JEREMIAH CLOSER UP

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THE PROPHET AND THE BOOK

Jack R. Lundbom

To
William L. Holladay
with whom I first studied Jeremiah at the
Near East School of Theology, Beirut

CONTENTS

Jeremiah Closer Up. Closer up from what? Much current Jeremianic schol-
arship, whether it reverts to the radical source-critical work of Bernhard
Duhm, or builds on Duhm and form criticism (substituting 'traditions'
for 'sources') in doing redaction criticism, or brings ideology into the
enterprise, leaves us with a prophet who has disappeared from view,
or nearly so, and a book the composition of which has disappeared
into a hazy mist of the middle exilic, late exilic, or postexilic periods.
Some would say all three. Much of this current work, in my opinion, is
highly subjective, and at best—not to say what it is at worst—becomes
an exercise in scholarly ingenuity. Often it depreciates beyond any rea-
sonable bound the biblical witness, substituting in its place the scholar's
own imagined reconstruction of how things really played out. My work
in Jeremiah proceeds along other methodological lines, also bringing in
at points the fruit of other scholarly work I find to be credible. I work
then not with just one method, but with a plurality of methods.

So far as the book of Jeremiah is concerned, I follow my teacher
David Noel Freedman in taking its completion in both Babylon and
Egypt prior to 560, roughly the same time the Primary History (Genesis
through 2 Kings) was completed. Freedman dates the postscript in Jer.
52.31-34 and 2 Kgs 25.27-30 to c. 560. By the middle of the sixth century
the tie had been made between the completed book of Jeremiah and
the completed Primary History. My text-critical work on the Hebrew
and (shorter) Greek (LXX) texts of Jeremiah, which is presented in the
lead essay, has led me to the conclusion that LXX Jeremiah was trans-
lated from a Hebrew text surviving in Egypt that suffered substantial
word loss (haplography), a common scribal error, over a period of some
350 years. A fragment of the short Hebrew text turned up at Qumran
(4QJer^b). The longer Hebrew text then has not undergone large scale
expansion, and stands as the better text of Jeremiah. This effectively
rules out a writing and editing of the Jeremiah book in the middle exilic,
late exilic, or postexilic periods.

A modest foray into form criticism led me to conclude that Baruch
ben Neriah, and to a lesser extent his brother Seraiah, were the scribes
of record writing, compiling, and editing the Jeremiah book. This effec-
tively rules out oral tradition in any appreciable amount functioning

to preserve traditions about Jeremiah. The book was largely—one is tempted to say entirely—a scribal work from the time Jeremiah's first scroll of oracles was written up in 605. The idea that traditions about Jeremiah survived in oral tradition for a significant period is a romantic assumption surviving from early form criticism, and does not make a whole lot of sense if (1) the late 7th century was a 'scribal age', as Muilenburg claimed it was both in Israel, Assyria, and elsewhere in the ancient Near East; and (2) we have a clear statement in chap. 36 of the Jeremiah book that the prophet's words were committed to writing in 605, and that this scroll when rewritten after its destruction by the king was enlarged with more writing of the same (Jer. 36.32).

So far as Jeremiah the prophet is concerned, I think the book as we now have it gives a rather good look at the man and the ministry he carried out, in some cases a considerably sharpened look at his preaching over against the audience he addressed. This conclusion comes not simply from a renewed attempt to do the sort of historical criticism carried on by Jeremiah scholars in the last century, although I have never reacted against John Skinner and others the way Robert Carroll has. True, we are not as confident today about historical conclusions reached earlier, which means we need to correct those views, not jettison the historical quest altogether. It is naïve to think we can dispense entirely with historical criticism.

My primary method in working with the text of Jeremiah has been rhetorical criticism, which treats with greater respect and leads to a greater respect for the text that has come down to us. Rhetorical criticism has brought the prophet into much clearer focus, particularly as he and his preaching are seen over against the audience originally addressed. With a proper delimitation of oracles—in both poetry and prose—we see more clearly the arguments that are going on. We have a sharpened view on the many dialogues in the preaching, and how the laments in some cases have been integrated into other literary genres. I have attempted a close reading of the text, letting it give the message to me rather than me bringing my own views to the text. When the text speaks to issues in the current day, as often it does, then applications can and should be made. But I begin with the biblical text, not with theory or ideology, convinced that battles in our discipline are won or lost ultimately on the ground, not in the air.

If there is a thread running through the present collection of essays, the first three of which deal mainly with the book of Jeremiah, and the remaining five of which deal with Jeremiah the prophet and his preaching, it is that by a proper and careful reading of the biblical text and the employment of relevant methodologies both the prophet and the book can be seen closer up than many present-day commentators imagine.

Needless to say, we are still dealing with an ancient book emanating from a world far removed from our own, and whatever confidence I have expressed in the veracity of the biblical witness should not be taken to mean that we can know all we wish to know. There are still plenty of questions that remain, and much depends on interpretation, but one can do much better in the study of Jeremiah than wander aimlessly in ambiguity and darkness.

The first and third essays reproduce and expand slightly a lecture on 'Text, Composition, and Historical Reconstruction in Jeremiah' that was given at the University of California, San Diego, Cambridge University, and most recently at Durham University. This lecture was published in the short-lived journal, *The Biblical Historian* 2/1 (2005), pp. 1-11. Portions of this article reprinted here were undertaken with the kind permission of the editor of this journal, David Miano. The essay on 'Rudimentary Logic in Jeremiah' is here presented for the first time.

The essay on 'The Laments of Jeremiah' was presented as a lecture in February, 2007 to students in a Psalms class conducted by my colleague, Dr Brooks Schramm, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, PA. It was later given in September, 2008 to theological students at the Menighetsfakultet (Norwegian School of Theology) in Oslo, Norway. The essay on 'Jeremiah and the Created Order' was delivered in March, 2007 to students at the Debrecen Reformed University in Debrecen, Hungary. The essay on 'Jeremiah and the (New) Covenant' was delivered at the same time to students at Debrecen Reformed University, the Lutheran Theological University in Budapest, and the Martin Bible School in Martin, Slovakia. In September, 2008 it was given to students at the Menighetsfakultet in Oslo. These three essays were also given as lectures in 2007–2008 to my students at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong. Essays on 'Jeremiah and History' and 'Jeremiah and the Nations' are here presented for the first time.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible Series
*ANET*³	James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd edition with Supplement; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969)
ATD	Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BWAT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CB	Century Bible
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBSC	Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DLZ	*Deutsche Literaturzeitung*
EncJud	*Encyclopaedia Judaica*
EncPhil	*Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
EncRhet	*Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HebSt	*Hebrew Studies*
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IB	*Interpreter's Bible*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
Int	*Interpretation*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JDT	*Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint
M^A	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible according to the Aleppo Codex
M^L	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible according to the Leningrad Codex
M^P	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible according to the St Petersburg Codex of the Prophets
MT	Masoretic Text
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament

OTS	*Oudtestamentische studiën*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Old Testament Message
PC	Pulpit Commentary
QJS	*Quarterly Journal of Speech*
RGG²	*Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (2nd edn)
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum, Supplement Series
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

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THE TEXT OF JEREMIAH

The LXX and MT

The text of Jeremiah has attracted considerable attention over the past two centuries. The LXX is one-eighth shorter than MT (Graf: 2700 words less), and orders its materials differently after 25.13a. Scholarly work on the text up through the 1960s is summarized in Gerald Janzen's 1963 Harvard dissertation, published a decade later.[1] Janzen included in his work transcriptions of two Dead Sea Scroll fragments,[2] 4QJer[a] and 4QJer[b], and reported how 4QJer[b] had come to impact the study of the Jeremiah text. 4QJer[a] was the longer text represented in MT, 4QJer[b] the shorter text represented in the LXX. These two fragments, together with another from Cave IV, 4QJer[c], have now been published in their entirety by Emanuel Tov.[3] A Cave II fragment, 2QJer, was published earlier by M. Baillet.[4] Both of these latter texts are proto-Masoretic, like 4QJer[a].

Scholars of the 19th century assessed the two text traditions differently. Movers[5] favored the shorter LXX text, recognizing in it some loss due to haplography, but thinking that divergences could more often be attributed to glosses and secondary expansion. Graf[6] came to quite a different conclusion. He favored the longer MT, arguing that the LXX text was a corrupt form of the Hebrew text currently available. The problem, he said, lay mainly with the translator, who made deliberate changes.

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1. J. Gerald Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 1-9.

2. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, pp. 173-84.

3. 'Jeremiah', in Eugene Ulrich *et al.* (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4. X. The Prophets* (DJD, 15; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 145-207 + plates.

4. 'Jérémie', in M. Baillet *et al.* (eds.), *Les 'Petites Grottes' de Qumrân*, I–II (DJD, 3; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 62-69 + plates.

5. Karl Franz Movers, *De utriusque recensionis vaticiniorum Ieremiae, graecae alexandrinae et hebraicae masorethicae, indole et origine commentatio critica* (Hamburg: Fridericus Perthes, 1837).

6. Karl Heinrich Graf, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Leipzig: T.O. Weigel, 1862).

Hitzig[7] and Giesebrecht[8] in their commentaries were more or less eclectic in selecting preferred readings, with Giesebrecht paying particular attention to divergences between MT and LXX and judging the two text traditions in an even-handed manner. He believed the MT contained secondary material, but thought the LXX tended to abridge verbose passages and omit doublets in its *Vorlage*; here and there it betrayed evidence of scribal ignorance and scribal error. Giesebrecht also noted, as no scholar has since, the consistent support shown for the Hebrew text in other ancient Versions (Origen, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Lucian, Syriac, Targum Jonathan, and Vulgate). Even when he did go with the LXX, Giesebrecht would cite Versional support for MT.

But things changed considerably with Duhm,[9] who showed consistent preference for the shorter LXX. Duhm also emended the MT freely, coming up with retroverted readings from the Greek that he deemed superior to readings in MT. Also, his view that large amounts of Jeremiah prose were secondary and postexilic went well with his assumption that MT represented an expanded text. Cornill, in his textual notes and later commentary on Jeremiah,[10] worked along the same lines as Duhm, usually deleting portions of MT that were not present in LXX. A preference for LXX readings was expressed also in the studies of H.P. Smith[11] and Streane,[12] although Streane in his commentary[13] backed away from the more radical judgments of Duhm, as Peake had done in his commentary.[14]

Paul Volz, in an early study of the Jeremiah text,[15] approved generally of the shorter LXX readings, and when it came to writing his

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7.   F. Hitzig, *Der Prophet Jeremia* (2nd edn; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1866 [originally 1841]).

8.   D. Friedrich Giesebrecht, *Das Buch Jeremia* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1894).

9.   Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (KHC; Tübingen and Leipzig: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1901).

10.   Carl Heinrich Cornill, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text* (trans. C. Johnston; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1895); *Das Buch Jeremia* (Leipzig: Chr. Herm. Tauchnitz, 1905).

11.   Henry Preserved Smith, 'The Greek Translators of Jeremiah', *JTS* 4 (1887), p. 199.

12.   A.W. Streane, *The Double Text of Jeremiah together with The Lamentations* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co, 1896), pp. 3-15.

13.   A.W. Streane, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah together with The Lamentations* (CBSC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952; originally 1913).

14.   A.S. Peake, *Jeremiah*, I (CB; New York: H. Frowde, 1910); *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, II (CB; New York: H. Frowde, 1911).

15.   Paul Volz, *Studien zum Text des Jeremia* (BWAT, 25; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1920).

commentary[16] he judged a considerable number of words, phrases, messenger formulas, and entire passages in MT to be secondary, and deleted them. Of the more recent commentators who have made critical judgments of the Jeremiah text, e.g., Rudolph,[17] Bright,[18] Thompson,[19] Carroll,[20] McKane,[21] and Holladay,[22] all except Carroll and McKane have rejected the radical interpretations of Duhm, yet all continue to believe that the divergence in length between LXX Jeremiah and MT Jeremiah is largely due to MT Jeremiah being an expanded text. Holladay, who relies heavily on Janzen, usually but not always goes with the LXX in his Jeremiah commentary, and an unconcealed preference—better, a strong bias—in favor of the LXX can be seen in the Jeremiah commentary by McKane, who applies the *brevior lectio potior* ('short text is preferable') principle to virtually every variant reading in the book. One can also discern a *Tendenz* in favor of the LXX in the apparatus of *Biblia hebraica*, about which I will have more to say shortly.

The issue has mainly been whether the LXX translator abridged his Hebrew *Vorlage*, or proto-MT expanded over time by taking on secondary material. Commentators, of course, have recognized with Movers that the LXX in places is corrupt, suffering from both scribal ignorance[23] and scribal error. The most common scribal errors are haplography (accidental omissions) and dittography (accidental duplications); however, since MT is generally thought to be an expanded text, alleged dittographies in MT have tended to outnumber alleged haplographies in LXX. Even so, scribal error has remained a relatively minor issue. The main issue has been whether the LXX translator abridged his Hebrew *Vorlage*, or whether proto-MT has grown because of taking on secondary material.

16. Volz, *Der Prophet Jeremia* (KAT, 10; 2nd edn; Leipzig: A. Deichertsche Verlags-buchhandlung D. Werner Scholl, 1983; originally 1928).

17. Wilhelm Rudolph, *Jeremia* (HAT; 3rd edn; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968; originally 1947).

18. John Bright, *Jeremiah* (AB, 21; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965).

19. J.A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

20. Robert P. Carroll, *The Book of Jeremiah* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986).

21. William McKane, *Jeremiah*, I (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986); *Jeremiah*, II (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996).

22. William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah*, I (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); *Jeremiah*, II (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1989).

23. See e.g., T.K. Cheyne, *Jeremiah*, I (PC; London: Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., 1883), p. xvii; and S.R. Driver, 'The Double Text of Jeremiah', *The Expositor*, 3rd Series 9 (1889), pp. 333-36.

A Short Hebrew Text of Jeremiah

With the Dead Sea discoveries came some important conclusions regarding the transmission history of the Jeremianic text, also the text of Samuel, which, like Jeremiah, contains significant—though many fewer—variations between MT and LXX. Frank Cross has concentrated on the Qumran fragments of Samuel (4QSamᵃ, 4QSamᵇ), and found that these support the LXX, which in this case happens to be a longer text than MT. The shorter MT of Samuel is seen to have suffered rather extensively from haplography.[24] The work of Cross thus brought new respect to the earlier view of Wellhausen that LXX Samuel was a more original text than MT Samuel, and this is the generally accepted view today.

A fresh textual study of Jeremiah was left to Gerald Janzen, a student of Cross. Finding among the Dead Sea Scrolls a Hebrew fragment supporting the shorter LXX text of Jeremiah, 4QJerᵇ, even though it was a very small fragment, containing only Jer. 9.22 [Eng 9.23]–10.18, was of great significance, for now it could be argued that the shorter LXX Jeremiah was not an abridgement after all, but the translation into Greek of a Hebrew text of comparable length, localized in Egypt, where the translation was made. This view, which builds on the theoretical work of Cross regarding the history and provenance of the biblical text,[25] is now widely accepted. Cross takes proto-MT to have a Babylonian provenance, and proto-LXX to have an Egyptian provenance.

But the short 4QJerᵇ cannot be said along with LXX Jeremiah to be a better and more original text. Cross is right about LXX Samuel being a more original text than MT Samuel, where it has been demonstrated concurrently that MT Samuel has suffered considerable loss due to haplography, but comments by him[26] about 'the short, superb text of Jeremiah', made with reference to the small fragment of 4QJerᵇ containing Jer. 9.22 [Eng 9.23]–10.18, are wide of the mark. This text is in no way 'superb', but rather a corruption just like LXX Jer. 9.22 [Eng 9.23]–10.18. Both 4QJerᵇ and the LXX are in manifest disarray after 10.4, and the consensus is growing that MT 10.1-10 is much the better text—poetically, structurally, and in terms of coherence—than its shorter version.[27] Even Cornill,

24. Frank M. Cross, 'The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judean Desert', *HTR* 57 (1964), pp. 284-90; P. Kyle McCarter, *I Samuel* (AB, 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 5-8.

25. Cross, 'The History of the Biblical Text'; 'The Evolution of a Theory of Local Texts', in Frank M. Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon (eds.), *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 309.

26. Cross, 'The History of the Biblical Text', p. 298; *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (3rd edn; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), p. 181.

27. Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20* (AB, 21A; New York: Doubleday, 1999), pp. 580-82.

who was no partisan of MT, said that the LXX here was 'very corrupt and in a mutilated condition'.

Cross reached his conclusion largely on the basis of Janzen's dissertation, where Janzen was said to have shown 'that a large portion of the plusses of MT in Jeremiah stem from expansionist tendencies' and that the 'short text [of Jeremiah] represented at Qumrân and in the Septuagint is exceedingly well preserved'.[28] Janzen had indeed come to these conclusions, but neither is correct. At the same time, Janzen's work does make a contribution to the study of the Jeremiah text, and the present essay is therefore not intended simply to refute generalizations he and others have made regarding MT Jeremiah and LXX Jeremiah, but to show that when it came to identifying omissions in LXX Jeremiah attributable to haplography, Janzen did not go far enough.

Janzen does concede that 'haplography is perhaps the most common scribal error',[29] and supports this by identifying 63 probable haplographies in LXX Jeremiah.[30] Some of these he believes occurred in the transmission of the Hebrew *Vorlage*. This 'high incidence of haplography' is said to be due to an inactive history of transmission for the LXX in Egypt, during which time omissions went undetected and uncorrected.[31] Janzen, then, does not believe that shorter is always better, and to this extent he is very much in the tradition of Hitzig, Giesebrecht, Rudolph, and others who see for Jeremiah a complex textual history in which more than one tendency is at work. But in the end, Janzen sides with the majority who believe that MT Jeremiah is longer primarily because of expansion. He says that instances of conflation and expansion in MT are 'far more frequent' than omissions in LXX attributable to scribal error.[32] Janzen also believes that 4QJer[b], supporting as it does the LXX of Jer. 10.1-10, confirms the methodological validity of moving from the LXX by retroversion to a supposed Hebrew *Vorlage*.[33] Finally, Janzen follows rather often in his work commentators who imagine that scribes in the MT tradition supplemented an already embellished Jeremiah prose with yet more embellishment, quarrying words and phrases from other parts of Jeremiah or from elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

In support of his view that ancient texts expanded over time, Janzen[34] cited Albright who spoke in 1940 about 'the tendency of ancient Oriental

28. Cross, 'The History of the Biblical Text', p. 287 n. 28.
29. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 9.
30. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, pp. 117-19.
31. Janzen, 'Double Readings in the Text of Jeremiah', *HTR* 60 (1967), pp. 446-47; *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 120.
32. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 9.
33. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 7.
34. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, pp. 9, 191-92.

scribes and compilers to add rather than to subtract'.[35] Janzen speaks
further about 'the general absence of a tendency to condense in the Greek
Old Testament'.[36] This being the case, LXX Jeremiah is not likely to be an
abridgement of its Hebrew *Vorlage*. Rather, it translates a short Hebrew
text that was extant in Egypt. But this early statement by Albright does
not address the problem of scribal error. Albright later spoke specifi-
cally to scribal omissions in a statement that has gone largely unnoticed.
In it he said that there is 'increasing evidence from the Qumran Scrolls
that our Hebrew originals, once edited in antiquity, suffered far more
from omissions by copyists than from additions'.[37] Janzen, as we said,
did cite 63 probable cases of haplography in LXX Jeremiah, more than
Giesebrecht or Rudolph, and at first glance this might be thought a con-
siderable number. But one would think that a study of 'zero variants',
which is what Janzen was primarily about,[38] would have entailed exam-
ining each variant to see whether or not haplography might explain the
omission. This Janzen evidently did not do, for as it turns out, 63 LXX
haplographies fall far short of the arguable number in the book.

Haplography in the Short Hebrew Text

In my *Jeremiah* commentary for the Anchor Bible[39] I identified 330 arguable
cases of LXX haplography, most of which are the result of homoeoarcton
or homoeoteleuton.[40] This number includes 56 of Janzen's 63 examples,
to which I have added another 274 examples. The 330 haplographies
represent a loss of 1715 Hebrew words. Graf,[41] as we mentioned, stated
that LXX Jeremiah lacked 2700 words of MT Jeremiah, which means that
haplography can account for well over half this total (64%). While this
does not explain all the differences in length between MT Jeremiah and
LXX Jeremiah, it goes some distance in suggesting what has in fact taken
place. The LXX translator(s) of Jeremiah had before them a defective
Hebrew *Vorlage*, or to put it another way, they were translating from 'a
bad Hebrew Bible'. So what we have in the received text of Jeremiah is

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35. W.F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins
Press, 1940), p. 46.

36. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 9.

37. Albright, 'Some Remarks on the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy xxxii', *VT* 9
(1959), p. 341.

38. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, p. 8.

39. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36* (AB, 21B; New York: Doubleday, 2004); *Jeremiah
37–52* (AB, 21C; New York: Doubleday, 2004).

40. Lundbom, 'Haplography in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Jeremiah', *HebSt* 46
(2005), pp. 301-20.

41. *Der Prophet Jeremia*, p. xliii.

not so much proto-MT expansion by busy scribes in Babylon, but proto-LXX loss by careless and inattentive scribes in Egypt. A reason for scribal error occurring on such a large scale is not hard to find. Jeremiah poetry and prose literally teem with repetition and *accumulatio*, with the prose particularly heaping up nouns in twos, threes, and fours, and balancing longer phrases in parallelism. The likelihood of haplography occurring in discourse of this type is much greater than it would be in discourse where repetition and accumulation are rare or non-existent.

The bulk of these scribal errors occurred in the Hebrew *Vorlage* to the LXX, which is to say the shortening took place while the text was still in Hebrew, before the translation into Greek was made. I noted in my commentary only a few inner-Greek haplographies, and perhaps a more concerted effort to find errors of this type might turn up additional examples. As for omitted doublets (usually the second occurrence), and other zero variants in the LXX, it remains an open question, in my view, whether these are proto-LXX abridgements or proto-MT expansions. If it is true that ancient texts tended to expand rather than contract, then abridgement is less likely at any time. But one of my other conclusions after working through the whole of Jeremiah is that repetitions in MT not present in the LXX often show themselves to be necessary in the discourse, also in the compilation of discourse. They give structure to the prophetic oracles and provide catchwords between discourse units; if they are omitted, both the rhetoric and composition of the book are compromised. This leads me to believe that LXX Jeremiah betrays a decided aversion to repetition (like that of some modern critical scholars), providing yet another reason for opting in favor of the longer Jeremiah text.

Preference for the longer MT Jeremiah brings us into harmony with ancient authorities and ancient textual witnesses. The LXX is the only ancient witness other than 4QJer[b] to the shorter Jeremiah text. The other Versions, e.g., Origen's Hexapla, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Lucian, Targum Jonathan, Syriac, and Vulgate, consistently support MT. The Qumran fragments 2QJer, 4QJer[a], the oldest Qumran text dated c. 200,[42] and 4QJer[c], are all proto-MT. And Jerome, with very few exceptions, goes with the Hebrew in his commentary. We should also not forget that the Rabbis, at some point, rejected the shorter Jeremiah text in favor of the longer text, and this preference is reflected in the medieval Jewish commentaries of Rashi, Kimḥi, and others. So in antiquity the Hebrew text of Jeremiah was given definite preference by both Jews and Christians. It is only with nineteenth-century German scholarship, beginning with Movers, that the shorter Greek text was thought to be better.

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42. Cross, 'The Evolution of a Theory of Local Texts', p. 308.

A final word about *Biblia hebraica*, for which Rudolph Kittel was the 'Jeremiah' editor in *BH*[1], and Wilhelm Rudolph the 'Jeremiah' editor in *BH*[3] and *BHS*. Rudolph, who can be said to represent a moderate, sensible, and mid-twentieth-century consensus view regarding the text of Jeremiah, assumed with most everyone else that MT Jeremiah was larger than LXX Jeremiah because the MT preserved an expanded text. His comments—and lack of comments—in the apparatus to *Biblia hebraica* make this clear, which in turn have influenced the direction in which Jeremiah scholarship has moved. In the apparatus some LXX omissions are misleadingly reported, and many more are not reported at all. Of the omissions that are reported, in most cases no comment is made. When there is a comment, it is usually a recommendation to delete. Only in a relatively few cases is a LXX omission attributed to haplography.

In another article[43] I have given a complete listing of what *Biblica hebraica* says or does not say about the 330 arguable LXX haplographies in my list. Here, I provide simply a summary:

1. The editor of *BHS* cites without comment 152 of my 330 examples. The apparatus simply says > ⅏.
2. Of the 330 examples, in 53 cases the *BHS* editor either recommends deletion, questions deletion, says or implies that MT is expanded, or avers that the shorter LXX reading is correct. The longer MT reading is said to result from a dittography or a doublet, or more often to be an expansion taking in words from other biblical texts.
3. In 11 of the 330 examples, the *BHS* editor notes the omission but reckons it differently.
4. In 7 cases, the *BHS* editor suggests or concludes that MT suffers from corruption, and advises either emendation or relocation.
5. In 13 of the 330 examples, the editor of *BHS* says the LXX omission is attributable to haplography, homoeoarcton, or homoeoteleuton.
6. In 16 cases, the *BHS* editor fails to note a LXX omission, but does give a partial or different LXX reading.
7. There are 9 cases where the *BHS* editor does not note a LXX omission, but nevertheless takes MT to be expanded, questions whether it is expanded, or implies expansion in recommending comparison with one or more other texts.
8. There are 69 cases where the *BHS* editor makes no mention at all of a LXX omission.

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43. Lundbom, 'Haplography in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Jeremiah'.

This tally is important in two respects. First, it shows that the Jeremiah apparatus in *Biblia hebraica* fails to mention a number of LXX omissions. There are other examples besides the 69 listed here, which are only cases where I have argued that haplography explains the omission. To get the full picture, one would need to check each LXX reading against each MT reading in the whole of Jeremiah, as the apparatus in *Biblia hebraica* is incomplete and sometimes inaccurate.

Secondly, we see that where the editor(s) of *Biblia hebraica* have interpreted the data, they are clearly of the opinion that MT is an expanded text, and that the shorter LXX text is better and more likely to be original. The fact that *BHS* identifies only 13 haplographies in the book, when I have found 330 arguable cases, shows beyond any doubt that the editor(s) simply were not looking for what was there, or in this case not there, with the result that a controlling *Tendenz* caused them to misinterpret the data.

Rudimentary Logic in Jeremiah

Logic among the Ancient Greeks

Aristotle and the Syllogism

Logic today and down through the ages owes a singular debt to the ancient Greeks, Aristotle (384–322) in particular, who developed syllogistic reasoning into a system in his *Prior Analytics* I.[1] Aristotle's name for logic was 'analytics'. At the heart of Aristotle's logic was the syllogism (συλλογισμός), which he defined as 'a form of words in which, when certain assumptions are made, something other than what has been assumed necessarily follows from the fact that the assumptions are such'.[2] An Aristotelian syllogism is a deductive argument, basically, an 'if…then' proposition: 'if α and β, then γ'. Typically it consists of three different categorical statements: two premises (one major and one minor), and a conclusion. The major premise is a generally accepted belief; the minor premise is a specific shared belief or observation; and the conclusion follows necessarily from the terms of the premises.[3]

Aristotle had precursors among the Greek mathematicians, rhetoricians, and philosophers of the 5th and 4th centuries Mathematicians had to prove their theorems, while rhetoricians and philosophers had to develop ways of refuting the contentions of other rhetoricians and philosophers.[4] The latter individuals would tentatively accept the point of view of their adversary, then refute it by showing that it led to absurd

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1. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, I-II (trans. Hugh Tredennick; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); Ernst Kapp, *Greek Foundations of Traditional Logic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), pp. vi, 60-74; Czeslaw Lejewski, 'Ancient Logic', in Paul Edwards (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 4, pp. 513-16; G.B. Kereford, 'Aristotle', in *EncPhil*, 1, pp. 151-62.

2. *Prior Analytics*, I, i 24b; cf. *Topics*, I (trans. E. S. Forster; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), i 100a; *The 'Art' of Rhetoric*, I (trans. John Henry Freese; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), ii 1356b.

3. Christopher Johnstone, 'Enthymeme', in Thomas O. Sloan (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 248.

4. Lejewski, 'Ancient Logic', pp. 513-14.

consequences. One precursor was Zeno of Elea (c. 490), who Aristotle credited with being the founder of dialectic. Another precursor much admired by Aristotle was the most celebrated practitioner of argumentation in all of Greece, Socrates (470–399). Aristotle had precursors as well among the Sophists, e.g., Protagoras (490–421) and Prodicus (460–399), who were interested in the correct use of words. Not surprisingly, Aristotle learned a good deal also from Plato (428–347) after entering his Athenian Academy in 367, going on to make practical applications of Plato's philosophical theories.

Aristotle and the Enthymeme

Aristotle brought deductive logic into the study of rhetoric by recognizing a type of syllogism which he called the 'enthymeme'.[5] The term was employed by prior and contemporary writers, e.g., Isocrates (436–338) and Anaximenes of Lampaskos (c. 380–320).[6] Aristotle said: 'Rhetorical demonstration is an enthymeme, which, generally speaking, is the strongest of rhetorical proofs'.[7] He called it a 'rhetorical syllogism',[8] considering it a truncated syllogism in which one premise was omitted (or suppressed) because the audience could supply it.[9] An example of the enthymeme would be the inference of 'Socrates is mortal' from 'All men are mortal'. The missing premise, here the minor one, is 'Socrates is a man'.

Argumentation in Ancient Israel

We are unaccustomed to probe behind the great classical cultures of Greece and Rome in a search for earlier logical and rhetorical arguments, preferring to leave their origin and development to the Greek rhetoricians and philosophers, and the Roman rhetoricians, who came later. This is perhaps how it should be. After all, from where else in the ancient world do we derive the systematic treatment of logic and rhetoric given us by an Aristotle, or the treatment of figures and modes of argumentation such as those coming down to us in the rhetorical handbooks of the *ad Herennium* and Quintilian's *Institutes*? Yet it seems fair to ask about the extent to which argument was understood by peoples of ancient Near East, who inhabited a world and shared a world view considerably older and different from that existing in the classical world of Greece and Rome.

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5. Johnstone, 'Enthymeme', pp. 247-50; Thomas M. Conley, 'The Enthymeme in Perspective', *QJS* 70 (1984), pp. 168-87.

6. Conley, 'The Enthymeme in Perspective', pp. 172-74.

7. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I, i 1355a.

8. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I, ii 1356b.

9. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I, ii 1357a; II, xxii 1395b.

If we peer into the Old Testament, which is the only real discourse that survives from ancient Israel, we find a select number of arguments being put to use. In Jeremiah, for example, one finds the prostasis-apodosis ('if…then') form, which is a deductive argument.[10] A couple examples:

> *If* you return, Israel
> — oracle of Yahweh—
> to me return
> and *if* you remove your wretched things from me
> and do not waver about
> *then* you can swear 'By Yahweh's life'
> in truth, in justice, and in righteousness
> *then* nations shall bless themselves in him
> and in him shall they boast (Jer. 4.1-2).

> *If* these statutes depart
> from before me — oracle of Yahweh
> *then* the seed of Israel shall cease
> from being a nation before me — all the days (Jer. 31.36).

> *If* the heavens above can be measured
> and the foundations of the earth explored to the depths
> *then* I, I will reject all the seed of Israel
> because of all that they have done
> — oracle of Yahweh (Jer. 31.37).

This argument appears elsewhere in Jer. 12.16, 17; 33.20-21, 25-26; and in Deut. 28.1, 15.

In Jeremiah are also arguments *a fortiori* or *a minori ad maius* (Heb. *qal vechomer*), which is an argument from the lesser to the greater.[11] It is a 'how much more' argument:

> *If* with men on foot you have run and they have wearied you
> *how then* will you fare in a heat with horses?
> and (*if*) in a peaceful land you have fallen down
> *how then* will you do in the pride of the Jordan? (Jer 12.5).

> Look, (*if*) those for whom there is no judgment to drink the
> cup must surely drink
> *then* are you one who will surely go free? (Jer. 49.12).

See also Jer. 3.1 and 25.29.[12]

Jeremiah made particularly good use of the rhetorical question in argumentation.[13] He uses the rhetorical question, sometimes a pair of

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10. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 130, 325-26; *Jeremiah 21–36*, pp. 486-87; *Jeremiah 37–52*, pp. 587, 593.

11. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 130, 646; *Jeremiah 37–52*, pp. 336, 586.

12. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, p. 301.

13. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 130-32.

them, as a foil for a more important statement he wishes to make. The rhetorical question is put to use in two types of argument. In one, a single or double question lifts up some paradigmatic behavior, a common happening, or something built into the natural order, which the prophet then follows by a (contrary) portrayal of human behavior that is scandalous. A couple of examples:

> Has a nation exchanged gods
>   even though they are no gods?
> But my people has exchanged its glory
>   for No Profit! (Jer. 2.22).

> Can a maiden forget her ornaments
>   a bride her knotted cords?
> But my people has forgotten me
>   days without number (Jer. 2.32).

See also Jer. 5.22a, 23; 18.14-15; and somewhat differently, Jer. 13.23.

   The other specialized usage in Jeremiah is the three-fold question in the 'If…if…so why…?' (הֲ…אִם…מַדּוּעַ) form, which appears nine times in the book. Here two questions are a foil for the third, which expresses a troubling vexation. The vexation is often an incongruity the prophet has observed. A couple examples:

> Have I become a wilderness to Israel?
>   or a land of thick darkness?
> So why do my people say, 'We are free to roam
>   we will no longer come to you?' (Jer. 2.31).

> If [people] fall down, do they not get up?
>   If one turns away, does he not return?
> So why has this people turned away
>   Jerusalem, the rebel perpetual? (Jer. 8.4-5a).

See elsewhere Jer. 2.14 (shortened); 8.19, 22; 14.19; 22.28; 30.6 (modified); and 49.1.

   Jeremiah uses other arguments described in the classical rhetorical handbooks, e.g., *epitrope* (Jer. 26.14); *descriptio* (Jer. 26.15); and *distributio* (Jer. 28.8-9).[14]

The Enthymeme in Prophetic Preaching

It came as somewhat of a surprise to me to discover the enthymeme in preaching of the Hebrew prophets.[15] When the preaching of virtually all the 8th to 6th century prophets was set over against the homiletical

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14. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, p. 133; *Jeremiah 21–36*, pp. 292-93, 334-35.
15. Lundbom, 'Hebrew Rhetoric', in *EncRhet*, p. 326.

rhetoric of Deuteronomy, it became immediately clear that what the prophets had done was simply to omit Deuteronomy's message that an Israel in violation of the covenant would be punished, and gone straight on to make their indictments (violation had occurred) and judgments (punishment will come). In order to reconstruct a complete syllogism for this preaching, if one is to be desired, the message of Deuteronomy has to be supplied:

[Deuteronomy:	An Israel in violation of the covenant will be punished]
The prophets:	Israel has violated the covenant
	Israel will therefore be punished

We can assume that the prophets' audience was fully capable of supplying the omitted premise, for which reason it did not have to be stated. Aristotle realized that speakers out to persuade crowds—even the most ignorant of speakers—were more successful in using the enthymene, since crowds do not require all the steps of an argument, nor do they want all the added words.[16] The prophets, for the most part, were addressing crowds, so they too stood a better chance of persuading their audience by means of the enthymeme.

One may well ask at this point what date is then to be assigned Deuteronomy? The general consensus is that Deuteronomy is a 7th-century document, but many believe it embodies traditions out of North Israel, which would push the date of the traditions, at least, back into the 8th century or earlier. In my view, the First Edition of Deuteronomy (chaps. 1–28) belongs to the reform of Hezekiah, which I date between 712 and 705. And I agree that this core document contains older material from North Israel, which could make preaching the conditional nature of the Sinai covenant contemporary with the 8th century prophets, Amos and Hosea. It may be older. Yet, the provenance of Deuteronomy is not crucial for maintaining the juxtaposition I am setting forth, since the idea that an Israel in violation of the covenant will be punished could have had currency at any time in Israel's history, long before the Deuteronomic Code and attendant homilies were written down on a scroll.

Rudimentary Logic in Oracle Clusters of Jeremiah

I now wish to present evidence that Jeremiah, or else the compiler of the Jeremiah oracles, expressed a rudimentary understanding of logic and argumentative strategy by arranging a select number of oracle into clusters of three, with the result that the prophet's preaching moved from a general principle to indictment to judgment. This could translate

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16. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II, xxii 1395b.

into a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion, in which case we would have an early form of syllogistic reasoning not unlike what Aristotle developed later into a system. I am not suggesting that Jeremiah understood and employed syllogistic reasoning in his preaching, although that need not be precluded, only that when certain oracle clusters are carefully delimited and examined, we see in them a rudimentary form of Hebrew logic. This discovery owes a considerable debt to rhetorical criticism, which in the book of Jeremiah has made significant progress in delimiting prophetic oracles—in both poetry and prose—within their larger contexts.[17] And it is significantly aided by form criticism, e.g., in the isolation of messenger formulas ('Thus says Yahweh' and 'oracle of Yahweh'), and by paying close attention to content, also by noting section markings in the Hebrew text, the *setumah* and the *petuḥah*, which we now know to be very old, since they have turned up in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[18]

The Temple Oracles (Jer. 7.1-15)

Earlier scholars saw in Jer. 7.1-15a a 'Temple sermon' delivered by Jeremiah in 609, a summary of which appears together with narrative background in chap. 26. But they were troubled by a lack of coherence in the sermon, particularly between vv. 3-7 and vv. 12-14.[19] This sermon began with a call for covenant obedience, which differed only from the preaching of Deuteronomy in that people were being told to amend current behavior (vv. 3-7). The hope was expressed here that the nation could escape judgment and its people remain in the land. Then came a strident indictment of evils having been committed (vv. 8-11), and finally unmitigated judgment, which the prophet says would leave the Jerusalem Temple in ruins like what happened to Israel's first sanctuary at Shiloh (vv. 12-14). One is left to wonder, then, how people could be told in a single sermon to 'make good their ways and their doings' and thereby avert judgment, and then be hit with a harsh indictment and an even harsher judgment for having disobeyed the Sinai covenant.

The term 'sermon', however, is a misnomer, for not only is this preaching too brief to be much of a sermon, but more important, the verses are not a unified composition, but rather three self-contained oracles

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17. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20; Jeremiah 21–36; Jeremiah 37–52*. On the delimitation of literary units as a first priority in rhetorical criticism, see James Muilenburg, 'Form Criticism and Beyond', *JBL* 88 (1969), pp. 8-10.

18. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 63, 74; 'Delimitation of Units in the Book of Jeremiah', in Raymond de Hoop *et al.* (eds.), *The Impact of Unit Delimitation on Exegesis* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2009), pp. 146-74.

19. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 458-59.

brought together into a cluster: Oracle I (vv. 3-7); Oracle II (vv. 8-11); and Oracle III (vv. 12-14). Each oracle possesses an integrity of its own, which if not eliminating the coherence problem entirely, at least significantly reduces it. Oracle I gives a general statement of principle, stating that a people amending their behavior by obeying the Sinai covenant will have ongoing existence in the land. Oracle II is an indictment that covenant violation—on a grand scale—has occurred. And Oracle III announces unmitigated judgment. When the three oracles are brought together into a cluster, there is movement from general principle to indictment to judgment.

The three oracles are delimited by (1) section markings; (2) messenger formulas (small caps); and (3) a use in each of the rhetorical device known as the inclusio (italics). The section markings cited are the three *setumah* breaks in the Leningrad Codex of the Hebrew Bible (M^L). The Aleppo Codex (M^A) and St. Petersburg Codex of the Prophets (M^P) also have a *setumah* before v. 3, marking the beginning of the first oracle; the St. Petersburg Codex has *a setumah* after v. 11, marking the end of the second oracle; and the Aleppo and St. Petersburg Codices have a *petuḥah* after v. 15, marking the end of the larger unit. 4QJer^a also has a section after v. 15. The text of Jer. 7.1-15 can then be delimited into three oracles as follows:

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I ^{3}Thus said Yahweh of Hosts, the God of Israel:
       Make good your ways and your doings and *I will let you dwell in this place*. ^{4}Do
       not trust for yourselves in the deceptive words, 'The temple of Yahweh, the
       temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh are these'. ^{5}For if you really make
       good your ways and your doings, if you really act justly each man toward his
       fellow, ^{6}the sojourner, the orphan, and the widow you do not oppress, and the
       blood of the innocent you do not shed in this place, and after other gods you do
       not go, to your own hurt, ^{7}then *I will let you dwell in this place*, in the land that I
       gave to your fathers for all time.

II ^{8}*Look*, you trust for yourselves in the deceptive words to no avail. ^{9}Do you think
       you can steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear to The Lie, and burn
       incense to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, ^{10}and then
       come and stand in my presence, in this house upon which my name is called,
       and say, 'We are safe!'—only to keep doing all these abominations? ^{11}A robber's
       den is this house upon which my name is called in your eyes? As for me, *Look!*
       I have seen!—Oracle of Yahweh.

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III ^{12}Go indeed, would you, to *my place* that was *in Shiloh*, where I first made my
       name dwell, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel.
       ^{13}Now then, because you have done all these doings—Oracle of Yahweh

—when I spoke to you—constantly I spoke—but you did not hear, and I called you but you did not answer, [14]I will do then to the house upon which my name is called, in which you trust, yes to *the place* that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did *to Shiloh*.

[15]So I will cast you away from my presence, as I cast away all your brothers, all the offspring of Ephraim.

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Each of the oracles contains a messenger formula. Oracle I is preceded by an embellished 'Thus said Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel' (v. 3); Oracle II concludes with 'oracle of Yahweh' (v. 11); and Oracle III has 'oracle of Yahweh' in the middle (v. 13). The different locations of the formulas may be intentional, particularly if the oracles were originally delivered as a cluster.

Looking at rhetorical form, we see that all three oracles employ the inclusio, which is a verbal tie-in between beginning and end. The repeated words and / or phrases in the three oracles:

I	*I will let you dwell in this place…*		v. 3
	I will let you dwell in this place		v. 7
II	*Look!*	*hinnēh*	v. 8
	Look!	*hinnēh*	v. 11
III	*my place …in Shiloh…*		v. 12
	the place …to Shiloh		v. 14

The inclusio in Oracle III supports bracketing out v. 15 as a later add-on, the purpose of which was to render a comparison between Judah and Ephraim (= Northern Israel).

So what we have in 7.1-15 is an introduction (vv. 1-2), three separate oracles (vv. 3-14), and an add-on (v. 15). Oracle I is preaching like Deuteronomy, although calling here for correction (v. 3: 'Make good [= Amend] your ways and your doings'), suiting the tenor of the Josianic Reform. Oracle II is a strident indictment for covenant violation. Oracle III is riveting judgment.

Reducing these messages into a syllogistic argument would yield the following:

Major premise:	A people not violating the covenant can remain in the land
Minor premise:	This people, though feeling secure, has violated the covenant
Conclusion:	Yahweh will bring (this people and) this land to ruin

It could be that this cluster of oracles is an editorial creation, and nothing more. But when all three oracles are compared with their summarization in 26.4-6, also with Jeremiah's defense in 26.13, the seg-

ments are seen to draw upon not just one oracle, but upon all three.[20]
So Jeremiah may have spoken all three oracles in succession on one
occasion, moving intentionally from general principle, to specific vio-
lation, to judgment. If so, we have a rudimentary logic in the preach-
ing of Jeremiah.

The Covenant Oracles (Jer. 11.1-13)

The same sequence of general principle, indictment, and judgment
appears a second time in Jer. 11.1-13. Here is a prose segment contain-
ing three self-standing oracles on covenant obedience. In the larger unit
is an introduction to Oracle I (vv. 1-3a); the text of Oracle I (vv. 3b-5a);
Jeremiah's 'amen' to Oracle I (v. 5b); an introduction to Oracle II (v. 6);
the text of Oracle II (vv. 7-8); an introduction to Oracle III (vv. 9-10); and
the text of Oracle III (vv. 11-13).[21] Two of the oracles have messenger
formulas (small caps), and all get help in delimitation from the section
markings in M[L]. The three oracles go as follows:

<div align="center">פ</div>

     ^{1-3a}…………..

I   ^{3b} THUS SAID YAHWEH, THE GOD OF ISRAEL :
     Cursed be the man who will not hear the words of this covenant ⁴that I
     commanded your fathers in the day I brought them out from the land of Egypt,
     out of the iron furnace: Hear my voice and do them, according to all that I
     commanded you, and you will be a people to me, and I, I will be God to you,
     ⁵that I may perform the oath that I swore to your fathers to give them a land
     flowing with milk and honey, as at this day.

     ………………..

<div align="center">ס</div>

II   ⁷For I told your fathers emphatically in the day I brought them up from the land
     of Egypt—and unto this day—constantly told: Hear my voice. ⁸But they did not
     hear, and they did not bend their ear, but they went each in the stubbornness of
     their evil heart, so I brought upon them all the words of this covenant, which I
     commanded them to do, but they did not do.[22]

<div align="center">ס</div>

     …………………

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20. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 454, 459.
21. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 614-20.
22. The oracle follows the reading in MT; the LXX has a shorter text (see Lundbom,
Jeremiah 1–20, p. 618).

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III   [11]THEREFORE THUS SAID YAHWEH:

Look I am bringing evil upon them, from which they will not be able to escape. And they will cry to me, but I will not hear them. [12]The cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and they will cry to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they certainly cannot save them in the time of their evil. [13]For the number of your cities equals your gods, Judah, and the number of the streets of Jerusalem is the altars you have set up to Shame—altars to burn incense to Baal.

○

The other major medieval codices support delimitation with section markings. M^A and M^P have a *petuḥah* before v. 1, and M^A a *setumah* and M^P a *petuḥah* after v. 13, marking the beginning of the larger unit, and the end of Oracle III. M^A has a *petuḥah* and M^P a *setumah* before v. 6, marking the beginning of Oracle II. M^A has a *setumah* and M^P a *petuḥah* after v. 8, marking the end of Oracle II. M^A has *a setumah* and M^P a *petuḥah* before v. 11, marking the beginning of Oracle III.

Oracle I begins with a 'Thus said Yahweh, the God of Israel' messenger formula, and Oracle III with a 'Therefore thus said Yahweh' formula. Oracle II has no messenger formula.

These oracles do not contain inclusio structures like the oracles in 7.3-14, but they do have some nice word balances and smaller rhetorical structures.[23] They share the following vocabulary and phraseology in vv. 3-4, 7-8, and 10:

v. 3	*who will not hear*	v. 8	*they did not hear…*	v. 10	*refused to hear*
	the words of		*the words of*		*my words…*
	this covenant		*this covenant*		*my covenant*
v. 4	*that I commanded*		*that I commanded*		
	your fathers	v. 7	*your fathers*	v. 10	*their fathers* (2×)
	in the day…		*in the day…*		
	from the land of Egypt		*from the land of Egypt*		
	Hear my voice		*Hear my voice*		
	and do	v. 8	*but they did not do*		

All three oracles focus on the covenant, which is the Sinai covenant undergoing renewal in the Josianic Reform (2 Kings 23). Oracle I (vv. 3b-5a) announces a curse on anyone not hearing the words of the

23. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 615-19.

covenant commanded to Judah's ancestors, after which comes an exhortation to hear Yahweh's voice and do the commands. Oracle II (vv. 7-8) indicts the ancestors for covenant disobedience, stating that punishment came as a result. Oracle III (vv. 11-13), preceded by a clarifying word to Jeremiah (vv. 9-10), promises judgment on the current generation, which the clarifying word says is engaged in a 'conspiracy' to return to the iniquity of the ancestors (vv. 9-10). The current generation has broken Yahweh's covenant made with the ancestors (v. 10b).

Reducing these oracles and editorial comment to a syllogism, we have a major premise, two minor premises, and a conclusion:

Major premise: Cursed be anyone who does not hear and do the covenant
Minor premise: The ancestors did not hear, and were cursed
Minor premise: The current generation refuses to hear
Conclusion: The current generation will be cursed.

The question of coherence has not arisen in these oracles largely because scholars have not assumed a single sermon, as in 7.1-15, but also because the supplementary prose of vv. 9-10 brings the indictment into the present and prepares for the judgment of Oracle III. The preaching moves clearly from a general curse on anyone who does not hear and do the covenant (Oracle I), to indictment of past and present generations for covenant violation (Oracle II and supplementary prose), to judgment on the current generation (Oracle III).

These three oracles could have been delivered in sequence on a single occasion, but if so, some editorial comment was required to get a syllogistic argument. Otherwise, we could take this argument as an enthymeme, where the audience was expected to supply the assumption that the current generation was no better than the former generation in refusing to hear (and do) Yahweh's covenant. In either case, the present oracle cluster becomes a full syllogistic argument only with the compiler's supplement, and the compiler is to be credited with the syllogistic argument. I suggested in my commentary that Oracles I and II fit well into the reform years of Josiah, and that Oracle III, because of its reference to a conspiracy, probably belongs to the early reign of Jehoiakim.[24] Either way, whether the argument was originally an enthymeme or a complete syllogism, whether it reflects the mind of Jeremiah or the mind of the compiler, or possibly both, there exists in the present text a clear movement from a general principle, to a specific violation of the principle, to judgment, another display of rudimentary logic in the preaching of Jeremiah.

24. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, p. 626.

Oracles to the Royal House (Jer. 21.11-14)

Our third example of an oracle cluster showing logical progression from a general principle to indictment to judgment is in Jer 21.11-14, which contains three oracles to Jerusalem's royal house. These oracles, unlike the others, are in poetry. The larger unit here consists of an introduction to the King Collection and Oracle I (vv. 11-12a); the text of Oracle I (v. 12b); the text of Oracle II (v. 13); and the text of Oracle III (v. 14).[25]

The three oracles are delimited by messenger formulas (small caps), and get partial support from section markings in M^L at the beginning and end of the larger unit. The M^A and M^P also have a *setumah* prior to v. 11, where a shift from prose to poetry occurs. One manuscript in the Cambridge Genizah Collection has a section after v. 12, separating Oracle I from Oracle II.[26] No medieval codex other than M^L has a section after v. 14, but the chapter division is made before the return to prose in 22.1. The three oracles in 21.12b-14 state the following:

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^{11-12a}………………..

I   ^{12b}THUS SAID YAHWEH:
        Execute justice in the morning
            and rescue the robbed from the oppressor's hand!
        Lest my wrath go forth like fire
            and burn so none can quench it
               on account of their evil doings.

II   ¹³Look I am against you, sitting one of the valley
          rock of the tableland—ORACLE OF YAHWEH.
        Those saying, 'Who can come down upon us
          And who can enter into our habitations?

III   ¹⁴But I will reckon upon you
          according to the fruit of your doings
          —ORACLE OF YAHWEH
        And I will kindle a fire in her forest
          and it will consume everything around her.

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Oracle I is a general exhortation to the royal house to execute justice, lest Yahweh's wrath go forth like fire. Oracle II is an indictment for royal house pride about impregnability. Oracle III is judgment on the royal house for unspecified (evil) deeds, stating that the divine fire will

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25. Verses 13-14 are not one oracle, as many commentators assume; cf. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, p. 108.

26. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, p. 109.

indeed come. Reducing the messages to a syllogistic argument, which takes some reading between the lines, yields the following:

Major premise: A royal house not executing justice will ignite the divine wrath
Minor premise: The royal house sits confident (despite unjust deeds)
Conclusion: (Unjust) deeds will bring divine wrath on the royal house.

One may prefer to label this an enthymeme, since the minor premise does not relate transparently to the major premise. The audience may be able to supply the unjust acts of the royal house, in which case it is unnecessary to state them in the argument. But we are probably not far from the truth if we imagine that the pride being censured in the indictment is going hand in hand with unjust deeds. 'The fruit of your doings' in Oracle III surely refers to unjust doings. There is, in any case, movement from a general principle to indictment to judgment, showing the same sort of logical progression seen in the other oracle clusters. In my commentary I suggested that these oracles were probably not spoken to the royal house directly, but to ordinary citizens in the Temple courtyard or some other public place,[27] which would support the argument being an enthymeme rather than an formal syllogism if the former is more suited to addressing the masses.

We must not think that the ancient Hebrew mind was incapable of thinking logically. The enthymeme was being used by the prophets 400 years before Aristotle, and a rudimentary form of syllogistic reasoning is evident in Jeremiah or a compiler of the Jeremiah oracles over 200 years before it was given classic definition by the great Athenian philosopher in his *Prior Analytics*, I.

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27. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, p. 110.

Jeremiah and Scroll-Making

Telescoping History

Jeremiah's Call and Commissioning (Jeremiah 1)
The main problem in reconstructing Jeremiah's early years as prophet designate and prophet active in the service of Yahweh turns up in the first chapter of the book, which reports the prophet's call and commission to begin a public ministry. The chapter contains a key date in the superscription, the 13th year of Josiah, which anchors the call in 627 (1.2, 4). Except for the date in this superscription, which introduces the larger Jeremiah book, there are no other dates in chap. 1—indeed, there are no other specific dates in all of chaps. 1–20. Only in 3.6 are we informed that the 'Tale of the Fallen Sisters' (3.6-18), an allegory on Israel and Judah, was delivered by Yahweh to Jeremiah in 'the days of Josiah the king'.

A straightforward reading of chap. 1 leaves the impression that Jeremiah was informed of his call, accepted it after an initial resistance, and was then commissioned for active ministry soon after. His preaching begins in chap. 2. Even those who follow Duhm and Mowinckel in separating out the center visions as later interpolation,[1] truncating the call passage to vv. 4-10, keep the call and commissioning (vv. 17-19) together, assuming that both belong to a single event in the life of the prophet. The same is true for those lowering the Jeremiah chronology, who disregard or reinterpret the 13th year of Josiah in 1.2 to place the call of Jeremiah closer to the death of Josiah in 609. Horst disregarded the date in 1.2,[2] while Hyatt and Holladay took the 627 date to refer to Jeremiah's birth.[3] All assume a beginning to Jeremiah's public ministry immediately after the call.

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1. Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia*, pp. 10-11; Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia* (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1914), p. 20.
2. F. Horst, 'Die Anfänge des Propheten Jeremia', *ZAW* 41 (1923), p. 132.
3. J.P. Hyatt, 'Jeremiah', in George A. Buttrick (ed.), *IB* 5 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 798; W.L. Holladay, 'The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding: Moses, Samuel, and Psalm 22', *JBL* 83 (1964), pp. 153-64.

This universal assumption, whereby the call and commission are taken to be a single event, is the basic mistake everyone has made in attempting a historical reconstruction of the prophet's early years. It is the main problem for those holding the 'traditional' view, who identify an early 'foe from the north' between 627 and 622 (1.13-19), and is what forces the low chronology proponents to disregard or reinterpret the date in 1.2, which simply does not work. I will not repeat here criticisms of the low chronology I have made elsewhere,[4] but will simply summarize my own reconstruction of the prophet's early years. It builds on an observed rhetorical structure in chap. 1, and concludes that the narrator of this chapter has telescoped two events to make it appear as if there is only one. My reconstruction also builds on a reinterpretation of 15.16, which everyone takes to be a later reflection by Jeremiah on the acceptance of his call, but no one has recognized to be the prophet's recollection of the finding of the Temple law book in 622.

Chapter 1 records two divine words, two visions, and two events in the life of the prophet. The first divine word announces to a young Jeremiah that Yahweh has called him to be a prophet to the nations (1.4-12). Jeremiah is a נַעַר (NRSV: 'boy'), about the age of Samuel when Yahweh first spoke to him (1 Samuel 1–3). Jeremiah does not accept the call when he hear of it, having none of the joy he alludes to later in 15.16. He is not an Isaiah who says, 'Here I am, send me' (Isa. 6.8). The call passage also does not end at v. 10 (*pace* Duhm; Mowinckel),[5] but has to include the almond branch vision in vv. 11-12. In this vision, Yahweh says that from his point of view, too, Jeremiah is not yet ready to begin a public ministry. Yahweh's concluding words, 'I am watching over my word to do it' (1.12), which commentators are typically at pains to interpret, are promissory and await a future fulfillment.

The second divine word comes to commission Jeremiah for a public ministry (1.13-19). That it is Yahweh's second word to the prophet is clear from שֵׁנִית ('a second time') appearing in 1.13. Here the accompanying vision comes first, not second, introducing the actual commissioning in vv. 15-19. In my view, this second divine word is not received by the prophet immediately after he is informed about his call, but follows some years later. What the narrator has done is to telescope two events making them appear as one. Between 1.12 and 1.13, the dividing point in the chapter, lies an interval of years. Chapter 1 begins with a call and ends with a commission; in the center are visions relating back and ahead to the respective events.

    4.   Lundbom, 'Rhetorical Structures in Jeremiah 1', *ZAW* 103 (1991), pp. 193-210; *The Early Career of the Prophet Jeremiah* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1993), pp. 53-63; 'Jeremiah 15,15-21 and the Call of Jeremiah', *SJOT* 9 (1995), pp. 143-55.
    5.   See discussion in my 'Rhetorical Structures in Jeremiah 1'.

The interval between call and commissioning has to be at least five years. It could be more, but not less. Why five years? Because the call was not accepted by Jeremiah until 622. In 15.16, where Jeremiah reflects in one of his laments on acceptance, the first colon has been wrongly interpreted. The Hebrew is perfectly clear; it says: 'your words were found (מצא) and I ate them'. Jeremiah is not talking about words that 'came' to him in his call (*pace* McKane: 'your words came to me and I ate them'). If he were, we should expect the verb to be היה, which is used throughout the book for Yahweh's word having 'come' to the prophet (1.4, 11, 13; 2.1; etc.). The verse goes on to say that this finding of Yahweh's words brought great joy to the prophet, of which there is not so much as a trace in chap. 1. The Hebrew נִמְצְאוּ דְבָרֶיךָ must be rendered 'your words were found', where reference is to the finding of the law book in the Temple in 622 (2 Kgs 22.13: 'the words of this book that has been found').[6] These are the words promised to Jeremiah in his call (1.9), words conveyed by the prophet Moses, which he now eats with great joy.

Jeremiah then accepts his call in 622 when eating with joy the words of the law book found in the Temple. Having now a date for the acceptance, the commission for public ministry can be put any time afterwards. We no longer need to search for a 'foe from the north' between 627 and 622, no Scythian hypothesis, because there was no early foe. Jeremiah learns about the foe from the north after 622, and begins then to preach about it. From the very beginning the foe is seen by the prophet to be Babylon. With this reconstruction, the chronology of the book in 1.2; 25.1-3; and 36.1-2 is left intact, and Jeremiah's early career is situated in the reign of Josiah, where it has to be.

The Mizpah Sojourn (Jeremiah 40–41)
At the other end of the Jeremiah book, in the so-called 'via Dolorosa' prose of chaps. 37–44, are no helpful dates after the Zedekiah superscription in 37.1. In 40.7–41.18 events appear to follow in chronological order. This narrative reports the settlement of Judahite survivors in Mizpah after the destruction of Jerusalem; Gedaliah's appointment as governor there; the murder of Gedaliah; the departure from Mizpah of a group of settlers led by Ishmael; the fight between Ishmael and Johanan for control of the group; and the arrival of Johanan's group at Geruth Chimham, near Bethlehem. After a brief sojourn in Geruth Chimham, the group then heads off to Egypt (42.1–43.7). The narrative is assigned to Baruch by a number of scholars,[7] with Holladay saying it has all the marks of an eyewitness account.

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6. Lundbom, 'The Lawbook of the Josianic Reform', *CBQ* 38 (1976), p. 302 n. 34; *The Early Career of the Prophet Jeremiah*, pp. 59-60; *Jeremiah 1–20*, p. 743.
7. Duhm; Volz; Bright; Holladay.

What we wish to know is how long the Mizpah community was in existence. The usual assumption is that Gedaliah was murdered soon after the settlement there. There is a reference to 'the seventh month' in 41.1 (cf. 2 Kgs 25.25), but we do not know the year. The seventh month would be September–October (= Tishri), and it seems to be mentioned in connection with the Feast of Booths. The narrator appears again to have telescoped events, in this case compressing Gedaliah's reign into two or three months: Jerusalem falls in July, 586 (39.2), summer fruits are harvested in August-September (40.12), and in September-October, after Gedaliah is murdered, pilgrims arrive from the north to mark the Feast of Booths (41.4-5). But a better reconstruction would be to allow for an interval of years between 40.12 and 40.13, with the first stirrings of a conspiracy coming four years after the joyful harvest of 40.12. This allows time for a rebuilding phase at Mizpah, and even more important, for Gedaliah's murder to be correlated with Nebuzaradan's return to Judah in 582, at which time another group of Judahites was taken to Babylon (52.30).

A telescoping of these same events occurs in 2 Kgs 25.23-25, but with less detail it is less obvious. Jerusalem in this history is said to have fallen in the fourth month of Zedekiah's 11th year (2 Kgs 25.2-3; Jer. 39.2), which means the 'seventh month' in 2 Kgs 25.25 could be taken as three months later in the same year. This chronology is accepted by some scholars,[8] but others[9] date the murder of Gedaliah three or four years later, which makes considerably more sense. Gedaliah, after all, was a Babylonian-appointed governor, and his murder would almost mandate a return visit of Nebuzardan to Judah in 582, and another exile of Judahites to Babylon. Mention is not made of the 582 visit in 2 Kings 25; it is reported only in Jer. 52.28-30.

This reconstruction has Jeremiah and Baruch living in Mizpah for three or four years after the destruction of Jerusalem, considerably longer than the usual estimate. This would allow ample time for Baruch to record Jeremiah's utterances after the fall of Jerusalem, e.g., those in chaps. 30-33, and to write up narrative reporting events before and after the fall.

Baruch, Seraiah, and the Jeremiah Scroll

Earlier critical scholars assigned the biographical prose in the book of Jeremiah to Baruch (Source B),[10] who in chap. 36 is recorded as writing

8. Volz; Rudolph; Holladay.

9. Heinrich Grätz, 'Gedalja Sohn Achikam's Dauer seiner Statthalterschaft und Datum seines gewaltsamen Todes', *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 19 (1870), pp. 268-75; *Geschichte der Israeliten*, II (Leipzig: Oskar Leiner, 1875), p. 415; Hyatt, 'Jeremiah', in *IB*; John H. Hayes and Paul K. Hooker, *A New Chronology for the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), p. 98.

10. Giesebrecht, *Das Buch Jeremia*; Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia*.

up the first Jeremiah scroll from the prophet's dictation, after which he reads it at the Temple before a large crowd on a day of fast. Baruch is also on hand to help negotiate the deed of transfer when Jeremiah buys his cousin's field at Anathoth, and afterwards is given custody of the deed for safe-keeping (32.9-15). After 604, Baruch is shown in the book to be Jeremiah's close companion, going with him into hiding when the two are sought by Jehoiakim after Jeremiah's scroll is read publicly and privately to the king (36.19, 26), to be present with him when a group led by Johanan left Mizpah and encamped near Bethlehem (43.3), and is still with him when the sojourners arrive in Egypt (43.6-7).

   One scholar who at first doubted Baruch authorship of Source B prose was Mowinckel,[11] but in a later work that has gone largely unnoticed,[12] he says he had given up this view long ago, and was now convinced that Baruch had compiled the book. What changed his mind was chap. 45, which he believed was Baruch's indirect presentation of himself to his audience. Mowinckel says:

> This is confirmed by the fact that the book closed with a word to Baruch himself, chap. 45. The saying is not placed where it now stands because it belongs there chronologically, the saying is dated and has been made in connection with the origin of the book roll in the fourth year of Yoyaqim (chap. 36). Where it now stands it is meant as a conclusion and a full stop, as unmistakable as any one may desire, and at the same time also as the indirect presentation of the author to the reader. 'All these words' in 45,1 cannot according to the context be applied to the actual oracles that were once dictated, but to everything that precedes, the oracles and the narratives. More plainly than in 45,1 it cannot upon the whole be indicated who is the author of the book.[13]

Muilenburg,[14] following Mowinckel, also believed that Baruch was likely responsible for the book's prose and for compiling and editing 1.1–45.5.

   In support of Mowinckel's later view, and to pay a modest debt to form criticism, I have argued that chap. 45 is an expanded colophon performing the function that Mowinckel claims for the passage.[15] I have also argued that 51.59-64 is a similar type of colophon written by Seraiah, Baruch's brother,[16] and that 36.1-8, at one time, was another expanded colophon

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11. Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia*.

12. Mowinckel, *Prophecy and Tradition* (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1946).

13. Mowinckel, *Prophecy and Tradition*, pp. 61-62.

14. James Muilenburg, 'Baruch the Scribe', in John I. Durham and J.R. Porter (eds.), *Proclamation and Presence: Old Testament Essays in Honour of Gwynne Henton Davies* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1970), pp. 232-38.

15. Lundbom, 'Baruch, Seraiah, and Expanded Colophons in the Book of Jeremiah', *JSOT* 36 (1986), pp. 99-101.

16. Lundbom, 'Baruch, Seraiah, and Expanded Colophons', pp. 101-104.

written by Baruch to conclude a collection of narrative prose.[17] However, with the Jeremiah book increasing in size over time, 36.1-8 became eclipsed by chap. 45, and lost its colophonic function. The expanded colophons in 45 and 51.59-64 were now the important ones, with each concluding a Jeremiah scroll of what is now 51 chapters in the LXX and MT respectively. Chapter 52, a near duplicate of 2 Kgs 24.18–25.20, is a historical appendix added later, bringing the book to final completion.

Baruch and Seraiah were professionally-trained scribes, belonging to what was doubtless a prominent scribal family in Jerusalem. Scribal families existed from earliest times, being attested in the Old Babylonian period[18] and at Ugarit.[19] Twice in the book, once at the first mention of Baruch (32.12), and once at the first (and only) mention of Seraiah (51.59), we are given double patronyms: Baruch and Seraiah are sons of Neriah, son of Mahseiah. This is a family like the scribal family of Shaphan, about which we hear a good deal in 2 Kings and Jeremiah.[20] Seal impressions belonging to both Baruch and Seriah have turned up in excavations.[21] Baruch's seal impression contains 'the scribe' (cf. 36.26, 32). We also have a seal belonging to Shaphan's father, giving us his name and the name of his father. It reads: 'Belonging to Aṣalyāhû, the son of Mešullām (2 Kgs 22.3).[22]

That chap. 45 and 51.59-64 are colophonic in nature becomes clear from a comparison with colophons extant in texts throughout the ancient Near East. Hermann Hunger's work[23] on Assyrian and Babylonian colophons lists 563 examples of the genre. Colophons are present in the Wisdom of Ben Sirach, in both Greek and Hebrew (Sir. 50.27-29; 51.30), in the Additions to Esther (Esth. 11.1), and in 2 Maccabees (2 Macc. 15.37-39).[24] Erle Leichty in an important article[25] lists the type

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17. Lundbom, 'Baruch, Seraiah, and Expanded Colophons', pp. 104-106.

18. W.G. Lambert, 'Ancestors, Authors, and Canonicity', *JCS* 11 (1957), pp. 2-3.

19. Anson F. Rainey, 'The Scribe at Ugarit', in *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*, III (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1969), p. 128.

20. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, p. 299.

21. N. Avigad, 'Baruch the Scribe and Jerahmeel the King's Son', *IEJ* 28 (1978), pp. 52-56 [Reprinted in *BA* 42 (1979), pp. 114-18]; 'The Seal of Seraiah (Son of) Neriah' [Hebrew with English summary] in Menahem Haran (ed.), *H.L. Ginsberg Volume* (Eretz-Israel, 14; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1978), pp. 86-87, 125.

22. N. Avigad, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals. Revised and completed by Benjamin Sass* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1997), p. 79, #90.

23. Hermann Hunger, *Babylonische und assyrische Kolophone* (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968).

24. Lundbom, 'Baruch, Seraiah, and Expanded Colophons', pp. 94-95.

25. Erle Leichty, 'The Colophon', in *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1964), pp. 147-54.

of information normally found in the colophon. One or more of the following items are present:

1.   the catch line
2.   the name of the series and number of the tablet
3.   the number of lines on the tablet
4.   the source of the copy
5.   the name of the owner of the tablet
6.   the name of the scribe making the copy — sometimes including his title and genealogy
7.   the reason for making the copy
8.   the curse or blessing
9.   the date
10. disposition of the copy — usually to the temple archive

Not every colophon has all the items, which is true also of the Jeremiah examples; nevertheless, in 45 and 51.59-64 a number of items are present. Because the Jeremiah examples expand the non-biblical genre by including narrative and a prophetic oracle, I call them 'expanded colophons'.

   In chap. 45, six of the standard colophonic elements are present:

1.   the name of the scribe with patronym: Baruch son of Neriah (45.1; cf. 36.4)
2.   source: 'these words [written] on a scroll from the dictation of Jeremiah' (45.1; cf. 36.4, 32)
3.   date: 4th year of Jehoiakim (45.1; cf. 36.1)
4.   reason for writing the scroll: Yahweh is destroying the whole land (45.4)
5.   curse and blessing: 'Woe now is me…but I will give you your life' (45.3, 5)
6.   catchword 'sorrow' (45.4; cf. 20.18).

   Location in the Jeremiah book is particularly important. In the LXX, where the Foreign Nation Oracles appear in the center of the book (LXX 25.14–31.44), this personal word to Baruch concludes a book of 51 chapters, coming in LXX 51.31-35. Muilenburg[26] believed the passage was a one-time conclusion to the Jeremiah book, assuming as most scholars do, that the LXX sequence is older than the sequence in MT.[27]

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26. Muilenburg, 'Baruch the Scribe', p. 235; 'The Terminology of Adversity in Jeremiah', in Harry Thomas Frank and William L. Reed (eds.), *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 57.

27. It was argued already by Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, *Einleitung ins Alte Testament*, III (Reutlingen: Johannes Grözinger, 1790), p. 120.

By placing this personal word from the prophet at the end of his book, Baruch is presenting himself to his audience as the scribe writing the book. But as Mowinckel rightly points out, this personal word has been relocated to the place it now occupies. 'These words' in 45.1 did not refer originally to words in a book of 51 chapters, but rather to words on the scroll of 605, since the date given is the 4th year of Jehoiakim when the first scroll was written (45.1; 36.1-8). This personal word to Baruch may also have concluded the replacement scroll (36.32), we do not know. I have argued that at one point in the compilation process it concluded the First Edition of chaps. 1-20, accepting a suggestion made some years ago by Rietzschel[28] that chap. 45 originally followed chaps. 1-20.[29] Rietzschel said a connection between the two passages was made by the catchword 'sorrow' (יָגוֹן) in 20.18 and 45.3. What has happened is that chap. 45 has undergone relocation. Originally it concluded the scroll of 605, and later was relocated to the position it now occupies in the LXX, at the end of chap. 51. Here it becomes Baruch's self-presentation as compiler of an enlarged Jeremiah book. The personal word has not been rewritten to fit the new location; hence the ambiguity in 'these words'. 'These words' now take on expanded meaning, referring to all the oracles and narrative in a book of 51 chapters.

Seraiah, who writes the other important colophon, has not received the attention nor the notoriety given to his brother, probably because his role in preserving the Jeremiah legacy was not as great as that of Baruch, but also because earlier scholars were generally dismissive of the Foreign Nation Oracles, particularly the Babylon oracles,[30] with the result that his colophon was consigned to oblivion along with the oracles to which it was attached. Not all scholars took this line. Some believed that 51.59-64 inspired confidence, featuring as it does Seraiah, brother of Baruch, and reporting an otherwise credible embassy to Babylon in 594/3[31] Seraiah was a high-ranking official in Zedekiah's government, a 'caravan prince', in which capacity he would have been capable of executing a range of scribal functions.

In 51.59-64, seven of the standard colophonic elements are present:

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28. Claus Rietzschel, *Das Problem der Urrolle* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gerd Mohn, 1966), p. 128.

29. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, p. 94.

30. E.g., Duhm, Volz, and McKane.

31. Peake, Cornill, Rudolph, Bright, Holladay and W. Zimmerli, 'From Prophetic Word to Prophetic Book', in Robert P. Gordon (ed.), *'The Place Is Too Small for Us': The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), p. 428.

1. the name of the scribe with double patronym: Seraiah son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah (51.59)
2. source: 'all these words that are written [by Jeremiah] toward Babylon', i.e., the Babylon oracles in chaps. 50-51 (51.60; cf. 25.13)
3. date: 4th year of Zedekiah (51.59)
4. reason for writing the scroll: 'all the evil that will come to Babylon' shall be proclaimed publicly in Babylon (51.60-62)
5. curse: 'Even so shall Babylon sink and not rise' (51.64)
6. catch-line: 'So they tire themselves' (51.58, 64)
7. disposition: in the middle of the Euphrates (51.63)

Here once again, location in the book is important. In the MT this personal word to Seraiah concludes a book of 51 chapters. Seraiah, like his brother Baruch, wishes to tell his audience that he too played a role in compiling a large Jeremiah book. Originally his personal word was a conclusion only to the Babylon oracles, which it still is in the LXX (LXX 28.59-64). 'These words' in 51.60 still refer only to the Babylon oracles. Seraiah is probably the one who relocates the Foreign Nation Oracles to the end of the book, where his expanded colophon now functions to present himself as the one responsible for this version of a large Jeremiah book. We should note that Baruch's composition is left intact: his colophon, no longer prominent in the book, becomes what is now MT chap. 45. Seraiah may also be the one who adds the final line in 51.64, 'Thus far the legacy of Jeremiah', which forms an inclusio with the opening words of the book.[32] The words are not present in the LXX, which is what we might expect, since the LXX reflects Baruch's book of 51 chapters.

If 45 and 51.59-64 are colophonic in nature, the scribes mentioned in them must be the ones who wrote the colophons and wrote (or copied) the texts to which the colophons were attached. I have suggested that Baruch and Seraiah each had a role in compiling and editing large Jeremiah books, having relocated their colophons to the end positions they now occupy in the LXX and MT respectively. Baruch is responsible for the final ordering in proto-LXX; Seriah is responsible for the final ordering in proto-MT. This conclusion correlates with the biblical report that Baruch went with Jeremiah to Egypt, and with the view that proto-LXX has an Egyptian provenance.[33] Seraiah may have gone to Babylon; if so, we can connect him with proto-MT, which has an original Babylonian provenance.[34] We have no evidence that Seraiah ended up Babylon, but

32. Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*, pp. 25-26 [= 1997, pp. 39-40]; *Jeremiah 37–52*, 504.
33. Cross, 'History of the Biblical Text', p. 297.
34. Cross, 'History of the Biblical Text', p. 297.

the Bible does say that he went there with Zedekiah in 594/3 (51.59). If Seraiah was later exiled to Babylon, then our linking of these two prominent Judahite scribes with the two main recensions of the book of Jeremiah is complete.

4

JEREMIAH AND HISTORY

Historical Consciousness in Ancient Israel

It is generally believed that one of the great advances by Hebrew thinkers in antiquity was the development of a linear view of history. A linear view is one in which sequenced events move from a beginning point to an end point, and to these events in the aggregate a particular meaning is ascribed. The controlling view of Israel's ancient Near Eastern neighbors was more cyclical, corresponding to the rhythms of nature, i.e., beginnings occurred in the spring, when trees and flowers came to life and crops began sprouting from seeds planted in the earth, and endings occurred in the fall, when the same flourished briefly, only to wither and die. Canaanite worship was a form of nature worship, with the god Baal dying at the onset of winter and coming to life again in the spring. The Babylonians every year at their New Year Akitu Festival celebrated the enthronement of their gods. Assyrian kings, for their part, chronicled successful campaigns against other nations throughout the Levant, but no story line connected the successes nor was there any greater meaning in it all. It was largely a boast of successes for the Assyrian kings and Assyrian gods over the kings and gods of their enemies. The ancient Hindu religion of India, which survives in the modern day, has a system of reincarnation that puts history, in its own way, on a wheel.

Israel took over ancient Babylonian creation myths and historicized them, connecting their own versions of creation, the flood, and other primeval stories with sagas of their Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The actor in the former and guiding hand in the latter was one God, who was believed to have an even larger plan in mind. God called Abraham to undertake a journey to an undisclosed land, and promised him that he would become father of a great nation. What is more, Abraham would be a blessing to all peoples of the earth (Gen. 12.1-3). The promise of numberless descendants and a gift of the land in which Abraham was presently sojourning was repeated to Isaac and Jacob. So far as the events leading up to the creation of the world were concerned, the Israelites left out the mythological stories

of a pre-creation conflict among the gods, and were content to let this matter remain shrouded in mystery — unknown and incomprehensible mystery. It is now more or less agreed that Gen. 1.1 should be translated, 'When God began to create the heavens and the earth…', moving away from the traditional translation suggesting an absolute beginning: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'. Martin Luther correctly understood the Hebrew mind. When asked the schoolboy question as to what God was doing before the Creation, Luther replied: 'He went into the woods to cut rods from which to punish good-for-nothing questioners'.[1]

Genealogies were subsequently created to connect persons of primeval times to the Patriarchs (Genesis 10–11), and what has come to be called not just 'history', but 'salvation history', was continued by connecting Joseph, the son of Jacob, to a band of Israelite slaves in Egypt. Salvation history then came to early flower when the Israelites affirmed that Yahweh, the God of the Fathers, acted — with the good services of a man named Moses — to liberate the nation from Egyptian bondage and guide them on a journey that would lead to rest in a land promised to Abraham. And so it happened that the Exodus, Wilderness Wanderings, and Settlement became Israel's paradigmatic 'salvation history', also the central event of the Old Testament. The joining of this march of events with the demythologized stories of primeval time, which occurs in Genesis 11–12, became another step in creating salvation history, about which more was yet to be written.

The prophet Jeremiah does not give us anything approaching a view of history, although from material preserved in his book we may conclude that he believed Yahweh to be the creator of heaven and earth (10.12-16 = 51.15-19; 31.35-36; 32.17), and from language he employed, it is clear that he knew both creation stories in Genesis 1–2 (Jer. 1.5; 4.23-26; 18.1-11). Other evidence in his book indicates that Jeremiah knew where people, happenings, and ideas came from, and where the same were headed, which means we can speak of a measure of historical understanding in this prophet. But, as we have said, Jeremiah does not give us a view of history per se.

Jeremiah's Call Veiled in Mystery

At the beginning of the Jeremiah book we are told that Yahweh God called Jeremiah to be a prophet before he was born — indeed, that the divine call was issued before he was formed in the womb. Yahweh says to the young Jeremiah:

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1.   J. Muilenburg, 'The Biblical View of Time', *HTR* 54 (1961), p. 251.

> Before I formed you in the belly I knew you
> > and before you came forth from the womb I declared you holy
> > > a prophet to the nations I made you (Jer. 1.5).

This may be a case of divine hyperbole; even so, it is a remarkable statement not for what it tells us about the prophet's call, but for what it does not tell us. Jeremiah's call came *before* he was conceived in the womb of his mother, which means the divine action remains veiled in mystery, just as the pre-creation of the world does. The time of Jeremiah's call is known only to God.

The Prophet like Moses

On only rare occasions does the Old Testament depart from a strictly linear view of history. One is when the prophet Elijah ascends into heaven (2 Kgs 2.11), from which he is expected to return, according to the prophet Malachi, to usher in the great day of the Lord (Mal. 4.5-6). The Jewish people continue their wait for Elijah, opening for him the door at the close of the Passover Seder Meal. Christians, however, following the testimony of Jesus, believe that Elijah did in fact return in the person of John the Baptist (Mt. 11.7-15).

Another departure from a strictly linear view of history is seen in a Deuteronomy passage dealing with the prophets, where Yahweh says to Moses:

> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren;
> and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that
> I command him (Deut. 18.18).

Jeremiah in his report of the divine call, indicates that he understood himself to be this 'prophet like Moses'.[2] One such indication is when Yahweh said to him:

> For on all that I send you you shall go
> > and all that I command you you shall speak (Jer. 1.7).

The command to speak what Yahweh commands is repeated in the prophet's commission (1.17).

In reporting the divine call Jeremiah makes a clear allusion to Deut. 18.18. He says:

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2.   Muilenburg, 'The Mediators of the Covenant' (Unpublished Nils W. Lund Memorial Lectures, 20-21 November, 1963; North Park College and Theological Seminary); Holladay, 'The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding', pp. 153-64.

And Yahweh extended his hand and hit upon my mouth. And Yahweh
said to me:
>   Look, I have put my words in your mouth
>   See, I have set you this day
>   over the nations and over the kingdoms
>   to uproot and to break down
>   and to destroy and to overthrow
>   to build up and to plant (Jer. 1.9-10).

The filling of Jeremiah's mouth with Yahweh's words, however, is
only promissory. It has not yet taken place. A later fulfillment is indi-
cated in the almond branch vision, in which Yahweh says to Jeremiah: 'I
am watching over my word to do it' (1.12). The day came when infilling
did take place. In 622, at the climax of the Josianic Reform, a law book
of Moses was found in the Temple (2 Kgs 22.13), which impacted the
prophet profoundly. In a later lament he tells Yahweh:

>   Your words were found and I ate them
>   and your word was to me for joy
>   and for the gladness of my heart
>   For your name is called upon me
>   Yahweh, the God of hosts
>   I sat not in the happy crowd and acted jolly
>   because of your hand, all alone I sat
>   for with indignation you filled me (Jer. 15.16-17).

On this scroll was written the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, and
it was words from this poem that Jeremiah took into his mouth.[3] In so
doing, Jeremiah accepted his call to be Yahweh's prophet, something
he probably could not have done, and clearly did not do, when news of
the call came to him five years earlier. The prophet now is joyful when
Moses' words—also Yahweh's words—enter his mouth, and the call is
accepted. No such joy was evident in 627.

In Jeremiah's call are other appropriations of traditions about Moses.
Jeremiah's vision of a blossoming almond branch (1.11-12) recalls Moses'
vision of a burning bush (Exod. 3.1-6), and his protestation that he is
unable to speak (1.6) recalls Moses' demur about not being eloquent
(Exod. 4.10-17). Jerome noted that Yahweh's response to each was differ-
ent because of their respective ages. Jeremiah was only a 'boy' (*puer*), but
Moses, at the time he received the divine call, was a grown man (Exod.
2.11). Because Moses was grown, says Jerome, his resistance was met
with a rebuke. Jeremiah, however, received lenient treatment because at
a young age fear and timidity are considered admirable traits.[4]

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3.   Lundbom, 'The Lawbook of the Josianic Reform', pp. 293-302.
4.   Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, p. 233.

Early preaching in the book of Jeremiah—much of it in chaps. 2–3—shows a clear debt to the Song of Moses. There is conceptual borrowing, e.g., in both the Song and in Jeremianic preaching, Yahweh's goodness in the Exodus, Wilderness Wanderings, and Settlement is contrasted with Israel's blatant ingratitude, the point being made also that Israel's settlement in the land was the time when things began to go wrong (Deut. 32.10-18; Jer. 2.5-9). Jeremiah's diction throughout these early oracles betrays yet other influences of diction in the Song of Moses.[5]

A final indication that Jeremiah understood himself to be the prophet like Moses is in his prophecy of a new covenant (Jer. 31.31-34). Moses was mediator of the Sinai covenant, and it was Moses who renewed this covenant in the plains of Moab (Deut. 5.2-3; 29.1). But when the Sinai covenant was broken and could no longer be renewed, to Jeremiah, the prophet like Moses, fell the task of announcing to Israel Yahweh's promise of a new covenant.

A Romantic View of the Wilderness Trek

Not only does Jeremiah view his prophetic ministry over against the ministry of Moses, but we see in him a focus early on in the wilderness period when Moses was Israel's leader. Jeremiah may have learned from Deuteronomy that what mattered more for Israel than the Exodus deliverance was the covenant making and giving of the Decalogue at Sinai. Deuteronomy begins not at the Exodus, but at Sinai, with Israel being told to turn and take its journey to the land promised to the Fathers (Deut. 1.6-8).

From the Song of Moses we learn, too, that Yahweh's special relationship with Israel began not with the Exodus deliverance, but in the wilderness. Moses, referring to Yahweh, says:

> He found him in a desert land
>   and in the howling waste of the wilderness
> He encircled him, he cared for him
>   he kept him as the apple of his eye
> Like an eagle that stirs up its nest
>   that flutters over its young
> Spreading out its wings, catching them
>   bearing them on it pinions
> Yahweh alone did lead him
>   and there was no foreign god with them (Deut. 32.10-12).

A focus on the wilderness time appears also in Hosea, who, of course, knows the Exodus event (Hos. 11.1; 12.9; 13.4), but sees in the wilderness trek Yahweh's time of honeymoon with his new bride. Witnessing

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5. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 110-14.

at present an opulent, well-fortified Israel, busy with building palaces and fortifying cities, and trusting in itself and its large army, Hosea finds to his sorrow that Israel has forgotten its master (8.14), and is showing total disregard of the Sinai covenant. He therefore longs for the days of Yahweh's care and Israel's faithfulness in the wilderness. Yahweh says through this prophet:

> Like grapes in the wilderness I found Israel
>> like the first fruit on the fig tree, in its first season
>>> I saw your ancestors
> But they came to Baal-peor
>> and consecrated themselves to a thing of shame
>>> and became detestable like the thing they loved
> Ephraim's glory shall fly away like a bird—
>> no birth, no pregnancy, no conception
> Even if they bring up children
>> I will bereave them until no one is left
> Woe to them indeed
>> when I depart from them (Hos. 9.10-12).

The problem began with the settlement, which in the Song of Moses took place not in Canaan, but in Transjordan after Moses defeated the Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, and settled Israelite tribes in their territories. People then began to enjoy the good things of a settled life, but they grew fat, and forsook the God who made them (Deut. 32.13-18). The preeminent act of apostasy was at Baal-peor (Num. 25.1-9; Deut. 4.3).

Yahweh says through Hosea that perhaps a return to the wilderness might remedy Israel's unfaithfulness:

> Therefore, I will now allure her
>> and bring her into the wilderness
>>> and speak to her heart
> And there I will give her vineyards
>> and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope
> And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth
>> as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt (Hos. 2.14-15).

After this honeymoon renewal Israel will once again call Yahweh 'My husband' (Hos. 2.16).

This idealism, which is also a romantic impulse, appears to have been born in Northern Israel. It is different from the idealism in Isaiah, who having been schooled in the Zion tradition, responded to the sorry state of affairs in Jerusalem by looking ahead to a time when Israel would once again have a king like David, and under him there would be a peace like what existed in primordial time (Isa. 2.4; 9.6-7; 11.1-9). Yahweh's holy mountain would become a new Garden of Eden. Isaiah describes it as a time when

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb
    and the leopard shall lie down with the kid
And the calf and the lion and the fatling together
    and a little child shall lead them
The cow and the bear shall feed
    their young shall lie down together
       and the lion shall eat straw like the ox
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp
    and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den
They will not hurt or destroy
    on all my holy mountain
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh
    as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11.6-9).

The Deuteronomic Historian, in a similar but different way, betrays the longing for a king like David. The 'golden age' of David and Solomon is past, and we read in the obituary for King Abijam, son of Rehoboam and grandson of Solomon:

> He committed all the sins that his father did before him; his heart was not true to Yahweh his God, like the heart of his father David. Nevertheless for David's sake Yahweh his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, setting up his son after him, and establishing Jerusalem; because David did what was right in the sight of Yahweh, and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite (1 Kgs 15.3-5).

Royal obituaries in the Deuteronomic History continue along similar lines: Judah's kings are compared or contrasted to David (1 Kgs 15.11; 2 Kgs 8.19; 14.3; 16.2; 18.3; 22.2), and Israel's kings are compared to evil kings preceding them, above all Jeroboam son of Nebat (1 Kgs 15.26, 34; 16.7, 19, 25-26, 30-31; 22.52; 2 Kgs 3.3; 10.29, 31; 13.2, 6, 11; 14.24; 15.9, 18, 24, 28).

Although Jeremiah late in his career looks ahead to a restored Israel under a king like David (Jer. 23.5-6; 30.8-9; 33.14-16), the focus in his early preaching is on the wilderness period, where Israel was ablaze with love for Yahweh and Yahweh was protective of Israel. Like Hosea, Jeremiah romanticizes the wilderness period. In the prophet's opening oracle, Yahweh says:

I remember about you
    your bridal devotion
       your engagement love
Your going after me in the wilderness
    in a land not sown
Something holy was Israel to me
    the firstfruits of his harvest
All who ate it became guilty
    evil came upon them (Jer. 2.2-3).

This is pure romanticism, as Israel's unfaithfulness in the wilderness is amply documented in Exodus and Numbers, where in the former the preeminent act of apostasy was the fashioning of a golden calf at Sinai (Exodus 32). Israel's disobedience is documented also in Deuteronomy (Deut. 1.26-46; 9.6-29), elsewhere in Jeremiah (Jer. 7.25-26), and in Ezekiel (Ezek. 20.13-26).

But Jeremiah's idealism continues in chap. 2, where Yahweh says:

> What did your fathers find wrong in me
>   that they wandered far from me?
> They went after The Nothing
>   and became nothing
>
> They did not say, 'Where is Yahweh
>   who brought us up from the land of Egypt
>   who led us in the wilderness
>   in a land of desert and pit
>   in a land of drought and death shadow
>   in a land through which a person does not pass
>   and a human being does not dwell there?'
>
> Then I brought you into the garden land
>   to eat its fruit and its goodness
> But you came in and polluted my land
>   and my heritage you made an abomination
>
> The priests did not say, 'Where is Yahweh?'
>   those handling the law did not know me
> The shepherds rebelled against me
>   the prophets prophesied by Baal
>
> After No Profits they went
>   Therefore I still have a grievance with you
>   — oracle of Yahweh —
>   and with your children's children I will have a grievance (Jer. 2.5-9).

Here we are told that sin took root not in the wilderness, but when Israel became settled in the land, and idea, as we said earlier, that appears to have emanated from the Song of Moses.

Other Jeremiah preaching focuses on the wilderness period. In his critique of sacrificial worship, Jeremiah says that sacrifices were not commanded in the wilderness (Jer. 7.21-26), which is not supported by Priestly traditions (Exod. 20.24; 24.5; Num. 28.6). Jeremiah also notes in a hope oracle, which may be early rather than late, that 'the people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness' (Jer. 31.2).

History Begins and Ends with Salvation

Jeremiah gave oracles of hope for the future, the most important being his prophecy of a new covenant. Many of the 'Look, days are coming'

oracles, primarily in chap. 31, speak of an indefinite future, but one in which Yahweh's promises are sure to be fulfilled. In prophesying a future hope, Jeremiah was perhaps again being influenced by the Song of Moses, which moves from salvation in former times (Deut. 32.7-14) to salvation in later times (Deut. 32.34-43). Judgment comes in the middle (Deut. 32.15-33). Salvation in later times will take place after Israel has been punished for her apostasy, a remnant is preserved, just as the enemy is about to annihilate the covenant people, and Yahweh God moves climactically to punish the enemy. Punishment for the enemy means mercy for Israel. History begins and ends with salvation.

Jeremiah and the Created Order

One may well pose the question whether Jeremiah had any thoughts at all on creation, living as he did on the eve of a calamitous destruction—people dying from sword, famine, and disease, the land he loved becoming an uninhabitable ruin, and the nation he loved tumbling headlong into inglorious demise. How much more we might learn from Second Isaiah, whose eloquence on creation compares with writers of Genesis 1, Psalm 104, and a handful of other biblical texts on the subject (Isa. 40.21-31; 42.5-9; 43.1-7; 44.1-5, 21-28; 45.12-18; 51.12-16). It is Second Isaiah who speaks about a new heaven and a new earth (Isa. 65.17), which gets ultimate and climactic expression at the close of the New Testament (Rev. 21.1–22.5). Jeremiah's eloquence appears at first glance to be saved for the undoing of creation, on the one hand (Jer. 4.23-26), and for the prophecy of a new covenant, on the other (Jer. 31.31-34).

Jeremiah, as it happens, has a good deal to say about Yahweh and the created order, but we must begin by taking a look at pronouncements about creation's undoing, including a vision the prophet received about creation returning to primeval chaos. The undoing of creation is Jeremiah's concern in the early and middle years of his preaching. We need also to know the reasons Jeremiah gave for destruction on such a grand scale, spoken to those who lived through it, but which can also inform those of us for whom the fragility of the created order is a topic of daily conversation.

Visions of Cosmic Destruction

Jeremiah's 'Vision of Cosmic Destruction' in chap. 4, for which the prophet is perhaps best known, describes a return of the created order to primeval chaos:

> I saw the earth, and look! it was waste and void
>   and the heavens, their light was not there
> I saw the mountains, and look! they were quaking
>   and all the hills were tossing about

I saw, and look! no human was there
        and all the birds of the skies had fled
I saw, and look! the garden land was a desert
        and all its cities were ruined
                before Yahweh
                before his burning anger (Jer. 4.23-26).

The vision contains unmistakable echoes of the creation account in Genesis 1, reproducing its characteristic language ('waste and void'), balancing terms ('heaven' and 'earth'), and strong cadences, yet possessing a rhetorical quality all its own. It is unparalleled in the prophetic corpus, perhaps in all literature, ancient and modern. The repetitions ('I saw…and look!'), and balancing terms ('earth' and 'heavens'; 'mountains' and 'hills'; 'quaking' and 'tossing about'; 'human' and 'birds'; 'garden land' and 'cities'), are supplemented by diminution to a couple terse, climactic lines ('before Yahweh, before his burning anger'), simulating creation's undoing. If creation was a gift of Yahweh God, and it was, its undoing is the result of Yahweh's burning anger.

On another occasion, Jeremiah sees creation coming apart—burned-out mountains, meadows empty of people, no cattle, no wild animals, no birds overhead—and he is reduced to tears:

Over the mountains I make weeping and lament
        and over pastures of the wild a dirge
For they are burned, without a person passing through
        they do not hear the sound of cattle
From birds of the skies to the beasts
        they have fled, they are gone (Jer. 9.10-11).

Portrayals mixing vision and metaphor with real-life scenarios occur all throughout the prophetic writings. The return to darkness routinely describes Yahweh's day of judgment (Amos 5.18-20; 8.9; Isa. 13.10; Joel 2.2), a day when the land will become dry, and the mountains and hills will shake violently (Amos 1.2; Nah. 1.4-6). Joel 1 stresses drought and famine, the prophet in this instance seeing a veritable 'garden of Eden' turned into a desert wilderness (Joel 2.3). Beasts, birds, and fish will disappear on that day (Hos. 4.3), and so will humans in the vision of Zephaniah (Zeph. 1.2-3). No talk of sparing innocent civilians, women and children, animals, trees, or fruit of the ground (Jer. 7.20; 21.6; 36.29; cf. Deut. 32.22). The divine wrath will descend on all creation, and it did (Jer. 32.43; 33.10, 12). In the Battle of Gettysburg during America's Civil War (1-3 July, 1863), it was not only fallen soldiers who lay dying on the battlefield: the Peach Orchard and surrounding land were ruined, and thousands of horses lay dead, waiting to be buried. Other wars have witnessed destruction on an even greater scale.

Jeremiah's vision, like those of the other prophets, is only a vision, and as bad as things became, the creation never returned to primeval chaos. Still, the impact of his words is stunning. Jeremiah tells us that he sees more chaos than creation, more endings than beginnings, and more of Yahweh tearing down than of Yahweh building up. Gunkel said the 'end times' are a return to 'beginning times' (*Endzeit gleicht Urzeit*),[1] and for Jeremiah this return would be a return to the beginning of creation itself.

A different picture, surely, from the one given by Isaiah of Jerusalem, who reaches back not quite so far for his typology, only to the time when creation was in perfect harmony. The end times for this prophet would be a felicitous return to harmony after eons of disharmony, a day when:

> The wolf shall live with the lamb
>> and the leopard shall lie down with the kid
> and the calf and the lion and the fatling together
>> and a little child shall lead them
> The cow and the bear shall graze
>> their young shall lie down together
>>> and the lion shall eat straw like the ox
> The nursing child shall play over the whole of the asp
>> and upon the adder's den
>>> the weaned child shall put his hand
> They will not hurt and they will not destroy
>> on all my holy mountain
> For the earth will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh
>> as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11.6-9).

Jeremiah is called to act out symbolically the message of a creation slated for destruction by not taking a wife and having children (Jer. 16.2). Marriage in ancient Israel was regarded as having been built into the created order (Gen. 2.18-24), with children considered to be a great blessing (Gen. 22.17; Psalm 128). God's command from creation on was 'to be fruitful and multiply' (Gen. 1.28; 8.17; 9.1, 7). Celibacy therefore was highly unusual (Deut. 7.14). But now in light of the imminent distress, the command to procreate is suspended. The Apostle Paul in his day similarly counseled a suspension of the procreation command when writing to the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 7.26-31; cf. Lk. 23.29).

In a brilliantly crafted poem among the oracles against Babylon, Jeremiah employs mythic imagery, first to record Lady Jerusalem's lament over treatment it received from Nebuchadnezzar, then to describe Yah-

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1. Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895 [English: *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton* (trans. K. William Whitney, Jr; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006)].

weh's eventual destruction of mighty Babylon—its celebrated rivers, canals, and artificial lakes, and climactically Bel Marduk, its powerless god (Jer. 51.34-45). The sea will roar in upon Babylon as a chaotic force, leaving her and daughter-cities as dusty, dried-up ruins:

> The sea has come up upon Babylon
>   with its roaring heaps she is covered
> Her cities have become a desolation
>   a land of drought and desert
> A land in which no person shall dwell
>   and a human shall not pass through
> So I have reckoned with Bel in Babylon
>   and taken out what he has swallowed from his mouth (Jer. 51.42-44a).

A Good Creation Gone Bad

Gerhard von Rad and others have made the point that God's work of creation stands in the Old Testament not as an independent doctrine, but occurs in tandem with God's work of redemption and salvation, specifically his redemption and salvation of Israel.[2] As for Jeremiah and the prophets, they, too, have no interest simply in affirming Yahweh's creation or lamenting its undoing, although Jeremiah does a considerable amount of both. At issue for Jeremiah is Israel's sinfulness, which at root comes down to covenant violation. The created order suffers a reversal because Israel has been unfaithful to Yahweh, his word, and his covenant.

Deuteronomy states that Yahweh is giving Israel an exceedingly good land. Moses tells the people:

> For Yahweh your God is bringing you into a good land
>   a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters
>   welling up in valleys and hills
>   a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates
>   a land of olive trees and honey

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2. G. von Rad, 'The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation', in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (trans. E.W. Trueman Dicken; London: SCM Press, 1984), pp. 131-43 [= Bernard W, Anderson (ed.), *Creation in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 53-64]; *Old Testament Theology*, I (trans. D.M.G. Stalker; Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd, 1962), pp. 124, 136-39; Walther Eichrodt, 'In the Beginning', in Bernard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (eds.), *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1962), p. 8 [= B.W. Anderson (ed.), *Creation in the Old Testament*, pp. 70-71]; Dennis J. McCarthy, ' "Creation" Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry', in B.W. Anderson (ed.), *Creation in the Old Testament*, pp. 75-76; H.H. Schmid, 'Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation', in B.W. Anderson (ed.), *Creation in the Old Testament*, p. 103, although Schmid goes on to say that creation is the fundamental theme of biblical theology (p. 111).

a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will
   lack nothing
a land whose stones are iron, and from whose hills you may mine
   copper
You shall eat your fill and bless Yahweh your God for the good land
   he has given you (Deut. 8.7-10).

But in Jeremiah Yahweh says regarding his gift of land and Israel's
taking possession of it:

Then I brought you into a garden land
   to eat its fruit and its goodness
But you came in and polluted my land
   and my heritage you made an abomination (Jer. 2.7).

The view that things began to go bad with settlement in the land comes
from the Song of Moses (Deut. 32.10-18), and Jeremiah shows a clear
familiarity with this Song (Jer. 2.2-9).

On another occasion, Jeremiah says Yahweh hoped that his gift of a
good land to daughter Israel would lead to faithfulness on her part, but
to his sorrow, the exact opposite occurred. Yahweh says:

And I said to myself,
   'How will I treat you among the children?
I will give you a fine land
   a heritage—beauty of beauties—among the nations'
And I said, 'You will call me 'My Father'
   and will not turn back from following me'
Surely as a woman faithless with her companion
   so you have been faithless to me, house of Israel (Jer. 3.19-20).

Ezekiel echoes this in calling Israel's heritage 'a beauty of all the lands'
(Ezek. 20.6, 15).

Jeremiah may also have learned from the Song of Moses that Yahweh
was a Father to Israel (Jer. 3.4; 31.9). In the Song Moses berates the wil-
derness generation for dealing corruptly with its God, whose created
work is perfect and whose ways are just (Deut. 32.4-6). Moses says:

Do you repay Yahweh thus?
   O people foolish and unwise!
Is not he your father who created you?
   He made you and set you up to last! (Deut. 32.6).

An early Jeremiah oracle berates the covenant people. Yahweh says they
are a people

Who say to a tree, 'You are my father'
   and to a stone, 'You gave me birth'
For they face me with the back of the neck
   not the face (Jer. 2.27ab).

The words are ironic, reversing the gender of Canaanite fertility symbols. The tree (or wooden pole) is the female fertility symbol, the Asherah; the stone (pillar) is the male fertility symbol. Two deliberate mismatches.

In another Jeremiah oracle (2.20-22), Yahweh says that Israel herself has gone bad, and he wonders how such a thing could have happened. Jeremiah knows about good and bad vine stock, perhaps recalling the portrayal of Israel's enemy in the Song of Moses as a strange vine yielding poisonous grapes (Deut. 32.32-33). Jeremiah completes the contrast: Yahweh planted Israel as a good vine, but now she has become something else. Yahweh says to the nation:

> But I, I planted you a choice vine
>   perfectly good seed
> How then have you become something putrid
>   a strange vine? (Jer. 2.21).

The *sorek* vine was high quality stock, producing grapes dark red in color (Gen. 49.11; Isa. 5.2). Jeremiah's usage continues to be meta-phorical, with Yahweh referring once again to Israel's settlement in the land and becoming like the former inhabitants, the very thing Deuter-onomy inveighed against in the strongest of terms (e.g., chap. 12). Israel broke the covenant yoke and took to whoredom 'on every high hill and under every leafy tree' (Jer. 2.20). Hosea, using the vine metaphor, gave a similar indictment of Northern Israel (Hos. 10.1-2), and Isaiah embel-ished the metaphor for Judah in his memorable 'Song of the Vineyard' (Isa. 5.1-7). In the natural order such things do not happen. Good vines remain good, and bad vines remain bad. All the same, in another Jeremiah oracle Yahweh calls for alien vines and trailing branches to be stripped away (Jer. 5.10).

Regular Creation, Irregular Judah

Jeremiah took particular notice of regularity within the created order, and cited examples of this regularity for the purpose of making a contrast with the irregular behavior of the covenant people. At times the latter stretched into incredulity.

Creation and wisdom themes combine in one Jeremiah oracle in order to focus attention on stability and rebellion (Jer. 5.20-25). Jeremiah noted the control Yahweh exercised over the ever-worrisome sea, having made the sandy shore a border over which it could not pass (Jer. 5.22-23; Pss. 104.9; 148.6; Prov. 8.29; Job 26.12; 38.8-11). In this oracle, Yahweh asks first whether people fear him, and then contrasts his turbulent yet con-trolled sea with a covenant people who turns and goes its own way:[3]

3. See Hans-Jürgen Hermisson, 'Observations on the Creation Theology in

> Me do you not fear — oracle of Yahweh
>   in my presence do you not writhe?
> In that I made the sand a border for the sea
>   an ancient prescribed limit it does not go past
> They shake themselves but do not prevail
>   its waves roar but they do not go past
> But this people has a wayward and rebellious heart
>   they turn and go their way (Jer. 5.22-23).

In the same oracle Jeremiah answers that people do not fear Yahweh, who gives seasonal rains and the prescribed weeks of harvest:

> They did not say in their heart
>   'Let us now fear Yahweh our God
> Who gives showers and early rain
>   and latter rain in its season
> The weeks prescribed for harvest
>   he maintains for us' (Jer. 5.24).

The oracle concludes by saying that sins of the people have turned these away (v. 25). Sinful behavior disrupts the regularity of the created order.

On another occasion, Jeremiah contrasts a consistently fresh-water well with a people consistently evil, embellishing his contrast with a word play in the Hebrew:

> As a well keeps fresh its water
>   so she keeps fresh her evil (Jer. 6.7).

Judah is as consistently bad as a fresh-water well is consistently good.

Jeremiah's contrast of the covenant people with migratory birds focuses on the question of 'knowledge', or in this instance, the lack thereof. From Hosea, Jeremiah may have learned that people could be sadly lacking in knowledge (Hos. 4.1, 6; 5.4; 6.6; Jer. 4.22), and in concluding this oracle (Jer. 8.4-7) Jeremiah says it comes down to a people not knowing the order of Yahweh:

> Even the stork in the skies
>   knows her seasons
> The turtledove, swift, and swallow
>   keep the time of their coming
> But my people do not know
>   the order of Yahweh (Jer. 8.7).

Migratory birds bear witness to an ordered creation under Yahweh's control, knowing instinctively when to fly south and when to fly north.

Wisdom', in B.W. Anderson (ed.), *Creation in the Old Testament*, p. 130; John Barton, 'History and Rhetoric in the Prophets', in Martin Warner (ed.), *The Bible as Rhetoric* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 59.

But Yahweh's covenant people, with whatever capacities they possess, do not know Yahweh's order for them. Jerome, in commenting on this verse, recalls the words of Isaiah: 'The ox knows its owner and the ass its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people does not understand' (Isa. 1.3).

Jeremiah observed regularity in the snow and streams of mountainous Lebanon, and in one oracle (18.13-17) he contrasted this trustworthy natural wonder to a forgetful and idolatry-driven people. A pair of rhetorical questions sets up the contrast:

> Can it leave the mountain highland
>   the snow of Lebanon?
> Can foreign waters dry up
>   the cool flowing streams?
> But my people have forgotten me
>   they burn incense in vain (Jer. 18.14-15).

Human sinfulness goes against the natural order; more than that, the natural order becomes profoundly disturbed because of sinful human behavior (5.24-25). The latter is a major motif in Jeremiah's preaching. In Jer. 3.2-3, the prophet notes that on dusty, dry hills, people are polluting the land with sexual improprieties. He says:

> So the showers were withheld
>   and the latter rains did not come (Jer. 3.3).

Yahweh was widely confessed by the Israelite people as the one who sends rain (Deut. 11.11-12; Hos. 6.3; Jer. 5.24; 14.22; Pss. 104.10-16; 147.8; Job 5.10), but when people buy into Canaanite whoredom, Yahweh withholds it. Amos recalled Yahweh's withholding of rain with no appreciable effect on the people (Amos 4.7-8); Hosea saw the land mourning because of covenant infidelity (Hos. 4.1-3); and Isaiah linked covenant infidelity with a mourning creation (Isa. 24.4-7). Not surprisingly, Jeremiah repeats these same ideas (Jer. 4.28; 12.4, 11; 14.1-10; 23.10). The drought described in Jer. 14.1-6 was particularly severe—farmers and nobles covering their heads, wild asses losing their eyesight, and does in the field forsaking their young. All Judah lay prostrate in mourning, said Jeremiah, while the cry of Jerusalem went up. Rain was a covenant blessing, and drought a covenant curse. Deuteronomy stated that covenant obedience would bring about rain and abundant crops (Deut. 11.13-15; 28.12), but if people turned to the worship of other gods, the heavens would become brass and the earth hard as iron (Deut. 28.23). Without crops, the covenant people would then perish (Deut. 11.16-17; 28.24).

Humans Taking on the Behavior of Animals

Jeremiah appears to presuppose a hierarchy in creation, which is transparent in Genesis 1, but which is stated somewhat differently in the Yahwistic account of creation in Genesis 2, where humans—male and female—rank higher in the created order and are given more responsibility than the animals, birds, and other living beings (Gen. 1.26-28; 2.18-23; cf. Mt. 6.26). This hierarchy, says Jeremiah in metaphor and simile, shows signs of having broken down. Humans, whether in denial, flagrant wrongdoing, and just unknowingly, have taken on the behavior of animals. In an early oracle (Jer. 2.23-25a), Jeremiah compares a people chasing the Baals to a dancing young camel or a wild ass in heat:

> How can you say, 'I am not defiled
>   after the Baals I have not gone'?
> Check your way in the valley
>   know what you have done
> A swift young camel crisscrossing her tracks
>   a wild ass used to the wilderness
> in her desirous craving sniffing the wind
>   in her season who can bring her back? (Jer. 2.23-24).

On another occasion, Jeremiah compares a well-fed people to sex-crazed horses. Satiated men are committing adultery and cutting paths to the whorehouse. Yahweh therefore asks:

> Why should I pardon you?
>   your children have forsaken me
>   and have sworn by 'no-gods'
> When I fed them to the full they committed adultery
>   and to a whorehouse they cut a path
>   well-endowed early-rising horses they were
> Each man neighing for his neighbor's wife (Jer. 5.7-8).

The Song of Moses says that Israel, after settling in the land and enjoying its good things, returned thanks by forgetting the Grand Provider and chasing after other gods (Deut. 32.13-18). Hosea found the very same thing happening in his time (Hos. 2.8; 13.6).

In Jeremiah's oracle contrasting the covenant people to migratory birds (8.4-9), a people unaware of evil is compared also to warhorses charging blindly into the fray. Jeremiah says:

> Everyone turns to their course
>   like a horse plunging headlong into battle (Jer. 8.6).

On yet another occasion, Jeremiah compares the man accumulating illicit gain to the partridge who tends or incubates chicks he did not bring forth. In doing a bad job of things both end up with substantial loss:

A partridge that brooded but did not bring forth
    is one raking in riches but not by right
In the middle of his days he will forsake it
    and at his end he will have become a fool (Jer. 17.11).

Yahweh Creator of Heaven and Earth

Jeremiah, despite an early preoccupation with covenant infidelity and creation's undoing, showed later, precisely at the time when events were spinning wildly out of control, a rock-solid belief in Yahweh as creator of heaven and earth. At midpoint in the First Edition of the Jeremiah book (chaps. 1–20) are liturgical pieces praising the God of Israel and exalting him over the gods of the nations, who, in fact, are no gods (10.1-16). The first liturgy (vv. 1-10) acknowledges Yahweh as the one true, living God, incomparable to the inert idols that have been crafted and decked out by human hands. Coming next, sandwiched in between the two liturgies, and exercising a climactic function in the larger compilation, is a playful verse debunking the gods who did not make the heavens and the earth. This verse, written in Aramaic, has perhaps been left un-translated because it preserves a pun on the words 'make' and 'perish':

> The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth
>   these shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens (Jer.
>   10.11).

    The second liturgical piece (vv. 12-16) is a hymn, basically, repeated a second time amidst the Foreign Nation Oracles (51.15-19). Verse 13 is a near-quote of Ps. 135.7, and vv. 12-13 have turned up in a hitherto unknown psalm from Qumran.[4] The hymn could derive from Jeremiah, or else be of unknown provenance, having simply been added to the Jeremiah book in the compilation process. Von Rad noted that 'the creation and preservation of the world by Jahweh was certainly one of the principal subjects of the hymns of the Old Testament',[5] and so it was (Pss. 89.12 [Eng 89.11]; 102.26 [Eng 102.25]; 104.2-9; 148.5-6; Amos 4.13; 5.8-9; 9.5-6). The present hymn celebrates the greatness of Yahweh, who created the world and is the Portion of Jacob:

> The Maker of the earth by his strength
>   the Establisher of the world by his wisdom
>   and by his understanding he stretched out the heavens
> When he utters his voice—a roar in heaven's waters
>   clouds come up from the ends of the earth

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4.   James A. Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 129-31.

5.   Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I, p. 361.

> Lightning bolts for rain he made
> > and he brought forth the wind from his storehouses
>
> Every human is stupid without knowledge
> > every smith is very ashamed because of the idol
> For his cast image is a lie
> > and no breath is in them
> They are nothing—a laughable work!
> > at the time of their visitation they shall perish
>
> Not like these is the Portion of Jacob
> > for the one forming everything is he
> And Israel is his tribal heritage
> > Yahweh of hosts is his name (Jer. 10.12-16).

Again we see that belief in Yahweh's creation of heaven and earth goes hand in hand with a belief in Yahweh's covenant with Israel.

In an oracle to foreign envoys, spoken in connection with Jeremiah wearing the yoke bars, Yahweh says that because he made the earth and its inhabitants by his great strength, he can and will give them over to Nebuchadnezzar, who for a time will be his servant. Yahweh says:

> I, I made the earth, human and beast that are on the face of the earth, with my great strength and with my outstretched arm, and I give it to whoever seems right in my eyes. And now I, I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, my servant; and even the beasts of the field I have given him, to serve him. So all the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson until the time of his land comes—even he! Then many nations and great kings shall make him serve! (Jer. 27.4-7).

In the questioning prayer that follows Jeremiah's purchase of the field at Anathoth, Yahweh is confessed by the prophet to be the matchless creator of heaven and earth. Jeremiah says:

> Ah, Lord Yahweh! Look, you, you made the heavens and the earth with your great strength and with your outstretched arm. Nothing is too difficult for you (Jer. 32.17).

Following immediately is a confession of Yahweh as redeemer in the Exodus and giver of the land. Jeremiah continues in his prayer:

> …you have shown signs and wonders, in the land of Egypt— up to this day—and in Israel and among humankind, and you made for yourself a name, as at this day. And you brought your people Israel out from the land of Egypt with signs and wonders and with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm and with great terror, and you gave to them this land that you swore to their fathers to give to them, a land flowing with milk and honey. And they came in and took possession of it, but they did not obey your voice and in your law did not walk; everything that you commanded them to do, they did not do, so you made them meet up with all this evil (Jer. 32.20-23).

The paired confessions of Yahweh as creator of heaven and earth and redeemer of Israel are foils for a concluding indictment on covenant disobedience. Something similar occurs early on in the Song of Moses (Deut. 32.1-18). In both Genesis creation accounts we observe an intentional balancing of 'creation and fall'. The Yahwist writer transparently juxtaposes creation and fall in Genesis 2–3, and the Priestly writer, in framing the Yahwistic narrative, comes up with a 'creation and fall' of his own in Genesis 1 and 6–9, the latter being his story of the Flood.

Von Rad and others believed that creation theology developed late in ancient Israel, the earlier focus being on Yahweh's redemption of Israel from Egyptian slavery (Isa. 45.12-13; Neh. 9.6-15). According to this view, Exodus faith was the prior faith in ancient Israel.[6] But it is now believed by many scholars that creation ideas were very old, entered Israel at an early time, and were well-established in the pre-exilic period, probably by the early monarchy (1 Kgs 8.22-23; 2 Kgs 19.15).[7] Creation theology in Jeremiah, for this reason and for others, is assuredly not late.[8] It occurs in Jer. 27.5 and 32.17, as we have seen, and exists elsewhere in the book.[9]

Yahweh Creator and Re-creator of Nations

In Jeremiah's early preaching is a striking oracle about Yahweh recreating nations — Israel first and foremost, but also other nations. This oracle, which came to the prophet in a visit to the potter's shop (Jer. 18.1-10), draws on imagery from the Yahwistic account of creation, where the Divine Potter is said to have 'formed' man out of clay from the ground, and then breathed into him the breath of life (Gen. 2.7-8). From the clay Yahweh also 'formed' the beasts of the field and the birds of the air (Gen. 2.19). The same Hebrew verb occurs when Yahweh tells Jeremiah of having 'formed' him in the womb of his mother (Jer. 1.5), and denotes Yahweh's creative work elsewhere in the Old Testament (Amos 4.13; Jer. 10.16 [= 51.19]; 33.2; Pss. 94.9; 104.26).

6.   Von Rad, 'The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation', pp. 131-43; *Old Testament Theology*, I, pp. 124, 136-39.

7.   Schmid, 'Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation,' p. 111; George M. Landes, 'Creation and Liberation', in B.W. Anderson (ed.), *Creation in the Old Testament*, pp. 136-37; Terence Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005).

8.   Jeremiah's 'Vision of Cosmic Destruction', in Jer. 4:23-26 clearly presupposes the Genesis 1 creation account. The P material, following Y. Kaufmann, is now dated by many scholars in the pre-exilic period; cf. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, p. 451.

9.   Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, pp. 312-13.

In the potter's shop, Jeremiah sees the potter remaking a spoiled vessel. In the oracle that follows, Yahweh says how much more does he exercise the same sort of control over nations, including Israel, remaking them if it becomes necessary. The divine action is not arbitrary. It depends on a prior divine word about Yahweh tearing down or building up, and nations responding by committing evil or repenting of evil. Yahweh says:

> Like this potter am I not able to do to you, house of Israel?—oracle of Yahweh. Look! Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, house of Israel. At one moment I will speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot or to break down or to destroy, and that nation against which I spoke turns from its evil, then I will repent concerning the evil that I planned to do to it. And at one moment I will speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build or to plant, and it does evil in my eyes, not hearing my voice, then I will repent concerning the good that I thought to benefit it (Jer. 18.6-10).

Here and throughout the Jeremiah book are references to building and planting. Yahweh not only uproots and breaks down, he builds up and plants (Jer. 1.10; 12.14-17; 24.6; 31.28; 32.41; 42.10; 45.4). This realization of divine upbuilding may have dawned upon Jeremiah in the potter's shop, but more than likely it came earlier. Already in his call to holy office, the young Jeremiah is informed by Yahweh that his appointment over nations and kingdoms is

> to uproot and to break down
>   and to destroy and to overthrow
>   to build up and to plant (Jer. 1.10).

Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe and friend, learned to his sorrow that Yahweh was currently busy with the overthrowing and uprooting of nations (Jer. 45.4; cf. 27.5-7). But the day would come when Yahweh would once again build up and plant, and the latter would be a work of recreation.

Jeremiah tells the covenant people, at a time of painful uprooting, that in Babylon and later in the homeland it can look forward to once again being built up. Israel's recreation is the dominant theme of Jeremiah's Letters to the Exiles (chap. 29), which are to be dated shortly after the first deportation in 597. The two letters (29.1-23, 24-28) echo the 'be fruitful and multiply' word of Gen. 1.28:

> Build houses and live in them, and plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters, and take for your sons wives, and your daughters give to husbands, and let them bear sons and daughters. Yes, multiply there, and do not decrease…

Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their fruit (Jer. 29.5-6, 28).

In a couple other future-oriented oracles, Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh building up a united Israel and Judah in the homeland. In the first, the verb 'sow' is used, an echo of Hos. 2.23:

> Look, days are coming—oracle of Yahweh—when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of human and the seed of beast.

> And it will be, as I have watched over them to uproot and to break down and to overthrow and to destroy, also to bring evil, so I will watch over them to build and to plant—oracle of Yahweh (Jer. 31.27-28).

Jeremiah along with other prophets are clear about Israel multiplying in its own land after Yahweh's destructive work is completed (Jer. 3.16; 23.3; 30.19; cf. Hos. 1.10; Ezek. 36.8-11; Isa. 49.20-21; 54.1-3). Recreation will occur also in other nations. Jeremiah 12.14-17 says that Israel's enemies, after their own uprooting, will be returned to their land and will be built up if they learn Yahweh's ways and swear by Yahweh's name.

Yahweh's Covenant with Creation

Some oracles in the book of Jeremiah speak of Yahweh as a God who keeps covenant with his creation, an idea that appears to develop from the Noachian covenant in Gen. 9.8-17. The Noachian covenant is unconditional and everlasting, like the covenants made with Abraham (Gen. 15.5; 17.7, 13-14), David (2 Sam. 7.12-16), and Phinehas the priest (Num. 25.11-13).[10] Each of the latter, not surprisingly, finds a place in one or more of the present oracles. The Noachian covenant was made with every living creature on earth, with Yahweh promising never again to destroy them as he did in the Flood. This effectively puts a cap on Yahweh's destructive work for all future time.

Jeremiah in a couple brief oracles first affirms Yahweh's eternal covenant with creation (the Noachian covenant), then in a protasis-apodosis argument Yahweh's covenant with the seed of Israel (the Abrahamic covenant). If the former cannot cease, neither can the latter:

> Thus said Yahweh
> > who gives the sun for light by day
> statutes of the moon and stars
> > for light by night
> Who stirs up the sea so its waves roar
> > Yahweh of hosts is his name

10. David Noel Freedman, 'Divine Commitment and Human Obligation', *Int* 18 (1964), pp. 419-31.

> If these statutes depart
>> from before me—oracle of Yahweh
> Then the seed of Israel shall cease
>> from being a nation before me—all the days (Jer. 31.35-36).

The mention here of 'statutes' puts the emphasis not upon Yahweh's initial creation, but upon Yahweh's regulation of creation over time (cf. Jer. 5.24; 33.20, 25).

Another oracle argues along similar lines. In it Yahweh says he has established an eternal covenant with day and night, which must refer to what is stated in Gen. 8.22 (Rashi):

> As long as the earth endures
>> seedtime and harvest, cold and heat
>> summer and winter, day and night
> shall not cease (Gen. 8.22).

This covenant is apparently another that cannot be broken, making it like the covenants with Noah, David, and the Levitical priests. The covenant with the Levitical priests is the covenant of peace made with Phinehas. The present Jeremiah oracle:

> Thus said Yahweh: If you could break my covenant of the day and my covenant of the night, so daytime and night would not come at their appointed time, then could my covenant be broken with David, my servant, so there would not be for him a son reigning on his throne, also with the Levitical priests, my ministers (Jer. 33.20-21).

The continuance of the Davidic covenant is argued on the basis of Yahweh's (prior) covenant with creation in Ps. 89.19-37.

A final oracle in the expanded Book of Restoration (chaps. 30–33) uses another protasis–apodosis argument to assert Yahweh's eternal covenants with creation, Abraham, and David:

> Thus said Yahweh: If indeed I have not established my covenant of daytime and night—statutes of heaven and earth—then the seed of Jacob and David, my servant, I will reject, not taking from his seed rulers unto the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for I will surely restore their fortunes, and I will show them mercy (Jer. 33.25-26).

Yahweh and a New Creation

For the grand prophecies of creation and a new creation we must wait until Second Isaiah, who digs deeper than Jeremiah into hoary antiquity to resurrect mythical ideas about the creation of the world. In Isa. 51.1-10 this lyrical prophet of the exile combines creation motifs with remembrances of Abraham and Sarah, then Israel's deliverance through the Sea.

The cryptic remark by Jeremiah in Jer. 31.22b, which concludes the core poetry in an early Book of Restoration (chaps. 30–31), is not a serious statement on the new creation, although it was given literal and positive interpretation in Targum Jonathan and the LXX, also by Jerome and Kimḥi, among others.[11] It is rather gentle irony from the prophet, expressing incredulity at the weakness of Judah's soldiers in defeat. As such, it represents a reversal of the created order. Jeremiah says:

> For Yahweh has created a new thing on earth
>   the female protects the man! (Jer. 31.22b).

Language here comes straight out of Genesis 1 ('create' and 'female' in Gen. 1.1 and 27).

Another cryptic word spoken by Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the guard just before Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, does anticipate a new creation. Yahweh speaks here about hidden things held in store for the future, with Jeremiah in an embellished messenger formula using language straight out of Genesis 2–3 ('make' and 'form' in Gen. 2.4b, 7-8, 19; 3.1):

> Thus said Yahweh who made it
>   Yahweh who formed it to establish it
>   Yahweh is his name
> Call to me and I will answer you
>   and let me tell you great and hidden things
>   you have not known (Jer. 33.2-3).

The great New Testament scholar, Johannes Weiss, commenting on the obscure beginnings of the nascent Church, said that all of God's great works begin in secret (Ps. 139.13-16).[12] Here we learn from Jeremiah that Yahweh is holding in store for the covenant people secret things that will constitute a wonderful new creation.

11. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, p. 452.
12. J. Weiss, *Earliest Christianity*, I (trans. Frederick C. Grant *et al.*; New York: Harper & Bros., 1959), p. 14.

JEREMIAH AND THE COVENANT

Covenant in Ancient Israel

The idea of 'covenant' is central to the faith of both Jews and Christians. Some would take it as being the most central idea in the Bible, one scholar having made it the controlling concept for illuminating the entire Old Testament.[1] Christian Scripture becomes the 'New Testament', where the Latin *testamentum* translates the Greek word διαθήκη, meaning 'covenant'. From Paul we get the term 'Old Testament', where in 2 Cor. 3.14 he refers to reading the 'old covenant' (παλαιὰ διαθήκη) in the synagogue. 'Old Covenant' occurs subsequently in Melito of Sardis, Irenaeus, and others among the Church Fathers.

In the Old Testament God makes not one, but numerous covenants. with individuals, with a chosen people, with royal and priestly lines, and with the whole of creation. The covenant made with Abraham, repeated to Isaac and Jacob, states that Abraham's descendants will be in number like the stars of the sky or the sands on the seashore; that Abraham will be a blessing to all people on the earth; and that descendants of him and Sarah will one day return to possess the land in which they are presently sojourning (Genesis 12; 15; 17). The Abrahamic covenant is thus announced:

> When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous'. Then Abram fell on his face, and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations' (Gen. 17.1-4).

With David, God made a covenant that his royal line would continue in perpetuity. Nathan the prophet delivered this oracle to David:

> Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you;

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1. Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, I (London: SCM Press, 1961).

> and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of
> the earth… Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make
> you a house…Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever
> before me; your throne shall be established forever (2 Sam. 7.8-9, 11, 16).

And in Psalm 89:

> You said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one
>   I have sworn to my servant David:
> "I will establish your descendants forever
>   and build your throne for all generations" ' (Ps. 89.3-4).

With the zealous priest Phinehas, who punished an Israelite man and
a Midianite woman for sex-related activities in worshiping Baal of Peor,
and thus stayed a plague that had already claimed 24,000 lives, God
made a covenant ensuring permanence to the Aaronic line of priests.
This covenant is stated as follows:

> Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my
> wrath from the Israelites by manifesting such zeal among them on my
> behalf that in my jealousy I did not consume the Israelites. Therefore say,
> 'I hereby grant him my covenant of peace. It shall be for him and for
> his descendants after him a covenant of perpetual priesthood, because
> he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the Israelites (Num.
> 25.11-13).

Earlier still, in hoary antiquity, God is recorded as having made a
covenant with Noah after the great Flood, promising that as long as
the world endured there would never again be a flood like the one just
sent. This covenant was with all humanity, Israelites and non-Israel-
ites; indeed, it was made with every living creature that came out of
the ark—beasts, birds, and other living creatures—a covenant with the
entire created order. The words of Noah's covenant:

> And God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me I am
> establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you,
> and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic
> animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of
> the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh
> be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood
> to destroy the earth' (Gen. 9.8-11).

All of these covenants were given unconditionally and in perpetu-
ity, which is to say they could not be broken, and thus would not end.
Yes, they were preceded by acts of faith (Noah; Abraham) or devotion
(Phinehas; David), with some having signs of confirmation (rainbow;
circumcision). Still, no conditions were set forth. Maintenance of the
covenant did not depend upon Abraham's obedience or any other con-
ditional act. The same held true with Noah and David, both of whom

acted badly after the covenants were made with them. Noah got drunk, and David committed adultery with the wife of Uriah the Hittite, after which he arranged Uriah's murder as a cover-up. Phinehas, so far as we know, did not commit any subsequent sin, but his priestly line fell into a sorry state. One might simply inquire of Hosea and Jeremiah about priests in their day (Hos. 4.4-10; 6.9; 10.5; Jer. 2.8; 6.13; 14.18; 23.11). This type of covenant in which a sovereign—here Yahweh God—obligates himself, but does not set forth statutes the subordinate must obey is, so far as we know, unique in the ancient world.[2]

The covenant occupying center stage in the Old Testament, however, is the one Yahweh made with the people of Israel. It was formalized at Mount Sinai, where Yahweh gave Israel the Law, the core of which was the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20.1-17; Deut. 5.2-21). The covenant itself was relational ('I will be your God and you will be my people'), and a larger concept than 'law'; law stands within the covenant, giving the covenant substance. Unlike the other covenants just named, this one was conditional, containing statutes that had to be kept. If they were not kept—and time and again they were not—the covenant would be declared broken, and would have to be renewed. Ultimately this covenant was so undone that another covenant had to replace it.

The covenant with Israel was predicated on God's gracious election and deliverance of his people from Egyptian slavery. The 'Exodus', as it was called, is the central event of the Old Testament, expanded to include a 40-year trek through the wilderness and settlement in the land promised to the Fathers. 'Salvation', or 'liberation', which also adequately translates the Hebrew, in the Bible is not so much a granting of freedom as it is a change of masters.[3] Paul will talk later about having 'freedom (in Christ)' (2 Cor. 3.17; Gal. 5.1, 13), but 'freedom' is not a defining component in either Old or New Testament salvation. Salvation in both is a 'change of masters'. In the Old Testament, Pharaoh is the old master, and the Lord God, after redeeming Israel, becomes the new. In the New Testament the old master is Satan and the power of sin; the new master is Jesus, who saves humankind from sin by his death on the cross.

The model for this theological concept comes from Near Eastern law. If a person fell into slavery, which could happen easily in the ancient world, it was possible for a kinsman to pay the redemption price that the person himself could not pay. In such a case, the one redeemed may then have to serve the kinsman who paid the release. But this servitude would be much easier, because the kinsman would treat him more

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    2. Freedman, 'Divine Commitment and Human Obligation'.
    3. David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963).

kindly. It would be a bit like making a low-interest or no-interest loan from your parents, or a generous uncle. God therefore instructed Moses to go and tell Pharaoh: 'Israel is my first-born son, and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me" ' (Exod. 4.22-23). God, by redeeming Israel from slavery, became the new master, and Israel was thus obliged to serve him. The terms of servitude were dealt with at Mount Sinai, where God laid upon Israel with the Ten Commandments. These commandments are introduced with the following words:

> I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me… (Exod. 20.2-3; Deut. 5.6-7).

Yahweh God can lay this law upon Israel because he is the one who liberated her. His law was not meant to be burdensome, even though it later became so for the Jewish people, for Jesus, for Paul, for members of the Christian Church, and for Gentiles wanting to join the Church. But it was not meant to be burdensome, and Israel at its best gives evidence of having understood this. Psalm 119, the longest psalm in the Bible, shows how Israel loved the law. It begins:

> Happy are those whose way is blameless
> > who walk in the law of the Lord
> Happy are those who keep his decrees
> > who seek him with their whole heart
> who also do no wrong
> > but walk in his ways
> You have commanded your precepts
> > to be kept diligently
> O that my ways may be steadfast
> > in keeping your statutes…
> Blessed are you, O Lord
> > teach me your statutes
> With my lips I declare
> > all the ordinances of your mouth
> I delight in the way of your decrees
> > as much as in all riches
> I will meditate on your precepts
> > and fix my eyes on your ways
> I will delight in your statutes
> > I will not forget your word (Ps. 119.1-5, 12-16).

In Deuteronomy, Moses tells the people just before they cross the Jordan that they will have no difficulty carrying out Yahweh's commandment:

> Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it

and observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe (Deut. 30.11-14).

But this same Deuteronomy makes clearer than any other biblical law code the conditional nature of the Sinai covenant, fortifying it with blessings and curses (Deut. 11.26-32; 28). If Israel obeys the covenant, it will be blessed and will live long in the land Yahweh is giving it. But if it disobeys, the covenant curses will fall, the most serious of which will be Israel's loss of the land. Hear the core blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 28:

And if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I command you this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God:
Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field;
Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your beasts, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock;
Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading trough
Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out (Deut. 28.1-6).

But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command you this day, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you:
Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field;
Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading-trough
Cursed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock
Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out (Deut. 28.15-19).

In subsequent verses, these blessings and curses are expanded upon and given specificity, with the curses outnumbering the blessings almost four to one.[4] Deuteronomy 28.20-68 does not make for pleasant reading. This covenant form—particularly in Deuteronomy—appropriates an international treaty form from the ancient Near East, one drafted by powerful kings for kings subordinate to them. These treaties, which are covenants, basically, set forth the conditions (= law) of the relationship, after which come the blessings and the curses. If the lesser king obeys the sovereign king, blessings will come upon him and his people. If he disobeys, a litany of horrible curses will fall.

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4.   Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 173.

The Hittite treaties[5] keep the blessings and curses in balance, but the Syrian and Assyrian treaties, like Deuteronomy 28, contain considerably more curses than blessings. The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon (680–669) contain a multitude of curses, and no blessings.[6]

Covenant in Prophetic Preaching

The story of the Old Testament is a story of covenant breaking. The seeds were sown early. Already in the wilderness, when Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the tables of law, the people in his absence—and with the assistance of brother Aaron—had made a golden calf. Moses in a blaze of anger broke the stone tables on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed, and as a result they had to be rewritten on new tables, after which the covenant itself had to be renewed (Exodus 24; 32–34). Covenant renewals were also required in the years that followed—under Moses, just before his death and before Israel entered the Promised Land (Deut. 29.1); at Shechem before the death of Joshua (Josh. 24.25); and in Jerusalem under Kings Jehoiada (2 Kgs 11.17), Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29.10), and Josiah (2 Kgs 23.3). But the time came, finally, when the covenant was so broken that renewal was no longer possible. Then fell the Deuteronomic curses with a terrible vengeance on a remnant of the once-great Israelite people, and the nation tumbled headlong into ruin in 586.

Eichrodt notes that prophets prior to Jeremiah and Ezekiel say very little about the covenant, adding that things are different from the Josianic Reform onward.[7] In the Deuteronomic History we do hear Elijah complaining that people have forsaken the covenant, where reference has to be to the Sinai covenant (1 Kgs 19.10, 14). Amos and Isaiah know the word 'covenant', using it in other ways (Amos 1.9; Isa. 24.5; 28.15, 18; 33.8), but they and other prophets prior to Jeremiah make no explicit references to (the Sinai) 'covenant'. Yet their preaching to Israel and Judah has everything to do with covenant disobedience. How is this to be explained?

The absence of 'covenant' vocabulary in the Prophets may result from the fact that covenant obedience is stressed in Deuteronomy, where we meet up with a multitude of terms such as 'covenant', 'law', 'command(ment)s', 'statutes', 'ordinances', and 'testimonies'. But in the prophetic preaching on covenant disobedience these terms are heard only rarely, if at all. One reason for the lack of 'covenant'

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5. *ANET*[3], pp. 201, 205.
6. *ANET*[3], pp. 538-41.
7. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, I, pp. 51-53.

language may be the prophets' use of the 'enthymeme', which was discussed earlier in Chapter 2. The prophets simply omitted the major premise in their argument, which would have gone: 'An Israel (Judah) disobeying the covenant will be punished'. Their arguments contained only a minor premise (indictment) and the conclusion (judgment):[8]

> Israel (Judah) has disobeyed the covenant
> Israel (Judah) will be punished

So while the prophets may not have used the word 'covenant' in their preaching, they did provide an array of concrete examples of what covenant disobedience consisted of.

Hosea on the Covenant

Hosea, whose influence on Jeremiah is widely conceded, does make explicit reference to the Sinai 'covenant'. The term 'covenant' occurs five times in his preaching: Hos. 2.18[9]; 6.7; 8.1; 10.4; and 12.1.[10] In 6.7 the prophet says the covenant at Adam was transgressed,[11] where an implicit comparison is made to covenant transgression taking place currently. In Hos. 8.1 the prophet says plainly that Israel has broken the (Sinai) covenant. We may also note a negation of the covenant formula in Hos. 1.9, an indication that Yahweh, for his part, considers the covenant broken. For Hosea the Sinai covenant is a marital bond between Yahweh and Israel. Then in Hos. 1.10[12] the covenant formula is reaffirmed, indicating that a divorce has not occurred (cf. Isa. 50.1), and in future days the covenant will be intact.

Hosea 2.18 speaks of a future covenant in which Yahweh says:

> I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field and with the birds of the air and the creeping things of the ground. And bow and sword and weapon of war I will abolish from the land. And I will make them lie down in safety.

This covenant differs from other Old Testament covenants in that Yahweh is either brokering a covenant between Israel and the animals,[13] or making himself a covenant directly with the animals—perhaps also

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8. Lundbom, 'Hebrew Rhetoric', in *EncRhet*, p. 326.

9. The verse numbers in the Hebrew of chap. 2 are 2 greater than the English.

10. The Hebrew is 12.2.

11. Some scholars emend the text here, but the MT reading can stand.

12. The Hebrew is 2.1.

13. William R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905), p. 242; H.W. Wolff, *Hosea* (trans. Gary Stansell; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp. 50-52.

other nations—for the benefit of Israel and her children.[14] The promise is three-pronged:

(a) a covenant will be made or brokered with the animals, birds, and creeping things
(b) the bow, sword, and weapon of war will be abolished from the land
(c) Yahweh will make Israel lie down in safety.

Three weapons of war are made to balance three representatives of the animal kingdom. With the first two, where reconciliation has occurred, harmony will be restored in creation, and Israel will rest securely. The first reconciliation reverses the judgment of 2.12, where beasts come to devour the people and ongoing enmity is promised between the serpent and the woman's seed (Gen. 3.14).

The larger question is how v. 18 fits into the larger context of vv. 16-20, or perhaps vv. 14-23, where a restoration of marriage between Yahweh and Israel is anticipated (vv. 16, 19-20). Some see the larger passage as a 'new covenant' anticipating the new covenant of Jeremiah (Jer. 31.31-34).[15] Others say that in v. 18 we are no longer in a marriage metaphor.[16] The covenant here is not between Yahweh and Israel, in which case it cannot be a renewal of the Sinai covenant. It is a covenant between Yahweh and the animals for the benefit of Israel, or more precisely, Israel's children. Yahweh is asserting his power over all creation.

This covenant, in any case, is not a renewal of the Sinai covenant. The nearest thing to a covenant involving God, people, and the animals is found in Gen. 9.8-11 (Noachian covenant), but this covenant does not seem to lie behind the present verse; the language of Gen. 9.8-11 is different.

Jeremiah and the Covenant

Traditions from the north, particularly those associated with Moses, predominate in the call of Jeremiah and in his earliest preaching. Jeremiah reflects upon the Exodus, Wilderness Wanderings, and Settlement in 2.2-9, where his indebtedness to the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32) is clear. From this old poem Jeremiah grasped the notion that Yahweh's grace toward Israel frames the entire sweep of world history. Within the frame, however, lay Israel's ingratitude, her corrupting ways with

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14. Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (AB, 24; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 265, 279-82.
15. Wolff, *Hosea*, pp. 50-53, 55.
16. Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, p. 280.

other gods, resulting from settlement in the land, and Yahweh's punishment of Israel for substantial wrongdoing. Yahweh stays the hand of the enemy only as Israel is about to be totally destroyed. Then, with a remnant, Yahweh begins a new work of salvation where Israel is redeemed and the enemy is punished. Jeremiah follows the Song of Moses in depicting the Wilderness trek as the idyllic period of national history, a time of purity when Israel was Yahweh's 'devoted bride' or 'firstfruits' (Jer. 2.2-3; cf. Deut. 32.10-12). We learn here that the covenant requires steadfast love and faithfulness. Jeremiah also views Israel's settlement in the land as the time when things began to go bad (Jer. 2.7; cf. Deut. 32.13-18).

From the First Edition of Deuteronomy, chaps. 1–28, which incorporates prior preaching and teaching from North Israel, Jeremiah came to understand that the Sinai covenant was conditional, and that obedience to this covenant was the basis on which land tenure rested. The Sinai covenant could be broken, and repeatedly it was, but it could be reconstituted (Joshua 24; 2 Kings 23). Jeremiah preached both messages—the brokenness of the covenant, and Yahweh's decision to remake it, more clearly than any other prophet (Jer. 2.20; 5.5; 7.5-10; 31.31-34; 32.37-41).

The important event coinciding with the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry was the finding of a law book in the Temple in 622. Its discovery was sensational, and a ceremony of covenant renewal followed (2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34–35). It was presided over by the young King Josiah. Jeremiah refers at one point to the finding of the law book and what effect it had on him personally (Jer. 15.16). Other passages in the book indicate that the prophet initially supported the reform, and preached on its behalf. We have, for example, the oracle preserved in Jer. 11.3-5, which begins, 'Cursed be the man who will not hear the words of this covenant…'. This oracle is followed by two others, one in vv. 6-8, which is an indictment upon Judah for not carrying out the covenant, and another in vv. 11-13, which is judgment for a broken covenant. The covenant referred to here could be the covenant brokered by Josiah (2 Kgs 23.3), taken by many as being embodied in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut. 5.3), or it could be the Sinai covenant (vv. 3-4). A sharp distinction is hardly necessary, since the covenant Josiah is renewing is the Sinai covenant.

In Jer. 7.1-15 are also Jeremiah's celebrated 'Temple Oracles', a summary of which appears with background information in 26.1-19. The first oracle in 7.3-7 echoes Deuteronomy, and could be preaching on behalf of Josiah's reform. The second oracle in 7.8-11 indicts Judah for covenant violation, and the third oracle in 7.12-15 is unmitigated judgment.

At the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign northern and southern theologies came into sharp conflict. It happened dramatically in the Temple Oracles, when Jeremiah said that tenure in the land and the continued existence of the Jerusalem Temple were contingent upon covenant obedience, and that the nation was slated to lose both. The Jerusalem audience, however, in which were not a few prophets and priests, had an expanded Zion theology. This theology had expanded the eternal and unconditional covenant to David to include Jerusalem and the Temple (Ps. 132.11-18). The destruction of city or Temple was therefore precluded. Preaching northern theology on this occasion nearly cost Jeremiah his life, but in the end it was this theology that prevailed.

The Temple conflict of 609 showed that theology is time- and situation-bound. A century earlier, Isaiah had preached that Zion was inviolable (Isa. 31.4-5; 37.33-35). Now this is said by Jeremiah to be a false theology on which people are resting vain hopes. Von Rad therefore says that the prophetic message is not timeless truth, but a 'particular word relevant to a particular hour in history'.[17]

Jeremiah's poetic oracles are a mix of indictment, calls for repentance, and judgment (see e.g., Jer. 4.13-17; 6.16-19). Perhaps knowing that the Sinai covenant was conditional, Jeremiah on one occasion was worried about Yahweh breaking it (14.21). But otherwise it appears clear to him that Judah is the one who had broken the covenant by violating its conditions (2.20; 5.5; 11.10; 22.9; 31.32; 32.23). King Jehoiakim broke the covenant with his gross social injustices (22.13-17). In chap. 3 Jeremiah calls for Judah to return to Yahweh, where 'return' also means 'repent'.

Jeremiah spoke also about other covenants, for example, the covenant Zedekiah made with the people of Jerusalem for the release of Hebrew slaves, which the king and slave-owners broke after the siege crisis passed (Jer. 34.8-22). This broken covenant is juxtaposed in the book to Rechabite faithfulness to (a covenant made with) Jonadab son of Rechab (Jeremiah 35), making an instructive contrast. The promise to the Rechabites is another 'covenant of divine commitment',[18] a prelude to Jeremiah's new covenant and the ongoing covenants with Abraham, David, and the Levitical priests, all unconditional and eternal covenants.

During his long ministry in Jerusalem Jeremiah appears to have appropriated some southern theology, particularly traditions associated with Abraham and David. We know that one event associated with Abraham loomed very large for Jeremiah, as it did for certain

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17. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II, p. 129.
18. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, p. 579.

other prophets, and that was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18–19). It is not a wonderment, then, that Jeremiah should have spoken about and affirmed eternal covenants at home in the south. In early preaching Jeremiah stated that blessings accruing from the Abrahamic covenant were contingent upon Israel's repentance (4.1-2), which over-extends the conditional Sinai covenant to make it apply to the covenant with Abraham. But later in the book we find oracles on all the important eternal covenants—to Noah, Abraham, David, and the Levitical priests through Phinehas (23.5-6 [= 33.14-16]; 31.35-36; 33.17-26). All these covenants, say Jeremiah, will remain intact. In the future Yahweh will make good his promise to bless the nations through Israel, and Israel can count on David's royal line and the line of Levitical priests surviving, despite the nation's demise. Israel can also count on a continuance of the covenant made with Noah not to carry out another destruction like the Great Flood, thus preserving the created order for all future time.

Jeremiah's New Covenant

The covenant for which Jeremiah is best known is the 'new covenant'. Just before Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar, and large numbers of people were carted off into Babylonian exile, Jeremiah, who understood himself to be the 'prophet like Moses' of Deut. 18.18, announced a 'new covenant' from his place of confinement in the court of the guard. This covenant, recorded in Jer. 31.31-34, and only there in the Old Testament, is described as follows:

> Look, days are coming—oracle of Yahweh—when I will cut with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant, not like covenant that I cut with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they, they broke, though I, I was their master—-oracle of Yahweh.

> But this is the covenant that I will cut with the house of Israel after those days—oracle of Yahweh: I will put my law in their inward parts, and upon their hearts I will write it. And I will be God to them, and they, they will be a people to me. And they shall not again instruct each person his fellow and each person his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh', for they, all of them, shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them— oracle of Yahweh—for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will not remember again (Jer. 31.31-34).

This prophecy is one of four future-oriented utterances concluding Jeremiah's first Book of Restoration (chaps. 30–31), all beginning, 'Look, days are coming' (31.27, 31, 38; cf. 30.3), and stating that the promised future will contain either continuity or discontinuity with the past

('again' in 31.23, 39; and 'not again' in 31.29, 34a, 34b, 40).[19] Discontinuity gets the accent in the new covenant prophecy. Whereas 'torah' ('law') will continue to exist in the new covenant, and an obligation to comply with its demands will still exist, conditions will be vastly improved, because Yahweh promises to write his torah on the human heart.

Jeremiah does not specify what this (new) law will consist of, but it is reasonable to assume that it will be the law at the heart of the Sinai covenant, which at minimum will be the Decalogue. The law will doubtless contain something more. As things have played out, Jewish and Christian valuations of the law have differed, even as valuations continue to differ within the traditions. In the New Testament period, Pharisaic Judaism counted 613 commandments that had to be obeyed, which was radically reduced by Christians. But Christians have not rejected the core of Sinaitic Law at the heart of the new covenant, as is sometimes alleged. Jesus consistently held the Ten Commandments in high regard (Mt. 19.17-19; 22.36-40), and claimed in the Sermon on the Mount to fulfill the Law, not do away with it (Mt. 5.17-18). Paul, too, for all his polemic against the Law—and there is much of this in his writings—considered the Law holy, and claimed to uphold it (Rom. 3.31; 7.12). At the Jerusalem Conference, reported in Acts 15, some compromises had to be made. There it was agreed that Gentiles did not have to be circumcised, but must nevertheless abstain from eating food offered to idols, blood, and meat of strangled animals, and to abstain from sexual immorality. Nevertheless, the core Sinaitic Law continues to be upheld in all Christian communions.

Scholars have considered two related questions in discussing the new covenant: (1) whether this covenant really is 'new', and (2) whether the Sinai covenant, over against which the new covenant stands, continues to be viable.[20] Some think the new covenant is simply a renewal of the Sinai covenant, and nothing more. Others believe that Jeremiah announces the end of the Sinai covenant, and presents here a covenant that is really new. What may certainly be said is that for Jeremiah the gulf between the new covenant and the Sinai covenant is greater than for any who preceded him. He declared the Sinai covenant broken, and stated that the new covenant of the future would not be like the old (31.32).

In my view, the new covenant cannot be simply a renewed Sinai covenant, such as what took place on the plains of Moab, at Shechem, or in Jerusalem under three Judahite kings. Although the future covenant will have admitted continuity with the Sinai covenant, it will

19. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, pp. 453-54.
20. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, p. 466.

nevertheless be a genuinely new covenant, one marking a new begin-
ning in the divine-human relationship, because: (1) it is given without
conditions; (2) it will be written in the hearts of people in a way the Sinai
covenant was not (v. 33); and (3) it will be grounded in a wholly new act
of divine grace, i.e., the forgiveness of sins (v. 34; cf. Ezek. 36.25-28).

First the forgiveness of sins, which is the all-important foundation on
which the new covenant will rest. In the Old Testament Yahweh is cer-
tainly known to forgive sin, but at the same time he is not loathe punish
the guilty. In the divine self-disclosure of Exodus 34, Yahweh describes
himself as

> a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast
> love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving
> iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will be no means clear the
> guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the
> children's children, to the third and fourth generation (Exod. 34.6-7).

Yahweh then does forgive sin; nevertheless, forgiveness of sins is not
what undergirded the Sinai covenant; in fact, forgiveness does not figure
at all in this covenant's earliest formulation in Exodus and Deuteronomy
(Exod. 32.32-34; Deut. 31.16-29). The act of divine grace undergirding
the Sinai covenant, as was mentioned earlier, was the deliverance from
Egypt (Exod. 20.2; Deut. 5.6). This early theology is best summed up in
Joshua's words to the people at Shechem: If you disobey the covenant
Yahweh will *not* forgive your sins; instead he will punish you (Josh.
24.19-20).

The second important feature of the new covenant is that it will
be written on the human heart. The Sinai covenant was written on
tables of stone (Exod. 24.12; 31.18). In Deuteronomy, to be sure, the
law was supposed to find its way into the human heart (Deut. 6.6;
11.18), and in the passage cited earlier from Deuteronomy 30, the law
was said to reside in human mouths and hearts: 'Indeed the word is
very near you, in your mouth and in your heart to do it' (Deut. 30.14).
Also, in the Psalms is a verse many children memorized in childhood:
'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee'
(Ps. 119.11 KJV). Yet Deuteronomy knows—as does Jeremiah—that the
human heart is deceitful and layered with evil (Deut. 10.16; 11.16; Jer.
4.4). Jeremiah assesses the human condition more negatively. He says
the heart is evil, stubborn, and rebellious (5.23), that sin is 'engraved'
on the tablet of the heart (17.1), and that the heart 'is deceitful above
all things' (17.9). Nevertheless, this 'heart talk' in Deuteronomy and
Jeremiah becomes background for and determines the articulation of
the new covenant promise. If the law did not penetrate the human
heart before, it will with the new covenant in place, because Yahweh
will make it happen.

In ancient Hebrew thought the 'will' resided in the heart, so if the law is to be written on the human heart, people will have the will to obey it. Moreover, they will no longer have to admonish one another to 'Know Yahweh!' for everyone will know him. 'Knowing Yahweh' here as elsewhere takes the expanded meaning of 'knowing and doing the law' (Hos. 4.1-2; Jer. 5.4-5). In Deuteronomy people had to be continually told, 'Be careful to do (the commands)' (Deut. 5.1, 32; 6.3, 25), 'Take heed… lest you forget the covenant/Yahweh' (Deut. 4.23; 6.12; 8.11). In the injunctions in Deut. 6.6-9 and 11.18-20, they were admonished to keep Yahweh's words in their hearts as well as in more conspicuous places.

Many therefore think that writing the law on the human heart is the really new element in the new covenant. Von Rad says that in the old covenant God spoke and the people listened, but now this will be dropped; God will put the law straight into Israel's heart and obedience will no longer be a problem.[21] Very well, but can Christians claim that this has happened with the dawn of the Kingdom? We should probably recognize an element of hyperbole in the words, which turns up in other Jeremiah preaching (cf. 50.20). We can simply say here that the new situation will be vastly improved over the old, and something will certainly change when the new covenant is internalized; nevertheless, the words about everyone knowing Yahweh will not be literally fulfilled. The Jews, if they desire, can retain a more literal interpretation of these words, since they look forward to a fulfillment of this happy state in the Messianic Age, which for them has not yet come.

Finally, the unconditional nature of the new covenant makes it eternal, like the covenants made with Noah, Abraham, David, and Phinehas. In Jeremiah 32 the covenant of the future is described as an 'eternal covenant', a designation occurring elsewhere in the Prophets (Jer. 50.5; Ezek. 16.60; Isa. 55.3; 61.8). These verses read:

> Look I am going to gather them from all the lands where I dispersed them in my anger and in my wrath and in great fury, and I will bring them back to this place and settle them in security. And they will be a people to me, and I, I will be God to them. And I will give them one heart and one way to fear me all the days, for their own good and for their children after them. And I will cut for them an eternal covenant, in which I will not turn away from them to do good to them; and the fear of me I will put in their hearts so they may not turn away from me. And I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will truly plant them in this land, with all my heart and with all my soul (Jer. 32.37-41).

Jeremiah gave this oracle on the eternal covenant also when confined in the court of the guard, just after he bought his cousin's field at

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21. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II, pp. 213-14.

Anathoth as a sign that the people would one day return to the land. It is generally agreed that this 'eternal covenant' is the same as the 'new covenant' in 31.31-34,[22] a further indication that the new covenant is to be everlasting. The Sinai covenant with its blessings and curses was never guaranteed to be everlasting. But this eternal covenant, says James Muilenburg, will be a relationship of pure grace.[23]

The New Covenant in Judaism and Christianity

With Israel's survival of its Babylonian exile and its return to the homeland, the new and eternal covenant became the centerpiece of a larger hope that included a new act of salvation, a new Zion, and a new Davidic king. In postexilic Judaism the covenant idea contained all the ambiguities characterizing this larger hope generally. National life was reconstructed along the old lines, which is to say the Sinai covenant was again central and the Law occupied a position of supremacy. At the same time a new covenant was looked for in the future, at which time the Messianic Age would dawn.

Among the Essene Jews living at Qumran, the new covenant found fulfillment in a separated community that believed it was living in the 'last days'. This community had important similarities to the early Church. Members of the Qumran community swore an oath to uphold a covenant variously described as a 'covenant of God', an 'eternal covenant', a 'covenant of repentance', a 'covenant of steadfast love', and a 'new covenant'. Essene covenant theology is contained in two sectarian documents among the Dead Sea Scrolls: the *Manual of Discipline* (1QS), and the *Damascus Document* (CD). The *Manual of Discipline* was the rule of the community. The *Damascus Document* contains three references to a 'new covenant' (CD 6.19; 8.21 = 19.33/34; 20.12) that the people have entered into 'in the land of Damascus', a cryptonym for their place of exile in the Qumran desert (cf. Amos 5.26-27).

The Essenes, who separated themselves from the rest of Judaism and relocated on the shores of the Dead Sea, did so in order to be reborn as the 'New Israel'. Frank Cross says that the word 'community' as used in the *Manual of Discipline* means 'Israel of the New Covenant'.[24] People entering this new covenant were required to return to a serious study of the Mosaic Law; required also of each member was strict obedience to the Law's demands as understood in light of interpretations by the

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22. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II, pp. 214-15.

23. James Muilenburg, 'Isaiah', in George A. Buttrick (ed.), *IB* 5 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 399.

24. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, p. 71.

priestly hierarchy. At the top of this hierarchy was a priest called the Teacher of Righteousness, the original leader of the sect and the author, perhaps, of the *Manual of Discipline*. The community bore an unmistakable stamp of legalism; nevertheless, that legalism was informed by the prophets, whose great legacy at Qumran was the conviction that sin lay deep within the human soul and only through repentance and purification was a restored relationship with God possible. The *Damascus Document* called the Qumran covenant a 'covenant of repentance' (19.16). Repentance had to precede purification, which was accomplished in the initiatory rite of baptism.

The new covenant at Qumran was to be eternal. Whatever else this signified, it at least meant that anyone entering the covenant was expected to remain within it for life (1QS 3.11-12). The Qumran covenant had to be renewed annually, at which time all members underwent evaluation. It had its obligations, and like the Sinai covenant these obligations were fortified with blessings and curses (1QS 2.1-18). The *Manual* reads much like the book of Deuteronomy. The main difference between the two is that in the *Manual* the older corporate sense is gone, e.g., the blessings and curses now fall upon individuals. Also, the *Manual* does not foresee any abrogation of the covenant as a whole, nor does it imagine that noncompliance might lead to the whole community being destroyed. As things turned out, something quite different happened. Vespasian and his Romans legions destroyed the community in 68, and the Essenes disappeared from off the face of the earth. The same belief about there being no abrogation of the new covenant existed in the Church. But among the Essenes, the individual responsibility presupposed in the *Manual* appears not to result from any inner motivation, at least not of the sort that Jeremiah envisioned in his new covenant prophecy. God is said to have placed a holy spirit in the people of Qumran (1QS 3.7), but they still need admonitions to obey, as both the *Manual* and the *Damascus Document* make clear.

The new covenant idea undergoes no further development in Judaism. The Midrashim—Jewish commentaries from the early Christian era—contain merely a few citations of Jer. 31.33 for purposes of focusing on the old problem of remembering the Torah. There the Jeremiah verse is given a meaning close to the one it had originally: that forgetting the Torah can be expected in the Present World, and only in the World to Come, when the Torah is (truly) written on the heart, will people no longer forget it (Midrashim Eccl. 2.1; Song 1.2; Pesiqta 107a; Yalqut on Jer. 31.33). Medieval Jewish writers cited the Jeremiah new covenant passage largely to refute Christological interpretations, arguing for example that the Mosaic Torah was not abrogated by Jesus and the Christian Gospel, but in the Messianic Age would be renewed

and internalized in a new covenant lasting forever.[25] It should also be noted that in the modern *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1971–1973), which is the standard reference work among Jews, there are no articles on 'new covenant' or 'eternal covenant', and in the article on 'covenant',[26] neither of these covenants is mentioned.

Jeremiah's prophecy was taken over by the Christian Church, which from earliest times claimed the promise of Jer. 31.31-34 and understood itself to be the people of a new covenant. It also thought of itself as a new people (1 Pet. 2.1-10): Israel reborn—but a more inclusive Israel to which Gentiles now belong.[27]

25. Richard S. Sarason, 'The Interpretation of Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Judaism', in Jakob J. Petuchowski (ed.), *When Jews and Christians Meet* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), pp. 103-19.

26. Moshe Weinfeld, 'Covenant', in *EncJud*, V, cols. 1012-22.

27. For a fuller discussion of the 'new covenant' in the New Testament and Patristic literature down to 325, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21–36*, pp. 474-82.

7

THE CONFESSIONS OF JEREMIAH

The Confessions Are Mostly Laments

In Jeremiah we are accustomed to speak of the prophet's 'confessions', so named because of their likeness to the confessions of Saint Augustine. These are a singular legacy of Jeremiah, for in them the prophet is not so much speaking Yahweh's word with power and passion, although some of this is definitely to be found in them, but rather telling us how he feels about what is going on, and what impact his preaching is having on him personally. We see in these confessions the other side of Jeremiah's role as mediator and divine messenger, which is to bring concerns of the people along with some of his own before Yahweh. The confessions are then a legacy of Jeremiah's prayer life.

No other prophet bears his soul to the extent Jeremiah does. Since most all the confessions are in poetry, we are probably closer to the prophet's own words than is the case in compositions of prose. The Old Testament preserves prayers, personal utterances, and dialogues of other covenant mediators, the most prominent being Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and Amos, but all are embodied in narrative. Elijah makes complaints like those of Jeremiah (1 Kgs 19.10, 14), but from him and the literate prophets coming later we have nothing even approaching the corpus of Jeremianic confessions. The only Old Testament discourse that can be compared to the confessions are the Psalms, which are also in poetic verse, and convey similarly an intimacy that has made them an unrivaled spiritual and human treasure down through the ages.

Most all the Jeremianic confessions are laments, basically, precisely the sort of which we find in the Psalter. Only one confession expresses confidence in besting an enemy (20.11-12), and only one is a ringing word of praise (20.13). From Jeremiah come also a few communal laments, which again have their prototypes in the Jerusalem psalm book.

Scholars of the early 19th century noted the similarity between Jeremiah's confessions and the Psalms, attributing certain psalms to Jeremiah, such as we find in some LXX and Vulgate manuscripts. But the scholar responsible for the pioneering work in comparing psalms in the Psalter

to the confessions of Jeremiah was Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932), who was followed by Walter Baumgartner in an important monograph of 1917, entitled *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*.[1] Baumgartner demonstrated in copious detail that Jeremiah's laments were little different from laments in the Psalter. More recent studies have been done on the Jeremianic laments, but none advances significantly the work of Baumgartner, except to show occasional literary features not examined by Gunkel and his form-critical colleagues.[2]

In speaking here about individual and communal laments we are not talking about laments that mourn the dead, which are dirges, basically, a different type of composition entirely. Karl Budde is credited with the important work on the *qina* (קִינָה) genre,[3] shown to be a carefully crafted dirge (3.2 rhythm) sung mainly but not exclusively by women leading people in mourning the dead (cf. Jer. 9.17-22). According to the Chronicler, Jeremiah uttered a dirge over King Josiah (2 Chron. 35.25), but it is not included in the book. Other compositions of this type, however, are (Jer. 22.10, 18-19, 28-30).

Individual and Communal Laments in the Psalter

After completing two major works on Genesis,[4] Gunkel turned his attention to the Psalms and a study of literary genres. His first book on selected psalms was published in 1904;[5] a year earlier some essays were translated into English.[6] In 1926 Gunkel published a Psalms commentary,[7] which was followed in 1930 by an important article on the Psalms in *RGG²*. The latter was translated into English and appeared in the little Facet book, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*.[8] Gunkel's

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1. Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament* (trans. David E. Orton; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988).

2. A.R. Diamond, *The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context* (JSOTSup, 45; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987); Kathleen M. O'Connor, *The Confessions of Jeremiah* (SBLDS, 94; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature & Scholars Press, 1988); Mark Smith, *The Laments of Jeremiah in their Contexts* (SBLMS, 42; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990).

3. Budde, 'Das hebräische Klagelied', *ZAW* 2 (1882), pp. 1-52.

4. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* [English: *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton*]; *Genesis* (trans. Mark E. Biddle; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997).

5. Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen übersetzt und erklärt* (3rd edn; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911).

6. Psalms 1; 8; 19.1-6; 24; 42; 43; 46; 103; and 137 appeared in *Biblical World* for 1903.

7. See Muilenburg's 'Introduction' to Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (Facet Books; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. vii.

8. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*.

major work on the Psalms, completed by Joachim Begrich, was pub-
lished posthumously in 1933.[9]

Considerably more important than Gunkel's early articles on selected
Psalms were his essays outlining a program of 'form-criticism' for Old
Testament study.[10] This program sought to identify literary 'forms' or
'types' (*Gattungen*; genres), with Gunkel's larger goal being to write a
history of Israelite literature. The latter never got done, but the many
and various literary genres preserved in the Old Testament were identi-
fied, with extraordinary results for both Old and New Testament study.
In the Psalms, Gunkel found the main genres to be the hymn, commu-
nity and individual lament, thank offering, song of the individual, and
royal psalm. Other minor types and some mixed types were also recog-
nized. Psalm genres were then compared to similar genres elsewhere in
the Bible, also to similar genres outside the Bible, e.g., the Babylonian
psalms.

Gunkel sought to identify the *Sitz im Leben* ('situation in life') for
each of the genres. Hymns, he said, were sung in the Temple; lawsuits
originated in the city gate; prophetic oracles were uttered in the outer
courtyard of the Temple; victory songs were sung by the conquering
hero returning from battle; dirges were intoned over the bier of the
dead; priestly rituals and liturgies were recited in the sanctuary; etc.[11]
Communal laments were recited at times of crop failure, pestilence, or
when danger from an enemy threatened.

Gunkel took particular note of typical vocabulary in each genre, having
been influenced here by Eduard Norden,[12] who believed that people in
antiquity were more tied to convention than people today. The hymn,

9. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms* (completed by Joachim Begrich; trans. James D.
Nogalski; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998).

10. Gunkel, 'Die Grundprobleme der israelitischen Literaturgeschichte', *DLZ* 29
(1906), pp. 1797-1800, 1861-66 [English: 'Fundamental Problems of Hebrew Literary
History', in Gunkel, *What Remains of the Old Testament and Other Essays* (trans. A.K.
Dallas; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928), pp. 57-68; 'Israelite Literary History',
in Gunkel, *Water for a Thirsty Land* (trans. K.C. Hanson; Minneapolis: Fortress Press,
2001), pp. 31-41]; 'Die israelitische Literatur', in Paul Hinneberg (ed.), *Die Kultur der
Gegenwart: Die orientalischen Literaturen*, I. 7 (Berlin and Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1906),
pp. 51-102; 'Die Religionsgeschichte und die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft', in Max
Fischer und Friedrich Michael Schiele (eds.), *Fünfter Weltkongress für freies Christen-
tum und religiösen Fortschritt, Berlin 5. bis 10. August 1910, Protokoll der Verhandlungen*
(Berlin: Verlag des Protestantischen Schriftenvertriebs, 1910), pp. 169-80 [English:
The History of Religion and Old Testament Criticism (Berlin–Schöneberg: Protestant-
ischer Schriftenvertrieb and London: Williams & Norgate, 1911)].

11. Muilenburg, 'Introduction' to Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*,
pp. v-vi.

12. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, I–II (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1958).

for example, begins with 'Sing unto Yahweh' (שִׁירוּ לַיהוה); the dirge begins 'Ah How!' (הוֹי); and the prophetic invective 'Woe to those' (הוֹי + participle).[13] Gunkel cited for comparison modern examples of conventional beginnings, e.g., the fairy tale begins: 'Once upon a time'; the letter begins: 'Dear Sir'; and the sermon begins: 'Beloved in the Lord'.[14]

Stereotyped opening phrases were an aid to delimiting literary units, although Gunkel and subsequent form-critics more often delimited units on the basis of content. In the Psalms content and later chapter numbers made beginnings and endings fairly straightforward. But things were more difficult in the Prophets, where the most form-critical help in delimiting oracles came from messenger formulas when they were present: 'Thus says Yahweh', and 'oracle of Yahweh'.[15] These occur most often at the beginning or end of the prophetic oracle, occasionally at both beginning and end. Rarely, at least in Jeremiah, do they come in the center.

Gunkel, being primarily interested in the pre-literary stage of Israelite literature, believed that oral literature was characterized by loose connections, an idea he apparently got from Johann Herder, who spoke of prophetic utterances as being like 'pearls on a string'.[16] The observation is basically a sound one, for we now know the importance of keywords and catchwords in Hebrew composition—oral and written. Both occur in individual psalms and in psalm compilations. Martin Buber said: 'The recurrence of keywords is a basic law of composition in the Psalms'.[17]

Gunkel believed that in laments of the individual, as well as in other songs of the individual, the 'I' of the poet represented the individual. He therefore disagreed with Rudolph Smend,[18] who claimed that the 'I' in the Psalter was a personification of the community. In Gunkel's view, the community would be personified only in cases of intense suffering (Lam. 1.9; 11.16, 18-19), in places where the poet said so explicitly (Ps. 129.1), and where it was clearly demanded by the sense (Mic. 7.7-10; Isa. 21.10; *Ps. Sol.* 1). Unless these indications were present—and they are infrequent—the 'I' is the poet himself. Gunkel thought Smend's view was a remnant of the allegorical interpretation of Scripture prevailing earlier.[19] The debate was renewed in the past century, with Henning

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13. Gunkel, 'Israelite Literary History', p. 33.

14. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 17.

15. Ludwig Köhler, *Deuterojesaja (Jesaja 40–55) stilkritisch untersucht* (BZAW, 37; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1923).

16. J.G. Herder, *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, I (trans. James Marsh; Burlington, VT: Edward Smith, 1833), p. 81.

17. Buber, *Good and Evil* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 52.

18. Smend, 'Ueber das Ich der Psalmen', *ZAW* 8 (1888), pp. 49-147.

19. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, pp. 15-17.

Graf Reventlow arguing for a collective 'I' in the Jeremiah confessions,[20] and John Bright arguing that the 'I' is Jeremiah expressing his own personal distress.[21] The view of Gunkel and Bright, in my opinion, is more likely.

Gunkel believed the Hebrew Psalter contained a rich collection of poetry of the individual, calling it 'the imperishable treasure in the Psalter'. These songs, in his view, are the prototypes of Protestant hymnody.[22] The main parts of the Individual and Communal Lament are the following:[23]

   a. the lament proper, depicting the suffering of the poet, the purpose of which is to move Yahweh to compassion. The laments are very emotional. They often complain about enemies who are mocking the poet in his misery and waiting for his death. The poet, for his part, either expresses his innocence and tries to persuade God to recognize the same (Psalms 17 and 26), or confesses his sin and asks for forgiveness (Psalm 51).[24] Gunkel noted individual laments protesting innocence in both Jeremiah and Job.[25]

   b. an entreaty to Yahweh to remove the calamity, whatever it may be. Often is a plea for divine revenge. All kinds of arguments are used. Expressions of confidence may be included, with Gunkel noting the moving alternation of passionate laments and entreaties, on the one hand, and confident hope on the other (Psalms 3, 123, 130).

   c. certainty of a hearing (Psalm 22). In some cases the answer of certainty may have been proclaimed by the priest in God's name.[26]

Individual Laments in the Psalter include Psalms 3; 5; 6; 7; 13; 17; 22; 25; 26; and others. Communal laments include Psalms 44; 74; 79; 80; 83; 89.38-51; 94.1-7; and others. In Jeremiah, Gunkel identified Jer. 3.22b-25; and 14.7-9, 19-22 as communal laments, containing confessions of sin. The communal lament in Jeremiah 14 was recited during a severe drought (Jer. 14.2-6).

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20. Henning Graf Reventlow, *Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963).

21. John Bright, 'Jeremiah's Complaints: Liturgy, or Expressions of Personal Distress?', in Durham and Porter (eds.), *Proclamation and Presence*, pp. 189-214.

22. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, p. 33.

23. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, pp. 34-35.

24. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, pp. 13-15, 19-22.

25. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, p. 36.

26. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, pp. 14-15.

Rhetoric and Composition in the Psalms

More recent work in the Psalms has focused on rhetoric and composition. Mitchell Dahood, for example, found many examples of 'inclusio' in individual psalms.[27] Some examples:

Psalm 1   'the assembly of sinners' (v. 1) and 'the assembly of the wicked' (v. 6)
Psalm 17   ' a righteous (cause)' (v. 1) and 'in righteousness' (v. 15)
Psalm 16   'I have trusted in Yahweh' (v. 1) and 'I will bless Yahweh' (v. 12)
Psalm 30   'O Yahweh my God' (v. 2) and 'O Yahweh my God' (v. 12)
Psalm 69   'Save me' (v. 1) and 'God will save Zion' (v. 35)
Psalm 70   'O Yahweh…help me' (v. 1) and 'my helper…O Yahweh' (v. 5)
Psalm 84   'O Yahweh of hosts' (v. 1) and 'O Yahweh of hosts' (v. 12)

In Psalm 8 is a hymnic inclusio:

> O Yahweh, our Lord
>> how majestic is your name in all the earth (v. 1).

> O Yahweh, our Lord
>> how majestic is your name in all the earth (v. 9).

Psalms 106, 135, and 146–150 begin and end with 'Praise Yahweh', likewise Psalm 105, if the 'Praise Yahweh' ending 104 is placed where it belongs at the beginning of 105, since Psalm 104 is a 'Bless Yahweh, O my soul' psalm. Psalms 103 and 104 have 'Bless Yahweh, O my soul', at both beginning and end.

Key words link psalms in composition. Psalms 1 and 2 are linked by the term אַשְׁרֵי ('Blessed/Happy') in Pss. 1.1 and 2.12. Muilenburg[28] showed, too, how Psalms 20 and 21 have been linked by key words. In Ps. 20.4 the king, departing for battle, is blessed with the words:

> *May he give you* according to *your heart*

Then in Ps. 21.2, after returning victorious, the king praises Yahweh, saying:

> *You have given him his heart's* desire

Individual and Communal Laments of Jeremiah

Gunkel believed that prophets used lyric poetry and other literary forms to give expression to their feelings or to make an impression on

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27. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I: 1–50* (AB, 16; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966); *Psalms II: 51–100* (AB, 17; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968); *Psalms III: 101–150* (AB, 17A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970).

28. Muilenburg, 'Psalms 20–21' (Unpublished paper read at the 1956 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature).

people who were receptive to such forms.[29] In his view, the laments of Jeremiah—both individual and communal—were imitations of genres from the cult. Since Jeremiah carried out his entire ministry in Jerusalem, he would doubtless have been influenced by Temple worship, and would have known lament forms intimately. Gunkel thought prophets prepared confessions in anticipation of the day when Israel would repent (Hos. 6.1-3; 14.2-3; Jer. 14.7-9, 19-22), or they would compose a hymn of joy to be sung when people were delivered from some present distress. In prophetic material, Gunkel found the lament usually to have two parts: (1) a passionate appeal; and (2) a divine response. Many of the Jeremiah laments are joined with divine responses, but not all of them are. There are other combinations, for example some laments appear in dialogues containing multiple speakers (Jer. 8.18-21; 17.13-16a), and in other configurations. In Jer. 20.7-13 a lament is followed by a hymn of confidence and a final word celebrating deliverance.

While Gunkel and Baumgartner made observations on typical vocabulary and phraseology in the lament, greater insights into style, rhetoric, and composition have come from rhetorical criticism carried out along the lines of Muilenburg and others.[30] Rhetorical criticism looks not so much for typical features in biblical discourse, but features that make it unique.[31]

Delimitation of the Jeremianic compositions, as we have said, is considerably more difficult than delimitation of the Psalms. Here both rhetorical and non-rhetorical criteria must be used, which for the Jeremiah laments would be:

  a. shifts from poetry to prose, or prose to poetry
  b. rhetorical structures delimiting laments and giving internal structures (repetitions; inclusio; chiasmus)
  c. section markings (*setumah* and *petuḥah*)
  d. content, including personal pronouns for individual and communal laments, and vocabulary typical of the lament form
  e. divine answers, noting the divine 'I' and messenger formulas in the prophetic oracles ('Thus said Yahweh' and 'oracle of Yahweh').

29. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, pp. 1-2.
30. Muilenburg, 'Form Criticism and Beyond', pp. 1-18; Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric* (SBLDS, 18; Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature & Scholars Press, 1975 [2nd edn; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997]); *Jeremiah 1–20*; *Jeremiah 21–36*; *Jeremiah 37–52*.
31. Muilenburg, 'Form Criticism and Beyond', pp. 4-5.

What follows is a brief description of 17—perhaps 19—laments in the book of Jeremiah. Most, but not all, have been identified by Gunkel and Baumgartner. Three laments are communal, and all are penitential. Individual laments in almost every case contain a protestation of innocence, although in one Jeremiah pleads for divine correction.

Jeremiah 3.21-25

Here is a prophetic word calling people to repentance (vv. 21-22a), followed by a communal lament with a confession (vv. 22b-25). The latter brings to a quiet end the harsh oracles on apostasy and repentance in chaps. 2–3. The lament is identified as communal by the 'we' in v. 22b (Gunkel), and by 'our God' in vv. 22b and 23. The prose of vv. 24-25 expands the confession. Key words link the call for repentance with the communal lament, also the communal lament with its expansion in vv. 24-25 (small caps). The communal lament and expansion both have internal key word balance (italics). Section markings delimit the larger unit of vv. 21-25 at top and bottom. At the end of v. 25 is also the chapter division.

Prophetic call to repentance:

> ²¹A cry on the bare heights is heard
>   the weeping supplications of Israel's children
> For they have perverted their way
>   they have forgotten Yahweh their God

> ²²ªReturn, turnable children
>   I will heal your turning away

Communal lament with confession:

> ²²ᵇLook we, we have come to you
>   for you are Yahweh our God

> ²³*Surely*, The Lie is from the hills
>   Noise of the Mountains
> *Surely*, in Yahweh our God
>   is the salvation of Israel.

> ²⁴The Shame has consumed what *our fathers* worked for, *from our youth*—
> their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. ²⁵Let us lie
> down in our shame and let our dishonor cover us, for against Yahweh
> our God we have sinned—we and *our fathers, from our youth* unto this
> day. We have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh our God.

The prophetic word was recited by a liturgist, perhaps even Jeremiah, with the communal lament intended for recitation by the congregation. The prophetic word alternates speakers: The liturgist speaks in v. 21 ('they have forgotten Yahweh their God'), and Yahweh speaks in v. 22a: ('I will heal your turning away'). Gunkel believed that Jeremiah in the

communal lament was anticipating the day when Israel would see her waywardness and repent.[32]

Jeremiah 4.19-22

Here two poetic compositions appear to go together as an individual lament (vv. 19-21) and a divine response (v. 22). Commentators routinely treat the passages together. Gunkel does not discuss the lament, but Baumgartner says vv. 19-21 echo the lament style.[33] Artur Weiser identified vv. 19-21 as a lament (*Klage*).[34] The lament is delimited by section markings at both top and bottom. No section, however, is present after v. 22. The divine response lacks a messenger formula, but 'my people' and 'me' at the beginning indicate that Yahweh is speaking. Both the lament and the divine response have intricate key word structures (italics).[35]

  Jeremiah's lament:

> [19]My innards, my innards, let me writhe
>   the walls of *my heart*
>   it roars to me, *my heart*
> I cannot be still
>
> *For the sound of the trumpet you hear*
> my soul, the *shout* of battle
>   [20]Crash upon crash resounds
>   for all the land is *devastated*
>   suddenly my tents are *devastated*
>   in a moment my curtains
>   [21]How long must I see the *flag*
>   must I hear the sound of the trumpet?

  Divine response:

> [22]For my people are fools
>   me *they do not know*
>   stupid children are *they*
>   not discerning are *they*
>   wise are they to do evil
> but to do good, *they do not know*.

  In this lament Jeremiah articulates his own hurt and the hurt of his nation. Both are sick. In the second part he converses with himself

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32. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, p. 14; similarly Rashi and others.

33. Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, p. 83.

34. Weiser, *Das Buch Jeremia 1–25* (ATD, 20; 8th edn; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981).

35. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 350-51.

(v. 19c: 'you hear, my soul'), and at the end he asks how long his suffering must go on. Yahweh in answering does not say how long; he only attests to the people's foolishness. Volz calls this 'Yahweh's lament'.[36] If Jeremiah has a hurt, so does Yahweh.

Jeremiah 8.18-21

This utterance from the prophet is a three-way dialogue between Jeremiah, the people, and Yahweh, who interrupts unexpectedly in the center. It is structured into a speaker chiasmus, with Jeremiah's lament coming at beginning and end, and the other voices speaking in between.[37] The upper limit is secured by a section before v. 18. The lower limit has been in doubt, with the next section coming after 9.3. Older scholars, including Baumgartner, extended the present unit to include 9.1, which is not correct. The unit is 8.18-21 (RSV, NRSV). The following poem, another individual lament, is delimited as 8.22–9.2. Baumgartner does, however, correctly discern the sequence of speakers in vv. 18-21.[38] Gunkel does not discuss the present verses as a lament.

Jeremiah:	[18]My joy is gone
	grief is upon me
	my heart is sick
People:	[19]Listen! a voice (a cry of my dear people from a land far off):
	'*Is* Yahweh not in Zion?
	Is her King not in her?'
Yahweh	*So why* have they provoked me to anger with their images
	with their foreign nothings?
People:	[20]The harvest is past
	the summer is ended
	and we are not saved!
Jeremiah:	[21]For the brokenness of my dear people
	I am broken, I mourn
	desolation has gripped me.

In v. 19 is a threefold rhetorical question in the 'Is…Is…So why…' form, a signature of the prophet. Its use here differs from elsewhere in the book, with Yahweh interrupting two questions from the people with a third of his own. The first person pronouns in vv. 18 and 21 are the prophet lamenting. The people in their laments speak directly to the calamity at hand, their questions in v. 19a and desperation statement in

36. Volz, *Der Prophet Jeremia*.
37. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 528-29.
38. Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, p. 84.

v. 20 indicating hopelessness in the face of a menacing enemy. There is no divine response to these multiple laments. Yahweh has spoken climactically in the center, indicting the people with a question they would just as soon not answer.

Jeremiah 8.22–9.2
This individual lament is spoken entirely by Jeremiah. In a larger chiasmus of 8.22–9.11, it balances another individual lament (with divine response) in 9.10-11. At midpoint in this rhetorical structure are divine oracles on reckless use of the tongue.[39] Since this structure appears to be editorial, no correlation is evident between the laments and the divine oracles. The limits of the present lament are determined by a rhetorical structure consisting of interlocking ending and beginning repetitions (italics). The very last line is later expansion. Gunkel does not identify these verses as a lament, except to say that 9.1 uses language of the individual lament.[40] Baumgartner includes the first two verses with the lament in 8.18-21.[41]

> [22]*Is* there no balm in Gilead?
>   *Is* there no healer there?
> Indeed *so why* has it not arisen
>   healing for *my dear people?*
>
> [1]*Who can make* my head waters
>   and my eyes a well of tears
> So I might weep day and night
>   for the slain of *my dear people?*
>
> [2]*Who can make* for me in the desert
>   a traveler's lodge
> So I might forsake my people
>   and go away from them?
>
> For all of them are adulterers, a faithless bunch.

This lament also employs the three-fold rhetorical question, 'Is… Is… So why…', which we just saw in 8.19. Jeremiah complains because there appears to be no healing for Judah. He can only weep over the slain, wishing he could abandon his people by escaping into the wilderness.

Jeremiah 9.10-11
This individual lament (v. 10), as was just mentioned, balances the lament in 8.22–9.2, where two laments frame divine oracles in an edi-

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39. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 534-36.
40. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 155.
41. Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, p. 84.

torial chiasmus. This lament, however, has a divine response (v. 11), to which it is linked by key words (small caps). The response has no messenger formula, but the 'I' in this verse has to be Yahweh speaking. The lament and divine response are delimited by section markings at top and bottom. Gunkel says v. 10 is a communal lament heard somewhere in the city.[42] Baumgartner says Jeremiah is alluding to or making use of the dirge.[43]

Jeremiah's lament:

> [10]Over the mountains I make weeping and lament
>   and over pastures of the wild a dirge
>
> For they are burned, WITHOUT A PERSON passing through
>   they do not hear the sound of cattle
> From birds of the skies to the beasts
>   they have fled, they are gone

Divine response:

> [11]I will make Jerusalem a heap of stones
>   a den of jackals
> And the cities of Judah I will make a desolation
>   WITHOUT INHABITANT.

In 9.1 Jeremiah wept over the slain of Judah. Here he weeps over a burned and desolate land. Yahweh says in his response that Jeremiah can expect more of the same. Not only is the countryside desolate; Jerusalem and neighboring cities will also become a wasteland.

Jeremiah 10.19-21

This Jeremianic lament, delimited by section markings at top and bottom, is without a divine response. In form and content it is similar to 4.19-22, only there the lament gets a divine answer (4.22). Here Jeremiah judges the foolish individuals himself (v. 21). Gunkel took 10.19-22 as an individual lament placed in the mouth of Zion. In his view, the 'I' was spoken originally by an individual at a lament occasion of the entire community.[44] Commentators otherwise agree that in v. 20 a personified Jerusalem (or Judah) is speaking ('my children'), and that Jeremiah is speaking in v. 21. In my view, Jeremiah also speaks the lament of v. 19.[45] The whole is then a three-stanza poem in which Jeremiah and Jerusalem alternate laments. Stanzas two and three have their own internal rhetorical structures (italics).

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42. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 83.
43. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 113 n. 35.
44. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, pp. 87, 122.
45. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, p. 603.

> ¹⁹Woe to me, at my brokenness
>> my blow is incurable
> Then I, I said to myself:
>> 'But this is suffering
>>> and I must bear it'
>
> ²⁰*My tent* is devastated
>> and all *my cords* are torn away
>>> my children have gone from me and are no more
> There is no one now who spreads *my tent*
>> and who sets up *my curtains*
>
> ²¹For the *shepherds* are stupid
>> they do not seek out Yahweh
> Therefore they have not fared well
>> and all *their flock* is scattered.

Jeremiah's lament opens with 'Woe to me', which begins a lament also in 15.10. The prophet speaks again of his sickness and suffering, as in 4.19-21, a common motif in laments of the Psalms. In this lament, Jeremiah does not ask to be delivered from his suffering; he tells himself he simply must bear it. Jerusalem or Judah laments that towns and rural areas have been devastated by an enemy, and large numbers of people have been killed or taken into exile. At the end Jeremiah puts the blame on foolish kings and leaders of the nation. They do not seek Yahweh.

Jeremiah 10.23-25

These verses contain an individual lament in which Jeremiah asks for (gentle) correction (vv. 23-24). It brings to an end oracles and more general laments on the coming 'foe from the north', and is followed by a separate word in which Jeremiah calls for Yahweh to take vengeance on his enemies (v. 25). The near-identity of v. 25 to Ps. 79.6-7 suggests that it is likely an add-on. The two compositions are linked by key words (small caps). The first composition has its own key word balance (italics). The two compositions go well together, the call for vengeance being a common motif in laments of the Psalms. Also, section markings delimit the unit as vv. 23-25. Gunkel lists 10.23-25 as a communal lament.[46] Baumgartner says these verses echo the communal song of lament, but thinks their authenticity is dubious.[47]

Jeremiah's lament:

> ²³I KNOW, YAHWEH, that the person's way is not his
>> it is not man who walks that determines his steps

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46. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 82.
47. Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, p. 89.

> ²⁴*Correct me, Yahweh*, but with justice
>   not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing.

> ²⁵Pour out your wrath on the nations
>   WHO DO NOT KNOW YOU
> And on the families
>   who do not call upon your name
> For they have consumed Jacob
>   they have consumed him and brought him to an end
>   his pasture they have made desolate.

Jeremiah begins by addressing Yahweh directly. Other Jeremiah laments either address Yahweh or name Yahweh at the beginning (11.18; 12.1; 14.7, 20; 15.15; 17.13; 18.19; 20.7). In the Hebrew text Jeremiah requests correction for himself personally, but in the LXX, 'Correct me' is changed to 'Correct us' (v. 24), making his plea one spoken on behalf of the nation.

Jeremiah 11.18-23
Here an individual lament in poetry (vv. 18-20) is followed by a divine response in prose (vv. 21-23). The divine response is preceded by an introductory word identifying the prophet's enemies as men of Anathoth (v. 21). Both Gunkel and Baumgartner treat these verses as an individual lament with a divine response.[48] The verses are delimited by section markings at both top and bottom. The lament is further delimited by a section marking after v. 20. There is also a section marking prior to v. 20, which could indicate the one-time independence of v. 20. This verse reappears with minor changes in 20.12. Another section after v. 21 sets off the introduction from the oracle following. We see here a repetition of 'Yahweh' at beginning and end (italics).
    Jeremiah's lament:

> ¹⁸*Yahweh* made me know and I knew
>   then you made me see their deeds
> ¹⁹I was like a trusting lamb led to the slaughter
>   I did not know that against me

> They planned plans:
>   'Let us destroy the tree with its sap
> Let us cut him off from the land of the living
>   that his name be remembered no more'

> ²⁰*Yahweh of hosts*, who judges righteously
>   who tests the inner being and the heart

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    48. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 121; Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, pp. 41-46.

> Let me see your vengeance upon them
>> when to you I have confided my case.

Divine response:

> [21]Therefore thus said Yahweh concerning the men of Anathoth who are seeking your life, saying: 'You shall not prophesy in the name of Yahweh, or you will surely die by our hand'.
>> [22]Therefore thus said Yahweh of hosts:
>> Look I will reckon with them. The chosen ones will die by the sword, their sons and their daughters will die by famine, [23]and there shall not be a remnant of them, for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth in the year of their reckoning.

Jeremiah begins this lament by naming Yahweh rather than addressing Yahweh directly. Yahweh is addressed emphatically in v. 20 as 'Yahweh of hosts'. Jeremiah's major complaint is that he is being attacked by enemies, a common motif in laments of the Psalms. The lament contains an alternation of speaker, giving it the following structure:

I   Jeremiah addresses confidant   vv. 18-19a.
II   Enemies of Jeremiah speak   v. 19bc.
III Jeremiah addresses Yahweh   v. 20.

Jeremiah here protests his innocence, saying he was like a trusting lamb led to the slaughter. Enemies wanted to kill him, and he did not know it. Jeremiah therefore puts out a call to Yahweh who judges righteously and truly discerns inner minds and passions, asking that Yahweh will take vengeance on his enemies. Yahweh in his divine response says that he will do just that.

Jeremiah 12.1-6
Here another individual lament (vv. 1-3) is combined with a divine response (vv. 5-6). The divine response has no messenger formula, but clarification about it being Yahweh's reply comes in the Targum. Verse 4 is later expansion reflecting on human evil and the land being ruined. In the divine response, the prose v. 6 appears to expand the poetry of v. 5. Gunkel and Baumgartner both treat these verses as related to songs of lament in the Psalms.[49] The present lament is delimited by section markings at both top and bottom; another section at the end of v. 6 closes the larger unit. The lament and divine response in v. 5 have internal key word balance (italics).

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49. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 121; Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, pp. 63-71.

Jeremiah's lament:

> ¹Righteous are you, *Yahweh*
>> when I make accusation to you
>>> nevertheless judgments I will speak to you
> Why does the way of the wicked prosper
>> and they live at ease, all who are faithlessly faithless?

> ²You plant them, what is more they take root
>> they grow, what is more they bear fruit
> You are near in their mouth
>> but far from their inner being

> ³Now you, *Yahweh*, you know me, you see me
>> and you test my heart toward you
> Pull them out like sheep to the slaughter
>> dedicate them for the day of killing.

Divine response:

> ⁵If *with* men on foot you have run and they have wearied you
>> *how then* will you fare in a heat *with* horses?
> And *in* a peaceful land you have fallen down
>> *how then* will you do *in* the pride of the Jordan?

> ⁶For even your brothers and the house of your father, even they, they
> have dealt faithlessly with you, even they, they are in full cry after you.
> Do not believe in them when they speak to you good things.

Jeremiah begins by addressing Yahweh, acknowledging Yahweh to be righteous despite the accusation he is about to lay before him. Here Jeremiah is not simply complaining; he is accusing. He is not wanting to talk over matters of judgment; he is speaking judgments. His burden is 'the way of the wicked', an indication that the prophet is again having problems with enemies, as in 11.18-20. Jeremiah protests his innocence, and calls for vengeance on his enemies. Yahweh's answer in this case is largely a non-answer. If Jeremiah is exhausted from a small battle, what will he do in a battle of greater magnitude? Things apparently are going to get worse. The add-on v. 6 identifies the enemies as family, presumably in Anathoth, but Yahweh does not say, as in 11.22-23, that they will get their just deserts.

This poem of lament in 12.1-3 is a companion poem to the lament in 11.18-20. Companion poems exist elsewhere in Jeremiah (6.1-7; 6.8-12). But the juxtaposition here is unique in that key words in each poem—which double as catchwords—make a large chiasmus.⁵⁰ The key words:

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50. Lundbom, *Jeremiah: A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*, pp. 100-101 [= 1997: 131-33].

<div style="margin-left:2em">

   ¹⁸*Yahweh made me know and I knew*

A   *you made me see*

   ¹⁹*like a lamb…to the slaughter*

       its sap

   B   ²⁰*Yahweh …who judges righteously*

      the inner being

      when to you …my case (רִיבִי).

      ¹*righteous… Yahweh*

      when I make accusation to you (אָרִיב)

   B'   *judgments*

      ²*fruit*

      their inner being

   ³*Yahweh, you know me*

A'   *you see me*

   like sheep to the slaughter

</div>

Jeremiah 14.2-10

These verses have long been recognized as a drama, possibly a Temple liturgy, in response to a severe drought (14.1). They contain a lament spoken by Jeremiah (vv. 2-6); a communal confession and petition that Yahweh will alleviate the suffering (vv. 7-9); and then a divine oracle rejecting the petition (v. 10). In a prose passage following (vv. 11-16), Jeremiah is rejected as covenant mediator. Gunkel and Baumgartner identify 14.2-6, 7-9 as a communal lament, with Baumgartner also recognizing v. 10 as a divine reply.[51] Gunkel believed the communal lament was written in anticipation of Israel's future repentance.[52] But it could have been spoken at the time of the drought, with Jeremiah or someone else leading the liturgy. Section markings delimit the lament and confession as a unit, and the divine response as a unit. Both the individual lament and communal confession have internal key word balances (italics).

   Jeremiah's lament:

<div style="margin-left:2em">

   ²*Judah* mourns

     her gates languish

     they are black to the earth

   The cry of *Jerusalem* goes up

   ³Their nobles send their young ones for *water*

     they come upon the canals

   They do not find *water*

     their containers *return* empty

</div>

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51. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 82; Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, p. 88.

52. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, p. 14.

They are ashamed and disgraced
 and *they cover their heads*
[4]On account of the ground being cracked
 because there is not rain in the land

The farmers *are ashamed*
 they cover their heads
[5]*Because* even the doe in the field gives birth and forsakes
 because there is not grass

[6]The wild asses stand on the bare heights
 they pant for air like jackals
Their eyes fail
 because of no herbage.

Communal confession:

[7]Though our iniquities testify against us
 Yahweh, act for the sake of *your name*
For our backslidings are many
 against you we have sinned

[8]The Hope of Israel
 its savior in time of trouble
Why will you become like a sojourner in the land
 and *like* a traveler turned aside to lodge?

[9]*Why will you become like* a helpless man
 like a mighty man unable *to save?*
But you are in our midst, *Yahweh*
 and *your name* upon us is called
  do not leave us!

Divine response:

[10]Thus said Yahweh to this people:
So they loved to wander
 their feet they did not restrain
Thus Yahweh did not accept them
 now he will remember their iniquity
  and call to account their sin.

Jeremiah laments the severe drought. The canals have no water, people are overcome with shame, and animals are dying and forsaking their young. Because people are blanketed in shame, a communal lament follows. Yahweh is addressed directly, called the 'Hope of Israel' and its savior in times of trouble. The people confess their sin, and ask for deliverance and Yahweh's continued presence. But in the divine response Yahweh says the people have loved their waywardness. He therefore will not act as savior; rather he will punish the people for their sin.

Jeremiah 14.17–15.4

Here is another sequence just like the one preceding, containing a lament spoken by Jeremiah (14.17-19ab); a communal confession and petition that Yahweh not break the covenant (14.20-22); and a divine response in two oracles (15.2b-3). Gunkel took 14.19-22 to be a communal lament,[53] Baumgartner 14.17-18 as an individual lament and 14.19–15.2 as a communal lament.[54] The fragment of 14.19c, which repeats in 8.15, may be an add-on. Delimitation of the sequence as a whole is aided only by a section marking after 14.22, which separates the communal confession from the divine response. At top and bottom of the sequence are shifts from prose to poetry in 14.17 and 15.5, which give further aid in delimitation. This divine response differs from the one in the earlier sequence in that the oracles of answer are framed at the top by prose rejecting Jeremiah as covenant mediator (15.1-2a), and at the bottom by prose expanding the judgment and blaming King Manasseh for what he did in Jerusalem (15.4). In 14.11-16 the rejection of Jeremiah as covenant mediation came in prose at the end of the sequence. Both the lament and communal confession contain internal key word repetitions (italics).

Jeremiah's lament:

> [17]And you shall say to them this word:
> Let my eyes run down with tears
>> night and day, and let them not stop
> For a major shatter has been shattered
>> my dear virgin people
>>> a most incurable *stroke*

> [18]*If I went out to the field*
>> *then look!* those slain by the sword
> *And if I entered the city*
>> *then look!* the diseases of famine
> For also prophet also priest
>> wander to a land that they do not know

> [19a]Have you utterly rejected Judah?
>> Does Zion your soul abhor?
> So why have *you struck us down*
>> that there is no healing for us?

Communal confession:

> [19c]To hope for peace—and no good!
>> for a time of healing—and look, terror!

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53. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, p. 14; *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 82.

54. Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, pp. 85, 88.

²⁰We know, *Yahweh*, our wickedness
    the iniquity of our fathers
        indeed we have sinned against you
²¹Do not spurn, for the sake of your name
    do not disdain your glorious throne
Remember, do not break
    your covenant with us

²²Are there among the nothings of the nations rainmakers?
    Or the heavens, do they give showers?
Are you not the one, *Yahweh*, our God?
    We are hoping for you
        indeed you, you have made all these.

Divine response:

^{2b}Thus said Yahweh:
Whoever is to death—to death, and whoever is to the sword—to
the sword, and whoever is to famine—to famine, and whoever is to
captivity—to captivity.

³And I will appoint over them four families—oracle of Yahweh—the
sword to kill and the dogs to drag away; and the birds of the skies and
the beasts of the earth to devour and to destroy.

Jeremiah in this lament expresses his grief over the effects of war, siege, and famine in city and country. He does not ask for deliverance, at least not directly. The lament ends with him asking whether Yahweh has utterly rejected Judah, since there appears to be no healing for the divine-inflicted blow. Jeremiah can only weep over his wounded people (cf. 8.22–9.2). The communal lament contains an acknowledgement of sin confessed directly to Yahweh. This is followed by a plea that Yahweh not break his covenant with the people, and an affirmation of Yahweh as the one who brings rain and is Israel's hope. Yahweh, in his response, remains unmoved. The people are told in two oracles that they can take their pick between death and exile.

Jeremiah 15.10-12
Here is an individual lament (v. 10) with a divine response (vv. 11-12), treated by Gunkel and Baumgartner as related to the individual lament.[55] Delimitation at top end is by a section marking. The dialogue concludes at v. 12.[56] Both lament and response have key word repetitions (italics).

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55. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 121; Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, pp. 71-73.
56. Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, p. 71.

Jeremiah's lament:

> [10]Woe to me, my mother because you bore me
>> *a man* of contention and *a man* of dispute
>>> *for the whole* earth
> *I have not loaned*
>> *and they have not loaned to me*
>>> *all of them curse me.*

Divine response:

> [11]Yahweh said:
> *Have I not* set you free *for good?*
>> *Have I not* stood by you
>>> *in time of evil* and *in time* of distress with the enemy?
> [12]Can *iron* break
>> *iron* from the north and bronze?

Jeremiah in this lament does not address Yahweh; he speaks rather to his mother ('because you bore me'), which may be apostrophe. A heavy 'woe' is heaped on both himself and his mother. 'Woe to me' begins the individual lament in 10.19. Yahweh, though not addressed, is nevertheless listening, and his response affirms Jeremiah as the 'iron-clad prophet' given prior protection against all comers. Yahweh does not say that Jeremiah's suffering will end, but it must be concluded that Yahweh will continue to stand by his prophet and deliver him in the future.

Jeremiah 15.15-21
Here is another individual lament (vv. 15-18) with a divine response (vv. 19-21). Verse 21 may be a later add-on. Both the lament and divine response have internal key word balance (italics), and the two are linked by catchwords (small caps). Gunkel and Baumgartner both treat the verses as an individual lament with a divine response.[57] The passage has also been discussed along with 15.10-12 by John Bright.[58] A.R. Diamond[59] points out that the lament and divine answer manifest a pattern of doublets, which are the following:

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57. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 121; Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, pp. 46-51.
58. Bright, 'A Prophet's Lament and its Answer: Jeremiah 15:10-21', *Int* 28 (1974), pp. 59-74.
59. Diamond, *The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context*, p. 68.

I	*you know*	יָדַעְתָּ	v. 15
	know	דַּע	
II	*your words*	דְּבָרֶיךָ	v. 16
	your word	דְּבָרְךָ (Q)	
III	*I sat not*	לֹא־יָשַׁבְתִּי	v. 17
	I sat	יָשַׁבְתִּי	
IV	*it has become*	הָיָה	v. 18
	(will) you really be	הָיוֹ תִהְיֶה	

I	*If you return, then I will let you return*	אִם־תָּשׁוּב וַאֲשִׁיבְךָ	v. 19
	If…they, they will turn…you will not turn	אִם…יָשֻׁבוּ הֵמָּה…לֹא־תָשׁוּב	
II	*to rescue you*	לְהוֹשִׁיעֶךָ	v. 20
	I will rescue you	הִצַּלְתִּיךָ	v. 21

Jeremiah's lament:

¹⁵You, *you know*, Yahweh
    remember me and take account of me
        and take vengeance for me on my pursuers
Do not in your slowness to anger take me away
    know that on your account I bear reproach

¹⁶*Your words* were found and I ate them
    and *your word* was to me for joy
        and for the gladness of my heart
For your name is called upon me
    Yahweh, the God of hosts

¹⁷*I sat not* in the happy crowd and acted jolly
    because of your hand, all alone *I sat*
        for with indignation you filled me

¹⁸Why *has* my pain *become* continual
    and my blow desperate
        refusing to be healed?
WILL YOU *really* BE FOR ME AS a deceptive stream
    waters that are not sure?

Divine response:

¹⁹Therefore thus said Yahweh:
If you return, then I will let you return
    before me you shall stand
And *if* you bring forth what is more precious than trash
    AS my mouth YOU WILL BE
They, they will turn to you
    but you, *you will not turn* to them

²⁰And I will make you to this people
    a fortified wall of bronze
They will fight against you
    but will not overcome you

For with you am I
>   to save you and *rescue you*
>   —oracle of Yahweh.

[21]Yes, *I will rescue you* from the hand of evildoers
>   and I will redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

Jeremiah's lament begins by invoking the divine name, as he does elsewhere (11.20; 12.1; 16.19; 17.14; 18.19; 20.7, 12). Here he asks Yahweh to 'remember' him, using a word occurring often in the Psalms (Pss. 25.6-7; 74.2, 18, 22; 89.47, 50). Being attacked once again by enemies, Jeremiah wants a speedy deliverance. If Yahweh delays, Jeremiah may become a victim. Jeremiah also wants Yahweh to take vengeance on his persecutors. Baumgartner sees in v. 18 vocabulary out of laments in the Psalter: (1) the 'why?' (לָמָּה) question (Pss. 22.1; 42.9; 43.2; 88.14); (2) נֶצַח ('continual/enduring'), which occurs equally often (Pss. 13.2; 44.23 together with 'why'; 74.1 together with 'why', 3, 10, 19; 77.8; 79.5); and (3) כְּאֵב ('pain'), which occurs only once (Ps. 39.2).[60] Gunkel and Baumgartner believed that 'pain' and 'healing', both here and in Jer. 17.14, are metaphorical, whereas the psalmist speaks of them in a real sense.[61] But Jeremiah may also be talking about real pain.

Jeremiah goes on in the lament to recall his joy at the finding of the Temple law book in 622, which he consumed with joy, and in so doing accepted Yahweh's call to be a prophet.[62] The lament closes with a complaint about his present hurt not letting up (cf. Pss. 38.5-8; 42.10), after which comes an ill-chosen remark about Yahweh being to him like a 'deceptive stream'. The divine answer is no less robust. Jeremiah receives not a word of consolation, but is told he must return (= 'repent'), and then he can once again stand before Yahweh. Jeremiah must abandon the worthless trash he has been preaching, get on with preaching Yahweh's precious word, and he can be again Yahweh's mouth. The promise given at the time of his commissioning is then renewed. Jeremiah will continue to be the 'wall of bronze' he has been thus far against his enemies, from whom he will be delivered.

Jeremiah 17.13-18
Here is one perhaps two poetic compositions that belong with Jeremiah's individual laments. Gunkel and Baumgartner treat 17.12-18 as a single poem of lament.[63] A section marking after v. 18 delimits the end

60. Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, p. 49.
61. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, p. 28; Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, p. 91.
62. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 743-44.
63. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 121; Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, pp. 51-56.

of the unit. A rhetorical structure in the first composition (17.13-16a) sets it off from the second (17.16b-18), suggesting that perhaps two compositions have been joined together.[64] Like the speaker chiasmus in 8.18-21, the structure here is a 3-way conversation between Yahweh, the people, and Jeremiah. Both poems have internal key word repetitions (italics), and key words linking them together (small caps). The two have much in common with Psalm 17.[65]

| Jeremiah: | [13]The Hope of Israel, Yahweh |
| | *all who forsake you* WILL BE SHAMED |

| Yahweh: | Those turning from me will be written in the earth |
| | *for they have forsaken the spring of living water* |

Jeremiah:	[14]Heal me, Yahweh, and I shall be healed
	save me, and I shall be saved
	for you are my praise

| People: | [15]Look, they are the ones saying to me, |
| | 'Where is the word of Yahweh? Let it come!' |

| Jeremiah: | [16a]As for me, I did not insist on shepherding after you |
| | and THE DAY OF DESPERATION I have not desired! |

	[16b]*You*, you know what has gone out of my lips
	it has come before your face!
	[17]Do not *become* to me a terror
	my refuge *you* are in THE DAY OF EVIL

	[18]*Let my pursuers* BE SHAMED, *but let not me, me* BE SHAMED
	Let them, them be broken, but let not me, me be broken
	Bring on them THE DAY OF EVIL*!*
	and a double breaking, break them!

Jeremiah begins the dialogue by addressing Yahweh, calling him the Hope of Israel. He says those who forsake Yahweh will be shamed. Yahweh speaks next, saying that those who turn away from him will be 'written in the earth'. In the center Jeremiah utters a lament. The prophet is again sick, asking to be healed and to be saved. The next stanza contains a taunt that has come to Jeremiah from his enemies. They ask that Jeremiah's word come to pass. Of course, they really do not want it fulfilled, they simply disbelieve Jeremiah's word. The dialogue ends with a complaint by Jeremiah that he did not seek the office to which he was called. Nor did not desire the dreadful day he has been preaching about.

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64. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 794-97.
65. Lawrence Boadt, *Jeremiah 1–25* (OTM, 9; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1982).

   In this second poem Jeremiah then protests his innocence to Yahweh, followed by a request that Yahweh not be a terror to him, but rather his refuge in the evil day. What he wants is Yahweh's vengeance on his enemies. This lament has no further reply from Yahweh.

Jeremiah 18.19-23

This lament by Jeremiah has no divine response. Gunkel and Baumgartner take 18.18-23 as a poem of lament,[66] which is delimited by section markings at both top and bottom. Verse 18 is a conspiracy speech announcing a plot laid against Jeremiah. The lament has striking affinities to Psalm 35, incorporating other stereotyped Psalm language. Key word repetitions make a chiasmus (italics).[67]

> [19]Give heed, *Yahweh*, to me
> > and hear the voice of my adversaries:
>
> [20]Should evil be repayment for good?
> > yet they *dug a pit* for my life
> Remember how I stood in your presence
> > to speak good for them
> > > to turn away your wrath from them?
>
> [21]Therefore give over their *sons* to famine
> (and pour them out to the power of the sword)
> > let their *women* become childless and husbandless
> > and their *men*, let them be the slain by black death
> Their *young men* sword-victims in battle
>
> [22]A cry will be heard from their houses
> > *for* you will bring raiders upon them suddenly
> > *for they dug a pit* to catch me
> and traps they hid for my feet
>
> [23]But you, *Yahweh*, you know
> > all their counsel against me for death.
>
> Do not atone for their iniquity
> > their sin from your presence do not blot out
> > let them be stumblers in your presence
> In the time of your anger deal with them.

   Jeremiah here addresses Yahweh at both beginning and end. His request is that Yahweh listen to both him and his enemies, and then judge the rank evildoers. Jeremiah protests his own innocence, saying he has spoken good, not ill, of his enemies. He has even interceded on

   66. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 121; Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, pp. 56-59.
   67. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, p. 829.

their behalf. But they have returned the favor by digging a pit to take his life (vv. 20, 22; cf. Ps. 35.7). At the center Jeremiah curses his enemies and those related to them (v. 21), and at the end asks that the iniquity of these enemies not be atoned for, but that Yahweh act to make them stumble.

Jeremiah 20.7-13

Here an individual lament (vv. 7-10) is followed by a hymn of confidence and thankful praise (vv. 11-13). This time the response to Jeremiah's lament comes from the prophet himself after a crisis has passed. Gunkel and Baumgartner take vv. 7-9 as a poem closely related to the songs of lament, and vv. 10-13 as an actual song of lament.[68] But in my view, the lament is best delimited to vv. 7-10, having as it does key words making an inclusio (italics).[69] Other balancing key words are also present (italics). Gunkel sees in vv. 11-13 certainty of a hearing, which often occurs in laments of the Psalms.[70] Many Psalms contain internal movement from complaint to confident assurance, e.g., Psalms 6; 13; 22; 28; 30; 31; 35. The present lament has some striking affinities to Psalm 31, e.g., v. 10 with Ps. 31.13. But we seem to have two separate compositions joined by catchwords (small caps).[71] Section markings delimit vv. 7-12 as a unit; v. 13 is delimited separately, and may be a later add-on. Verse 12 may also be an addition, since it is duplicated in 11.20.

    Jeremiah's lament:

> ⁷*You enticed me*, YAHWEH, and *I was enticed*
>   you laid hold of me, and YOU OVERCAME
> *I have become* a joke *all the day*
>   they all make fun *of me*
>
> ⁸*For* too often I speak, I cry out
>   violence and destruction, I proclaim
> *For* the word of Yahweh *has become for me*
>   reproach and ridicule *all the day*
>
> ⁹Then I say, I will not mention him
>   I will not speak any longer in his name
> But it becomes in my heart like a burning fire
>   shut up in my bones
> I am weary from holding it in
>   and I CANNOT OVERCOME

68. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 121; Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, pp. 59-62, 73-76.
69. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, p. 853.
70. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 181.
71. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, pp. 852-53.

¹⁰For I hear whispering in the crowd:
    'Terror-on-every-side!
        tell, let us tell on him!'
All my trusted friends watch for my fall:
    'Perhaps *he can be enticed* AND WE WILL OVERCOME HIM
        and we will take OUR REVENGE on him'.

Hymn of confidence:

¹¹But YAHWEH is with me like a fearless warrior
    therefore my pursuers will stumble and WILL NOT OVERCOME
They are greatly shamed, for they did not succeed
    eternal disgrace will not be forgotten!

¹²Yahweh of hosts, who tests the righteous
    who sees the inner being and the heart
    let me see YOUR VENGEANCE upon them
when to you I have confided my case.

¹³Sing to Yahweh
    praise Yahweh
For he rescued the life of the needy
    from the hand of evildoers!

Jeremiah begins this lament by complaining directly to Yahweh about his call to prophesy, alleging that Yahweh took advantage of his youth by forcing him into submission. He then cites reproaches and ridicule from enemies, saying they come all day long. He has tried keeping silent, but that does not work, for then he has a fire in his bones that he cannot contain. The lament ends with more complaining about taunts from enemies, who are would-be friends. There is no plea here for deliverance, but in the hymn that follows, Jeremiah is confident that will come. He is also confident that his enemies will not succeed. But just for good measure, v. 12 calls for Yahweh to take vengeance on the enemies. In v. 13 deliverance has come. Jeremiah refers here to himself as a 'needy' soul, which Gunkel says is an identification made often in the Psalms.⁷² Psalmists frequently paint themselves as the poor, distressed, humble, and silent faithful. The 'Sing to Yahweh' of this final verse begins Pss. 96.1-2; 98.1; and 149.1. The 'praise Yahweh' following is likewise a common beginning in the Psalms (Pss. 105 [reconstructed]; 106; 111; 112; 113; 117; 135; 146–150).

Jeremiah 20.14-18; 1.5
Concluding the First Edition of Jeremiah (chaps. 1-20) is the most moving lament in the book (20.14-18), delimited by content, a rhetorical structure, and section markings at top and bottom. Taken by itself, the

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72. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, pp. 33-34.

lament is without a divine response. Von Rad says: 'The God whom the prophet addresses no longer answers him'.[73] But in the larger compilation of the First Edition (chaps. 1–20), it receives an answer in 1.5. The tie-in is made by a key word inclusio (small caps).

The lament needs reconstruction at the beginning of v. 17, since presently the curse on the day is not filled out and the curse on the man in v. 16 is disproportionately heavy.[74] The lament has extraordinary key word balance, with a chiasmus of day/man/man/day upon reconstruction (italics). Gunkel and Baumgartner both treat 20.14-18 as a poem related to the songs of lament.[75] Baumgartner thinks the poem is not directed to Yahweh, therefore not a song of lament in the strict sense. But v. 18, in my view, is addressed to Yahweh, and the whole a Jeremiah lament.[76]

Jeremiah's lament:

> [14]*Cursed* be *the day*
>   *on which I was born*
>   the day *my mother* bore me
> Let it not be *blessed*
>
> [15]*Cursed* be *the man*
>   *who* brought *my father* the news:
> 'A male child *is born* to you'
>   *making him very glad*
>
> [16]*Let that man be like* the cities
>   *which* Yahweh overthrew and did not pity
> Let him hear *a cry in the morning*
>   and *an alarm at noontime*
>
> [17][*Let that day be like…*]
>   *because* he did not kill me *in the womb*
> So my mother would have been my grave
>   *and her womb* eternally pregnant
>
> [18]Why this: FROM THE WOMB CAME I FORTH
>   to see hard times and sorrow
>   and *my days* end in shame?

Divine response:

> [1.5]Before I formed you in the belly I knew you
>   and before YOU CAME FORTH FROM THE WOMB I declared you holy
>   a prophet to the nations I made you.

73. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II, p. 204.

74. Lundbom, 'The Double Curse in Jeremiah 20:14-18', *JBL* 104 (1985), pp. 589-600.

75. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 121; Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament*, pp. 76-78.

76. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, p. 865.

In this lament Jeremiah curses the day of his birth and the man who brought the happy news to his father. Both mother and father are obliquely implicated in the malediction, but they are not cursed. Jeremiah knows they cannot be. The hapless friend of Jeremiah's father is compared to the proverbial cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which Yahweh overthrew in his anger. But the man here will not die. He is simply condemned to hear human cries and war alarms day and night, which may be as bad as death, possibly worse. With reconstruction in v. 17 the day of Jeremiah's birth is compared to some other inauspicious day, no longer known, the reason being that Yahweh did not kill Jeremiah in the womb. Jeremiah concludes the lament by asking Yahweh why he was born to see hard times and sorrow, and end his days in shame.

The prophet's wrenching question receives an answer when the scribe compiling the First Edition ties v. 18 of the lament in with a word from Jeremiah's call in 1.5. The larger message is that Jeremiah came forth from the womb because Yahweh called him long before he came forth.

8

Jeremiah and the Nations

Hebrew Prophets as International Figures

Hebrew prophets had become international figures by the 9th century, at which time Yahweh commissioned Elijah to anoint Hazael king of Syria (1 Kgs 19.15). We are not told that this act was carried out, but Elisha, whom Elijah appointed to be prophet in his stead, did journey to Damascus to inform Hazael that he would succeed Ben-hadad as king over Syria (2 Kgs 8.7-15). Elisha also predicted that Hazael would go on to inflict grievous evil upon Israel. In these acts we see a Hebrew prophet very much involved in international affairs.

All the 8th to 6th century prophets, with the exception of Hosea, prophesied against foreign nations, some leaving a legacy of numerous foreign nation oracles (Amos 1.3–2.3; Isaiah 13–24; Zephaniah 2; Jeremiah 46–51 [MT]; Ezekiel 25–32). And then there was the tale about Jonah, who, after trying to flee Yahweh's presence, went on to preach judgment to the people of Nineveh.

Jeremiah Prophet to the Nations

Jeremiah was appointed a prophet to the nations (Jer. 1.5, 10), and in his book is a collection of oracles against nine foreign nations (MT Jeremiah 46–51; LXX 25.14–31.47). In addition, we have in chap. 25 a vision and oracle in which Jeremiah, as cupbearer, serves up Yahweh's wine of wrath to nations of the world (Jer. 25.15-29). All the banquet guests at Yahweh's table will become thoroughly drunk, retch, and go mad, after which they will be easy prey before the sword Yahweh is sending against them. Elsewhere in the book of Jeremiah is evidence aplenty that Jeremiah has been assigned by Yahweh the expanded mission of prophet to the nations. The term 'nations' in 1.5, 10 means all nations, including the prophet's own (cf. 9.25-26; 10.25; 16.19-20; 18.7-10; 25; 28.8; 36.2; and 51.20). Against Babylon, Jeremiah is said to have written in his own hand an entire scroll of oracles (Jer. 51.60).

Yahweh God of All Nations

Yahweh's judgment on the nations does not translate automatically into salvation for Judah, much less reflect narrow nationalism that is the hallmark of false prophecy. Yet, in the long term, these oracles against nations of the world will mean salvation for a covenant people duly chastened (cf. Deut. 32.34-42). In the short term they intend only to announce Yahweh's judgment on everyone, which is what the sweep of nations in Amos 1.2–2.16 does. According to Amos, if Yahweh judges nations with whom he has no covenant, *a fortiori* he will judge a people with whom he does have a covenant, and who willfully disobeys it. But the argument can be turned around, as it does in Jeremiah's preaching. Jeremiah states that judgment will come first to Jerusalem and Judah, then to nations round about (Jer. 25.15-29). Jeremiah's theology cannot be reduced to a political viewpoint, i.e., which would be that because Jeremiah preaches subservience to Nebuchadnezzar he is 'pro-Babylonian'. Jeremiah knows that at the end of the day Yahweh is Lord and Judge of all nations.

The view is also expressed in the book that the nations who taught Judah to swear by Baal will afterwards learn the ways of Yahweh, and if they do, they will be built up amidst a restored Israel (Jer. 12.14-17). This seed of universalism will come to flower in Second Isaiah and others.

Authenticity of Jeremiah's Foreign Nation Oracles

There has been considerable discussion about whether Jeremiah's Foreign Nation Oracles actually emanate from the prophet. Most of the oracles are in poetry, but opinions about quality and style vary. Bright says the quality is high, with some oracles showing the same vividness as oracles addressed to Israel, whose genuineness is unquestioned.[1] These oracles also contain some of Jeremiah's most characteristic phrases, e.g., 'terror on every side' (46.5; 49.29; cf. 6.25; 20.10); 'rebellious daughter' (49.4; cf. 31.22); 'like a woman in labor' (49.24; 50.43; cf. 6.24; 22.23; 30.6); 'den of jackals' (49.33; 51.37; cf. 9.11; 10.22). So far as rhetorical structures are concerned, the oracles in 51.20-23 and 51.34-45 rank with the best of Jeremiah's oracles to Israel and Judah. In one instance, an oracle written for 'daughter Zion' (6.22-24) is adapted for delivery to 'daughter Babylon' (50.41-43).

Certain oracles do, nevertheless, contain verses that appear to be either anonymous or from some other prophet. The Edom oracle has verses recurring in Obadiah (49.7-16; cf. Obad. 1-5), and verses in the

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1. Bright, *Jeremiah*, pp. 307-308.

Moab oracles (48.33-39) echo Isaiah 15–16. Other duplications or similar sounding verses are 48.43-44 (cf. Isa. 24.17-18); 49.27 (cf. Amos 1.4, 14); 49.31 (cf. Ezek. 38.11); and 50.16b (cf. Isa. 13.14b). In one case, the same Jeremiah oracle is used against two different nations: Edom and Babylon (Jer. 49.19-21; 50.44-46). The superscription to the Babylon oracles suggests that the tradition about Jeremianic authorship of these oracles is late, and may, in fact, be in doubt. The Greek text (Jer. 27.1 LXX) makes no reference to Jeremiah, while in the Hebrew (Jer. 50.1), the words 'through Jeremiah the prophet' are tacked on at the end. The Foreign Nation Oracles, in any case, probably include some non-genuine sayings, even though the collection as a whole can certainly be ascribed to Jeremiah.

Anonymity and a late date for Jeremiah's Foreign Nation Oracles belong to late eighteenth and nineteenth-century German literary criticism, where already in J.G. Eichhorn and Wilhelm M. de Wette sections were denied to the prophet.[2] Karl Budde judged the Babylon oracles to be non-genuine, with Schwally, a decade later, denying Jeremianic authorship for the entire Foreign Nation corpus. Schwally's radical assessment[3] is reflected in the commentaries of Bernhard Duhm and Paul Volz, surviving little changed in the recent commentaries of Robert Carroll and William McKane, despite the fact that many early scholars (F. Hitzig, Karl H. Graf, F. Giesebrecht, Carl H. Cornill, A.S. Peake), and an even greater number since, have claimed at least some of the oracles for Jeremiah. Sigmund Mowinckel,[4] for example, thought Jeremiah was concerned about foreign nations when their future was tied up with Judah's, e.g., the oracles in chaps. 25, 27, and 43. He also conceded the Egypt oracles (chap. 46) and perhaps those against Philistia (chap. 47) to Jeremiah. Scholars since have claimed for Jeremiah a portion of the oracles in chaps. 46-49, and perhaps by the same margin have denied Jeremianic authorship for most of chaps. 50–51. Brevard Childs points out that chaps. 46–49 are characterized by explicit plays on vocabulary and motifs in chaps. 4–6.[5] William Holladay has brought things almost full circle by attributing no less than 82 verses or portions of verses in the Babylon oracles to the prophet.[6] And this is to say nothing of Umberto Cassuto's sharp critique of Schwally for his wholesale deletions of

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2. For discussion, see Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37–52*, pp. 182-83.

3. Friedrich Schwally, 'Die Reden des Buches Jeremia gegen die Heiden. XXV. XLVI–LI', *ZAW* 8 (1888), pp. 177-217.

4. Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia*, pp. 65-66.

5. Brevard Childs, 'The Enemy from the North and the Chaos Tradition', *JBL* 78 (1959), pp. 194-95.

6. Holladay, *Jeremiah*, II, p. 401.

Foreign Nation material in chap. 25 simply to bring these verses in line with his view regarding chaps. 46–51.[7]

Foreign Nation Oracles and Holy War

A change in perspective came with form criticism. It was now realized that early Israelite prophecy and prophecy elsewhere in the ancient Near East included oracles against enemy nations, which meant that Foreign Nation Oracles, beginning with Amos and continuing through to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, must be placed in a larger context. J.H. Hayes pointed out that Foreign Nation Oracles originated in contexts of war,[8] which is clear in Jeremiah, where Yahweh is seen to be carrying out holy war against the nations (Jer. 51.27-28; cf. Isa. 13.3), just as he did against Judah (Jer. 6.4; 22.7).

War oracles against other nations are heard from Samuel (1 Sam. 15.2-3), prophets and 'men of God' prophesying to Ahab (1 Kgs 20.13-14, 28), Yahweh prophets prophesying to Ahab and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22), and Elisha (2 Kgs 3.16-19 *et passim*). Later on, foreign nation oracles are spoken by Amos, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, prophets of even greater reputation. Among neighboring peoples, prophetic-type individuals giving oracles in the second millennium for and against other nations would include Balaam son of Beor (Numbers 23–24), prophets known from the Mari Letters,[9] and prophets appearing in the Egyptian execration texts.[10] Esarhaddon of Assyria was encouraged by a prophetic oracle to do battle with enemies,[11] the scene perhaps comparing to the one acted out before Ahab and Jehoshaphat in 1 Kings 22.

Rhetoric in Jeremiah's Foreign Nation Oracles

Although it is often stated that Jeremiah's Foreign Nation poetry is of exceptional quality, it is also claimed that the same is stereotypical,[12]

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7. Umberto Cassuto, 'The Prophecies of Jeremiah concerning the Gentiles', in Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, I (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973), pp. 178-226.

8. J.H. Hayes, 'The Usage of Oracles against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel', *JBL* 87 (1968), pp. 81-82.

9. *ANET*[3], pp. 629-30; A. Malamat, 'Prophetic Revelations in New Documents from Mari and the Bible', in *Volume du Congrès, Genève, 1965* (VTSup, 15; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), pp. 214-19.

10. A. Bentzen, 'The Ritual Background of Amos I 2–ii 16', *OTS* 8 (1950), pp. 85-99.

11. *ANET*[3], p. 605.

12. K. Budde, 'Ueber die Capitel 50 und 51 des Buches Jeremia', *JDT* 23 (1878), pp. 458-59.

lacking in great ideas that stir the mind and heart. My own view is that this poetry is vivid, rich in imagery, and replete with irony, but probably no more stereotypical than any other poetry in the book. Foreign Nation Oracles make effective use of repetition, and in them are many of the same rhetorical structures one finds in the Judah oracles. They also teem with the vocabulary and phraseology of the Judah oracles, and if such do not emanate from Jeremiah, they must come from an imitator—an uneconomical theory adopted by some scholars. So far as great ideas are concerned, the Foreign Nation Oracles lack the specificity of the Judah oracles, e.g., there are no arguments detailing wrongdoing; no calls for repentance; no personal involvement in the sin, guilt, and suffering of the nations addressed; and of personal and corporate confession, one hears nothing. How could it be otherwise? There are also no arguments with false prophets, escapes from personal enemies, or run-ins with officials of Temple and state, details of which fill or lurk in the shadows of the oracles and confessions in Jeremiah 1–20. The prophet does not know other nations the way he knows his own.

Nations Judged for Wickedness, Hubris, and Idol Worship

Israel comes under judgment for covenant violation, but since Yahweh has no covenant with the foreign nations, they must be punished for other reasons. In Amos, foreign nations are judged because of gross inhumanity, but in Jeremiah they are said to incur the wrath of Yahweh and are punished because of (unspecified) wickedness (Jer. 25.31), hubris (Jer. 50.31-32), and the worship of idols (Jer. 50.38; 51.47, 52). Hubris is a common motif in ancient Near Eastern religion.[13]

In passages within the book of Jeremiah that may not emanate from the Jeremiah, Babylon is said to have 'sinned' against Yahweh (Jer. 50.14), and her land 'filled with guilt' (Jer. 51.5). This could refer to any of the misdeeds mentioned above. Also, Yahweh's vengeance on Babylon is said to repay her for the destruction of the Temple (Jer. 50.28; 51.11b).

In Jeremiah it is also stated that Yahweh will reserve compassion and favor for the foreign nations (except Babylon) after their punishment is complete. At that time, the nations will be re-inhabited (Jer. 46.26) and their fortunes will be restored (Jer. 48.47; 49.6, 39).

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13. Barton, 'History and Rhetoric in the Prophets', p. 56.

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