

# Figures of Speech in Jeremiah

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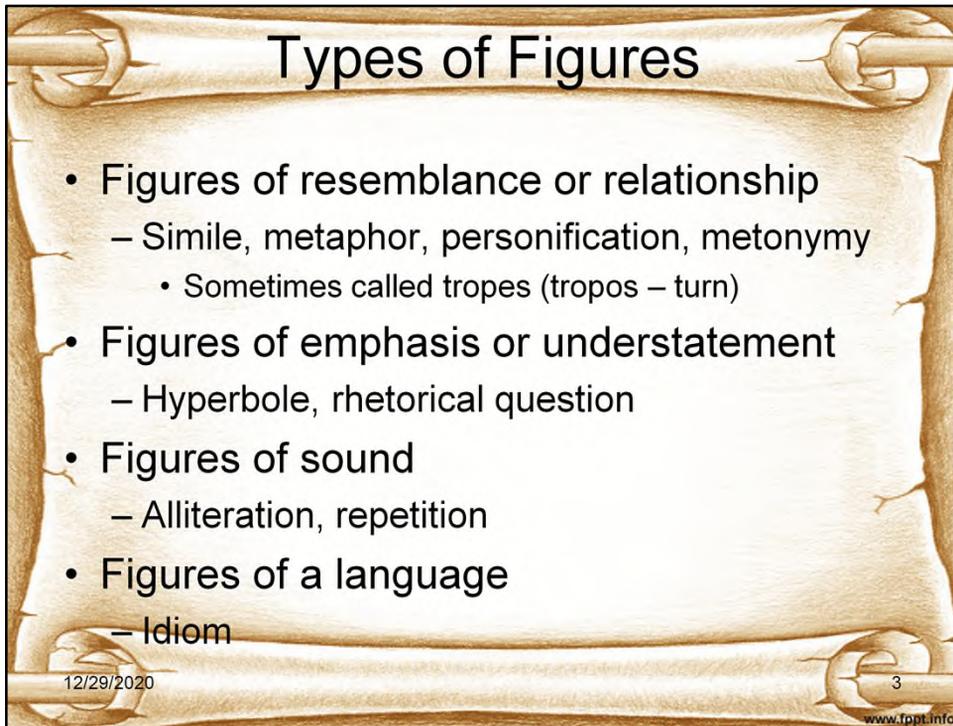
# Purpose

- Bring to life something that might be described with many words
  - Create a picture in the mind
- To provide dramatic effect
- To get the attention of the audience
- To make the less familiar known by what is familiar
- Implied meaning vs literal meaning

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**Simile** – 6:23; 50:42 – Their voice roars like the sea

**Metaphor** – 51:42 - The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof.

**Personification** – 3:1 – but you have played the harlot with many lovers

**Metonymy** – 18:18 – Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

**Hyperbole** – 33:22 – As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

**Rhetorical Question** - 47:7 - How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it.

**Alliteration** – 10:11 – Thus shall you say to them: "The gods who did not **make** the heavens and the earth shall **perish** from the earth and from under the heavens." (in Chaldee) – have made (avadu) and shall perish (yavadu)

**Repetition** – 6:14; 8:11 - They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, '**Peace, peace,**' when there is no peace.

**Idiom** – 16:7 - No one shall **break bread** for the mourner

## Key Figures

- Almond branch
  - 1:11-12 - And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see an **almond branch**." Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am **watching over** my word to perform it." – shaqed ...shaqad
  - From a root meaning waker, vigilant, watchful
  - God will be careful and sure that his word comes to reality

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This is an Hebrew alliteration.

Almond - (Ge. 43:11; Nu. 17:8 (nuts); Ec. 12:5 (tree); Ex.25:33-34; 37:19-20 (shaped)).

Watch over – Je. 31:28 And it shall come to pass that as I have **watched over** them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring harm, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, declares the LORD. Also 5:6; 44:27; Da. 9:14.

In Greek – greporeo – Ac. 20:31; 1 Co. 16:13; 1 Th. 5:6; 10; 1 Pe. 5:8

## Key Figures

- Seething pot
  - Je. 1:13-14 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a **seething pot**; and the face thereof is toward the **north**. Then the LORD said unto me, **Out of the north an evil shall break forth** upon all the inhabitants of the land.
  - Judah to be attacked and destroyed by Babylon – God’s judgment

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This is a metaphor

ESV notes facing away from the north.

It’s as if the pot is about to spill over toward the nation in a southerly direction. Imminent disaster is coming.

Interesting we sometimes say when someone is angry that the individual is “seething” – the boiling point has been reached (idioms) and now the individual is about to unload or explode.

God’s judgement can take a while,, in his mercy to become unleashed, – but without repentance it will be unleashed. There comes a point after which the judgment will fall.

God’s judgment on this world is coming as well – 2 Pe. 3:3-4, 10

# Key Figures

- Israel as a woman
  - Bride of Jehovah – 2:2; 31:3-4
    - I have given my beloved to the enemy – 12:7
    - She seems to have forgotten the groom – 2:32
    - She commits adultery – 2:20, 33; 5:7, 13:27
      - The evidence of her prostitution cannot be removed – 2:22
  - A woman in labor – 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23
    - The men, as a woman in labor – 30:6; 49:22, 24; 50:43
  - A daughter – 4:11, 31, 6:2, 26; 8:19, etc.

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Marriage – 2:2-3, 5-13, 20, 23-24, 33; 3:1-9, 12, 20; 4:30; 13:27 (Pro 5:15-18).

Adultery – Consider Ek. 6:9; 16:1-63.

Consider Hosea – Gomer's adultery as a picture of the nation (1:2; 2:1-7; 3:1-5).

A woman – labor - personification

Lesson – Ja. 4:4 – You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

## Adultery Figures

- Devotion to another; looking to another for help; etc.
  - Bowing down to idols – 2:20
  - Israel as a camel or donkey in heat – 2:23-24
  - Sacrificing children in the valley – 7:32; 32:35
  - Looking indiscriminately for lovers – 3:1-2, 9
  - Wearies Itself looking for lovers – 2:25
  - Looks to wood/stone as source of life – 2:27
  - Looks to idols for help in time of need – 2:28

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Lovers – 22:20; 30:14

Oppression and innocent blood is in the place – 2:34; 7:6, 31; 19:4; 22:3, 17; 26:15

The sin of Judah indelibly written within (heart) and without (idolatrous altars) – 17:1

# Adultery Figures

- More figures
  - Worship the queen of heaven – 7:18; 44:17-25
  - The defiled or uplifted skirts – 2:34; 13:22, 26
  - Abominable evil like Sodom and Gomorrah – 23:14

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Consider Ja. 4:4; 1 Jn. 2:15; Mt. 15:L7-8; 23:25-28.

## Summary

- Judah following Israel's example of adultery (idolatry) and divorce (captivity) – 3:6-11, 20, 23 and only returned in pretense to God.
- Exchanging the nation's glory (its source of honor and brightness) for nothing (2:11) – God for gods that are no gods. Je. 5:7; 16:20; Is. 37:19; 2 Ki. 19:18).

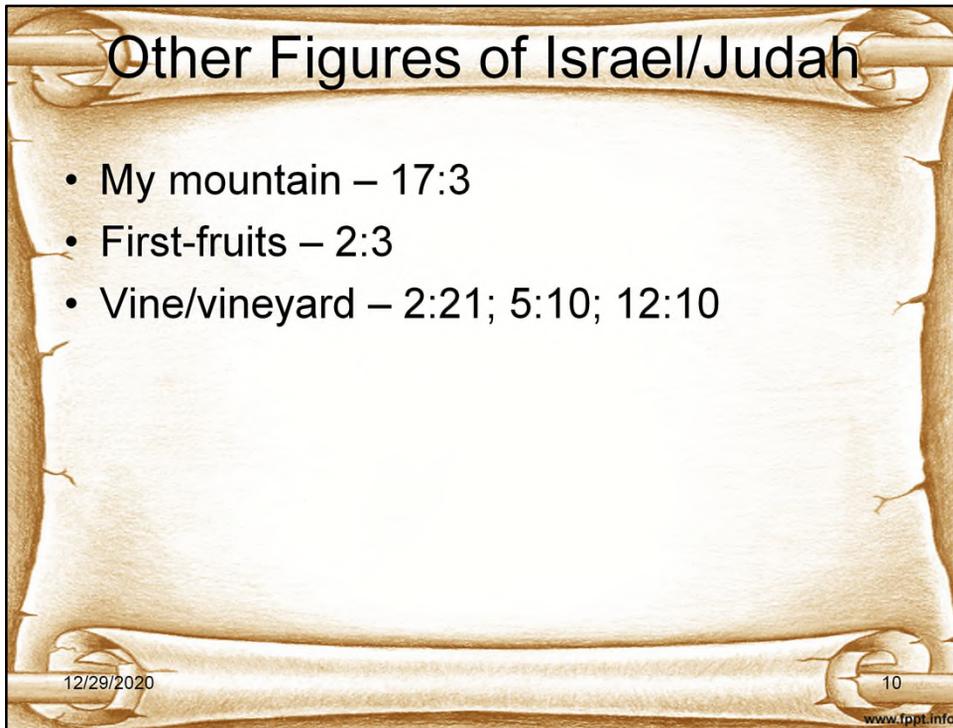
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Exchanging the nation's glory (its source of honor and brightness) for nothing (2:11) – God for gods that are no gods. Je. 5:7; 16:20; Is. 37:19; 2 Ki. 19:18). There is nothing that compares to the God of the universe (Je. 1:16; 10:1-11; 1 Ki. 18; 19:18; 2 Ch. 32:9-22; Is. 40:20).

At least the nations were loyal to their gods – Israel was unfaithful to theirs – Ga. 4:8; 1 Th. 1:9



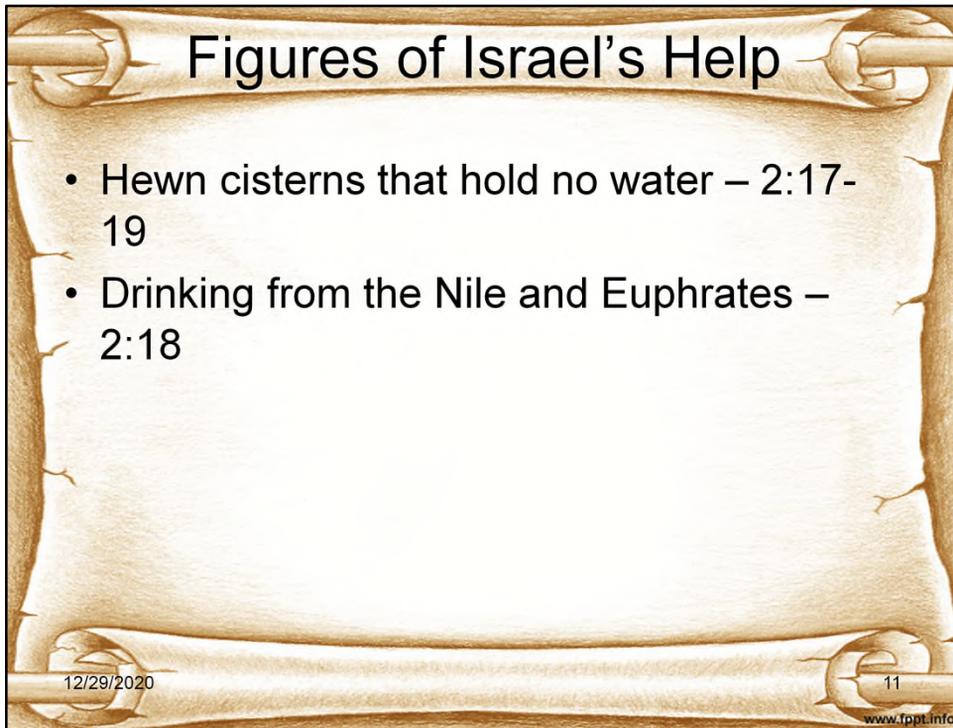
Israel seen as the first-fruits – the first and best – of Jehovah’s harvest (Je. 2:3). As a result it belongs to him – Ex. 23:16, 19; 34:26; Le. 23:10, 17, 20; Nu. 18:12; Dt. 18:4).

Israel as a vine (2:21) – Is. 5:1-2; Ps. 80:8-9; Ho. 10:1; Je. 5:10; 12:10; 6:9 – Also see the Song of Solomon. See also Mt. 21:33-43.

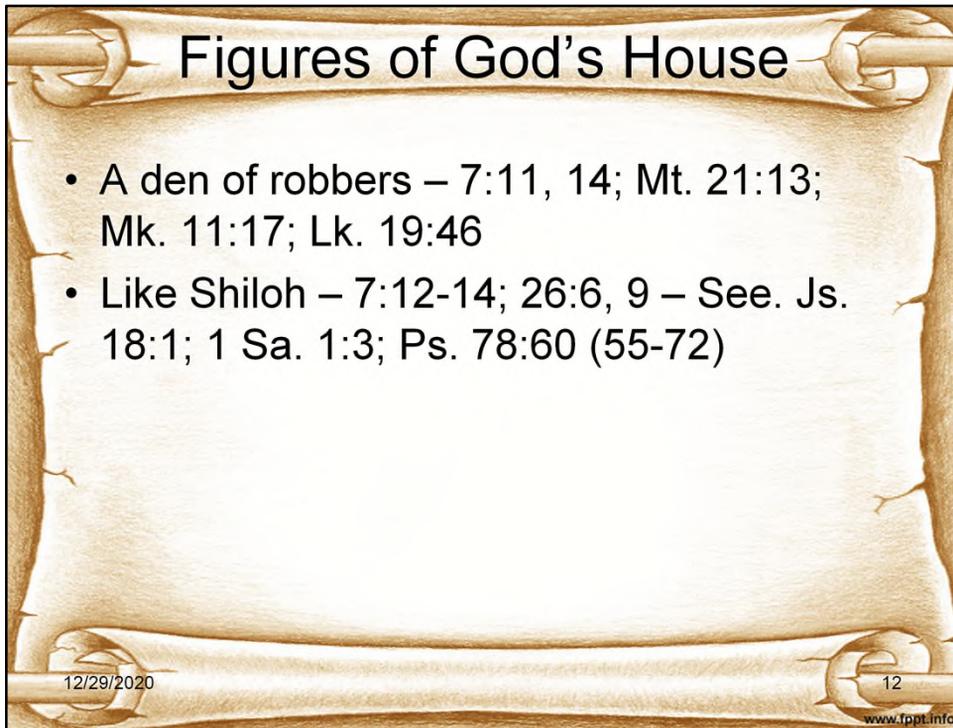
She will be stripped bare as a vine – 6:9

No grapes on the vine – 8:13

Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard – 12:10



The fountain of living water – 2:13; 17:13 – God – like a well of water  
Hewn cisterns – idols of wood and stone – man-made gods – no water – 2:17-19  
(38:6; Zec. 9:11; Pr. 5:15-20)



God's house a den of robbers – 7:11, 14; Mt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Lk. 19:46  
Detestable things in his house – 7:30; 32:34  
What right has my beloved in my house – 11:15  
I have forsaken my house – 12:7  
Ungodly men in the house – 23:11  
Led into judgment – like slippery paths in the darkness – 23:12  
Like Shiloh – 7:12-14; 26:6, 9 – See. Js 18:1; 1 Sa. 1:3; Ps. 78:60 (55-72)

## Judgment Figures

- Burning fire – 4:4; 5:14; 7:20; 11:16
- Devouring lion – 2:15; 4:7; 5:6; 50:17
- Wind – 4:11; 13:24; 18:17
  - Tempest, storm – 23:19; 25:32; 30:23
- Shepherds and flocks – 6:3; 12:10
- Poisoned water – 8:14; 9:15; 23:15
- Cup – 25:15, 17, 28; 49:12
  - Drunkenness – 13:13; 25:27
- Yoke – 22:2, 8, 11-12; 30:8

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Burning Fire - 4:4; 5:14; 7:20; 11:16; 15:14; 17:4, 27; 21:10, 12, 14; 22:7; 32:29; 34:2, 22; 37:8; 38:17-18, 23; 43:12; 52:13

Devouring Lion - 2:15; 4:7; 5:6; 25:38; 49:19; 50:17, 44; 51:38

Wind, tempest, storm – 4:11; 13:24; 18:17; 22:22; 23:19; 25:32; 30:23; 49:36; 51:1

Cup – 25:15; 17, 28; 49:12; 51:7

Drunkenness – 13:13; 25:27; 48:26; 51:7; 39; 57

Yoke – 2:20; 5:5; 27:2, 8, 11-12; 28:2, 4, 10-14; 30:8

The calf that is split in two and passed between – 34:18-19 (see Ge. 15:9-17)

The lord opens his armory – 50:25

A grievous blow – 14:17

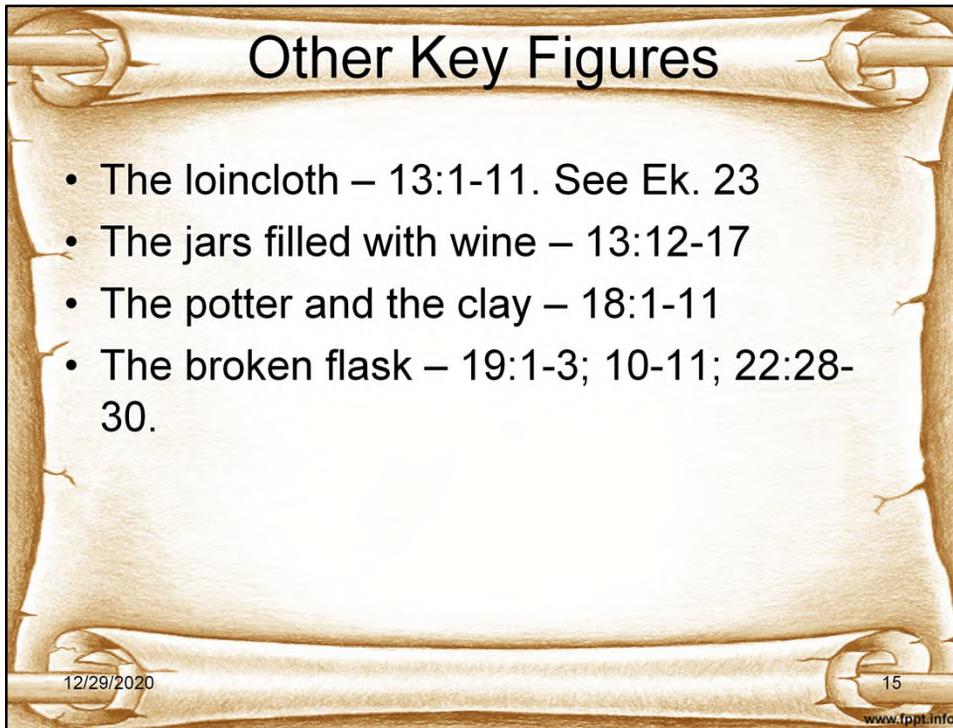
## Figures of Northern Nation

- Sound like the roaring sea – 6:22-23
- Like adders/snakes/vipers – 8:17
- A great commotion – 10:22
- Destroyers or ravagers – 12:12
- Iron and bronze – 15:12
- A biting fly – 46:20, 24
- Waters, overflowing flood – 47:2
- An eagle – 48:40; 49:22
- Destroying mountain – 51:25

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The loincloth – 13:1-11. See Ek. 23. People of Judah like the loin cloth (8 of the 14 times used are here in this section) (Ek. 23:15) – intimately connected with the Lord but not dipped in water – that is, not cleaned as it should be – the defiled garment is taken to the Euphrates (Babylon) and spoiled while hidden there (the captivity) and at the end is worthless (Le. 26:36-39).

The jars filled with wine – 13:12-17. The people likened to jars full of wine – the people are drunk and end up stumbling and crashing in to each other in their stupor – destroying them. The people think of it physically but the God is bringing out the figurative lesson. They will feel the effect of drinking of the cup of God's wrath (25:15; Is.51:17; Re 16:19). Like the previous picture the pride of the nation is dealt with.

The potter and the clay – 18:1-11. God, the potter, is able to fashion the clay (Israel or any nation) for his use – but the condition of the clay is important in determining the type of vessel it becomes – what the vessel will be used for and its end (Is. 45:9-10; Ro. 9:19-24; 2 Ti. 2:21). Frame can mean potter in v. 11 as in v.3.

The broken flask – 19:1-3; 10-11; 22:28-30. The potter lets the clay harden into

the vessel that is best suited to the clay as Israel had become obstinate in its condition. The remedy is to break the vessel so it cannot be remade in its current condition. Jehoiachin (Coniah) is seen as a broken vessel never to rule again.

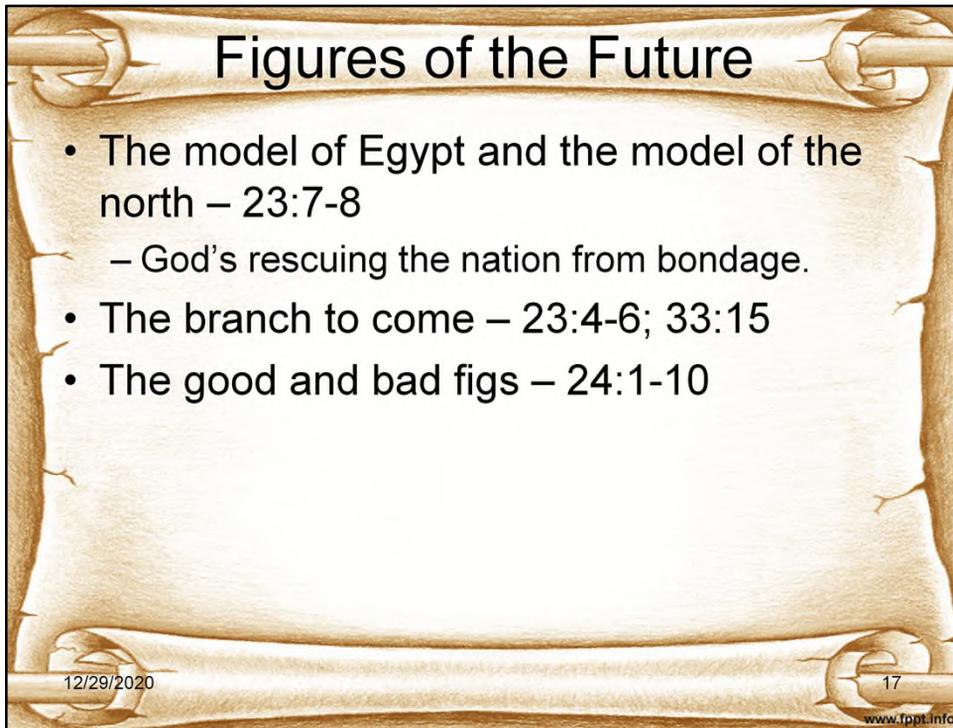
## Figures of Mourning/Shame

- Sackcloth and ashes – 6:26; 25:34
- Cut off the hair – 7:29; 48:37
- Wailing – 9:17-19
- Land mourning – 12:4; 23:10
- Earth mourns/heavens black – 4:28
- Rachel weeping for children – 31:15; Mt. 2:18
- God weeps – 48:31-32
- Skirt lifted over face – 13:26

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The good and bad figs – 24:1-10. The good figs are those who went into captivity as prophesied and will experience good (Je. 29) – the bad figs (29:17) are those who either tried to remain in Judah or find help in Egypt – they will be destroyed.

The king raised through Nathan’s line (Lk. 3:31) once Solomon’s line lost rights to throne through Coniah (Mt. 1:6). See also Is. 4:2; 11:1; Ze. 3:8; 6:12