

# *The Book of Jeremiah*

| Chapter | Est. Date B.C. | Principal Topic  |
|---------|----------------|--|
| 1       | 626            | Jeremiah receives his calling.                                       |
| 2       | 626-620        | The Lord's controversy with Judah.                                   |
| 3       | "              | Gathering of Israel in the Latter Days.                              |
| 4       | "              | Jerusalem's coming desolation.                                       |
| 5       | 620            | Jeremiah's rejected as he commences his ministry.                    |
| 6       | 609            | No peace, the Babylonians are on their way.                          |
| 22      | "              | Weep for Jehoahaz, cursed is Jehoiakim.                              |
| 7       | 608            | The abomination of idolatry.   |
| 8       | "              | Bitterness of the coming desolation.                                 |
| 9       | "              | O that my head were water, and mine eyes fountain of tears.          |
| 10      | 607            | Learn not the ways of the heathen.                                   |
| 11      | "              | Jeremiah's fellow townsmen seek his life.                            |
| 12      | "              | Jeremiah's family turn against him.                                  |
| 13      | "              | Message to Jehoiakim and his queen.                                  |
| 17      | "              | Hallow the Sabbath day and be saved.                                 |
| 18      | "              | Plot to kill Jeremiah.   |
| 26      | "              | Jeremiah is saved but Urijah is killed.                              |
| 19      | "              | Ye shall eat the flesh of your children.                             |
| 20      | "              | Pashur abuses Jeremiah.  |
| 35      | "              | Jeremiah's visit to the Rechabites.                                  |
| 14      | 605            | The great drought.   |
| 15      | "              | Not even Moses or Samuel could save Judah now.                       |
| 16      | "              | Jeremiah forbidden to marry during time when a curse is on the land. |
| 25      | "              | All heathen nations to imbibe in the cup of war.                     |
| 36      | "              | Jehoiakim burns Jeremiah's scroll but the Prophet dictates another.  |
| 45      | "              | The Lord comforts Jeremiah's scribe.                                 |
| 46      | 604            | Defeat of Egypt predicted.   |
| 23      | 598            | Denunciation of apostate prophets.                                   |
| 24      | "              | Vision of the two baskets of figs.                                   |
| 29      | 597            | Jeremiah's letters to the captives.                                  |
| 27      | 595            | Jeremiah wears bonds and a yoke.                                     |
| 28      | "              | Hananiah publicly challenges Jeremiah and dies.                      |
| 30      | 588            | Latter-day glory of Judah.   |
| 31      | "              | Latter-day restoration of Israel.                                    |
| 33      | "              | Glory of Jerusalem when the Messiah comes.                           |
| 21      | "              | Zedekiah seeks a revelation through Jeremiah as war threatens.       |
| 34      | "              | Zedekiah will be taken to Babylon as a captive.                      |
| 37      | "              | Jeremiah is imprisoned for treason.                                  |
| 32      | "              | Jeremiah buys a field while in prison.                               |

| <b>Chapter</b> | <b>Est. Date B.C.</b> | <b>Principal Topic</b>                                      |
|----------------|-----------------------|---|
| 38             | 587                   | Jeremiah rescued from the dungeon by a servant of the king. |
| 39             | 587                   | Jerusalem falls.  |
| 40             | "                     | Jeremiah joins remnant at Mizpah                            |
| 41             | "                     | Gedaliah assassinated at Mizpah.                            |
| 42             | "                     | Mizpah leaders reject Jeremiah's advice.                    |
| 43             | "                     | Mizpah remnant goes to Egypt.                               |
| 44             | 584-571               | Idolatrous Jews in Egypt to be completely destroyed.        |
| 47             | "                     | Prophetic warning to the Philistines.                       |
| 48             | "                     | Prophetic warning to the Moabites.                          |
| 49             | "                     | Prophetic warning to the other nations bordering Israel.    |
| 50             | "                     | Coming fall of Babylon.                                     |
| 51             | "                     | Total desolation coming to Babylon.                         |
| 52             | "                     | Summary of the fall of Judah.                               |

*The above information was taken from (The Fourth Thousand Years By W. Cleon Skousen)*

## Lessons 41 & 42

# ***“I Have Made Thee This Day...an Iron Pillar” “I Will Write It in Their Hearts”***

***Jeremiah 1-2; 15; 16; 20; 26; 23; 29; 31 36-38***

## ***The Prophet Jeremiah***

Among all of the so called “Latter Prophets” from Isaiah to Malachi we know more about Jeremiah than any of them.

The Book of Jeremiah is one of the most interesting segments of scripture ever written, but at the same time authorities agree that it is one of the most mixed-up books in the Bible. Dr. Clarke believes that the sheets of an early manuscript were accidentally shuffled and then bound together in that unfortunate arrangement. He suggest that respect for the sanctity of holy writ subsequently for bade the rearrangement of the sheets in their correct order and that for this reason even the King James translators left them just as they came to hand.

Jeremiah began to prophesy to the nation of Judah about a hundred and ten years after Isaiah began prophesying to Judah and northern Israel. Jeremiah’s call from the Lord came to him near the middle of the reign of the last good and righteous man to reign in Judah, King Josiah, in the thirteenth year of his reign (Jer.1:2, 626 BC). When the righteous King Josiah was killed in battle against Pharaoh Necho in the valley of Meggiddo, Jeremiah was one of those who lamented him (2 Chr. 35:20-37). Well might he have done so, for the last righteous king and religious reformer was gone and bitter days were ahead.

“With the exception of Josiah, all of the kings of Judah during Jeremiah’s ministry were unworthy men under whom the country suffered severely. Even during the reign of an earlier king, the wicked Manasseh, the Baal cult was restored among the Jews, and there was introduced the worship of the heavenly planets in accordance with the dictates of the Assyro-Babylonian religion. Jeremiah therefore found idolatry, hillworship, and heathen religious practices rampant among his people. Heathen idols stood in the temple (Jeremiah 32:34), children were sacrificed to Baal-Moloch (7:31; 19:5; 32:35), and Baal was especially invoked as the usual heathen deity.

The worship of the “queen of Heaven” ought also to be mentioned. (7:18; 44:19) The corruption of the nation’s religious worship was, of course, accompanied by all manner of immorality and unrighteousness, against which the prophet had continually to testify. The poor were forgotten. Jeremiah was surrounded on all sides by almost total apostasy. But professional prophets there were aplenty. Says Dr. H. L. Willett:

"He was surrounded by plenty of prophets, but they were the smooth, easy-going, popular, professional preachers whose words awakened no conscience, and who assured the people that the nation was safe in the protecting care of God. This was a true message in Isaiah's day, but that time was long since past, and Jerusalem was destined for captivity. Thus Jeremiah was doomed to preach an unwelcome message, while the false prophets persuaded the people that he was unpatriotic, uninspired, and pessimistic. (14:13, 14)."

(Sidney B. Sperry, *The Voice of Israel's Prophets*, p. 153.)

Jeremiah was a living prophet in his day. The evil people, particularly the leaders of Judah, cast aside his words as naught. He delivered the message that the Lord gave him, but he ended up in prison. Eventually he was driven out of Israel and compelled to live in Egypt.

**President Ezra Taft Benson has said:**

"As a prophet reveals the truth it divides the people. The honest in heart heed his words, but the unrighteous either ignore the prophet or fight him. When the prophet points out the sins of the world, the worldly either want to close the mouth of the prophet, or else act as if the prophet didn't exist, rather than repent of their sins. Popularity is never a test of truth. Many a prophet has been killed or cast out. As we come closer to the Lord's second coming, you can expect that as the people of the world become more wicked, the prophet will be less popular with them." (**"Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophet,"** in *Speeches of the Year, 1980* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1981], p. 29).

It is the living prophet who really upsets the world. "Even in the Church," said Elder Spencer W. Kimball, "many are prone to garnish the sepulchers of yesterday's prophets and mentally stone the living ones" (**"To His Servants the Prophets,"** *Instructor*, Aug. 1960, p. 257).

Why? Because the living prophet tells us what we need to know and do now, and the world prefers that prophets either be dead or mind their own business. Some would-be authorities on politics want the prophet to keep still about politics. Some would-be authorities on evolution want the prophet to keep still about evolution. The list goes on and on.

"How we respond to the words of a living prophet when he tells us what we need to know, but would rather not hear, is a test of our faithfulness" (Benson, **"Fourteen Fundamentals in Following the Prophets,"** forthcoming).

Men who covenant with God are bound to him in righteousness. Ancient Judah cut that tie when she rebelled against the Lord and failed to heed Jeremiah's words. The result was that she was carried away captive into Babylon.

It was Jeremiah's privilege (or Burden) to predict and then live through the fall of Judah to Babylon. He is one of the few prophets who have been allowed to see the fulfillment of his major prophecies come to pass. One of the first things the Lord told Jeremiah was, "I will hasten my word to perform it" (Jeremiah 1:12).

Jeremiah, like Mormon, was called to labor among a people for whom there was no hope because they refused to repent, and "the day of grace was passed with them, both temporally and spiritually" (Mormon 2:15). Mormon, after witnessing the destruction of the Nephite nation, cried out for his people (see Mormon 6:17-19). Here was a righteous man, one of the best, lamenting over his people who were so blind, so foolish, so spiritually dead. Jeremiah, too, mourned his people's wickedness. You may think of Jeremiah as a stern, harsh man as you read his scorching denunciations of the Jewish people and the lives they were living, but he was not. His motivation, like Mormon's, was love.

"A prophet does not select where and when he will serve the Lord. God chooses when and to whom the prophets will be sent. One maybe an Enoch and build Zion, or a David O. McKay and preside over the Church in times of peace and prosperity. Another may be a Mormon or a Jeremiah and try in vain to save a rebellious and backsliding people. Each has his calling. Each has his time. Each has his lesson for us to learn.

## ***Pre-mortal existence a time to prepare for life on earth***

### ***Jeremiah 1***

President Howard W. Hunter spoke in the October 1989 general conference about the premortal existence and what the knowledge of that state brings to individuals. He said:

"Part of our reassurance about the free, noble, and progressing spirit of man comes from the glorious realization that we all existed and had our identities, and our agency, long before we came to this world. To some that will be a new thought. but the Bible teaches clearly of just such an eternal view of life, a life stretching back before this world was and stretching forward into the eternities ahead."

***"God said to Jeremiah, 'Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.' (Jer. 1:5.)***

At another time God reminded Job 'that all the sons of God shouted for joy' before there was yet any man or woman on the earth God was creating. (Job 38:7.) The Apostle Paul taught that God the Father chose us 'before the foundation of the world.'" (Eph. 1:4.)

President Hunter said that this happened long before man's mortal birth, in a great pre-mortal existence where individuals developed their identities and increased in their spiritual capabilities by exercising their agency and making important choices. "We developed our intelligence and learned to love the truth, and we prepared to come to earth to continue our progress," he said.

President Hunter explained that the Lord wanted His children's growth to continue in mortality and to be enhanced by their freedom to choose and learn. "He also wanted us to exercise our faith and our will, especially with a new physical body to master and control," he said. "But we know from both ancient and modern revelation that Satan wished to deny us our independence and agency in that now-forgotten moment long ago, even as he wishes to deny them this very hour.

Indeed, Satan violently opposed the freedom of choice offered by the Father, so violently that John in Revelation described 'war in heaven' (Rev. 12:7) over the matter. Satan would have coerced us, and he would have robbed us of that most precious of gifts if he could: our freedom to choose a divine future and the exaltation we all hope to obtain.

"Through Christ and His valiant defense of our Father's plan, the course of agency and eternal aspirations prevailed. In that crucial, pre-mortal setting, a major milestone was passed a monumental victory was won.

As a result, we would be allowed to continue to pursue what President David O. McKay once described as the 'eternal principle of progress.' Later Christ Himself would come to earth, President McKay noted, 'to perfect society by perfecting the individual, and only by the exercising of Free Agency can the individual even approach perfection.'  
(In *Conference Report*, April 1940, p. 118.)

"So we came to our mortality, like Jeremiah known by God as His literal spirit children, having the privilege to choose our personal path on matters of and religious conviction. With Christ's triumph in heaven in overcoming Lucifer, and later His triumph on earth in overcoming the effects of Adam's fall and the death of all mankind, 'the children of men' continue 'free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not be acted upon.....

"Wherefore, men are free..... to choose liberty and eternal life, through *[Christ]* the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.(2 Ne. 2:26-27.)

## ***Pursuit of possessions can encumber the achieving of happiness*** ***Jeremiah 2***

One reason for unhappiness, said Elder Marion D. Hanks at the April 1972 general conference, is that people seek material possessions more than spiritual values.

"Material objectives consume too much of our attention," said Elder Hanks, then an Assistant to the Twelve and later a member of the Seventy. "The struggle for what we need or for more than we need exhausts our time and energy. We pursue pleasure or entertainment, or become over-involved in associations or civic matters. Of course, people need recreation, need to be achieving, need to contribute; but if these come at the cost of friendship with Christ, the price is much too high.

***"For my people have committed two evils' said the Lord to Israel; 'they have forsaken me the foundation of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns broken cisterns, that can hold no water.'"*** (Jer.2:13)

Elder Hanks said that the substitutions people fashion to take the place of God in their lives truly hold no water. "To the measure we thus refuse the living water,' we miss the joy we could have."

## ***Each morning is time for gratitude***

### ***Jeremiah 15***

“Spiritual self-esteem begins with the realization that each new morning is a gift from God,” said Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve in an address at the October 1986 general conference.

“Even the air we breathe is a loving loan from Him,” Elder Nelson said. “He preserves us from day to day and supports us from one moment to another. (See Mosiah 2:21.)

“Therefore, our first noble deed of the morning should be a humble prayer of gratitude. Scripture so counsels: ‘Pray unto God, and he will be favorable unto [you]: and [you] shall see his face with joy.’” (Job 33:26; see also Alma 34:21, 37:37.)

Elder Nelson said that he did not fully appreciate the significance of prayerful greetings until he became a father himself. “I am so grateful that our children never gave their mother or dad the silent treatment. Now I sense how our Heavenly Father may appreciate our prayers, morning and night. But I can imagine the pangs of His sorrow because of silence from any of His children. To me, such ingratitude seems comparable to, sullen goldfish oblivious to kind providers who sprinkle food in their bowl. Indeed, those who pray can ‘worship God with exceedingly great joy.’ (Alma 45: 1.)

***“I learned long ago that a period of uninterrupted scriptural study in the morning brings’ enduring enrichment. I feel as did Jeremiah: ‘Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.’ (Jer. 15:16.)***

Sacred scriptures have been repeatedly described as ‘glad tidings of great joy.’ (Helaman 16:14, Mosiah 3:3, Alma 13:22; Luke 2:10.) As we learn and abide their teachings, that joy becomes part of our lives.

“Joy cometh in the morning when personal talents are developed. Each of us is blessed with different potential. I don’t think I could get up early enough to become a portrait painter. But, I have appreciated teachings since my earliest childhood from parents who knew the joy that good music brings. And some of the sweetest sounds in our home have been those from songs and instruments of children improving their talents. ..”Even in Old Testament days, ‘David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, - - - sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.’ (I Chron. 15:16.)

“Confidence to begin each morning ready to meet the challenges of the day comes from spiritual self-esteem.”

## ***Members' mission is to put hands to net, bring in others***

### ***Jeremiah 16***

In his address at the October 1986 general conference, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve spoke of having traveled to Ghana in West Africa where the Church was growing rapidly and was on solid footing.

Elder Wirthlin described the scene as he traveled to Cape Coast: "As the sun was setting, we saw a large crowd of villagers. Young, and old, and middle-aged all were pulling on a huge net and drawing it out of the water. We stopped and inquired about what they were doing. They were pulling in the fish caught that day. In the net were large and small fish of many kinds, Each villager put his hands to the net to help bring in the catch. The thought ran through my mind of the gathering of Israel in the last days as referred to in Jeremiah." ***The Lord said, 'I will send for many fishers, ...and they shall fish them' (Jer. 16:16)***

"That, brethren and sisters, is the mission of all of us as members of the Church: to put our hands on the net and pull in thousands of fine men and women who are searching for the truth....

"The gospel of Jesus Christ is more enduring than fame, more precious than riches, more to be desired than happiness. Understanding and living the gospel leads to the possession of a Christlike character. The aim of each of us is to live a great and exemplary life. A noble character is needed especially in this age when evil is rampant. I should like to caution our youth to live the gospel. Develop strong character, and not indulge in those things that deviate from righteousness.

"Our Heavenly Father has endowed us with hearts of courage and faith, with strong wills, and with the ability to understand and to see clearly the difference between right and wrong. He has mercifully clothed us, each member, with the gift of the Holy Ghost, which gives us insight and personal power."

## ***Solace in Christ is found through the Comforter***

### ***Jeremiah 31***

In his address at general conference in April 1992, Elder James E. Faust, then of the Quorum of the Twelve and now second counselor in the First Presidency, spoke of the healing that comes through repentance and obedience.

"The Prophet Isaiah verified that 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' (Isa. 1:18.) The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: "There is never a time when the spirit is too old to approach God. All are [in] reach of pardoning mercy.'" (*Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 191.*)



Elder Faust said: "After our full repentance, the formula is wonderfully simple. Indeed, the Lord has given it to us in these words: 'Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you? (3 Ne. 9:13) In so doing, we have His promise that 'he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.' (Psalm 147:3)

"We find solace in Christ through the agency of the Comforter, and Christ extends this invitation to us: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give rest.' (Matt. 11:28.) The Apostle Peter speaks of 'casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.' (1Pet. 5:7.) As we do this, healing takes place, just as the Lord promised through the prophet Jeremiah when he said:

*"I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow....I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." (Jer. 31:13, 25.)*

"In the celestial glory, we are told, 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.' (Rev.21:4.)

Then faith and hope will replace heartache, disappointment, torment, anguish, and despair, and the Lord will give us strength, as Alma says that we should suffer no manner of afflictions, save it were swallowed up in the joy of Christ.'" (Alma 31:38.)

## ***Plan of salvation is the right plan for success*** ***Jeremiah 32***

Life is a school where each student must learn to select the right plan for success, and the right plan is God's plan of salvation, said Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve at the April 1984 general conference.

A Wrong choice will have eternal consequences, for "truly, of all the errors mortals could make, God's plan of salvation is the wrong thing to be wrong about."

Elder Maxwell said that this plan offers "a most stunning example of the precious perspective of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

The plan of salvation is the doctrinal framework without which mankind would unavoidably perish. "So vital is this framework that if one strays outside it, he risks provinciality and misery. In fact, most human misery represents ignorance of or noncompliance with the plan," Elder Maxwell said.

This perspective teaches that at the center of the plan is Jesus Christ. "It matters very little what people think of us, but it matters very much what we think of Him," he said.

Understanding the plan gives insights into life, which might be considered a deliberately made proving ground and tutoring school with opportunities, choices and struggles. For those who make wrong choices. "This plan of mercy provides for recognition and redress of error and for the resumption of interrupted, individual development.

"Hence...for the faithful, our finest hours are sometimes during or just following our darkest hours."

Elder Maxwell said that because life is necessarily brief, "there must be regular exit routes. Some easy, some hard. Some sudden, others lingering. Therefore. We cannot presume, even by faith, to block all these exits, all the time, for all people."

However, he noted, during life the plan of salvation can serve to focus efforts and outlooks in every situation, no matter how extreme.

The plan of salvation points the way, but not always to a smooth way, since development requires opposition in all things, Elder Maxwell observed. "Unsurprisingly...this mortal school produces some soaring triumphs but also a history filled with individual mistakes.

But we should not blame the school, nor the curriculum. Least of all, the Schoolmaster.

Furthermore, we dare not lecture Him on the plight of His children."

Elder Maxwell said that reassurances will be there for those who are spiritually attuned, as they were with Elisha's young servant who saw an outnumbering enemy but after his spiritual eyes were opened saw the mountain filled with defending horses and chariots of fire (2 Kings 6:17)

"All will be well now, as anciently, because the Lord's covenant keepers have his echoing assurance:

***"And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:***

***"And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:***

***"And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good." (Jer. 32:38-40.)***

***The above information was taken from the following sources: A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament By Elilis T. Rasmussen; A companion To Your Study of The Old Testament By Daniel H. Ludlow; The Fourth Thousand Years By W. Cleon Skousen; Old Testament Student Manual; Articles in the LDS Church News dated September 26, and October 3, 1998***

### Jeremiah 1-2; 15; 20; 26; 36-38

**Outline:** Jeremiah has seven major units **1)** opening prophecies against Judah (1-12) **2)** messages about Judah's exile and suffering (13-20) **3)** messages of judgment (21-29) **4)** messages of future hope (30-33) **5)** messages of judgment (34-35) **6)** narratives about Jeremiah's suffering (36-45) **7)** prophecies against the nations (46-51) **appendix:** the fall of Jerusalem (52). (adapted from Dorsey, *Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 237)

There are sixty-two prophecies in the book of Jeremiah as it is presently composed (some of these consist of several parts). Before "many plain and precious things" were taken away from the record of the Jews (see 1 Nephi 13:23-29), there were undoubtedly several others. (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, iv.)

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should have a special interest in the life of Jeremiah because of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon account begins in 600 B.C., when Lehi is called to warn the inhabitants of Jerusalem concerning its destruction (see 1 Nephi 1:18). It says there were many other prophets in that same year warning the people that unless they repented the city would be destroyed (see 1 Nephi 1:4). Jeremiah had been ministering to the Jewish people for about thirty years at that time and was certainly one of these many prophets. In fact, as the scriptures indicate, he was probably the chief prophet of this time period. (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, 2.)

The book of Jeremiah is the longest of all the books of the prophets and the next to the longest in the entire Bible. Only the book of Psalms is longer. Although Jeremiah prophesied for approximately forty-one years, his prophecies were not compiled into book form until some twenty-three years after his ministry began. Chapter 36 gives an account of this compilation and indicates that there were also later compilations; therefore, it is appropriate to begin a study of the actual text of Jeremiah with this chapter because it describes the origin of the book and helps us analyze the other chapters. (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, 8.)

It was Jeremiah's privilege (or burden) to predict and then live through the fall of Judah to Babylon. He is one of the few prophets who have been allowed to see the fulfillment of his major prophecies come to pass. One of the first things the Lord told Jeremiah was, "I will hasten my word to perform it" (Jeremiah 1:12). Jeremiah, like Mormon, was called to labor among a people for whom there was no hope because they refused to repent, and "the day of grace was passed with them, both temporally and spiritually" (Mormon 2:15). Mormon, after witnessing the destruction of the Nephite nation, cried out for his people (see Mormon 6:17-19). Here was a righteous man, one of the best, lamenting over his people who were so blind, so foolish, so spiritually dead. Jeremiah, too, mourned his people's wickedness. You may think of Jeremiah as a stern, harsh man as you read his scorching denunciations of the Jewish people and the lives they were living, but he was not. His motivation, like Mormon's, was love. (*CES Old Testament Manual*, 2:235)

Many biblical scholars believe that the following three sections of Jeremiah were originally compiled into separate books:

- 1st. Chapter 1 through chapter 25, verse 13 (with certain qualifications).
- 2nd. Chapters 30 and 31, possibly with chapters 32 and 33 included. (This is concluded from verse 2 of chapter 30.)
- 3rd. Chapters 46 through 51. (This is concluded from chapter 46, verse 1.)

According to the scholars, the biographical narratives were later inserted between the first and second and between the second and third books. An appendix was also added (chapter 52) which tells of the fall of Jerusalem; this is essentially the same as 2 Kings, chapters 24 and 25, and is reminiscent of the insertion of several chapters from Kings in the middle of the Isaiah text (see Isaiah 36-39). The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament which was made in Egypt about the third century B.C., is further evidence that Jeremiah is a compilation of shorter books. In this version, chapters 46 through 51 are inserted intact following chapter 25, verse 13.

That many revelations of Jeremiah were compiled into book form before all of his revelations were given is a concept supported, as before stated, in the Book of Mormon. When Lehi's sons returned from Jerusalem with the plates of brass, he found that they contained "also many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah" (1 Nephi 5:13). The present book of Jeremiah contains many prophecies and much biographical material related to the eleven-year reign of Zedekiah. As Lehi left in the first year of Zedekiah, these words would necessarily have been added after Lehi's departure.

This passage from the Book of Mormon also reveals some additional facts. First, the writings of Jeremiah were already considered to be scripture while Jeremiah was yet alive; and second, the writings seem to imply that Jeremiah may have uttered other prophecies which were not included. This inference is a matter of interpretation, but is consistent with the manner in which scripture has been compiled in our own dispensation. When Joseph Smith's revelations were compiled into the Book of Commandments, the most important ones were selected for inclusion. With the subsequent publication of the Doctrine and Covenants, and with each new edition of this standard work, a similar selection pattern has been followed.

Another possible reason for the insertions should be considered. We learn from the Book of Mormon that "many plain and precious things" were taken away from the *gospel* (suggesting alterations in the New Testament), and also many *covenants* were taken away (suggesting alterations in the Old Testament; see 1 Nephi 13:23-29). From the book of Jeremiah we learn that this destructive work was under way even during his day. (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, 10-11.)

**1:1** Jeremiah, like Ezekiel, was a priest (Jer. 1:1; Ezek. 1:3). Anathoth was one of thirteen cities appointed by Joshua for the priests of Aaron among the forty-eight cities designated for the Levites (Josh. 21:18; BD, "Levites"; "Priests"; "Aaronic Priesthood"). (Ellis Rasmussen, *A Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament*, 541.)

**1:5** This passage is one of the few clear revelations about foreordination in the scriptures. It tells of Jeremiah's being sanctified for special service and ordained to be a prophet in his premortal life—in the spirit world, for it happened before his body was even formed (Jer. 1:5 and fn.). Nevertheless, like Moses and Enoch before him, Jeremiah felt inadequate for his calling (Jer. 1:6). The Lord assured him he would be able to go where divinely sent and speak what he would be commanded to speak, but he must not be afraid. The Lord touched Jeremiah's mouth and assigned him six difficult tasks as a reformer (Jer. 1:6-10 and fn.). (Ellis Rasmussen, *A Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament*, 541.)

Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council. It is the testimony that I want that I am God's servant, and this people His people. (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 365.)

Joseph Smith was ordained before he came here, the same as Jeremiah was. Said the Lord unto him, "Before you were begotten I knew you," etc.

So do I believe with regard to this people, so do I believe with regard to the apostles, the high priests, sevens and the elders of Israel bearing the Holy Priesthood, I believe they were ordained before they came here; and I believe the God of Israel has raised them up and has watched over them from their youth, has carried them through all the scenes of life both seen and unseen, and has prepared them as instruments in His hands to take this kingdom and bear it off. If this be so, what manner of men ought we to be? If anything under the heavens should humble men before the Lord and before one another, it should be the fact that we have been called of God. (*Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Discourses 21:317, October 10, 1880*)

**1:5** The word of the Lord came also to Jeremiah the prophet saying that before he was born the Lord "sanctified (him) and ordained (him) a prophet unto the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5.) These and other similar scriptures make it plain that man existed in a spiritual condition before coming here to this earth and that in that pre-existence he had his free agency or right to choose. How could some of those spirits as seen by Abraham have become noble and great except by faithfulness to God's cause? How came God to choose Abraham or Jeremiah before they were born? If we had the complete answer to these questions, we would no doubt learn that they and others stood up valiantly with Michael and his angels when "there was war in heaven. . . . and Satan and his angels were cast out" of heaven for rebellion. (Rev. 12:7-12.) (Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living*, p.163-164)

**1:6** A memorable account of the power of such teaching comes from the life of the prophet Jeremiah. This great man felt the way most teachers or speakers or Church officers feel when called—inexperienced, inadequate, frightened. "Ah, Lord," he cried, "behold, I cannot speak: for I am [but] a child."

But the Lord reassured him: "Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee. . . . Therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them."

So speak unto them he did, but initially not with much success. Things went from bad to worse until finally he was imprisoned and made a laughingstock among the people. Angry that he had been so mistreated and maligned, Jeremiah vowed, in effect, never to teach another lesson, whether that be to an investigator, Primary child, new convert, or—heaven forbid—the 15-year-olds. "I will not make mention of [the Lord], nor speak any more in his name," the discouraged prophet said. But then came the turning point of Jeremiah's life. Something had been happening with every testimony he had borne, every scripture he had read, every truth he had taught. Something had been happening that he hadn't counted on. Even as he vowed to close his mouth and walk away from the Lord's work, he found that he could not. Why? Because "his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, May 1998, 27)

**1:11** As a reminder that the Lord would fulfill Jeremiah's prophecies, the almond tree was given as a symbol; the Hebrew letters of its name are the same letters as the word for "be alert, wakeful"; thus whenever Jeremiah saw that tree (which is the earliest tree to bloom in Israel), he would be reminded of the promise that the Lord would be attentive to his prophecies and fulfill his words (Jer. 1:11-12; BD, "Almond"). (Ellis Rasmussen, *A Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament*, 541.)

**2:5** The "fathers" mentioned in this prophecy may have been those of the long, idolatrous reign of Hezekiah's son Manasseh and grandson Amon (ca. 697-640 B.C.; 2 Kgs. 21; Jer. 15:4). Many of the evils Jeremiah condemned and fought against throughout his mission were the religious and social sins made common in that fifty-seven year period. The reforms of King Josiah no doubt had some good effects; but just as good character grows like a tree and evil multiplies like weeds, so did Judah slip back into evil ways after Josiah's death. (Ellis Rasmussen, *A Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament*, 543.)

**2:13** Too many of our Heavenly Father's children spend their precious lives carving out broken cisterns of worldly gain that cannot hold the living water that satisfies fully their natural thirst for everlasting truth. (Joseph B. Wirthlin, in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 23)

**2:19** Indeed, moral standards must be maintained. In large measure, those who are disobedient punish themselves. As the Lord said through Jeremiah: "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee." Those entrusted with judicial responsibility in the kingdom of God must see that the Church remains clean so that the living waters of life flow unimpeded. (James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 77)

**15:16** I learned long ago that a period of uninterrupted scriptural study in the morning brings enduring enrichment. I feel as did Jeremiah: "Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). (Russell M. Nelson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 86)

**15:16** The Lord uses the image of "eating," whether fruit or bread or fish or living water, to provide a tangible symbol of obtaining a higher spiritual life, as though one could "eat" to replace one's old self with new cells of more dynamic and gifted life. Adam and Eve ate a new way of life (Gen. 3); the ancient Israelites ate the elements of the Passover and were delivered from spiritual and physical death (Ex. 12); they lived by the manna from heaven in the wilderness (Ex. 16); Lehi ate the fruit of the tree of Christ's love (1 Ne. 8); Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and John ate the words of Christ (Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 3:1; Rev. 10:10); Jesus bade the squeamish Jews to live by eating his flesh and blood (John 6:48-58). In each case, the people "ingested" the Holy Ghost, or obtained access to blessings through Christ. (1 Cor. 2:16.) The scripture records that the disciples and multitude were filled. (3 Ne. 18:4-5.) They were not only physically satisfied from an abundance of food, but also with what bread and wine represent: the spirit and body of Christ through the atonement. (3 Ne. 18:7.) Their physical satisfaction served as a device to teach spiritual satisfaction. In the sacrament covenant we promise to keep the commandments in exchange for the power to keep the commandments. We eat the emblems of the atonement to receive the spirit, the power, and the mind of Christ. The sacrament is not optional; it is the ordinance that unlocks the flow of the Holy Ghost and provides progression along the path of light and fulness. (Catherine Thomas in Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 8: Alma 30 to Moroni*, p.176)

**20:7-13** Jeremiah was so moved upon by the Lord that he swallowed his human pride and proclaimed the Lord's message, as the Spirit now superseded the reasoning or decisions of man. He was reluctant to prophesy because he feared for his life, but, knowing the Lord's desire, he proceeded and placed his trust in the Lord's protection. It is possible that he was aware of the principle that one's life is not to be taken before his mission is completed (see Mosiah 13:1-5; Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), pp. 274, 328). (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, p.64)

**20:9** Even the most faithful among us will have moments of loneliness and rejection. From Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith cried out, "O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?" (D&C 121:1.) Soon afterward, the voice of the Spirit whispered to Joseph: "Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (D&C 122:7-8.) Jeremiah had a similar struggle: "O Lord, . . . thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed. . . . Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones. . . . But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one." (Jeremiah 20:7-9, 11.) And even the Savior, in his hour of greatest darkness and greatest triumph, pleaded, "If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42.) (Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart: Applying the Atonement to Life's Experiences*, p.56)

**26:1** The first of twenty historical chapters that relate many of the prophet's experiences and the persecution he suffered as he continued his mission, chapter 26 dates to five years before the previous chapter, being "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim," or 609 B.C. Jeremiah delivered this message from the Lord on the temple grounds, so that the worshippers might repent and be saved. (Ellis T. Rasmussen, *A Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament*, 560 - 561.)

**26:2** As we face the issues of the future, my brethren, may we, in the leadership of our people here at headquarters, and you in your stakes, weigh all the issues according to principle. There comes a time in the career of every man when he must speak according to the truth or break the trust of his office, and when the Presidency of the Church, and their associates in the general councils of the Church, unitedly take a stand on any principle, let us remember the prophets of the Old Testament, and meet the issues according to their merit as principles, and on no other consideration. (Richard L. Evans, Conference Report, April 1942, Evening Meeting, p.51)

**26:6** Jeremiah compared Jerusalem to Shiloh, which was the first permanent resting place for the tabernacle and the place at which the tribes cast lots for their inheritances. Shiloh was part of Ephraim's heritage and was the place where Hannah took Samuel to serve Eli. The Lord was saying in Jeremiah 26:1-9 that just as he allowed the tabernacle to be desecrated by the Philistines, so would he allow the temple to be desecrated by the Babylonians. And, just as Shiloh was leveled for its wickedness, so would Jerusalem be destroyed. (See Jeremiah 7:12, 14.) (*CES Old Testament Manual* 2:46.)

**36:1-32** This chapter indicates how scriptures can be restored even though the original copy may be lost or destroyed. In modern times the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith the writings of John the Revelator, which help to clarify John 21. (See D&C 7.) Also the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith the complete writings of Matthew, which contained the teachings of the Savior to a select group of his apostles during the last week of his life on earth. (See JS-M in the Pearl of Great Price.) (Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Old Testament*, 328.)

**36:26** The Hebrew word translated here as though it were the proper name *Hammelech*, literally means "the king." It should probably have been translated according to its basic meaning rather than formed into a name. The statement would then read "Jerahmeel the son of the king." (Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Old Testament*, 328.)

**37:1-10.** This threatened invasion by the Egyptians, possibly at the request of Zedekiah (see verse 7), caused a temporary departure of the Chaldean army, but Jeremiah prophesied that they would return and destroy the city. The time frame fits into the time frame in which the Book of Mormon was begun. It was then Lehi was shown that Jerusalem would be destroyed and that many of the inhabitants would be carried into Babylon. Lehi was then called to prophesy and warn the Jews, but they were angry and sought to take away his life (see 1 Nephi 1:4-13, 18-20). Thus, the Book of Mormon serves as a second witness to the record of Jeremiah. (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, 98.)

**37:11-15.** It is very possible that Jeremiah went to the land of Benjamin to buy his uncle's field, as it had been revealed to him to do (see 32:6-15). He was, nonetheless, accused of falling away to the Chaldeans and placed in prison. This incident is also attested to in the Book of Mormon. After Lehi's sons had returned to Jerusalem for the second time--the first time to get the plates of brass and the second to persuade the family of Ishmael to join them--the older brothers rebelled against Nephi and desired to return to Jerusalem. Nephi reasoned with them (see 1 Nephi 7:12-15.) ... Apparently Jeremiah had not been in prison when Lehi and his family left Jerusalem, but by the time Lehi had sent his sons back for the plates of brass, undoubtedly several weeks later, he had been cast there. (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, 99.)

**38:7** The English word *Ebed-melech* is a transliteration of a Hebrew word that literally means "servant of the king." Thus the word could be translated simply as a description of the function of the person or it could be the proper name of the person. The King James translators consider it a proper name. (See also vs. 8, 10, and 12.) (Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Old Testament*, 328.)

**38:14-28.** Zedekiah, when he expresses his fears, reminds us of the chief priests and the elders who asked Christ by what authority he operated. They were stymied by his questioning answer. Either he had again outwitted them, or they were in danger of the people who held John the Baptist to be a prophet (see Matthew 21:23-27). Zedekiah recognized that Jeremiah represented the Lord, but feared the response of his princes. Jeremiah's response exemplifies the following teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith: Said Joseph, "Our lives have already become jeopardized by revealing the wicked and bloodthirsty purposes of our enemies; and for the future we must cease to do so. All we have said about them is truth, but it is not always wise to relate all the truth. Even Jesus, the Son of God had to refrain from doing so, and had to restrain His feelings many times for the safety of Himself and His followers. and He had to conceal the righteous purposes of His heart in relation to many things pertaining to His Father's kingdom. When still a boy He had all the intelligence necessary to enable Him to rule and govern the kingdom of the Jews, and could reason with the wisest and most profound doctors of law and divinity, and make their theories and practice to appear like folly compared with the wisdom He possessed: but He was a boy only, and lacked physical strength even to defend His own person; and was subject to cold, to hunger and to death. So it is with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; we have the revelation of Jesus, and the knowledge with in us is sufficient to organize a righteous government upon the earth. and to give universal peace to all mankind, if they would receive it, but we lack the physical strength, as did our Savior when a child. to defend our principles, and we have of necessity to be afflicted, persecuted and smitten, and to bear it patiently until Jacob is of age, then he will take care of himself." (*Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 392.) (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, 99-100.)



### Jeremiah 16; 23; 29; 31

**16:1-12** Jeremiah's day was a sad one for Judah. To symbolize that truth, the Lord told his prophet three things that he was not to do:

1. He was not to marry or father children (see Jeremiah 16:2). So universal was the calamity bearing down upon the people that God did not want children to suffer its outrage. This commandment, however, like the one to Hosea (see Hosea 10), who was commanded to take a wife of whoredoms, was probably not a literal one; rather, it probably was allegorical, that is, Jeremiah was not to expect that his people would marry themselves to the covenant again, nor was he to expect to get spiritual children (converts) from his ministry.
2. He was not to lament those in Judah who died by the sword or famine (see Jeremiah 16:5), since they brought these judgments upon themselves.
3. He was not to feast or eat with friends in Jerusalem (see v. 8), since feasting was a sign of celebration and eating together a symbol of fellowship.

In addition, Jeremiah was commanded to explain very clearly to the people the reasons for his actions as well as the reasons for their coming punishment. (*Old Testament Student Manual: 1 Kings–Malachi*, p. 241)

**3:14-16** In pursuing that work I testify with Jeremiah that this last great missionary declaration to modern Israel will, in the end, be a greater miracle than ancient Israel's crossing of the Red Sea. (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, May 2001, 16)

**16:14-16** The Prophet quoted Jeremiah 16:14-16 [Jer. 16:14-16] as evidence that the gathering of Israel was "one of the most important points in the faith of the Church of Latter-day Saints, through the fulness of the everlasting gospel." (Teachings, pp. 92-93.) He also quoted Jeremiah 31:12 [Jer. 31:12] as evidence that there would be two gathering places for the house of Israel in the latter days, Judah to Jerusalem and all the tribes of Israel to Zion (America). (Teachings, p. 17.) (Monte S. Nyman, "Restoring 'Plain and Precious Parts': The Role of Latter-day Scriptures in Helping Us Understand the Bible," *Ensign*, Dec. 1981, 21)

**16:14** The Lord said to Israel, when you repent, when you get ready to do My will, I will bring you back from your long dispersion, and it shall no longer be said that the people came up from the land of Egypt, because this gathering will so greatly overshadow the exodus from Egypt that it will be forgotten.

If I should ask you who are here tonight [a meeting in 1942] to raise your hands and tell me where you or your parents came from, we would discover that some came from Scotland and some from England, some from Scandinavian countries, Germany, Holland, and most other parts of the earth. We have come to Zion, but we have only seen the beginning of the gathering. When the Ten Tribes return and when the Lord breaks down the mountains at their presence, and the everlasting hills tremble, and an highway is built for them, it will be greater than the journey out of Egypt. This is all yet to be; but we see how we have been gathered out from the nations in fulfillment of these prophecies. (Joseph Fielding Smith. *The Signs of the Times* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1963), p. 58.)

**16:16-17.** This passage on how the second gathering of Israel will take place is very *descriptive*. First the Lord will send for many fishers; then he will send for many hunters. Fishing in the days of Jeremiah was done with nets and schools of fish were caught. In the early days of the Church, the missionaries went to the various locations and preached to congregations, or invited all interested people to assemble in the local schoolhouse, church, or community hall. Oft times

whole groups of people were converted...The hunting period would follow the fishing period of missionary work. Hunting is done on a one-on-one basis (except with shotguns, where occasionally two or three birds may be shot with the spread of one shell, but even then the hunter must sight in on only one of the birds, and the others fall with that one). Jeremiah's prophecy is thus noting a change from the teaching of groups to the teaching of individuals or families, as is presently done. (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, 56.)

**16:18.** This verse states that there would be a period of time between the scattering and the gathering. During this interlude, the people of Israel would be punished for their sins. Isaiah spoke of Judah's being sent through the "furnace of affliction" (48:10) which would remove their impurities. The double payment, also mentioned by Isaiah (see Isaiah 40:2) was probably based upon the seriousness of their sins (see Exodus 22:4). (Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, 56.)

**16:20** We have come here to learn of God's ways and to walk in his paths. "Our fathers have inherited lies and vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." They have been fed upon husks, while the kernel was not with them. They have been taught by the traditions of men; they have been led by theologians who knew not God, who could not describe him or explain his laws to the people, for they knew not of Him themselves, and how could they, when according to their own admissions the voice of prophecy had ceased, and God would no more speak to the children of men. (Charles W. Penrose, *Journal of Discourses* 20:296.)

**23:5** That is to say, the King who shall reign personally upon the earth during the Millennium shall be the Branch who grew out of the house of David. He shall execute judgment and justice in all the earth because he is the Lord Jehovah, even him whom we call Christ. (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978), p. 194.)

**23:18** Likewise, Jeremiah 23:18 (contemporaneous with Lehi) asks rhetorically about those who are true prophets: "For who hath stood in Yahweh's council [sod], and seen and heard his word? Who has carefully marked [obeyed] his word?" This passage not only stresses the importance in Lehi's day for a prophet to stand in the council of God, but also to both "see and hear" what goes on there, and then to carry out his assignment meticulously by delivering the precise words of the council's decree, just as Lehi does. To so report and do, it has been concluded, was certification in that day that the prophet was a true messenger of God. (John W. Welch in Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., *First Nephi: The Doctrinal Foundation*, p.41)

**23:30-32.** There seem to be three separate sources for falsifying outlined here: plagiarism or stealing words from one's neighbor, outright lying, and claiming that which one dreams to be of the Lord. (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, p. 78)

**23:33-40.** The word burden in these verses (King James Version of the Bible) is used to depict "message of doom" or "burdensome utterance" as translated in the Anchor Bible. Isaiah uses it in a similar way. (See Isaiah 13:1 and the footnote in the King James Version of the Bible published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 1979.) Verses 39 and 40 relate the first prophecy against the false prophets. (Nyman, *Words of Jeremiah*, p.78)

**29** As in Jerusalem, so too in Babylon the predictions of the false prophets fostered a lively hope that the domination of Nebuchadnezzar would not last long, and that the return of the exiles to their fatherland would soon come about. The spirit of discontent thus excited must have exercised an injurious influence on the fortunes of the captives, and could not fail to frustrate the aim which the chastisement inflicted by God was designed to work out, namely, the moral

advancement of the people. Therefore Jeremiah makes use of an opportunity furnished by an embassy sent by King Zedekiah to Babel, to address a letter to the exiles, exhorting them to yield with submission to the lot God had assigned to them. He counsels them to prepare, by establishing their households there, for a long sojourn in Babel, and to seek the welfare of that country as the necessary condition of their own. They must not let themselves be deceived by the false prophets' idle promises of a speedy return, since God will not bring them back and fulfil His glorious promises till after seventy years have passed (vers. 4–14). (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 8:1:408–9.)

**29:1-32** This letter of Jeremiah to the Israelites in exile in Babylonia contains the following advice and prophecies:

1. Build houses, raise families, get along with your neighbors, live as normal a life as possible (vs. 5-7).
2. Do not believe in the false prophets who are among you; two of them (Ahab and Zedekiah) will be killed by Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 8-9, 20-23).
3. In seventy years you will have the opportunity to return to your homeland (vs. 10-14).
4. King Zedekiah and the wicked Israelites now in Jerusalem will be smitten with "the sword, the famine, and the pestilence" and are to be removed from the land among many nations (vs. 15-19). (Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Old Testament*, 324.)

**29:4** The second wave of exiles arrived in Babylon barely ten years after the first. We can safely assume that, with the aid of the first exiles, the second group eased its way into life in a different land. According to Ezekiel, some of his people had settled along "the river of Chebar," a major canal that ran through the rich soil of southern Mesopotamia and passed a locale called Tel-Abib (Ezekiel 1:1, 3; 3:15). We also assume that the Babylonians forced the exiles to perform some sort of compulsory service. The fact that Ezekiel and Daniel seem to have moved about rather freely indicates that the exiles were not thought of as prisoners, and they probably lived in their own villages. They apparently owned their own homes and planted gardens, were allowed to practice their marriage customs, and gathered together freely (Jeremiah 29:4-8; Ezekiel 33:30-33). But one thing was missing their beloved temple. They thought of themselves as dwelling in a strange land, in a defiled land (Psalm 137:1-6; Ezekiel 4:13). In that place, they felt it was impossible to worship God as they had done in Jerusalem. They pined to go back. Their chance came in 538 B.C., fifty years after Jerusalem had burned. (*Between the Testaments*)

**29:5** I refer to the Jewish race who today are suffering in their native land of Palestine because of peoples who are determined to drive them from their homes—homes that have belonged to them from the far distant ages. In every period of the world's history, the Jewish people have stood for the brotherhood of mankind and have recognized that God gave the world its first children who came from heaven. From the days of Abraham, the Jews have maintained their identity as have no other people in history. They have remained one race in blood, instinct, and faith in one Supreme Being. They still follow the words of the Prophet Jeremiah when he addressed the Jewish captives in Babylon: [quoted Jeremiah 29:5, 7] (Levi Edgar Young, *Improvement Era*, June 1957, 409)

**29:9** When a man goes about prophesying, and commands men to obey his teachings, he must either be a true or false prophet. False prophets always arise to oppose the true prophets and they will prophesy so very near the truth that they will deceive almost the very chosen ones. (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 365.)

**29:9-14.** Jeremiah compares what the Lord has said about the characteristics of his own prophets with those of the self-appointed prophets. Apparently the priests (a hereditary office) as well as the false prophets were introducing pagan worship into the temple of the Lord. The land is "full of adulterers" (verse 10) and the prophets of Jerusalem are "commit[ing] adultery" (verse 14). This suggests that perhaps temple prostitution was being practiced or introduced to the prophets and priests in the worship of Baal. A further comparison is made between the Samaritan (Northern Israel) false prophets, who would be readily condemned by those in Jerusalem, and the false prophets in Jerusalem. Jeremiah implies that those in Jerusalem were worse than those in Samaria by comparing them to Sodom and Gomorrah. (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, p. 77-78)

**29:15-23.** It should be remembered that there were true prophets raised up among the captives of Babylon. As noted previously, Daniel and Ezekiel were called among their respective groups after they had been taken captive (see Daniel 1:1-6; Ezekiel 1:1-3). The prophets referred to in this verse are the false prophets among them. They further verify the Prophet Joseph Smith's teaching that false prophets always arise to oppose the true prophets (see Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), p. 365). There are two separate prophecies in these verses: one directed against those who follow the false prophets and one directed against two specific false prophets. (Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, p. 78-79)

**31:3** The Hebrew translated here as "the Lord hath appeared of old unto me" could have been translated more literally "Jehovah has appeared to me from far away." (Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Old Testament*, 324.)

**31:6, 8-9.** Oliver Cowdery says that these three verses were proclaimed by the angel Moroni to Joseph Smith as to be fulfilled soon, although he quoted them separately (with verse 6 preceding verses 8 and 9) and quoted other verses between all three (see *Messenger and Advocate*, Apr. 1835, p. 111).

**31:8** "'I will bring them ... a great company shall return thither.' This was something the Lord was going to do. Note that Jeremiah does not say that they will return hither, or to the place where this prediction was made, but thither, or to a distant place. He understood that Joseph was to be given a new land in the 'utmost bound of the everlasting hills.' (See Genesis 49:22-26; Deuteronomy 33:13-17.)" (LeGrand Richards, *Israel! Do You Know?*, pp. 177-78.)

**31:9** Ephraim was blessed with the *birthright* in Israel, and in this dispensation he has been called to stand at the *head* to bless the other tribes of Israel. . . . It is essential in this dispensation that Ephraim stand in his place at the head, exercising the birthright in Israel which was given to him by direct revelation. Therefore, *Ephraim must be gathered to prepare the way*, through the gospel and the priesthood, for the rest of the tribes of Israel when the time comes for them to be gathered to Zion. The great majority of those who have come into the Church are Ephraimites. It is the exception to find one of any other tribe, unless it is of Manasseh. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* 3:247, 252.)

**31:9** "I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble." In their trek from Nauvoo across the great American desert to the Great Salt Lake Valley, the Saints traveled about six hundred miles (1,000 kilometers) along the North Platte River, as Jeremiah had seen. (LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, 225)

**31:15** These words are embroidered in Hebrew on the covering of Rachel's tomb, which is located between modern Jerusalem and Bethlehem. (Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Old Testament*, 325.)

**31:15** The lamentation of Rachel is heard at Ramah, as the most loftily situated border-town of the two kingdoms, whence the wailing that had arisen sounded far and near, and could be heard in Judah. ... The destruction of the people of Israel by the Assyrians and Chaldeans is a type of the massacre of the infants at Bethlehem [as cited by Matthew in his gospel (Matt. 2:18)], in so far as the sin which brought the children of Israel into exile laid a foundation for the fact that Herod the Idumean became king over the Jews, and wished to destroy the true King and Saviour of Israel that he might strengthen his own dominion. (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 8:2:25–26.)

**31:22** In the verse now before us [the Hebrew word which is translated as 'compass'], signifies to encompass with love and care, to surround lovingly and carefully,—the natural and fitting dealing on the part of the stronger to the weak and those who need assistance. And the new thing that God creates consists in this, that the woman, the weaker nature that needs help, will lovingly and solicitously surround the man, the stronger. Herein is expressed a new relation of Israel to the Lord, a reference to a new covenant which the Lord, ver. 31ff., will conclude with His people, and in which He deals so condescendingly towards them that they can lovingly embrace Him. This is the substance of the Messianic meaning in the words." (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 8:2:30.)

**31:29-30** There is the man who resisted release from positions in the Church. He knew positions were temporary trusts, but he criticized the presiding leader who had released him, complaining that proper recognition had not been given; the time had not been propitious; it had been a reflection upon his effectiveness. He bitterly built up a case for himself, absented himself from his meetings, and justified himself in his resultant estrangement. His children partook of his frustrations, and his children's children. In later life he 'came to himself,' and on the brink of the grave made an about-face. His family would not effect the transformation which now he would give his life to have them make. How selfish! Haughty pride induces eating sour grapes, and innocent ones have their teeth set on edge. 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.'

When I was a child, we used the expression, 'He cut off his nose to spite his face.' To us, that meant that one was fighting against fate, rebelling against the inevitable, damaging himself to spite others, breaking his toe to give vent to his senseless anger.

Eight lovely children had blessed the temple marriage of a man and woman who in later years were denied a temple recommend. They would not be so dealt with by this young bishop. Why should they be deprived and humiliated? Were they less worthy than others? They argued that this boy-bishop was too strict, too orthodox. Never would they be active, nor enter the door of that Church as long as that bishop presided. They would show him. The history of this family is tragic. The four younger ones were never baptized; the four older ones never were ordained, endowed, nor sealed. No missions were filled by this family. Today the parents are ill at ease, still defiant. They had covered themselves with a cloud, and righteous prayers could not pass through. (See Lam. 3:44.)

Sour grapes! Such unhappy food! (Spencer W. Kimball, in *Conference Report*, Apr. 1955, p. 95.)

**31:31-34.** According to Oliver Cowdery, verses 31 through 33 were paraphrased and quoted by the angel Moroni to Joseph Smith as about to be fulfilled. In Oliver's account this preceded the

quotation: "For this happy situation and blessed state of [restored] Israel, did the prophets look, and obtained a promise, that, though the house of Israel and Judah, should violate the covenant, the Lord, in the last days would make with them a new one..." (*Messenger and Advocate*, Apr. 1835, p. 110).

**31:31-33** This covenant has never been established with the house of Israel, nor with the house of Judah. For it requires two parties to make a covenant, and those two parties must be agreed or no covenant can be made. Christ in the days of his flesh proposed to make a covenant with them, but they rejected him and his proposals. And in consequence thereof they were broken off, and no covenant was made with them at that time. But their unbelief has not rendered the promise of God of none effect. No, for there was another day limited in David which was the day of his power. And then his people, Israel, should be a willing people, and he would write his laws in their hearts and print them in their thoughts. Their sins and their iniquities he would remember no more. (Joseph Smith, Letter to the editor, *American Revivalist and Rochester Observer*, from Kirtland, Ohio, 4 January 1833; PWJS, 271)

**31:32** The Savior has frequently taught his people about this dimension of his Atonement by referring to familiar forms of belonging-marriage and child-parent relationships. He commonly described his relationship with ancient Israel as a marriage. So when Israel descended into patterns of sustained disobedience to Jehovah's commandments, Israel was "unfaithful," like an unfaithful spouse. The Lord thus warned through Moses that Israel should not worship other gods, for Jehovah "is a jealous God: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods." (Exodus 34:14-15. See also Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 31:6; Judges 8:33.) Said Jehovah through Jeremiah, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you" (Jeremiah 3:14; emphasis added); and "My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:32; emphasis added). In expressing the permanence of his covenants with Israel, again the Lord used the language of marriage: "I will betroth thee unto me forever . . . and I will say to them . . . thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." (Hosea 2:19, 23; emphasis added.) (Bruce C. Hafen and Marie K. Hafen, *The Belonging: The Atonement and Relationships with God and Family Heart*, p.142)

**31:33** Without question some will be deceived and will endure lives of heartbreak and sadness. Others will enjoy the promise recorded by Jeremiah, "I will put my law in their inward parts" (Jeremiah 31:33). In some ways it will be harder to be faithful in your day, perhaps in some ways, even more challenging than pulling a handcart across the plains. When someone died in the wilderness of frontier America, their physical remains were buried and the handcarts continued west, but the mourning survivors had hope for their loved one's eternal soul. However, when some dies spiritually in the wilderness of sin, hope may be replaced by dread and fear for the loved one's eternal welfare. (James E. Faust, "The Voice of the Spirit", CES Fireside for Young Adults, 5 September 1993)

**31:34** The day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, "Know ye the Lord." For all shall know him (who remain), from the least to the greatest. How is this to be done? It is to be done by this sealing power and the Other Comforter spoken of, which will be manifested by revelation. (Joseph Smith, Discourse of 27 June 1839, recorded in Willard Richards's "Pocket Companion"; WJS, 4.)