

Expansions on the Book of Jeremiah

Introduction

This text comes after a number of similar “expansion” texts pertaining to both the Old and New Testaments, all of which are viewed from the point of *lectio divina*. At the same time the prospect of going through a lengthy fifty-two chapters is a cause for some concern and hesitation. Reason? A cursory glance reveals that it contains page after page of curses along with digressions on obscure places and people long forgotten and irrelevant to today’s world. Still, if you persevere, plenty of nuggets are to be found. An overall view emerges as it had with the last “expansion” text of Second Kings—full of such curses and vile behavior—of how the Lord remains so patient. Further reflection reveals that such apparently boring material resembles our lives which in the end are no different from the characters involved as in Second Kings, Jeremiah or any other book ¹.

A brief remark is in order with regard to references of verbs within the text. Although a given verb may be closer in the text to the one noted, the reference preferred is the verb belonging to the same form. That means the second reference can be further removed in the Book of Jeremiah. For example, the verb *paqad* (set) is first found in 1.10. The next occurrence is 3.16 but not noted as such because the two forms differ. That is to say, the reference given is 36.20 because it’s the next form of *paqad*. If a verb isn’t found in Jeremiah, a reference from another biblical book is given. Also with regard to a verb, the last reference in the text is noted regardless of its form.

In other “expansion” documents the conjunctive *v-* has been singled out for special reference. This small word...actually letter...is prefaced to the beginning of many verses translated usually as “and” as well as other similar terms. Sometimes it isn’t even translated at all. The purpose of the conjunctive is to show the close connection between what had just happened and what is transpiring at the moment. While Jeremiah certainly has them, they don’t seem as prevalent as in other books. For some reason or other, that gives it a different pace. Perhaps upon completion of these notations the reason will become clear and a note will be made of it.

At the end of each chapter are the transliterated words noted upon which are inserted for easier cross reference. The above mentioned *davar* is not listed because it’s so common.

Citations are taken from **The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha (RSV)**,

¹A personal observation...while Jeremiah does go into seemingly endless rants about Israel having abandoned the Lord and his *torah*, nevertheless there’s something not so boring or wearisome about it. Hard to explain, really, but perhaps a clearer picture of this might emerge towards the end of the book.

(New York, 1973). Also the **NIV Study Bible** (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984) has been used chiefly for general information with regard to the text.

As of now, only Chapter One is posted more as a sample. Other postings will be made on a regular basis until complete. At that time the file will be deleted temporarily for a review.

Chapter One

This book opens prophetically and significantly with the noun *davar* or word-as-expression which will play an important role throughout the ensuing fifty-two chapters. Here the plural is used and belong to Jeremiah who is author of all that follows. His background is described briefly as from a priestly class; other than that no further information is provided. For a prophet—and this would hold true if we could walk right up and ask him—any background or personal information is purely irrelevant. Like all those who came before, his attention is fixed wholly upon the Lord and what's required of him. This makes Jeremiah more or less oblivious to earthly concerns, one reason why people—especially those in authority—tend to loathe him. In fact, the Lord warns him about this straightaway just as he had done with the other prophets.

Vs. 2 forms one sentence with the book's first verse and is significant insofar as the *davar* of the Lord came to Jeremiah. If it weren't for this singular divine *davar*, the prophet's own *davar* which is plural would be of no value. The next two verses are careful to mention three kings of Judah which incarnates what the Lord wishes to *davar*. First in line is Josiah, thirteen years into his reign, a significant amount of time, and an auspicious moment for Jeremiah to get his career off the ground. As for this king, "he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord" and most importantly of all, "walked in all the way of David his Father, and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" [2Kg 22.2]. For all kings David is something like the gold standard.

The second king is Jehoiakim, quite another story, who like many of his predecessors "did what was evil in the sight of the Lord according to all that his fathers had done" [2Kg 24.9]. He set the stage, if you will, for King Nebuchadnezzar to lay siege to Jerusalem. However, Second Kings concludes on an upbeat note, that is, Jehoiakim was treated royally by his captives. Despite any hesitations as to this treatment, one has to overlook an individual case which turned out to forebode well for the Israelite captives.

Finally we have Zedekiah who like Jehoiakim, "did what was evil in the sight of the Lord" [2Kg 24.19]. His actions again provoked King Nebuchadnezzar who not only besieged Jerusalem but took him and the survivors captive. However, the Babylonians slew his sons and then blinded him, leaving him to linger on with bitter memories.

Against this eventful background vs. 4 has Jeremiah speaking about the *davar* of the Lord coming to him. It begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “now” and serves to show the connection between two events. How and under what circumstances the *davar* came to him aren’t given. Still, Jeremiah had to be disposed to receive it which means he had a readiness to listen. As for the context, Israel was going through considerable political upheaval, especially the undoing of what King Josiah had accomplished, which must have shaken Jeremiah considerably. On the other hand, it was a perfect time for this divine *davar* to kick in and define his mission.

Vs. 5 spells out both the personal and communal nature of this *davar* with regard to appointing Jeremiah a prophet, *nave’* being one especially attuned to expressing the Lord’s *davar* which is *natan*, the common verb to give. Note that Israel isn’t specified but nations or *goy*...in other words, all peoples. This mission is in the Lord’s mind before he had formed Jeremiah, *yatsar* as a potter fashions clay into a pot or the like. “For he is the one who formed all things” [10.16]. Furthermore, the Lord had consecrated him, *qadash* as to be holy or to set apart. “Prepare war against her” [6.4]. Jeremiah may have had an inkling of this throughout his life or perhaps up to this point but was unable to articulate it adequately. Therefore he had been uneasy, in a state of waiting.

Vs. 6 begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “then” which shows that Jeremiah responded immediately to this divine invitation. As one would expect, he begins with *’ahah* translated as “ah” which conveys his astonishment. It also intimates a sense of relief...relief insofar as at last that uneasy feeling which had been gnawing at him throughout life stopped. That latent knowledge of having been formed and appointed before his birth has come to fulfillment. In the same breath Jeremiah exclaims *hineh* or “behold,” that he’s unable to speak (the verb *davar*)—to respond to the divine *davar* with *davar* equal to it—because he’s a mere youth or *nahar* (cf. vs. 7), technically a male ready for marriage but not yet betrothed.

Vs. 7 has the conjunctive *v-* translated as “but,” signaling a retort by the Lord to Jeremiah’s misgivings about being a *nahar* or youth. Instead, the Lord tells Jeremiah that he’s taking the initiative by sending him to those whom he wishes to speak (*davar*) what’s commanded of him, the verb being *tsavah* also as to set up, appoint. Thus *davar* and *tsavah* are one and the same. “And say to them everything that I command you” [vs. 17]. Then in vs. 8 the Lord decides it’s time to offer some consolation, about not being afraid of them literally as “from their faces.” He will be with Jeremiah to deliver him, *natsal* also as to snatch, remove. “For I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you” [vs. 19]. All will be fine Jeremiah says to himself. The problem is with regard to what people and where? The Lord used *goy* or nations in vs. 5 which can intimate those other than his own Israelites. So now it’s a waiting game and for how long. Both options are attractive as well as scary.

Without waiting for a response, in vs. 9 the Lord goes ahead and touches Jeremiah’s

mouth, *nagah* also as to reach, strike. “Whereas the sword has reached their very life” [4.10]. This gesture is preceded immediately by the Lord extending his hand suggesting a personal touch. As for *nagah*, the same gesture was made to Isaiah in Is 6.7: “And he touched my mouth and said, ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin forgiven.’” Here it’s a seraphim compared with the Lord himself, something Jeremiah must have recalled. As for Isaiah, clearly he’s sent to Israel. However, it turns out the people are closed to any divine communication which doesn’t forebode well for Jeremiah. On the other hand, going to the *goy* may find them more open. Right now the choice is up for grabs.

As for the Lord’s touch or *nagah*, it’s the means by which he inserts his *davar*. So once in Jeremiah’s mouth, the Lord will simply *davar* them, no distinction between the two but without confusing the human and divine. After withdrawing his hand, in vs. 10 the Lord spells out what he has in mind, again referring to *goy* as well as *mamlakah* or kingdoms. “For I cam calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north” [vs. 15]. This must have been troubling for Jeremiah since as of yet there’s no mention of his native Israel. So it looks like his task will be quite formidable with regard to having been set over these *goy*, the verb *paqad* having military connotations fundamentally as to muster, pay attention. “So they went into the court to the king, having put the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the secretary” [36.20].

Jeremiah’s mission in vs. 10 is threefold with two pairs each and sounds like something applicable to a ruler: *natash* and *natats* (pluck up and break down, 12.15 & 31.28), *avad* and *haras* (destroy and overthrow, 18.7 & 31.28), *banah* and *natah* (build and plant, 35.9 & 18.9). Of the three, only the last is positive, the first two necessary for clearing the way.

After this commission where the Lord touches Jeremiah’s mouth to insert his *davar*, in vs. 11 this same *davar* comes to him which does so immediately afterwards. This is backed up by vs. 13 with the *davar* coming a second time. The Lord asks more or less rhetorically as to what Jeremiah sees, the rod of almond right before his eyes, *shaqed* having three other biblical references, one of which is Ecc 12.5: “The almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails.” The Lord responds favorably, that Jeremiah has see well, for the Lord is watching (*shaqad*) over his *davar* in order to bring it to fruition. As for the verb *shaqad* (root of *shaqed*), cf. 5.6: “A leopard is watching against their cities.”

In vs. 13 the *davar* of the Lord comes to Jeremiah a second time, clearly distinct from the first one which is divided into two parts. However, no time interval is given. As in vs. 11, the Lord bids his prophet-in-the-making to look which turns out to be a boiling pot, the noun *syf* being used as in 52.18: “And they took away the pots...and all the vessels of bronze used in the temple service.” A footnote in the **RSV** says that the words “facing away from the north” are uncertain in the Hebrew text though the image is that of a pot a spilling over and whose contents rush toward the south. So in vs. 14 the Lord tells Jeremiah something that is quite obvious to all, namely, that many invasions have come from the north. The boiling

signifies not just an intense, unwavering type of evil (*raha*, cf. vs. 16) but one which breaks forth, *patach* also as to open, let loose. “The cities of the Negeb are shut up with none to open them” [13.19]. So after having designated Jeremiah as a prophet (cf. vs. 5) to *goy* with nothing said about Israel, the threat of an invasion of Israel is close at hand. What’s worse is that the people haven’t the slightest knowledge of it.

Vs. 15 begins with *hineh* (cf. vs. 6) or “lo,” a way of getting attention which here consists of an invasion that appears right around the corner, it being instigated by the Lord himself. After all, it is he who is calling (*qara*) all the tribes from the north. “For behold, I begin to work evil at the city which is called by my name” [25.29]. As for tribes, *mishpachah* is used which more specifically refers to families. “Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel” [2.4]. All these peoples who aren’t identified further will make their way to Jerusalem and set up their thrones before it or more specifically, at the city gates and walls as well as other cities of Judah. This is a way of saying that although they have as yet to capture these places, they are sufficiently confident that they will do so. It’s simply a matter of time before they move in and take over.

In vs. 16 for the first time the Lord intimates his intent for Jeremiah. Earlier he was set aside to be a prophet to the *goy* or nations in general whereas here he implies strongly that his mission is for Israel. The Lord will *davar* his *mishpat* or judgment, sentence against his people, that is, through those who had invaded from the north and who will so be encamped at the very threshold of Jerusalem and other towns. He identifies evil or *rah* (cf. vs. 14) with having forsaken him, *hazav*. “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters and hewed out cisterns for themselves” [2.13]. Not only this but worse .Israel has burned incense to foreign gods and worshiped the work of their own hands. This was nothing new to Jeremiah. At least he had a confirmation of what he knew was true and could proceed accordingly.

A note with regard to *rah* or evil...a quick note at Hebrew lexicon shows that the Book of Jeremiah contains the greatest amount of references to it.

Vs. 17 begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “but” with the Lord telling Jeremiah what to do in light of the disaster at hand. When the “families” are encamped outside city walls, they won’t as yet breach the walls but are on the verge of doing so. Girding up his loins is equivalent to tightening one’s belt for intense action ahead, this followed by *qum* or arise which implies suddenness or springing into action. “Arise and save us” [2.27]!

Once so prepared, Jeremiah is to *davar* all that the Lord had said to him. Then he gives a warning, a threat of sorts...not to be dismayed by whatever the people throw at him, the verb being *chatat* fundamentally as to be broken down with fear. “Learn not the way of the nations nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens” [10.2]. If Jeremiah succumbs to this *chatat*, the Lord with *chatat* him in return.

In response to the “families” who will take up their position outside Jerusalem and other towns, the Lord will fortify Jeremiah not so much against them but against Israel, implying that this will happen before the invasion. So to his own people it seems that the prophet is on the enemy’s side. That is to say, Jeremiah will become both a fortified city, iron pillar and bronze wall:

1) *Mibtsar* is a noun also as stronghold. “Assemble and let us go into the fortified cities[4.5]!

2) *Hamud* or pillar. “For thus says the Lord of hosts concerning the pillars” [27.19].

3) *Chomah* or wall. “And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze” [15.20].

All three are to be done against the entire land, officials and priests. In sum, every inhabitant of Israel is included, a task no one could undertake unless with divine assistance and a lot of it. Even though Jeremiah’s own people will fight against him, the Lord will do it for him, *lacham*. “They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you” [15.20]. In addition to the Lord doing the heavy lifting, he will save Jeremiah, *natsal* meaning to snatch as in vs. 7.

Thus the opening chapter has the call of Jeremiah to be a prophet followed by an impending invasion from the north which results from Israel’s apostasy. The real battle is not against them—for they are divine agents, if you will—but against Israel. And so Jeremiah is left with the prospect of being a one man army of sorts against his own people. Nothing is said of how he feels about all this which is secondary to the story but certainly we are left wondering.

5) nave’, natan, goy, yatsar, qadash, 6) hineh, 7) nahar, tsavah, 8) natsal, 9) nagah, 10) goy, mamlakah, paqad, natash, natats, ‘avad, haras, banah, natah, 11) shaqed, shaqad, 13) syr, 14) rah, patach, 15) hineh, qara’, mishpachah, 16) mishpat, rah, hazav, 17) qum, chatat, 18) mibtsar, hamud, chomah, 19) lacham, natsal

Chapter Two

This new chapter opens with the untranslated conjunctive *v-* which sometimes is found, showing a close connection between the action just described and the current situation. This verse repeats 1.11 but is specific as to what Jeremiah is to do, literally, “call (*qara*) in the ears of Jerusalem.” “Have you not just now called to me” [3.4]? As we advance through this chapter, Jeremiah lays it on thick and simply keeps on going. You wonder how he managed to stay alive and not be killed on the spot. Despite the charges leveled against Israel, there’s something positive to say about the nation, her willingness to put up with such a barrage. Perhaps things will change later, for Jeremiah doesn’t seem the type to stop.

Earlier it was said that Jeremiah seemed called to the *goy*, but this was resolved later by an impending invasion from the north against Jerusalem. Now he seems to be siding with the invaders is what the Israelites must have thought about the Lord, this making a lethal response to anyone who'd challenge their position. This image of needing to shout in the ears of the Jerusalemites is a preview of what's in store for Jeremiah, and he knows it. At this moment he recalls how desperately he'll need to be what the Lord promised him: a fortified city, iron pillar and bronze wall (cf. 1.18).

Instead of hitting the people with the full force of the divine *davar*, Jeremiah begins with an appeal. That is to say, he recalls Jerusalem's devotion when young, *chesed* being the noun considered untranslatable and not unlike the New Testament concept of *agape*. "I am the Lord who practices steadfast love" [9.24]. Similar to this *chesed* is bridal love, *'ahavah* which connotes affection either for good or ill. "How well you direct your course to seek lovers" [vs. 33]! In the same verse (2) the Lord refers to Israel's glory days during the forty years in the Sinai wilderness where she followed him, the common verb *halak*. He calls that place a "land not sworn" which can mean that the wilderness was a place Israel didn't put down roots, was always on the move and thus had to trust more directly upon the Lord and Moses.

Vs. 3 continues the theme of Israel's glory days when the people had been holy or *qodesh* to the Lord, that is, set apart for him. "Can vows and sacrificial flesh avert your doom" [11.15]? Also she had been the first fruits of his harvest, *re'shyth*. "In the beginning of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, this word came from the Lord" [26.1]. So far so good. However, the Lord now says that anyone who ate of this first fruits became guilty followed by evil (*rah*, cf. 1.16) coming down hard upon them. As for the verb *'asham*, it connotes failure of duty or commitment. "We are not guilty, for they have sinned against the Lord" [50.7].

Although Chapter Two begins with "Thus says the Lord," for emphasis the conclusion of this three verse communication with "says the Lord."

Vs. 4 begins with "hear the word of the Lord," this being the first time *shamah* is used with regard to *davar* and is found next in 7.2. Also it's the first time Jeremiah tried it out, as it were, and continues through 3.5. In the verse at hand *shamah* is directed to Jacob as well as families of Israel, *mishpachah* found last in 1.15 in reference to *goy* or nations. It's followed by what will become very familiar, "Thus says the Lord" found last in vs. 2 which in vs. 5 assumes a direct, rhetorical question by the Lord to his people with regard to their fathers put in terms of their youth in vs. 2. As for rhetorical questions, this is the first of fourteen in Chapter Two. Their rapid-fire appearance is a way of wearing down the people, shaming and cajoling them at once, until they (hopefully) return to the Lord. Those listening may balk thinking why should the Lord be concerned about people who had lived many years ago? What effect do they have on us now? Such an attitude is a denial of responsibility as well as

acknowledgment that people living then were of no difference from the current generation including all those generations in between.

So when the Lord says that Israel's fathers had found wrong in him, they simply did not stray but went far from him. *Havel* also means wickedness or depravity as in Ps 7.3: "O Lord my God, if I have done this, if there is wrong in my hands." The verb is *rachaq* with two prepositions as one (*mehalay*), literally "from upon me." "With the result that you will be removed from your land, and I will drive you out, and you will perish" [27.10]. The end result of this *rachaq*? Worthlessness or *hevel* which also means emptiness or vanity along with its verbal root *haval*. References are as follows: "Why have they provoked me to anger with their...foreign idols" [8.19]? "Filling you with vain hopes" [23.16]. Although not mentioned explicitly, idol worship is the bone of contention.

The rhetorical question of the previous verse is countered in vs. 6 with one the Lord wishes Israel had asked. In other words, the people failed to inquire where the Lord had been, the same Lord who had brought them from Egypt into the Sinai wilderness. This place is described in really miserable terms: a land of deserts (*haravah*, cf. 5.6), pits (*shuchah*, cf. 18.20), drought (*tsiyah*, cf. 50.12), deep darkness (*tsalmaveth*, cf. 23.26) and a place where no one goes or dwells. While all this is true, their biggest omission, of course, is not to follow through on God's revelation to them at Mount Sinai. So right off the bat we have a contrast that will play out not only in the Book of Jeremiah but withn virtually every other prophet. That is, clear and unmistakable revelations of the Lord are in conflict with the incorrigible persistence of human desires and refusal to accept this transcendent reality.

The Lord continues (apparently to deaf ears) that he had brought Israel into a land that's plentiful or literally a "land of the garden, *karmel*." "I looked, and lo, the fruitful land was a desert" [4.26]. There Israel was to enjoy the produce of this garden, reminiscent of the Garden of Eden though *gan* is the word used for it, something encloses with trees. However, the opposite happened. Israel is marked by having been exiled from Eden which when as vs. 7 says, comes into "my land" or the Lord's land, *'erets* (cf. vs. 15) being more than a physical spot but essentially as home, she defiled it, *tame'* as making it unclean. "They have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name to defile it" [7.30]. Also Israel had made this garden also called the Lord' heritage an abomination, *nachalah* and *tohevah* (that which is abhorred) with the verb *sum* which connotes a placing and therefore something permanent. As for the two nouns: "A heritage most beautiful of all nations" [3.19] and "Were they ashamed when they committed abomination [6.15]?"

In vs. 8 Jeremiah singles out three categories of people responsible for Israel's well-being, but all have failed miserably.

1) The priests (*kohen*, cf. vs. 26) who didn't ask "Where is the Lord?" They are handlers of the *torah*, *taphash* meaning to take hold of and keep as in 46.9: "Men of Ethiopia and Put who handle the shield, men of Lud, skilled in handling the bow." As for

torah, cf. 6.19: “And as for my law, they have rejected it.” In sum, the priests are noted for not knowing the Lord, *yadah* implying intimate knowledge. “Know and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the Lord your God” [vs. 19]. Of all three groups, this one is supposed to excel in such *yadah*.

2) Next come the rulers which literally read shepherds, *rahaḥ* being a participle meaning to feed. “Shepherds with their flocks shall come against her” [6.3]. In the verse at hand they trespassed against the Lord, *pashaḥ* also as to rebel and with the preposition *b-*, “rebelled in me.” “You have all rebelled against me” [vs. 29].

3) Finally we have the prophets who prophesied by (*b-*, in) Baal who pursued what was of no profit, *yahal*. “But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit” [vs. 11]. Jeremiah was quite familiar with these prophets under whose influence he had lived, for example, King Jehoiakim mentioned in Chapter One.

Vs. 9 begins with *laken* or therefore, indicative even before he goes further that the Lord already has and is continuing to take drastic steps to remedy the situation just described. When he means contend or *ryv* (to plead a case), it’s with *hod* or still...that the Lord has been doing this since Israel had been in the Sinai desert right up to the present. Despite the long, drawn-out affair, undoubtedly he will win. “Why do you complain against me [vs. 29]?”

In vs. 10 the Lord invites...one could say almost taunt...Israel to travel from Cyprus to Kedar in order to examine closely if any such thing as he had described is true. In short, go and find out for yourselves. The verb *byn* or to understand is used along with the adverb *me’od*, “to understand excessively.” “Consider and call for the mourning women to come” [9.17]. This leads to another rhetorical question in vs. 11, that is, concerning a nation (*goy*, cf. 1.10) which has changed its gods even if they didn’t exist, the verb being *mur* as in 48.11: “and his scent is not changed.” *Mur* as used is transferred over to Israel with respect to their innate glory for that which is worthless, *yahal* (cf. vs. 8), *kavod* being found next in 13.16: “Give glory to the Lord your God before he brings darkness.”

Vs.s 12-13 has the Lord turning attention away from Israel, telling the heavens above to be appalled, *shamam* also as to be desolate and rhyming with *shamym*. “The priests shall be appalled and the prophets astonished” [4.17]. He also tells the heavens to be shocked and utterly desolate, *sahar* and *charav*, the former also as to be afraid and the latter to be laid waste. “Before him is a devouring fire, round about him a mighty tempest” [Ps 50.3]. “Slay and utterly destroy after them, says the Lord” [50.21]. The reason for this attitude? Israel has committed two evils (*rah*, cf. vs. 3) made all the more poignant by calling her “my people,” that is, very personal. The two are:

1) Forsook the Lord, *hazav* (cf. 1.17) also as to abandon the fountain of living waters, *maqor* as in 9.1: “O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears.”

2) Hewed out cisterns or *bo’r*, this term in contrast to the naturalness of *maqor*. This

is the only use of the noun in the Bible but closely related to one of a similar spelling. The very act of hewing or *chatsav* means applying oneself to digging where it isn't required as with a fountain. "And he set stone cutters to prepare dressed stones for building the house of God" [1Chron 22.2]. In the verse at hand, these cisterns which are in the ground are broken or *shavar*. "For long ago you broke your yoke and burst your bonds" [vs. 20].

Vs. 14 has another rhetorical question by the Lord addressed to Israel, this time with regard to being a slave or *heved* as well as a servant who is born at home. "I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them" [17.20]. If this is so, then why has Israel become prey or *baz*, this also as spoil. "Your wealth and your treasures I will give as spoil without price" [15.13].

In vs. 15 Israel has become prey to a lion which roared again her, *sha'ag*. "The Lord will roar from on high" 25.30]. Just as in that verse, lions similarly and literally "give their voices." This *sha'ag* is so loud, if you will, that it lays waste Israel, *shamah* also as astonishment and makes no one able to live in any of her cities. *Gan* or moreover functions here like the conjunctive *v-* beginning vs. 16 to show the close connection between this and invaders singled as coming from Memphis and Tahpanhes as having broken the crown of Israel's head.

Vs. 17 has another rhetorical question—the large number of them indicative of the Lord's great displeasure with his people—that they have brought this calamity upon themselves by forsaking (*hazav*, cf. vs. 13) the Lord who had led them in his way, *derek* which also means a journey. *Derek* is found in vs. 18 literally as "to the way to Egypt." In other words, Israel wants to return to the place of slavery and drink the Nile River's water. The same applies to Assyria.

Instead of the Lord taking it out on Israel, vs. 19 says that her own wickedness and apostasy will do the job, *rah* (cf. vs. 13) and *meshuvah*, the latter literally as a turning away. "Have you see what she did, that faithless one, Israel" [3.6]? As for the former, it will chasten and as for the latter, reprove, *yasar* and *yakach*. *Yasar* has a positive side, to instruct and to correct. "Correct me, O Lord, but in just measure" [10.24]. "Let no man strive nor reprove another" [Hos 4.4].

In this same verse (19) the Lord warns Israel both to know and to see (*yadah* and *ra'ah*, vs. 8 and vs. 10 but not noted there) it's evil and bitter (*rah* and *mar*, vs. 19 and 4.18) to forsake or *hazav*. This verb means to abandon as in vs. 17 him simply because Israel lacks fear of the Lord, *pachdah* being the only use of this noun in the Bible which is rendered here literally and directly as "no fear to (*el*) you."

In vs. 20 "long ago" isn't specified but most likely refers to Israel in the Sinai Desert or when she broke her yoke bonds (*hol* and *moser*). She proclaimed boldly that she won't serve

the Lord, the common verb *havad* also as to be a slave, both found together in 5:5: “But they all alike had broken the yoke, they had burst the bonds.” However, Israel exchanged free bondage, as it were, to the Lord, for worship of idols (though the verse doesn’t mention it except for hills and trees) as well as degrading herself to the role of a harlot, the participle *zannah* as in 3:3: “Yet you have a harlot’s brow, you refuse to be ashamed.”

The Lord planted Israel as a choice vine or *soreq* in vs. 21, most likely referring to the newly re-possessed land of Canaan, the only other biblical reference being Is 5.2, the context being similar, that is, a vineyard: “He digged it and cleared it of stones and planted it with choice vines.” This vine contained seed that was choice, the noun *‘emeth* being used, literally as “seed of truth.” “If you swear, ‘As the Lord lives,’ in truth, in justice and in uprightness” [4.2]. Right after this comes another rhetorical question which at this stage is becoming quite embarrassing for Israel. She has become degenerate, that is, a wild vine, the verb being *haphak*. “Why has every face turned pale” [30.6]? The adjective *nakry* is used which connotes being strange or alienated. “The children of strangers” [Is 2.6].

In vs. 22 Israel attempts to clean herself with lye and soap or *neter* and *boryth* (Prov 25.20 and Mal 3.2 are the only other biblical references accordingly). Despite use of such strong cleaning material, she can’t get rid of the stain of her guilt (*havon*, cf. 3.13), the verb being *katim*, a word which is used only once. The picture is of Israel as someone desperately scrubbing herself made all the more pathetic by reason of doing this “before me” or before the Lord. This attempt to remove what can’t be removed leads to a further rhetorical question in vs. 23, namely, that Israel tries to justify herself by saying she isn’t defiled or *tame’* (cf. vs. 7) which is equivalent to going after the Baals (cf. 2.8).

In this same verse (23) the Lord bids Israel to consider her way or *derek* (cf. vs. 17), that is, her manner of life, in the valley, singular being used which can be indicative of her favorite hideaway from the Lord. There she took refuge to engage in illicit sexual activity as a restive young camel and wild ass. The adjective *qal* as restive means light or swift. “The swift cannot flee away nor the warrior escape” [46.6]. As for the wild ass, it enjoys sniffing the wind in her heat, *sha’aph* being the verb meaning to pant hard. “The wild asses stand on the bare heights, they pant for air like jackals” [14.6]. No one can restrain the lust of such an animal, *shuv* meaning to turn back. “If you return, I will restore you” [15.19]. At the same time anyone who seeks out Israel as this lustful animal won’t grow weary, *yahaph* also as to faint. “And the nation weary themselves only for fire” [51.58].

In vs. 25 the Lord mockingly encourages Israel to keep her sandals on and to drink plenty of water to which she responds that she is compelled to go after strangers whom she has loved strangers. *Zur* is the participle fundamentally as to turn aside; compare with *nakry* in vs. 21, similar in meaning. “And scattered your favors among strangers under every green tree” [3.13].

Next in vs. 26 the Lord compares Israel along with her kings, princes, priests and prophets to the shame experienced by a thief, *bosh* as in vs. 36: “You shall be put to shame by Egypt as you were put to shame by Assyria.” They were chiefly responsible for idol worship, calling a tree father and stone as one who had given birth, both referring to physical statues and other representations. This, as vs. 27 says, is a sign that the people have turned their backs on the Lord, *horeph* more commonly as neck which contrasts with the divine face or *panym*. For the former, cf. 7.26: “They did not listen to me or incline their ear but stiffened their neck.” So in the time of trouble or *rah*, more as evil (cf. vs. 19), Israel cries out for salvation to these idols, the verb *yashah* being used and found in the next verse.

The next rhetorical question posed by the Lord to Israel is in vs. 28 where in light of her distress he asks where are her gods now, *yashah* (verbal root for ‘Jesus’). She shouldn’t have trouble getting aide from them because they are as numerous as her cities.

Vs. 29 has another rhetorical question, of why Israel complains to the Lord, *ryv* as in 2.9 meaning to plead as case. Israel has no case to win simply because she has rebelled against the Lord, *pashah* (cf. vs. 8).

The Lord had attempted to correct Israel’s children—the generation recently born and currently learning from their parents—but in vain, *shave’* being uses in vs. 30 and found next in 4.30: “In vain you beautify yourself.” However, this younger generation failed to take divine correction, *musar* also as chastisement. “You have consumed them, but they refused to take correction” [5.3]. If this generation isn’t responsive to the Lord, let alone its parents, then all is lost. Furthermore, Israel slew the prophets sent to her just like a ravening lion, *shachat* meaning to destroy as well as to corrupt. “A destroyer of nations has set out” [4.7]. Although Jeremiah is uttering these words...these *davar*...he can’t help but think of his recent designation of a prophet, that his fate will be the same of his predecessors.

In vs. 31 the Lord shifts attention to the current generation by bidding them to hear the *davar* of the Lord. This is a preface to a rhetorical question where the Lord asks if he had been a wilderness or *midbar* to Israel, this in a negative sense and found last in vs. 24 but not noted there. Equivalent to *midbar* is *ma’peyah*, the only use of this noun in the Bible yet related closely to *’aphelah*, thick darkness. Then there follows another rhetorical question which the Lord claims that Israel poses, namely, that they are free, this freedom being that they have nothing to do with the Lord. The verb is *rud* which means to have dominion and has two other biblical references, Gn 27.40 and Hos 11.12, the former being cited here: “But when you break loose you shall break his yoke from your neck.”

In vs. 32 we have another rhetorical question, all this part of the divine *davar* communicated to Jeremiah. Israel is compared to a maiden and bride forgetful of their adornments which seems impossible on a wedding day. The common verb is *shakach* as in 3.21: “They have forgotten the Lord their God.” Such forgetfulness in both instances as well

as others in Jeremiah are voluntary...chosen deliberately...and put aptly in the verse at hand as consisting of “days without number” or literally, “days with no counting.”

The Lord mocks Israel as to directing her way (*derek*, cf. vs. 18) in a search for her lovers, the verb in vs. 33 being *baqash* which connotes a striving after. “Your lovers despise you; they seek your life” [4.30]. Mention of evil women or those who are *rah* (cf. vs. 27) is suggestive of either prostitutes or those engaged in divinization. Israel is worse than both; that is to say, she teaches (*lamad*) her *derek* to them, making them worse or the same as she. This use of *derek* is parallel to the one in the verse at hand relative to Israel’s lovers. “They have taught their tongue to speak lies” [9.5]. As for the verb *lamad*, cf. 9.5: “They have taught their tongue to speak lies.”

The blood (literally, ‘blood of souls,’ *nephesh*: cf. vs. 24 but not noted there) of innocent people or the poor who are guiltless is found on Israel’s skirt, they presumably having broken into her house. *‘Evyon* also means those who are wretched or oppressed as in 5.28: “And they do not defend the rights of the needy.” Still, in vs. 35 Israel persists in proclaiming her innocence, *naqy* being the adjective also as free from blame. “If you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow or shed innocent blood” [7.6]. Such presumed innocence leads Israel to the delusion that the Lord’s anger has turned away from her, *‘aph* also as nostrils and intimating short, heavy breathing. “For the fierce anger of the Lord has not turned back from us” [4.8].

In vs. 36 the **RSV** translates *‘azal* as to gad which means to spin or go away. “‘It is bad, it is bad,’ says the buyer; but when he goes away, then he boasts” [Prov 20.14]. Intimated here is frivolous, aimless activity while Israel changes her way, *derek* (cf. vs. 33). Earlier she had been shamed (*bosh*, cf. vs. 26) by Assyria and soon will experience the same by Egypt.

The last verse of Chapter Two has Israel being led into apparent captivity (presumably by Egypt; cf. the previous verse). She has no one to rely upon because the Lord rejected (*ma’as*, cf. 4.30) those whom she had trusted and will no longer prosper because of them, *tsalach* also as to come upon with might. “The cause of the fatherless, to make it prosper” [5.28].

2) qara’, chesed, ‘ahavah, halak, 3) qodesh, re’shyth, rah, ‘asham, 4) shamah, mishpachah, 5) havel, rachaq, hevel, haval, 6) haravah, shuchah, tsiyah, tsalmaveth, 7) karmel, ‘erets, tame’, nachalah, tohevah, sum, 8) kohen, taphash, torah, yadah, rahah, pashah, yahal, 9) ryv, 10) byn, me’od, 11) goy, mur, kavod, yahal, 12) shamam, sahar, charav, 13) rah, hazav, maqor, b’or, chatsav, shavar, 14) heved, baz, 15) sha’ag, shamah, 17) hazav, derek, 18) derek, 19) rah, meshuvah, yasar, yakach, yadah, ra’ah, rah, mar, pachdah, 20) hol, moser, havad, zanah, 21) soreq, ‘emeth, haphak, nakry, 22) neter, boryth, havon, katim, 23) qal, 24) sha’aph, shuv, yahaph, 25) zur, 26) bosh, 27) horeph, panyim, 27) rah, 28) yashah, 29) ryv, pashah, 30) shave’, musar, shachat, 31) midbar, ma’pelyah, rud, 32) shakach, 33) derek, baqash, rah, lamad, derek, 34) nephesh, ‘evyon, 35) naqy, ‘aph, 36) ‘azal, 36) derek, bosh, ma’as, tsalach

Chapter Three

If Israel entertained the thought of being in for a break after Jeremiah's introductory prophecy, she is delusional. Vs. 1 begins with *le'mor* or "saying," pretty much equivalent to v-conjunctive to show the close connection between the content of two chapters. We have no mention of the divine *davar* nor of Jeremiah, *le'mor* making this unnecessary.

The opening verse of this new chapter brings up the subject of divorce and has the Lord posing only two rhetorical questions compared with a number of them as in Chapter One. Should a woman run off with a man other than her husband, she would pollute the land. Interestingly the marriage bond and land as noted with regard to 2.7 *'erets* is more than a physical place, more a permanent dwelling set aside by the Lord. The verb meaning to pollute or to make the land unclean is *chaneph*. "Because harlotry was so light to her, she polluted the land" [vs. 9]. Thus the divorce is more far-reaching than Israel envisioned. The *chaneph* extends to Israel playing the harlot, *zanah* (cf. vs. 20) with a multitude of lovers. Here the Lord asks if she'd then return to him, this really putting Israel on the spot.

The rhetorical question in vs. 2 has the Lord asking Israel to look up to the bare heights or *shephy*, this suggestive of baldness and so high that it's above the tree line. "A voice on the bare heights is heard, the weeping and pleading of Israel's sons" [vs. 21]. This, of course, will come later to Israel's chagrin. Similarly Israel is told to look by the wayside (*derek*, cf. 2.36) as an Arab in the wilderness waiting to pounce on an unwary traveler, this resulting in polluting the land (*chaneph* again as in vs. 1) but in a vile fashion, *rah* (cf. 2.33).

Israel's harlotry caused rain and showers to cease, implying drought for the *'erets* of vs. 1. Despite this calamity, she has the brow of a harlot and refuses to be put to shame, *kalam* also as to confound. "Were they ashamed when they committed abomination" [8.12]?

Vs. 4 has the second and final rhetorical question, this time the Lord saying that Israel is being quite presumptuous in calling him father and friend from her youth, *'aluph* also as a leader of a family or tribe. "But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter" [11.19]. In other words, the Lord won't be angry forever, the verb *natar* meaning to keep as in vs. 12 with the same wording. To this the Lord simply responds that Israel had done all the evil (*rah*, cf. vs. 3) she could, taking advantage of him.

Vs.s 6-12 change style, if you will, being put in prose form which represents a time gap from the reign of Jehoiakim noted in 1.3 to now, the reign of King Josiah, both kings being dealt with in Second Kings. Regardless of which king he finds himself under, for Jeremiah the situation doesn't change. Perhaps Israel will return to the Lord, but history thus far proves it's temporary. Jeremiah knows this fact all too well yet continues to perform his function as

prophet.

Vs. 6 begins with the conjunctive *v-* which goes untranslated showing the close connection between what had occurred and what is to follow. As for Jeremiah, we have no information about him though as the conjunctive intimates, we can assume that he didn't experience a time gap between the two kings as far as being under the influence of the divine *davar*. "Days of Josiah" intimate that Jeremiah had been affected by this king who had instituted many religious reforms and took courage by that fact, namely, that his prophetic *davar* weren't in vain.

Vs. 6 has the Lord asking his prophet if he had seen what Israel had done, calling her faithless, the noun *meshuvah* meaning one who backslides and noted in 2.19. As in 2.20, this is manifested by her preference for green trees and high hills, favored places to play the harlot, *zanah*. Then in vs. 7 the Lord mistakenly thinks that Israel will return to him (*shuv*, cf. 2.24), a fact witnessed by her false sister, Judah, *bagud* being the only use of this adjective in the Bible. Just like Israel, Judah does the same, thereby doubling the grief for the Lord and Jeremiah.

Judah sees that the Lord divorced her sister and follows after her by playing the harlot, *zanah* (cf. vs. 2). Not only did this harlotry seem light (*qol*: the noun for voice perhaps mistaken for *qal* as in 2.23; cf. vs. 21) to her, she polluted (*chaneph*, cf. vs. 3) the land (*'erets*...as identified with Israel, cf. vs. 1) with adultery, stone and tree suggestive of idols. At the same time vs. 10 says that Judah had a kind of change of heart (*lev*, cf. vs. 15) insofar as she saw personal gain in her relationship with the Lord. Thus she return in pretense only, *sheqer* also as that which is false. "Truly the hills are a delusion" [vs. 23].

Vs. 11 has the conjunctive *v-* as "and" to show a continuation of the Lord speaking (*'amar* or to say, not *davar*) with Jeremiah which in vs. 12 through vs. 14 returns to a poetic style. The Lord now bids his prophet to proclaim or *qara'* (cf. vs. 4 but not noted there) these *davar* towards the north, this verb more as to cry out and north being places to which many Israelites had been exiled. Thus what follows is addressed to those exiled from their own land.

After a series of rebukes, many of which were quite strong, the Lord decides to take a new approach, one that he had in mind all along. To date he tried to shake up Israel but to no avail. Now he speaks in accord with his true nature as a loving father asking faithless (*meshuvah*, cf. vs. 6) Israel to return or *shuv* (cf. vs. 7). He won't bother looking upon her in anger which reads literally as "I will not let fall (*naphal*, cf. 6.15 but not noted there) my face in you." In sum, the Lord is too merciful, *chasyd* (related to *chesed* as in 2.9). "But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself" [Ps 4.3]. This manifestation of *chesed* counters the threat of the Lord being angry with Israel forever literally as "I will not keep (*natar*) forever" as in vs. 4.

The condition for this *chesed* is quite simple, that Israel acknowledge her guilt, the verb *yadah* and noun *havon* (2.19 and 2.22 respectively). Such *yadah* means intimate, detailed knowledge as it pertains to her rebellion, *pashah* (cf. 2.29) made all the more serious by the preposition *b-* which reads literally, “in the Lord,” not simply against him. Such rebellion takes on the concrete form of scattering favors (*davar*) among strangers, the verb *pazar* as in 50.17: “Israel is a hunted sheep.” *Zur* is a participle for strangers as in 2.25. Next the conjunctive *v-* is used as “and” to show how much this has affected the Lord because Israel had not listened (*shamah*, cf. 2.15) literally “in (*b-*) my voice.”

In vs. 14 the Lord extends an invitation for Israel as his faithless children or *shovav* to return (*shuv*, cf. vs. 7), the former derived from the latter. “Return, O faithless sons” [vs. 22]. This *shuv* of her who is *shovav* is a restoration of the Lord being master, the verb *bahal* being used which can translate as “I am your husband.” “To bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke” [cf. 31.32]. *Bahal* is the verbal root for Baal and can be taken as a play on words of exchanging worship of alien gods for the Lord... *Baal* for *bahal*. Vs. 14 continues with the Lord taking one person from a city and two from a family, the purpose of which is to bring them to Zion or Jerusalem. Zion is found next in 4.6.

Vs.s 15-18 are a shift to prose from poetry where the Lord speaks of the future restoration of Israel under responsible leaders whom he calls shepherds, the participle *rahah* meaning to feed (cf. 2.8) which is used in this verse. Even more specifically, these are to be according to the Lord’s heart or *lev* (cf. vs. 10). The fodder consists of knowledge and understanding, *dehah* and *sakal* [1Sam 2.3 and 9.24], the latter being a verb meaning to give attention to, to be prudent. Vs. 16 has Israel multiplying and increasing in the land or *erets* (cf. vs. 9), *ravah* (cf. 2.22 but not noted there) and *parah* (cf. 23.3), the latter more as to be fruitful. This twofold fecundity will cause Israel exclaim no more “the ark of the covenant of the Lord” because the Messiah will have come although this isn’t explicitly mentioned. As for this exclamation, the Lord says it will be forgotten completely, one of three phrases reading literally “not go upon the heart (*lev*, cf. vs. 15).”

“At that time” in vs. 17 refers to the arrival of the unmentioned but inferred Messiah when Jerusalem will be called “throne (*kise’*, cf. 1.15 but not noted there) of God and all nations (*goy*, cf. 2.11) shall gather together before it, *qavah* also as to wait. “We looked for peace, but no good came” [8.15]. This is reminiscent of Revelation where the throne of God plays a dominant role. The Hebrew has *shem* or name for the RSV’s “presence,” this name presumably the one revealed by the Lord to Moses in Ex 3.14 having the power to prevent Israel from being stubborn enough, *shryroth* being a noun as found next in 7.24: “But walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts.” In both verses *rah* and *lev*, vs.s 3 and 15 respectively.

Compare “in those days” of vs. 18 with “at that time” of vs. 17. Judah will be joined with

Israel and both go to the land (*‘erets*, cf. vs. 16) the Lord gave their fathers as a heritage or *nachalah* which is mentioned in 2.7.

Vs. 19 begins the poetic form of expression which continues through vs. 24 after which the remaining verses are in prose form where the Lord changes his tone of voice using *‘amar* (to speak; cf. vs. 11) twice as “I thought.” The tone is more wishful of something that could have been done, namely, setting Israel among his sons or literally “in (*b-*) his sons,” the verb being *shyith* (cf. 2.15 but not noted there) which also means to appoint. There Israel would enjoy a land or *‘erets* (cf. vs. 18) which is pleasant which reads literally as a “land of desire” or *chemdah*. “They have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness” [12.10]. This is also described as a heritage (*nachalah*, cf. vs. 18) which is the most beautiful of all nations, literally as “beauty of hosts of nations” (*goy*, cf. 2.17). *Tsevy* is a noun meaning splendor as well as gazelle: “Save yourself like a gazelle from the hunter” [Pro 6.5] and is similar in sound to *tsava’* (cf. 2.19 but not noted there) or hosts.

The Lord adds poignantly that he thought Israel would call him father and not turn from him. However, she behaved as a faithless wife, the verb *bagad* being used, to act perfidiously. “For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have been utterly faithless to me” [5.11].

Vs. 2 mentions voice, weeping and pleading or *qol* (cf. vs. 9 as lightness, perhaps mistaken as the adjective *qal*), *beky* (cf. 9.10) and *tachanunym* (cf. 31.9). All three take place on the bare heights or *shephy* as in vs. 2. It’s as though Israel’s sons chose that spot—a favorite one for their mother’s former harlotries—so their lament could resound throughout the entire land. These sons too have perverted their way or *derek* (cf. vs. 3), *havah* being the verb which means to deal perversely and in this context, the same as forgetting (*shakach*, cf. 2.32) the Lord. “Everyone deceives his neighbor, and no one speaks the truth” [9.5].

At once the Lord responds to this voice, weeping and pleading on the bare heights as he invites these faithless (*shuv*, cf. vs. 14) sons with the offer to heal this affliction, *rapha’* being the verb also as to cast down, leave off. “For I will restore health to you” [30.17]. Without missing a beat, the sons chime in, speaking for the rest of the chapter. They claim that they will return to the Lord which reads literally as “behold, we to you.” Despite this admission of dire straits and need for help, the Lord knows that these sons will falter yet again. More to prop themselves up in vs. 23 these sons call the hills a delusion as well as the orgies on mountain tops, *sheqer* (cf. vs. 10) and *hamon* fundamentally as multitude or uproar. “When he utters his voice there is a tumult of waters in the heavens” [10.13]. And so the sons acknowledge that the Lord is Israel’s salvation, *teshuhah*. “Wait for the salvation of the Lord” [Lam 3.26].

Vs. 24 has the faithless sons of Israel speak of a shameful thing or *bosheth* (cf. 2.26 but not noted there) as having devoured all that their fathers labored for. To make up for this they offer to lie down in this *bosheth* and let their dishonor cover them, *kelimah* also as

confusion and reproach. “Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten” [20.11]. They sum up their shame and willingness to repent by acknowledging that they have sinned and did not listen (*shamah*, cf. vs. 13) to the Lord’s voice, literally as “in (*b-*) voice (*qol*, cf. vs. 21) of the Lord.” While this concludes Chapter Three on a positive note, it remains to be seen if this acknowledgment of guilt and promise to return to the Lord takes hold.

1) ‘erets, chaneph, 2) zannah, shephy, 3) derek, chaneph, rah, kalam, 4) ‘aluph, natar, 5) natar, 6) meshuvah, zannah, qol, 7) shuv, 9) chaneph, ‘erets, 10) lev, sheqer, 11) ‘amar, qara’, 12) meshuvah, naphal, chasyd, natar, 13) yadah, havon, pazar, zur, shamah, 14) shuv, shovav, bahal, 15) rahah, lev, dehah, sakal, 16) ‘erets, lev, 17) kise’, goy, qavah, 18) ‘erets, nachalah, 19) shyth, ‘erets, chemdah, tsevy, tsava’, 20) bagad, 21) qol, beky, tachanunym, derek, havah, shakach, 22) shuv, rapha’, sheqer, hamon, teshuhah, 24) bosheth, 25) kelimah, shamah, qol

Chapter Four

This new chapter begins with an if...a very big if...which intimates that the Lord has gotten sufficient experience of Israel with his *davar*. This comes, of course, through Jeremiah who isn’t mentioned actually until 7.1. The Lord had extended an invitation to return or *shuv* earlier (cf. 3.21) but by now has become wary of her intent. However, the invitation to return is always there. Thus “if” sets the tone for what will follow. In the second part of vs. 1 the Lord makes clear that any *shuv* must be to him, the reason why this verb occurs a second time.

As for “if” (*im*), it serves to lay out the condition for such a return in the second sentence of vs. 1. We have the familiar request to abandon (*sur*, found next in vs. 4) worship of alien divinities which here is put in turns of abominations or *shiquts* usually in reference to idols. “They have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name to defile it” [7.30]. That verse is similar to the one at hand insofar as it’s in the Jerusalem temple, “from my presence” in vs. 1 or literally “from my face.” However, the invitation to return to the Lord demands no wavering, *nud* also as to remove. “Who will turn aside to ask about your welfare” [15.5]?

Vs. 2 begins with the conjunctive *v-* translated as “and” which continues the introductory theme of “if.” The “if” at hand consists in swearing an oath of sorts, *shavah* from which the sacred number seven is derived. “That I may perform the oath which I swore to your fathers” [11.5]. The words of this oath are “As the Lord lives” which on the surface seems simple enough. However, it’s set against a long...too long...history (and unfortunately, future) of Israel backsliding. Here it’s in truth, justice and uprightness or *‘emeth* (cf. 2.21), *mishpat* (cf. 1.16) and *tsedaqah* (cf. 9.24). Hopefully all three will have an effect upon the *goy* (cf. 3.17), most if not all of which subscribed to the above mentioned abominations. Instead, they will bless the Lord and glory in him, *barak* and *halal*, the latter also as to praise.

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord” [17.7]. “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom” [9.23].

Vs. 3 gets more specific as to whom the Lord is speaking, namely, the men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Both are to break up their ground and fallow it. This applies to land which has been plowed and harrowed but left unsown for a period in order to restore its fertility as part of a crop rotation or to avoid surplus production. The verb and noun is *nyr* (same spelling) and are found in one other biblical verse: “Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord” [Hos 10.12]. In the verse at hand, the Lord cautions further not to sow among thorns which both had been doing for some time.

When the Lord bids the two groups to circumcise themselves in vs. 4, in effect he’s reminding them to be faithful to the covenant he had made with Abraham (cf. Gn 17.9-14). The next and only time circumcision (the verb *mul*) is made in Jeremiah is 9.25: “The days are coming when I will punish all those who are circumcised but yet un-circumcised.” More specifically, this is to be done with regard to the heart or *lev* (cf. 3.16). If not, the Lord will release his wrath or *chemah* which intimates intense heat and fury as in 6.11: “Therefore I am full of the wrath of the Lord.” Once let go, nobody can stop it, *kavah* meaning to quench. “Lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour with none to quench it for Bethel” [Am 6.5]. Both the men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem are responsible by reason of their evil deeds which is rendered literally as “evil of deeds,” *roah* and *mahalah*: “Behold, I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord” [23.2]. “Your ways and your doings have brought this upon you” [vs. 18].

Vs. 5 begins with a slightly different audience, if you will, compared with vs. 3, Judah and Jerusalem. The Lord says to Jeremiah (he isn’t mentioned) that he’s to declare or *nagad* to both, this verb suggestive of speaking openly. A verse virtually identical to this one is 5.20: “Declare this in the house of Jacob, proclaim it in Judah.” Such *nagad* is to take the form of blowing a trumpet and crying out, the two similar sound verbs being *taqah* and *qara’*, [cf. 6.1 and 3.11 respectively]. Some kind of invasion is about to happen (‘evil from the north,’ vs. 6) meaning everyone must take shelter in cities which are fortified, *mivtsar* (cf. 1.18 but not noted there) being a noun for stronghold.

Chief among these fortified cities is Jerusalem which vs. 6 calls Zion toward which a standard is to be raised, *nes* also as a military banner. “How long must I see the standard” [vs. 21]? Apparently this *nes* will be a sign for many to take refuge, *huz* being the verb which literally means to be strong. “Flee for safety, O people of Benjamin from the midst of Jerusalem” [6.1]! Word got out quickly about an invasion from the north as noted back in 1.13. Without mentioning any nation, vs. 7 describes this nation as a lion and destroyer of nations, *mashchyth*. “Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain” [51.25]. Also land = waste and cities = ruins. The second noun of the first pair is *shamah* (cf. 2.15); as for the second, we have the verb *natsah* which also means to strive against. “These are the Dathan

and Abiram...who contended against Moses and Aaron" [Num 26.9].

In vs. 8 those in Judah and in Jerusalem are to gird themselves with sackcloth, lament and wail, *saphad* and *yatal*, the former as to beat the breast. Both are found in 49.3: "Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai is laid waste! Cry, O daughters of Rabbah! Gird yourselves with sackcloth, lament and run to and fro among the hedges!" The reason for both? Through this not yet mentioned invader from the north the Lord expresses his fierce anger, literally as "heat of anger" which consists of *charon* and *'aph* (cf. vs. 26 and 2.35 respectively).

Vs. 9 begins with the conjunctive *v-* which goes untranslated and is in reference to "that day" meaning the time of the invasion from the north which still isn't given, this phrase being more as a warning to Israel to prepare for it. Unfortunately for the people, the leadership will falter—fail, appalled and astounded. The first is *'avad* (cf. 10.15) or to perish with *lev* (cf. vs. 4), heart; the second is *shamah* as in vs. 7; the third is *tamah* also as to marvel as in Is 13.8: "They will look aghast at one another."

After having engaged in this prophecy about Israel, Jeremiah interrupts his prophetic role as medium of the divine *davar* and confronts the Lord. He does so spontaneously, his outrage building the more he *davar* about his fellow Israelites. This must have caught the Lord off guard but lets him speak anyway. Jeremiah claims that the Lord has been deceiving Israel, *nahsa'*: "The horror you inspire has deceived you" [49.16]. He cites what he thinks are the Lord's own words to Israel, "It shall be well with you," these words not found exactly but implied by the good things the people will enjoy should they return to the Lord. *Shalom* is the word for well: "Saying 'peace, peace' when there is no peace" [6.14]. Apparently while the Lord is uttering these words of deception, he's sending a sword right into their soul or *nephes* (cf. 2.34).

Vs. 11 begins literally as "in (*b-*) that time" referring to the impending invasion of which Israel had been warned and hopefully prepared. Note the words, "It will be said" as opposed to directly from the Lord or through Jeremiah though the source is obvious. Putting it this way has a more ominous ring to it. Earlier the north was specified, but a wind (*ruach*, cf. 2.24 but not noted there) which is hot implies a sirocco which comes from the south. As for the adjective *tsach*, it connotes clearness. "My beloved is white and ruddy" [Sg 5.10]. And so this barrels down from the bare heights (*shephy*, cf. 3.2) down into the desert which it picks up steam, having the "daughter of my people" in its sights.

This sirocco as the **RSV** calls it, isn't to winnow or to cleanse (*zarah* and *barar*, cf. 15.7 and 51.11 respectively) as Israel might hope but is "too full" in the sense of too strong for these two purposes. In sum, this offers an opportunity for the Lord to speak in judgement, *mishpat* (cf. vs. 2).

Vs. 13 continues to describe this ominous storm coming supposedly from the south in

terms of the Lord himself, clouds and whirlwind (*suphah*; cf. Hos 8.7), the latter as chariots drawn by horses which are swifter than an eagle. This makes the people cry out *oy* (cf. vs. 31) or “woe” because they recognize that ruin has come upon them, *shadad*. “Disaster follows hard on disaster, the whole land is laid waste” [4.20]. However, the Lord offers last-minute salvation provided that Jerusalem wash evil (*rah*, cf. 3.3) from her heart (*lev*, cf. vs. 9), the verb *yashah* (cf. 2.28).

Vs. 14 concludes with a rhetorical question, more as a plea, with the Lord asking Jerusalem as to how long will evil thoughts reside in her, *lun* being the verb which means to pass the night. “Like a wayfarer who turns aside to tarry for a night” [14.8]? In the verse at hand, such *lun* is *qerev* or in the very center or interior of Jerusalem. The two words *machasheveth* and *aven* read together literally as “machinations of iniquity” [cf. 6.19 and vs. 15 respectively], the latter also as falsehood and wickedness.

Vs. 15 has a voice (*qol*, cf. 3.25) declaring and proclaiming, *nagad* and *shamah* (cf. vs. 5 and 3.25 respectively), the latter more literally as “causing to be heard” as it pertains to evil, *aven* (cf. vs. 14). Both verbs are with respect to two others in vs. 16, *zakar* (cf. 2.2 but not noted there) and *shamah* (vs. 15), warning and announcing. For those in Jerusalem the warning is somewhat confusing because it includes the unknown “he is coming” which most likely refers to the Lord along with beseigers from an equally unknown land put only as distant. In other words, they are virtually unknown. As for the latter, they’re described colorfully as keepers of a field surrounding Jerusalem, the image conjuring up reapers who soon will cut down the inhabitants of the city. All this came about due to the people having rebelled against the Lord (*marah*) though they seem to be clueless as to how or why they caused this sad state of affairs. “But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart” [5.23].

Due to the refusal of the people to acknowledge their rebellious nature, in vs. 18 the Lord puts it to them, namely, that their ways and doings (*derek* and *mahalal*, cf. 3.21 and vs. 4 respectively) have brought this upon them. He calls it their doom or *rah* (cf. vs. 14) which is *mar* (cf. 2.19) or bitter. Even more poignantly, the Lord says that this *rah* has reached (*nagah*, cf. 1.9 as touch) literally “upon (*hal-*) their heart” or *lev* (cf. vs. 14). In other words, it has leaped upon them and won’t let them go.

In vs. 19 Jeremiah...or is the Lord?...both being the same through impartation of *davar*, he exclaims about his anguish or *mehah* which also means bowels. “Your offspring would have been like the same and your descendants like its grains” [Is 48.19]. In contrast to Jerusalem’s heart, we have that of the Jeremiah which beats so wildly that he can’t keep silent, *charash* which also means to plow. “So they left of speaking with him” [38.27]. This beating is so loud that Jeremiah can’t hear the trumpet which sounds a warning for battle. With this in mind, vs. 20 speaks of disaster following upon disaster—a heartbeat counter to Jeremiah’s if you *will-shever* (cf. vs. 6 but not noted there) being the noun also as a breaking or fracture. This verse concludes with the land being laid waste, *shadad* (cf. vs. 13 but not noted there).

The second sentence in vs. 20 says that Jeremiah's tents and curtains are destroyed which must have made him think of the ironical application of Is 54.2: "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out." This is followed by Jeremiah sickened by hearing the standard of the enemy and hearing its trumpet blasts, *nes* and *shophar* (cf. vs. 6 and vs. 5, the latter not noted there).

In vs. 22 Jeremiah speaks...*davar*...on behalf of the Israelites whom he calls, rather personalizes, as "my people." They are marked by the following three:

1) Foolish or *'evyl*, this connoted impiety. "Some were sick (fools) through their sinful ways" [Ps 107.17]. The impiety comes in because Israel doesn't know the Lord, *yadah* (cf. 3.13).

2) Stupid (as children) or *sakal* which connotes wickedness. "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people" [5.21]. The opposite of *sakal* in this verse is *byn* or understanding, this being the verbal root for the preposition "between." Thus to have *byn* implies being able to see in between things and events.

3) Skilled or *chakam* (verbal root is wisdom). "How can you say, 'We are wise' [8.8]? *Rah* (cf. vs. 18) or evil is the object of this skill. *Yadah* is used a second time with regard to ignorance concerning what's good.

Between vs. 23 and 26 Jeremiah engages in looking, *ra'ah* (cf. 2.19) being the most common verb for this. In each verse it's coupled with *hineh* (cf. 1.15) or "lo." It should be noted that these verses are an interval of sorts in that they are in between the Lord *davar* to Jeremiah which picks up again at vs. 27 through the rest of this chapter:

1) On earth (*'erets*, cf. 3.19) which was *tohu* and *bohu*, the same as in Gn 1.2: "The earth was without form and void." The major difference is that in the verse at hand there's no creative Spirit hovering upon the face of the waters. As for the heavens above, they lacked light.

2) Mountains were quaking and hills moving to and fro, *rahash* and *qalal* (8.16 and 6.14 respectively, the latter also as to be swift, light).

3) No one was present as well as birds.

4) The land which had been fruitful: *karmel* to *midbar* or desert (2.7 and 2.31 respectively). Also cities were in ruins, *natats* also as to cast down (cf. 1.10 but not noted there). The Lord's fierce anger caused this, *hamon* and *'aph* (cf. 3.22 and vs. 8 respectively).

Vs. 27 resumes the Lord speaking (*'amar*, not *davar*, cf. 3.11) where he lays it on thick, that the entire *'erets* (cf. vs. 23) becomes a desolation, *shemamah* not unlike *tohu* and *bohu* of vs. 23. "Lest I make you a desolation, an uninhabited land" [6.8]. Despite such extreme words the Lord relents, this indicated by the conjunctive *v-* translated as "yet." In other words, he won't make a full end, *kalah*. "Go up through vine-rows and destroy but make not a full end" [5.10]. Vs. 28 continues this theme despite the Lord making the earth mourn and heavens blackening, that is to say, he has *davar* and well as *zamam*, the latter connoting to propose to

oneself. “For the Lord has both planned and done what he spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon” [51.12]. Also the Lord says that he won’t relent nor turn back, *nacham* and *shuv* [cf. 18.8 and vs. 1 respectively], the former also as to comfort.

In vs. 29 invaders flood through Israel, words reminiscent of Rev 6.16: “calling to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne.’” This is followed in the next verse by a rhetorical question as to why the people decorate themselves, the words applicable to women, while her lovers despise her, *ma’as* (cf. 2.36)...not only that, they seek her life or *nephesh* (cf. vs. 10), often used in reference to the soul or one’s inmost self.

The concluding verse of this chapter (31) has Jeremiah listening to his people crying out as a woman in travail or *chul* which also means to stay or to abide, reference here as in the process of giving birth. “Do you not tremble before me” [5.22]? While suffering this pain, the daughter of Zion exclaims “woe” or *’oy* (cf. vs. 13) because she’s fainting before those who are about to murder (*harag*; cf. 14.30) her...her *nephesh* (cf. vs. 30). *Hayeph* is the only use of this adjective in the Bible; a similar adjective exists with a slightly different spelling” 31.25: “For I will satisfy the weary soul and every languishing soul I will replenish.”

1) *shuv*, *sur*, *shiquts*, *nud*, 2) *’emeth*, *mishpat*, *tsedaqah*, *shavah*, *goy*, *barak*, *halal*, 3) *nyr*, 4) *mul*, *lev*, *chemah*, *roah*, *mahalal*, 5) *nagad*, *taqah*, *qara’*, *mivs.tar*, 6) *nes*, *huz*, 7) *shamah*, *natsah*, 8) *saphad*, *yalal*, *charon*, *’aph*, 9) *’avad*, *lev*, *shamah*, *tamah*, 10) *nasha’*, *nephesh*, *shalom*, 11) *ruach*, *tsach*, *shephy*, *zarah*, *barar*, 12) *mishpat*, 13) *suphah*, *’oy*, *shadad*, 14) *rah*, *lev*, *yashah*, *lun*, *qerev*, *machasheveth*, *’aven*, 15) *qol*, *nagad*, *shamah*, *’aven*, 16) *shamah*, *zakar*, 17) *marah*, 18) *derek*, *mahalal*, *rah*, *mar*, *nagah*, *lev*, 19) *mehah*, *charash*, 20) *shever*, *shadad*, 21) *nes*, *shophar*, 22) *’evyl*, *yadah*, *sakal*, *byn*, *chakam*, *rah*, 23) *ra’ah*, *hineh*, *’erets*, *tohu*, *bohu*, 24) *rahash*, *qalal*, 26) *karmel*, *midbar*, *natats*, 27) *’erets*, *shemamah*, *kalah*, 28) *zamam*, *nacham*, *shuv*, 30) *ma’as*, *nephesh*, 31) *chul*, *’oy*, *harag*, *nephesh*

Chapter Five

This new chapter starts off with a bang, the Lord *davar* through Jeremiah to run through Jerusalem’s streets, *shut* connoting a frantic, zipping back-and-forth as in 49.3. It’s well expressed by Satan in response to the Lord’s question as to where he had been: “Whence have you come?’ ‘From going to and fro on the earth and from walking up and down on it” [Job 1.7]. Also this opening verse is reminiscent of Wisdom in Prov 1.29: Wisdom cries aloud in the street; in the markets she raises her voice (etc)” [Prov 1.20].

In the verse at hand, the command is to both look and to take note, *ra’ah* and *yadah* (cf. 4.23 and 4.22 respectively). The purpose? To search out someone who does justice and seeks the truth, the two verbs being *baqash* (cf. 2.33) and *matsa’* (cf. 2.5 but not noted there).

Mishpat and *‘emunah* (cf. 4.12 and vs. 3) are the two objects with *baqash* applied also to the latter. If successful, the Lord will pardon Jerusalem, *salach* found next in vs. 7 and also means to forgive.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem give lip service to what’s said in vs. 1, that is, “as the Lord lives.” However, they swear falsely, *shavah* and *sheqer* (cf. 4.1 and 3.22 respectively). The latter is prefaced with the preposition *l-* reading literally “to what is false.”

In vs. 3 Jeremiah breaks his *davar* to the people and exclaims rhetorically that despite the Lord looking for truth or literally, “your eyes not to truth” or *‘emunah* (cf. vs. 1), he smote them, *nakah* found next in vs. 6. However, they experienced no anguish, *chul* (cf. 4.31) being a verb which reads “but they have not had anguish.” The same applies when the Lord consumes (*kalah*, cf. 4.27) them; they don’t receive divine correction, *ma’as* (cf. 4.30) and *mosar* (cf. 4.30 and 7.39 respectively). This is made clear by the people having made their faces harder than rock in their refusal to repent, *ma’as* used as second time and *shuv* (cf. 4.28).

Between vss. 4 and 5 Jeremiah speaks, most likely to the Lord in defense of his people saying that they are poor and lack sense, *dal* and *ya’al*. The former suggests weakness and found next in 39.10: “Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, left in the land of Judah some of the poor people who owned nothing.” As for the verb, it means to be keen on something, to be prepared. “A sword upon the diviners that they may become fools” [50.36]! Furthermore, the people don’t know (*yadah*, cf. vs. 1) the Lord’s way as well as his law (*derek* and *mishpat* or judgment, cf. vs. 4.18 and vs. 1 respectively).

Perhaps if Jeremiah goes to the leaders and *davar* with them, the situation might turn out better, for he believes...and naively so...that they know both the way and law of the Lord, *yadah* with regard to both *derek* and *mishpat*, all three found in vs. 1. To his chagrin it turns out they were just as bad, having broken both the divine law put in terms of a yoke and bonds or *hol* and *moser*, both found in 2.20. Because of their transgressions and apostasies mentioned in vs. 6, the lion, wolf and leopard will devour them, *peshah* and *meshuvah* (cf. Lam 1.5 and 3.12 respectively). The latter has the verb *hatsam* meaning to increase or be firm. “I have made their widows more in number than the sand of the seas” [15.8].

After coming away disillusioned from the leaders, in vs. 7 Jeremiah poses a rhetorical question to them as well as to the people, *davar* in the name of the Lord as to pardoning them, *salach* hearkening back to vs. 1. They have forsaken the Lord which is equivalent to swearing by no gods, *hazav* and *shavah* (cf. 2.17 and vs. 2 respectively). In place of having fed the people—*savah* (cf. 44.16) being a play on *shavah*—everyone went off to commit adultery and visit harlots, the graphic verb *gadad* fundamentally as to cut oneself, as if pushing and shoving to go there. “No one shall lament for them or cut himself or make himself bald for them” [16.6].

Because everyone resembled lusty stallions going after the wives of their neighbors, the Lord asks rhetorically in vs. 9 whether or not he'll punish and avenge himself because of them, *paqad* and *naqam* (cf. vs. 29 for both; also cf. 1.10 for the former).

In vs. 10 the Lord gets down to business by ordering Jeremiah to destroy (*shachat*, cf. 2.30) the vine-rows of Israel. At the same time he isn't to do so fully or make a *kalah* as full end as in 4.27. Similarly he is to strip away the branches which is reminiscent of Jn 15.2: "Every branch that bears no fruit, he takes away." All in all, both the house of Israel and Judah haven't been faithful to the Lord which is rendered literally and vividly as "treacherous they are treacherous in (*b-*) me." *Bagad* and *bagod* (cf. 3.20 and vs. 3.10 respectively). This is manifested in vs. 12 by having spoken falsely (*kachash*) "in (*b-* again) the Lord," this verb also as to lie or to deceive. "But he lied to him" [1Kg 13.18]. In short, the people believe that the Lord won't bring any evil (*rah*, cf. 4.22) upon them. Even the prophets—and this hits home with Jeremiah—speak wind or *ruach* (cf. 4.11) which is true but *ruach* in reality a wholly different way, that is, not as spirit.

Vs. 14 begins ominously with *laken* or therefore meaning it's time for the Lord to respond to the way the people have *davar* their *davar*—spoken their word (the **RSV** has a footnote saying 'you' instead of 'they'). He will making his own *davar* a fire in their mouths with them being wood to fuel it. Furthermore, the Lord will bring a far-off nation (*goy*, cf. 4.2) mentioned in 4.16 which will turn out to be Babylon. The Lord describes it as being enduring and ancient, and that the Israelites won't be able to understand their language. *'Eyatan* is the adjective for enduring which is a noun meaning strength. "Behold, like a lion coming up from the jungle of the Jordan against a strong sheepfold" [49.19]. Vss. 16-17 describe how this nation will devour not only Israel's produce but her children.

In vs. 18 the Lord reiterates his words of vs. 10 ('but make not a full end,' *kalah*) which could have gotten lost easily by the Israelites after hearing such dire news as to their fate. "But even in those days" begins with the conjunctive *v-* where *gan* ('even') underscores his concern for the people. Anticipating a response from the people to Jeremiah for such calamity, the Lord bids him with equally frightful words but not pertaining to their utter destruction. Jeremiah reminds them of their principle fault, of having forsaken (*hazav*, cf. vs. 7) the Lord in favor of foreign gods, *nekar* being the adjective suggestive of strangeness. "Why have they provoked me to anger...with their foreign gods [8.19]? They had done this in their own land or *'erets*, this word driving home what comes next. Instead of engaging in apostasy in the comfort of their own place, the people will serve strangers in an *'erets* not their own. *Zur* (cf. 3.13) is the participle which also means to turn aside, especially in reference to another nation, thus its from *nekar*. And so ends the bittersweet words with no response recorded, after which Jeremiah continues his usual prophetic words.

It's to Israel's credit that the people haven't risen up and stoned Jeremiah by now. At least

they are listening or seem to do so. And so vs. 20 begins with two forms of making known what's on the Lord's mind, *nagad* and *shamah* together as in 4.15. Vs. 21 follows with another use of *shamah*, this time directly as to hear and calls the people foolish and senseless or *sakal* (cf. 4.22), the latter reading literally as "there is no heart" [*lev*, cf. 4.18]. This is borne out by having eyes yet not seeing and having ears but not hearing, the latter yet another instance of *shamah*.

With words that smack of the Lord being affronted, vs. 22 poses two rapid-fire rhetorical questions. They deal with the people neither fearing nor trembling, *yare'* and *chul*, cf. 3.8 but not noted there and vs. 3 respectively. Right after this the Lord speaks of having put the sea as a boundary, that is, to the west, whereas the impending invasion and subsequent exile seem to point to the east. Despite that formidable barrier, the heart (*lev*, cf. vs. 21) of the people has one that's even more formidable but in the negative sense, rebellious and having turned away, two similar sounding words being *sarar* and *sur* (cf. 4.1). As for the former which contains both, cf. 6.28: "They are all stubbornly rebellious, going about with slanders."

Vs. 24 laments how the Israelites fail to say in their hearts (*lev*, cf. vs. 23) that they should fear (*yare'*, cf. vs. 22) the Lord. They're interested only in the material benefit of him providing rain in both spring and autumn, this vital for a successful harvest which means holding a celebration. However, her iniquities and sins (*havon* and *chata'th*, cf. 3.13 and 14.10 respectively) prevented them from coming. Vs. 26 narrows down the collective guilt of Israel a bit by saying that wicked men (*rashah*) are among them. "Why does the way of the wicked prosper" [12.1]? They aren't out in the open but lurking and laying in wait behind the scenes. Chances are that the Lord has in mind many leaders of Israel who have profited from their treachery or *mirmah* also as deceit. "Heaping oppression upon oppression and deceit upon deceit, they refuse to know me, says the Lord" [9.6]. All the while such persons have grown fat and sleek (*shaman* and *hashath*, the latter being the only other use of this verb in the Bible, Dt 32.15 and Jon 1.6).

Vs. 28 continues with this denouncement, about not knowing any bounds to their wickedness rendered by *davar* and *rah* (cf. vs. 12), which could be rendered literally as "words of evil." Also they're merciless toward the fatherless and need, prompting the Lord to ask rhetorically in vs. 29 that he's bound to both punish and avenge himself against them, *paqad* and *naqam*, both found in vs. 9).

Chapter Six draws to a close with the Lord saying that an appalling and horrible event has transpired, *shamah* and *shaharur* (cf. 4.7 and 23.14, the latter being the only other biblical reference). It consists of prophets engaging in false prophecy (*sheqer*, cf. vs. 2) and priests ruling in accord with their personal whims (literally, 'ruling on their hands,' that is, of the people). What's so telling about this is that the people not only consent, they love (*'ahav*, cf. 2.25 but noted there) this corrupt situation. This is followed by an equally telling question

both rhetorical and direct when the Lord asks what will the people do when the end comes, implying the imminent Babylonian invasion.

1) shut, ra'ah, yadah, baqash, matsa', derek, mishpat, 'emunah, salach, 2) shavah, sheqer, 3) 'emunah, nakah, chul, kalah, ma'as, shuv, mosar, 4) dal, ya'al, yadah, mishpat, 5) yadah, derek, mishpat, hol, moser, 6) peshah, meshuvah, hatsam, 7) salach, hazav, savah, gadad, 9) paqad, naqam, 10) shachat, kalah, 11) bagad, bagod, 12) bagad, rah, kachash, 13) ruach, 15) goy, 'eyatan, 18) kalah, 19) hazav, nekar, 'erets, 20) nagad, shamah, 21) shamah, sakal, lev, shamah, 22) yare', chul, 23) lev, sarar, sur, 24) lev, yare', 25) havon, chata'th, rashah, 27) mirmah, 28) shman, hashath, rah, 29) paqad, naqam, 30) shamah, shaharur, sheqer, 31) 'ahav