### A Letter to the Captives in Babylon

**29**Jeremiah sent a letter to the captives in Babylon. He sent it to the elders, the priests, the prophets, and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem to Babylon. **2**(This letter was sent after King Jehoiachin, the queen mother, the officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the carpenters, and the metalworkers had been taken from Jerusalem.) **3**King Zedekiah of Judah sent Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah to King Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah gave them the letter to take to Babylon. This is what the letter said:

**4**This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says to all the people he sent into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon: **5**“Build houses and live in them. Settle in the land. Plant gardens and eat the food you grow. **6**Get married and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons, and let your daughters be married. Do this so that they also may have sons and daughters. Have many children and grow in number in Babylon. Don’t become fewer in number. **7**Also, do good things for the city I sent you to. Pray to the Lord for the city you are living in, because if there is peace in that city, you will have peace also.” **8**The Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says, “Don’t let your prophets and those who practice magic fool you. Don’t listen to the dreams they have.**9**They are telling lies, and they are saying that their message is from me. But I didn’t send it.” This message is from the Lord.

**10**This is what the Lord says: “Babylon will be powerful for 70 years. After that time, I will come to you people who are living in Babylon. I will keep my good promise to bring you back to Jerusalem. **11**I say this because I know the plans that I have for you.” This message is from the Lord. “I have good plans for you. I don’t plan to hurt you. I plan to give you hope and a good future. **12**Then you will call my name. You will come to me and pray to me, and I will listen to you. **13**You will search for me, and when you search for me with all your heart, you will find me. **14**I will let you find me.” This message is from the Lord. “And I will bring you back from your captivity. I forced you to leave this place. But I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have sent you,” says the Lord, “and I will bring you back to this place.”

**15**You people might say, “But the Lord has given us prophets here in Babylon.” **16**But this is what the Lord says about your relatives who were not carried away to Babylon. I am talking about the king who is sitting on David’s throne now and all the other people who are still in the city of Jerusalem. **17**The LordAll-Powerful says, “I will soon bring war, hunger, and disease against those who are still in Jerusalem. And I will make them the same as bad figs that are too rotten to eat. **18**I will attack those who are still in Jerusalem with war, hunger, and disease. And I will cause such pain that all the kingdoms of the earth will be frightened at what has happened to those people. They will be destroyed. People will whistle with amazement when they hear what happened. And people will use them as an example when they ask for bad things to happen to people. People will insult them wherever I force them to go. **19**I will make all these things happen because the people of Jerusalem have not listened to my message.” This message is from the Lord. “I sent my message to them again and again. I used my servants, the prophets, to give my messages to them, but they didn’t listen.” This message is from the Lord. **20**“You people are captives. I forced you to leave Jerusalem and go to Babylon. So listen to the message from the Lord.”

**21**This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah: “These two men have been telling you lies. They have said that their message is from me. I will give these two prophets to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. And he will kill them in front of all you who are captives in Babylon. **22**They will be an example of a terrible way to die. Yes, in the future, when the Jewish captives want something bad to happen to someone, they will say this curse: ‘May the Lord treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab, those men the king of Babylon burned in the fire!’ **23**They did very bad things among the people of Israel. They committed the sin of adultery with their neighbors’ wives. They also spoke lies and said those lies were a message from me. I did not tell them to do that. I know what they have done. I am a witness.” This message is from the Lord.

### God’s Message to Shemaiah

**24**Also give a message to Shemaiah from the Nehelam family.**25**This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: “Shemaiah, you sent letters to all the people in Jerusalem and to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah. You also sent letters to all the priests. You sent those letters in your own name and not by my authority. **26**Shemaiah, this is what you said in your letter to Zephaniah: ‘Zephaniah, the Lord has made you priest in place of Jehoiada. You are to be in charge of the Lord’s Temple. You should arrest anyone who acts like a crazy person[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2029&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19380a)] and acts like a prophet. You should put that person’s feet between large blocks of wood and put neck irons[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2029&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19380b)] on him.**27**Now Jeremiah is acting like a prophet. So why didn’t you arrest him? **28**Jeremiah has sent this message to us in Babylon: You people in Babylon will be there for a long time, so build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what you grow.’”

**29**Zephaniah the priest read the letter to Jeremiah the prophet.**30**Then this message from the Lord came to Jeremiah:**31**“Jeremiah, send this message to all the captives in Babylon: ‘This is what the Lord says about Shemaiah, the man from the Nehelam family: Shemaiah has spoken to you, but I didn’t send him. He has made you believe a lie. **32**Because Shemaiah has done that, this is what the Lord says: I will soon punish Shemaiah, the man from the Nehelam family. I will completely destroy his family, and he will not share in the good things I will do for my people.’” This message is from the Lord. “‘I will punish Shemaiah because he has taught the people to turn against the Lord.’”

**Promises of Hope**

**30**This is the message that came to Jeremiah from the Lord.**2**The Lord, the God of the people of Israel, said, “Jeremiah, write in a book the words I have spoken to you. Write this book for yourself. **3**Do this because the days will come”—this message is from the Lord—“when I will bring my people, Israel and Judah, back from exile.” This message is from the Lord. “I will put the people back in the land that I gave to their ancestors. Then my people will own that land again.”

**4**The Lord spoke this message about the people of Israel and Judah. **5**This is what the Lord said:

“We hear people crying from fear.  
    There is fear, not peace.

**6**“Ask this question and consider it:  
    Can a man have a baby? Of course not!  
Then why do I see every strong man holding his stomach  
    like a woman having labor pains?  
Why is everyone’s face turning white  
    like a dead man?

**7**“This is a very important time for Jacob.  
    This is a time of great trouble.  
There will never be another time like this,  
    but Jacob will be saved.

**8**“At that time,” says the Lord All-Powerful, “I will break the yoke from the necks of the people of Israel and Judah, and I will break the ropes holding you. People from foreign countries will never again force my people to be slaves. **9**The people of Israel and Judah will not serve foreign countries. No, they will serve the Lord their God. I will send them David their king,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2030&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19395a)] and they will serve him.

(Isaiah 9:7 His power will never end; peace will last forever; He will rule David’s kingdom and make grow strong. He will always rule with honesty and justice.)

(Isaiah 11:1 Like a branch that sprouts from a stump, someone from David’s family will someday be king.)

(Hosea 3:5 But later, Israel will turn back to the Lord their God and to David their King. At that time they will come to the Lord with fear and trembling and he will be good to them)

**10**“So Jacob, my servant, don’t be afraid!”  
    This message is from the Lord.  
“Israel, don’t be afraid.  
    I will save you from that faraway place.  
You are captives[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2030&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19396b)] in that faraway land,  
    but I will save your descendants.  
    I will bring them back from that land.  
Jacob will have peace again.  
    People will not bother Jacob.  
    There will be no enemy to frighten my people.  
**11**People of Israel and Judah, I am with you.”  
    This message is from the Lord.  
“I will save you.  
    I sent you to those nations,  
    but I will completely destroy all of them.  
It is true; I will destroy those nations,  
    but I will not destroy you.  
You must be punished for the bad things you did,  
    but I will discipline you fairly.”

**12**This is what the Lord says:  
“You people of Israel and Judah have a wound that cannot be cured.  
    You have an injury that will not heal.  
**13**There is no one to care for your sores,  
    so you will not be healed.  
**14**You became friends with many nations,  
    but those nations don’t care about you.  
    Your ‘friends’ have forgotten you.  
I hurt you like an enemy.  
    I punished you very hard.  
I did this because of your great guilt.  
    I did this because of your many sins.  
**15**Israel and Judah, why are you still crying about your wound?  
    There is no cure for it.  
I did this to you because of your great guilt.  
    I did this because of your many sins.  
**16**Those nations destroyed you,  
    but now they have been destroyed.  
    Israel and Judah, your enemies will become captives.  
They stole things from you,  
    but others will steal from them.  
They took things from you in war,  
    but others will take things from them in war.  
**17**And I will bring your health back  
    and heal your wounds,” says the Lord,  
“because other people said you were outcasts.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2030&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19403c)]  
    They said, ‘No one cares about Zion.’”

**18**This is what the Lord says:  
“Jacob’s people are now in captivity,  
    but they will come back.  
    And I will have pity on Jacob’s houses.  
The city[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2030&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19404d)] is now only an empty hill covered with ruined buildings,  
    but the city will be rebuilt on its hill.  
    And the king’s palace will be rebuilt where it should be.  
**19**People in those places will sing songs of praise,  
    and there will be the sound of laughter.  
I will give them many children.  
    Israel and Judah will not be small.  
I will bring honor to them.  
    No one will look down on them.  
**20**Jacob’s family will be like the family of Israel long ago.  
    I will make Israel and Judah strong,  
    and I will punish those who hurt them.”  
**21**The Lord says,  
“One of their own people will lead them.  
    That ruler will come from my people.  
People can come close to me only if I ask them to.  
    So I will ask that leader to come to me,  
    and he will be close to me.  
**22**You will be my people,  
    and I will be your God.”

**23**The Lord was very angry!  
    He punished the people.  
The punishment came like a storm.  
    It came like a tornado against those wicked people.  
**24**The Lord will be angry until he is through punishing them.  
    He will be angry until he finishes the punishment he planned.  
When that day comes,  
    you people of Judah will understand.

### The New Israel

**31**This is what the Lord said, “At that time I will be the God of all the tribes of Israel. And they will be my people.”

**2**This is what the Lord says:  
“The people who escaped the enemy’s sword will find comfort in the desert.  
    Israel will go there looking for rest.”  
**3**From far away, the Lord  
    will appear to his people.

The Lord says, “I love you people with a love that continues forever.  
    That is why I have continued showing you kindness.  
**4**Israel, my bride, I will rebuild you.  
    You will be a country again.  
You will pick up your tambourines again.  
    You will dance with all the other people who are having fun.  
**5**You farmers of Israel will plant vineyards again.  
    You will plant the vineyards on the hills around the city of Samaria.  
    The farmers will enjoy the fruit from the vineyards.  
**6**There will be a time when watchmen[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2031&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19416a)] shout this message:  
    ‘Come, let’s go up to Zion to worship the Lord our God!’  
Even the watchmen in the hill country of Ephraim[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2031&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19416b)] will shout that message.”

**7**This is what the Lord says:  
“Be happy and sing for Jacob!  
    Shout for Israel, the greatest of the nations!  
Sing your praises and shout:  
    ‘Lord, save your people![[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2031&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19417c)]  
    Save those who are left alive from the nation of Israel.’  
**8**Remember, I will bring Israel  
    from that country in the north.  
I will gather the people of Israel  
    from the faraway places on earth.  
Some of the people will be blind and crippled.  
    Some of the women will be pregnant and ready to give birth.  
    But many people will come back.  
**9**They will come back crying,  
    but I will lead them and comfort them.  
I will lead them by streams of water.  
    I will lead them on an easy road,  
    where they will not stumble.  
I will lead them in that way because I am Israel’s father.  
    And Ephraim is my firstborn son.

**10**“Nations, listen to this message from the Lord!  
    Tell this message in the faraway lands by the sea:  
‘God scattered the people of Israel,  
    but he will bring them back together.  
    And he will watch over his flock like a shepherd.’  
**11**The Lord will bring Jacob back.  
    He will save his people from those who are stronger.  
**12**The people of Israel will come to the top of Zion,  
    and they will shout with joy.  
Their faces will shine with happiness about the good things the Lord gives them.  
    He will give them grain, new wine, olive oil, young sheep and cattle.  
They will be like a garden that has plenty of water.  
    And the people of Israel will not be troubled anymore.  
**13**Then the young women of Israel will be happy and dance.  
    And the men, young and old, will join in the dancing.  
I will change their sadness into happiness.  
    I will comfort my people, making them happy instead of sad.  
**14**I will give the priests plenty of food.  
    And my people will be filled and satisfied with the good things I give them.”  
This message is from the Lord.

**15**This is what the Lord says:  
“A sound is heard in Ramah—  
    bitter crying and great sadness.  
Rachel[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2031&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19425d)] cries for her children,  
    and she refuses to be comforted,  
    because her children are gone.”

**16**But the Lord says, “Stop crying.  
    Don’t fill your eyes with tears.  
You will be rewarded for your work.”  
    This message is from the Lord.  
    “The people of Israel will come back from their enemy’s land.  
**17**Israel, there is hope for you.”  
    This message is from the Lord.  
    “Your children will come back to their own land.  
**18**I have heard Ephraim crying:  
    ‘Lord, you punished me, and I learned my lesson.  
    I was like a calf that was never trained.  
Please stop punishing me,  
    and I will come back to you.  
    You really are the Lord my God.  
**19**I wandered away from you.  
    But I finally realized how wrong I was.  
    So I changed my heart and life.  
I am ashamed and embarrassed  
    about the foolish things I did when I was young.’”  
**20**The Lord says,  
“You know that Ephraim is my dear son.  
    I love that child.  
Yes, I often criticized Ephraim,  
    but I still think about him.  
I love him very much,  
    and I really do want to comfort him.

**21**“People of Israel, repair the road signs.  
    Put up signs that show the way home.  
Watch the road.  
    Remember the road you are leaving on.  
Israel, my bride, come home.  
    Come back to your towns.  
**22**Unfaithful daughter,  
    how long will you wander around?

“The Lord has created something new in the land:  
    A woman surrounding a man.[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2031&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19432e)]”

**23**This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: “I will again do good things for the people of Judah. I will bring back those who were taken away as prisoners. At that time the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: ‘May the Lord bless you, good home and holy mountain[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2031&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19433f)]!’

**24**“People in all the towns of Judah will live together in peace. Farmers and those who move around with their flocks will live peacefully together in Judah. **25**I will give rest and strength to those who are weak and tired.”

**26**After hearing that, I, Jeremiah, woke up and looked around. My sleep was very pleasant.

**27**“The days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I will help the family of Israel and Judah to grow. I will help their children and animals to grow too. It will be like planting and caring for a plant. **28**In the past I watched over Israel and Judah, but I watched for the time to pull them up. I tore them down. I destroyed them. I gave many troubles to them. But now I will watch over them to build them up and make them strong.” This message is from the Lord.

**29**“People will not use this saying anymore:

‘The parents ate the sour grapes,  
    but the children got the sour taste.’[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2031&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19439g)]

**30**No, people will die for their own sins. Those who eat sour grapes will get the sour taste.”

### The New Agreement

**31**This is what the Lord said, “The time is coming when I will make a new agreement with the family of Israel and with the family of Judah. **32**It will not be like the agreement I made with their ancestors. I made that agreement when I took them by the hand and brought them out of Egypt. I was their master, but they broke that agreement.” This message is from the Lord.

**33**“In the future I will make this agreement with the people of Israel.” This message is from the Lord. “I will put my teachings in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. **34**People will not have to teach their neighbors and relatives to know the Lord, because all people, from the least important to the most important, will know me.” This message is from the Lord. “I will forgive them for the evil things they did. I will not remember their sins.”

### The Lord Will Never Leave Israel

**35**He makes the sun shine in the day,  
    and he makes the moon and the stars shine at night.  
He stirs up the sea so that its waves crash on the shore.  
    The Lord All-Powerful is his name.

This is what the Lord says:  
**36**“The descendants of Israel will never stop being a nation.  
    That would happen only if I lost control of the sun, moon, stars, and sea.”

**37**The Lord says, “I will never reject the descendants of Israel.  
    That would happen only if people could measure the sky above,  
    and learn all the secrets of the earth below.  
Only then would I reject them for the bad things they have done.”  
    This message is from the Lord.

### The New Jerusalem

**38**This message is from the Lord, “The days are coming when the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt for the Lord. The whole city will be rebuilt—from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.**39**The measuring line[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah%2031&version=ERV#fen-ERV-19449h)] will stretch from the Corner Gate straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to the place named Goah. **40**The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown and all the terraces down to the bottom of Kidron Valley all the way to the corner of Horse Gate will be holy to the Lord. The city of Jerusalem will never again be torn down or destroyed.”