### Jeremiah

## Chapter 4

1Then the Lord said:  
  
 ‘If IsraEl should [choose to] return,  
 I’ll also turn back to them.  
 If they’ll wash the disgusting things from their mouths…  
 If they’ll show that they will respect me,  
 2And if they’ll swear ‘As Jehovah is living’ in oaths;  
 I’ll bless them with equity, justice, and truth.  
 Then the rest of the nations will praise them,  
 And in JeruSalem, all will praise God.  
  
 3‘So to the men of Judah and JeruSalem  
 Jehovah gave these instructions:  
  
 ‘Prepare your [hearts]… Yes, get them ready to plow…  
 Don’t allow thorn bushes to grow here again!’  
  
 4‘O men of Judah and JeruSalem,  
  
 ‘Circumcise yourselves to your God…  
 Snip the hardness out of your hearts  
 So He doesn’t send the fire of His rage…  
 [A fire] that can’t be extinguished  
 Because of the bad things you’re doing!  
  
 5‘Announce [this message] to Judah,  
 And let them hear it in JeruSalem:  
  
 ‘Blow trumpets throughout the whole land,  
 And then, cry out in loud voices!’  
  
 6‘Say:  
  
 ‘All should gather inside the walled cities…  
 Gather your things and run to Mount Zion!  
 Do this quickly, don’t wait,  
 For from the north, bad things will arrive…  
 A terrible destruction is heading your way!’  
  
 7‘Now the lion has come from his lair,  
 And he is wiping out nations.  
 He’s arisen and now he’s come from his place  
 To desolate lands and destroy them!  
  
 ‘So your cities will all be demolished,  
 And you’ll no longer be living within them.  
 8Because of this, put on sackcloth…  
 Yes, be sad, and then start to bawl!  
 For the anger and rage of Jehovah  
 Will not be diverted from you.  
  
 9‘And in that day,’ said the Lord,  
 ‘There’ll be no heart in the king…  
 The hearts of the rulers and priests will be shocked  
 And the prophets will all be confused.’  
  
10Then I replied:  
  
 ‘O Almighty Lord,  
  
 ‘You must surely be joking… Aren’t you misleading these people? Aren’t you saying that there’ll really be peace for JeruSalem and that the sword won’t be coming into our lives?’  
  
11[But He replied]:  
  
 ‘At that time, I’ll say to these people  
 (To those who live in JeruSalem):  
  
 ‘An addiction to delusions has come from the desert;  
 For the ways of the daughters of my people  
 Can no longer be thought of as pure…  
 None have kept themselves holy.  
 12So the spirit of fulfillment is coming from me,  
 And I’m now speaking judgments against them.  
  
 13‘Look! Like a cloud, someone has arisen  
 Whose chariots are sending out blasts,  
 And whose horses are lighter than eagles.  
 So woe, for misery is headed your way!  
  
 14‘Therefore, O JeruSalem,  
  
 ‘Rinse the evil out of your hearts  
 So that somehow, you might be saved!  
 For, how long did you think you can do all those things  
 That are [the root] of your [problems]?  
  
 15‘So from Dan, you’ll start hearing voices,  
 And from Ephraim will come misery.  
  
 16‘{Look!} Remind your nation of this,  
 And shout this aloud in JeruSalem:  
  
 ‘From a far-away land will come an alliance  
 That’s speaking against the cities of Judah!’  
  
 17‘For Jehovah had told me this:  
  
 ‘They’ll [camp] around her and guard all her fields  
 Because I’ve been neglected by you.  
 18It’s because of your [bad] ways and [evil] deeds  
 That they are coming against you…  
 Because your evil is now so bitter  
 That it has reached into your hearts!  
  
 19‘This [thought] brings pain to My belly…  
 It causes My heart to feel spasms and ache…  
 But My Soul has been forced to take action!  
  
 20‘So, since I’ll no longer stay silent,  
 My Soul now hears trumpet blasts  
 And the cries of misery and war.  
  
 ‘This conflict is something that’s called for,  
 And misery will come to your land.  
 For, you have abandoned My Tent,  
 And its covering of skins you have parted.  
  
 21‘Why must I watch [people] fleeing  
 And hear the blowing of trumpets?  
 22Yet, this will all happen because,  
 The leaders of My people don’t know Me…  
 They’ve become undiscerning, foolish sons…  
 They’re just wise when it comes to doing what’s bad,  
 And they don’t remember how to do what is good.’  
  
23Well at that, I looked down at the ground and I couldn’t see anything, then I looked up into the sky, and its lights weren’t there. 24I also noticed that the mountains were shaking and all the hills were being disturbed. 25So I looked around and I couldn’t see anyone, for even the birds in the skies had been frightened away. Then I noticed that CarMel was bare and all of its cities were burning… They had been set on fire by the face of Jehovah! 26For, due to His anger and rage, He had removed them from His view.  
  
27And at that, the Lord said:  
  
 ‘Although the whole land will soon lie in ruins;  
 No way will it all be destroyed.  
  
 28‘But the land should now start to mourn,  
 Because the skies above will grow dark…  
 I’ve spoken, and I won’t change my mind.  
 No I won’t be dissuaded… It will happen!  
  
 29‘So from the sounds of horsemen with tightly stretched bows,  
 In every place, they will run…  
 They’ll hide in caves and in sacred groves…  
 Down among rocks, they’ll descend.  
 Then their cities will all be abandoned…  
 No one will be living there.  
  
 30‘So now, what will they do…  
 Will they wrap themselves in scarlet and gold?  
 If they rub antimony on their eyelids,  
 It will all be in vain!  
 For, although they may dress in their finest of clothes,  
 Their lovers have already pushed them away…  
 And now they are seeking their lives!  
  
 31‘So I hear the sounds of a woman in labor  
 And the moans of one who is giving first birth.  
 But the voice of the daughter of Zion grows faint,  
 And her hands grow weak as she says:  
  
 ‘Woe to me, for my life has now failed  
 And I am being destroyed!’