Heshbon his residence, there can be no doubt that Jeremiah purposely changed מִקְרִית into מִבֵּין סִיחוֹן, in order to show that Sihon was the originator of the fire which consumed Heshbon. By this latter expression Jeremiah seeks to intimate that, in Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldean army, there will arise against the Moabites another Sihon, from whose legions will burst forth the flame that is to consume Moab. מִבֵּין, “from between,” is to be explained on the ground that Sion is not viewed as a single individual, but as the leader of martial hosts. This fire will “devour the region of Moab, and the crown of the head of the sons of tumult.” These words have been taken by Jeremiah from Balaam’s utterance regarding Moab, Num. 24:17, and embodied in his address after some transformation. What Balaam announces regarding the ruler (Star and Sceptre) that is to arise out of Israel, viz., “he shall smite the region of Moab, and dash in pieces the sons of tumult,” Jeremiah has transferred to the fire: accordingly, he has changed וְיִמְחַץ into וְתֹאכַל, and וְיִמְחַץ into וְיִמְחַץ. Several commentators understand פֶּאֶה as signifying the margin of the beard (Lev. 19:27; 21:5); but the mention of the crown of the head in the parallel member does not require this meaning, for פֶּאֶה does not signify the corner of the beard, except when found in combination with רֶאֶשׁ or זָקֵן. The singeing of the margin of the beard seems, in connection with the burning of the crown, too paltry and insignificant. As in the fundamental passage פֶּאֶה signifying the sides of Moab, so here פֶּאֶה is the side of the body, and קֶדְקֵד the head.

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כְּגֵי שְׂאוֹן, *homines tumultuosi*, are the Moabites with their imperious disposition; cf. v. 29.

**Jeremiah 48:46.** V. 46 is again derived from the ancient poem in Num. 21, but the second half of the verse is altered. The bold figure which represents Chemosh the god of the Moabites as delivering his people up to captivity, is continued in the literal statement of the case; Moab's sons and daughters, i.e., its population, are carried away by the enemy into captivity.

**Jeremiah 48:47.** This infliction of judgment, however, on the Moabites, is not to prove a complete annihilation of them. At the end of the days, i.e., in the Messianic times (see on 23:20), there is in store for them a turn in their fortunes, or a restoration. For שׁוֹב שְׁבוּת, see on 29:14. Cf. the similar promise for Egypt, 46:26; Ammon and Elam, 49:6 and 39. The last clause, "Thus far," etc., is an addition made by the editor, when this oracle was received into the collection of Jeremiah's prophecies; cf. 51:64. מְשַׁפֵּט means the prophecy regarding Moab with respect to its contents.

As to the fulfilment of the threatened ruin, Josephus (Antt. x. 9. 7) states that Nebuchadnezzar, in the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, made war on the Moabites and subdued them. This statement is not to be questioned, though the date given should be incorrect. We have no other sources of information regarding this people. After the return of the Israelites from Babylon, the Moabites are no longer mentioned as a people, except in Ezra 9:1, Neh. 13:1, 23, where it is stated that some Israelites had married Moabish wives; nor is any mention made of this people in the books of the Maccabees, which, however, relate the wars of Judas Maccabeus with the Ammonites and Edomites (1 Macc. 5:3 and 6, cf. 4:61); neither is there any further notice taken of them in Josephus, who only now and then speaks of Moab, i.e., the country and its towns (Antt. xiii. 14. 2, 15. 4; Bell. Jud. iii. 3. 3, iv. 8. 2). This name seems to have been merged, after the exile, in that of the

Arabians. But the disappearance of the name of this people does not exclude the probability that descendants continued to exist, who, when Christianity spread in the country to the east of the Jordan, were received into the communion of the Christian church.

## Jeremiah 49

### Concerning Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, Elam

**Jeremiah 49:1-6.** Concerning the Children of Ammon.—The Ammonites were, not merely as regards descent, but also as to their character and their relation to Israel, the twin-people with the Moabites. From them, too, as well as from the Moabites, Sihon the king of the Ammonites had wrenched a portion of their territory, which the Israelites received for a possession after Sihon had been subdued. This territory they sought every opportunity of retaking from the Israelites, whom they as constantly endeavoured to humiliate when they could. Besides their connection with Eglon the Moabite king (Judg. 3:13), they oppressed Israel during the period of the judges for eighteen years, not only in Gilead, but also on this side of Jordan, since they fought against Ephraim, Benjamin, and Judah (Judg. 10:7ff., 11:12-32). During Samuel's time, their king Nahash besieged Jabesh-Gilead, and demanded the surrender of the city under shameful conditions, in consequence of which they were defeated by Saul (1 Sam. 2). During the time of David they disgracefully treated his ambassadors, who had come to comfort King Hanun over the death of his father; they then united with the Syrians against Israel, but were defeated by Joab, and, after the taking of their capital, Rabbah, severely chastised (2 Sam. 10:1 to 11:1, and 12:26-31). Under the reign of Jehoshaphat, also, in company with the Moabites, they invaded Judah (2 Chron. 20); and when, later, the Israelites were heavily oppressed by the Syrians under Hazael, the Ammonites practised cruelties on them in Gilead, for which the prophet Amos (Amos 1:13-15) threatens them with devastation of

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their country and foreign captivity. After the death of Jeroboam II, who had restored the borders of Israel as far as the Dead Sea (2 Kings 14:25), the Ammonites must have made fresh attempts to enlarge their territory during the interregnum that had begun in the kingdom of the ten tribes; for it is mentioned in 2 Chron. 26:8 that they brought presents to King Uzziah, i.e., paid tribute, and had thus been rendered tributary to him: it is also stated in 2 Chron. 27:5 that his son Jotham marched against them in order to enforce the payment of the tribute. But when, soon afterwards, Tiglath-pileser the Assyrian carried away the tribes of Israel on the east of the Jordan (2 Kings 15:29; 1 Chron. 5:26), the Ammonites seized possession of the depopulated country of the tribes of Gad and Reuben, while they also seized Heshbon on the border of these two tribal territories. This unjust appropriation of Israelitish territory forms the starting-point of the prophecy now before us.

Ammon has taken possession of the inheritance of Gad, therefore must his cities be destroyed by war, that Israel may again obtain his own property (vv. 1, 2). Ammon will sorrow deeply, for his god will go with his princes into captivity (vv. 2–4). His trust in the wealth of his land will not help him, but his people will be frightened away through terror on every side, yet they will be restored in the future (vv. 5, 6).

**Jeremiah 49:1.** *“Concerning the children of Ammon, thus saith Jahveh: Hath Israel no sons, or hath he no heir? Why doth their king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities? V. 2. Therefore, behold, days are coming, saith Jahveh, when I will cause to be heard against Rabbah of the children of Ammon a war-cry; and it shall become a heap of ruins, and her daughters shall be burned with fire: and Israel shall heir those who heired him, saith Jahveh. V. 3. Howl, O Heshbon! for Ai is laid waste. Cry! ye daughters of Rabbah, gird yourselves with sackcloth; lament, and run up and down among the enclosures: for their king shall go into captivity, his priests and his princes together. V. 4. Why dost thou glory in the valleys? Thy valley flows away, O thou rebellious daughter, that trusted in her*

*treasures, [saying], Who shall come to me? V. 5. Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, saith the Lord Jahveh of hosts, from all that is round thee; and ye shall be driven each one before him, and there shall be none to gather together the fugitives. V. 6. But afterwards I will turn the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith Jahveh.”*

The address begins with a question full of reproach: “Has Israel, then, no sons who could take possession of his land as their inheritance, that the king of the Ammonites has taken possession of Gad (i.e., of the hereditary portion of the tribe of Gad), and dwells in the cities of Gad?” The question presupposes that the Israelites had been carried away by Tiglath-pileser, but at the same time, also, that the country still belongs to the Gadites, for they certainly have sons who shall again receive the inheritance of their fathers. Since Jeremiah, as is clear from v. 3, had Amos 1:13–15 in his mind, he evidently uses מִלְכָּם in a double sense, not merely in v. 3, but even in v. 1 also, with a reference to Amos 1:15, meaning the king and god of the Ammonites. As in Amos, Aquila, Symmachus, Jerome, and the Syriac, so in this passage also, the LXX, Vulgate, and Syriac have understood מִלְכָּם of the god מִלְכָּם; with them agree Ewald, Hitzig, and Graf. But the reasons alleged for the change of מִלְכָּם into מְלִכּוֹם are quite as insufficient here as in Amos 1:15. Just as, in the last-named passage, מִלְכָּם first of all refers to the king of the Ammonites, so is it here. It is not the god, but the king, of the Ammonites that has taken possession of the territory of Gad. It is not till v. 3 that the reference to the god Milcom plainly comes out. V. 2. Therefore shall Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites, hear the cry of war, and be changed into a heap of ruins. רַבָּתַי בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן, “The great (city) of the sons of Ammon,” is the full name of the Ammonite capital (cf. Deut. 3:11), which is usually called, briefly, רַבָּה (Amos 1:14; 2 Sam. 11:1, etc.); it was afterwards called *Philadelphia*, probably after Ptolemy Philadelphus, in Polybius’ Παρθατάμωνα, in Abulfeda *Amân*, which is the name still given to

its ruins on the Nahr *Ammân*, i.e., the Upper Jabbok; see on Deut. 3:11. “A cry of war,” as in 4:19; cf. Amos 1:14. “A will of desolation,” i.e., a heap of ruins; cf. Josh. 8:28, Deut. 13:17. “her daughters” are the smaller cities dependent on the capital,—here, all the remaining cities of the Ammonites; cf. Num. 21:25, Josh. 15:45, etc. “Israel shall heir those who heired him,” i.e., receive back the property of those who have appropriated his land.

**Jeremiah 49:3.** The cities of the Ammonites, i.e., their inhabitants, shall howl and lament over this calamity. The summons given to Heshbon to howl implies that this city, formerly the residence of Sihon, was then in possession of the Ammonites. There is obscurity in the clause announcing the reason, “for עי (LXX Γαι) is laid waste:” the word seems to be a proper noun, but there is no city of this name known in the Ammonite country, or the land east of the Jordan; while we must not think of Ai (העי), Josh. 7:2f.), which was situated on the west side of the Jordan. Venema and Ewald are inclined to take the word as an appellative, synonymous with תל, “ruins” (which is the meaning of עי), and regard it as the subject of Rabbah, the capital, “because it has bee laid in ruins.” But a comparison of 48:20; 4:20, Zech. 11:3, rather favours our taking עי as the subject. Graf and others would therefore change עי into ער, as (they say) the capital of the Ammonites was called by the Israelites. But there are no historical traces of this designation of Rabbah. There remains hardly any other course open than to consider עי as the name of an important Ammonite city. The mere fact that it is mentioned nowhere else cannot form a strong foundation for the objection against this assumption, for we do not find anywhere a list of the Ammonite cities. The inhabitants of the other towns are to put on signs of sorrow, and go about mourning “in the enclosures,” i.e., in the open country, since the cities, being reduced to ashes, no longer afford shelter. Most expositors understand גדרות as meaning sheep-

folds (Num. 32:16, 24, 36); but there is no reason for taking this special view of the meaning of the word, according to which גדרות would stand for צאן גדרות צאן. גדרה and גדר also mean the wall of a vineyard, or the hedges of the vineyards, and in Num. 22:24 specially the enclosure of the vineyards at the cross-roads in the country east of the Jordan. This is the meaning here. We must not, with Nägelsbach, think of city walls on which one could run up and down, for the purpose of taking measures for defence: the words to not signify the walls of a city. The carrying away into exile of *Malcom* with his priests and princes gives the reason for the sorrow. מלכּם is here not the earthly king, but the god *Milcom* viewed as the king of the Ammonites, as is clear from the addition בּהניו, and from the parallel passage in 48:7. The clause is copied from Amos 1:15, but הוא has been substituted for בּהניו, in order that מלכּם may be understood of *Milcom*, the chief deity (see on 1 Kings 11:5).

**Jeremiah 49:4.** Thus shall the empty boasting of the Ammonites and their trust in their riches come to nothing. “Why dost thou boast of the valleys?” i.e., of the splendid fruitful valleys and plains which, being well watered, produced large crops of corn and wheat. זב עמקד is viewed by some as an antithesis [to what immediately precedes]: “thy valley flows, sc. with the blood of the slain” (Rosenmüller and Gesenius still view it thus); or, “it flows away,” i.e., thy valley (viz., its inhabitants) is scattered, dispersed. But it is quite arbitrary to supply “with blood;” and even the other explanation—which Hitzig justifies on the ground that valley or river-bottom stands for what it contains, i.e., the inhabitants of the valley, and that the population is represented under the figure of a mass of water running, flowing away—is very far-fetched. The words cannot form an antithesis to what precedes (because the description of the confidence shown is still continued, and the antithesis does not follow till v. 5), but merely a further extension of the

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preceding clause. We may, then, either translate, “thy valley flows, overflows,” so that the words shall be subordinated to what precedes; or we may take **בְּ**, with Ewald and Graf, as a noun, in which case we must repeat the preposition **בְּ**, “the abundance of thy valley.” The singular, “thy valley,” means, together with the other valleys of the country, perhaps the valley of Rabbah; for *Ammân* lies in a broad valley along with banks of the Moiet *Ammân*, which has its source in a pool two hundred paces from the south-west end of the city (Burckhardt’s *Syria*, p. 355). Regarding the vicinity, Abulfeda writes (*Tabulae Syr.* ed. Mich. p. 92), *circumjecta regio arva sativa sunt ac terra bona et abundans*. The direct address, “O rebellious daughter,” used of Israel in 31:22, is here transferred to the inhabitants of Rabbah, with reference to the fact that the Ammonites, denying their descent from Lot, behaved like enemies towards Jahveh and His people. In trusting their riches, they are like the Moabites, 48:7. In this confidence they said, “Who will come unto us?” i.e., attack us as enemies. Thereupon the Lord replies, “I will bring on thee fear, terror from all that is round thee,” all the nations that dwell about thee (cf. 48:17, 39), whose distress or overthrow will put thee in terror. **אִישׁ לְפָנָיו = אִישׁ נֹגְדוֹ**, “every one before him” (cf. Josh. 6:5, Amos 4:3), without looking about him, or turning round (cf. 46:5), i.e., in the most precipitate flight, with no one to rally the fugitives. **לְנֹדֵר** is collective.

**Jeremiah 49:6.** Yet afterwards, the fortunes of Ammon also shall be changed, as it was with Moab. 48:47.

Regarding the fulfilment of this prophecy (just as in the case of Moab), we have no further information than that of Josephus (*Ant.* x. 9. 7), that Nebuchadnezzar defeated and subdued the Ammonites in the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem. Shortly before, their king Baalis had got Gedaliah the governor put out of the way (Jeremiah 40:14). Even after the exile they kept up their hostile spirit against the Israelites and the Jews, inasmuch as they tried

to hinder the building of the city walls at Jerusalem (Neh. 4:1ff.), and in the Maccabean age were still making war against the Jews; 1 Macc. 5:6, 30–43. Their name was preserved till the time of Justin Martyr (*Ἀμμωνιτῶν ἐστὶ νῦν πολὺ πλῆθος*, *Dial. Tryph.* p. 272). But Origen already comprehends their country under the general name Arabia (*lib. 1 in Jobum*).

**Jeremiah 49:7–22.** Concerning Edom.—To the Edomites, whom Israel were to leave undisturbed in their possession, since they were a kindred nations (Deut. 2:4), Balaam announces that “Edom shall become a possession,” i.e., shall be taken possession of by the ruler rising out of Israel. We have shown, in the explanation given of Num. 24:18, that up to the time of the exile this utterance had been fulfilled merely by feeble attacks being made, since the Edomites were only temporarily subdued by the Israelites, then soon made themselves independent again, and made war on Israel. On account of their implacable hostility towards the people of God, Ezekiel (Ezek. 25:12ff.), as well as Jeremiah in this prophecy, announces ruin to them. The contents of the prophecy before us are as follow: The far-famed wisdom of Teman will not preserve Edom from the destruction with which Jahveh will visit it. The judgment of desolation that has been decreed shall inevitably come on it (vv. 7–13). The nations shall wage war against it, and make it small; because of its proud trust in the strength of its dwelling-place, it shall become the laughing-stock of every passer-by (vv. 14–18). As a lion from the reedy places of Jordan suddenly attacks a herd, the Lord will drag the Edomites from their rocky dwelling, so that the earth shall quake with the crash of their fall, and the anguish of death shall seize their heroes (vv. 19–22). In this prophecy Jeremiah has relied much on Obadiah, vv. 1–9, and reproduced much of his expressions regarding the fall of Edom. According to what has been said, his address falls into three strophes. In the first (vv. 7–13), the judgment breaking over Edom is depicted as one that cannot be averted, and as having been irrevocably decreed by the Lord; in

the second (vv. 14–18), it is set forth as to its nature and the occasion of its occurrence; and in the third (vv. 19–22), as to its completion and consequences.

**Jeremiah 49:7–13.** *The judgment as inevitable.*—V. 7. “Thus saith Jahveh of hosts: Is there no more wisdom in Teman? has wisdom perished from those of understanding? is their wisdom [all] poured out? V. 8. Flee, turn ye! hide yourselves, ye inhabitants of Dedan; for I bring the destruction of Esau upon him, the time [when] I visit him. V. 9. If grape-gatherers come to thee, they will not leave gleanings; if thieves by night, they destroy what suffices them. V. 10. For I have stripped Esau, I have uncovered his secret places, and he cannot cover himself; his seed is destroyed, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not. V. 11. Leave thine orphans, I will keep them alive; and let thy widows trust me. V. 12. For thus saith Jahveh: Behold, [they] whose judgment was not to drink the cup shall certainly drink it: and art thou he [who] shall be quite unpunished? thou shalt not be unpunished, but shalt certainly drink. V. 13. For by myself have I sworn, saith Jahveh, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all its cities shall become everlasting wastes.”

In order to frighten Edom out of his carnal security, the prophet begins by depicting the horror of the judgment coming down on this people, before which his wise men shall stand not knowing what to advise, and unable to find out any means for averting the evil. *Teman*, the home of the wise Eliphaz (Job 2:11), is here, as in Amos 1:12, Obad. v. 9, the region of that name in Gebalene, the northern district of Idumea; see on Amos 1:12. The question, “Is there no longer wisdom in Teman?” is ironical, and has a negative meaning. The following clauses also are to be taken as questions, not as assent to the question, as Hitzig and Graf infer from the omission of אִם. בְּנִים is not the plural of בֵּן, “son,” but the participle of בָּוֶן or בִּין, and equivalent to נִבְנִים; cf. Isa. 29:14.

**Jeremiah 49:8.** The Dedanites, whose caravans march in peace through Edom (see on 25:23),

must flee, and hide themselves in deeply concealed hiding-places, in order to escape the evil befalling Edom. The form הִפְנוּ, which only occurs besides in Ezek. 9:2, in the sense of being “turned, directed,” is here preferred to the Hiphil (cf. v. 24, 46:21, etc.), in order to indicate the constraint under which they must change their route. הִעֲמִיקוּ is also an imperative, in spite of the Segol in the first syllable, which is found there, in some forms, instead of *a*; cf. Ewald, § 226, *a*. הִעֲמִיקוּ לְשֹׁבֵת, “make deep to stay,” i.e., withdraw yourselves into deep or hidden places, where the enemy does not see and discover you. “For the destruction of Esau,” i.e., the destruction determined on Esau, or Edom, “I bring on him;” on this matter, cf. 46:21.

**Jeremiah 49:9.** Ver. 9 is a reproduction of Obad. v. 5, but in such a way that what Obadiah brings forward as a comparison is directly applied by Jeremiah to the enemy: our prophet represents the enemy as grape-gatherers who leave nothing to glean, and as nocturnal thieves who destroy what is sufficient for them, i.e., destroy till they have enough, drag away and destroy as much as they can. The after-clauses, “they will not leave,” etc., “they destroy,” etc., are thus not to be taken as questions. The reference to Obadiah does not entitle us to supply הָלוֹא from that passage. The connection here is somewhat different. The following verse is joined by means of כִּי, “for;” and the thought, “for I have stripped Esau, I have discovered his secret places,” shows that the enemy is to be understood by the grape-gatherers and nocturnal thieves: he will leave nothing to glean—will plunder all the goods and treasures of Edom, even those that have been hidden. On this subject, cf. Obad. v. 6. הִשָּׁף, “to strip off leaves, make bare” (Jeremiah 13:26), has been chosen with a regard to נִחַפְּשׁוּ in Obadiah. יִכְלֹא וְיִתְחַבֵּהוּ, lit., “and he hides himself, he will not be able to do it;” i.e., Esau (Edom) tries to hide himself; he will not be able to do it—he will not remain concealed from the enemy. There are

not sufficient grounds for changing the perf. נִחְבָּה = נִחְבָּא into the inf. abs. נִחְבֵּה, as Ewald and Graf do. "His seed is destroyed," i.e., his family, the posterity of Esau, the Edomites, his brethren," the descendants of nations related to the family, and of others similar who had intermingled with them, as the Amalekites, Gen. 36:12, Horites, Gen. 36:20ff., Simeonites, 1 Chron. 4:42, "and his neighbours," the neighbouring tribes, as Dedan, v. 8, Thema and Buz, 25:23. "And he is not" is added to give intensity, as in Isa. 19:7; cf. Jeremiah 31:15. The last idea is made more intensive by v. 11, "Leave your orphans and widows." Edom is addressed, and the imperative expresses what must happen. The men of Edom will be obliged to leave their wives and children, and these will be left behind as widows and orphans, because the men fall in battle. Yet the Lord will care for them, so that they shall not perish. In this comfort there is contained a very bitter truth for the Edomites who hated Jahveh. עֲזֹבָה is the imperative (Ewald, § 228, a), not infinitive (Hitzig); and תִּבְטְחוּ is a rare form of the jussive for תִּבְטְחוּנָה, as in Ezek. 37:7; cf. Ewald, § 191, b. Reasons are given for these threats in vv. 12 and 13, first in the thought that Edom cannot continue to be the only one unpunished, then in the bringing forward of the solemnly uttered purpose of God. "Those who should not be compelled to drink." Those meant are the Israelites, who, as the people of God, ought to have been free from the penal judgment with which the Lord visits the nations. If, now, these are not left (spared such an infliction), still less can Edom, as a heathen nation, lay claim to exemption. By this Jeremiah does not mean to say that nay injustice befalls the Jews if they are obliged to drink the cup of the wrath of God, but merely that their having been chosen to be the people of God does not give them any right to exemption from the judgments of God on the world, i.e., if they make themselves like the heathen through their sins and vices. The inf. abs. שתוּ for שתה intensifies: "ye shall (must) drink." The idea is founded on that pervading

Jeremiah 25, and there is use made of the words in 25:29. The כִּי in v. 123 is mainly dependent on the clause immediately preceding: "thou shalt certainly drink." On "by myself have I sworn" cf. 22:5. In the threat that Edom shall be laid waste there is an accumulation of words corresponding to the excitement of feeling accompanying an utterance under solemn oath. חָרַב is used instead of the more common חָרְבָה; cf. 25:18; 44:22, etc. חָרְבוּת עוֹלָם, as in 25:9. Bozrah was at that time the capital of the Edomites (cf. v. 22); it lay south from the Dead Sea, on the site of the village Buseireh (Little Bozrah), in Jebal, which is still surrounded by a castle and with ruins of considerable extent, and is situated on an eminence; see on Amos 1:12 and Gen. 36:33. "And all its cities," i.e., the rest of the cities of Idumea; cf. וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ, v. 2.

**Jeremiah 49:14–18.** *The nature and occasion of the judgment decreed.*—V. 14. "I have heard tidings from Jahveh, and a messenger has been sent among the nations: Gather yourselves together, and go against her, and arise to the battle! V. 15. For, behold, I have made thee small among the nations, despised among men. V. 16. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, the pride of thy heart, O thou that dwellest in the hiding-places of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill. Though thou makest thy nest high like the eagle, thence will I bring thee down, saith Jahveh. V. 17. And Edom shall become an astonishment; every passer-by shall be astonished at her, and shall hiss at all her plagues. V. 18. As [it was in] the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, saith Jahveh, no man shall dwell there, nor shall a son of man sojourn there."

This judgment will immediately take place. The nations who are to make Edom small and despised have been already summoned by the Lord to the war. Jeremiah has taken this idea from Obad. vv. 1, 2. The subject in "I have heard" is the prophet, who has heard the information from Jahveh. In Obadiah is found the plural, "we have heard," because the prophet includes himself among the people;

this is to show that the news serves as a consolation to Israel, because Edom shall be punished for his crimes committed against Judah. This view was not before the mind of Jeremiah; with him the prevailing representation is, that judgment, from which Edom cannot be excepted, is passed upon all nations. Therefore he has chosen the singular, "I have heard." In the succeeding clause the perf. Pual שלח has been changed into שלח, as the more usual form. The messenger is to be considered as having been sent by the Lord for the purpose of summoning the nations to war, as he actually does in the second hemistich. The message agrees, in the nature of its contents, with Obad. v. 1; but Jeremiah has dealt somewhat freely with its form. The statement with regard to the object of the war, v. 15, agrees pretty exactly with Obad. v. 2. The account, too, which is given of the cause of the judgment, i.e., the guilt of Edom arising from his trusting in the impregnable character of his habitation, is derived from Obad. vv. 3, 4. Jeremiah has intensified the idea by the additional use of תפלצת, but has also made certain limitations of the expression by omitting some clauses found in Obadiah. The word just named is ἄπ. λεγ., and has been variously explained. The verb פלץ occurs only in Job 9:6, with the meaning of quaking, trembling; and the noun פלצות pretty frequently in the sense of fear, shuddering, horror; further, מפלצת is used in 1 Kings 15:13, 2 Chron. 15:16, of an idol, monster, object of horror. Hence Rabbinical writers have been inclined to understand תפלצת as meaning idolatry; in this they are followed by J. D. Michaelis, Meier, and Nägelsbach. The last-named writer translates, "Thy monster (idol) led thee astray." But even though this meaning were better established from the use of language than it is, yet the mention of idolatry, or even of an idol, is quite unsuitable in this passage. The LXX render ἡ παγνία σου i.e., risus or jocus tuus, Chald. טפשותך, "thy folly,"—evidently a mere guess from the context. The best ascertained

translation is, "Thy terror," i.e., the terror which thou dost inspire, or the fear of thee, "hath misled thee, the pride of thine heart," so that "the pride," etc., forms an apposition to "thy terror." The combination of the fem. תפלצת with the verb השיא in the masc. is not decisive against this. Following the example of Schleussner (*O arrogantiam tuam*), Hitzig and Graf would take the word as an exclamation, "Terror to thee! horror on thee!" and thy point for support to הפרכם, Isa. 29:16. But an exclamation is out of place here, and incompatible with the derivation of the following words from Obadiah. Since Jeremiah appropriates from Obadiah the thought, "thy pride hath misled thee," תפלצת may possibly be meant as a mere intensification of לדון. The pride of Edom increased because the other nations were afraid to make war on him in his rocky dwelling, so difficult of access. On שכני השלע, see on Obad. v. 3. The succeeding apposition-clause מרום שבתו, found in Obadiah, is modified by Jeremiah into גבעה, "thou that seizest, or holdest (as in 40:10), the height of the hill." In the expression חגוי השלע there is perhaps implied an allusion to the rock-city שלע, or Petra, in the Wady Musa (see on 2 Kings 14:7), and in מרום גבעה another allusion to Bozrah, which lay on a hill; see on v. 13. On v. 16, cf. Obad. v. 4. Jeremiah has omitted the hyperbolic addition, "among the stars." In vv. 17 and 18 the devastation of Edom is further portrayed. On v. 17a, cf. 25:11, 38; with 17b agrees 19:8, almost word for word. The comparison with Sodom, etc., is a reminiscence from Deut. 29:22, and is repeated in the prophecy concerning Babylon, 50:40; cf. Isa. 13:19, Amos 4:11. "Her neighbours" are Admah and Zeboim, Deut. 29:22, Hos. 11:8. The comparison with Sodom is not so to be understood as if it indicated that Edom shall be destroyed in the same manner as Sodom; it is merely stated that the land of Edom shall become a desert waste, like the region of the



Dead Sea, uninhabited, and with no human beings in it; cf. v. 33 and 50:40.

**Jeremiah 49:19–22.** *“The execution of the judgment, and fall of Edom.—V. 19. “Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the glory of Jordan, to the dwelling or rock: but in a moment will I drive him away from her, and will appoint over her him who is chosen; for who is like me? and who will summon me [before the judge]? and what shepherd shall stand before me? V. 20. Therefore hear the counsel of Jahveh which He hath counselled against Edom, and His purposes which He has purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: Surely they shall drag them about, the little ones of the flock; surely he shall lay waste their dwelling over them. V. 21. At the noise of their fall the earth trembles; a cry—its noise is heard in the Red Sea. V. 22. Behold, he shall come like the eagle and dart after [his prey], and spread his wings over Bozrah; and the heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall become like the heart of a woman travailing.”*

As a lion coming up out of the thicket of reeds at the Jordan (גִּאֲזוֹן הַיַּרְדֵּן, see on 12:5) suddenly attacks a flock, so shall he who executes the judgment attack the Edomites in their strong habitations, and at once put them to flight. The foe or general who executes the judgment is here no further pointed out, as in 46:18; 48:20; but he is merely set forth as a lion, and in v. 22 as an eagle that in its flight darts down on its prey. נֹהַד אֵיתָן, pasture or dwelling of permanence; as אֵיתָן is used in Num. 24:21 of the rocky range of Sinai, so is it used here of the rocky range of Seir (תְּגִי הַסֵּלַע, v. 16). The translation “evergreen pasture” (Graf, Nägelsbach) cannot be defended; for neither אֵיתָן, “continual, enduring,” nor נֹהַד, “pasture-ground, dwelling,” includes the notion of green grass. Quite baseless is the assumption of Hitzig, that the former word means the “shepherd” as remaining with the flock. אֶרְנִיעָה, “I shall wink,” stands for the adverb, “immediately, at once.” אֶרְיָצְנֻ מִעֲלֶיהָ, “I will make him (Edom) run,” i.e., drive him, “from it,”

his habitation (which is construed as fem. *ad sensum*). Jahveh sends the lion; Jahveh is not compared with the lion (Hitzig). In מִי בַחֹר the former word is not the interrogative pronoun, but the indefinite *quicumque*, as in Ex. 24:14; cf. Ewald, 332, *b*. And the latter word is not “the valiant shepherd” (Hitzig), but signifies “chosen.” אֶלֶיָּהּ is used instead of עֲלֶיהָ; and פָּקַד עָלַי means to “set over” something, as the chief, superior. The idea is, that God will frighten away the Edomites out of their land by a lion, and appoint him as the shepherd whom He chooses for that purpose. None can prevent this, for there is none like Jahveh in strength or power, and none can call Him to account for His doing. יַעֲדֵנִי (from יָעַד), in Hiphil, to “summon before the court of justice,” i.e., to call on one to make a defence; cf. Job 9:19. Nor can any shepherd stand before Jahveh, i.e., defend his flock. These words are directed against the rulers of Edom, who foolishly imagined they were secure, and could not be touched in their rock-fortresses. The words, moreover, contain general truths, so that we cannot apply בַּחֹר to historical persons, such as Nebuchadnezzar or Alexander the Great.

**Jeremiah 49:20.** This truth the Edomites are to lay to heart, and to hear, i.e., consider the purpose which the Lord has formed regarding Edom. Teman is not synonymous with Edom, but the inhabitants of Teman are specially named together with Edom in the parallel member, because they were particularly famous for their wisdom (v. 7), and in their pride over this wisdom, held the counsels of God in very small esteem. The counsel of God, the thoughts which He has conceived regarding Edom, follow in the clauses which are introduced with solemn assurance. יִסְתַּבּוּם צְעִירֵי הַצֹּאן is rendered by the Vulgate, *si non dejecerint eos parvuli gregis*, which Luther follows in his translation, “if the shepherd-boys will not drag them away.” And C. B. Michaelis and Hävernick (on Ezekiel, p. 415) still view the words as meaning that “the least of the flock”

will drag away Edom; i.e., the covenant people, weak and miserable though they are, will be victorious over Edom: in support of this rendering they point to Ezek. 25:14. But though Ezekiel clearly declares that the Lord will satisfy His revenge on Edom by means of His people Israel, yet it does not follow from this that Ezekiel had this passage of Jeremiah in his mind, and sought so to apply it. In spite of the clearness with which the thought is expressed by Obadiah and Ezekiel, that Edom will at last become the prey of the people of God, we would expect to find it in Jeremiah only as a simple inference from his words; for Jeremiah does not, like Obadiah and Ezekiel, mention the enmity of Edom to Israel as the cause of his guilt, but only the pride of his heart. Against taking “the little ones of the flock” as the subject of the clause, we find these considerations: (1) סָחַב, “to pull, drag away,” does not well apply to sheep, but rather points to dogs (Jeremiah 15:3) or lions, which drag away their prey. (2) The context is far from leading us to understand, by the little ones of the sheep, Israel or the people of God, either here or where the words are repeated, 50:45; while Zech. 2:7 and 13:7 are passages which cannot be held as regulating this verse. In v. 19 the rulers of Edom are viewed as shepherds: in accordance with this figure, the Edomites are in v. 20 called sheep, and weak, helpless ones too. The subject of יִסְחָבוּ is indefinite: “the enemy will advance like a lion out of the jungle of the Jordan;” the suffix precedes the noun, as in 48:44, etc. The fate of Edom will be so terrible, that their pasture-ground, their habitation will be astonished at it. The Hiphil יִשִּׁים is formed, like נָשִׂים in Num. 21:20, from שָׂם; not, however, with the sense of “laying waste,” which the construction with עַל of a person does not suit, but with the meaning of “making astonished,” as in Ezek. 32:10, and only here with the directly causative sense of manifesting, showing astonishment or amazement.

**Jeremiah 49:21.** The fall of Edom will be so fearful, that the earth will tremble, and the cry

of anguish from the perishing people will be heard on the Red Sea. נִלְלָם is the inf. Kal with suffix. The threatening concludes, in v. 22, with the same though through which destruction is threatened to the Moabites, 48:40ff. The comparison of the enemy to an eagle is continued in the expression, “he shall come up;” the coming up, however, does not mean the rising of the eagle into the air, but refers to the enemy: to march as an enemy against Edom.

With reference to the fulfilment of this prophecy, we have already pointed out, on Num. 24:18, and at the close of the exposition in Obadiah, that the threatened devastation of the land of Edom was brought about by the Chaldeans, as is clear from Mal. 1:3; but the annihilation of the people was commenced by the Maccabees, and completed by the Romans, about the time of the Jewish war.

**Jeremiah 49:23–27.** Concerning Damascus.—Aram, on this side of the Euphrates, or Syria, was divided, in the times of Saul and David, into the kingdoms of Damascus, Zobah, and Hamath, of which the second, extending between Damascus and Hamath (see on 2 Sam. 8:3), or situated north-eastward from Damascus, between the Orontes and the Euphrates, was the most powerful; its kings were defeated by Saul (1 Sam. 14:47), and afterwards conquered and made tributary to the kingdom of Israel by David, who did the same to the Syrians of Damascus that had come to the assistance of Hadadezer king of Zobah (2 Sam. 8 and 10). After the death of David and during the time of Solomon, a freebooter named Rezon, who had broken away from Hadadezer during the war, established himself in Damascus (see on 1 Kings 11:23–25), and became the founder of a dynasty which afterwards made vassals of all the smaller kings of Syria, whose number is given 1 Kings 20:1. This dynasty also, under the powerful rulers Benhadad I and II and Hazael, long pressed hard on the kingdom of Israel, and conquered a great part of the Israelite territory (1 Kings 15:18ff., 20:1ff., 22:3ff.; 2 Kings 5:1ff., 6:8ff., 8:28f., 10:32f., 12:18ff., 13:3ff.). At last, King Joash, after the death of Hazael, succeeded

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in retaking the conquered cities from his son, Benhadad III (2 Kings 13:19ff.); and Jeroboam II was able to restore the ancient frontiers of Israel as far as Hamath (2 Kings 14:25). Some decades later, Rezin king of Damascus, in alliance with Pekah of Israel, undertook a war of conquest against Judah during the time of Ahaz, who therefore called to his aid the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser. This monarch conquered Damascus, and put an end to the Syrian kingdom, by carrying away the people to Kir (2 Kings 15:37; 16:5–9). This kingdom of Syria is called “Damascus” in the prophets, after its capital. We find threats of destruction and ruin pronounced against it even by such early prophets as Amos (Amos 1:3–5), for its cruelty committed against Israel, and Isaiah (Isa. 17:1ff.), because of its having combined with Israel to destroy Judah. According to the use of language just referred to, “Damascus,” mentioned in the heading of this prophecy, is not the city, but the kingdom of Syria, which has been named after its capital, and to which, besides Damascus, belonged the powerful cities of Hamath and Arpad, which formerly had kings of their own (Isa. 37:13). Jeremiah does not mention any special offence. In the judgment to come on all nations, Aram-Damascus cannot remain exempt.

**Jeremiah 49:23.** *“Hamath is ashamed, and Arpad, for they have heard evil tidings: they despair; there is trouble on the sea; no one can rest. V. 24. Damascus has become discouraged, she has turned to flee: terror has seized her; distress and pains have laid hold on her, like a woman in childbirth. V. 25. How is the city of praise not left, the city of my delight? V. 26. Therefore shall her young men fall in her streets, and all the man of war shall be silent in that day, saith Jahveh of hosts. V. 27. And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall devour the palaces of Benhadad.”*

The largest cities of Aram are seized with consternation and discouragement. Damascus would flee, but its men of war fall by the sword of the enemy, and the city is in flames. The description of the terror which overpowers the inhabitants of Aram begins with *Hamath*

(*Epiphaneia* of the Greeks, now called Hamah), which lies north from Hums (Emesa), on the Orontes (el ‘Asi); see on Gen. 10:17 and Num. 34:8. *Arpad* is always mentioned in connection with Hamath (Isa. 10:9; 36:19; 37:13; 2 Kings 18:34 and 19:13): in the list of Assyrian synonyms published by Oppert and Schrader, it is sounded Arpadda; and judging by the name, it still remains in the large village of *Arfâd*, mentioned by Maras<sup>2</sup>., about fifteen miles north from Haleb (Aleppo); see on 2 Kings 18:34. The bad news which Hamath and Arpad have heard is about the approach of a hostile army. “She is ashamed,” i.e., disappointed in her hope and trust (cf. 17:13), with the accessory idea of being confounded. נָמוּג, to be fainthearted from fear and anxiety; cf. Josh. 2:9, 24, Ex. 15:15, etc. There is a difficulty with the expression בַּיָּם דְּאִגְרָה, from the mention of the sea. Ewald has therefore invented a new word, יָב, which is stated to signify *mind, heart*; and he translates, “their heart is in trouble.” Graf very rightly remarks, against this, that there was no occasion whatever for the employment of a word which occurs nowhere else. The simplest explanation is that of J. D. Michaelis, Rosenmüller, and Maurer: “on the sea,” i.e., onwards to the sea, “anxiety prevails.” The objection of Graf, that on this view there is no nominative to יוֹכַל, cannot make this explanation doubtful, because the subject (German, Fr. *on*, Eng. *people, they*) is easily obtained from the context. The words יוֹכַל לֹא הִשְׁקֵט form a reminiscence from Isa. 57:20, where they are used of the sea when stirred up, to which the wicked are compared. But it does not follow from this that the words are to be understood in this passage also of the sea, and to be translated accordingly: “in the sea there is no rest,” i.e., the sea itself is in ceaseless motion (Hitzig); or with a change of בַּיָּם into כַּיָּם, “there is a tumult like the sea, which cannot keep quiet” (Graf). As little warrant is there for concluding, from passages like Jeremiah 17:12ff., where the surging of the Assyrian power is compared to the roaring of the waves

of the sea, that the unrest of the inhabitants of Syria, who are in a state of anxious solicitude, is here compared to the restless surging and roaring of the sea (Umbreit). For such a purpose, דאָגה, “concern, solicitude,” is much too weak, or rather inappropriate.

**Jeremiah 49:24.** רַפְּתָה דַּמְשֶׁק, “Damascus has become slack,” i.e., discouraged; she turns to flee, and cannot escape, being seized with trembling and anxiety. הַחַיִּיקָה is not the third pers. fem., *prehendit terrorem*, but stands for הַחַיִּיקָה, with Mappik omitted, because the tone is retracted in consequence of the Athnach; cf. 6:24; 8:21, etc. “Terror has seized Damascus.” In the last clause וְהַבְּלִים is subsumed along with צָרָה; hence the verb is put in the singular.—V. 25. The question, “How is not,” etc., has been differently explained. Eichhorn, Gesenius, Ewald, and Umbreit take the words according to the German usage, in the sense, “How is the city forsaken?” or laid waste. But this Germanism is foreign to the Hebrew; and it is not obviated by C. B. Michaelis taking “how” in the sense of *quam inopinato et quam horribiliter non deserta est*, so that the words would mean *nullus est modus desertionis aut gradus quem Damascus non sit experta*, because לֹא אֵיךְ does not express the kind and manner, or the degree of an action. In the only other passage where לֹא אֵיךְ occurs (2 Sam. 1:14) the negative has its full meaning. Others (Calvin, Schnurrer, J. D. Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Maurer) take עָזַב in the sense of leaving free, untouched: “How has she not been left untouched?” i.e., been spared. But this meaning of the verb is nowhere found. There is no other course left than, with Nägelsbach, to take the verb as referring to the desertion of the city through the flight of the inhabitants, as in 4:29, etc., and to take the words thus: “How is (i.e., how has it happened that) the famous city (is) not forsaken?” According to this view, it is not the desolation of the city that is bewailed, but the fact that the inhabitants have not saved their lives by flight. The way is prepared for this thought by v. 24,

where it is said that the inhabitants of Damascus wish to flee, but are seized with convulsive terror; in v. 25 also there is a more specific reason given for it, where it is stated that the youths (the young warriors) and all the men of war shall fall in the streets of the city, and be slain by foes. The suffix in “my delight” refers to the prophet, and expresses his sympathy for the fall of the glorious city (see on 48:31); because not only does its population perish, but the city itself also (v. 27) is to be burned to ashes.

**Jeremiah 49:27.** Ver. 27 has been imitated from Amos 1:4 and v. 14 conjointly. בְּחֻמָּתָא, not “on,” but “in,” i.e., “within the wall.” “The palaces of Benhadad” are the palaces of the Syrian kings generally, because three kings of Damascus bore this name.

The fulfilment of this threat cannot be proved historically, from want of information. Since Pharaoh-Necho had conquered Syria as far as the Euphrates, it is very possible that, after the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish, in the conquest of Syria by Nebuchadnezzar, Damascus was harshly treated. The prophecy is, however, so general in its statement, that we need not confine its fulfilment to the conquest by Nebuchadnezzar.

**Jeremiah 49:28–33.** “Concerning Kedar and the Kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon smote.” (The *Kethib* בְּבִיבְכֶרְאֵצוֹר is perhaps merely an error in transcription occasioned by the occurrence of the preceding הַצֹּר). *Kedar*, the Kedarenes, a Bedouin nation descended from Ishmael, dwelling in tents throughout the region between Arabia Petraea and Babylonia (see on Gen. 25:13 and Ezek. 27:21), is here, no doubt, a general name for all the nomadic tribes and shepherd nations of Arabia. Hazor elsewhere occurs only as the name of various cities in Palestine (Josh. 11:1; 15:23, 25; 19:23; Nah. 11:33), of which we need not think here, since it is Arabians who are spoken of. No locality or region of this name in Arabia is known. Jeremiah appears to have formed the name for

the purpose of designating those Arabians who dwelt in הַצְּרִים, “courts” or “villages,” and who thus differed from the Bedouins proper, or nomads and dwellers in tents; cf. Isa. 42:11 with Gen. 25:16. The settled Arabians are to this day called *Hadarijeh*, in contrast with *Wabarijeh*, who dwell in tents. “*Hadar*, הַצֵּר, is the settled dwelling-place, in contrast with *bedû*, the steppe, where the tents are pitched, sometimes here, sometimes there, and only for a time” (Delitzsch on Isa. 42:11). “The kingdoms of Hazor” are the regions of the settled tribes, ruled by their own princes or sheiks; cf. 25:24. In the prophecy, the general designation, “children of the east,” i.e., Orientals, alternates with Kedar: the former is the most common name given to the tribes living to the east of Palestine, in the wilderness: cf. Judg. 6:3, Job 1:3, Ezek. 25:4. Instead of this name, Josephus uses the designation “Arabians” (Ant. v. 6. 1); later, “Nabateans” or “Kedarenes” became common. Here also (v. 32) is used the special designation קָצוּצֵי פִּאָה [cut (at) the corner (of the hair)], which points to the custom, usual among several of these Bedouin tribes, of cropping the hair of the head and beard; see on 9:25 and 25:23.

**Jeremiah 49:28b.** “Thus saith Jahveh, Arise, go up to Kedar, and destroy the children of the east. V. 29. Their tents and their flocks shall they take: their curtains, and all their vessels, and their camels shall they carry away for themselves; and they shall cry over them, Fear is on every side. V. 30. Flee! wander far, dwell deep, ye inhabitants of Hazor, saith Jahveh; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath taken counsel against you, and hath devised a plan against them. V. 31. Arise! go up against a nation at ease, dwelling carelessly, saith Jahveh; it has no gates nor bars—they dwell alone. V. 32. And their camels shall be a prey, and the multitude of their herds a spoil; and I will scatter them to every wind who have cut the corner [of their beards], and from all sides will I bring their destruction, saith Jahveh. V. 33. And Hazor shall be an habitation of jackals, a desolation for ever. No man shall dwell there, nor shall a son of man sojourn in it.”

This prophecy consists of two brief strophes, which begin with a summons to the army of the enemy to wage war on the Arabians (v. 28b and v. 31), and then announce the execution of this order; the arrangement, moreover, is such that there is attached to the first strophe a summons to the Arabians to save themselves by flight (v. 30), while the other concludes with the threat that their territory shall be destroyed (v. 33).

**Jeremiah 49:28.** עָלָה is used with אָל instead of לָ, to signify hostile advance against a nation or city. שָׁדָד with Qametz-Hatuph (without Metheg) is imperative; cf. Ewald, § 227, *i*, with 251, *c*. The verbs יִקְחוּ and יִשָּׂאוּ in v. 29 are not jussives (Ewald, Umbreit, etc.), but imperfects, describing what takes place in consequence of the order given. Tents and flocks of sheep and goats, curtains and vessels, together with camels, form the property and wealth of the nomads. נִשָּׂא, to take away, carry off; לָהֶם, *sibi*. They call out over them, as if it were a watch-cry, “Horror around!” on this expression, see 6:25. This justifies the call addressed to them, “Flee,” etc. To נָסוּ is added נָדוּ for the purpose of intensifying, and this again is further strengthened by appending מֵאֵד: “Use every effort to flee.” הִעָמִיקוּ לְשִׁבְתָּ as in v. 8. A reason is given for the summons, in the statement that Nebuchadnezzar, as the instrument of Jahveh, has formed a plan against them; cf. v. 20 and 18:11. Instead of עָלֵיהֶם, many MSS and the ancient versions have עָלֵיכֶם, in conformity with the first member. In all probability, the original reading is “against them,” inasmuch as “the discourse, as in other instances, makes a transition, in the last portion, from direct address to a calmer style of speaking” (Ewald).

**Jeremiah 49:31.** Ver. 31 does not declare the plan of the king of Babylon; but the words, “Arise, go ye up,” etc., are once more the summons of the Lord, as is shown by the expression “saith Jahveh.” The enemy is to march against a peaceful nation, dwelling securely, that has neither doors nor bars, i.e.,

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does not live in cities surrounded by walls with gates and bars (cf. 1 Sam. 23:7, Deut. 3:5), whose territory, therefore, is easily conquered. They dwell alone, apart from others, without connection and intercourse with other nations, from which they could obtain help and support. שְׁלֵי, like זְעִיר, Job 36:2, Dan. 7:8, is a Chaldaizing form; elsewhere it is written שְׁלֵי, Job 21:23, or שְׁלֵי, Job 16:12. As to living securely, cf. Judg. 18:7, Ezek. 38:11; on living alone, 15:17. This last is elsewhere said only of Israel, Num. 23:9, Deut. 33:28. Their possessions will become the spoil of the enemy; God will scatter them to every wind (cf. Ezek. 5:12; 12:14), and bring destruction on them from every side (עַבְרָיו, cf. 1 Kings 5:4).

**Jeremiah 49:33.** The dwelling-places of the settled tribes (Hazor) shall become the habitation of jackals (cf. 9:10), an uninhabited desolation for ever. V. 33*b* is in part a repetition of v. 18.

With regard to the fulfilment of this prophecy, it follows from the latter part of the title that Nebuchadnezzar had smitten the Arabian tribes, i.e., defeated them, and subjected them to his sway. But we have no historical information as to the time when this took place. M. von Niebuhr (*Gesch. Assy. u. Bab.* S. 209) and Duncker (*Gesch. d. Alterth.* i. S. 427) suppose that Nebuchadnezzar, after he had returned home to Babylon from Hither Asia, having heard of the death of his father, after his victory at Carchemish, and after he had ascended the throne, "as it seems," first thought of extending his authority over the Arabians on the lower portion of the Euphrates, in North Arabia, and in the Syrian desert. This supposition may possibly be true, but cannot be raised to historic probability; moreover, it is connected, by the above-mentioned historians, with theories regarding the campaigns against Hither Asia which rest upon statements of Josephus that are very uncertain, and some of which can be proved to be incorrect. Such is the statement in Antt. x. 6. 1, that Nebuchadnezzar, after his victory at Carchemish, in pursuing the

Egyptians to the borders of their country, did not touch Judea. The only notice we have, apart from Scripture, of the conquest of Arabia by Nebuchadnezzar, is that furnished by Josephus (*contra Ap.* i. 19) from Berosus: κρατῆσαι δὲ φησί τὸν Βαβυλώνιον (i.e., Nebuchadnezzar) Αἰγύπτου Συρίασ Φοινίκης Ἀραβίας. But this notice is stated in such indefinite and general terms, that nothing more specific can be inferred from it regarding the time and circumstances of the conquest of Arabians.

**Jeremiah 49:34–39.** Concerning Elam.—By the title (on the form of which, cf. 46:1; 47:1, and 14:1), the utterance regarding Elam is placed "in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah;" hence it was published later than the prophecies in Jeremiah 48 and in 49:1–33, and not long before the prophecy regarding Babylon in Jeremiah 50. Elam, a Shemitic people in Elymais, the Persian province of Susiana (the modern *Husistân*), which, except in Gen. 14:1, only appears in history when it had no longer a Shemitic but an Aryan language (see on Gen. 10:22 and Dan. 8:2), is mentioned in Isa. 22:6 as serving in the Assyrian army, and in Isa. 21:6 as being, together with Madai (the Medes), the executors of judgment against Babylon. That Elam still belonged, in the time of Esarhaddon, to the kingdom of Assyria, follows from Ezra 4:9, where Elamites are mentioned among the colonists whom this Assyrian king transplanted into the depopulated kingdom of the ten tribes. But whether Elam, after the revolt of Media, also made itself independent of Assyria, or remained subject to this kingdom till it fell, we have no historical data to determine. The same must be said regarding the question whether, after the fall of Nineveh and the destruction of the Assyrian kingdom by the united armies of Nabopolassar from Babylon and Cyaxares from Media, Elam was incorporated with the Median or the Babylonian kingdom; for nothing more specific has been transmitted to us regarding the division of the conquered kingdom among the two victors. Judging from its geographical situation, we must probably come to the conclusion that Elam fell to the lot of the Medes.

Seeing that there is an utter want, in other respects, of facts regarding the earlier history of Elam, neither can a historical occasion be made out for this prophecy. The supposition of Ewald, "that the wild and warlike Elamites (Isa. 22:6) had shortly before taken part with the Chaldeans as their allies in the deposition of Jehoiachin and the first great exile of the people, and had therein shown themselves particularly cruel," has no support of any kind, either in the contents of the prophecy or in the time when it was composed. The prophecy itself contains not the slightest indication of any hostility on the part of the Elamites towards Judah; nor is anything proved regarding this by the fact that the chastisement is not said to proceed from Nebuchadnezzar, but directly from Jahveh, since, in the oracles concerning Philistia, Edom, and Damascus also, Nebuchadnezzar is not mentioned, but Jahveh is named as the one who destroys these peoples and burns up their cities; cf. 47:4; 49:10, 13ff., 27. Add to this, that the assumption of Elamites being in Nebuchadnezzar's army is devoid of historic probability, since Elam, as has already been stated, hardly belonged to the Chaldean kingdom.

**Jeremiah 49:35.** "Thus saith Jahveh of hosts: Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief part of their strength. V. 36. And I will bring upon Elam four winds from the four ends of the heaven, and I will scatter them towards all these winds; and there shall be no nation where the scattered ones of Elam shall not come. V. 37. And I will make Elam terrified before their enemies, and before those who seek their life; and I will bring on them evil, the heat of my wrath, saith Jahveh; and I will send after them the sword, until I consume them. V. 38. And I will place my throne in Elam, and will destroy thence king and princes, saith Jahveh. V. 39. But it shall be in the end of the days, that I will turn the captivity of Elam, saith Jahveh."

Elam's martial power is to be destroyed, and its population scattered to the four winds among all nations (v. 25f.). The Lord will make them terrified before their enemies, and let them be pursued by the sword till they are swept away

(v. 37). In the country itself He will hold a tribunal, and destroy king and priests out of it (v. 38). In v. 35, the bow, as the chief weapon of the Elamites (cf. Isa. 22:6), is mentioned, by synecdoche, instead of all offensive and defensive weapons, for all the means of resistance and attack employed by this warlike nation. This, indeed, is shown by the apposition, "the first-fruits (i.e., the chief part) of their strength" or valour. To break the bow in pieces is thus equivalent to rendering defenceless. The plural suffix in גְבוּרָתָם points to Elam as a nation—the Elamites. Hitzig, Graf, and older expositors make an assumption which is both unnecessary and incapable of proof, that קָשָׁת stands for גְבוּרָים, and means "the valiant, brave people of war," as in Isa. 21:17 and 1 Sam. 2:4; but neither in these passages can the alleged meaning be fully made out.

**Jeremiah 49:36.** Through the working of God's power, the Elamites shall be dispersed to all the four winds, i.e., to all parts of the earth. This exercise of power is represented under the figure of the four winds. The wind is the most appropriate among all earthly things for symbolizing the Spirit of God, or the energy of the divine operation; cf. Zech. 6:5, Dan. 7:2. The *Kethib* עולם in v. 36 has evidently been written by mistake for עילם. The meaning of the figure is this: Elam is to be attacked on all sides by enemies, and be scattered in every direction. This is evident from v. 37, where the figurative is changed for the literal, and the thought further extended. הִתְהַתְּתִי, Hiphil from הִתַּת, be broken to pieces, in Hiphil to dispirit through fear and terror; cf. 1:17. On the form of the text, which is shortened from הִתְהַתְּתִי through the shifting of the tone to the last syllable, cf. Ewald, § 234, e. רָעָה, "evil, misfortune," is marked by the apposition, "the heat of mine anger," as the emanation of God's judgment of wrath. On 37b, cf. 9:15. The Lord will sit in judgment on king and princes, and punish them with death. The throne is set for the Judge to sit in judgment;

see 43:10. Yet (v. 39), in the Messianic future, blessing shall come on Elam; cf. 49:6; 48:7. If we compare this prophecy with the remaining prophecies of Jeremiah regarding the heathen nations, we shall find that it contains no reference whatever to any execution by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon of the judgment with which the Elamites are threatened; but it announces the fall of Elam and the dispersion of its inhabitants by enemies in a way so general, that, as Hävernicks (on Daniel, p. 549) has remarked, it is an arbitrary addition for any one to make, if he thinks definitely of the Chaldeans [as the enemies of Elam], because, correctly viewed, the contents rather declare against a conquest by Nebuchadnezzar. "Jeremiah," says Hävernicks, "announces the utter extinction of the state as such, a general dispersion and annihilation of the people, a tribunal of punishment which the Lord Himself will hold over them,—features which are far too strongly marked, and far too grand, to let us think that Elam is merely to be rendered tributary and incorporated into a new state. If we connect with this the deliverance of Elam mentioned at the close of v. 39, viz., his conversion, then we will not hesitate to take the meaning of the oracle, in a more general way, as referring to the gradual fall of this heathen nation, for which, however, a future deliverance is in store, as is fully shown by the issue." This view is at least much more correct than the current tone, still maintained by Ewald, Hitzig, Graf, etc., according to which the prophecy refers to a conquest of Elam by Nebuchadnezzar. M. von Niebuhr (*Gesch. Assy. und Bab.* S. 210) attempts to show its probability from a notice in Strabo (xi. 524), and (on S. 212) from the intimation given in the book of Judith, Judith 1, of a war between Nebuchadnezzar and Media, which was successfully concluded in the twelfth year of his reign. But the statement in Strabo, that the Kossaites, a nation of robbers, once sent 13,000 archers to help the Elamites against the Susites and Babylonians, is far too indefinite for us to be able to apply it to a war which Nebuchadnezzar in company with Media

carried on against Elam; for the Susites are at least not Medes. And the notice in the book of Judith is self-evidently unhistorical; for it says that Nebuchadnezzar was king of the Assyrians and resided in the great city of Nineveh, and that he defeated Arphaxad the king of Media in the seventeenth year of his reign (Judith 1:1, 13). But Nebuchadnezzar neither resided in Nineveh, which had been destroyed shortly before; nor could he have made war on Arphaxad king of Media in the seventeenth year of his reign, because he had in that year begun to besiege Jerusalem with all his forces. But the additional considerations which Niebuhr brings forward in support of his hypothesis can as little stand the test. Neither Jeremiah 25:25, where the kings of Media and Elam are mentioned among those who are to drink the cup of wrath, nor Ezek. 32:24f., where Elam and the whole multitude of its people are brought forward as among those who were slain, and who sank into the nether parts of the earth, furnish proofs of the conquest and destruction of Elam by Nebuchadnezzar, or of a war between that king and Media. For the funeral-song in Ezekiel bears a thoroughly ideal character, and announces the fall of all the heathen powers, without any regard to Nebuchadnezzar. This holds, too, in a sense, of Jeremiah 25, where Nebuchadnezzar is certainly mentioned as the ruler into whose power all the nations are to be delivered for the space of seventy years, inasmuch as this announcement also launches out into the idea of a judgment of all nations; so that we are not entitled to assume that all the kingdoms of the earth, to whom the cup of wrath is presented, were to be conquered and brought under subjection by Nebuchadnezzar. Still less reason is there for inferring from Jeremiah 27:3, that Nebuchadnezzar was involved in a war with Media at a time when, as is there stated, at the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Phoenicia sent ambassadors to Jerusalem to recommend a coalition against the power of Babylon. Even if Nebuchadnezzar were then occupied in the eastern portion of his kingdom, yet there is



nothing at all to prove that he was involved in war with Media or Elam. History says nothing of a war waged by Nebuchadnezzar on Elam, nor does this prophecy furnish any support for such an assumption. Although it does not set before us a "gradual ruin" of Elam (Hävernick), but rather a catastrophe brought on by God, yet the description is given in terms so general, that nothing more specific can be inferred from it regarding the time and the circumstances of this catastrophe. In this prophecy, Elam is not considered in its historical relation to the people of Israel, but as the representative of the heathen world lying beyond, which has not hitherto come into any relation towards the people of Israel, but which nevertheless, along with it, falls under the judgment coming on all nations, in order that, through the judgment, it may be led to the knowledge of the true God, and share in His salvation.

## Jeremiah 50

### Chs. 50 and 51—Against Babylon

**Jeremiah 50–51.** The genuineness of this prophecy has been impugned by the newer criticism in different ways; for some quite refuse to allow it as Jeremiah's, while others consider it a mere interpolation. Hitzig (*Exeg. Handb.* 2 Aufl.) considers that this oracle, with its epilogue, 51:59–64, is not to be wholly rejected as spurious, as has been done by Von Cölln and Gramberg; he is so much the less inclined to reject it, because, although there is many an interpolated piece here and there (?), yet no independent oracle has hitherto been found in Jeremiah that is wholly interpolated. "In fact," he continues, "this oracle shows numerous traces of its genuineness, and reasons for maintaining it. The use of particular words (Jeremiah 50:6; 51:1, 5, 7, 14, 45, 55), and the circle of figures employed (Jeremiah 51:7, 8, 34, 37), as well as the style (Jeremiah 50:2, 3, 7, 8, 10), especially in turns like 51:2; the concluding formula, 51:57; the dialogue introduced without any forewarning, 51:51, — all unmistakably reveal Jeremiah; and this result is confirmed by chronological data."

These chronological data, which Hitzig then extracts from particular verses, we cannot certainly esteem convincing, since they have been obtained through a method of exegesis which denies the spirit and the essential nature of prophecy; but his remarks concerning Jeremiah's use of words and his circle of images are perfectly well-founded, and may be considerably corroborated if the matter were more minutely investigated. Notwithstanding all this, Ewald has again repeated, in the second edition of his work on the Prophets, the assertion first made by Eichhorn, that this prophecy is spurious. He does not, indeed, deny that "this long piece against Babylon has many words, turns of expression, and thoughts, nay, even the whole plan, in common with Jeremiah; and since Jeremiah is often accustomed in other places also to repeat himself, this might, at the first look, even create a prepossession favouring the opinion that it was composed by Jeremiah himself. But Jeremiah repeats himself in a more wholesale style, and is not unfaithful to himself in his repetitions: here, however, the Jeremianic element peers through only in single though very numerous passages, and the repeated portions are often completely transformed. What, therefore, appears here as Jeremianic is rather a studied repetition and imitation, which would require here to be all the stronger, when the piece was intended to pass as one of Jeremiah's writings." Ewald goes on to say that Babylon appears already as directly threatened by Cyrus; and the whole view taken of Babylon as a kingdom utterly degenerated, and unable any longer to escape the final destruction,—the prophetic impetuosity shown in rising up against the Chaldean oppression,—the public summons addressed to all the brethren living in Babylon, that they should flee from the city, now irrecoverably lost, and return to the holy land,—the distinct mention of the Medes and other northern nations as the mortal enemies of Babylon, and of the speedy and certain fall of this city;—all this, says Ewald, is foreign to Jeremiah, nay, even conflicting and impossible. For particular proof of this sweeping verdict,

Ewald refers to the name **יְרֵמְיָהוּ** (Jeremiah 51:41, as in 25:26) for Babylon, **לִבְקַמִּי** for **בְּשָׂדִים**, 51:1, and similar circumlocutions for Chaldean names, 51:21. He refers also to certain words which are quite new, and peculiar only to Ezekiel and later writers: **סָגַן**, **פָּחָה**, 51:23, 25, 27; **גְּלוּלִים**, 50:2; **בְּדִים** as a designation of false prophets, 50:36; also to **הִחָרִים**, to devote with a curse, 50:21, 26; 51:3, which in the rest of Jeremiah occurs only 25:9. Further, he refers to the headings found in 50:1 and 51:59, which are quite different from what Jeremiah himself would have written; and lastly, to the intimate connection subsisting between 50:27; 51:40, and Isa. 34:6ff., between 50:39 and Isa. 34:14, and between 51:60ff. and Isa. 34:16.

But all these considerations are much too weak to prove the spuriousness of the passage before us. The connection with Isa. 34 quite agrees with Jeremiah's characteristic tendency to lean on older prophecies, and reproduce the thoughts contained in them (we merely recall the case of the prophecy concerning Moab in Jeremiah 48, against whose genuineness even Ewald has nothing to say); and it can be brought to tell against the genuineness of this oracle only on the groundless supposition that Isa. 34 originated in exile times. The headings given in 50:1 and 51:59 contain nothing whatever that would be strange in Jeremiah: 51:59 is not a title at all, but the commencement of the account regarding the charge which Jeremiah gave to Seraiah when he was going to Babylon, with reference to his carrying with him the prophecy concerning Babylon; and the heading in 50:1 almost exactly agrees with that in 46:13 (see the exposition).

Of the alleged later words, **הִחָרִים** and **גְּלוּלִים** are derived from the Pentateuch, **בְּדִים** from Isa. 44:25. **סָגַן** and **פָּחָה** certainly were not known to the Hebrews till the invasions of Judah by the Assyrians and Chaldeans; but the latter of the two words we find as early as in the address of the Assyrians in Isa. 36:9, and the former in Isa. 41:25: thus, not a single one of the words

alleged to have been first used by Ezekiel is peculiar to him. Finally, of the circumlocutions used for the names "Babylon" and "Chaldeans," Ewald himself confesses that **יְרֵמְיָהוּ** in 25:26 may be Jeremiah's; and he has yet to give proof for the assertion that the names cited are merely circumlocutions in which a play is made on words that did not come into vogue till after Jeremiah's time. And as little has been even attempted in the way of establishing the opinion he has expressed regarding what is Jeremianic in the prophecy,—that it is a studied repetition and imitation,—or the assertion that Babylon is represented as being directly threatened by Cyrus. In the Old Testament Scriptures, Cyrus is represented as the king of Persia, which he was; but this prophecy says nothing of the Persians. Thus, the learned supplementary matter with which Ewald seeks to support his general assertions is by no means fitted to strengthen his position, but rather shows that the proper argument for rejecting this oracle as spurious is not to be found in the nature of this particular prophecy, but in the axiom openly expressed by Eichhorn, von Cölln, Gramberg, and other followers of the "vulgar rationalism," that Jeremiah could not have announced the destruction of Babylon by the Medes, because at his time the Medes had not yet appeared on the scene of history as a conquering nation; for, according to the principles of rationalism, the prophets could merely prophesy of things which lay within the political horizon. It has not escaped the acute observation of Hitzig, that the genuineness of this prophecy could not be shaken by such general assertions; hence he has adopted Movers' hypothesis of numerous interpolations, in order thereby to account for the use made of portions of Isaiah, which, on dogmatic grounds, are referred to the exile. But for this assumption also there are wanting proofs that can stand the test. Besides the general assertion that Jeremiah could not have repeated earlier prices word for word, the arguments which Movers and Hitzig bring forward from the context, or from a consideration of the contents, in the case of isolated verses, depend upon false

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renderings of words, conjectures of a merely subjective character, and misunderstandings of various kinds, which at once fall to the ground when the correct explanation is given.

The germ of this prophecy lies in the word of the Lord, Jeremiah 25:12, "When seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and make it everlasting desolations;" and its position with regard to the other prophecies of Jeremiah against the nations has already been given in outline in the statement of 25:26, "And the king of Sheshach (Babylon) shall drink after them." Just as these utterances (Jeremiah 25:12, 26) stand in full accord with the announcement that, in the immediate future, all nations shall be given into the power of the king of Babylon, and serve him seventy years; so, too, the prophecy against Babylon now lying before us not only does not stand in contradiction with the call addressed to Jeremiah, that he should proclaim to his contemporaries the judgment which Babylon is to execute on Judah and all nations, but it rather belongs to the complete solution of the problems connected with this call. The announcement of the fall of Babylon, and the release of Israel from Babylon, form the subject of the prophecy, which is more than a hundred verses in length. This double subject, the two parts of which are so closely connected, is portrayed in a series of images which, nearly throughout, are arranged pretty loosely together, so that it is impossible to summarize the rich and varied contents of these figures, and to sketch a correct plan of the course of thought and of the divisions of the oracle. Hence, too, the views of expositors with regard to the division of the whole into parts or strophes widely differ; we follow the view of Ewald, that the whole falls into three main parts (Jeremiah 50:2-28; 50:29 on to 51:26, and 51:27-58), every one of which begins with a spirited exhortation to engage in battle. These three main portions again fall into ten periods, of which the first three (Jeremiah 50:2-10, 11-20, and 21-28) form the first main division; the four middle ones form the second main portion

(Jeremiah 50:29-40, v. 41 to 51:4, vv. 5-14, and vv. 15-26); while the following three form the last (vv. 27-37, 38-49, and 50-58). We further agree with what Ewald says regarding the contents of the first two parts in general, viz., that in the first the prevailing view is the necessity for the deliverance of Israel, and that in the second, the antithesis between Babylon on the one hand, and Jahveh together with Israel, His spiritual instrument, on the other, is fully brought out; but we do not agree with his remark concerning the third part, that there the prevailing feature is the detailed description of the condition of Israel at that time, for this does not at all agree with the contents of 51:27-58. Rather, the address rises into a triumphant description of the fall of Babylon, in which the Lord will show Himself as the avenger of His people. On the whole, then, the prophecy is neither wanting in arrangement nor in that necessary progress in the development of thought which proves unity of conception and execution.

**Jeremiah 50:1.** The title, "*The word which Jahveh spake concerning Babylon, concerning the land of the Chaldeans, by Jeremiah the prophet,*" follows 46:13 in choosing אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יהוה instead of the usual אֲשֶׁר הִיָּה, and deviates from that passage only in substituting "by the hand of Jeremiah" for "to Jeremiah," as in 37:2. The preference of the expression "spake by the hand of" for "spake to," is connected with the fact that the following prophecy does not contain a message of the Lord which came to Jeremiah, that he might utter it before the people, but a message which he was to write down and send to Babylon, 51:60ff. The apposition to "Babylon," viz., "the land of the Chaldeans," serves the purpose of more exactly declaring that "Babylon" is to be understood not merely of the capital, but also of the kingdom; cf. vv. 8, 45, and 51, 54.

**Jeremiah 50:2-10.** *The fall of Babylon, and deliverance of Israel.—V. 2. "Tell it among the nations, and cause it to be heard, and lift up a standard; cause it to be heard, conceal it not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is ashamed, Merodach is*

*confounded; her images are ashamed, her idols are confounded. V. 3. For there hath come up against her a nation out of the north; it will make her land a desolation, and there shall be not an inhabitant in it: from man to beast, [all] have fled, are gone. V. 4. In those days, and at that time, saith Jahveh, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together; they shall go, weeping as they go, and shall seek Jahveh their God. V. 5. They shall ask for Zion, with their faces [turned to] the road hitherwards, [saying], Come, and let us join ourselves to Jahveh by an eternal covenant [which] shall not be forgotten. V. 6. My people have been a flock of lost ones; their shepherds have misled them [on] mountains which lead astray: from mountain to hill they went; they forgot their resting-place. V. 7. All who found them have devoured them; and their enemies said, We are not guilty, for they have sinned against Jahveh, the dwelling-place of justice, and the hope of their fathers, Jahveh. V. 8. Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and from the land of the Chaldeans; let them go forth, and let them be like he-goats before a flock. V. 9. For, behold, I will stir up, and bring up against Babylon, an assembly of great nations out of the land of the north: and they shall array themselves against her; on that side shall she be taken: his arrows [are] like [those of] a skilful hero [who] does not return empty. V. 10. And [the land of the] Chaldeans shall become a spoil; all those who spoil her shall be satisfied, saith Jahveh."*

In the spirit Jeremiah sees the fall of Babylon, together with its idols, as if it had actually taken place, and gives the command to proclaim among the nations this event, which brings deliverance for Israel and Judah. The joy over this is expressed in the accumulation of the words for the summons to tell the nations what has happened. On the expression, cf. 4:5, 6; 46:14. The lifting up of a standard, i.e., of a signal-rod, served for the more rapid spreading of news; cf. 4:6; 6:1, Isa. 13:2, etc. "Cause it to be heard" is intensified by the addition of "do not conceal it." The thing is to be proclaimed without reserve; cf. 38:14. "Babylon is taken," i.e., conquered, and her idols have become

ashamed, inasmuch as, from their inability to save their city, their powerlessness and nullity have come to light. Bel and Merodach are not different divinities, but merely different names for the chief deity of the Babylonians. Bel = Baal, the Jupiter of the Babylonians, was, as Bel-merodach, the tutelary god of Babylon. "The whole of the Babylonian dynasty," says Oppert, *Expid. en Misopot.* ii. p. 272, "places him [Merodach] at the head of the gods; and the inscription of Borsippa calls him the king of heaven and earth." עֲצָבִים, "images of idols," and גְּלוּלִים, properly "logs," an expression of contempt for idols (see on Lev. 26:30), are synonymous ideas for designating the nature and character of the Babylonian gods.

**Jeremiah 50:3.** Babylon is fallen by a people from the north, that has gone out against her, and makes her land a desolation. This nation is described in v. 9 as a collection, union of great nations, that are enumerated especially in 51:27, 28. On "it [the nation] shall make her land," etc., cf. 2:15; 48:9; on the expression "from man to beast," cf. 33:12; 9:9. נָדָו is from נָדָו, v. 8 and 49:30 = נָדָו, from נָדָו, 9:9.

**Jeremiah 50:4f.** Then, when Babylon shall have fallen, the children of Israel and Judah return out of their captivity, seeking Jahveh their God with tears of repentance, and marching to Zion, for the purpose of joining themselves to Him in an eternal covenant. The fall of Babylon has the deliverance of Israel as its direct result. The prophet views this in such a way, that all the steps in the fulfilment (the return from Babylon, the reunion of the tribes previously separated, their sincere return to the Lord, and the making of a new covenant that shall endure for ever), which will actually follow successively in long periods, are taken together into one view. By the statement made regarding the time, "In those days, and at that time," the fall of Babylon and the deliverance of Israel (which Jeremiah sees in the spirit as already begun) are marked out as belonging to the future. Israel and Judah come together, divided no more; cf. 3:18. "Going and weeping

they go," i.e., they always go further on, weeping; cf. 41:6; 2 Sam. 3:16; Ewald, § 280, *b*. Cf. also 3:21; 31:9. Seeking the Lord their God, they ask for Zion, i.e., they ask after the way thither; for in Zion Jahveh has His throne. "The way hither" (i.e., to Jerusalem) "is their face," *sc.* directed. "Hither" points to the place of the speaker, Jerusalem. באו ונלו are imperatives, and words with which those who are returning encourage one another to a close following of the Lord their God. נלו is imperative for ילו, like נקבצו in Isa. 43:9, Joel 4:11; cf. Ewald, § 226, *c*. It cannot be the imperfect, because the third person gives no sense; hence Graf would change the vowels, and read נלוה. But suspicion is raised against this by the very fact that, excepting Eccles. 8:15, לנה, in the sense of joining oneself to, depending on, occurs only in the Niphal. ברית עולם is a modal accusative: "in an eternal covenant [which] shall not be forgotten," i.e., which we will not forget, will not break again. In fact, this is the new covenant which the Lord, according to 31:31ff., will make in time to come with His people. But here this side of the matter is withdrawn from consideration; for the point treated of is merely what Israel, in his repentant frame and returning to God, vows he shall do.

Israel comes to this determination in consequence of the misery into which he has fallen because of his sins, vv. 5–7. Israel was like a flock of lost sheep which their shepherds had led astray. צאן אבדות, a flock of sheep that are going to ruin. The participle in the plural is joined with the collective noun *ad sensum*, to show what is imminent or is beginning to happen. The verb הנה points to the subject צאן; hence the *Qeri* הוי is unnecessary. The plural suffixes of the following clause refer to עמי as a collective. The shepherds led the people of God astray on הרים שובבים (a local accusative; on the *Kethib* שובבים, cf. 31:32; 49:4; it is not to be read (שובבים), mountains that render people faithless.

These mountains were so designated because they were the seats of that idolatry which had great power of attraction for a sinful people, so that the seduction or alienation of the people from their God is ascribed to them. שובב is used in the sense which the verb has in Isa. 47:10.

The *Qeri* שובבו gives the less appropriate idea, "the shepherds made the sheep stray." Hitzig's translation, "they drove them along the mountain," does to suit the verb שובב.

Moreover, the mountains in themselves do not form unsuitable pasture-ground for sheep, and הרים does not mean "a bare, desolate mountain-range." The objection to our view of שובבים, that there is no very evident proof that worship on high places is referred to (Graf), is pure fancy, and the reverse only is true. For the words which follow, "they (the sheep) went from mountain to hill, and forgot their resting-place," have no meaning whatever, unless they are understood of the idolatrous dealings of Israel. The resting-place of the sheep (רבצם), the place where the flocks lie down to rest), according to v. 7, is Jahveh, the hope of their fathers. Their having forgotten this resting-place is the result of their going from mountain to hill: these words undeniably point to the idolatry of the people on every high hill (Jeremiah 2:20; 3:2; 17:2, etc.).

**Jeremiah 50:7.** The consequence of this going astray on the part of Israel was, that every one who found them devoured them, and while doing so, cherished the thought that they were not incurring guilt, because Israel had been given up to their enemies on account of their apostasy from God; while the fact was, that every offence against Israel, as the holy people of the Lord, brought on guilt; cf. 2:3. This befell Israel because they have sinned against Jahveh. ניה צדק, "the habitation (or pasture-ground) of righteousness." So, in 31:23, Zion is called the mountain on which Jahveh sits enthroned in His sanctuary. As in other places Jahveh Himself is called a fortress, Ps. 18:3; a sun, shield, Ps. 84:12; a shade, Ps. 121:5; so here He is called

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the One in whom is contained that righteousness which is the source of Israel's salvation. As such, He was the hope of the fathers, the God upon whom the fathers put their trust; cf. 14:8; 17:13, Ps. 22:5f. The repetition of יהוה at the end is intended to give an emphatic conclusion to the sentence.

**Jeremiah 50:8-10.** To escape from this misery, Israel is to flee from Babylon; for the judgment of conquest and plunder by enemies is breaking over Babylon. The summons to flee out of Babylon is a reminiscence of Isa. 38:20. The *Kethib* יצאו may be vindicated, because the direct address pretty often makes a sudden transition into the language of the third person. They are to depart from the land of the Chaldeans. No more will then be necessary than to change וְהָיוּ into וְהָיוּ. The simile, "like he-goats before the flock," does not mean that Israel is to press forward that he may save himself before any one else (Graf), but that Israel is to go before all, as an example and leader in the flight (Nägelsbach).

**Jeremiah 50:9.** For the Lord arouses and leads against Babylon a crowd of nations, i.e., an army consisting of a multitude of nations. As מְעִיר reminds us of Isa. 13:17, so קָהַל גּוֹיִם גְּדֹלִים remind us of מְאַסְפִּים גּוֹיִם מִמְּלֻכֹת in Isa. 13:4. עָרַךְ לְ, to make preparations against. מָשָׁם is not used of time (Rosenmüller, Nägelsbach, etc.), for this application of the word has not been established from the actual occurrence of instances, but it has a local meaning, and refers to the "crowd of nations:" from that place where the nations that come out of the north have assembled before Babylon. In the last clause, the multitude of great nations is taken together, as if they formed one enemy: "his arrows are like [the arrows] of a wisely dealing (i.e., skilful) warrior." The words לֹא יָשׁוּב רִיקָם do not permit of being referred, on the strength of 2 Sam. 1:22, to one particular arrow which does not come back empty; for the verb שׁוּב, though perhaps suitable enough for the sword, which is drawn back when it has executed the

blow, is inappropriate for the arrow, which does not return. The subject to יָשׁוּב is גִּבּוֹר, the hero, who does not turn or return without having accomplished his object; cf. Isa. 55:11. In v. 10, כְּשָׂדִים is the name of the country, "Chaldeans;" hence it is construed as a feminine. The plunderers of Chaldea will be able to satisfy themselves with the rich booty of that country.

**Jeremiah 50:11-20.** *The devastation of Babylon and glory of Israel.*—V. 11. "Thou ye rejoice, though ye exult, O ye plunderers of mine inheritance, though ye leap proudly like a heifer threshing, and neigh like strong horses, V. 12. Your mother will be very much ashamed; she who bare you will blush: behold, the last of the nations [will be] a wilderness, a desert, and a steppe. V. 13. Because of the indignation of Jahveh it shall not be inhabited, and it shall become a complete desolation. Every one passing by Babylon will be astonished, and hiss because of all her plagues. V. 14. Make preparations against Babylon round about, all ye that bend the bow; shoot at her, do not spare an arrow, for she hath sinned against Jahveh. V. 15. Shout against her round about; she hath given herself up: her battlements are fallen, her walls are pulled down; for it is Jahveh's vengeance: revenge yourselves on her; as she hath done, do ye to her. V. 16. Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handles the sickle in the time of harvest. From before the oppressing sword each one will turn to his own nation, and each one will flee to his own land. V. 17. Israel is a scattered sheep [which] lions have driven away: the first [who] devoured him [was] the king of Babylon; and this, the last, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, hath broken his bones. V. 18. Therefore thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon ad his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. V. 19. And I will bring back Israel to his pasture-ground, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and on the mountains of Ephraim his soul shall be satisfied. V. 20. In those days, and at that time, saith Jahveh, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, but it shall not be; and the sins of Judah, but

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they shall not be found: for I will pardon those whom I will leave remaining.”

**Jeremiah 50:11.** Ver. 11 does not permit of being so closely connected with what precedes as to separate it from v. 12 (De Wette, Nägelsbach). Not only is the translation, “for thou didst rejoice,” etc., difficult to connect with the imperfects of all the verbs in the verse, but the direct address also does not suit v. 10, and rather demands connection with v. 12, where it is continued. וַי, of course, introduces the reason, yet not in such a way that v. 11 states the cause why Chaldea shall become a spoil, but rather so that vv. 11 and 12 together give the reason for the threatening uttered. The different clauses of v. 11 are the protases, to which v. 12 brings the apodosis. “You may go on making merry over the defeat of Israel, but shame will follow for this.” The change of the singular forms of the verbs into plurals (*Qeri*) has been caused by the plural וְשָׂרִי, but is unnecessary, because Babylon is regarded as a collective, and its people are gathered into the unity of a person; see on 13:20. “Spoilers of mine inheritance,” i.e., of the people and land of the Lord; cf. 12:7, Isa. 17:14. On פָּוֶשׂ, to gallop (of a horse, Hab. 1:8), hop, spring (of a calf, Mal. 3:20), see on Hab. 1:8. אֲשַׁדְּ is rendered by the LXX ἐν βοτάνῃ, by the Vulgate *super herbam*; after these, Ewald also takes the meaning of springing like a calf through the grass, since he explains אֲשַׁדְּ as exhibiting the correct punctuation, and remarks that פָּוֶשׂ, like הִלָּךְ, can stand with an object directly after it; see § 282, a. Most modern expositors, on the other hand, take אֲשַׁדְּ as the fem. participle from דָּוַשׁ, written with א instead of ה: “like a threshing heifer.” On this, A Schultens, in his *Animadv. philol.*, on this passage, remarks: *Comparatio petita est a vitula, quae in area media inter frumenta, ore ex lege non ligato* (Deut. 25:10), *prae pabuli abundantia gestit ex exsultat*. This explanation also gives a suitable meaning, without compelling us to do violence to the language and to alter the text. As to אֲבִירִים,

stallions, strong horses (Luther), see on 8:16 and 47:3. “Your mother” is the whole body of the people, the nation considered as a unity (cf. Isa. 50:1, Hos. 2:4; 4:5), the individual members of which are called her sons; cf. 5:7, etc. In v. 12b, the disgrace that is to fall on Babylon is more distinctly specified. The thought is gathered up into a sententious saying, in imitation of the sayings of Balaam. “The last of the nations” is the antithesis of “the first of the nations,” as Balaam calls Amalek, Num. 24:20, because they were the first heathen nation that began to fight against the people of Israel. In like manner, Jeremiah calls Babylon the last of the heathen nations. As the end of Amalek is ruin (Num. 24:20), so the end of the last heathen nation that comes forward against Israel will be a wilderness, desert, steppe. The predicates (cf. 2:6) refer to the country and kingdom of Babylon. But if the end of the kingdom is a desert, then the people must have perished. The devastation of Babylon is further portrayed in v. 13, together with a statement of the cause: “Because of the anger of Jahveh it shall not be inhabited;” cf. Isa. 13:20. The words from וְהָיְתָה onwards are imitated from 49:17 and 19:8.

**Jeremiah 50:14.** In order to execute this judgment on Babylon, the nations are commanded to conquer and destroy the city. The archers are to place themselves round about Babylon, and shoot at the city unsparingly. עָרְךָ does not mean to prepare oneself, but to prepare מִלְחָמָה, the battle, combat. The archers are mentioned by synecdoche, because the point in question is the siege and bombardment of Babylon; cf. Isa. 13:18, where the Medes are mentioned as archers. יָדָה is used only here, in Kal, of the throwing, i.e., the shooting of arrows, instead of יָרָה, which is elsewhere the usual word for this; and, indeed, some codices have the latter word in this passage. “Spare not the arrow,” i.e., do not spare an arrow; cf. 51:3. הִרְיֵעַ, to cry aloud; here, to raise a battle-cry; cf. Josh. 6:16. The effect and result of the cry is, “she hath given

her hand," i.e., given herself up. נָתַן usually signifies the giving of the hand as a pledge of faithfulness (2 Kings 10:15; Ezek. 17:18; Ezra 10:19), from which is derived the meaning of giving up, delivering up oneself; cf. 2 Chron. 30:8. Cf. Cornelius Nepos, *Hamilc.* c. 1, *donec victi manum dedissent*. The אֲשׁוּיָהּ (the *Kethib* is either to be read אֲשׁוּיָהּ, as if from a noun אֲשׁוּיָהּ, or to be viewed as an error in transcription for אֲשׁוּיָהּ, which is the *Qeri*) signifies "supports," and comes from אָשָׂא, Arab. *asâ*, to support, help; then the supports of a building, its foundations; cf. אֲשָׁא, Ezra 4:12. Here the word signifies the supports of the city, i.e., the fortifications of Babylon, ἐπάλαξις, *propugnacula, pinnae*, the battlements of the city wall, not the foundations of the walls, for which נִפְל is unsuitable. "It (sc., the destruction of Babylon) is the vengeance of Jahveh." "The vengeance of Jahveh" is an expression derived from Num. 31:3. "Avenge yourselves on her," i.e., take retribution for what Babylon has done to other nations, especially to the people of God; cf. 27f. and 51:11. The words, "cut off out of Babylon the sower and the reaper," are not to be restricted to the fields, which, according to the testimonies of Diod. Sic. ii. 7, Pliny xviii. 17, and Curtius v. 1, lay within the wall round Babylon, but "Babylon" is the province together with its capital; and the objection of Nägelsbach, that the prophet, in the whole context, is describing the siege of the city of Babylon, is invalid, because v. 12b plainly shows that not merely the city, but the province of Babylon, is to become a wilderness, desert, and steppe. The further threat, also, "every one flees to his own people from before the oppressing sword" (cf. 25:38; 46:16), applies not merely to the strangers residing in Babylon, but generally to those in Babylonia. Hitzig would arbitrarily refer these words merely to the husbandmen and field-workers. The fundamental passage, Isa. 13:14, which Jeremiah had before his mind and repeats

*verbatim*, tells decidedly against this view; cf. also Jeremiah 51:9, 44.

**Jeremiah 50:17–19.** This judgment comes on Babylon because of her oppression and scattering of the people of Israel, whom the Lord will now feed in peace again on their native soil. Israel is like אֵשׂה פְּזוּרָה, a sheep which, having been scared away out of its stall or fold, is hunted into the wide world; cf. פָּזְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם, Joel 4:2. Although פָּזַר, "to scatter," implies the conception of a flock, yet we cannot take אֵשׂה as a collective (Graf), since it is *nomen unitatis*. The point in the comparison lies on the fact that Israel has been hunted, like a solitary sheep, up and down among the beasts of the earth; and פָּזַר is more exactly specified by the following clause, "lions have chased after it." The object of הַדִּיחוּ is easily derived from the context, so that we do not need to follow Hitzig in changing הַדִּיחוּ הָרֵאשׁוֹן into הַדִּיחוּהָ רֵאשׁוֹן. These kings are, the king of Assyria first, and the king of Babylon last. The former has dispersed the ten tribes among the heathen; the latter, by destroying the kingdom of Judah, and carrying away its inhabitants, has shattered the theocracy. The verbs apply to the figure of the lion, and the suffixes refer to Israel. אָכַל is used of the devouring of the flesh; נָצַם is a *denominative* from נָצַם, and means the same as גָּרַם, Num. 24:8, to break bones in pieces, not merely gnaw them. So long as the flesh only is eaten, the skeleton of bones remains; if these also be broken, the animal is quite destroyed.

**Jeremiah 50:18.** The Assyrian has already received his punishment for that—the Assyrian kingdom has been destroyed; Babylon will meet with the same punishment, and then (v. 19) Israel will be led back to his pasture-ground. נֶגְוָה, pasture-ground, grass-plot, where sheep feed, is the land of Israel. Israel, led back thither, will feed on Carmel and Bashan, the most fertile tracts of the country, and the mountains of Ephraim and Gilead, which also furnish fodder in abundance for sheep. As to



Gilead, see Num. 32:1, Mic. 7:14; and in regard to the mountains of Ephraim, Ex. 34:13f., where the feeding on the mountains of Israel and in the valleys is depicted as fat pasture. The mountains of Israel here signify the northern portion of the land generally, including the large and fertile plain of Jezreel, and the different valleys between the several ranges of mountains, which here and there show traces of luxuriant vegetation even yet; cf. Robinson's *Physical Geography*, p. 120. Then also the guilt of the sins of Israel and Judah shall be blotted out, because the Lord grants pardon to the remnant of His people. This promise points to the time of the New Covenant; cf. 31:34 and 33:8. The deliverance of Israel from Babylon coincides with the view given of the regeneration of the people by the Messiah, just as we find throughout the second portion of Isaiah. On the construction יִשׁ' בְּקֶשׁ אֶת־עֹן, cf. 35:14, and Gesenius, § 143, 1. On the form תִּמְצְאֵינָהּ, with י after the manner of verbs לִיָּהּ, cf. Ewald, § 198, b.

**Jeremiah 50:21–28.** The pride and power of Babylon are broken, as a punishment for the sacrilege he committed at the temple of the Lord. V. 21. *“Against the land,—Double-rebellion,—go up against it, and against the inhabitants of visitation; lay waste and devote to destruction after them, saith Jahveh, and do according to all that I have commanded thee.* V. 22. *A sound of war [is] in the land, and great destruction.* V. 23. *How the hammer of the whole earth is cut and broken! how Babylon has become a desolation among the nations!* V. 24. *I laid snares for thee, yea, and thou hast been taken, O Babylon; but thou didst not know: thou wast found, and also seized, because thou didst strive against Jahveh.* V. 25. *Jahveh hath opened His treasure-house, and brought out the instruments of His wrath; for the Lord, Jahveh of hosts, hath a work in the land of the Chaldeans.* V. 26. *Come against her, [all of you], from the last [to the first]; open her storehouses: case her up in heaps, like ruins, and devote her to destruction; let there be no remnant left to her.* V. 27. *Destroy all her oxen; let them go down to the slaughter:*

*woe to them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation.* V. 28. *[There is] a sound of those who flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of Jahveh our God, the vengeance of His temple.”*

The punishment of Babylon will be fearful, corresponding to its crimes. The crimes of Babylon and its punishment Jeremiah has comprised, in v. 21, in two names specially formed for the occasion. The enemy to whom God has entrusted the execution of the punishment is to march against the land מְרִיתִים. This word, which is formed by the prophet in a manner analogous to *Mizraim*, and perhaps also *Aram Naharaim*, means “double rebellion,” or “double obstinacy.” It comes from the root מָרָה, “to be rebellious” against Jahveh and His commandments, whence also מָרִי, “rebellion;” Num. 17:25, Ezek. 2:5, 7, etc. Other interpretations of the word are untenable: such is that of Fürst, who follows the Vulgate *“terram dominantium,”* and, comparing the Aramaic מְרָא, “Lord,” renders it by “dominion” (*Herrschaft*). Utterly indefensible, too, is the translation of Hitzig, “the world of men” (*Menschenwelt*), which he derives from the Sanskrit *martjam*, “world,” on the basis of the false assumption that the language of the Chaldeans was Indo-Germanic. The only doubtful points are in what respect Babylon showed double obstinacy, and what Jeremiah had in his mind at the time. The view of Hitzig, Maurer, Graf, etc., is certainly incorrect,—that the prophet was thinking of the double punishment of Israel by the Assyrians and by the Babylonians (vv. 17 and 33); for the name is evidently given to the country which is now about to be punished, and hence to the power of Babylon. Nägelsbach takes a twofold view: (1) he thinks of the defiance shown by Babylon towards both man and God; (2) he thinks of the double obstinacy it exhibited in early times by building the tower, and founding the first worldly kingdom (Gen. 10:8f.), and in later times by its conduct towards the theocracy: and he is inclined rather to the latter than to the

former view, because the offences committed by Babylon in early and in later times were, in their points of origin and aim, too much one and the same for any one to be able to represent them as falling under two divisions. This is certainly correct; but against the first view there is also the important consideration that *מָרָה* is pretty constantly used only of opposition to God and the word of God. If any one, notwithstanding this, is inclined to refer the name also to offences against men, he could yet hardly agree with Nägelsbach in thinking of the insurrections of Babylon against the kings of Assyria, their masters; for these revolts had no meaning in reference to the position of Babylon towards God, but rather showed the haughty spirit in which Babylon trod on all the nations. The opinion of Dahler has most in its favour: "Doubly rebellious, i.e., more rebellious than others, through its idolatry and its pride, which was exalted it against God, vv. 24, 29." Rosenmüller, De Wette, etc., have decided in favour of this view. Although the dual originally expresses the idea of pairing, yet the Hebrew associates with *double, twofold*, the idea of increase, gradation; cf. Isa. 40:2; 66:7. The object is prefixed for the sake of emphasis; and in order to render it still more prominent, it is resumed after the verb in the expression "against it." *פָּקֹד*, an infinitive in form, "to visit with punishment, avenge, punish," is also used as a significant name of Babylon: the land that visits with punishment is to be punished. Many expositors take *חֶרֶב* as a denominative from *חָרַב*, "sword," in the sense of strangling, murdering; so also in v. 27. But this assumption is far from correct; nor is there any need for making it, because the meaning of destroying is easily obtained from that of being laid waste, or destroying oneself by transferring the word from things to men. *הִחָרִים*, "to proscribe, put under the ban," and in effect "to exterminate;" see on 25:9. On "after them," cf. 49:37; 48:2, 9, 15, etc.

**Jeremiah 50:22.** After the command there immediately follows its execution. A sound of

war is heard in the land. The words are given as an exclamation, without a verb. As to *שָׁבַר גְּדוֹל*, which is an expression much used by Jeremiah, see on 4:6.

**Jeremiah 50:23.** Babylon, "the hammer of the whole earth," i.e., with which Jahveh has beaten to pieces the nations and kingdoms of the earth (Jeremiah 51:20), is itself now being beaten to pieces and destroyed. On the subject, cf. Isa. 14:5, 6. Babylon will become the astonishment of the nations, 51:41. "How!" is an exclamation of surprise, as in Zeph. 2:15, —a passage which probably hovered before the mind of the prophet.

**Jeremiah 50:24.** This annihilation will come unexpectedly. As the bird by the snare of the fowler, so shall Babylon be laid hold of by Jahveh, because it has striven against Him. The Lord lays the snare for it, that it may be caught. *שָׁקַד*, "to lay snares;" cf. Ps. 141:9, where *פָּח* is also found. *וְלֹא יָדַעְתָּ*, "and thou didst not perceive," i.e., didst not mark it: this is a paraphrase of the idea "unexpectedly," suddenly; cf. 51:8, Isa. 47:11. This has been literally fulfilled on Babylon. According to Herodotus (i. 191), Cyrus took Babylon by diverting the Euphrates into a trench he had dug. By this stratagem the Persians threw themselves so unexpectedly on the Babylonians (*ἔξ ἀπροσδοκίτου σφι παρέστησαν οἱ Πέρσαι*), that when the outmost portions of the city had been already seized, those who lived in the middle had not observed at all that they were captured (*τοὺς τὸ μέσον οἰκέοντας οὐ μανθάνειν ἔαλωκότας*). Similarly, when the city was taken under Darius Hystaspes, they were surprised that Zopyrus traitorously opened the gates to the besiegers (Herodotus, iii. 158). Babylon has contended against Jahveh, because, in its pride, it refused to let the people of God depart; cf. vv. 29 and 33. In v. 25 the sudden devastation of Babylon is accounted for. Jahveh opens His armoury, and brings out the instruments of His wrath, in order to execute His work on the land of the Chaldeans. *אֹצֶר*, "magazine, treasure-chamber," is here applied to an armoury. The

“instruments of His wrath” are, in Isa. 13:5, the nations which execute the judgment of god,— here, the instruments of war and weapons with which Jahveh Himself marches into battle against Babylon. On מְלֹאכָה וגו', cf. 48:10. The business which the Lord has there regards the chastisement of Babylon for its insolence. For the transaction of this business He summons His servants, v. 26f. בְּאוֹ-לָהּ, as in 46:22; 49:9, is substantially the same as בְּאוֹ עָלֶיהָ, 49:14; 48:8. מִקֵּץ, “from the end,” or from the last hitherwards, the same as מִקְצָה, 51:31, i.e., all together on to the last; cf. Gen. 19:4; 47:2, etc. “Open her (Babylon’s) barns” or granaries; “heap it up (viz., what was in the granaries) like heaps” of grain or sheaves, “and devote it to destruction,” i.e., consume it with fire, because things on which the curse was imposed must be burnt; cf. Josh. 11:12 and 13. All the property found in Babylon is to be collected in heaps, and then burnt with the city. The use of the image is occasioned by the granaries. מִמְּאֲבָסֶיהָ is ἄπ. λεγ., from אָבַס, to give fodder to cattle,—properly a stall for fodder, then a barn, granary. עֲרֻמָּה is a heap of grain (Cant. 7:3), sheaves (Ruth 3:7), also of rubbish (Neh. 3:34). As v. 26 declares what is to be done with goods and chattels, so does v. 27 state what is to be done with the population. The figure employed in v. 26 is followed by the representation of the people as oxen destined for slaughter; in this Jeremiah had in his mind the prophecy found in Isa. 34, in which the judgment to come on Edom is depicted as a slaughter of lambs, rams, and he-goats: the people of Edom are thus compared to cattle that may be offered in sacrifice. This figure also forms the basis of the expression יָרַד לְטֹבָה in 48:15, where this style of speaking is used with regard to the youths or the young troops; cf. also 51:40. The פְּרִים, accordingly, designate not merely the chief among the people, or the men of rank, but represent the whole human population. In the last clause (“for their day is come,” etc.), there is a

transition in the discourse from the figure to the real subject itself. The suffix in עָלֶיהָ does not refer to the oxen, but to the men over whose murder there is an exclamation of woe. In like manner, “their day” means the day of judgment for men, viz., the time of their visitation with punishment; see on 46:21. Fugitives and escaped ones will bring to Zion, and proclaim the news of the execution of this fearful judgment, that the Lord has fulfilled the vengeance of His temple, i.e., avenged on Babylon the burning of His temple by the Chaldeans. The fugitives and escaped ones are the Israelites, who were summoned to flee from Babylon, v. 3. On “the vengeance of Jahveh,” cf. v. 15 and 51:11.

**Jeremiah 50:29–40.** The pride of Babylon is humbled through the utter destruction of the people and the land.—V. 29. *“Summon archers against Jerusalem, all those who bend the bow; encamp against her round about. Let there be no escape for her; recompense to her according to her work; according to that which she hath done, do ye to her: for she hath presumed against Jahveh, against the Holy One of Israel.* V. 30. *Therefore shall her young men fall in her streets, and all her men of war shall fail in that day, saith Jahveh.* V. 31. *Behold, I am against thee, O Pride! said the Lord, Jahveh of hosts; for thy day hath come, the time [when] I visit thee.* V. 32. *And Pride shall stumble and fall, and he shall have none to lift him up; and I will kindle fire in his cities, and it shall devour all that is round about him.* V. 33. *Thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the Children of Israel and the children of Judah are oppressed together, and all who led them captive kept hold of them; they refused to let them go.* V. 34. *Their Redeemer is strong; Jahveh of hosts is His name: He shall surely plead their cause, that He may give rest to the earth, and make the inhabitants of Babylon tremble.* V. 35. *A sword [is] against the Chaldeans, saith Jahveh, and against the inhabitants of Babylon, and against her princes, and against her wise men.* V. 36. *A sword [is] against the liars, and they shall become fools; a sword [is] against her heroes, and they shall be confounded.* V. 37. *A sword is*

against his horses, and against his chariots, and against all the auxiliaries which [are] in the midst of her, and they shall become women; a sword is against her treasures, and they shall be plundered. V. 38. A drought is against her waters, and they shall become dry; for it is a land of graven images, and they are mad upon idols. V. 39. Therefore shall wild beasts dwell [there] with jackals, and ostriches shall dwell in it; and it shall no more be inhabited for ever, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. V. 40. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their inhabitants, saith Jahveh, no man shall dwell there, nor shall a son of man sojourn in it." Further description of the execution of God's wrath. Archers shall come and besiege Babylon round about, so that no one shall escape. The summons, "Call archers hither," is a dramatic turn in the thought that the siege is quickly to ensue. הַשְּׂמִיעַ is used here as in 51:27, to summon, call by making proclamation, as in 1 Kings 15:22. רַבִּים does not signify "many," as the ancient versions give it; this agrees neither with the apposition which follows, "all that bend the bow," nor with v. 26, where all, to the last, are summoned against Babylon. Raschi, followed by all the moderns, more correctly renders it "archers," and derives it from רָבָה = רַבָּב, Gen. 49:23, cf. with 21:10, like רַב, Job 16:13. The apposition, "all those who bend the bow," gives additional force. הִקָּה with accus. means to besiege; cf. Ps. 53:6. "Let there be no escape" is equivalent to saying, "that none may escape from Babylon." The *Qeri* לָהּ after יְהוָה is unnecessary, and merely taken from v. 26. On the expression "render to her," etc., cf. 25:14; and on "according to all," etc., f. v. 15. "For she hath acted presumptuously against Jahveh," by burning His temple, and keeping His people captive: in this way has Babylon offended "against the Holy One of Israel." This epithet of God is taken from Isaiah, cf. 51:5. This presumption must be punished.

**Jeremiah 50:30.** V. 30 is a repetition of 49:26.—V. 31. The Lord will now visit the presumption of Babylon. The day of

punishment has arrived. On "behold, I am against thee," cf. 21:13. "O arrogance, pride!" is directly addressed to Babylon: in v. 32 also there is a like designation of Babylon as the personification of pride. On the words "for thy day is come," cf. v. 27. "And I will kindle a fire," etc., stands as in 21:14, where, however, "in its forest" is found instead of "in his cities." The former, indeed, is the reading rendered by the LXX in this passage; but they have acted quite arbitrarily in this, since Jeremiah, for the most part, varies individual words when he repeats a thought. "In his cities" does not suit very well, inasmuch as the other cities of the country belonged to Babylon, the μητρόπολις as hers, and in 51:43 they are spoken of as hers; cf. 19:15; 34:1; 49:13, etc.

**Jeremiah 50:33–40.** Further description of the guilt and punishment of Babylon. The presumptuous pride manifests itself in the fact that Israel and Judah still languish in exile. All those who have been seized and carried away they have kept hold of. שְׁבִיָּהֶם is used as in Isa. 14:2. They refuse to let them go, as Pharaoh once did, Ex. 7:14, 27; 9:2; cf. Isa. 14:17. Jahveh, the deliverer of Israel, cannot endure this. As the strong One, the God of hosts, He will lead them in the fight; as their advocate, He will obtain their dues for them; cf. 25:31, Isa. 49:25. Dahler, Ewald, and Umbreit follow the Vulgate and the Chaldee in taking לְמַעַן הִרְגִיעַ וְגו' as synonymous with הִרְגִיעוּ, in the sense of shaking, rousing, a meaning which רָגַע has in the Kal, but which cannot be made out for the Hiphil. In the Hiphil it means to give rest, to come to rest, Deut. 28:65, Isa. 34:14; 61:4, Jeremiah 31:2; and in the Niphal, to rest, keep quiet, 47:6. This is the meaning given by the Syriac, Raschi, Kimchi, Rosenmüller, Maurer, Hitzig, etc., and supported by a comparison with Isa. 14:7, 3, 16. Babylon has hitherto kept the earth in unrest and anxiety (Isa. 14:16); now it is to get rest (Isa. 14:3, 7), and trembling or quaking for fear is to come on Babylon. The two verbs, which have similar sounds, express a contrast. On the form of the infinitive הִרְגִיעַ, cf. Ewald, § 238, *d*. In

order to conduct the case of Israel as against Babylon, the Lord (vv. 35–38) calls for the sword against the Chaldeans, the inhabitants of Babylon, on their princes, wise men, heroes, and the whole army, the treasures and the waters. There is no verb following **הָרַב**, but only the object with **עַל**, the words being put in the form of an exclamation, on account of the passion pervading them. The sword is to come and show its power on the Chaldeans, i.e., the population of the rural districts, on the inhabitants of the capital, and further, on the princes and wise men (magicians). A special class of the last named are the **בְּדִים**, properly “babblers,” those who talk at random, here “soothsayers” and lying prophets, the astrologers of Babylon; see Delitzsch on Isa. 44:25 [Clark’s translation, For. Theol. Lib.]. **וְנֹאֲלֵי**, “And they shall be as fools;” see on 5:4. Further, on the warriors, the horses, and war-chariots, the main strength of the Asiatic conquerors, cf. 46:9, Isa. 43:17, Ps. 20:8. **כָּל־הַתַּעֲרָב**, “all the mixed multitude” in the midst of Babylon: these are here the mercenaries and allies (as to this word, see on 25:20). These shall become women, i.e., weak and incapable of resistance; see Nah. 3:13. The last objects of vengeance are the treasures and the waters of Babylon. In v. 38 the Masoretes have pointed **הָרַב**, because **הָרַב**, “sword,” seemed to be inapplicable to the waters. But indeed neither does the sword, in the proper sense of the word, well apply to treasures; it rather stands, by synecdoche, for war. In this improper meaning it might also be used with reference to the waters, in so far as the canals and watercourses, on which the fertility of Babylonia depended, were destroyed by war. Hence many expositors would read **הָרַב** here also, and attribute the employment of this word to the rhetorical power connected with enumeration. Others are of opinion that **הָרַב** may also mean aridity, drought, in Deut. 28:22; but the assumption is erroneous, and cannot be confirmed by that passage. Neither can it be

denied, that to confine the reference of the expression “her waters” to the canals and artificial watercourses of Babylonia seems unnatural. All these received their water from the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, the volume of water in which remained uninfluenced by war. We therefore follow Hitzig in holding that **הָרַב** is the correct punctuation; in the transition from **הָרַב** into **הָרַב**, with its similar sound, we neither perceive any injury done to rhetorical force, derived from an enumeration of objects, nor any need for referring the following clause, which assigns the reason merely to such rhetorical considerations as Graf does. In the drying up of the water there is no allusion to the diversion of the Euphrates, by which Cyrus opened up for himself an entrance into the city (Herodotus, i. 190); the drying up is merely appointed by God, as a consequence of continued drought, for the purpose of destroying the land. Hitzig’s opinion neither suits the context, nor can be justified otherwise; he holds that water is the emblem of the sea on nations, the surging multitude of people in the streets of the city, and he refers for proof to 51:36 and Isa. 21:1 (!). The clauses in v. 38*b*, which assign the reason, refer to the whole threatening, vv. 35–38*a*. Babylon is to be destroyed, with its inhabitants and all its means of help, because it is a land of idols (cf. 51:52 and Isa. 21:9), and its inhabitants suffer themselves to be befooled by false gods. **הִתְהוֹלֵל** means to act or behave like a madman, rave, 25:16; here, to let oneself be deprived of reason, not (as Graf thinks) to fall into a sacred frenzy. **אֵימִים**, terrors, Ps. 88:16; here, objects of fear and horror, i.e., idols.

**Jeremiah 50:39.** Therefore shall Babylon become an eternal waste, where none but beasts of the desert find shelter, where no human being dwells. This threat is formed out of reminiscences from Isa. 13:20–22 and 34:14. For **צִיִּים** and **אֵיִים**, see on Isa. 34:14; for **בְּנוֹת יַעֲקֹב**, see on Isa. 13:21. The second half of the verse agrees word for word with Isa. 13:20*a*.

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**Jeremiah 50:40.** V. 40 is a repetition of 49:18, and in its first half is founded on Isa. 13:19.

**Jeremiah 50:41–51:4.** *The agents who execute the judgment.*—V. 41. “Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the most distant sides of the earth. V. 42. Bow and javelin shall they seize: they are cruel, and will not pity; their voice shall sound like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, [each one] arrayed like a man for the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon. V. 43. The king of Babylon hath heard the report concerning them, and his hands have fallen down: distress hath seized him, writing pain, like [that of] the woman in childbirth. V. 44. Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the glory of Jordan to a habitation of rock; but in a moment will I make them run away from her, and will set over her him who is chosen: for who is like me, and who will appoint me a time [to plead my defence]? and what shepherd [is there] that will stand before me? V. 45. Therefore hear ye the counsel of Jahveh which He hath taken against Babylon, and His purposes which He hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Assuredly they shall drag them away, the smallest of the flock; assuredly [their] habitation shall be astonished at them. V. 46. At the cry, ‘Babylon is taken,’ the earth is shaken, and a cry [for help] is heard among the nations.

51:1. “Thus saith Jahveh: Behold, I will stir up against Babylon, and against the inhabitants of [as it were] the heart of mine opponents, the spirit of a destroyer. V. 2. And I will send against Babylon strangers, and they shall winnow her, and empty her land, because they are against her round about in a day of evil. V. 3. Against [him who] bends let the bender bend his bow, and against [him who] lifts up himself in his coat of mail: and do not spare her young men; devote to destruction all her host, V. 4. That slain ones may fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and those that are pierced through in her streets.”

The greater portion of this strophe consists of quotations from former utterances. Vv. 41–43 are taken from 6:22–24, and vv. 44–46 from 49:19–21; here they are applied to Babylon.

What is said in 6:22–24 concerning the enemy out of the north who will devastate Judah, is here transferred to the enemy that is to destroy Babylon. For this purpose, after the words “and a great nation,” are added “and many kings,” in order to set forth the hostile army advancing against Babylon as one composed of many nations; and in consequence of this extension of the subject, the verb יָעָרוּ is used in the plural, and אֶכְזְרֵי הַמָּהּ is changed into אֶכְזְרֵי הוּא.

Moreover, the mention of the “daughter of Babylon” instead of the “daughter of Zion” is attended by a change from the directly communicative form of address in the first person (“We have heard,” etc., v. 43) into the third person (“The king of Babylon hath heard,” etc.). In applying the expression used in 49:19–21 regarding the instrument chosen for the destruction of Edom, to the instrument selected against Babylon (vv. 44–46), the names “Babylon” and “and land of the Chaldeans” are substituted for “Edom” and “the inhabitants of Teman” (Jeremiah 49:20); but beyond this, only the last verse is changed, in accordance with the change of circumstances. The thought that, in consequence of the fall of Edom, the earth trembles, and Edom’s cry of anguish is heard on the Red Sea, is intensified thus: by the sound or cry, “Babylon is taken,” the earth is shaken, and a cry is heard among the nations. The conquest of Babylon, the mistress of the world, puts the whole world in anxiety and fear, while the effects of Edom’s fall extend only to the Red Sea. The *Kethib* אַרְוֹצִים, v. 44, seems to come from the verb רָצַץ, in the sense of pushing, so that it is not a mere error in transcription for אַרְיָצִים.

Moreover, such changes made on former utterances, when they are repeated and applied to Babylon, show that these verses are not glosses which a reader has written on the margin, and a later copyist inserted into the text, but that Jeremiah himself has applied these earlier words in his address against Babylon. The two passages are not merely quite appropriately arranged beside one another, but even present in their connection a thought

which has not hitherto been met with in the address against Babylon, and which does not recur afterwards. The enemy that is to conquer Babylon is certainly pointed out, so early as v. 9, as an assemblage of great nations out of the north, but not more particularly characterized there; but the nations that are to constitute the hostile army are not further designated till 51:11 and 27ff. The second quotation, vv. 44–46, adds the new thought that the appearance of this enemy against Babylon is owing to a decree of the Lord, the execution of which no man can prevent, because there is none like Jahveh. The figurative description of the enemy as a lion coming up out of the thicket of reeds at the Jordan, frightening the herd feeding on their pasture-ground, and carrying off the weakly sheep, is appropriate both to Nebuchadnezzar's expedition against Edom, and to the invasion of Babylonia by the Medes and their allies, for the purpose of laying waste the country of the Chaldeans, smiting the inhabitants of Babylon, and conquering it. Even the expression *נִוּה אֵימָן* permits of being applied to Babylonia, which was protected by its canal system and the strong walls of its capital.

### Jeremiah 51

**Jeremiah 51:1–4.** In 51:1–4, the terrible character of the hostile nation is further described. Against Babylon and the inhabitants of Chaldea, God stirs up the “spirit of a destroyer,” viz., a savage nation that will massacre the Chaldeans without pity. *לֵב קָמִי*, lit., “the heart of mine adversaries,” is the word *בְּשָׂדִים*, changed, according to the canon *Atbash* (see on 25:26), for the purpose of obtaining the important meaning that Chaldea is the centre of God's enemies. This explanation of the name involves the thought that all enmity against God the Lord culminates in Babylon; on the basis of this representation Babylon is called, Rev. 17:5, “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” *רוּחַ מְשַׁחֵת* does not mean *καύσωνα διαφθείροντα* (LXX), *ventum pestilentem* (Vulgate), “a sharp wind” (Luther), nor, as it is

usually translated, “a destroying wind;” for *הָעִיר* *רוּחַ* is nowhere used of the rousing of a wind, but everywhere means “to rouse the spirit of any one,” to stir him up to an undertaking; cf. Hag. 1:14, 1 Chron. 5:56, 2 Chron. 21:16, and 36:22. Jeremiah also employs it thus in v. 11, and this meaning is quite suitable here also. *מְשַׁחֵת* is a substantive, as in 4:7: “the spirit of a destroyer.” The figure of winnowing, which follows in v. 2, does not by any means necessarily require the meaning “wind,” because the figure contained in the word *זְרוּקָה* was first called forth by the employment of *זָרִים*, “strangers” = barbarians. The sending of the *זָרִים* to Babylon has no connection with the figure of the wind, and it even remains a question whether *זְרוּקָה* really means here to winnow, because the word is often used of the scattering of a nation, without any reference to the figure of winnowing; cf. Lev. 26:33, Ezek. 5:10; 12:15, etc., also Jeremiah 49:32, 36. However, this thought is suggested by what follows, “they empty her hand,” although the clause which assigns the reason, “because they are against her round about” (cf. 4:17), does not correspond with this figure, but merely declares that the enemies which attack Babylon on every side disperse its inhabitants and empty the land.

**Jeremiah 51:3.** These strangers shall kill, without sparing, every warrior of Babylon, and annihilate its whole military forces. In the first half of the verse the reading is doubtful, since the Masoretes would have the second *יִדְרַךְ* (*Qeri*) expunged, probably because (as Böttcher, *N. Aehrenl.* ii. S. 166, supposes) they considered it merely a repetition. The meaning is not thereby changed. According to the *Qeri*, we would require to translate, “against [him who] bends [the bow, may there be, or come], one who bends his bow;” according to the *Kethib*, “against [him who] bends [the bow], may he who bends his bow bend it.” As to *אֶל־יִדְרַךְ* with *אֶשֶׁר* omitted, cf. 1 Chron. 15:12, 2

Chron. 1:4, and Ewald, § 333, *b.* יתעל בָּס׳ stands in apposition to אָל־יִדְרֹךְ יתעל; יתעל is the Hithpael from עָלָה, and means to raise oneself: it is to be taken as the shortened form of the imperfect passive; cf. Gesenius, § 128, Rem. 2. Certainly, the Hithpael of עָלָה occurs nowhere else, but it is quite appropriate here; so that it is unnecessary, with Hitzig, to adduce, for explanation, the Arabic *tl'*, to stretch the head out of anything, or, with Ewald, to derive the form from the Aramaic עָלָה, Arabic *gl*, to thrust in. Neither is there any foundation for the remark, that the abbreviated form of the imperfect would be admissible only if אָל were found instead of אָל. Indeed, the Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate have actually read and rendered from אָל, which several codices also present, "Let him not bend his bow, nor stretch himself in his coat of mail." But by this reading the first half of the verse is put in contradiction to the second; and this contradiction is not removed by the supposition of J. D. Michaelis and Hitzig, who refer these clauses to the Chaldeans, and find the thought expressed in them, that the Chaldeans, through loss of courage, cannot set themselves for defence. For, in that case, we would be obliged, with Hitzig, to explain as spurious the words that follow, "and spare ye not her young men;" but for this there is no valid reason. As to הַחֲרִימוּ, cf. 50:21, 26. On v. 4, cf. 50:30 and 49:26. The suffix in "her streets" refers to Babylon.

**Jeremiah 51:5–14.** Because of the righteousness of Israel, Babylon is to be irretrievably destroyed. V. 5. *"For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of Jahveh of hosts; but their land is full of guilt because of the Holy One of Israel.* V. 6. *Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and save ye every one his life: do not perish for her iniquity; because it is a time of vengeance for Jahveh; He renders to her what she has committed.* V. 7. *Babylon [was] a golden cup in the hand of Jahveh, that intoxicated all the earth. Nations have drunk of her wine, therefore nations are mad.* V. 8. *Babylon has fallen*

*suddenly and been broken: howl over her: take balsam for her pain; perhaps she may be healed.* V. 9. *'We have tried to heal Babylon, but she is not healed. Leave her, and let us go each one to his own land; for her judgment reaches unto heaven, and is lifted up to the clouds.'* V. 10. *Jahveh hath brought forth our righteousnesses; come, and let us declare in Zion the doing of Jahveh our God.* V. 11. *Sharpen the arrow, fill the shields: Jahveh hath roused the spirit of the kings of Media; for His counsel is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of Jahveh, the vengeance of His temple.* V. 12. *Against the walls of Babylon raise a standard; strengthen the watch, set watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for Jahveh hath both devised and done what He spake against the inhabitants of Babylon.* V. 13. *O thou that dwellest upon many waters, rich in treasures, thine end hath sworn by Himself, 'Surely I have filled thee with men, as [with] the locust; and they shall raise a shout of joy against thee.'*"

The offence of Babylon against the Holy One of Israel demands its destruction. In v. 5, two reasons are given for God's determination to destroy Babylon. The Lord is induced to this (1) by His relation to Israel and Judah, whom Babylon will not let go; (2) by the grave offence of Babylon. Israel is לֹא אֶלְמָן, "not widowed," forsaken by his God; i.e., Jahveh, the God of hosts, has not rejected His people for ever, so as not to trouble Himself any more about them; cf. Isa. 50:1; 54:4ff. "Their land"—the land of the Chaldeans—"is full of guilt before the Holy One of Israel," partly through their relation to Israel (Jeremiah 50:21), partly through their idolatry (Jeremiah 50:2, 38). מִן does not mean here "on the side of," but "on account of," because they do not acknowledge Jahveh as the Holy One of Israel.

**Jeremiah 51:6.** In order to escape the punishment that is to fall on the guilt-laden city, the Israelites living in Babylon must flee to save their lives; cf. 50:8, and on the mode of expression, 48:6. "Be not destroyed בְּעוֹנָהּ, for her iniquity," (ב of price), not "in her guilt" =



punishment for sin (Graf), or “through her guilt” (Nägelsbach). Both of these last two views are against the context; for the idea is, that Israel must flee to save his life, and that he too may not atone for the guilt of Babylon. On the expression, “It is a time of vengeance,” etc., cf. 50:15, Isa. 34:8. גְּמוּלַ מְשָׁלָם, as in Isa. 59:18; 66:6. גְּמוּלַ, *prop.* accomplishment, actual proof, is used both of human and divine doing and working, of human misdeeds and divine recompense. הוּא is used emphatically.

**Jeremiah 51:7f.** Babylon, certainly, in its former power and greatness, was a golden goblet, by means of which Jahveh presented to the nations the wine of His wrath, and intoxicated them; but now it is fallen, and broken without remedy. Isa. 21:9 finds an echo in the expression, “Babylon is fallen.” The figure of the cup refers us back to 25:15ff., where, however, it is applied in a different way. The cup is said to be of gold, in order to point out the splendour and glory of Nebuchadnezzar’s dominion. “In the hand of Jahveh,” i.e., used by Him as His instrument for pouring out His wrath to the nations. But Babylon has suddenly fallen and been broken in pieces. At this point Jeremiah drops the figure of the cup, for a golden cup does not break when it falls. The fall is so terrible, that the nations in Babylon are summoned to participate in the lamentation, and to lend their aid in repairing her injuries. But they answer that their attempts to heal her are fruitless. (On צָרַי, cf. 46:11 and 8:22.) The terrible and irreparable character of the fall is thus expressed in a dramatic manner. We must neither think of the allies and mercenaries as those who are addressed (Schnurrer, Rosenmüller, Maurer, Hitzig), nor merely the Israelites who had been delivered from Babylon (Umbreit). The latter view is opposed by the words which follow, “Let every one go to his own country;” this points to men out of different lands. And the former assumption is opposed by the consideration that not merely the mercenaries, but also the allies are to be viewed as fallen and ruined together with

Babylon, and that Babylon, which had subdued all the nations, has no allies, according to the general way in which the prophet views these things. Those addressed are rather the nations that had been vanquished by Babylon and detained in the city, of which Israel was one. Inasmuch as these were the servants of Babylon, and as such bound to pay her service, they are to heal Babylon; and because the attempts to heal her prove fruitless, they are to leave the ruined city. They answer this summons by the resolve, “We will go every one to his own land;” cf. 50:8, 16. The motive for this resolution, “for her guilt reaches up to heaven,” certainly shows that it is Israelites who are speaking, because it is only they who form their opinions in such a way; but they speak in the name of all the strangers who are in Babylon. מְשַׁפֵּט is the matter upon which judgment is passed, i.e., the transgression, the guilt, analogous to מְשַׁפֵּט דְּמִים, Ezek. 7:23, and מְשַׁפֵּט מָוֶת, Deut. 19:6; 21:22; it does not mean the punishment adjudged, of which we cannot say that it reaches up to heaven. On this expression, cf. Ps. 57:11; 108:5. Through the fall of Babylon, the Lord has made manifest the righteousness of Israel; the redeemed ones are to proclaim this in Zion. צְדָקוֹת does not mean “righteous acts” (Judg. 5:11), but proofs of the righteousness of Israel as opposed to Babylon, which righteousness Babylon, through tyrannical oppression of the people that had been delivered up to it merely for chastisement, has failed to perceive, and which, so long as the Lord did not take His people to Himself again in a visible manner, was hidden from the world; cf. Ps. 37:6.

**Jeremiah 51:11.** The instruments which the Lord employs in bringing about the fall of Babylon are the kings of the Medes, i.e., the provincial governors, or heads of the separate provinces into which the Medes in ancient times were divided, until, after revolting from the Assyrians in the year 714 B.C., they put themselves under a common head, in order to assert their independence, and chose Dejokes

as their monarch. See Spiegel's *Erân* (1863, S. 308ff.), and Delitzsch on Isa. 13:17, who rightly remarks that in Isa. 13:17, as well as here, **קָדִי** is a general designation for the Aryan tribes of Iran, taken from the most important and influential nation. In 21:2, Isaiah mentions Elam in the first series, along with Media, as a conqueror of Babylon; and the Babylonian kingdom was destroyed by Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian. But the Persians are first named in the Old Testament by Ezekiel and Daniel, while the name "Elam" as a province of the Persian kingdom is gradually lost, from the times of Cyrus onwards, in that of the "Persians." The princes of Media are to prepare themselves for besieging and conquering Babylon. **הִבֵּר** (from **בָּרַר**), prop. to polish, cleanse from dirt and rust. The arrows are thereby sharpened; cf. Isa. 49:2. **מִלְאוּ הַשְּׁלֵטִים** is variously explained. The meaning of "shields" is that best established for **שְׁלֵטִים** (see on 2 Sam. 8:7); while the meaning of "armour equipment," which is defended by Thenius, is neither very suitable for 2 Sam. 8:7 nor for 2 Kings 11:10 and Cant. 4:4. There is no the least foundation for the meaning "quiver," which is assumed merely for this passage. **מִלְאוּ הַשְּׁלֵטִים** is to be explained in accordance with the analogous expression in 2 Kings 9:24, **מִלְאָ יָדוֹ בַּקֶּשֶׁת**, "he filled his hand with the bow," i.e., seized the bow. "Fill the shields" with your bodies, or with your arms, since we put these among the straps of the shields. Those addressed are the kings of the Medes, whose spirit God has stirred up to make war against Babylon; for it is against her that His mind or plan is directed. As to the expression, "for it is the vengeance of Jahveh," etc., cf. 50:15, 28. The attack is to be directed against the walls of Babylon. **סֶנֶן**, "standard," is the military sign carried before the army, in order to show them the direction they are to take, and the point of attack. **מִשְׁמָר** "watch," is the force besieging the city; cf. 2 Sam. 11:16. "Make the watch strong," i.e., enclose the city firmly. This is more exactly specified in the

following clauses. "Set watches," not as a guard for their own camp (Hitzig), but against the city, in order to maintain a close siege. "Place the ambushes," that they may peep into the city whenever a sally is made by the besieged; cf. Josh. 8:14ff., Judg. 20:33ff. "For what Jahveh hath determined, He will also perform." **גַּם-יַגֵּם**, "as well as:" He has resolved as well as done, i.e., as He has resolved, He also executes.

**Jeremiah 51:13.** All the supports of the Babylonian power, its strong position on the Euphrates, and its treasures, which furnished the means for erecting strong fortifications, cannot avert the ruin decreed by God. As to the form **שְׁכֵנֶיהָ**, see on 22:23. It is the city with its inhabitants that is addressed, personified as a virgin or daughter. The many waters on which Babylon dwells are the Euphrates, with the canals, trenches, dykes, and marches which surrounded Babylon, and afforded her a strong protection against hostile attacks, but at the same time contributed to increase the wealth of the country and the capital. The great riches, however, by which Babylon became **רַבַּת אוֹצְרוֹת**, "great in treasures," so that Aeschylus (*Pers.* 52) calls it **Βαβυλῶν ἡ πολύχρυσος**, were derived from the enormous spoils which Nebuchadnezzar brought to it, partly from Nineveh, partly from Jerusalem, and from the tribute paid by Syria and the wealthy commercial cities of Phoenicia. "Thine end is come;" cf. Gen. 6:13. **אֵמַת בְּצַעַךְ**, "the ell (i.e., the measure) of thy gain," i.e., the limit put to thine unjust gain. The words are connected with "thine end is come" by zeugma. This explanation is simpler than the interpretation adopted by Venema, Eichhorn, and Maurer, from the Vulgate *pedalis praecisionis tuae*, viz., "the ell of cutting thee off." Böttcher (*Proben*, S. 289, note *m*) seeks to vindicate the rendering in the following paraphrase: "The ell at which thou shalt be cut off, like something woven or spun, when it has reached the destined number of ells." According to this view, "ell" would stand for the complete number of the ells determined on; but there is no consideration of

the question whether *עָצַב*, “to cut off the thread of life,” Isa. 38:12, can be applied to a city.

**Jeremiah 51:14.** The Lord announces destruction to Babylon with a solemn oath. Many take *כִּי אֵלֶּי* in the sense of *לֵאמֹר אֵלֶּי* in oaths: “truly, certainly.” But this use of the expression is neither fully established, nor suitable in this connection. In 2 Sam. 15:21 (the only passage that can be cited in its behalf), the meaning “only” gives good enough sense. Ewald (§ 356, b) wrongly adduces 2 Kings 5:20 in support of the above meaning, and three lines below he attributes the signification “although” to the passage now before us. Moreover, the asseveration, “Verily I have filled thee with men as with locusts, and they shall sing the Hedad over thee,” can have a suitable meaning only if we take “I have filled thee” prophetically, and understand the filling with men as referring to the enemy, when the city has been reduced (Hitzig). But to fill a city with men hardly means quite the same as to put a host of enemies in it. *כִּי* serves merely to introduce the oath, and *אֵלֶּי* means “although,”—as, for instance, in Job 9:15. The meaning is not, “When I filled thee with men, as with locusts, the only result was, that a more abundant wine-pressing could be obtained” (Nägelsbach), for this though is foreign to the context; the meaning rather is, “Even the countless multitudes of men in Babylon will not avail it” (Ewald), will not keep it from ruin. *הַיָּדֵד*, the song sung at the pressing of wine, is, from the nature of the case, the battle-song; see on 25:30.

**Jeremiah 51:15–26.** The omnipotence of the Lord and Creator of the whole world will destroy the idols of Babylon, and break the mighty kingdom that rules the world. V. 15. “He who made the earth by His strength, establishing the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by His understanding; V. 16. When, thundering, He makes a roaring sound of water in the heavens, He causes clouds to ascend from the end of the earth, makes lightnings for the rain, and brings forth the wind out of His treasures. V. 17. Every man without knowledge is

*brutish; every goldsmith is ashamed because of the image: for his molten work is a lie, and there is no spirit in them. V. 18. They are vanity, a work of mockery; in their time of visitation they perish. V. 19. The Portion of Jacob is not like these; for He is the framer of all, and of the tribe of his inheritance: Jahveh of hosts is His name. V. 20. Thou art a hammer to me, weapons of war; and with thee I will break nations in pieces, and with thee destroy kingdoms. V. 21. And with thee I will break in pieces the horse and his rider, and with thee I will break in pieces the chariot and its rider. V. 22. And with thee I will break in pieces man and woman, and with thee I will break in pieces old and young, and with thee I will break in pieces young man and maiden. V. 23. And with thee I will break in pieces the shepherd and his flock, and with thee I will break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke [of oxen], and with thee I will break in pieces governors and deputy-governors. V. 24. And I will recompense to Babylon, and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea, all their evil which they have done in Zion before your eyes, saith Jahveh. V. 25. Behold, I am against thee, O mountain of destruction, saith Jahve, that destroyed all the earth; and I will stretch out my hand against thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and make thee a burnt mountain, V. 26. So that they shall not take from thee a stone for a corner, or a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolations for ever, saith Jahveh.”*

In order to establish, against all doubt, the fall of Babylon that has been announced under solemn oath, Jeremiah, in vv. 15–19, repeats a passage from the address in 10:12–16, in which he holds up before the people, by way of warning, the almighty power of the living God, and the destruction of the idols at the time of the judgment. In v. 10 he wished, by means of this announcement, to combat the fears of the idolatrous people for the power of the heathen gods; here he seeks by the same means to destroy the confidence of the Chaldeans in their gods, and to state that all idols will be destroyed before the almighty power of the Creator and Ruler of the whole world on the day of judgment, and Israel shall then learn that

He who formed the universe will show Himself, by the fall of Babylon, as the Creator of Israel. The whole passage is repeated *verbatim*, on till a change made in v. 19, where **יְשֻׁרָאֵל** is omitted before **שִׁבְטֵי נְחֻלָּתוֹ**, and these words are connected with what precedes: "He is the former of all, and of the tribe which belongs to Him as His own property," i.e., Israel. This alteration is not to be put to the account of a copyist, who omitted the word "Israel" through an oversight, but is due to Jeremiah: there was no need here, as in Jeremiah 10, for bringing into special prominence the relation of Israel to his God. As to the rest, see the exposition of 10:12–16. In vv. 20–26 the destruction of Babylon and its power is further carried out in two figures. In vv. 20–24 Babylon is compared to a hammer, which God uses for the purpose of beating to pieces nations and kingdoms, with their forces and their inhabitants, but on which He will afterwards requite the evil done to Zion. **מַפְּץ** is equivalent to **מַפְּיץ**, Prov. 25:18, one who breaks in pieces; hence a battle-hammer. Hitzig takes **כָּלִי** to be a singular, "formed thus in order to avoid an accumulation of *i* sounds (cf. **פְּלִיטִים** with **פְּלִיטִי**)." This is possible, but neither necessary nor probable. The plural, "weapons of war," is added, because the battle-hammer is considered as including all weapons of war. By the hammer, Ewald understands "the true Israel;" Hitzig, Cyrus, the destroyer of Babylon; Nägelsbach, an ideal person. These three views are based on the fact that the operation performed by means of the hammer (breaking to pieces) is marked by perfects with *relative* (**וְנִפְצְתִי**), which is also true of the retribution to be made on Babylon: from this it is inferred that the breaking with the hammer, as well as the retribution, is still future, and that the meaning is, "When I hammer in this way with thee, I will requite Babylon" (Hitzig); while Ewald concludes from nothing but the context that the words refer to Israel.

But none of these reasons is decisive, nor any of the three views tenable. The context gives

decided support to the opinion that in v. 20ff. it is Babylon that is addressed, just as in v. 13f. and v. 25; a further proof is, that as early as Jeremiah 50:23, Babylon is called "the hammer of the whole earth." Only very weighty reasons, then, could induce us to refer the same figure, as used here, to another nation. The word **פְּטִישׁ** (Jeremiah 50:23), "hammer, smith's hammer" (Isa. 41:7), is not essentially different from **מַפְּץ**, which is used here. The figure is quite inapplicable to Israel, because "Israel is certainly to be delivered through the destruction of Babylon, but is not to be himself the instrument of the destruction" (Graf). Finally, the employment of the perfect with *relative*, both in connection with the shattering to pieces which God accomplishes with (by means of) Babylon, and also the retribution He will execute on Babylon, is explained by the fact, that just as, in prophetic vision, what Babylon does to the nations, and what happens to it, was not separated into two acts, distinct from one another, but appeared as one continuous whole, so also the work of Babylon as the instrument of destruction was not yet finished, but had only begun, and still continuing, was partly future, like the retribution which it was to receive for its offence against Zion; just as in v. 13 Babylon is viewed as then still in the active exercise of its power; and the purpose for which God employs it, as well as the fate that is to befall it, is presented together in something like this manner: "O Babylon, who art my hammer with which I break peoples and kingdoms in pieces, thee will I requite!" There is separate mention made of the instances of breaking, in a long enumeration, which becomes tedious through the constant repetition of the verb—something like the enumeration in Jeremiah 50:35–38, where, however, the constant repetition of **הָרַב** gives great emphasis to the address. First comes the general designation, nations and kingdoms; then military forces; then (v. 25) the inhabitants of the kingdoms, arranged, as in Ezek. 23:6, 23, according to sex, age, and class, labouring classes (shepherds, and husbandmen

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with their cattle); and lastly dignitaries, satraps and lieutenant-governors, פְּחוּתֵי וְסִגְנִים, as in Ezek. 23:6, 23. פְּחוּתֵי probably comes from the Zendic *pavan* (root *pa*), of which a dialectic form is *pagvan*, “upholder of government;” see on Hag. 1:1. סִגְנִי corresponds to the ζωγάνης of the Athenians, “lieutenant-governor;” but it is not much that has hitherto been ascertained with regard to this office; see Delitzsch on Isa. 41:25 [Clark’s translation]. On וְשִׁלַּמְתִּי וְגוֹר, cf. v. 6 and 50:15, 29; “before your eyes,” towards the end of this verse, belongs to this verb in the main clause.

This retribution is set forth in v. 25f. under a new figure. Babylon is called the “mountain of destruction;” this name is immediately explained by the predicate, “that destroys the whole earth,” brings destruction on it. The name הַר הַמְשֻׁחָדֵת is applied in 2 Kings 23:13 to the Mount of Olives, or its southern summit, the so-called *mons offensionis vel scandali* of ecclesiastical tradition, on which Solomon had erected idolatrous altars for his foreign wives; the name refers to the pernicious influence thereby exercised on the religious life of Israel. In this verse, “destruction” is used in a comprehensive sense of the physical and moral ruin which Babylon brought on the nations. Babylon is a “mountain,” as being a powerful kingdom, supereminent above others; whether there is also a reference in the title to its lofty buildings (C. B. Michaelis) seems doubtful. “I will roll thee down from the rocks,” *de petris, in quarum fastigiis hucusque eminuisti. Non efferes te amplius super alia regna* (C. B. Mich.). To this Hitzig adds, by way of explanation: “The summit of the mountain is sometimes changed into the very position occupied by the crater.” From what follows, “I will make thee a mountain of burning,” i.e., either a burning, or burnt, burnt-out mountain, modern expositors infer, with J. D. Michaelis, that the prophet has before his mind a volcano in active eruption, “for no other kind of mountains could devastate countries; it is just volcanoes which have been hollowed out by fire that fall in, or, it may be,

tumble down into the valley below, scattering their constituent elements here and there; the stones of such mountains, too, are commonly so much broken and burnt, that they are of no use for building” (Hitzig). Of the above remarks this much is correct, that the words, “I will make thee a burning mountain,” are founded on the conception of a volcano; any more extended application, however, of the figure to the whole verse is unwarranted. The clause, “I will roll thee down from the rocks,” cannot possibly be applied to the action of a volcano in eruption (though Nägelsbach does so apply it), unless we are ready to impute to the prophet a false notion regarding the eruptions of volcanoes. By the eruption, a mountain is not loosened from the rock on which it rests, and hurled down into the valleys round about; it is only the heart of the mountain, or the rocks on which its summit rests, that seem to be vomited out of it. Besides, the notion that there is a representation of an active volcano in the first clauses of the verse, is disproved by the very fact that the mountain, Babylon, does not bring ruin on the earth, as one that is burning; it is not to become such until after it has been rolled down from the rocks on which it rests. The laying waste of the countries is not ascribed to the fire that issues from the mountain, but the mountain begins to burn only after it has been rolled down from its rocks. Babylon, as a kingdom and city, is called a mountain, because it mightily surpassed and held sway over them; cf. Isa. 2:14. It brings ruin on the whole earth by subjugation of the nations and devastation of the countries. The mountain rests on rocks, i.e., its power has a foundation as firm as a rock, until the Lord rolls it down from its height, and burns the strong mountain, making it like an extinct volcano, the stones of which, having been rendered vitreous by the fire, no longer furnish material that can be employed for the foundation of new buildings. “A corner-stone,” etc., is explained by C. B. Michaelis, after the Chaldee, Kimchi, and others, to mean, “no one will appoint a king or a prince any more out of the stock of the Chaldeans.” This is against the context, according to which the point treated of is, not

the fall of the kingdom in or of Babylon, but the destruction of Babylon as a city and kingdom. Hitzig and Graf, accordingly, take the meaning to be this: Not a stone of the city will be used for a new building,—no one will any more build for himself among their ruins, and out of the material there. The corner-stone and the foundation (it is further asserted) are mentioned by way of example, not because particularly large and good stones are needed for these parts, but because every house begins with them. But though the following clause, “thou shalt be an everlasting desolation,” contains this idea, yet this interpretation neither exhausts nor gives a generally correct view of the meaning of the words, “no one will take from thee a corner-stone or a foundation-stone.” The burning of the mountain signifies not merely that Babylon was to be burned to ashes, but that her sway over the world was to be quite at an end; this was only to come about when the city was burnt. When no stone of any value for a new building is to be left after this conflagration, this is equivalent to saying that nothing will be left of the empire that has been destroyed, which would be of any use in the foundation of another state. The last clause also (“for thou shalt be,” etc.) refers to more than the destruction of the city of Babylon. This is seen even in the fundamental passage, 25:12, where the same threat is uttered against the land of the Chaldeans.

**Jeremiah 51:27–37.** A summons addressed to the nations to fight against Babylon, in order that, by reducing the city, vengeance may be taken for the offence committed against Israel by Babylon. V. 27. *“Lift up a standard on the earth, sound a trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz against her; appoint troops against her; bring up horses lie horrid locusts. V. 28. Prepare nations against her, the kings of the Medes and her governors, and all her lieutenant-governors, and all the land of his dominion. V. 29. Then the earth quakes and trembles: for the purposes of Jahveh against Babylon are being performed, to make the land of Babylon a desolation, without an inhabitant.*

V. 30. *The heroes of Babylon have ceased to fight, they sit in the strongholds: their strength is dried up; they have become women; they have set her habitations on fire; her bars are broken. V. 31. One runner runs against another, and one messenger against another, to tell the king of Babylon that his city is wholly taken. V. 32. And the crossing-places have been seized, and the marches have they burned up with fire, and the men of war are confounded. V. 33. For thus saith Jahveh of hosts, the God of Israel: The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor at the time when it is trodden; yet a little, and the time of harvest will come to her. V. 34. Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured us, and ground us down; he hath set us down [like] an empty vessel, he hath swallowed us like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my dainties; he hath thrust me out. V. 35. Let the inhabitress of Zion say, ‘My wrong and my flesh [be] upon Babylon;’ and let Jerusalem say, ‘My blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea.’ V. 36. Therefore thus saith Jahveh: Behold, I will plead thy cause, and execute vengeance for thee; ad I will dry up her sea, and make her fountain dry. V. 37. And Babylon shall become heaps [of ruins], a dwelling-place of dragons, an astonishment, and a hissing, without an inhabitant.”*

The lifting up of the standard (v. 27) serves as a signal for the nations to assemble for the struggle against Babylon.  $\text{קָרָאָה}$  does not mean “in the land,” but, as the parallel “among the nations” shows, “on the earth.”  $\text{קִדְּשׁוּ}$ , “consecrate [prepare] against her (Babylon) nations” for the war; cf. 6:4; 22:7.  $\text{הַשְׂמִיעוּ}$ , as in 50:29. The kingdoms summoned are: *Ararat*, i.e., the middle (or eastern) province of Armenia, in the plain of Araxes, which Moses of Chorene calls Arairad, Araratia (see on Gen. 8:4); *Minni*, which, according to the Syriac and Chaldee, is also a name of Armenia, probably its western province (see Gesenius’ *Thesaurus*, p. 807); and *Ashkenaz*, which the Jews take to be Germany, although only this much is certain, that it is a province in the neighbourhood of Armenia. For *Askên* is an Armenian proper name, and *az* an Armenian termination; cf.

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Lagarde's *Gesammelte Abhandll.* S. 254, and Delitzsch on Gen. 10:3, 4th ed. פָּקְדוּ, "appoint, order against her." טַפָּסָר does not mean "captains" or leaders, for this meaning of the foreign word (supposed to be Assyrian) rests on a very uncertain etymology; it means some peculiar kind of troops, but nothing more definite can be affirmed regarding it. This meaning is required by the context both here and in Nah. 3:17, the only other place where the word occurs: see on that passage. The sing. טַפָּסָר corresponds with the sing. סוּס, and is therefore to be taken collectively, "troops and horses." Whether the simile פִּילֵק סָמָר belongs merely to "horses," or to the combination "troops and horses," depends on the meaning attached to the expression. Modern expositors render it "bristly locusts;" and by that they understand, like Credner (*Joel*, S. 298), the young grasshopper after it has laid aside its third skin, when the wings are still enveloped in rough horny sheaths, and stick straight up from the back of the animal. But this explanation rests on an erroneous interpretation of Nah. 3:17. סָמָר means to shudder, and is used of the shivering or quivering of the body (Ps. 119:120), and of the hair (Job 4:15); and לֵקֵק does not mean a particular kind of locusts, through Jerome, on Nah. 3:17, renders it *attelabus* (*parva locusta est inter locustam et bruchum, et modicis pennis reptans potius quam volans, semperque subsiliens*), but is a poetic epithet of the locust, "the devourer." If any one prefers to view סָמָר as referring to the nature of the locusts, he may with Bochart and Rosenmüller, think of the *locustarum species, quae habet caput hirsutum*. But the epithet "horrid" is probably intended merely to point out the locusts as a fearful scourge of the country. On this view, the comparison refers to both clauses, and is meant to set forth not merely the enormous multitude of the soldiery, but also the devastation they make of the country. In v. 28 mention is further made of the kings of the Medes (see on v. 11), together with their governors and lieutenant-governors (see

on v. 23), and, in order to give prominence to the immense strength of the army, of "all the land of his dominion;" on these expressions, cf. 34:1 and 1 Kings 9:19. The suffix refers to the king of Media, as the leader of the whole army; while those in "her governors, and all her lieutenant-governors," refer to the country of Media.

**Jeremiah 51:29f.** On the advance of this mighty host against Babylon, to execute the judgment determined by the Lord, the earth quakes. The mighty men of Babylon cease to offer resistance, and withdraw dispirited, like women, into inaccessible places, while the enemy sets fire to the houses, breaks the bars, and captures the city. The prophet views all this in spirit as already present, and depicts in lively colours the attack on the city and its capture. Hence the historic tenses, וְתָחַל, וְתָחַל, וְתָחַל, etc. קָמָה is used of the permanence, i.e., of the realization of the divine counsels, as in 44:23f. On the singular, see Ewald, § 317, a. "To make the land," etc., as in 4:7; 18:16, etc. "They sit (have taken up their position) in the strongholds" (Mountain fastnesses), i.e., in inaccessible places; cf. 1 Sam. 13:16, 2 Sam. 23:14. נִשְׁתָּהּ is but to be regarded as a Kal form from נִשְׁתָּהּ; on its derivation from שָׁתַת, see on Isa. 41:17. "They have become women;" cf. 50:37. The subject of the verb הִצִּיעֵתוּ is the enemy, who set fire to the dwellings in Babylon. "Runner runs against runner," i.e., from opposite sides of the city there come messengers, who meet each other running to tell the king in his castle that the city is taken. The king is therefore (as Graf correctly remarks against Hitzig) not to be thought of as living outside of the city, for "in this case לְקִרְאָתָא would have no meaning," but as living in the royal castle, which was situated in the middle of the city, on the Euphrates. Inasmuch as the city is taken "from the end" (מִקְצֵהָ), i.e., on all sides, the messengers who bring the news to the king's fortress must meet each other.

**Jeremiah 51:32.** permits of being taken as a continuation of the message brought to the king. מַעְבְּרוֹת, “crossing-places,” do not here mean “fords” (Judg. 3:28); for such shallow places, where one could go through the river, are not to be found in the Euphrates. at Babylon: they mean bridges and ferries, because, in addition to the stone bridge built by Nebuchadnezzar (Herodotus, i. 186; see Duncker’s *Geschichte*, i. S. 859), there must also have been at Babylon, throughout its large extent, other means of crossing, either by bridges of boats or ferries. נִתְפָּסוּ, “they have been taken,” seized by the enemy; cf. 48:41. אֲגָמִים are ponds and artificial lakes which had been formed for the protection of the city, of the waters of the Euphrates (Herodotus, i. 185; Arrian. 7:17); these “they have burned with fire.” Inasmuch as a burning of ponds is an impossibility, many, with Kimchi, would understand אֲגָמִים of the reeds of the marshes. But the word has no such meaning; moreover, even if it had, the burning of the reeds would have no significance for the taking of the city. Others think of the sluices and the enclosures of the artificial waters, which enclosures were constructed of wood-work; but apart from the basin of water at Sepharvaim, which could be opened by sluices, the enclosure of the ponds with wood-work is a matter of much doubt, and a burning of the wood-work is not a burning of the ponds. The expression, as Calvin long ago remarked, is hyperbolic, and not to be pressed: *Propheta hyperbolice ostendit, siccata fuisse vada Euphratis ac si quis lignum exureret igni supposito; hoc quidem aquis non convenit, sed hyperbolice melius exprimit miraculum.* On the whole, the picture is not to be taken as a description of the historical circumstances connected with the taking of Babylon by Cyrus; neither, therefore, is the burning of the ponds to be referred to the fact that the bed of the Euphrates was made dry through diversion of the stream (Herodotus, i. 191); but we have here a poetic colouring given to the thought that all Babylon’s means of offence and defence will fall into the power of the enemy and be

destroyed by them. For (according to the reason assigned in v. 33 for what has been described) the Almighty God of Israel has decreed the destruction of Babylon. “The daughter of Babylon (i.e., not merely the city, but the kingdom of Babylon) is like a threshing-floor at the time when they tread it,” i.e., stamp on it, make the ground into a threshing-floor by treading it hard. הִדְרִיכָהּ might be the infinitive (Ewald, § 238, *d*): it is simpler, however, to take it as a perfect, and supply the relative אֲשֶׁר. The meaning is, that Babylon is ripe for judgment. עוֹד קָמֵט, “yet a little while” (i.e., soon), comes the time of harvest, so that the grain will be threshed, i.e., the judgment will be executed. The figure reminds us of Isa. 21:10, cf. Joel 4:13, Mic. 4:15, etc.

**Jeremiah 51:34f.** This judgment comes on Babylon for its offences against Israel. The king of Babylon has devoured Israel, etc. Those who complain, in v. 34, are the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, in whose name the prophet enumerates the crimes of Babylon. “Nebuchadnezzar has devoured us,” i.e., oppressed us. The plural suffixes to the verbs have been needlessly changed in the *Qeri* into singulars, for the simple reason, perhaps, that with מַעְדָּנִי and in v. 35 the address makes a transition into the singular. הָמָם signifies to throw enemies into confusion by causing a panic, for the purpose of destroying them; hence to destroy, see on Deut. 2:15; here to destroy, crush. “He set us down like an empty vessel” refers to the country and the people; he has swept the country of human beings, and robbed the people of everything. תִּגְזֹן, usually a sea-monster, crocodile (Isa. 27:1; 51:9, etc.); here a beast of prey which devours everything. מַעְדָּנִים, “delights,” then “dainty meats,” Gen. 49:20. הִדְיָהּ, from דָּוָה, signifies to wash away, push away (see Delitzsch on Isa. 4:4); in other places Jeremiah uses הִדְיָהּ, 8:3; 16:15, etc. “Let my wrong (i.e., the wrong done me) come upon Babylon.” This wrong is more fully specified, with reference to the figure of swallowing, by



“my flesh and blood;” cf. Mic. 3:3. The Lord will avenge this wrong, v. 36, cf. 50:34; 51:6, 11; He will also dry up the sea of Babylon, and make her spring dry up. Many expositors understand these latter words metaphorically, as referring to the sea of nations surging in Babylon (vv. 42, 55), and view the treasures and riches as the fountain from which the sea of nations sprang up (Hitzig); but the context demands a literal interpretation, inasmuch as in v. 37 the subject treated of is the laying waste of the country. The sea of Babylon is the Euphrates, with its canals, lakes, and marshes, i.e., the abundance of water to which Babylonia owed its fertility, and the city its influence as the centre of the then known world. Isaiah (Is. 21:1) accordingly calls Babylon, emblematically, the desert of the sea, inasmuch as the region in which Babylon stands is a plain, broken in such a manner by the Euphrates, as well as by marshes and lakes, as that the city, so to speak, swims in the sea (Delitzsch). The source of spring of the sea is the Euphrates, and the drying up of this spring is not to be understood literally of the drying up of the Euphrates, but signifies a drying up of the springs of water that fertilize the country. On the figures employed in v. 37, cf. 9:10; 18:16; 49:33.

**Jeremiah 51:38–49.** The inhabitants of Babylon fall; the city perishes with its idols, to the joy of the whole world.—V. 38. *“Together they roar like young lions, they growl like the whelps of lionesses.* V. 39. *When they are heated, I will prepare their banquets, and will make them drunk, that they may exult and sleep an eternal sleep, and not awake, saith Jahveh.* V. 40. *I will bring them down like lambs to be slaughtered, like rams with he-goats.* V. 41. *How is Sheshach taken, and the praise of the whole earth seized! How Babylon is become an astonishment among the nations!* V. 42. *The sea has gone up over Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of its waves.* V. 43. *Her cities have become a desolation, a land of drought, and a steppe, a land wherein no man dwells, and through which no son of man passes.* V. 44. *And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and will bring out of his mouth what he has swallowed, and no longer*

*shall nations go in streams to him: the wall of Babylon also shall fall.* V. 45. *Go ye out from the midst of her, my people! and save ye each one his life from the burning of the wrath of Jahveh.* V. 46. *And lest your heart be weak, and ye be afraid because of the report which is heard in the land, and there comes the [= this] report in the [= this] year, and afterwards in the [= that] year the [= that] report, and violence, in the land, ruler against ruler.* V. 47. *Therefore, behold, days are coming when I will punish the graven images of Babylon; and her whole land shall dry up, and all her slain ones shall fall in her midst.* V. 48. *And heaven and earth, and all that is in them, shall sing for joy over Babylon: for the destroyers shall come to her from the north, saith Jahveh.* V. 49. *As Babylon sought that slain ones of Israel should fall, so there fall, in behalf of Babylon, slain ones of the whole earth.”*

This avenging judgment shall come on the inhabitants of Babylon in the midst of their revelry. V. 38. They roar and growl like young lions over their prey; cf. 2:15, Amos 3:4. When, in their revelries, they will be heated over their prey, the Lord will prepare for them a banquet by which they shall become intoxicated, so that they sink down, exulting (i.e., staggering while they shout), into an eternal sleep of death. מִקָּח, “their heat,” or heating, is the glow felt in gluttony and revelry, cf. Hos. 7:4f., not specially the result or effect of a drinking-bout; and the idea is not that, when they become heated through a banquet, then the Lord will prepare another one for them, but merely this, that in the midst of their revelry the Lord will prepare for them the meal they deserve, viz., give them the cup of wrath to drink, so that they may fall down intoxicated into eternal sleep, from which they no more awake. These words are certainly not a special prediction of the fact mentioned by Herodotus (i. 191) and Xenophon (*Cyrop.* vii. 23), that Cyrus took Babylon while the Babylonians were celebrating a feast and holding a banquet; they are merely a figurative dress given to the thought that the inhabitants of Babylon will be surprised by the judgment of death in the midst of their riotous enjoyment of

the riches and treasure taken as spoil from the nations. In that fact, however, this utterance has received a fulfilment which manifestly confirms the infallibility of the word of God. In v. 40, what has been said is confirmed by another figure; cf. 48:5 and 50:27. Lambs, rams, goats, are emblems of all the classes of the people of Israel; cf. Isa. 34:6, Ezek. 39:18.

**Jeremiah 51:41ff.** The fearful destruction of Babylon will astonish the world.—V. 41 is an exclamation of astonishment regarding the conquest of the city which was praised throughout the world. As to  $\text{פִּשְׁשָׁ}$ , see on v. 1 and 25:26.  $\text{תְּהִלָּה}$ , “praise,” is here used for “a subject of praise and fame;” cf. 49:25.

**Jeremiah 51:42f.** Description of the fall. The sea that has come over Babylon and covered it with its waves, was taken figuratively, even by the Chaldee paraphrasts, and understood as meaning the hostile army that overwhelms the land with its hosts. Only J. D. Michaelis was inclined to take the words in their proper meaning, and understood them as referring to the inundation of Babylon by the Euphrates in August and in winter. But however true it may be, that, in consequence of the destruction or decay of the great river-walls built by Nebuchadnezzar, the Euphrates may inundate the city of Babylon when it wells into a flood, yet the literal acceptation of the words is unwarranted, for the simple reason that they do not speak of any momentary or temporary inundation, and that, because Babylon is to be covered with water, the cities of Babylonia are to become an arid steppe. The sea is therefore the sea of nations, cf. 46:7; the description reminds us of the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. On v. 43, cf. 48:9; 49:18, 33f., 50:12. The suffix in  $\text{בָּהֶן}$  refers to “her cities;” but the repetition of  $\text{אֲרָץ}$  is not for that reason wrong, as Graf thinks, but is to be explained on the ground that the cities of Babylonia are compared to a barren land; and the idea is properly this: The cities become an arid country of steppes, a land in whose cities nobody can dwell.

**Jeremiah 51:44.** With the conquest of Babylon, Bel, the chief deity of the Babylonians (see on 50:2), is punished; and not only is his prey torn from him, but his fame also, which attracted the nations, is destroyed. Under the prey which Bel has swallowed, and which is to be torn out of his mouth, we must include not merely the sacred vessels which had been deposited in the temple of Belus (Dan. 1:3), and the voluntary offerings presented him (Hitzig), but all the property which Babylon had taken as spoil from the nations; and the nations themselves, with life and property, Babylon has swallowed (see 34 and 50:17). All this is now to be torn out of his jaws. Bel falls with the fall of Babylon (cf. Isa. 46:1), so that nations no longer come in streams to him, to dedicate their goods and treasures to him. The description ends with the sentence, “the wall of Babylon also is fallen,” which Hitzig and Graf wrongly suspect, on the ground that it is insipid. Ewald, on the contrary, perceives in the very same expression a brief and emphatic conclusion; because the famous wall of Babylon, strong in every part, was the main defence of this great city of the world. For explaining this sentence, therefore, it is unnecessary to assume that the walls of Babylon seem to have been regarded as sacred to Bel, as Nägelsbach is inclined to infer from the names which are said to be given to these walls in an inscription translated by Oppert.

**Jeremiah 51:45f.** Since Babylon will be punished by the Lord with destruction, the people of God are to flee out of it, and to preserve their lives from the fierce anger of Jahveh, which will discharge itself on Babylon.  $\text{אֲרָץ}$ , as in 4:8, 26, etc.

**Jeremiah 51:46.** Yet they are not to despair when the catastrophe draws near, and all kinds of rumours of war and oppression are abroad. The repetition of  $\text{הַשְּׂמוּעָה}$  expresses the correlative relation,—this and that report; cf. Ewald, § 360, c. The suffix in  $\text{אֲחֵרָיו}$  has a neuter sense; the word means “afterwards” (=  $\text{אֲחֵרֵי זֶה}$ , Job 42:16).  $\text{וְהָמָס בְּאֲרָץ}$  is also to be taken as dependent, grammatically, on  $\text{וּבָא}$ : “and when a

deed of violence is committed in the land, one ruler (rises up) against the other.” These words presuppose not merely a pretty long duration of the war, but also rebellion and revolution, through which Babylon is to go to ruin. In this sense they are employed by Christ for describing the wars and risings that are to precede His advent; Matt. 24:6, Mark 13:7, Luke 21:9.

**Jeremiah 51:47.** Therefore, viz., because what has been stated above will happen, or because the events mentioned in v. 46 are harbingers of the judgment on Babylon,—therefore days are coming when God shall execute judgment on the idols of Babylon, and dry up the land (cf. v. 43), and all her slain ones, i.e., all her inhabitants shall fall down, slain in the midst of her. לָכֵן הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים. “Therefore, behold, days are coming,” is a formula very frequently found in Jeremiah; cf. 7:32; 16:14; 19:6; 23:7, etc.

**Jeremiah 51:48.** Heaven and earth, with all that is in them (i.e., the whole world, with its animate and inanimate creatures), break out into rejoicing over the fall of Babylon (cf. Isa. 44:23), for Babylon has enslaved and laid waste all the world. The second part of v. 48, “for the destroyers shall come from the north,” is logically connected with v. 47, to which v. 48a is to be taken as subordinate, in the sense, “over which heaven and earth rejoice.” On v. 48b, cf. 50:3, 9, 41. Both parts of v. 49 are placed in mutual relation by גַּם-גַּם. These two particles, thus used, signify “as well as,” “not only ... but also,” or “as ... so.” Ewald, Hitzig, and Graf have quite missed the meaning of both clauses, since they take יְשָׂרָאֵל as a vocative, and render the whole thus: “Not only must Babylon fall, O ye slain ones of Israel, but slain ones of the whole earth have fallen on the side of Babylon (or through Babylon).” This view of the expression “slain ones of Israel” cannot be established, either from grammatical considerations or from a regard to the meaning of the whole. Not only is there no occasion for a direct address to the slain ones of Israel; but by such a view of the expression, the antithesis

indicated by גַּם ... גַּם, between “the slain ones of Israel” and “the slain ones of the earth,” is thereby destroyed. Viewed grammatically, “the slain ones of Israel” can only be the subject dependent on the inf. לִנְפֹל: “the fall of the slain ones of Israel.” Kimchi has long ago hit the meaning in the explanation, גַּם בְּבָל הִיְתָה סִבַּת לִנְפֹל, “as Babylon was the cause of the slain ones of Israel falling.” Similarly Jerome: *et quomodo fecit Babylon ut caderent occisi ex Israel*. This paraphrase may be vindicated on grammatical grounds, for the inf. constr. with לְ, with or without הִיְהִי, is used to express that on which one is engaged, or what one is on the point of doing; cf. Gesenius, § 132, 3, Rem. 1. In this meaning, לִנְפֹל stands here without הִיְהִי: “Just as Babylon was concerned in making the slain ones of Israel fall;” or better: “Just as Babylon was intent on the fall of slain ones in Israel, so also there fall because of Babylon (prop. dative, for Babylon) slain ones of all the earth;” because there are to be found, in the capital of the empire, people from all quarters of the world, who are slain when Babylon is conquered. The perf. נִפְּלוּ is prophetic, like פָּקְדוֹתַי in v. 47.

**Jeremiah 51:50–58.** Final summing up of the offence and the punishment of Babylon. V. 50. “Ye who have escaped the sword, depart, do not stay! remember Jahveh from afar, and let Jerusalem come into your mind. V. 51. We were ashamed, because we heard reproach; shame hath covered our face, for strangers have come into the holy places of the house of Jahveh. V. 52. Therefore, behold, days are coming, saith Jahveh, when I will take vengeance on her graven images; and through all her land shall the wounded groan. V. 53. Though Babylon ascended to heaven, and fortified the height of her strength, yet from me there shall come destroyers to her, saith Jahveh. V. 54. The noise of a cry [comes] from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans. V. 55. For Jahveh lays waste Babylon, and destroys out of her the great noise; and her waves sound like

*many waters: a noise of their voice is uttered. V. 56. For there comes against her, against Babylon, a destroyer, and her heroes are taken; each one of their bows is broken: for Jahveh is a God of retributions, He shall certainly recompense. V. 57. And I will make drunk her princes and her wise men, her governors and her lieutenant-governors, and her heroes, so that they shall sleep an eternal sleep, and not awake, saith the King, whose name is Jahveh of hosts. V. 58. Thus saith Jahveh of hosts: The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly destroyed, and her high gates shall be burned with fire, so that nations toil for nothing, and peoples for the fire, and thus are weary."*

Once more there is addressed to Israel the call to return immediately; cf. v. 45 and 50:8. The designation, "those who have escaped from the sword," is occasioned by the mention in v. 49 of those who are slain: it is not to be explained (with Nägelsbach) from the circumstance that the prophet sees before him the massacre of the Babylonians as something that has already taken place. This view of the matter agrees neither with what precedes nor what follows, where the punishment of Babylon is set forth as yet to come. It is those who have escaped from the sword of Babylon during the exercise of its sway that are meant, not those who remain, spared in the conquest of Babylon. They are to go, not to stand or linger on the road, lest they be overtaken, with others, by the judgment falling upon Babylon; they are also to remember, from afar, Jahveh the faithful covenant God, and Jerusalem, that they may hasten their return. הֵלְכוּ is a form of the imperative from הָלַךְ; it occurs only here, and has probably been chosen instead of לָכוּ, because this form, in the actual use of language, had gradually lost its full meaning, and become softened down to a mere interjection, while emphasis is here placed on the *going*. After the call there follows, in v. 51, the complaint, "We have lived to see the dishonour caused by the desecration of our sanctuary." This complaint does not permit of being taken as an answer or objection on the part of those who are

summoned to return, somewhat in this spirit: "What is the good of our remembering Jahveh and Jerusalem? Truly we have thence a remembrance only of the deepest shame and dishonour" (Nägelsbach). Such an objection the prophet certainly would have answered with a reproof for the want of weakness of faith. Ewald accordingly takes v. 51 as containing "a confession which the exiles make in tears, and filled with shame, regarding the previous state of dishonour in which they themselves, as well as the holy place, have been." On this view, those who are exhorted to return encourage themselves by this confession and prayer to zeal in returning; and it would be necessary to supply *dicite* before v. 51, and to take בָּשָׁנוּ as meaning, "We are ashamed because we have heard scoffing, and because enemies have come into the holy places of Jahveh's house." But they might have felt no shame on account of this dishonour that befell them. בּוֹשׁ signifies merely to be ashamed in consequence of the frustration of some hope, not the shame of repentance felt on doing wrong. Hence, with Calvin and others, we must take the words of v. 51 as a scruple which the prophet expresses in the name of the people against the summons to remember Jahveh and Jerusalem, that he may remove the objection. The meaning is thus something like the following: "We may say, indeed, that disgrace has been imposed on us, for we have experienced insult and dishonour; but in return for this, Babylon will now be laid waste and destroyed." The plural הַמְקֹדְשִׁים denotes the different holy places of the temple, as in Ps. 68:36. The answer which settles this objection is introduced, v. 52, by the formula, "Therefore, behold, days are coming," which connects itself with the contents of v. 51: "Therefore, because we were obliged to listen to scoffing, and barbarians have forced their way into the holy places of the house of our God,—therefore will Jahveh punish Babylon for these crimes," The suffixes in אֶרְצָהּ and פָּסְלֵיהָ refer to Babylon. הֵלְלָהּ is used in undefined generality, "slain, pierced through."

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**Jeremiah 51:53.** Babylon shall by no means escape punishment. Even though it mounted up to heaven (cf. Job 20:6; there may, at the same time, be an allusion to Isa. 14:12, and possibly also to the tower at Babylon), and **הַבְּצֹר**, “cut off (i.e., made inaccessible) the height of its strength,” i.e., the height in which its strength consists, its lofty wall of defence (probably an allusion to the lofty walls of Babylon; see on v. 58), yet destroyers are to come against it from Jahveh.

**Jeremiah 51:54.** The prophet in the spirit sees these destroyers as already come. A cry of anguish proceeds from Babylon, and great destruction; cf. 50:22, 46, and 48:3. For (v. 55) Jahveh lays waste Babylon, and destroys out of her **קוֹל גְּדוֹל**, properly “the loud voice,” i.e., the loud noise and bustle of the city. “Their waves,” i.e., the surging masses of the conquering army, roar like many or great waters; cf. Isa. 17:12. **נָתַן שְׁאוֹן קוֹלָם**, lit., “there is given” (i.e., there sounds) “the noise of their voice,” i.e., of the roaring of their waves. “For there comes on Babylon a destroyer, so that her heroes are made prisoners, and her bows (by synecdoche for weapons) broken in pieces.” The Piel **הִתְתָּה** has here an intransitive sense, “to break or shiver into pieces,” like **פָּתָה**, Isa. 48:8; 60:11. This must take place, for Jahveh is a God of retribution; cf. v. 24. This retribution He will execute in such a way as to make the princes, wise men, rulers, and heroes of Babylon sink down into an eternal sleep, by presenting to them the cup of wrath. On **וַיִּשְׁנֶנּוּ** and **הַשְּׂכַרְתִּי**, cf. v. 39. On the enumeration of the different classes of leaders and supporters of the state, cf. v. 23 and 50:35; and on the designation of Jahveh as King, 48:15, with the remark there made.

**Jeremiah 51:58.** And not only are the defenders of the city to fall, but the strong ramparts also, the broad walls and the lofty towers, are to be destroyed. The adjective **הִרְחִבָהּ** is joined in the singular with the plural **חֲמוֹת**, because the complex notion of the walls of Babylon, denoted by the latter word, is

viewed as a unity; cf. Ewald, § 318. **עָרַר**, in Hithpael, means “to be made bare,” i.e., to be destroyed down to the ground; the inf. abs. Piel is added to intensify the expression. Regarding the height and breadth and the extent of the walls of Babylon, cf. the collection of notices by the old writers in Duncker’s *Gesch. des Alt. i. S.* 856ff. According to Herodotus (i. 178f.), they were fifty ells [“royal cubits,” or nearly 85 feet] thick, and 200 ells [337 1/2 feet] high; Ctesias assigns them a height of 300 feet, Strabo that of 50 ells [cubits, or 75 feet], and a breadth of 32 feet. On this Duncker remarks: “The height and breadth which Herodotus gives to the walls are no doubt exaggerated. Since the wall of Media, the first line of defence for the country, had a height of 100 feet and a breadth of 20 feet, and since Xenophon saw in Nineveh walls 150 feet in height, we shall be able with some degree of certainty to assume, in accordance with the statement of Pliny (vi. 26), that the wall of Babylon must have had a height of 200 feet above the ditch, and a proportionate breadth of from 30 to 40 feet. This breadth would be sufficient to permit of teams of four being driven along the rampart, between the battlements, as Herodotus and Strabo inform us, without touching, just as the rampart on the walls of Nineveh is said to have afforded room for three chariots.” The gates leading into the city were, according to Herodotus, *l.c.*, provided with beautifully ornamented gateways; the posts, the two leaves of the gates, and the thresholds, were of bronze. The prophecy concludes, v. 58b, with some words from Hab. 2:13, which are to be verified by the destruction of Babylon, viz., that the nations which have built Babylon, and made it great, have laboured in vain, and only wearied themselves. Habakkuk probably does not give this truth as a quotation from an older prophet, but rather declares it as an ordinance of God, that those who build cities with blood, and strongholds with unrighteousness, make nations toil to supply food for fire. Jeremiah has made use of the passage as a suitable conclusion to his prophecy, but made some unimportant

alterations; for he has transposed the words בְּדִי וְיַעֲפוּ and בְּדִי רִיק, and changed יַעֲפוּ into וְיַעֲפוּ, that he may conclude his address with greater emphasis. For, according to the arrangement here, וְיַעֲפוּ וְלֵאמֹים בְּדִי־אֵשׁ, and וְיַעֲפוּ indicates the result of this toil for the enslaved nations,—they only weary themselves thereby. The genuineness of this reading is put beyond a doubt by the repetition of וְיַעֲפוּ at the close of the epilogue in v. 64. What Habakkuk said generally of the undertakings of the Chaldeans, Jeremiah applied specially to the fall of the city of Babylon, because it was to exhibit its fulfilment most plainly in that event.

**Jeremiah 51:59–64. Epilogue.**—V. 59. *“The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Nerijah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign. Now Seraiah was ‘quartermaster-general’ ”* (Ger. Reisemarschall). Seraiah the son of Nerijah was, no doubt, a brother of Baruch the son of Nerijah; cf. 32:12. שָׂר מְנוּחָה does not mean “a peaceful prince” (Luther), [“a quiet prince,” English Version], but “prince of the resting-place” (cf. Num. 10:33), i.e., the king’s “quartermaster-general.” What Jeremiah commanded Seraiah, or charged him with, does not follow till v. 61; for the words of v. 60, “And Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that was to come on Babylon, [namely] all these words which are written against Babylon” (in the preceding address, Jeremiah 50 and 51), form a parenthetic remark, inserted for the purpose of explaining the charge that follows. This remark is attached to the circumstantial clause at the end of v. 59, after which “the word which he commanded” is not resumed till v. 61, with the words, “and Jeremiah spake to Seraiah;” and the charge itself is given in vv. 61b–64: *“When thou comest to Babylon, then see to it, and read all these words, and say, O Jahveh, Thou hast spoken against this place, to destroy it, so that there shall be no inhabitant in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be eternal desolations. And it shall be, when thou hast finished reading this*

*book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates (v. 64), and say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise again, because of the evil that I bring upon her; and they shall be weary.”* כְּבִיאָה בְּבָבֶל does not mean, “when thou shalt have got near Babylon, so that thou beholdest the city lying in its full extent before thee” (Hitzig), but, according to the simple tenor of the words, “when thou shalt have come into the city.” The former interpretation is based on the erroneous supposition that Seraiah had not been able to read the prophecy in the city, from fear of being called to account for this by the Babylonians. But it is nowhere stated that he was to read it publicly to the Babylonians themselves in an assembly of the people expressly convened for this purpose, but merely that he is to read it, and afterwards throw the book into the Euphrates. The reading was not intended to warn the Babylonians of the destruction threatened them, but was merely to be a proclamation of the word of the Lord against Babylon, on the very spot, for the purpose of connecting with it the symbolic action mentioned in v. 63f. וְרָאִיתָ does not belong to כְּבִיאָה (“when thou comest to Babylon, and seest”), but introduces the apodosis, “then see to it, and read,” i.e., keep it in your eye, in your mind, that you read (cf. Gen. 20:10); not, “seek a good opportunity for reading” (Ewald). At the same time, Seraiah is to cry to God that He has said He will bring this evil on Babylon, i.e., as it were to remind God that the words of the prophecy are His own words, which He has to fulfil. On the contents of v. 62, cf. 50:3; 51:26. After the reading is finished, he is to bind the book to a stone, by means of which to sink it in the Euphrates, uttering the words explanatory of this action, “Thus shall Babylon sink,” etc. This was to be done, not for the purpose of destroying the book (which certainly took place, but was not the object for which it was sunk), but in order to symbolize the fulfilment of the prophecy against Babylon. The attachment of the stone was not a precautionary measure to prevent the writing

from being picked up somewhere, and thus bringing the writer or the people of the caravan into trouble (Hitzig), but was merely intended to make sure that the book would sink down into the depths of the Euphrates, and render it impossible that it should rise again to the surface, thus indicating by symbol that Babylon would not rise again. The words which Seraiah is to speak on throwing the book into the Euphrates, contain, *in nuce*, the substance of the prophecy. The prophet makes this still more plain, by concluding the words he is likewise to utter with יָעֵבֹר as the last word of the prophecy. Luther has here well rendered יָעֵבֹר, "to weary," by "succumb" (*erliegen*). The Babylonians form the subject of יָעֵבֹר. The symbolic meaning of this act is clear; and from it, also, the meaning of the whole charge to the prophet is not difficult to perceive. The sending of the prophecy through Seraiah, with the command to read it there, at the same time looking up to God, and then to sink it in the Euphrates, was not intended as a testimony to the inhabitants of Babylon of the certainty of their destruction, but was meant to be a substantial proof for Israel that God the Lord would, without fail, fulfil His word regarding the seventy years' duration of Babylon's supremacy, and the fall of this great kingdom which was to ensue. This testimony received still greater significance from the circumstances under which it was given. The journey of King Zedekiah to Babylon was, at least in regard to its official purpose, an act of homage shown by Zedekiah to Nebuchadnezzar, as the vassal of the king of Babylon. This fact, which was deeply humiliating for Judah, was made use of by Jeremiah, in the name of the Lord, for the purpose of announcing and transmitting to Babylon, the city that ruled the world, the decree which Jahveh, the God of Israel, as King of heaven and earth, had formed concerning the proud city, and which He would execute in His own time, that He might confirm the hope of the godly ones among His people in the deliverance of Israel from Babylon.

The statement, "Thus far are the words of Jeremiah," is an addition made by the editor of the prophecies. From these words, it follows that Jeremiah 52 does not belong to these prophecies, but forms a historical appendix to them.

Finally, if any question be asked regarding the fulfilment of the prophecy against Babylon, we must keep in mind these two points: 1. The prophecy, as is shown both by its title and its contents, is not merely directed against the city of Babylon, but also against the land of the Chaldeans. It therefore proclaims generally the devastation and destruction of the Chaldean kingdom, or the fall of the Babylonian empire; and the capture and destruction of Babylon, the capital, receive special prominence only in so far as the world-wide rule of Babylon fell with the capital, and the supremacy of the Chaldeans over the nations came to an end. 2. In addition to this historical side, the prophecy has an ideal background, which certainly is never very prominent, but nevertheless is always more or less to be discovered. Here Babylon, as the then mistress of the world, is the representative of the God-opposing influences on the earth, which always attempt to suppress and destroy the kingdom of God. The fulfilment of the historical side of this prophecy began with the capture of Babylon by the united forces of the Medes and Persians under the leadership of Cyrus, and with the dissolution of the Chaldean empire, brought about through that event. By this means, too, the people of Israel were delivered from the Babylonish captivity, while Cyrus gave them permission to return to their native land and rebuild the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem; 2 Chron. 36:22f., Ezra 1:1ff. But Babylon was not destroyed when thus taken, and according to Herodotus, iii. 159, even the walls of the city remained uninjured, while, according to a notice of Berosus in Josephus, *contra Ap.* i. 19, Cyrus is said to have given orders for the pulling down of the outer wall. Cyrus appointed Babylon, after Susa and Ecbatana, the third city in the kingdom, and the winter residence of the Persian kings (according to Xenophon, *Cyrop.* viii. 6. 22).

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Darius Hystaspes, who was obliged to take the city a second time, in consequence of its revolt in the year 518 B.C., was the first who caused the walls to be lowered in height; these were diminished to 50 ells [royal cubits—about 85 feet], and the gates were torn away (Herodotus, iii. 158f.). Xerxes spoiled the city of the golden image of Belus (Herodot. i. 183), and caused the temple of Belus to be destroyed (Arrian, vii. 17. 2). Alexander the Great had intended not merely to rebuild the sanctuary of Belus, but also to make the city the capital of his empire; but he was prevented by his early death from carrying out this plan. The decay of Babylon properly began when Seleucus Nicator built Seleucia, on the Tigris, only 300 stadia distant. “*Babylon*,” says Pliny, vi. 30, “*ad solitudinem rediit, exhausta vicinitate Seleuciae.*” And Strabo (born 60 B.C.) says that, even in his time, the city was a complete wilderness, to which he applies the utterance of a poet: ἐρημία μεγάλη ἐστὶν ἡ μεγάλη πόλις (xvi. l. 5). This decay was accelerated under the rule of the Parthians, so that, within a short time, only a small space within the walls was inhabited, while the rest was used as fields (Diodorus Siculus, ii. 9; Curtius, v. 4. 27). According to the statements of Jerome and Theodoret, there were still living at Babylon, centuries afterwards, a pretty considerable number of Jews; but Jerome (*ad Jerem.* 51) was informed by a Persian monk that these ruins stood in the midst of a hunting district of the Persian kings. The notices of later writers, especially of modern travellers, have been collected by Ritter, *Erdkunde*, xi. S. 865f.; and the latest investigations among the ruins are described in his *Expédition scient. en Mésopotamie*, i. pp. 135–254 (Paris, 1863). John the evangelist has taken the ideal elements of this prophecy into his apocalyptic description of the great city of Babylon (Rev. 16ff.), whose fall is not to begin till the kingdom of God is completed in glory through the return of our Lord.

## Jeremiah 52

### Historical Account of the Capture and Destruction of Jerusalem, the Fate of Zedekiah and the People, and the Liberation of Jehoiachin from Imprisonment

**Jeremiah 52.** By the closing formula, 51:64, the contents of Jeremiah 52 are separated from, and marked as an appendix to, the prophecies of Jeremiah; yet nothing is said regarding the author of this chapter. However, if we keep in mind the nature of its contents, then, from the very fact that it gives an account of the liberation of King Jehoiachin from prison, and of his elevation to royal honours, it necessarily follows that it cannot have been composed by Jeremiah, because the prophet can scarcely have lived till this occurred, which was less than 561 B.C. It must further be considered that the contents of this chapter also agree, almost word for word, with 2 Kings 24:18–25, 30; moreover, the introductory notice regarding Zedekiah’s ascension of the throne, his age, and the character of his rule, given vv. 1–3, was unnecessary for the object of this appendix. The same holds true of the notice regarding the liberation of Jehoiachin from prison, at the close, vv. 31–34, which does not seem to stand in any close and intimate connection with the history of the destruction of Jerusalem and the fate of Zedekiah, while both of these events are closely connected with the plan and aim of the Books of Kings, and are written quite in their spirit. On these grounds, most expositors, both ancient and modern, assume that this historical appendix to the prophecies of Jeremiah has been derived from the Second Book of Kings. But weighty reasons oppose this assumption. (1.) The very fact that the name of the king of Babylon is throughout written *Nebuchadrezzar* makes it unlikely that the narrative was derived from 2 Kings 24:18ff., because the name is there constantly written *Nebuchadnezzar*,—a form which also occurs in Jeremiah, though not often (see pp. 245f., note). (2.) This chapter contains notices which are not found in 2 Kings 24 and 25. Thus, it is stated, in v. 10, the



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Nebuchadnezzar also caused all the princes of Judah to be executed at Riblah, and King Zedekiah, who had been carried to Babylon, to be put in prison till his death; in vv. 19–23 we find a whole series of special remarks as to the vessels of the temple and the ornaments of the brazen pillars,—observations which are not met with either in 2 Kings 25, or in the description of the building of the temple, 1 Kings 7. We further find, in vv. 28–30, a notice regarding three deportations of the people, giving the numbers, not roundly, but precisely, as they are nowhere else given in the historical books of the Old Testament, Were this statement the only additional detail given by this chapter, as compared with 2 Kings 25, one might perhaps suppose that it was an interpolation from another source, added to the rest of the account that has been derived from 2 Kings 24 and 25; but this opinion, which even in itself is not very probable, is excluded by the other additions found in v. 10 and in 19–23. If the author of this chapter had been able to derive, and had actually derived, these additional particulars from a historical source, treating of the later times of the kingdom of Judah, which has not come down to us, and which contained more than our canonical books of Kings and Chronicles, he would no doubt have also found there the account of the three deportations, and taken it from that source. We must therefore assume that this chapter, and 2 Kings 24:18 on to 25:30, have both a common origin, in which the fall of the kingdom of Judah was more fully described than in the historical books of the canon; in this way, the remarkable coincidence, almost word for word, between the narrative portions which are common to the two extracts, is accounted for quite as easily as the differences that have just been mentioned. From a critical examination of the state of both texts now before us, no certain conclusions can be drawn regarding their mutual relation. The differences of this kind arise partly from errors and omissions by later copyists, partly also from the circumstance that the epitomizers have not throughout kept rigorously to the words of

their source. Regarding the author of the original written document, we cannot even make any supposition that could pretend to anything like probability. Baruch, as the editor of the collection of Jeremiah's prophecies, may have made the extract from it which we find in this chapter. We have already, in substance, given the exposition while treating of 2 Kings 24:18ff., so that we may here content ourselves with briefly putting together the deviations of this text from the other, and explaining its peculiarities.

**Jeremiah 52:1–11.** Fate of King Zedekiah at the taking of Jerusalem; cf. 2 Kings 24:18; 25:7, and Jeremiah 39:1–7. The statements regarding Zedekiah's ascension and his government, vv. 1–3, agree word for word with 2 Kings 24:18–20, even to the variation השליכו, v. 3, for השליכו (Kings). The length of the siege of Jerusalem, vv. 4–7a, and the flight, capture, and condemnation of King Zedekiah and the princes of Judah, vv. 7b–11, not only agrees with 2 Kings 25:1–7, but also with Jeremiah 39:1–7, where it is merely the forcible entrance into the city by the Chaldeans that receives special detail; see on 39:3. The variation ויחזו, v. 4, instead of ויחזו (2 Kings 25:1), does not affect the sense. As to the account given of the flight, capture, and condemnation of the king, both Jeremiah 39 and 2 Kings 25 omit the notices given in v. 10, “and also all the princes of Judah he caused to be slain (i.e., executed) at Riblah,” and in v. 11, “and he put him in the prison-house till the day of his death.” בַּיַּת־הַפְּקֻדוֹת has been rendered οἰκία μωλῶνος by the LXX; on this fact Hitzig bases the opinion that the Hebrew words signify “the house of punishment,” or “the house of correction,” in which Zedekiah was obliged to turn the mill like other culprits, and as Samson was once obliged to do (Judg. 16:21). But this meaning of the words cannot be substantiated. פְּקֻדָּה means “oversight, mustering, or visitation (*Heimsuchung*), or vengeance,” e.g., Isa. 10:3, but not punishment (*Strafe*), and the plural, “watches” (Ezek. 9:1) and “custody,” Ezek. 54:11; hence the

expression used here signifies “the house of custody,” or “the house of the watches.” The translation of the LXX can decide nothing against this, because their interpretation is based upon traditions which are themselves unfounded. Regarding this, Ewald well remarks (*History of the People of Israel*, iii. p. 748 of 2nd ed.): “That Zedekiah must have laboured at the mill, as is mentioned in later chronicles (see Aug. Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio*, t. i. P. 2, p. 6; cf. *Chron. Sam.* ch. xlv.), is probably a mere inference from Lam. 5:13.”

**Jeremiah 52:12–23.** The destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, and the carrying away of the people, which are only very summarily stated in Jeremiah 39:8–10, are here related in complete accordance with the account given in 2 Kings 25:8–17. The deviations for the most part originated through the freedom exercised by the epitomizer in his work, or only when mistakes were made by later copyists. The text before us has some amplifications (especially the notices regarding the ornaments of the brazen pillars, v. 23) which are found nowhere else in the Old Testament. The difference in date between v. 12 (“on the tenth of the month”) and the passage in Kings (“on the seventh of the month”) has arisen through one number having been mistaken for another in copying; it cannot now be decided which is correct; see on 2 Kings 25:18. As to Nebuzaradan, see on 39:13. Instead of עֶמֶד לְפָנָי, is found עֶבֶד in 2 Kings 25:8, which certainly is a simpler reading, but one having less appearance of being the original. The only strange point is the want of the relative אֲשֶׁר in plain prose before עֶמֶד, which is probably to be pointed עֶמֶד בְּירוּשָׁלַיִם, instead of יְרוּשָׁלַיִם (Kings), is a pregnant expression for “he came into Jerusalem.”—V. 14. From the expression אֶת-כָּל-חַוּמוֹת, as given in v. 14, “all” is omitted in Kings, as being not indispensable for the meaning.

**Jeremiah 52:15.** The first words, “And of the poor of the people,” are wanting in Kings, and have been brought here, through an error on

the part of the copyist, from the beginning of the next verse; for “the poor of the people” are first treated of in v. 16, where it is stated that Nebuzaradan left them in the land, while v. 15 treats of those who were carried away to Babylon. The word הָאֲמוֹן, instead of הַהֶמְוֹן (Kings), seems to have originated simply through the exchange of א for ה, and to mean, like the other, the multitude of people. Hitzig and Graf are of opinion that אֲמוֹן here, as in Prov. 8:30, means workmaster or artificer, and that הָאֲמוֹן denotes the same persons

(collectively) who are designated הַחֲרָשׁ וְהַמְסַגֵּר in 24:1; 29:2, and 2 Kings 24:14. But this view is opposed by the parallel passage, 39:9, where the whole of this verse occurs, and יְתֵר הָעָם stands instead of הָאֲמוֹן. “The rest of the people of Jerusalem” are divided, by וְאֶת-יֹאֵת, into those who went over to the Chaldeans, and the rest of the people who were taken prisoners by the Chaldeans at the capture of the city. The statement that both of these two classes of the population of Jerusalem were carried away to Babylon is so far limited by the further declaration, in v. 16, that Nebuzaradan did not carry away every one, without exception, but let a portion of the humbler inhabitants of the country, who had no property, remain in the land, as vinedressers and husbandmen, that they might till the land. Instead of מִדְּלוֹת הָאָרֶץ there occurs in Kings מִדְּלוֹת הָאָרֶץ, and in Jeremiah 39:10, more distinctly, מִן הָעָם הַדְּלִיִּים, “some of the people, the humbler ones,” who had no property of their own. דְּלוּת, pl. דְּלוֹת, is an abstract noun, “poverty;” the singular is used collectively, hence the plural is here used to supply the deficiency. For יְגֵבִים, from יָגַב, to plough, there is found instead, in 2 Kings 25:12, *Kethib* גְּבִים, from גָּבַב, with the same meaning.

**Jeremiah 52:17–23.** The carrying away of the vessels of the temple is more fully stated than in 2 Kings 25:13–17. The large brazen articles,

the two pillars at the porch (cf. 1 Kings 7:15ff.), the bases (1 Kings 7:27ff.), and the brazen sea (1 Kings 7:23ff.), which were too vast in their proportions to be easily carried away to Babylon, were broken to pieces by the Chaldeans, who carried off the brass of which they were made. אֲשֶׁר לְבֵית is more correct than אֲשֶׁר בֵּית (Kings), and “all their brass” is more precise than simply “their brass” (Kings). In the enumeration of the smaller brazen vessels used for the temple service, v. 18, there is omitted, in 2 Kings, וְאֵת־הַמְזֻרְקוֹת, “and the bowls” (used in sacrifice); this omission is perhaps due merely to an error in transcription. The enumeration of the gold and silver vessels in v. 19 has been much more abbreviated in 2 Kings 25:15, where only “the fire-pans and the bowls” are mentioned, while in the text here, besides these there are named “the basons,” then “the pots (Eng. vers. *caldrons*), and the candlesticks, and the pans (Eng. vers. *spoons*), and the cups.” For particulars regarding these different vessels, see on 1 Kings 7:40, 45, 50. In v. 20, reference is made to the fact that the mass of metal in the vessels that were carried away was without weight. The same is stated in 2 Kings 25:16, where, however, there is no mention of the twelve brazen bulls; while in the text of Jeremiah, אֲשֶׁר תַּחַת הַמְכַנּוֹת is faulty, and we must read instead, אֲשֶׁר תַּחְתֵּיו וְהַמְכַנּוֹת. The assertion of Graf, in his commentary on this verse, and of Thenius on 2 Kings 25:16, —that the notice regarding the twelve brazen bulls is incorrect, because these were then no longer in Jerusalem (Jeremiah 27:19), but had previously been removed by Ahaz from under the brazen sea for Tiglath-pileser, —we have already, under 2 Kings 16:17, shown to be erroneous. The apposition of לְנַחֲשָׁתָם וְכָל־הַבָּלִים הָאֵלֶּה explains the reference of the suffix. In vv. 21–23, the narrator, in order to call attention to the amount of art exhibited on the vessels destroyed by the Chaldeans, gives a brief description of the brazen pillars with their capitals. This description is much shortened in 2 Kings 25:17, and contains notices completing

that which is given of these works of art in 1 Kings 7. For details, see the passage referred to.

**Jeremiah 52:24–27.** The account given regarding the arrest of the chief officers of the temple and of the city, and concerning their transportation to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar caused them to be executed, agrees with 2 Kings 25:18–21, except in some unimportant variations, which, however, do not alter the sense; the explanation has been already given in the commentary on that passage. In 2 Kings 25, the account of the appointment of Gedaliah as the governor of Judah, together with that of his assassination by Ishmael, which follows the narrative just referred to, is here omitted, because the matter has been already more fully stated in the passage Jeremiah 40:7 on to 43:7, and had no close connection with the object of the present chapter. Instead of this, there follows here, in vv. 28–30 (as a continuation of the remark made, v. 27, “Thus was Judah carried away captive out of his own land”), a calculation of the number of the Jews taken to Babylon at the three deportations: in the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar, 3023 Jews; in the eighteenth year, 832 souls from Jerusalem; and in the twenty-third year, 745 souls,—in all, 4600 persons. The correctness of these data is vouched for by the exactness of the separate numbers, and the agreement of the sum with the individual items. In other respects, however, they present various difficulties. There is, first, the chronological discrepancy that the second deportation is here placed in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, in contradiction with v. 12, according to which, the deportation after the taking of Jerusalem occurred in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar; and 832 souls could not well be carried out of Jerusalem during the siege. This difference can be settled only by assuming that this list of deportations was derived from another source than the preceding notice regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, in which the years of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign were reckoned in some other way than elsewhere in Jeremiah and in the books of

Kings, probably from the date of the actual commencement of his reign, which followed a year after he first appeared in Judah, from which his reign is dated elsewhere; see *Comm. on Daniel* at Dan. 1:1. According to this mode of computation, the seventh year would correspond to the eighth of the common reckoning, and be the year in which Jehoiachin was carried away to Babylon, together with a large number of the people. But this does not agree with 3023, which is given as the number of those who were carried away; for, at that time, according to 2 Kings 24:14, 16, as many as 10,000 Jews, or, according to another view of these verses, even 18,000, were carried away to Babylon. This difference does not permit of being explained in any way. Ewald (*History of the People of Israel*, iii. p. 738) accordingly assumes that in v. 28, after *שָׁבַע*, the word *עֶשְׂרִים* has been omitted, as in 2 Chron. 36:9, where the age of Jehoiachin is given; hence he thinks that, instead of "in the seventh," we must read "in the seventeenth year of Nebuchadnezzar." On such a view, the reference would be to a deportation which took place under Zedekiah, a year before the capture, or during the time of the siege of Jerusalem, and that, too, out of the country districts of Judah in contrast with Jerusalem, v. 29. This supposition is favoured not merely by the small number of those who are said to have been carried away, but also by the context of the narrative, inasmuch as, in what precedes, it is only the capture of Jerusalem and the deportation of the people in Zedekiah's time that is treated of. Nägelsbach has objected to this supposition, that it was not likely the great mass of the people would be carried away during the war, at a time when the approach of the Egyptian army (cf. 37:5) was an object of dread. But the objection does not weaken the supposition, since the former rests on two presuppositions that are quite erroneous: viz., first, that the deportation took place before the defeat of the auxiliary army from Egypt, where as it may have followed that event; and secondly, that the Chaldeans, by keeping the hostile Jews in the country, might have been able to get some assistance against the Egyptian

army, whereas, by removing the hostile population of Judah, they would but diminish the number of the enemies with which they had to contend. We therefore regard this conjecture as highly probable, because it is the means of settling all difficulties, and because we can thereby account for the small number of those who were carried away in the deportations during and after the destruction of Jerusalem. Regarding the third deportation, which was effected by Nebuzaradan (v. 30) in the twenty-third, or, according to another reckoning, in the twenty-fourth year of Nebuchadnezzar, i.e., in the fifth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, we have no other information; for the statement of Josephus, Antt. x. 9. 7, that Nebuchadnezzar made war upon the Ammonites and Moabites in that year, has not been placed beyond a doubt, and is probably a mere inference from this verse, taken in connection with the prophecies in Jeremiah 48 and 49. Yet there is nothing improbable in the statement, viewed by itself. For it must be borne in mind that, after the appointment of Gedaliah as governor, and the departure of the Chaldean hosts, many Jews, who had fled during the war, returned into the country. Hence, in spite of the fact that, after the murder of Gedaliah, a multitude of Jews, fearing the vengeance of the Chaldeans, fled to Egypt, many may have still remained in the country; and many other fugitives may not have returned till afterwards, and given occasion to the Chaldeans for removing other 745 disturbers of the peace to Babylon, four or five years after Jerusalem had been laid in ashes. This deportation may have taken place on the occasion of the subjugation of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Idumeans, or during the war with the Phoenicians, possibly because they had rendered assistance to these nations against the Chaldeans. These verses thus contain nothing to justify the assumption of M. von Niebuhr (*Gesch. Assy. und Babels*, S. 58, note) and Nägelsbach, that they are a gloss. The paucity of those who were carried away is not to be attributed to a desire on the part of the writer of this inserted portion to represent the

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calamity as not so very terrible after all; nor is it due to the substitution of the number of the Levites for that of the entire people,—two wholly arbitrary assumptions: it is completely explained by a consideration of the historical circumstances. The best of the population of Judah had already been carried away, and Zedekiah and his counsellors must have said to themselves, when they rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, that the latter would not spare this time; thus they must have defended themselves to the utmost, as is shown by the very fact that the siege of Jerusalem lasted eighteen months. In this manner, war, pestilence, and famine carried off a great number of the population of Jerusalem; so that, of men who were able-bodied and fit for war, and who could be carried into exile, not more than 4600 fell into the hands of the Chaldeans. During the war, also, many had concealed themselves in inaccessible places, while the lowest of the people were left behind in the country to cultivate the fields. Still more strange might appear the circumstance that the sum-total of those who were carried away to Babylon, viz., 10,000 with Jehoiachin, and 4600 under Zedekiah,—14,600 in all,—is evidently disproportionate to the number of those who returned to Jerusalem and Judah under Zerubbabel, which number is given in Ezra 2:64 at 42,360, exclusive of men and maid servants. For this reason, Graf is of opinion that still later deportations may have taken place, of which no mention is made anywhere. This assumption, however, has little probability. On the other hand, we must consider these points: (1.) In the accounts given of those who were carried away, only full-grown and independent persons of the male sex are reckoned, while, along with fathers, both their wives and their children went into exile. (2.) Even so early as the first capture of Jerusalem in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, a number of prisoners of war, perhaps not inconsiderable, came to Babylon;

these might unite with the thousands of their brethren who were carried thither at a later period. (3.) When the exiles had settled down in Babylon, and there found not only a means of livelihood, but even in many instances, as is clear from several intimations, attained to opulence as citizens, many, even of those who had been left in the country, may have gone to Babylon, in the hope of finding there greater prosperity than in Judah, now laid waste and depopulated by war. (4.) From the time when the 10,000 were carried away with Jehoiachin, in the year 599 B.C., till the return under Zerubbabel, 536 B.C., 63 years, i.e., nearly two generations, had passed, during which the exiles might largely increase in numbers. If we take all these elements into consideration, then, in the simple fact that the number of those who returned amounts to nearly three times the numbers of those given as having been carried away under Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, we cannot find such a difficulty as entitles us to doubt the correctness of the numbers handed down to us.

**Jeremiah 52:31–34.** The closing portion of this chapter, viz., the notice regarding the liberation of Jehoiachin from imprisonment, and his elevation to royal honours by Evil-merodach after Nebuchadnezzar's death, substantially agrees with the account given of that even in 2 Kings 25:27–30. The difference of date, "on the twenty-fifth of the month" (v. 31), and "on the twenty-seventh of the month" in 2 Kings, has arisen through the entrance of a clerical error into one text or the other. The few remaining variations of the two texts have no influence on the meaning. As to the fact itself, and its importance for the people languishing in exile, we may refer to the explanation given at 2 Kings 25:27ff.