

# GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY: HOPE FOR THE FUTURE AND JUDGEMENT ON THE NATIONS

Jeremiah 30—35; 46—51

## ORACLES OF HOPE Jeremiah 30:1—35:19

The dominant judgemental theme is now changed to one of hope. Why are these chapters inserted in what apparently was Baruch's beginning of biographical material (Jer. 26—29)? When were the oracles uttered? The answers vary among scholars; however, the theme of restoration appears in Jeremiah 29:10-14, and there is a logical sequence of thought. Also, chapter 32 contains additional biographical material that strengthens the hope motif.

Although the material does have affinities with material found in the latter chapters of Isaiah, there seem to be insufficient grounds to question the Jeremianic authorship. As for the date, in spite of contrary opinions, it is suggested here that the oracles of hope were issued in the last tragic days of Judah's independent existence.<sup>1</sup> The false prophets (Jer. 27—28) had not spoken God's word: Babylon would conquer the nation; a new exile is inevitable. Nevertheless, out of the tragedy of moral failure, the sovereign Lord promises ultimate victory. The oracles and biographical materials give evidence to Jeremiah's remarkable faith and insight. Judgement is not eliminated from his messages: he simply goes beyond the nation's fall. Jeremiah himself is in prison, accused of being a traitor. Jerusalem is a besieged city: famine and pestilence rage. In that dark hour, God sends a message of hope: the nation would not perish. In fact, the time would come when the righteous branch from the house of David would arise and even the Gentiles would recognize God's sovereign ways.

### The Hope: Restoration and Healing (30:1—31:40)

#### The promise of restoration and healing (30:1-17)

*Restoration (vv. 10-11).* Verses 1-4 serve as an introduction to the section: God will restore the "fortunes" (lit., "captivity") of Israel and Judah (v. 3). The day of pain (v. 6) and distress (v. 7) will pass: Jacob "will be saved" (v. 7). God, not Hananiah (Jer. 28:10), will break the yoke (v. 8). Judah is called to trust God for the future. The day of the Lord is a day of distress (vv. 5-7a) and deliverance (vv. 7b-9). Also, "they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King" (v. 9). The allusion to David is messianic (cf. Jer. 23:5,6; 30:21; 33:15): it refers to an ideal king from the house of David (cf. Ezek. 34:23; 37:24).<sup>2</sup> The

The oracles of hope are found in chapters \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(30-35)

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As for a possible date, it is suggested that the oracles were issued during the last days of \_\_\_\_\_ .

(Judah's independence)

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In the dark hour of tragedy God sent a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(message, hope)

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The hope begins with a promise of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(restoration)

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The Day of the Lord is a day of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(distress, deliverance)

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In that day the people will serve the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ their king.  
(Lord, David)

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prophet appeals to Jacob (note the usage of the term along with Judah and Israel) to “fear not” (v. 10): God will save and restore His people; He will not destroy “completely,” but will “chasten you justly” (v. 11).

*Healing (vv. 12-17).* Only God can cure the incurable (vv. 12,17). Judah’s “lovers” (v. 14) were her political allies that deserted her in the days of divine visitation (588-587 BC). The wounds were the results of sin (v. 14b). From the human standpoint there was no hope; however, from the divine side there was the promise of healing (vv. 16,17). The use of “Zion” (i.e., Jerusalem) here as an “outcast” (v. 17) gives an indication of the date (587 BC): it seemingly refers to the city in isolation because of her sins, surrounded by the Babylonian army.

**The restoration of Judah’s fortune (30:18-24)**

The announced restoration is now described: the city will be rebuilt, joy will be restored and punishment will be visited on Judah’s oppressors (vv. 18-21). God will reign through a chosen representative (vv. 21,22). In this new theocracy the covenant ideal will be realized. The representative will have unusual access to God (v. 21). Literally, he will be one who “gives his life” as a “pledge” (cf. marginal note NAS). He is one who risks himself in an intimately personal and mediatorial role. These things will come about “on that day” (Jer. 30:8): from the standpoint of the New Testament, these words sound strangely familiar.<sup>3</sup>

Although the future day of hope will dawn, the tragic day of “the tempest of the Lord” (v. 23) is sweeping over the land. Without repentance, the punishment is inevitable; “in the latter days” the people will understand (v. 24; cf. Jer. 23:19-20).

**The foundation stones of restoration: God’s grace and love (31:1-6)**

Jeremiah 31:1-22 contains four poems (vv. 2-6, 7-14, 15-20 and 21,22) emphasizing joy. The entire chapter deals with the restoration and joy in both kingdoms (Israel, vv. 1-22; Judah, vv. 23-26; both kingdoms, vv. 27-40): “all the families of Israel” indicates the entire people. Verses 2-6 are heavily coloured by exodus imagery: the return from exile is seen as a new exodus. The old Exodus is the type from which the new exodus is drawn (an anti-type): “grace in the wilderness” (v. 2) draws on the Egyptian Exodus; however, “the people who survived the sword” refers to the Babylonian captivity. Israel will be rebuilt (vv. 4-6): “Samaria” and the “hills of Ephraim shall call out.” They will invite others to go with them to Zion (v. 6; cf. Jer. 2:2). The electing covenant love (v. 3) produces power for a new quality of life that is missionary in outreach. It is an “everlasting love”—a love that lies beyond space or time.<sup>4</sup> Even the Exile, punishment for sin, is redemptive in purpose: God draws Israel with “lovingkindness” (*hesed*). Covenant love, which originated in the desert experience, will never cease (cf. Deut. 7:8; Isa. 43:4; Hos. 2:18): it is limitless. Although addressing Israel in the collective sense,

The second promise of hope is that of \_\_\_\_\_.

*(healing)*

Zion refers to \_\_\_\_\_ in isolation because of her \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Jerusalem, sins)*

The city will be \_\_\_\_\_; God will \_\_\_\_\_ through a chosen \_\_\_\_\_.

*(rebuilt, reign, representative)*

The representative will be one who gives his \_\_\_\_\_ as a \_\_\_\_\_ in a \_\_\_\_\_ role.

*(life, pledge, mediatorial)*

The foundation stones of restoration are God’s \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

*(grace, love)*

The return from exile is seen as a \_\_\_\_\_.

*(new exodus)*

Electing \_\_\_\_\_ will produce \_\_\_\_\_ for a new quality of \_\_\_\_\_ that is \_\_\_\_\_ in outreach.

*(love, power, life, missionary)*

Jeremiah is moving toward the individual as the basic unit in the religious experience: "I have loved you"—each one of you. The foundation stones for restoration are laid in God's grace and love.

### The new exodus: restoration and comfort (31:7-20)

The joy of the restoration is repeated: the Lord will save (v. 7), gather (v. 8), and lead (v. 9) a remnant home (v. 7). He will bring those who normally cannot travel: the blind, lame, pregnant and those in labour (v. 8). God is a "father to Israel," and "Ephraim" is His firstborn. Although the style, language and thought resemble that of Isaiah 40—55, the expressions are consistent with Jeremiah's ministry. The Lord who scattered Israel will keep (v. 10), redeem (v. 11), and provide that which is needed (v. 12). Nations and distant islands ("coastlands") are invited to witness the event (v. 10). The spirit of the long dead Rachel (v. 15), the mother of Joseph and Benjamin (cf. Gen. 30:22-24; 35:16-18; the personification of the Northern Kingdom exiled in 722 BC), weeps for her exiled children (cf. 722, 597, 586 BC) and will not be comforted. The only source of hope is in the Lord (vv. 16,17). The basis for the return is found in Israel's recognition of her sin (v. 18) and sincere repentance (v. 19). Another step has been taken in Jeremiah's interpretation of individual religion moving from the nation to the remnant to the children, and now "Thou has chastised me, and I was chastised, . . . after I turned back, I repented" (vv. 18,19). Israel's understanding of the corporate personality never ignored the value of the individual; however, Jeremiah now begins a reversal of the collective-individual process. It will be the individual that forms the primary unit in the formation of the new covenant community.

### The return and restored fortunes (31:21-26)

The people are urged to set their minds on the road back (v. 21). The prophet continues: "How long will you go here and there . . . ?" (i.e., aimlessly wander, v. 22). After all, the Lord has created a "new thing . . . A woman will encompass a man" (v. 22b). The Revised Standard Version translates: "a woman will protect a man." The translation and interpretation of this phrase is difficult: it could refer to such a secure future that women would be able to protect society. However, another interpretation has the "woman" symbolizing Israel; "man" represents "Yahweh." Thus the "new thing": finally the people are faithfully surrounding (encompassing) God in obedience. Both interpretations have their difficulties; this may be a proverb whose meaning has been lost. Regardless of this uncertain phrase, restoration and material blessings are assured (vv. 23,24). With this hope, the prophet finds rest for his troubled soul (v. 26).

### Restoration: individual responsibility and the new covenant (31:27-34)

Verses 27,28 refer to the future restoration: God, who

The Lord will \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ a remnant home.

*(save, gather, lead)*

Basic for the return is a recognition of \_\_\_\_\_ and a sincere \_\_\_\_\_.

*(sin, repentance)*

As he interpreted individual religion Jeremiah moved from the \_\_\_\_\_ to a \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and at last to the \_\_\_\_\_.

*(nation, remnant, children, individual)*

In a reversal of the process, the \_\_\_\_\_ will form the primary unit in the formation of the new \_\_\_\_\_.

*(individual, community)*

punished Israel and Judah for their sins, will now rebuild and repopulate the land (cf. Ezek. 36:9-11; Ezek. 37:21-24). Nevertheless, this reversal of God's activity requires three vital elements: individual responsibility (vv. 27-30); a new covenant of experiential religion (vv. 31-34), and a holy society (vv. 35-40).<sup>5</sup>

*Individual responsibility (vv. 27-30).* Individual responsibility moves into its climactic section: the developing concept of a new society takes shape. The new order will require a new individual (vv. 29,30) who in turn will form the base for the new covenant. The popular proverb (v. 29) is also quoted in Ezekiel 18:2.<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah says that in the future the commonly accepted doctrine of collective responsibility and retribution (cf. Num. 16:26-33; Jer. 7:1-12) will no longer apply.<sup>7</sup> As indicated above in "The New Exodus," Old Testament family solidarity ("corporate personality") did not mean that a generation or family was so immersed in sin that repentance was totally impossible; however, the shift is now from the collective responsibility to that of the individual. The new covenant will require personal responsibility for one's actions. People in Jeremiah's day had denied their responsibility for the tragic national situation: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge" (v. 29). Now, "every one will die for his own iniquity . . ." (v. 30).

*The new covenant (vv. 31-34).* This is the climax of Jeremiah's preaching and is clearly a revelatory oracle. Four times the phrase "declares the Lord" appears (vv. 31,32, 33,34). Although the old Covenant with the nation had collapsed, the new covenant will also be with "the house of Israel and . . . Judah" (v. 31), will have the Law central (v. 33), and will be a dynamic relationship of God and man. In addition to the similarities, Jeremiah indicates four differences: (1) the new covenant is promised, not made (cf. Ex. 19—20); (2) the new covenant will be written on the "heart," not on a tablet of stone—it will be internal, moral and personal, creating a new person; (3) the new covenant will create a new community: "I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (v. 33); also, "they shall all know Me . . ." (v. 34): to "know God" means an intimate personal relationship (cf. Jer. 2:8; 4:22; 9:24; 24:7; also, cf. Hos. 4:1,6; 5:4; 6:6); (4) the new covenant will begin with divine pardon (v. 34). Sin must be forgiven; however, Jeremiah does not say how the forgiveness will be accomplished. The New Testament indicates the way: at the institution of the Lord's Supper in the upper room, Jesus used Jeremiah's terminology (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). Other New Testament passages also indicate that Jesus fulfills the prophecy (2 Cor. 3:3-14; Heb. 8:8-12; 10:16, 17).

In conclusion, God is the author of both covenants, and both are based on the gracious acts of God. The seat of the new covenant is in the heart of the individual believer (cf. "priesthood of all believers"); however, this does not promise sinlessness but forgiveness: "and their sin I will remember no more" (v. 34).

Three vital elements of the restored community are

(Compare your answers with the text)

The new covenant will require \_\_\_\_\_ for one's action.

(personal responsibility)

In Jeremiah's day, people denied their personal \_\_\_\_\_ in the tragic \_\_\_\_\_ situation.

(responsibility, national)

List four differences between the old and new covenants.

(Compare your answers with the text)

Are the following statements true or false?

The new covenant does not promise sinlessness but forgiveness. \_\_\_\_\_

The new Israel will be temporary. \_\_\_\_\_

(true, false)

## Restoration: the eternal nation and the rebuilt Jerusalem (31:35-40)

First, the Lord pledges the permanency of new Israel, those who form a part of the new covenant (vv. 35-37). The new covenant will form a new society. Then the Lord promises that Jerusalem would be rebuilt (vv. 38-40). Historically, Nehemiah (ca. 444 BC) was to share in the rebuilding of the holy city; however, from the eschatological point of view, the words carry a future implication that prefigures the glory of the eternal city of God so beautifully expressed in Revelation 20—21.

### The Evidence of Hope: The Purchase of Property in Anathoth (32:1-44)

#### Historical background (32:1-5)

The next two chapters are dated in the tenth year of Zedekiah (588/7 BC, v. 1). The siege of Jerusalem was begun in January of that year, and the fall of the city was imminent (cf. 2 Kings 25:1-3). Because of Jeremiah's continued oracles of doom, Zedekiah placed him under arrest in the court of the palace guard (vv. 2-5), where dangerous subversive elements were kept in semi-public confinement. The chronological order is related to chapters 37—38; however, since the episode is included in the "Book of Consolation," the historical context was necessary.

#### The command and transaction (32:6-15)

In spite of the tragic times in which he is living, Jeremiah is optimistic about the future. He is convinced that a remnant would survive to serve Yahweh's purposes. His conviction is tested when Hanamel, his cousin, offers to sell him some property in Anathoth, now behind the enemy lines (vv. 7,8). In detailed terms the business procedure is explained (vv. 9-14). The deed is recorded and carefully preserved; Jeremiah expects a future benefit from the transactions. God has a future for His people; Jeremiah has faith in that future. Evidently Jeremiah has ample funds, even while detained: "seventeen shekels" has been estimated to be approximately a year's wage. The "right of redemption" (v. 7) refers to Leviticus 25:25 ff.: property was to be kept in the family. Evidently Jeremiah buys the property to keep it from being sold outside the family; this is not a case of buying property back.

#### The prophet's prayer and God's reply (32:16-44)

*The prayer (vv. 16-25).* The realization of what he had done now strikes home: ". . . the siege mounds have reached the city . . . And Thou has said to me . . . Buy for yourself the field . . ." (vv. 24,25). In itself, the prayer is a thing of beauty: he remembers the steadfast love of God revealed in history (vv. 17-20); he recalls the redemptive action of God in forming Israel (vv. 21,22); he acknowl-

Historically, \_\_\_\_\_ shared in the rebuilding of Jerusalem in \_\_\_\_\_ BC; eschatologically, the glory of the eternal city is seen in \_\_\_\_\_.

(Nehemiah, 444, Revelation 20-21)

While Jerusalem was besieged, how did Jeremiah demonstrate his optimism about the future? \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answer with the text)

Seventeen shekels have been estimated to amount to approximately \_\_\_\_\_

(a year's wages)

What was the reason for Jeremiah's purchase of the field? \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answer with the text)

edges the righteous judgement of God for disobedience (vv. 23,24); why buy the field (v. 26)?

*God's reply* (vv. 26-44). First, because of Judah's sin, the Babylonian army was sent in judgement: is anything too difficult for God (vv. 27-35)? Verse 27 stands as a reply to Jeremiah's questioning the purchase (vv. 24,25). Second, because of God's grace, there will be a restoration to the land (vv. 36,37). Fellowship will be restored (v. 39) and "an everlasting covenant" established (v. 40). This promise builds on the "new covenant" theme found in Jeremiah 31:31-34. Finally, the reason for the purchase of the field is to reaffirm and strengthen the future hope (vv. 42-44).

### **The Confident Hope: The Reiteration of Restoration (33:1-26)**

Chapter 33 continues the optimistic note of chapters 30—32.

#### **The restoration to the land (33:1-9)**

Again, the tragic situation of the last days of Judah was because of her sin; nevertheless, God will "heal them" and reveal "an abundance of peace and truth" (v. 6). The fortunes of Judah and Israel will be restored (v. 7); they will be forgiven (v. 8).

#### **The restoration of prosperity (33:10-14)**

The "waste" places (v. 10) will be restored (v. 11c). Joy and gladness will return (v. 11a).

#### **The restoration of the Davidic king (33:15-26)**

The Septuagint omits this section; however, it contains the hope of a blessed future based on the messianic ideal (cf. Jer. 23:5,6). The sequence of verses calls first for the "righteous branch of David" to appear (v. 15), and then Judah will be saved (v. 16). David and the Levitical priesthood will never lack a man (vv. 17,18). The linking of the king and priest is significant: the union was achieved in Jesus. The expression "my covenant for the day, and . . . for the night" (v.20) is the modern equivalent of "natural law."<sup>8</sup> The "two families" (v. 24) probably refer to Judah and Israel. Jeremiah says that the restoration will result in rejoicing (vv. 9-11), righteousness (vv. 12-22) and reunion (vv. 24-26).<sup>9</sup>

### **False Hope: A Warning to Zedekiah (34:1-7)**

Verse 7 indicates that Lachish,<sup>10</sup> Azekah and Jerusalem alone remain as fortified cities. This implies a date early in the Babylonian campaign: Jerusalem is not under siege and Jeremiah had not yet been imprisoned. The message

The restoration would include \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ and the  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
(*land, prosperity, Davidic Kingdom*)

resembles others (cf. Jer. 21:1-10; 32:3-5; 37:8-10; 38:17-23) with one unusual note: if Zedekiah would surrender he is promised an honourable death (vv. 4,5). The counsel is to surrender and avoid the destruction of the city. This course of action does not indicate a lack of patriotism or heroism on the part of Jeremiah. He was a courageous, consistent realist who believed the revelations received from God. Jeremiah's attitude toward, and message for, Zedekiah are very different in tone from those addressed to Jehoiachin. Unfortunately, the prophet's oracle went unheeded.<sup>11</sup>

**Broken Hopes: Released Slaves  
Taken Captive Again  
(34:8-12)**

**The release and re-enslavement (34:8-12)**

As the military situation worsens, Zedekiah leads the people to make a covenant releasing all slaves (vv. 8-10). They hope that this would result in divine favour and victory. A short time later, the Egyptian army moves north to aid Judah. Consequently, the Babylonian army temporarily lifts the siege (Jer. 37:6-11) in order to deal with the advancing Egyptians. The inhabitants of Jerusalem think that God had repeated His liberation of the city (cf. 701 BC from the Assyrians). Thinking that the danger had passed, the former slaveholders promptly retake their ex-slaves (v. 11).

**The rebuke (34:13-22)**

Jeremiah severely denounces such hypocrisy (vv. 13-22). The consequence would be the sword, pestilence, and famine (v. 17); the king and officials would be given into the hands of the enemy (v. 21); the Babylonian army would return (v. 22).

**Hope Through Obedience: A Lesson  
From the Rechabites  
(35:1-19)**

**Rechabite fidelity (35:1-11)**

The chronological sequence moves back to the days of Jehoiakim. Verse 11 suggests the year 602/1 BC when successes against Nebuchadnezzar led to a revolt against Babylon. A swift Babylonian reaction and invasion led to the troubled period of 600-598 BC. During the time of uncertainty, the Rechabites, who were dwellers of southern Palestine (cf. Judg. 4:17; 1 Sam. 15:6), moved into Jerusalem for safety. They were distantly related to Israel (cf. Judg. 1:16), were loyal Yahwists (cf. 2 Kings 10:15-17), and maintained puritan convictions. Jonadab, one of the group, in the days of Jehu supported the bloody

Seeking divine favour, the people made a covenant to release their \_\_\_\_\_; thinking the crisis was over, they \_\_\_\_\_ their \_\_\_\_\_ (34:8-12).

*(slaves, retook, ex-slaves)*

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Identify the Rechabites.

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*(Compare your answer with the text)*

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Jeremiah 35:11 suggests a date of \_\_\_\_\_ BC for Jehoiakim's revolt against Babylon. (602-601)

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Why had the Rechabites moved into Jerusalem?

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*(Compare your answer with the text)*

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extermination of the pagan Baal cult. As a nomad and fearful of the urban agriculture-oriented Baalism, he led the group to vow that they would never plant vineyards, drink wine, or live in houses. They were tent dwellers and modeled their lives after the pattern of the desert sojourn. The Rechabites protested the infiltration of Canaanite culture into Israelite life and faith: they called for simplicity and purity in religion as practised in the early days of the national existence.

As an object lesson, the Lord instructs Jeremiah to invite the Rechabites (probably representatives) to one of the temple chambers and to give them wine (vv. 1,2). When the wine is offered (v. 5), the Rechabites are faithful to their vow. Although extreme in their position, they are faithful to a vow made by their ancestors.

**Israel’s infidelity (35:12-18)**

The Rechabites were faithful to a misplaced orthodoxy; Israel was unfaithful to the divine revelation. The Rechabites obeyed their human father; Judah disobeyed her divine Father (v. 14). The coming judgement would be because of Judah’s failure to repent (v. 17).

**The Rechabites’ reward (35:18-19)**

Jeremiah pronounces an oracle of salvation directed to the Rechabite community. They were promising that they would “not lack a man to stand” before God always (v. 19). Even today in Syria and Arabia there are tribes that claim to be descendants of the Rechabites and follow the rules of Jonadab.<sup>12</sup>

**ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS  
Jeremiah 46—51**

These oracles are perhaps the least read portion of Jeremiah, yet at the same time they play an important role in developing a theology of the sovereignty of God, the Lord of history (cf. Jacob, Jer. 46:27,28; Moab, 48:47; Elam, 49:39; Israel, 50:19,20). Yahweh is the Creator of all the earth (cf. Jer. 51:15); He judges evil wherever found (e.g., Babylon, Jer. 51:24, as well as Israel and Judah, 51:5), and, at the same time, He is the one who restores because He is the Redeemer of all mankind.

Judgement is a moral necessity, and, as Jeremiah clearly develops the theme, precedes salvation.<sup>13</sup> The background of God’s election for service is implied. God had chosen Israel to be a redemptive blessing for the world (cf. Gen. 12:3; Ex. 19:5,6). Because of Israel’s failure, God’s judgement came with an “historic accent.” Nevertheless, the purpose of judgement was not punitive but redemptive. So God, the Lord of creation, man and history deals with the international scene. History is interpreted theologically. The oracles to the nations supplement Israel’s future hope

The Rechabites were promised that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Compare your answer with the text)*

The oracles against the nations contribute to an understanding of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God as the \_\_\_\_\_ of history.

*(sovereignty, Lord)*

As Creator, God judges \_\_\_\_\_ wherever found.  
*(evil)*

Jeremiah presents judgement as a \_\_\_\_\_ necessity that precedes \_\_\_\_\_.

*(moral, salvation)*

and relate the new age to the old one. The eschatological nature of God's international "holy war" against evil is placed in context with the eschatological "new Israel." The remnant is now thrown into the world as a redemptive unit. God, too, is there in power to protect and use them. His concern is for all men everywhere (cf. Isa. 42:6; 49:6 and Jonah).

The oracles differ in the Masoretic Text and Septuagint both in location and sequence. In the Septuagint they are found immediately after Jeremiah 25:13 and include 25:15-38 as a final judgement. Since Ezekiel and Isaiah insert their oracles against the nations between judgement on Israel and the future restoration (cf. Isa. 13—24; Ezek. 25—32), it has been suggested that the Septuagint probably represents the original position of the prophecies. Any suggestion as to why the change in the Masoretic Text is purely conjecture.<sup>14</sup>

Within the section, the sequence, or order, of the nations differs. The Septuagint presents the nations in the order of their political importance; the Masoretic Text has a geographical order moving from west to east.

Although the more radical critics of the last century tended to consider the section as a later addition,<sup>15</sup> there seem to be insufficient grounds to follow their suggestion. Most scholars are inclined to credit at least an essential nucleus of the material to Jeremiah with some possible subsequent expansion.<sup>16</sup> For a more precise consideration, each oracle will need to be evaluated; however, Jeremiah's spirit and work can be seen here along with the expression of his poetic genius.

### **Oracles against Egypt (46:1-28)**

#### **The defeat of Egypt: Battle of Carchemish (46:1-12)**

The background for the poem-oracle is 605 BC (v. 2). Nebuchadnezzar, then general of the Babylonian army, defeated Pharaoh Necho (cf. 2 Kings 24:7) at Carchemish in one of the decisive battles of history. Jeremiah's poem, probably written after the battle, is a vivid account of the preparation (vv. 3,4) and defeat (vv. 5-7) of the Egyptian army. The pride of Egypt was chided (vv. 8,9). That was a "day of Yahweh," i.e., judgement on Egypt, on the banks of the Euphrates (v. 10). There was no healing for Egypt (vv. 11,12).

#### **The consequences of the defeat: Babylonian dominance (46:13-28)**

The prophet was now able to identify the "foe from the north."<sup>17</sup>

#### **Comfort for Jacob (46:27,28)**

As assurance of the universal reign God will save Jacob even "from afar . . . from the land of their captivity" (v.

The remnant was thrown into the world as a

\_\_\_\_\_ .  
(redemptive unit)

The Septuagint presents the nations in order of their \_\_\_\_\_ importance; the Masoretic Text presents a \_\_\_\_\_ order.

(political, geographical)

The background for Jeremiah 46 is the defeat of the \_\_\_\_\_ army by \_\_\_\_\_ in the famous battle of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Egyptian, Nebuchadnezzar, Carchemish)

27). The Near East will be swallowed up by Babylon, including Judah (cf. Jer. 51:34); however, this punishment will be redemptive.

### **An Oracle against the Philistines (47:1-7)**

The Philistines and Israelites arrived in Canaan at approximately the same time (ca. 1200 BC). They became bitter enemies, and only during the reign of David did Israel gain the upper hand. Evidently, the Philistines maintained an established identity until the Babylonian invasions eliminated them as a political entity.<sup>18</sup> There have been various suggestions for the date of Pharaoh's conquest of Gaza (v. 1): 609, 605, 604 or 601 BC. Perhaps 609, following the Egyptian victory at Megiddo, best fits the historical context.

### **Oracles against Moab (48:1-47)**

The long section devoted to Moab contains numerous geographical references and quotes other sources (or uses material common to both). Verses 29-39 are similar to parts of Isaiah 15—16; verses 43,44 resemble Isaiah 24:17,18, and verses 45,46 find a similar echo in Numbers 21:28,29.

The date and setting of the prophecy is made more difficult by the limited knowledge about Moabite history. Having taken the previous oracles as the basis, it would seem that Jeremiah includes Moab in the overall theme of Babylonian dominance following the Battle at Carchemish. God's sovereignty held sway over all nations. Jeremiah 27:1-3 lists the presence of Moab in the plot early in Zedekiah's reign.<sup>19</sup> Moab apparently fell to Babylon soon after Jerusalem's capture.

Moab was distantly related to Israel (cf. Gen. 19:37) and occupied the rich plateau highland which lay to the east of the Dead Sea. The northern part of the territory was conquered by Israel in the time of Joshua (cf. Josh. 13:15-32). Conflict continued on an intermittent basis. David was able to subdue the area; however, following the death of Solomon, neither Judah nor Israel were able to maintain a suzerainty position. Consequently, Moab rebelled and reconquered much of her lost territory.

The oracle against Moab has an echo in the bitter condemnation of Edom by Obadiah. Both nations, seemingly secure in their geographic isolation and arrogant in their self-sufficiency, were headed for disaster. Life lived apart from God is headed toward an inevitable bankruptcy; however, God does not want the destruction (death) of the nation or individual (cf. Ezek. 33:9,11).

### **An Oracle against the Ammonites (49:1-6)**

The Ammonites, like the Moabites, were related to

The Philistines arrived in Palestine around \_\_\_\_\_ BC and maintained an established identity until destroyed by \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(1200, Babylon)

Moab was related to \_\_\_\_\_ and occupied a highland which lay to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Israel, east, Dead Sea)

Moab and Edom were seemingly \_\_\_\_\_ in their \_\_\_\_\_ and arrogant in their \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(secure, geographic isolation, self sufficiency)

Israel (cf. Gen. 19:36-38). Ammon was located north of Moab in Transjordan; however, her boundaries were never clearly defined. Rabbah, the modern Ammon, was the capital city. As in the case of Moab, the tension between Ammon and Israel ran similar courses. The Ammonites rejoiced over the fall of Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 25:1-7); Baalis, their king, was the instigator of the assassination of Gedaliah (cf. Jer. 40:11ff.).

Ammon (along with Moab and Judah) was involved in the intrigue of 594-593 BC sending an ambassador to the Jerusalem meeting (cf. Jer. 27:1-3). Following the fall of Jerusalem, Ammon (and Moab) apparently rebelled. In 582 BC both were defeated by Babylon. Soon afterward, an invasion of Arabian tribes from the desert totally engulfed the area. At this time, Ammon and Moab ceased to exist as nations.<sup>20</sup>

### An Oracle against Edom (49:7-22)

Edom was the southern-most Transjordan state located to the east of the southern part of the Dead Sea. Bozrah, the capital city, lay approximately 23 miles to the southeast of the Dead Sea. The Edomites were related to Israel through Esau, Jacob's twin (cf. Gen. 25:30). The animosity between the brothers was perpetuated through their progeny. Along with Moab and Ammon, Edom was involved in Judah's final tragedy (cf. rebellion of Jehoiakim; intrigue of 594-593 BC). They rejoiced over Judah's fall, and taking advantage of the situation, they plundered the area south of Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 35:1-15; Obad. 10-17; Lam. 4:21). The Edomites were subsequently forced from their rugged homeland by Arab (Nabataeans) pressure and moved into southern Palestine. They then formed the Idumean people, from whom the Herods of the New Testament descended.

Many of the expressions are similar to those also found in Obadiah (compare vv. 9,10a with Obad. 5,6; and vv. 14-16 with Obad. 1-4). Does Obadiah quote Jeremiah, or do they both quote another source? The answer is uncertain. Also, much of the prophecy is found in other places in Jeremiah.

### An Oracle against Damascus (49:23-27)

The oracle is addressed against the cities of Syria. Although Damascus, the capital of Syria, is not mentioned in Jeremiah 25:17-26, the oracle indicates Jeremiah's grasp of the significance of the Battle of Carchemish (605 BC). Syria was the bitter foe of the Northern Kingdom (cf. Amos 1:3-5) and fell to the Assyrian pressure. The Babylonian Chronicle reports tribute paid to Nebuchadnezzar as he took control of the area.<sup>21</sup> Like the other oracles against the nations, the destruction announced is swift and complete.

The Ammonites were related to \_\_\_\_\_. Ammon was located \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ in Transjordan.

*(Israel, north, Moab)*

The Ammonites \_\_\_\_\_ over the fall of \_\_\_\_\_, their king, instigated the \_\_\_\_\_ of Gedaliah.

*(rejoiced, Jerusalem, Baalis, assassination)*

Edom was the \_\_\_\_\_ Transjordan state. The Edomites were related to Israel through \_\_\_\_\_.

*(southern-most, Esau)*

Edom rejoiced over \_\_\_\_\_ fall and \_\_\_\_\_ the area south of \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Judah's, plundered, Jerusalem)*

\_\_\_\_\_ was the capital of Syria. Syria was a bitter foe of the \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Damascus, Northern Kingdom)*

## Oracles against Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33)

Kedar was the name of a nomadic tribe dwelling to the east of Palestine (cf. Isa. 21:16; 60:7; Ezek. 27:21). The Septuagint reads *haser* (instead of "Hazor"), which means an "enclosure," or a nomadic campsite or villages where they lived.<sup>22</sup> The prophet announces that Nebuchadnezzar would destroy the tribe. Their camels and cattle would become his booty (v. 32a). Certain Arab tribes "cut the corners of their hair" (v. 32b) as religious rites. Leviticus 19:27 prohibits the practice in Israel. The desolation announced will be complete and forever (v. 33).

## An Oracle against Elam (49:34-39)

Elam was a country east of Babylon located in the area now known as Iran. The date is 598/7 BC (v. 34). There is no knowledge at the present time of any relationship between Judah and Elam. The oracle contains both judgement (vv. 35-38) and restoration (v. 39; cf. also Egypt, Moab, and Ammon). The Elamites were famous archers (cf. v. 35; also, Isa. 22:6). Their "bow," i.e., military strength, would be broken. It has been suggested that this prophecy might have been a warning to Zedekiah not to make alliances with countries to the far east for their revolt would be crushed by Babylon just like those close by.<sup>23</sup>

## Oracles against Babylon (50:1—51:64)

The last and longest of the prophecies concerns Babylon. This should be no surprise for it was Babylon that finally destroyed Jerusalem. The death throes of the nation, coupled with the resulting Exile, left indelible emotional scars on the remnant. It was most fitting that Baruch would climax the ministry of his patron with a collection of Jeremiah's oracles of doom on the nation that had executed God's judgement on sinful Judah. The oracles in both poetry and prose have one dominant theme: imminent judgement on Babylon and restoration of Israel.

The oracles were clearly proclaimed prior to the Persian conquest of Babylon; however, they do present some difficulties as to precise authorship. It is possible that some adaptations have been made from other prophetic sources of the exile period and included in the material. Observations have been made that the historical situation presented in Jeremiah 51:59-63 (cf. 593 BC) does not coincide with Jeremiah's opposition to the false prophet's predictions of an imminent downfall of Nebuchadnezzar. Chapter 29 also exhorts the exiles to settle down for a long period of time. In other words, the situation and thrust have been suggested as contrary to that of Jeremiah: the prophecies evidence an anti-Babylonian spirit not present in

Are the following statements true or false?

Jeremiah prophesied that the Israelites would destroy Kedar. \_\_\_\_\_

Elam was located in the area known today as Iran. \_\_\_\_\_

The Elamites were famous runners. \_\_\_\_\_

The last and longest of the prophecies concerns Babylon. \_\_\_\_\_

*(false, true, false, true)*

---

the previous chapter.<sup>24</sup>

Although the difficulties exist, it seems unnecessary to reject the Jeremican authorship of the oracles, at least in an original formation and expansion. Jeremiah was never pro-Babylonian and anti-Israel. He recognized that, regardless of the nation, sin against Yahweh inevitably brings divine retribution. Judah's sin would be punished. Babylon was the instrument. Also, Babylon's sin would be punished; she would face her foe from the North (the Medes, Jer. 51:28). Even if the oracles were originally uttered in 593 BC, the subsequent tragic history would give ample opportunity for the prophet to expand his words of doom. It also can be assumed that similar expressions found here and in other sections of Jeremiah are not abnormal in literary circles: an author tends to repeat that which most concerns him, especially in a ministry as lengthy as Jeremiah's.

### **Babylon's fall and Israel's restoration (50:1-20)**

*The fall of Babylon (vv. 1-3).* "Marduk" was the chief god of Babylon; "Bel" (v. 2) was a term used for him, the equivalent of "lord." Idols, or "images" (lit., from "dung," an indelicate word, "a shameful object")<sup>25</sup> are nothings (cf. Isa. 40:18-20).

*The restoration of Israel (vv. 4-7).* Babylon's fall will initiate Israel's return. Verse 4 is reminiscent of Jeremiah 31:8,9; also, the remnant will be bound by an "everlasting," (or eternal) "covenant" (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; 32:40).

*The desolation of Babylon (vv. 8-16).* Since Babylon is about to be destroyed by the nations (vv. 9,10), the foreigners are warned to flee (v. 8). However, Babylon, for her part, is blissfully unaware of her imminent destruction (v. 11).

*A remnant of Israel will be restored and pardoned (vv. 17-20).* A prose oracle looks back to the Assyrian conquest and deportation of the Northern Kingdom (722-721 BC).

### **The day of Yahweh: judgement of Babylon continued (50:21-46)**

*The great destruction (vv. 21-27).* Verse 21 presents a wordplay: "Merathaim" was located at the southernmost point of Babylon's border, near the Persian Gulf; "Pekod" was a people in the eastern region of the country. The Hebrew for "Merathaim" means "double rebellion" and "Pekod" is a play on the Hebrew word "to punish." The two sections of Babylon indicate that "the land of double rebellion" will be "punished": the day of Yahweh has come (v. 27). The "young bulls" (v. 27a) signify Babylon's soldiers.

*Punishment for arrogance (vv. 29-32).*

*The sword of judgement (vv. 33-40).* The oracle announces that Yahweh will plead the case of Israel (vv. 33-34): the sword of judgement will fall on Babylon (vv. 35-37). The destruction will be complete (vv. 38,39) like that which fell on Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 40; cf. Jer. 49:18; Isa. 13:19b).

UNDERLINE the correct answer:

Baal    Marduk    Astarte    was the chief god of  
Babylon.

(Marduk)

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Babylon's fall would initiate Israel's \_\_\_\_\_ .

(return)

---

Babylon is blissfully unaware of her \_\_\_\_\_ .

(imminent destruction)

---

Babylon will be punished for her \_\_\_\_\_ .

(arrogance)

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*An invasion from the North (vv. 41-43).  
The plan of the Lord (vv. 44-46).*

### Oracles of judgement continued (51:1-33)

The theme of judgement (destruction) on Babylon and restoration (hope for Israel) continue in this chapter.

*The winnowing of Babylon (vv. 1-4).* “Leb-kamai” (v. 1) literally means “the heart of my adversaries.” The name represents a cryptogram known as an *atbash*. Bright defines this as “a cipher by which letters of one name, counted from the beginning of the alphabet, are exchanged for corresponding letters counted from the end.”<sup>26</sup> The above form interpreted this way means Chaldea (*ksdym*). Apparently, this literary form developed during the pressure of the Exile to protect the writers and enabled them to code their messages.<sup>27</sup> The parallelism of the verse, Babylon-Chaldea (*Leb-kamai*) supports the interpretation. Once again the theme of total devastation is presented (v. 2).

*God’s vindication of Israel and Judah (vv. 5-10).* Israel is admonished to flee from Babylon from the “golden cup in the hand of the Lord” (vv. 6,7). Babylon was fabulously rich; hence the golden cup symbolized wrath (cf. Jer. 25:15ff).

*The vengeance of the Lord (vv. 11-14).* Yahweh, the sovereign God, calls on a nation that does not know Him to execute His judgement on Babylon (cf. Isa. 44:24—45:7). “The foe from the north” (cf. Jer. 50:3,9,41) is now specified as the Medes (v. 11b), a nation from the highland region to the east of Babylon (cf. Iran). They aided the Babylonians in the defeat of Nineveh (612 BC); then they fell to Cyrus of Persia (ca. 550 BC) who in turn conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

*The omnipotent Yahweh (vv. 15-23).* Verses 15-19 form a doublet with Jeremiah 10:12-16.

*The nations against Babylon: harvest time (vv. 27-33).* To “consecrate nations” against Babylon (v. 27) meant to prepare for combat. Ararat-Urartu was located in the area of Armenia, north of Lake Van; Minni-Mamnai was situated in northwest Persia; Ashkenaz—the Scythians (probably).

### Babylon’s crimes against Judah (51:34-58)

*Zion’s case: aggression, destruction, exile, violence (vv. 34,35).* Verses 34 and 44 are reminiscent of Jonah 1 and 2 where the nation, like the eighth-century prophet, was swallowed by Babylon and then freed (vomited out) and allowed to return to her homeland.

*Yahweh’s judgement: vengeance on Babylon for her crimes (vv. 36- 44).* Zion had called for the same fate she received to be inflicted on her tormentor (cf. v. 35). Now the verdict is decreed. “Sheshak” (v. 41) is an *atbash*, or code name for Babylon (cf. on Jer. 51:1 and footnote). “The sea” (v. 42) is a literary symbol of the chaotic waters of primeval ocean (cf. Gen. 1:1,2,6): destruction has completely engulfed the nation (vv. 41-43).

“Leb-kamai” (the heart of my adversaries) as an “atbash” means \_\_\_\_\_.

(Chaldea)

Explain the use of the cryptogram known as the “atbash.”

(Compare your answer with the text)

UNDERLINE the correct answer.

The Persians, Medes aided Babylon in the defeat of Nineveh.

Babylon fell to Cyrus of Persia, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

(Medes, Cyrus of Persia)

Babylon’s crimes against Judah included \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

(aggression, destruction, exile, violence)

Jeremiah says Israel would be \_\_\_\_\_ by Babylon and then \_\_\_\_\_ and allowed to return home.

(swallowed, freed)

*Judah's deliverance from Babylon (vv. 44-46).  
Divine punishment of Babylon (vv. 47-58).*

### The final words of Jeremiah and a symbolic action (51:59-64)

Chronologically the passage is related to chapter 29. Evidently Zedekiah was required to go to Babylon to assure Nebuchadnezzar of his loyalty (cf. the Jerusalem meeting, Jer. 27:1ff.). Among the traveling attendants was Seraiah (v. 59), a brother of Baruch (cf. Jer. 32:12). Jeremiah wrote these words of doom on a scroll, gave them to Seraiah with instructions to read them aloud in Babylon, and then to symbolically throw the weighted scroll into the Euphrates (vv. 60-63). As he did so he was to quote aloud the words of verse 64. Symbolically, the prophetic words had been placed in motion.

Evidently these verses, along with chapter 52, are editorial additions. When added and by whom remain a mystery; however, the conclusion is well drawn: "Thus far are the words of Jeremiah" (v. 64c). And so they remain!

MATCH the following:

Sheshak	foe from the North
Seraiah	code name
Ashkenaz	Chaldea
Babylon	brother of Baruch
Leb-Kamai	the Scythians
atbash	Babylon

(Compare your answers with the text)

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>It has been suggested that the oracles of hope were written at Mizpah in 587 BC following the fall of Jerusalem. Another opinion is that they date from Jeremiah's early ministry: cf. geographical references to the northern part of Palestine; themes similar to the early oracles; and Hosean influence.

<sup>2</sup>For references to the ideal king in previous pre-exilic prophets see Amos 5:18-20; Hosea 3:5; Isaiah 11:1-10; Micah 5:2-5; and Zephaniah 1:14-18.

<sup>3</sup>James Leo Green, "Jeremiah," in *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, ed. by Clifton J. Allen (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1971), p. 147.

<sup>4</sup>Green, "Jeremiah," p. 148.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Roy L. Honeycutt, Jr., *Jeremiah: Witness under Pressure* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1981), pp. 104-06.

<sup>6</sup>Ezekiel will disprove the truth of the proverb: cf. Ezekiel 14:13-20; 18:1-32.

<sup>7</sup>Contrary to numerous authorities, there seem to be insufficient grounds to deny this section to Jeremiah.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. James Philip Hyatt, "Jeremiah," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 5, ed. by Nolan B. Harmon *et al.* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 1052.

<sup>9</sup>Honeycutt, *Jeremiah: Witness under Pressure*, pp. 113-14.

<sup>10</sup>Lachish was located 23 miles southwest of Jerusalem, the modern Tell ed-Duweir. Between 1932 and 1938 it was excavated. Correspondence discovered known as the "Lachish Letters" give additional evidence supporting the biblical account of the invasion. Azekah was located 11 miles north of Lachish and was approximately 18 miles west-southwest of Jerusalem. Archaeological discoveries support the biblical account that Nebuchadnezzar captured fortified Judean cities.

<sup>11</sup>For Zedekiah's fate, cf. Jeremiah 39:7; 52:8-11; 2 Kings 25:5-7.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Hyatt, "Jeremiah," p. 1062. Hyatt notes the impossibility of tracing a genealogy. Green, "Jeremiah," p. 163, suggests that Jeremiah did not advocate the practices of the Rechabites; rather, he advocated the principle behind the practice, "the moral quality of loyalty."

<sup>13</sup>Green, "Jeremiah," p. 184.

<sup>14</sup>Perhaps the order found in the MT is related to God's "theological accent" in history as presented above.

<sup>15</sup>The judgement was based on literary style, viewpoint, extraneous material, and lack of historical details (cf. Hyatt, "Jeremiah," pp. 1104-05, for discussion).

<sup>16</sup>Guy P. Couturier, "Jeremiah," in the *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. by Raymond E. Brown (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 333.

<sup>17</sup>Green, "Jeremiah," p. 186, dates this poem around 604 BC; Couturier, "Jeremiah," p. 333, favours 587/6 BC with the fulfillment in 568/567 BC.

<sup>18</sup>Other prophetic oracles against the Philistines can be found in Amos 1:6-8; Isaiah 14:28-31; Ezekiel 25:15-17; Zephaniah 2:4-7; Zechariah 9:5-7.

<sup>19</sup>2 Kings 24:2 includes Moab among the allies of Babylon invading Judah following Jehoiakim's rebellion. A few years later they attempted to get Judah to join in their rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>20</sup>John Bright, *Jeremiah*, Vol. 21 of *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), p. 323.

<sup>21</sup>F. Cawley and A. R. Millard, "Jeremiah," in *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, ed. by D. Guthrie *et al.* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 655.

<sup>22</sup>Hazor was the name of several towns in Palestine, the most important located in central Galilee.

<sup>23</sup>Cawley and Millard, "Jeremiah," p. 656.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 657.

<sup>25</sup>Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, reprint, 1951), p. 165; cf. Bright, *Jeremiah*, p. 353.

<sup>26</sup>Bright, *Jeremiah*, p. 161; cf. Sheshak (Heb. *ssk*) corresponds to Babylon (*bb*l).

<sup>27</sup>See the discussion in the introduction to Ezekiel on the development of Apocalyptic literature.

## Home Study Exercise

**Basic activity** (*Levels 1, 2, and 3*). Read the study guide and answer the following questions:

1. Discuss the possible dates for the writing of Chapters 30—35. Which date do you prefer? Why?

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2. Who were Judah's "lovers"?

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3. What type of government will the rebuilt city have?

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4. How many poems are contained in Jeremiah 31:1-22?

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5. What is the relationship between the old Exodus and the promised new exodus?

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6. What does the "new thing" of Jeremiah 31:22b mean?

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7. Where was the property located that Jeremiah purchased?

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8. What were the existing conditions under which the property was purchased?

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9. Explain the proverb found in Jeremiah 31:29.

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10. List three similarities between the old and new covenants.

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11. How is sin forgiven?

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12. What was God's answer to the prophet's doubts?

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13. What significant union was promised in Jeremiah 33:17,18?

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14. Explain the Rechabite object lesson.

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15. What was God's purpose in His judgement on Judah?

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16. What was the general relationship between the Philistines and Israel?

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17. How were the Moabites related to Israel?

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18. Who was the father of the Ammonites?

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**Supplementary activity** (*Levels 2 and 3*).

1. Compare the content and stipulations of the old and new covenants.

2. How does the New Testament interpret the new covenant?
3. What are the theological implications of Jeremiah's foreign policies?
4. What are the the origins of Moab, Ammon and Edom?
5. What parallels can be drawn between Jeremiah 51:34-48 and the book of Jonah?

**Advanced activity (Level 3).** Read an article on Israelite law in a Bible encyclopedia or dictionary (cf. the *New Bible Dictionary*, pp. 682-687); John Bright, *A History of Israel*, pp. 172-173, 347-351, 385-390, 428-442; see also Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 270-275). Answer the following:

1. How does the Law relate to an understanding of God's presence? (Cf. relation of Law to the Word of God; God's intervention in the world.)
2. When did the principle of law originate in Israel? When did legalism develop?
3. What is the relation of the Law to the Covenant? (See Ex. 19—20)
4. How is the term "torah" (law) used in the Old Testament? Identify at least three usages.
5. How is the Law used in Deuteronomy? (See Deut. 4:44ff.; 19:14-21; 16:1-17.)
6. What was the significance of Ezra's ministry? When did Judaism begin?
7. How did Judaism develop as a religion of the Law? What was the importance of the canonization of the Law? What was the place of the synagogue, the sabbath and the scribe?
8. How did the absolutizing of the Law loosen it from the Covenant and history? What was the place of Law in salvation?

### Optional Supplementary Reading

R. E. Clements, *Old Testament Theology*, pages 104-130.

### Seminar Discussion

Read H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel*, pages 124-149; also read articles on "Justice," "Righteousness," and "Truth" in a Bible encyclopedia or dictionary (cf. *New Bible Dictionary*, pp. 644-646, 1030-1031, 1225). Discuss the following:

1. Discuss the good life as projected in the Old Testament.
2. How do Exodus 19:5, Deuteronomy 6:6 and Leviticus 19:18 relate to an understanding of doing God's will? What is the relationship between obedience and sacrifice?
3. How does the decalogue (Ex. 20) relate to the good life? What essential elements for a good life are contained there?
4. Define the Old Testament concept of righteousness.
5. Discuss the place of the sabbath in the good life.
6. How do mercy and justice fit into the good life?
7. What place does the family play in the good life?
8. How does worship form an element of the good life?
9. Discuss the place of prayer and praise in the good life.
10. How do Jeremiah's oracles relate to Judah's rejection of God's good life?