

Preface

THIS BOOK SEEKS TO place before the beginning student and general reader a representative discussion of material contained in the biblical book of Jeremiah. It is written for those who may never look into a Jeremiah commentary, which would include, among others, my three volume *Jeremiah* for the Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1999, 2004; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). There are no footnotes, no technical discussions, and few citations of the Hebrew. The bibliography is brief. My hope is that these essays can be read with profit by students, adult Bible study classes, and people anywhere who want to learn more about Jeremiah, one of the truly great prophets in ancient Israel. Perhaps a modest introduction such as this will generate further interest in Jeremiah, the Hebrew prophets, and the Old Testament as a whole, in which case the reader will be led to break open a biblical commentary to learn more. If these aims are realized, the book will have achieved its goal.

I am dedicating this book to students in the seminaries and theological schools of Myanmar (Burma), who have become very special to me. I came to know many of them in classes taught at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, and then from June 16 to July 2, 2010, I visited Myanmar and gave lectures at nine seminaries and theological schools in the country: Myanmar Institute of Theology, Pwo Karen Theological Seminary, Bethany Theological Seminary, Karen Baptist Theological Seminary, and Tedim Christian College in Yangon; Myanmar Theological College in Mandalay; Tahan Theological College, Bethel Theological Seminary, and Tahan Institute of Theology in Tahan. Selected essays in the book were given as lectures on these occasions, and it now gives me great pleasure to present these and others in written form to those with whom I spent these 17 memorable days. I remain much in the debt of these wonderful students and their teachers for the many kindnesses shown me on my visit. I also had the privilege of giving ten essays as lectures to the Adult Sunday School Class of the First Presbyterian Church, Evanston, IL, in January to March,

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2012. Now I wish all the essays to reach a broader audience, for whom Jeremiah, the Hebrew prophets, and the Old Testament as a whole is still little understood.

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