The Old Testament
The Beginning of the World

1 In the beginning, when God created the earth and sky, \(a\) the earth was without life and not yet useful for anything. Deep waters covered the earth, and darkness covered the water. God’s Spirit \(b\) was moving like a storm over the surface of the water.

The First Day—Light

3 Then God said, “Let there be light!” And light began to shine. \(c\) He saw the light, and he knew that it was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. \(d\) God named the light “day,” and he named the darkness “night.”

There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the first day.

The Second Day—Sky

6 Then God said, “Let there be a space \(d\) to separate the water into two parts!” \(e\) So God made the space and separated the water. Some of the water was above it, and some of the water was below it. \(g\) God named that space “sky.” There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the second day.

The Third Day—Dry Land and Plants

9 Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered together so that the dry land will appear.” And it happened. \(i\) God named the dry land “earth,” and he named the water that was gathered together “seas.” And God saw that this was good.

11 Then God said, “Let the earth grow grass, plants that make grain, and fruit trees. The fruit trees will make fruit with seeds in it. And each plant will make its own kind of seed. Let these plants grow on the earth.” And it happened. \(k\) The earth grew grass and plants that made grain. And it grew trees that made fruit with seeds in it. Every plant made its own kind of seeds. And God saw that this was good.

13 There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the third day.

The Fourth Day—Sun, Moon, and Stars

14 Then God said, “Let there be lights in the sky. These lights will separate the days from the nights. They will be used for signs to show when special meetings \(e\) begin and to show the days and years. They will be in the sky to shine light on the earth.” And it happened.

16 So God made the two large lights. He made the larger light to rule during the day and the smaller light to rule during the night. He also made the stars. \(l\) God put these lights in the sky to shine on the earth. \(m\) He put them in the sky to rule over the day and over the night. They separated the light from the darkness. And God saw that this was good.

19 There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the fourth day.

\(a\) 1:1 Or “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” “God” in this first section (1:1–2:3) is the most general word for God in the Old Testament. It is a plural form. See verse 26.
\(b\) 1:2 God’s Spirit Or “A wind from God” or “A mighty wind.”
\(c\) 1:1–3 Or “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. While the earth had no special shape, and darkness covered the ocean, and God’s Spirit hovered over the water, God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” Or “When God began to create the sky and the earth, while the earth was completely empty, and darkness covered the ocean, and a powerful wind blew over the water, God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.”
\(d\) 1:6 space Or “firmament.” The Hebrew word can refer to a piece of metal that has been hammered into the shape of a bowl.

\(e\) 1:14 special meetings The Israelites used the sun and moon to decide when the months and years began. Many Israelite festivals and special meetings began at the time of the new moon or full moon.

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The Fifth Day—Fish and Birds

20 Then God said, “Let the water be filled with many living things, and let there be birds to fly in the air over the earth.” 21 So God created the large sea animals. He created all the many living things in the sea and every kind of bird that flies in the air. And God saw that this was good.

22 God blessed all the living things in the sea and told them to have many babies and fill the seas. And he blessed the birds on land and told them to have many more babies.

23 There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the fifth day.

The Sixth Day—Land Animals and People

24 Then God said, “Let the earth produce many kinds of living things. Let there be many different kinds of animals. Let there be large animals and small crawling animals of every kind. And let all these animals produce more animals.” And all these things happened.

25 So God made every kind of animal. He made the wild animals, the tame animals, and all the small crawling things. And God saw that this was good.

26 Then God said, “Now let’s make humans who will be like us. They will rule over all the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. They will rule over all the large animals and all the little things that crawl on the earth.”

27 So God created humans in his own image. He created them to be like himself. He created them male and female.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Have many children. Fill the earth and take control of it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. Rule over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

The Seventh Day—Rest

1 So the earth, the sky, and everything in them were finished. 2 God finished the work he was doing, so on the seventh day he rested from his work. 3 God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day. He made it special because on that day he rested from all the work he did while creating the world.

The First Man and the Garden of Eden

4 This is the story about the creation of the sky and the earth. This is what happened when the Lord God made the earth and the sky. 5 This was before there were plants on the earth. Nothing was growing in the fields because the Lord God had not yet made it rain on the earth, and there was no one to care for the plants.

6 So water came up from the earth and spread over the ground. 7 Then the Lord God took dust from the ground and made a man. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nose, and the man became a living thing. 8 Then the Lord God planted a garden in the East, in a place named Eden. He put the man he made in that garden. 9 Then the Lord God caused all the beautiful trees that were good for food to grow in the garden. In the middle of the garden, he put the tree of life and the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil.

These trees make fruit with seeds in it. This grain and fruit will be your food. 30 And I am giving all the green plants to the animals. These green plants will be their food. Every animal on earth, every bird in the air, and all the little things that crawl on the earth will eat that food.” And all these things happened.

31 God looked at everything he had made. And he saw that everything was very good.

There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the sixth day.
10 A river flowed from Eden and watered the garden. The river then separated and became four smaller rivers. 11 The name of the first river was Pishon. This river flowed around the entire country of Havilah.* 12 (There is gold in that country, and that gold is pure. A kind of expensive perfume and onyx are also found there.) 13 The name of the second river was Gihon. This river flowed east of Assyria. The fourth river was the Euphrates.

The Lord God put the man in the Garden of Eden to work the soil and take care of the garden. 16 The Lord God gave him this command: “You may eat from any tree in the garden. 17 But you must not eat from the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil. If you eat fruit from that tree, on that day you will certainly die!”

A Companion for Adam
18 Then the Lord God said, “I see that it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make the companion he needs, one just right for him.” 19 The Lord God used dust from the ground and made every animal in the fields and every bird in the air. He brought all these animals to the man, and the man gave them all a name. 20 The man gave names to all the tame animals, to all the birds in the air, and to all the wild animals. He saw many animals and birds, but he could not find a companion that was right for him. 21 So the Lord God caused the man to sleep very deeply. While he was asleep, God took one of the ribs from the man’s body. Then he closed the man’s skin where the rib had been. 22 The Lord God used the rib from the man to make a woman. Then he brought the woman to the man. 23 And the man said, “Finally! One like me, with bones from my bones and a body from my body.”

She was taken out of a man, so I will call her ‘woman.’” 24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife. In this way two people become one. 25 The man and his wife were naked, but they were not ashamed.

The Beginning of Sin
3 The snake was the most clever of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. The snake spoke to the woman and said, “Woman, did God really tell you that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?” 4 The woman answered the snake, “No, we can eat fruit from the trees in the garden. 3 But there is one tree we must not eat from. God told us, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. You must not even touch that tree, or you will die.’” 5 But the snake said to the woman, “You will not die. 6 God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree you will learn about good and evil, and then you will be like God!”

6 The woman could see that the tree was beautiful and the fruit looked so good to eat. She also liked the idea that it would make her wise. So she took some of the fruit from the tree and ate it. Her husband was there with her, so she gave him some of the fruit, and he ate it.

7 Then it was as if their eyes opened, and they saw things differently. They saw that they were naked. So they got some fig leaves, sewed them together, and wore them for clothes.

8 During the cool part of the day, the Lord God was walking in the garden. The man and the woman heard him, and they hid among the trees in the garden. 9 The Lord God called to the man and said, “Where are you?” 10 The man said, “I heard you walking in the garden, and I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid.” 11 God said to the man, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat fruit

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* 2:11 Havilah The land along the west coast of the Arabian peninsula and possibly, the part of Africa south of Ethiopia.
* 2:13 Cush Usually this means Ethiopia, but here, it probably refers to the area north and east of the Tigris River.
from that special tree? I told you not to eat from that tree!”

12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me gave me fruit from that tree. So I ate it.”

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What have you done?” She said, “The snake tricked me, so I ate the fruit.”

14 So the LORD God said to the snake, “You did this very bad thing, so bad things will happen to you. It will be worse for you than for any other animal. You must crawl on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life.

15 I will make you and the woman enemies to each other. Your children and her children will be enemies. You will bite her child’s foot, but he will crush your head.”

16 Then God said to the woman, “I will cause you to have much trouble when you are pregnant. And when you give birth to children, you will have much pain. You will want your husband very much, but he will rule over you.”

17 Then God said to the man, “I commanded you not to eat from that tree. But you listened to your wife and ate from it. So I will curse the ground because of you. You will have to work hard all your life for the food the ground produces.

18 The ground will grow thorns and weeds for you. And you will have to eat the plants that grow wild in the fields.

19 You will work hard for your food, until your face is covered with sweat.

You will work hard until the day you die, and then you will become dust again. I used dust to make you, and when you die, you will become dust again.”

20 Adam named his wife Eve. He gave her this name because Eve would be the mother of everyone who ever lived.

21 The LORD God used animal skins and made some clothes for the man and his wife. Then he put the clothes on them.

22 The LORD God said, “Look, the man has become like us—he knows about good and evil. And now the man might take the fruit from the tree of life. If the man eats that fruit, he will live forever.”

23 So the LORD God forced the man out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground he was made from. God forced the man to leave the garden. Then he put Cherub angels and a sword of fire at the entrance to the garden to protect it. The sword flashed around and around, guarding the way to the tree of life.

The First Family

4 1 Adam had sexual relations with his wife Eve. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Cain.

Eve said, “With the LORD’s help, I have made a man!”

2 Eve gave birth again to Cain’s brother Abel. Abel became a shepherd, and Cain became a farmer.

The First Murder

3–4 At harvest time, Cain brought a gift to the LORD. He brought some of the food that he grew from the ground, but Abel brought some animals from his flock. He chose some of his best sheep and brought the best parts from them.

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7 The LORD accepted Abel and his gift. But he did not accept Cain and his offering. Cain was sad because of this, and he became very angry. 

8 The LORD asked Cain, “Why are you angry? Why does your face look sad? You know that if you do what is right, I will accept you. But if you don’t, sin is ready to attack you. That sin will want to control you, but you must control it.”

9 Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” So they went to the field. Then Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

10–11 Then the LORD said, “What have you done? You killed your brother and the ground opened up to take his blood from your hands. Now his blood is shouting to me from the ground. So you will be cursed from this ground.

12 Now when you work the soil, the ground will not help your plants grow. You will not have a home in this land. You will wander from place to place.”

13 Then Cain said to the LORD, “This punishment is more than I can bear! You are forcing me to leave the land, and I will not be able to be near you or have a home! Now I must wander from place to place, and anyone I meet could kill me.”

14 Then the LORD said to Cain, “No, if anyone kills you, I will punish that person much, much more.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to show that no one should kill him.

Cain’s Family

16 Cain went away from the LORD and lived in the land of Nod.

17 Cain had sexual relations with his wife. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son named Enoch. Cain built a city and gave the city the same name as his son Enoch.

18 Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad had a son named Mehujael. Mehujael had a son named Methushael. And Methushael had a son named Lamech.

19 Lamech married two women. One wife was named Adah, and the other was named Zillah. 20 Adah gave birth to Jabal. Jabal was the father of people who live in tents and earn their living by keeping cattle. 21 Jabal was Jubal’s brother. Jubal was the father of people who play the harp and flute. 22 Zillah gave birth to Tubal-Cain. Tubal-Cain was the father of people who work with bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was named Naamah.

23 Lamech said to his wives, “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice! You wives of Lamech, listen to me. A man hurt me, so I killed him. I even killed a child for hitting me. 24 The punishment for killing Cain was very bad. But the punishment for killing me will be many times worse!”

Adam and Eve Have a New Son

25 Adam again had sexual relations with his wife, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth. Eve said, “God has given me another son. Cain killed Abel, but now I have Seth.” 26 Seth also had a son. He named him Enosh. At that time people began to pray to the LORD.

The History of Adam’s Family

1 This is the history of Adam’s family. When God created people, he made them like himself. 2 He created them male and female. And on the same day he made them, he blessed them and called them “humans.”

a 4:7 But if you … control it Or “But if you don’t do right, sin is crouching at your door. It wants you, but you must rule over it.”

b 4:8 Let’s go … field This sentence is found in the ancient versions but not in the standard Hebrew text.

c 4:16 Nod This name means “wandering.”

d 4:20 father This probably means that this man invented these things or was the first one to use them.

e 4:25 Seth This is like a Hebrew word meaning “to give.”

f 4:26 people … the LORD Literally, “people began calling on the name Yahweh.”

3:1 Adam This name means “man” or “people.” It is like the word meaning “earth” or “red clay.”


i 5:2 humans The Hebrew word means “Adam,” “man,” or
After Adam was 130 years old, he had another son. This son looked just like Adam. Adam named his son Seth. After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. So Adam lived a total of 930 years; then he died.

After Seth was 105 years old, he had a son named Enosh. After Enosh was born, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. So Seth lived a total of 912 years; then he died.

After Enosh was 90 years old, he had a son named Kenan. After Kenan was born, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. So Enosh lived a total of 905 years; then he died.

After Kenan was 70 years old, he had a son named Mahalalel. After Mahalalel was born, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. So Kenan lived a total of 910 years; then he died.

When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he had a son named Jared. After Jared was born, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. So Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years; then he died.

After Jared was 162 years old, he had a son named Enoch. After Enoch was born, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. So Jared lived a total of 962 years; then he died.

After Enoch was 65 years old, he had a son named Methuselah. After Methuselah was born, Enoch walked with God for 300 years and had other sons and daughters. So Enoch lived a total of 365 years.

One day Enoch was walking with God, and he disappeared. God took him.

After Methuselah was 187 years old, he had a son named Lamech. After Lamech was born, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters. So Methuselah lived a total of 969 years; then he died.

After Noah was 500 years old, he had sons named Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

People Become Evil

The number of people on earth continued to increase. When these people had daughters, the sons of God saw how beautiful they were. So they chose the women they wanted. They married them, and the women had their children.

Then the Lord said, “People are only human. I will not let my Spirit be troubled by them forever. I will let them live only 120 years.”

During this time and also later, the Nephilim people lived in the land. They have been famous as powerful soldiers since ancient times.

The Lord saw that the people on the earth were very evil. He saw that they thought only about evil things all the time. The Lord was sorry that he had made people on the earth. It made him very sad in his heart. So the Lord said, “I will destroy all the people I created on the earth. I will destroy every person and every animal and everything that crawls on the earth. And I will destroy all the birds in the air, because I am sorry that I have made them.”

But Noah pleased the Lord.

Noah and the Great Flood

This is the history of Noah’s family. He was a good man all his life, and he always followed God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

When God looked at the earth, he saw that people had ruined it. Violence...
was everywhere, and it had ruined their life on earth.

13 So God said to Noah, “Everyone has filled the earth with anger and violence. So I will destroy all living things. I will remove them from the earth. 14 Use cypress wood and build a boat for yourself. Make rooms in the boat and cover it with tar inside and out.

15 “This is the size I want you to make the boat: 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. 16 Make a window for the boat about 1 cubit below the roof. Put a door in the side of the boat. Make three floors in the boat: a top deck, a middle deck, and a lower deck.

17 “Understand what I am telling you. I will bring a great flood of water on the earth. I will destroy all living things that live under heaven. Everything on the earth will die.

18 I will make a special agreement with you. You, your wife, your sons, and their wives will all go into the boat. 19 Also, you will take two of every living thing on the earth with you into the boat. Take a male and female of every kind of animal so that they might survive with you. 20 Two of every kind of bird, animal, and creeping thing will come to you so that you might keep them alive. 21 Also bring every kind of food into the boat, for you and for the animals.”

22 Noah did everything God commanded him.

The Flood Begins

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, “I have seen that you are a good man, even among the evil people of this time. So gather your family, and all of you go into the boat. 2 Get seven pairs (seven males and seven females) of every kind of clean animal. And get one pair (one male and one female) of every other animal on the earth. Lead all these animals into the boat with you. 3 Get seven pairs (seven males and seven females) of all the birds. This will allow all these animals to continue living on the earth after the other animals are destroyed. 4 Seven days from now, I will send much rain on the earth. It will rain for 40 days and 40 nights, and I will wipe everything off the face of the earth. I will destroy everything I made.” 5 Noah did everything the LORD told him to do.

6 Noah was 600 years old at the time the rains came. 7 He and his family went into the boat to be saved from the flood. His wife and his sons and their wives were on the boat with him. 8 All the clean animals, all the other animals on the earth, the birds, and everything that crawls on the earth went into the boat with Noah. These animals went into the boat in groups of two, male and female, just as God commanded. 10 Seven days later the flood started. The rain began to fall on the earth.

11–13 On the 17th day of the second month, when Noah was 600 years old, the springs under the earth broke through the ground, and water flowed out everywhere. The sky also opened like windows and rain poured down. The rain fell on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. That same day Noah went into the boat with his wife, his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives. 14 They and every kind of animal on the earth were in the boat. Every kind of cattle, every kind of animal that crawls on the earth, and every kind of bird were in the boat. 15 All these animals went into the boat with Noah. They came in groups of two from every kind of animal that had the breath of life. 16 All these animals went into the boat in groups of two, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind Noah.

17 Water flooded the earth for 40 days. The water began rising and lifted the boat off the ground. 18 The water continued to rise, and the boat floated on the water.
high above the earth. 19 The water rose so much that even the highest mountains were covered by the water. 20 The water continued to rise above the mountains. The water was more than 20 feet\(^d\) above the highest mountain.

21-22 Every living thing on earth died—every man and woman, every bird, and every kind of animal. All the many kinds of animals and all the things that crawl on the ground died. Every living, breathing thing on dry land died. 23 In this way God wiped the earth clean—he destroyed every living thing on the earth—every human, every animal, everything that crawls, and every bird. All that was left was Noah and his family and the animals that were with him in the boat. 24 The water continued to cover the earth for 150 days.

The Flood Ends

8 But God did not forget about Noah. God remembered him and all the animals that were with him in the boat. God made a wind blow over the earth, and all the water began to disappear.

2 Rain stopped falling from the sky, and water stopped flowing from under the earth. 3-4 The water that covered the earth began to go down. After 150 days the water was low enough that the boat touched land again. The boat stopped on one of the mountains of Ararat. This was the 17th day of the seventh month. 5 The water continued to go down, and by the first day of the tenth month, the tops of the mountains were above the water.

6 Forty days later Noah opened the window he had made in the boat. 7 Then he sent out a raven. The raven flew from place to place until the ground was dry and the water was gone. 8 Noah also sent out a dove. He wanted it to find dry ground. He wanted to know if water still covered the earth.

9 The dove could not find a place to rest because water still covered the earth, so the dove came back to the boat. Noah reached out his hand and caught the dove and brought it back into the boat.

10 After seven days Noah again sent out the dove. 11 And that afternoon the dove came back to Noah. The dove had a fresh olive leaf in its mouth. This was a sign to show Noah that there was dry ground on the earth. 12 Seven days later Noah sent the dove out again. But this time the dove didn’t come back.

13 After that Noah opened the door\(^b\) of the boat. He looked and saw that the ground was dry. This was the first day of the first month of the year. He was 601 years old. 14 By the 27th day of the second month, the ground was completely dry.

15 Then God said to Noah, \(16\) Leave the boat. You, your wife, your sons, and your sons’ wives should go out now. 17 Bring every living animal out of the boat with you—all the birds, animals, and everything that crawls on the earth. These animals will make many more animals, and they will fill the earth again.”

18 So Noah went out with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives. 19 All the animals, everything that crawls, and every bird left the boat. All the animals came out of the boat in family groups.

20 Then Noah built an altar to honor the Lord. Noah took some of all the clean birds and some of all the clean animals and burned them on the altar as a gift to God.

21 The Lord smelled these sacrifices, and it pleased him. The Lord said to himself, “I will never again curse the earth as a way to punish people. People are evil from the time they are young, but I will never again destroy every living thing on the earth as I did this time. 22 As long as the earth continues, there will always be a time for planting and a time for harvest. There will always be cold and hot, summer and winter, day and night on earth.”

The New Beginning

9 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Have many children. Fill the earth with your people. 2 Every

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animal on earth, every bird in the air, every animal that crawls on the ground, and every fish in the sea will be afraid of you. All of them will be under your control. 3 In the past, I gave you the green plants to eat. Now every animal will also be food for you. I give you everything on earth—it is yours. 4 But I give you one command. You must not eat meat that still has its life (blood) in it. 5 Also, I will demand your blood for your lives. That is, I will demand the life of any person or animal that takes a human life.

6 “God made humans to be like himself. So whoever kills a person must be killed by another person.

7 “Have many children and fill the earth with your people.”

8 Then God said to Noah and his sons, 9 “I now make my promise to you and to your people who will live after you. I make my promise to all the birds, and to all the cattle, and to all the animals that came out of the boat with you. I make my promise to every living thing on earth. 10 This is my promise to you: All life on the earth was destroyed by the flood. But that will never happen again. A flood will never again destroy all life on the earth.”

11 And God said, “I will give you something to prove that I made this promise to you. It will continue forever to show that I have made an agreement with you and every living thing on earth. 12 I am putting a rainbow in the clouds as proof of the agreement between me and the earth. 13 When I bring clouds over the earth, you will see the rainbow in the clouds. 14 When I see this rainbow, I will remember the agreement between me and you and every living thing on the earth. This agreement says that a flood will never again destroy all life on the earth. 15 When I look and see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the agreement that continues forever. I will remember the agreement between me and every living thing on the earth.”

16 So God said to Noah, “This rainbow is proof of the agreement that I made with all living things on earth.”

**Problems Begin Again**

18 Noah’s sons came out of the boat with him. Their names were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) 19 These three men were Noah’s sons. And all the people on earth came from these three sons.

20 Noah became a farmer and planted a vineyard. 21 One day Noah made some wine. He got drunk, went into his tent, and took off all his clothes. 22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and told his brothers who were outside the tent. 23 Shem and Japheth took a robe, put it across their shoulders, and walked backward into the tent. Then they covered their father without looking at him.

24 Later, Noah woke up. (He was sleeping because of the wine.) When he learned what his youngest son Ham had done to him, 25 he said, “May there be a curse on Canaan! 26 May he be a slave to his brothers.”

26 Noah also said, “May the LORD, the God of Shem, be praised! May Canaan be Shem’s slave. 27 May God give more land to Japheth. May God live in Shem’s tents, and may Canaan be their slave.”

28 After the flood Noah lived 350 years. 29 He lived a total of 950 years; then he died.

**Nations Grow and Spread**

1 This is the history of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They are Noah’s sons. These men had children after the flood.

**Japheth’s Descendants**

2 Japheth’s sons were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

3 Gomer’s sons were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

4 Javan’s sons were Elishah, Tarshish,
Kittim, and Dodanim. All the people who lived in the area around the Mediterranean Sea came from these sons of Japheth. The people separated and went to different countries according to languages, families, and nations.

Ham's Descendants

Ham's sons were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

Cush's sons were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. Raamah's sons were Sheba and Dedan.

Cush also had a son named Nimrod who became a very powerful man on earth. He was a great hunter before the LORD. That is why people compare other men to him and say, “That man is like Nimrod, a great hunter before the LORD.”

Nimrod's kingdom spread from Babylon to Erech, to Akkad, and then to Calneh in the land of Babylonia. Nimrod also went into Assyria. In Assyria, Nimrod built the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen. (Resen is the city between Nineveh and Calah, the big city.)

Mizraim was the father of the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, Pathrus, Casluh, and Caphtor. (The Philistine people came from Casluh.)

Canaan was the father of Sidon. Sidon was Canaan’s first son. Canaan was also the father of the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Gergashites, Hivites, Arkites, the Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites.

The families of Canaan spread to different parts of the world. The land where the Canaanites lived went from Sidon down along the coast to Gerar and from Gaza as far east as Sodom and Gomorrah and from Admah and Zeboiim as far north as Laish.

Shem's Descendants

Shem was Japheth’s older brother. One of Shem’s descendants was Eber, the father of all the Hebrew people.

Shem’s sons were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

Aram’s sons were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

Arphaxad was the father of Shela. Shelah was the father of Eber.

Eber was the father of two sons. One son was named Peleg. He was given this name because the earth was divided during his life. The other son was named Joktan.

Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these people were Joktan’s sons. They lived in the area between Mesha and the hill country in the East. Mesha was toward the country of Sephar.

These are the people from the family of Shem. They are arranged by families, languages, countries, and nations.

This is the list of the families from Noah’s sons. They are arranged according to their nations. From these families came all the people who spread across the earth after the flood.

The Tower of Babel

There was a time when the whole world spoke one language. Everyone used the same words. Then people began to move from the East. They found a plain in the land of Babylonia and stayed there to live. Then they said to each other, “Let’s make some bricks of clay and bake them in the fire.” Then they used these
bricks as stones, and they used tar as mortar.

4 Then the people said, “Let’s build ourselves a city and a tower that will reach to the sky. Then we will be famous. This will keep us together so that we will not be scattered all over the earth.”

5 Then the Lord came down to see the city and the tower. 6 The Lord said, “These people all speak the same language. And I see that they are joined together to do this work. This is only the beginning of what they can do. Soon they will be able to do anything they want. 7 Let’s go down and confuse their language. Then they will not understand each other.”

8 So people stopped building the city, and the Lord scattered them all over the earth. 9 That is the place where the Lord confused the language of the whole world. That is why it is called Babel. 10 And it was from there that the Lord caused the people to spread out to all the other places on earth.

The History of Shem’s Family

10 This is the history of Shem’s family. Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, his son Arphaxad was born. 11 After that Shem lived 500 years. He had other sons and daughters.

12 When Arphaxad was 35 years old, his son Shelah was born. 13 After Shelah was born, Arphaxad lived 403 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

14 After Shelah was 30 years old, his son Eber was born. 15 After Eber was born, Shelah lived 403 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

16 After Eber was 34 years old, his son Peleg was born. 17 After Peleg was born, Eber lived another 430 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

18 After Peleg was 30 years old, his son Reu was born. 19 After Reu was born, Peleg lived another 209 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

20 After Reu was 32 years old, his son Serug was born. 21 After Serug was born, Reu lived another 207 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

22 After Serug was 30 years old, his son Nahor was born. 23 After Nahor was born, Serug lived another 200 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

24 After Nahor was 29 years old, his son Terah was born. 25 After Terah was born, Nahor lived another 119 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

26 After Terah was 70 years old, his sons Abram, Nahor, and Haran were born.

The History of Terah’s Family

27 This is the history of Terah’s family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot.

28 Haran died in his hometown, Ur of Babylonia, while his father Terah was still alive. 29 Abram and Nahor both married. Abram’s wife was named Sarai. Nahor’s wife was named Milcah. Milcah was the daughter of Haran. Haran was the father of Milcah and Iscah. 30 Sarai did not have any children because she was not able to have children.

31 Terah took his family and left Ur of Babylonia. They planned to travel to Canaan. Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran’s son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai (Abram’s wife). They traveled to the city of Haran and decided to stay there. 32 Terah lived to be 205 years old. He died in Haran.

God Calls Abram

12 The Lord said to Abram, “Leave your country and your people. Leave your father’s family and go to the country that I will show you.

2 I will build a great nation from you.

I will bless you

and make your name famous.

People will use your name
to bless other people.

3 I will bless those who bless you,

and I will curse those who curse

"Babylon." This is like a word meaning "confuse."

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you.
I will use you to bless
all the people on earth.”

Abram Goes to Canaan

4 So Abram left Haran just like the LORD said, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the slaves, and all the other things he had gotten in Haran. Then he and his group moved to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram traveled through the land as far as the town of Shechem and then to the big tree at Moreh. The Canaanites were living in the land at that time.

7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your descendants.” Abram built an altar to honor the LORD who appeared to him there.

8 Then he left that place and traveled to the mountains east of Bethel. He set up his tent there. Bethel was to the west, and Ai was to the east. Abram built another altar at that place to honor the LORD, and he worshiped the LORD there.

9 Then he moved on toward the Negev, stopping for a time at several places on the way.

Abram in Egypt

10 During this time there was not enough food in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to live. 11 Just before they arrived in Egypt, Abram told Sarai, “Look, I know that you are a very beautiful woman. When the Egyptian men see you, they will say, ‘This woman is his wife.’ Then they will kill me and keep you alive because they want you. 12 So tell them that you are my sister. Then they will be good to me because of you. In this way you will save my life.”

13 So when Abram went into Egypt, the Egyptian men saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. 14 Even some of Pharaoh’s officials noticed her and told Pharaoh how beautiful she was. So they took her to Pharaoh’s house. 15 Pharaoh was kind to Abram because he thought Abram was Sarai’s brother. He gave Abram sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and men and women servants.

16 Pharaoh took Abram’s wife, so the LORD caused Pharaoh and all the people in his house to have very bad diseases. 17 Pharaoh called Abram and said to him, “You have done a very bad thing to me! Why didn’t you tell me Sarai was your wife? 18 You said, ‘She is my sister.’ Why did you say that? I took her so that she could be my wife, but now I give your wife back to you. Take her and go!” 19 Then Pharaoh commanded his men to lead Abram out of Egypt. So Abram and his wife left that place and took everything they had with them.

Abram Returns to Canaan

13 1 So Abram left Egypt. He traveled through the Negev with his wife and everything he owned. Lot was also with them. 2 At this time Abram was very rich. He had many animals and much silver and gold.

3 Abram continued traveling around. He left the Negev and went back to Bethel. He went to the place between the city of Bethel and Ai, where he and his family had camped before. 4 This was where Abram had built an altar earlier. So he worshiped the LORD there.

Abram and Lot Separate

5 During this time Lot was also traveling with Abram. Lot had many animals and tents. 6 Abram and Lot had so many animals that the land could not support both of them together. 7 (The Canaanites and the Perizzites were also living in this land at the same time.) The shepherds of Abram and Lot began to argue.

8 So Abram said to Lot, “There should be no arguing between you and me or between your people and my people. We are all brothers. 9 We should separate. You
can choose any place you want. If you go to the left, I will go to the right. If you go to the right, I will go to the left.”

Lot looked and saw the whole Jordan Valley. He saw that there was much water there. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. At that time the Jordan Valley all the way to Zoar was like the Lord’s Garden. This was good land, like the land of Egypt.) So Lot chose to live in the Jordan Valley. The two men separated, and Lot began traveling east. Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, and Lot lived among the cities in the valley. Lot moved as far as Sodom and made his camp there. The Lord knew that the people of Sodom were very evil sinners.

After Lot left, the Lord said to Abram, “Look around you. Look north, south, east, west. All this land that you see I will give to you and your people who live after you. This will be your land forever. I will make your people so many that they will be like the dust of the earth. If people could count all the particles of dust on earth, they could count your people. So go. Walk through your land. I now give it to you.”

So Abram moved his tents. He went to live near the big trees of Mamre. This was near the city of Hebron. There he built an altar to honor the Lord.

Lot Is Captured

Amraphel was the king of Babylonia, Arioch was the king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer was the king of Elam, and Tidal was the king of Goiim. All these kings fought a war against King Bera of Sodom: King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboim, and the king of Bela. (Bela is also called Zoar.)

All these kings joined their armies in the Valley of Siddim. (The Valley of Siddim is now the Salt Sea.) These kings had served Kedorlaomer for twelve years. But in the 13th year, they all rebelled against him. So in the 14th year, King Kedorlaomer and the kings with him came to fight against them. Kedorlaomer and the kings with him defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim. They also defeated the Zuzites in Ham. They defeated the Emites in Shaveh Kiriathaim. And they defeated the Horites who lived in the area from the hill country of Seir to El Paran. (El Paran is near the desert.)

Then King Kedorlaomer turned back, went to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and defeated the Amalekites. He also defeated the Amorites living in Hazezon Tamar.

At that time the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Bela (Zoar) joined together to fight against their enemies in the Valley of Siddim. They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia, and King Arioch of Ellasar. So there were four kings fighting against five.

There were many holes filled with tar in the Valley of Siddim. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their armies ran away, some of the soldiers fell into these holes, but the others ran away to the mountains.

So Kedorlaomer and his armies took everything that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah owned. They took all their food and clothing and left. Lot, the son of Abram’s brother, was living in Sodom, and they captured him. They also took everything he owned and left. One of the men who had escaped went to Abram the Hebrew and told him what happened. Abram was camped near the trees of Mamre the Amorite. Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner had made an agreement to help each other, and they had also signed an agreement to help Abram.

Abram Rescues Lot

When Abram learned that Lot was captured, he called all of his family together.
There were 318 trained soldiers. He led the men and chased the enemy all the way to the town of Dan. That night he and his men made a surprise attack against the enemy. They defeated them and chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus. Then Abram brought back everything the enemy had stolen, as well as the women and servants, his nephew Lot, and everything Lot owned.

17 Then Abram went home after he defeated Kedorlaomer and the kings with him. On his way home, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh. (This is now called King’s Valley.)

Melchizedek

18 Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, also went to meet Abram. He brought bread and wine.

19 He blessed Abram and said, “Abram, may you be blessed by God Most High, the one who made heaven and earth. And we praise God Most High, who helped you defeat your enemies.” Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything he had taken during the battle.

21 Then the king of Sodom told Abram, “Give me my people who were captured. But you can keep everything else.”

22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I promise to the Lord, the God Most High, the one who made heaven and earth. I promise that I will not keep anything that is yours—not even a thread or a sandal strap! I don’t want you to say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ The only thing I will accept is the food that my young men have eaten, but you should give the other men their share. Take what we won in battle and give some to Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. These men helped me in the battle.”

God’s Agreement With Abram

15 After all these things happened, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision. God said, “Abram, don’t be afraid. I will defend you and give you a great reward.”

2 But Abram said, “Lord God, there is nothing you can give me that will make me happy, because I have no son. My slave Eliezer from Damascus will get everything I own after I die.”

3 Abram said, “You have given me no son, so a slave born in my house will get everything I have.”

4 Then the Lord spoke to Abram and said, “That slave will not be the one to get what you have. You will have a son who will get everything you own.”

5 Then God led Abram outside and said, “Look at the sky. See the many stars. There are so many you cannot count them. Your family will be like that.”

6 Abram believed the Lord, and because of this faith the Lord accepted him as one who has done what is right.

7 He said to Abram, “I am the Lord who led you from Ur of Babylonia. I did this so that I could give you this land. You will own this land.”

8 But Abram said, “Lord God, how can I be sure that I will get this land?”

9 God said to Abram, “We will make an agreement. Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a dove, and a young pigeon.”

10 Abram brought all these to God. Abram killed these animals and cut each of them into two pieces. Then he laid each half across from the other half. He did not cut the birds into two pieces. Later, large birds flew down to eat the animals, but Abram chased them away.

12 The sun began to go down and Abram got very sleepy. While he was asleep, a very terrible darkness came over him.

13 Then the Lord said to Abram, “You should know this: Your descendants will live in a country that is not their own. They will be strangers there. The people there will make them slaves and be cruel to them for 400 years. But then I will punish the nation that made them slaves.

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Your people will leave that land, and they will take many good things with them.

15 “You yourself will live to be very old. You will die in peace and will be buried with your family. 16 After four generations your people will come to this land again and defeat the Amorites. That will happen in the future because the Amorites are not yet guilty enough to lose their land.”

17 After the sun went down, it got very dark. The dead animals were still on the ground, each animal cut into two pieces. Then a smoking firepot and a flaming torch passed between the halves of the dead animals.

18 So on that day the Lord made a promise and an agreement with Abram. He said, “I will give this land to your descendants. I will give them the land between the River of Egypt and the great river Euphrates.

19 This is the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”

Hagar the Servant Girl

1 Sarai was Abram’s wife, but she did not have any children. She had an Egyptian slave named Hagar. 2 Sarai told Abram, “The Lord has not allowed me to have children, so sleep with my slave. Maybe she can have a son, and I will accept him as my own.” Abram did what Sarai said.

3 So after living ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai gave her Egyptian slave to Abram as a second wife. 4 Abram slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When Hagar realized this, she became very proud and began to feel that she was better than Sarai her owner.

5 Then Sarai said to Abram, “My slave girl now hates me, and I blame you for this. I gave her to you, and she became pregnant. Then she began to feel that she is better than I am. I want the Lord to judge which of us is right.”

6 But Abram said to Sarai, “She is your slave. You can do anything you want to her.” So Sarai was cruel to Hagar, and Hagar ran away.

Hagar’s Son Ishmael

7 The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring of water in the desert. The spring was by the road to Shur. 8 The angel said, “Hagar, Sarai’s slave girl, why are you here? Where are you going?”

Hagar said, “I am running away from Sarai.”

9 The angel of the Lord said to her, “Sarai is your owner. Go home to her and obey her.”

10 The angel of the Lord also said, “From you will come many people—too many people to count.”

11 Then the angel of the Lord said, “Hagar, you are now pregnant, and you will have a son. You will name him Ishmael, because the Lord has heard that you were treated badly.

12 Ishmael will be wild and free like a wild donkey. He will be against everyone, and everyone will be against him. He will move from place to place and camp near his brothers.”

13 The Lord talked to Hagar. She began to use a new name for God. She said to him, “You are ‘God Who Sees Me.’” She said this because she thought, “I see that even in this place God sees me and cares for me!”

14 So the well there was called Beer Lahai Roi. It is between Kadesh and Bered.

15 Hagar gave birth to Abram’s son, and Abram named the son Ishmael. 16 Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born from Hagar.

a 15:17 firepot A clay pot in which burning coals were placed to be used for starting new fires.

b 15:17 passed between … animals This showed that God “signed” or “sealed” the agreement he made with Abram. People showed that they were sincere in making an agreement by walking between the parts of animals that had been cut into pieces and saying something like, “May this same thing happen to me if I don’t keep the agreement.”

c 15:18 River of Egypt That is, the stream called “Wadi El-Arish.”

d 16:17 Ishmael This name means “God hears.”

e 16:14 Beer Lahai Roi This means “The well of the Living One who sees me.”

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Circumcision—Proof of the Agreement

17 When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him. He said, “I am God All-Powerful. Obey me and live the right way. If you do this, I will prepare an agreement between us. I will promise to make your people a great nation.”

Then Abram bowed down before God. God said to him, “This is my part of our agreement: I will make you the father of many nations. I will change your name from Abram to Abraham, because I am making you the father of many nations. I will give you many descendants. New nations and kings will come from you. And I will prepare an agreement between me and you. This agreement will also be for all your descendants. It will continue forever. I will be your God and the God of all your descendants. I will give you the land you are traveling through—the land of Canaan. I will give you this land forever, and I will be your God.”

Then God said to Abraham, “Now, this is your part of the agreement: You and all your descendants will obey my agreement. This is my agreement that all of you must obey. This is the agreement between me and you and all your descendants. Every male must be circumcised. You will cut the skin to show that you follow the agreement between me and you. When the baby boy is eight days old, you will circumcise him. Every boy born among your people and every boy who is a slave of your people must be circumcised. So every baby boy in your nation will be circumcised. Every boy who is born from your family or bought as a slave will be circumcised. Abraham, this is the agreement between you and me: Any male who is not circumcised will be cut off from his people because he has broken my agreement.”

Isaac—the Promised Son

15 God said to Abraham, “I will give Sarai, your wife, a new name. Her new name will be Sarah. I will bless her. I will give her a son, and you will be the father. She will be the mother of many new nations. Kings of nations will come from her.”

16 Abraham bowed his face to the ground to show he respected God. But he laughed and said to himself, “I am 100 years old. I cannot have a son, and Sarah is 90 years old. She cannot have a child.”

17 Then Abraham said to God, “I hope Ishmael will live and serve you.”

18 God said, “No, I said that your wife Sarah will have a son. You will name him Isaac. I will make my agreement with him that will continue forever with all his descendants.

19 “You mentioned Ishmael, and I heard you. I will bless him, and he will have many children. He will be the father of twelve great leaders. His family will become a great nation. But I will make my agreement with Isaac, the son who Sarah will have. He will be born at this same time next year.”

20 After God finished talking with Abraham, God went up into heaven. Then Abraham gathered together Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house. He also gathered all the slaves he had bought. Every man and boy in Abraham’s house was gathered together, and they were all circumcised. Abraham circumcised them that day, just as God had told him to do.

21 Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised. And Ishmael, his son, was 13 years old when he was circumcised. Abraham and his son were circumcised on the same day. Also, on that day all the men in Abraham’s house were circumcised. All the slaves born in his house and all the slaves he had bought were circumcised.

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The Three Visitors

1 Later, the Lord again appeared to Abraham near the oak trees of Mamre. It was the hottest part of the day, and Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent. 2 He looked up and saw three men standing in front of him. When he saw the men, he ran to them and bowed before them. 3 Abraham said, “Sirs, please stay a while with me, your servant. 4 I will bring some water to wash your feet. You can rest under the trees. 5 I will get some food for you, and you can eat as much as you want. Then you can continue your journey.”

The three men said, “Do as you wish.”

6 Abraham hurried to the tent. He said to Sarah, “Quickly, prepare enough flour for three loaves of bread.” 7 Then Abraham ran to his cattle. He took his best young calf and gave it to the servant there. He told the servant to quickly kill the calf and prepare it for food. 8 Abraham brought the meat and some milk and cheese and set them down in front of the three men. Then he stood near the men, ready to serve them while they sat under the tree and ate.

9 Then the men said to Abraham, “Where is your wife Sarah?”

Abraham said, “She is there, in the tent.”

10 Then one of them said, “I will come again in the spring. At that time your wife Sarah will have a son.”

Sarah was listening in the tent and heard these things. 11 Abraham and Sarah were very old. Sarah was past the right age for women to have children. 12 So she laughed to herself and said, “I am old, and my husband is old. I am too old to have a baby.”

13 Then the Lord said to Abraham, “Sarah laughed and said she was too old to have a baby. 14 But is anything too hard for the Lord? I will come again in the spring, just as I said I would, and your wife Sarah will have a son.”

15 Sarah said, “I didn’t laugh!” (She said this because she was afraid.)

16 Then the Lord said, “No, I know that is not true. You did laugh!”

17 Then the men got up to leave. They looked toward Sodom and began walking in that direction. Abraham walked with them to send them on their way.

Abraham’s Bargain With God

18 The Lord said to himself, “Should I tell Abraham what I am going to do now? 19 Abraham will become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on earth will be blessed because of him. 20 I have made a special agreement with him. I did this so that he would command his children and his descendants to live the way the Lord wants them to. I did this so that they would live right and be fair. Then I, the Lord, can give him what I promised.”

21 Then the Lord said, “I have heard many times that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are very evil. 22 I will go and see if they are as bad as I have heard. Then I will know for sure.”

23 So the men turned and started walking toward Sodom while Abraham stood there before the Lord. 24 Then Abraham approached him and asked, “Will you destroy the good people while you are destroying those who are evil? 25 What if there are fifty good people in that city? Will you still destroy it? Surely you will save the city for the fifty good people living there. 26 Surely you would not destroy the city. You would not destroy fifty good people to kill those who are evil. If that happened, those who are good would be the same as those who are evil—both would be punished. As the judge of the whole world, surely you would do the right thing!”

27 Then the Lord said, “If I find fifty good people in the city of Sodom, I will save the whole city.”

28 Then Abraham said, “Compared to you, Lord, I am only dust and ashes. But let me bother you again and ask you this question. 29 What if there are five less than fifty? Will you destroy a whole city because of just five people?”
The Lord said, “If I find forty-five good people there, I will not destroy the city.”

29 Abraham spoke again. He said, “And if you find only forty good people there, will you destroy the city?”

The Lord said, “If I find forty good people, I will not destroy the city.”

30 Then Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me, but let me ask you this. If only thirty good people are in the city, will you destroy it?”

The Lord said, “If I find thirty good people there, I will not destroy the city.”

31 Then Abraham said, “Lord, may I bother you again and ask, what if there are twenty good people?”

The Lord answered, “If I find twenty good people, I will not destroy the city.”

32 Then Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me, but let me bother you this one last time. If you find ten good people there, what will you do?”

The Lord said, “If I find ten good people in the city, I will not destroy it.”

33 The Lord finished speaking to Abraham and left. Then Abraham went back home.

Lot’s Visitors

19 1–2 That evening the two angels came to the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting near the city gates and saw them. He got up and went to them. He bowed to show respect and said, “Sirs, please come to my house, and I will serve you. There you can wash your feet and stay the night. Then tomorrow you can continue your journey.”

The angels answered, “No, we will stay the night in the city square.”

3 But Lot continued to ask them to come to his house, so they agreed and went with him. Lot gave them something to drink. He baked some bread for them, and they ate it.

4 That evening, just before bedtime, men from every part of town came to Lot’s house. They stood around the house and called to Lot. They said, “Where are the two men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us. We want to have sex with them.”

6 Lot went outside and closed the door behind him. He said to the men, “No, my friends, I beg you, please don’t do this evil thing! 7 Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man before. I will give my daughters to you. You can do anything you want with them. But please don’t do anything to these men. They have come to my house, and I must protect them.”

9 The men surrounding the house answered, “Get out of our way!” They said to themselves, “This man Lot came to our city as a visitor. Now he wants to tell us how we should live!” Then the men said to Lot, “We will do worse things to you than to them.” So the men started moving closer and closer to Lot. They were about to break down the door.

10 But the two men staying with Lot opened the door, pulled him back inside the house, and closed the door. 11 Then they did something to the men outside the door—they caused all these evil men, young and old, to become blind. So the men trying to get in the house could not find the door.

The Escape From Sodom

12 The two men said to Lot, “Are there any other people from your family living in this city? Do you have any sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or any other people from your family here? If so, you should tell them to leave now. 13 We are going to destroy this city. The Lord heard how evil this city is, so he sent us to destroy it.”

14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, the men who had married his other daughters. He said, “Hurry and leave this city! The Lord will soon destroy it!” But they thought he was joking.

15 The next morning at dawn, the angels were trying to make Lot hurry. They said, “This city will be punished, so take your wife and your two daughters who are still...
with you and leave this place. Then you will not be destroyed with the city.”

16 When Lot did not move fast enough, the two men grabbed his hand. They also took the hands of his wife and his two daughters. The two men led Lot and his family safely out of the city. The Lord was kind to Lot and his family. 17 So after the two men brought Lot and his family out of the city, one of the men said, “Now run to save your life! Don’t look back at the city, and don’t stop anywhere in the valley. Run until you are in the mountains. If you stop, you will be destroyed with the city!”

18 But Lot said to the two men, “Sirs, please don’t force me to run so far! You have been very kind to me, your servant. You have been very kind to save me, but I cannot run all the way to the mountains. What if I am too slow and something happens? I will be killed! 19 Look, there is a very small town near here. Let me run to that town. I can run there and be safe.”

20 The angel said to Lot, “Very well, I’ll let you do that. I will not destroy that town. 21 But run there quickly. I cannot destroy Sodom until you are safely in that town.” (That town is named Zoar, because it is a small town.)

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

23 Lot was entering the town as the sun came up, and the Lord began to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. He caused fire and burning sulfur to fall from the sky. 24 He destroyed the whole valley—all the cities, the people living in the cities, and all the plants in the valley.

25 Lot’s wife was following behind him and looked back at the city. When she did, she became a block of salt.

26 Early the next morning, Abraham got up and went to the place where he stood before the Lord. 27 Abraham looked down into the valley toward the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He saw clouds of smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.

28 God destroyed the cities in the valley, but he remembered what Abraham had said. So God sent Lot away from those cities before destroying them.

Lot and His Daughters

30 Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar, so he and his two daughters went to live in the mountains in a cave. 31 One day the older daughter said to the younger, “Everywhere on the earth, men and women marry and have a family. But our father is old, and there are no men around here to give us children. 32 So let’s get our father drunk with wine. Then we can have sex with him. That way we can use our father to keep our family alive!”

33 That night the two girls went to their father and got him drunk with wine. Then the older daughter went and had sexual relations with him. He did not even know when she came to bed or when she got up.

34 The next day the older daughter said to the younger daughter, “Last night I went to bed with my father. Let’s get him drunk with wine again tonight. Then you can go and have sex with him. In this way we can use our father to have children, and our family will not come to an end.”

35 So that night the two girls got their father drunk with wine. Then the younger daughter went and had sexual relations with him. Again, Lot did not know when she came to bed or when she got up.

36 Both of Lot’s daughters became pregnant. Their father was the father of their babies. 37 The older daughter gave birth to a son. She named him Moab. Moab is the ancestor of all the Moabites living today. 38 The younger daughter also gave birth to a son. She named him Ben-Ammi. Ben-Ammi is the ancestor of all the Ammonites living today.

Abraham Goes to Gerar

20 1 Abraham left that place and traveled to the Negev. He settled in the city of Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur. While in Gerar, 2 Abraham told people that...
Sarah was his sister. King Abimelech of Gerar heard this. Abimelech wanted Sarah, so he sent some servants to take her. But one night God spoke to Abimelech in a dream and said, “You will die. The woman you took is married.”

But Abimelech had not yet slept with Sarah, so he said, “Lord, I am not guilty. Would you kill an innocent man? Abraham himself told me, ‘This woman is my sister,’ and she also said, ‘This man is my brother.’ I am innocent. I did not know what I was doing.”

Then God said to Abimelech in a dream, “Yes, I know that you are innocent and that you did not know what you were doing. I saved you. I did not allow you to sin against me. I was the one who did not allow you to sleep with her. So give Abraham his wife again. He is a prophet. He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you don’t give Sarah back to him, I promise that you will die. And all your family will die with you.”

So very early the next morning, Abimelech called all his servants and told them about the dream. The servants were very afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “Why have you done this to us? What wrong did I do to you? Why did you lie and say that she was your sister? You brought great trouble to my kingdom. You should not have done this to me.”

So Abraham said, “I thought no one in this place respected God. I thought someone would kill me to get Sarah. She is my wife, but she is also my sister. She is the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother. God led me away from my father’s house. He led me to wander to many different places. When that happened, I told Sarah, ‘Do something for me. Wherever we go, tell people you are my sister.’”

So Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham. Abimelech also gave Abraham some sheep, cattle, and slaves. And Abimelech said, “Look all around you. This is my land. You may live any place you want.”

Abimelech said to Sarah, “I gave your brother Abraham 1000 pieces of silver. I did this to show that I am very sorry. I want everyone to see that I did the right thing.”

The LORD made all the women in Abimelech’s family not able to have children. God did this because Abimelech had taken Sarah, Abraham’s wife. But Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his servant girls.

Finally, a Baby for Sarah

The LORD came back to visit Sarah as he said he would, and he kept his promise to her. At exactly the time God said it would happen, Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. Abraham named his son Isaac. Abraham did what God commanded and circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old.

Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born. Sarah said, “God has made me happy, and everyone who hears about this will be happy with me. No one thought that I, Sarah, would be able to have Abraham’s child. But I have given Abraham a son, even though he is old.”

Trouble at Home

Isaac continued to grow, and soon he was old enough to begin eating solid food. So Abraham gave a big party. Sarah saw Hagar’s son playing. (Hagar was the Egyptian slave woman who gave birth to Abraham’s first son.) Sarah said to Abraham, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son. Send them away! When we die, our son Isaac will get everything we have. I don’t want that slave woman’s son sharing these things with my son Isaac!”

This upset Abraham very much. He was worried about his son Ishmael. But God said to Abraham, “Don’t worry about the boy and the slave woman. Do what

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Sarah wants. Your descendants will be those who come through Isaac. 13But I will also bless the son of your slave woman. He is your son, so I will make a great nation from his family also.”

14Early the next morning Abraham took some food and water and gave them to Hagar. She carried them and left with her boy. She left that place and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

15After some time, when all their drinking water was gone, Hagar put her son under a bush. 16Then she walked a short distance away and sat down. She thought her son would die because there was no water. She did not want to watch him die. She sat there and began to cry.

17God heard the boy crying, and God’s angel called to Hagar from heaven. He said, “What is wrong, Hagar? Don’t be afraid! God has heard the boy crying there. 18Go help the boy. Hold his hand and lead him. I will make him the father of many people.”

19Then God allowed Hagar to see a well of water. So she went to the well and filled her bag with water. Then she gave water to the boy to drink.

20God continued to be with the boy while he grew up. Ishmael lived in the desert and became a hunter. He learned to shoot a bow very well.

21His mother found a wife for him in Egypt. They continued to live in the Paran desert.

Abraham’s Bargain With Abimelech

22Then Abimelech and Phicol spoke with Abraham. Phicol was the commander of Abimelech’s army. They said to Abraham, “God is with you in everything you do. 23So make a promise to me here before God. Promise that you will be fair with me and with my children. Promise that you will be kind to me and this country where you have lived. Promise that you will be as kind to me as I have been to you.”

24And Abraham said, “I promise to treat you the same way you have treated me.” 25Then Abraham complained to Abimelech because Abimelech’s servants had captured a well of water.

26But Abimelech said, “I don’t know who did this. You never told me about this before today!”

27So Abraham and Abimelech made an agreement. Abraham gave Abimelech some sheep and cattle as proof of the agreement. 28Abraham also put seven a female lambs in front of Abimelech.

29Abimelech asked Abraham, “Why did you put these seven female lambs by themselves?”

30Abraham answered, “When you accept these lambs from me, it will be proof that I dug this well.”

31So after that, the well was called Beer-sheba. b Abraham gave the well this name because it was the place where they made a promise to each other.

32So Abraham and Abimelech made an agreement at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and Phicol, his military commander, went back to the country of the Philistines.

33Abraham planted a special tree at Beersheba and prayed to the Lord , the God who lives forever.

34And Abraham lived as a stranger for a long time in the country of the Philistines.

Abraham, Kill Your Son

22 1After these things God decided to test Abraham’s faith. God said to him, “Abraham!”

And he said, “Yes!”

2Then God said, “Take your son to the land of Moriah and kill your son there as a sacrifice for me. This must be Isaac, your only son, the one you love. Use him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains there. I will tell you which mountain.”

3In the morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took Isaac and two servants with him. He cut the wood for the sacrifice. Then they went to the place where God told them to go. 4After they traveled three days, Abraham looked up, and in the distance he saw the place where

a 21:28 seven The Hebrew word for “seven” is like the Hebrew word for “oath” or “promise,” and it is like the last part of the name Beersheba. The seven animals were proof of this promise.

b 21:31 Beersheba This name means “well of the oath.”
they were going. 5 Then he said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go to that place and worship. Then we will come back to you later.”

6 Abraham took the wood for the sacrifice and put it on his son’s shoulder. Abraham took the special knife and fire. Then both he and his son went together to the place for worship.

7 Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!”

Abraham answered, “Yes, son?”

Isaac said, “I see the wood and the fire. But where is the lamb we will burn as a sacrifice?”

8 Abraham answered, “God himself is providing the lamb for the sacrifice, my son.”

So both Abraham and his son went together to that place. 9 When they came to the place where God told them to go, Abraham built an altar. He carefully laid the wood on the altar. Then he tied up his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached for his knife to kill his son.

11 But the angel of the LORD stopped him. The angel called from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”

Abraham answered, “Yes?”

12 The angel said, “Don’t kill your son or hurt him in any way. Now I can see that you do respect and obey God. I see that you are ready to kill your son, your only son, for me.”

13 Then Abraham noticed a ram whose horns were caught in a bush. So Abraham went and took the ram. He offered it, instead of his son, as a sacrifice to God.

14 Then Abraham reached up to cut the ram with the knife. He gave him the name, “The LORD Provides.” Even today people say, “On the mountain of the LORD, he will give us what we need.”

15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham the second time.

16 The angel said, “You were ready to kill your only son for me. Since you did this for me, I make you this promise: I, the LORD, promise that 17 I will surely bless you and give you as many descendants as the stars in the sky. There will be as many people as sand on the seashore. And your people will live in cities that they will take from their enemies. 18 Every nation on the earth will be blessed through your descendants. I will do this because you obeyed me.”

19 Then Abraham went back to his servants. They all traveled back to Beersheba, and Abraham stayed there.

20 After all these things happened, a message was sent to Abraham. It said, “Your brother Nahor and his wife Milcah have children now. 21 The first son is Uz. The second son is Buz. The third son is Kemuel, the father of Aram. 22 Then there are Kedesh, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.” Bethuel was the father of Rebekah. Milcah was the mother of these eight sons, and Nahor was the father. Nahor was Abraham’s brother. 23 Also Nahor had four other sons from his slave woman Reumah. The sons were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Sarah Dies

23 Sarah lived to be 127 years old. 2 She died in the city of Kiriath Arba (Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham was very sad and cried for her there. 3 Then he left his dead wife and went to talk to the Hittites. He said, “I am only a foreigner staying in your country. I have no place to bury my wife. Please give me some land so that I can bury her.”

5 The Hittites answered Abraham, “Sir, you are a great leader among us. You can have the best place we have to bury your dead. You can have any of our burying places that you want. None of us will stop you from burying your wife there.”

7 Abraham got up and bowed to the people. He said to them, “If you really want to help me bury my dead wife, speak to Ephron the son of Zohar for me. I would like to buy the cave of Machpelah, which belongs to Ephron. It is at the end

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\(a\) 22:14 The LORD Provides Hebrew, “Yahweh Yireh,” which can mean “the LORD sees” or “the LORD gives.”

\(b\) 22:14 On the mountain … need Or “On this mountain the LORD can be seen.”

\(c\) 23:6 great leader Literally, “God’s prince.”
of his field. I will pay him the full price. I want all of you to be witnesses that I am buying it as a burial place.”

10 Ephron was sitting there among the people. He answered Abraham, “No, sir. Here in front of my people, I give you that land and the cave on it so that you can bury your wife.”

11 Abraham bowed before the Hittites. He said to Ephron before all the people, “But I want to give you the full price for the field. Accept my money, and I will bury my dead.”

12 Ephron answered Abraham, “Sir, listen to me. Ten pounds of silver mean nothing to you or me. Take the land and bury your dead wife.”

13 Abraham understood that Ephron was telling him the price of the land. So Abraham paid him for the land. He weighed out ten pounds of silver for Ephron and gave it to the merchant.

14 So the field of Ephron changed owners. This field was in Machpelah, near Mamre. Abraham became the owner of the field, the cave in it, and all the trees in the field. Everyone in the city saw the agreement between Ephron and Abraham. After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of that field near Mamre (Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

15 Abraham bought the field and the cave in it from the Hittites. So this became his property to be used as a burial place.

A Wife for Isaac

24 Abraham lived to be a very old man. The LORD blessed him and everything he did. 2 Abraham’s oldest servant was in charge of everything he owned. Abraham called that servant to him and said, “Put your hand under my leg. 3 Now I want you to make a promise to me. Promise to me before the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry a girl from Canaan. We live among these people, but don’t let him marry a Canaanite girl. Go back to my country, to my own people, to find a wife for my son Isaac. Bring her here to him.”

4 The servant said to him, “Maybe this woman will not want to come back with me to this land. If that happens, should I take your son with me to your homeland?”

5 Abraham said to him, “No, don’t take my son to that place. 6 The LORD, the God of heaven, brought me from my homeland to this place. That place was the home of my father and the home of my family, but he promised that this new land would belong to my family. May he send his angel before you so that you can choose a wife for my son. 7 If the girl refuses to come with you, you will be free from this promise. But you must not take my son back to that place.”

8 So the servant put his hand under his master’s leg and made the promise.

The Search Begins

9 The servant took ten of Abraham’s camels and left that place. The servant carried with him many different kinds of beautiful gifts. He went to Mesopotamia, to Nahor’s city. 10 In the evening, when the women come out to get water, he went to the water well outside the city. He made the camels kneel down at the well.

11 I will say to one of them, ‘Please put your jar down so that I can drink.’ Let her answer show whether she is the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. 12 Here I am, standing by this well of water, and the young women from the city are coming out to get water. 13 I will say to one of them, ‘Please put your jar down so that I can drink.’ Let her answer show whether she is the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. If she says, ‘Drink, and I will also give water to your camels,’ I will know that she is the right one. It will be
proof that you have shown kindness to my master.”

A Wife Is Found

Before the servant finished praying, a young woman named Rebekah came to the well. She was the daughter of Bethuel. (Bethuel was the son of Milcah and Nahor, Abraham’s brother.) Rebekah came to the well with her water jar on her shoulder. She was very pretty. She was a virgin; no man had ever had sexual relations with her. She went down to the well and filled her jar.

Then the servant ran to her and said, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.”

Rebekah quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and gave him a drink. She said, “Drink this, sir.” As soon as she finished giving him something to drink, Rebekah said, “I will also pour some water for your camels.”

So Rebekah quickly poured all the water from her jar into the drinking trough for the camels. Then she ran to the well to get more water, and she gave water to all the camels.

The servant quietly watched her. He wanted to be sure that the Lord had given him an answer and had made his trip successful.

After the camels finished drinking, he gave Rebekah a gold ring that weighed 1/4 ounce. He also gave her two gold arm bracelets that weighed 2 ounces each.

The servant asked, “Who is your father? And is there a place in your father’s house for me and my men to sleep?”

Rebekah answered, “My father is Bethuel, the son of Milcah and Nahor.” Then she said, “Yes, we have straw and other food for your camels and a place for you to sleep.”

The servant bowed and worshiped the Lord. He said, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham. The Lord has been kind and loyal to him by leading me to his own people.”

Then Rebekah ran and told her family about all these things.

A brother named Laban. She told him what the man had said to her. Laban was listening to her. And when he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, he ran out to the well. There the man was, standing by the camels at the well. Laban said, “Sir, you are welcome to come in! You don’t have to stand outside here. I have prepared a room for you to sleep in and a place for your camels.”

So Abraham’s servant went into the house. Laban unloaded his camels and gave them straw and feed. Then he gave Abraham’s servant water so that he and the men with him could wash their feet.

Laban then gave him food to eat, but the servant refused to eat. He said, “I will not eat until I have told you why I came.”

So Laban said, “Then tell us.”

Bargaining for Rebekah

The servant said, “I am Abraham’s servant. The Lord has greatly blessed my master in everything. My master has become a great man. The Lord has given him many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. He has much silver and gold and many servants. He has many camels and donkeys.

Sarah was my master’s wife. When she was very old, she gave birth to a son, and my master has given everything he owns to that son. My master forced me to make a promise to him. He said to me, ‘You must not allow my son to marry a girl from Canaan. We live among these people, but I don’t want him to marry one of the Canaanite girls.

So you must promise to go to my father’s country. Go to my family and choose a wife for my son.’

I said to my master, ‘Maybe the woman will not come back to this place with me.’

But my master said to me, ‘I serve the Lord, and he will send his angel with you and help you. You will find a wife for my son among my people there.’ But if you go to my father’s country, and they refuse to give you a wife for my son, you will be free from this promise.’

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“Today I came to this well and said, ‘LORD, God of my master Abraham, please make my trip successful. 43I will stand by this well and wait for a young woman to come to get water. Then I will say, “Please give me water from your jar to drink.” 44The right woman will answer in a special way. She will say, “Drink this water, and I will also get water for your camels.” That way I will know that she is the one the LORD has chosen for my master’s son.’ 45Before I finished praying, Rebekah came out to the well to get water. She had her water jar on her shoulder as she went to get water from the well. I asked her to give me some water. 46She quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and poured me some water. Then she said, ‘Drink this, and I’ll get some water for your camels.’ So I drank the water, and she gave water to my camels. 47Then I asked her, ‘Who is your father?’ She answered, ‘My father is Bethuel the son of Milcah and Nahor.’ Then I gave her the ring and bracelets for her arms. 48I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham. I thanked him for leading me straight to the granddaughter of my master’s brother. 49Now, tell me, will you be kind and loyal to my master and give him your daughter? Or will you refuse to give her to him? Tell me so that I will know what I should do.” 50Then Laban and Bethuel answered, “We see that this is from the LORD, so there is nothing we can say to change it. 51Here is Rebekah. Take her and go. Let her marry your master’s son. This is what the LORD wants.” 52When Abraham’s servant heard this, he bowed to the ground before the LORD. 53Then he gave Rebekah the gifts he brought. He gave her beautiful clothes and gold and silver jewelry. He also gave expensive gifts to her mother and brother. 54Then he and his men had something to eat and drink, and they spent the night there. Early the next morning they got up and the servant said, “Now we must go back to my master.” 55Rebekah’s mother and her brother said, “Let Rebekah stay with us for a short time. Let her stay with us ten days. After that she can go.” 56But the servant said to them, “Don’t make me wait. The LORD has made my trip successful. Now let me go back to my master.” 57Rebekah’s brother and mother said, “We will call Rebekah and ask her what she wants to do.” 58They called her and asked her, “Do you want to go with this man now?” Rebekah said, “Yes, I will go.” 59So they allowed Rebekah to go with Abraham’s servant and his men. Her nurse also went with them. 60While Rebekah was leaving they said to her, “Our sister, may you be the mother of millions of people, and may your descendants defeat their enemies and take their cities.” 61Then Rebekah and her nurse got on the camels and followed the servant and his men. So the servant took Rebekah and left. 62Isaac had left Beer Lahai Roi and was now living in the Negev. 63One evening he went out to the field to think. He looked up and saw the camels coming from far away. 64Rebekah also looked and saw Isaac. Then she jumped down from the camel. 65She said to the servant, “Who is that young man walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “That is my master’s son.” So Rebekah covered her face with her veil. 66The servant told Isaac everything that had happened. Then Isaac brought the girl into his mother’s tent. Rebekah became his wife that day. Isaac loved her very much. So he was comforted after his mother’s death.

Abraham’s Family

1Abraham married again. His new wife was named Keturah. 2She gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, 

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Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. The people of Asshur, Leum, and Letush were descendants of Dedan. The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these sons came from the marriage of Abraham and Keturah.

5-6 Before Abraham died, he gave some gifts to his sons who were from his slave women. He sent them to the East, away from Isaac. Then Abraham gave everything he owned to Isaac.

7 Abraham lived to be 175 years old.

8 Then he grew weak and died. He had lived a long and satisfying life. He died and went to be with his people. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah. This cave is in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar. It was east of Mamre. This is the same cave that Abraham bought from the Hittites. He was buried there with his wife Sarah. After Abraham died, God blessed Isaac. Isaac was living at Beer Lahai Roi.

9 This is the list of Ishmael’s family. Ishmael was Abraham and Hagar’s son. (Hagar was Sarah’s Egyptian maid.)

10 These are the names of Ishmael’s sons: The first son was Nebaioth; then Kedar was born, then Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These were the names of Ishmael’s sons. Each son had his own camp that became a small town. The twelve sons were leaders over their own people. Ishmael lived to be 137 years old. Then he died and went to be with his people. His descendants settled throughout the desert area from Havilah to Shur. This area begins near Egypt and goes toward Assyria. Ishmael’s people were often at war with the other descendants of Abraham.

Isaac’s Family

19 This is the story of Isaac. Abraham had a son named Isaac. When Isaac was 40 years old, he married Rebekah. Rebekah was from Paddan Aram. She was Bethuel’s daughter and the sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac’s wife could not have children. So Isaac prayed to the Lord for her. The Lord heard Isaac’s prayer, and he allowed Rebekah to become pregnant.

22 While Rebekah was pregnant, the babies inside her struggled with one another. She prayed to the Lord and said, “What is happening to me?” The Lord said to her, “The leaders of two nations are in your body. Two nations will come from you, and they will be divided. One of them will be stronger, and the older will serve the younger.”

24 When the right time came, Rebekah gave birth to twins. The first baby was red. His skin was like a hairy robe. So he was named Esau. When the second baby was born, he was holding tightly to Esau’s heel. So that baby was named Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob and Esau were born.

27 The boys grew up. Esau became a skilled hunter, who loved to be out in the fields. But Jacob was a quiet man, who stayed at home.

28 Isaac loved Esau. He liked to eat the animals Esau killed. But Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 One day Esau came back from hunting. He was tired and weak from hunger. Jacob was boiling a pot of beans. So Esau said to Jacob, “I am weak with hunger. Let me have some of that red soup.” (That is why people call him “Red.”)

31 But Jacob said, “You must sell me your rights as the firstborn son.”

32 Esau said, “I am almost dead with hunger, so what good are these rights to me now?”

33 But Jacob said, “First, promise me that you will give them to me.” So Esau made an oath to him and sold his rights as the firstborn son to Jacob. Then Jacob
gave Esau bread and lentil\textsuperscript{a} soup. Esau ate the food, had something to drink, and then left. So Esau showed that he did not care about his rights as the firstborn son.

**Isaac Lies to Abimelech**

1Now there was a famine. This was like the famine that happened during Abraham’s life. So Isaac went to the town of Gerar, to King Abimelech of the Philistines.\textsuperscript{2} The Lord spoke to Isaac and said, “Don’t go down to Egypt. Live in the land that I commanded you to live in.\textsuperscript{3} Stay in this land, and I will be with you. I will bless you. I will give you and your family all these lands. I will do what I promised to Abraham your father. \textsuperscript{4} I will make your family as many as the stars of heaven, and I will give all these lands to your family. Through your descendants\textsuperscript{5} every nation on earth will be blessed. \textsuperscript{5} I will do this because your father Abraham obeyed my words and did what I said. He obeyed my commands, my laws, and my rules.”

\textsuperscript{6}So Isaac settled in Gerar. \textsuperscript{7} His wife Rebekah was very beautiful. The men of that place asked Isaac about Rebekah. He said, “She is my sister.” He was afraid to tell them Rebekah was his wife. He was afraid the men would kill him so that they could have her.

8After Isaac had lived there a long time, Abimelech looked out of his window and saw Isaac and his wife enjoying one another. \textsuperscript{9} Abimelech called for Isaac and said, “This woman is your wife. Why did you tell us that she was your sister?”

Isaac said to him, “I was afraid that you would kill me so that you could have her.”

\textsuperscript{10} Abimelech said, “You have done a bad thing to us. One of our men might have had sex with your wife. Then he would be guilty of a great sin.”

\textsuperscript{11} So Abimelech gave a warning to all the people. He said, “No one must hurt this man or this woman. If anyone hurts them, they will be killed.”

\textsuperscript{a} 25:34 lentil A type of bean.
\textsuperscript{b} 26:4 descendants Or “Descendant.” See Gal. 3:16.
worshiped the LORD in that place. He set up camp there, and his servants dug a well.

26Abimelech came from Gerar to see Isaac. He brought with him Ahuzzath, his advisor, and Phicol, the commander of his army.

27Isaac asked, “Why have you come to see me? You were not friendly to me before. You even forced me to leave your country.”

28They answered, “Now we know that the LORD is with you. We think that we should make an agreement. We want you to make a promise to us. 29We did not hurt you; now you should promise not to hurt us. We sent you away, but we sent you away in peace. Now it is clear that the LORD has blessed you.”

30So Isaac gave a party for them. They all ate and drank.

31Early the next morning each man made a promise and a vow. Then the men left in peace.

32On that day Isaac’s servants came and told him about the well they had dug. The servants said, “We found water in that well.”

33So Isaac named it Shibah.\(^a\) And that city is still called Beersheba.\(^b\)

**Esau’s Wives**

34When Esau was 40 years old, he married two Hittite women. One was Judith the daughter of Beeri. The other was Basemath the daughter of Elon. These marriages made Isaac and Rebekah very unhappy.

**Jacob Tricks Isaac**

27Isaac grew old, and his eyes became so weak that he could not see clearly. One day he called his older son Esau to him and said, “Son!”

Esau answered, “Here I am.”

2Isaac said, “I am old. Maybe I will die soon. Take your bow and arrows and go hunting. Kill an animal for me to eat. Prepare the food that I love. Bring it to me, and I will eat it. Then I will bless you before I die.” So Esau went hunting.

\(^a\) 26:33 Shibah A Hebrew word meaning “seven” or “oath.”

\(^b\) 26:33 Beersheba This name means “well of the oath.”

Rebekah was listening when Isaac told this to his son Esau. Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Listen, I heard your father talking to your brother Esau. Your father said, ‘Kill an animal for me to eat. Prepare the food for me, and I will eat it. Then, with the LORD as witness, I will bless you before I die.’ So listen, son, and do what I tell you. Go out to our goats and bring me two young ones. I will prepare them the way your father loves them. Then you will carry the food to your father, and he will bless you before he dies.”

11But Jacob told his mother Rebekah, “My brother Esau is a hairy man. I am not hairy like him. If my father touches me, he will know that I am not Esau. Then he will not bless me—he will curse me because I tried to trick him.”

13So Rebekah said to him, “I will accept the blame if there is trouble. Do what I said. Go get the goats for me.”

14So Jacob went out and got two goats and brought them to his mother. His mother cooked the goats in the special way that Isaac loved. Then Rebekah took the clothes that her older son Esau loved to wear. She put these clothes on the younger son Jacob. She took the skins of the goats and put them on Jacob’s hands and on his neck. Then she got the food she had cooked and gave it to Jacob.

18Jacob went to his father and said, “Father.”

His father answered, “Yes, son. Who are you?”

19Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau, your first son. I have done what you told me. Now sit up and eat the meat from the animals that I hunted for you. Then you can bless me.”

20But Isaac said to his son, “How have you hunted and killed the animals so quickly?”

Jacob answered, “Because the LORD your God allowed me to find the animals quickly.”

21Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near to me so that I can feel you, my son. If I
can feel you, I will know if you are really my son Esau.”

So Jacob went to Isaac his father. Isaac felt him and said, “Your voice sounds like Jacob’s voice, but your arms are hairy like the arms of Esau.” Isaac did not know it was Jacob, because his arms were hairy like Esau’s. So Isaac blessed Jacob.

Isaac said, “Are you really my son Esau?”

Jacob answered, “Yes, I am.”

The Blessing for Jacob

Then Isaac said, “Bring me the food. I will eat it and bless you.” So Jacob gave him the food, and he ate it. Then Jacob gave him some wine, and he drank it.

Then Isaac said to him, “Son, come near and kiss me.”

So Jacob went to his father and kissed him. When Isaac smelled Esau’s clothes, he blessed him and said, “My son smells like the fields the LORD has blessed. May God give you plenty of rain, good crops, and wine. May the nations serve you and many people bow down to you. You will rule over your brothers. Your mother’s sons will bow down to you and obey you. Whoever curses you will be cursed. Whoever blesses you will be blessed.”

Esau’s “Blessing”

Isaac finished blessing Jacob. Then, just as Jacob left his father Isaac, Esau came in from hunting. Esau prepared the food in the special way his father loved. He brought it to his father and said, “Father, I am your son. Get up and eat the meat from the animals that I killed for you. Then you can bless me.”

But Isaac said to him, “Who are you?”

He answered, “I am your son—your first son—Esau.”

Then Isaac became so upset that he began to shake. He said, “Then who was it that cooked and brought me food before you came? I ate it all, and I blessed him. Now it is too late to take back my blessing.”

When Esau heard his father’s words, he became very angry and bitter. He cried out and said to his father, “Then bless me also, father!”

Isaac said, “Your brother tricked me! He came and took your blessing!”

Esau said, “His name is Jacob. That is the right name for him. He has tricked me twice. He took away my rights as the firstborn son. And now he has taken away my blessing.”

But Esau continued to beg his father. “Do you have only one blessing, father? Bless me also, father!” Esau began to cry.

Then Isaac said to him, “You will not live on good land. You will not have much rain. You will have to fight to live, and you will be a slave to your brother. But when you fight to be free, you will break away from his control.”

Jacob Leaves the Country

After that Esau hated Jacob because of this blessing. Esau said to himself, “My father will soon die, and after we are finished with that, I will kill Jacob.”

Rebekah heard about Esau’s plan to kill Jacob. She sent for Jacob and said to him, “Listen, your brother Esau is planning to kill you. So, son, do what I say. My brother Laban is living in Haran. Go to him and hide. Stay with him for a short time until your brother stops being angry. When your brother forgets what you did to him, I will send a servant to bring you

27:36 Jacob This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “heel.” It also means “the one who follows” or “tricky.”
back. I don’t want to lose both of my sons the same day.”

Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “Your son Esau married Hittite women. I am very upset about this, because they are not our people. I’ll have nothing to live for if Jacob marries one of these women!”

Isaac called Jacob and blessed him. Then Isaac gave him a command and said, “You must not marry a Canaanite woman. So leave this place and go to Pad- 

Dan Aram. Go to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father. Laban, your moth-

er’s brother, lives there. Marry one of his daughters. I pray that God All-

Powerful will bless you and give you many children. I pray that you will become the father of a great nation and that God will bless you and your children the same way he blessed Abraham. And I pray that you will own the land where you live. This is the land God gave to Abraham.”

So Isaac sent Jacob to Rebekah’s brother in Paddan Aram. Jacob went to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean. Laban was the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Esau learned that his father Isaac blessed Jacob and sent him away to Pad- 

Dan Aram to find a wife there. He also learned that Isaac commanded Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. Esau learned that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and went to Paddan Aram. Esau saw from this that his father did not want his sons to marry Canaanite women. Esau already had two wives, but he went to Abraham’s son Ishmael and married another woman, Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. Mahalath was Nebaioth’s sister.

Jacob’s Dream at Bethel

Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran. The sun had already set when he came to a good place to spend the night. He took a rock there and laid his head on it to sleep. Jacob had a dream. He dreamed there was a ladder that was on the ground and reached up into heaven. He saw the angels of God going up and down the ladder. And then Jacob saw the LORD standing by the ladder. He said, “I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. I will give you the land that you are lying on now. I will give this land to you and to your children. You will have as many descendants as there are particles of dust on the earth. They will spread east and west, north and south. All the families on earth will be blessed because of you and your descendants.

“I am with you, and I will protect you everywhere you go. I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised.”

Then Jacob woke up and said, “I know that the LORD is in this place, but I did not know he was here until I slept.”

Jacob was afraid and said, “This is a very great place. This is the house of God. This is the gate to heaven.”

Jacob got up very early in the morning. He took the rock he had slept on and set it up on its edge. Then he poured oil on the rock. In this way he made it a memorial to God. The name of that place was Luz, but Jacob named it Bethel.

Then Jacob made a promise. He said, “If God will be with me, and if he will protect me on this trip, and if he gives me food to eat and clothes to wear, and if I return in peace to my father’s house—if he does all these things—then the LORD will be my God. I am setting this stone up as a memorial stone. It will show that this is a holy place for God, and I will give God one-tenth of all he gives me.”

Jacob Meets Rachel

Then Jacob continued his trip. He went to the country in the East. He looked and saw a well in the field. There were three flocks of sheep lying near the well, where the sheep drank water. There was a large rock covering the mouth of the well. When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll

a 28:3 God All-Powerful Literally, “El Shaddai.”

b 28:19 Bethel A town in Israel. This name means “God’s house.”
the rock away from the well. Then all the sheep could drink from the water. After the sheep were full, the shepherds would put the rock back in its place.

4 Jacob said to the shepherds there, "Brothers, where are you from?"
   They answered, "We are from Haran."
5 Then Jacob said, "Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor?"
   The shepherds answered, "We know him."
6 Then Jacob said, "How is he?"
   They answered, "He is well. Look, that is his daughter Rachel coming now with his sheep."
7 Jacob said, "Look, it is still day and long before the sun sets. It is not yet time for the animals to be gathered together for the night. So give them water and let them go back into the field."
8 But they said, "We cannot do that until all the flocks are gathered together. Then we will move the rock from the well, and all the sheep will drink."
9 While Jacob was talking with the shepherds, Rachel came with her father's sheep. (It was her job to take care of the sheep.) 10 Rachel was Laban's daughter. Laban was the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's mother. When Jacob saw Rachel, he went and moved the rock and gave water to the sheep. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and cried. 12 He told her that he was from her father's family. He told her that he was the son of Rebekah. So Rachel ran home and told her father.
13 When Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he ran to meet him. Laban hugged him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban everything that had happened.
14 Then Laban said, "This is wonderful! You are from my own family." So Jacob stayed with Laban for a month.

Laban Tricks Jacob
15 One day Laban said to Jacob, "You are a relative of mine. It is not right for you to continue working for me without pay. What should I pay you?"

16 Now Laban had two daughters. The older was Leah and the younger was Rachel.
17 Leah's eyes were gentle, but Rachel was beautiful. 18 Jacob loved Rachel, so he said to Laban, "I will work seven years for you if you will allow me to marry your daughter Rachel."
19 Laban said, "It would be better for her to marry you than someone else. So stay with me."
20 So Jacob stayed and worked for Laban for seven years. But it seemed like a very short time because he loved Rachel very much.
21 After seven years Jacob said to Laban, "Give me Rachel so that I can marry her. My time of work for you is finished."
22 So Laban gave a party for all the people in that place. 23 That night Laban brought his daughter Leah to Jacob. Jacob and Leah had sexual relations together. 24 (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter to be her maid.) 25 In the morning Jacob saw that it was Leah he had slept with, and he said to Laban, "You have tricked me. I worked hard for you so that I could marry Rachel. Why did you trick me?"
26 Laban said, "In our country we don't allow the younger daughter to marry before the older daughter. 27 Continue for the full week of the marriage ceremony, and I will also give you Rachel to marry. But you must serve me another seven years."
28 So Jacob did this and finished the week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife. 29 (Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her maid.) 30 So Jacob had sexual relations with Rachel also. And Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Jacob worked for Laban for another seven years.

Jacob's Family Grows
31 The Lord saw that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, so he made it possible for

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Leah to have children. But Rachel did not have any children.

32 Leah gave birth to a son, and she named him Reuben. She named him this because she said, “The LORD has seen my troubles. My husband does not love me. So now maybe my husband will love me.”

33 Leah became pregnant again and had another son. She named this son Simeon. She said, “The LORD has heard that I am not loved, so he gave me this son.”

34 Leah became pregnant again and had another son. She named this son Levi. She said, “Now, surely my husband will love me. I have given him three sons.”

35 Then Leah gave birth to another son. She named this son Judah. Leah named him this because she said, “Now I will praise the LORD.” Then Leah stopped having children.

30 Rachel saw that she was not giving Jacob any children. She became jealous of her sister Leah. So Rachel said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I will die!”

2 Jacob became angry with Rachel and said, “I am not God. He is the one who has caused you to not have children.”

3 Then Rachel said, “You can have my maid Bilhah. Sleep with her, and she will have a child for me. Then I can be a mother through her.”

4 So Rachel gave Bilhah to her husband Jacob. He had sexual relations with Bilhah. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Jacob.

5 Rachel said, “God has listened to my prayer. He decided to give me a son.” So she named the son Dan.

6 Rachel, said, “God has listened to my prayer. He decided to give me a son.” So she named this son Asher.

14 During the wheat harvest Reuben went into the fields and found some special flowers. He brought them to his mother Leah. But Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s flowers.”

15 Leah answered, “You have already taken away my husband. Now you are trying to take away my son’s flowers.”

But Rachel answered, “If you will give me your son’s flowers, you can sleep with Jacob tonight.”

16 Jacob came in from the fields that night. Leah saw him and went out to meet him. She said, “You will sleep with me tonight. I have paid for you with my son’s flowers.” So Jacob slept with Leah that night.

17 Then God allowed Leah to become pregnant again. She gave birth to a fifth son. She said, “God has given me a reward because I gave my slave to my husband.” So she named her son Issachar.

19 Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son. She said, “God has given me a fine gift. Now surely Jacob will accept me, because I have given him six sons.” So she named this son Zebulun.

21 Later, Leah gave birth to a daughter. She named her Dinah.

22 Then God heard Rachel’s prayer and made it possible for Rachel to have sister, and I have won.” So she named that son Naphtali.

9 Leah saw that she could have no more children. So she gave her slave girl Zilpah to Jacob. Then Zilpah had a son. Leah said, “I am lucky.” So she named the son Gad. Zilpah gave birth to another son. Leah said, “I am very happy! Now women will call me happy.” So she named that son Asher.

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a 29:32 Reuben This is like the Hebrew word meaning “Look, a son.”
b 29:33 Simeon This is like the Hebrew word meaning “He hears.”
c 29:34 Levi This is like the Hebrew word meaning “accompany,” “be joined together,” or “become close.”
d 29:35 Judah This name is like the word meaning “He is praised.”
e 30:3 she will have a child for me Literally, “she will give birth on my knees, and I, too, will have a son through her.”
f 30:6 Dan This is like the Hebrew word meaning “to decide” or “to judge.”
g 30:8 Naphtali This is like the Hebrew word meaning “my struggle.”
h 30:11 Gad This is like the Hebrew word meaning “lucky” or “fortunate.”
i 30:13 Asher This is like the Hebrew word meaning “blessed” or “happy.”
j 30:14 special flowers Or “mandrakes.” The Hebrew word means “love plant.” People thought these plants could help women have babies.
k 30:18 Issachar This is like the Hebrew word meaning “reward” or “salary.”
l 30:20 Zebulun This is like the Hebrew word meaning “praise” or “honor.”

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children. 23She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She said, “God has taken away my shame.” 24Rachel named the son Joseph, a saying, “May the Lord give me another son.”

Jacob Tricks Laban
25After the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Now let me go back to my own homeland. 26Give me my wives and my children. I have earned them by working for you. You know that I served you well.”

27Laban said to him, “Please, let me say something. I know b that the Lord has blessed me because of you. 28Tell me what I should pay you, and I will give it to you.”

29Jacob answered, “You know that I have worked hard for you. Your flocks have grown and been well while I cared for them. 30When I came, you had little. Now you have much, much more. Every time I did something for you, the Lord blessed you. Now it is time for me to work for myself—it is time to do things for my family.”

31Laban asked, “Then what should I give you?”

Jacob answered, “I don’t want you to give me anything! I only want you to let me do this one thing: I will go back and take care of all the animals that were left. 32But let me go through all your flocks today and take every lamb with spots or stripes. Let me take every black young goat and every female goat with stripes or spots. That will be my pay. 33In the future you can easily see if I am honest. You can come to look at my flocks. If I have any goat that isn’t spotted or any sheep that isn’t black, you will know that I stole it.”

34Laban answered, “I agree to that. We will do what you ask.” 35But that day Laban hid all the male goats that had spots. And he hid all the female goats that had spots on them. He also hid all the black sheep. Laban told his sons to watch these sheep. 36So the sons took all the spotted animals and led them to another place. They traveled for three days. Jacob stayed and took care of all the animals that were left.

37Then Jacob cut green branches from poplar and almond trees. He stripped off some of the bark so that the branches had white stripes on them. 38He put the branches in front of the flocks at the watering places. When the animals came to drink, they also mated in that place. 39Then when the goats mated in front of the branches, the young that were born were spotted, striped, or black.

40Jacob separated the spotted and the black animals from the other animals in the flock. He kept his animals separate from Laban’s. 41Any time the stronger animals in the flock were mating, Jacob put the branches before their eyes. The animals mated near those branches. 42But when the weaker animals mated, Jacob did not put the branches there. So the young animals born from the weak animals were Laban’s. And the young animals born from the stronger animals were Jacob’s. 43In this way Jacob became very rich. He had large flocks, many servants, camels, and donkeys.

Time to Leave—Jacob Runs Away
31One day Jacob heard Laban’s sons talking. They said, “Jacob has taken everything that our father owned. He has become rich—and he has taken all this wealth from our father.”

2Then Jacob noticed that Laban was not as friendly as he had been in the past. 3The Lord said to Jacob, “Go back to your own land where your ancestors lived. I will be with you.”

4So Jacob told Rachel and Leah to meet him in the field where he kept his flocks of sheep and goats. 5He said to them, “I have noticed that Laban was not as friendly as he had been in the past. The Lord said to Jacob, “Go back to your own land where your ancestors lived. I will be with you.”

4So Jacob told Rachel and Leah to meet him in the field where he kept his flocks of sheep and goats. He said to them, “I have noticed that your father is not as friendly with me as he used to be. But the God of my father has been with me. You both know that I have worked as hard as I could for your father. But he cheated me. He has changed my pay ten times. But during all this time, God protected me from all of Laban’s tricks.

8“At one time Laban said, ‘You can
keep all the goats with spots. This will be your pay.’ After he said this, all the animals gave birth to spotted goats, so they were all mine. But then Laban said, ‘I will keep the spotted goats. You can have all the striped goats. That will be your pay.’ After he said this, all the animals gave birth to striped goats. 9 So God has taken the animals away from your father and has given them to me.

10 ‘I had a dream during the time when the animals were mating. I saw that the only male goats that were mating were the ones with stripes and spots. 11 The angel of God spoke to me in that dream. The angel said, ‘Jacob!’

12 ‘I answered, ‘Yes!’

13 ‘The angel said, ‘Look, only the striped and spotted goats are mating. I am causing this to happen. I have seen all the wrong things Laban has been doing to you. I am doing this so that you can have all the new baby goats. 14 I am the God who came to you at Bethel, and there you made an altar, poured olive oil on it, and made a promise to me. Now I want you to be ready to go back to the country where you were born.’”

14 Rachel and Leah answered Jacob, “Our father has nothing to give us when he dies. 15 He treated us like strangers. He sold us to you, and then he spent all the money that should have been ours. 16 God took all this wealth from our father, and now it belongs to us and our children. So you should do whatever God told you to do.”

17 So Jacob prepared for the trip. He put his children and his wives on camels. 18 Then they began traveling back to the land of Canaan, where his father lived. All the flocks of animals that Jacob owned walked ahead of them. He carried everything with him that he had gotten while he lived in Paddan Aram.

19 While Laban was gone to cut the wool from his sheep, Rachel went into his house and stole the false gods that belonged to her father.

20 Jacob tricked Laban the Aramean. He did not tell Laban he was leaving. 21 Jacob took his family and everything he owned and left quickly. They crossed the Euphrates River and traveled toward the hill country of Gilead.

22 Three days later Laban learned that Jacob had run away. 23 So he gathered his men together and began to chase Jacob. After seven days Laban found Jacob near the hill country of Gilead. 24 That night God came to Laban in a dream and said, “Be careful! Be careful of every word you say to Jacob.”

The Search for the Stolen Gods

25 The next morning Laban caught up with Jacob. Jacob had set up his camp on the mountain, so Laban and all his men set up their camp in the hill country of Gilead.

26 Laban said to Jacob, “Why did you trick me? Why did you take my daughters like they were women you captured during war? 27 Why did you run away without telling me? If you had told me, I would have given you a party. There would have been singing and dancing with music. 28 You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters goodbye. You were very foolish to do this! 29 I have the power to really hurt you. But last night the God of your father came to me in a dream. He warned me not to hurt you in any way. 30 I know that you want to go back to your home. That is why you left. But why did you steal the gods from my house?”

31 Jacob answered, “I left without telling you, because I was afraid. I thought you would take your daughters away from me. 32 But I did not steal your gods. If you find anyone here with me who has taken your gods, they will be killed. Your men will be my witnesses. You can look for anything that belongs to you. Take anything that is yours.” (Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen Laban’s gods.)

33 So Laban went and looked through Jacob’s camp. He looked in Jacob’s tent and then in Leah’s tent. Then he looked in the tent where the two slave women stayed, but he did not find the gods from his house. Then he went into Rachel’s...
tent. 34 Rachel had hidden the gods inside her camel’s saddle, and she was sitting on them. Laban looked through the whole tent, but he did not find the gods.

35 And Rachel said to her father, “Father, don’t be angry with me. I am not able to stand up before you. I am having my monthly time of bleeding.” So Laban looked through the camp, but he did not find the gods from his house.

36 Then Jacob became very angry and said, “What wrong have I done? What law have I broken? What right do you have to chase me and stop me?

37 You looked through everything I own and found nothing that belongs to you. If you found something, show it to me. Put it here where our men can see it. Let our men decide which one of us is right.

38 I have worked 20 years for you. During all that time none of the baby sheep and goats died during birth. And I have not eaten any of the rams from your flocks. 39 Any time a sheep was killed by wild animals, I always paid for the loss myself. I did not take the dead animal to you and say that it was not my fault. But I was robbed day and night. 40 In the daytime the sun took away my strength, and at night sleep was taken from my eyes by the cold.

41 I worked 20 years like a slave for you. For the first 14 years I worked to win your two daughters. The last six years I worked to earn your animals. And during that time you changed my pay ten times. 42 But the God of my ancestors, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, was with me. If God had not been with me, you would have sent me away with nothing. But he saw the trouble that I had and the work that I did, and last night God proved that I am right.”

Jacob and Laban’s Treaty

43 Laban said to Jacob, “These women are my daughters. These children belong to me, and these animals are mine. Everything you see here belongs to me, but I can do nothing to keep my daughters and their children. 44 So I am ready to make an agreement with you. We will set up a pile of stones to show that we have an agreement.”

45 So Jacob found a large rock and put it there to show that he had made an agreement. 46 He told his men to find some more rocks and to make a pile of rocks. Then they ate beside the pile of rocks. 47 Laban named that place Yegar Sahadutha. But Jacob named that place Galeed.

48 Laban said to Jacob, “This pile of rocks will help us both remember our agreement.” That is why Jacob called the place Galeed.

49 Then Laban said, “Let the Lord watch over us while we are separated from each other.” So that place was also named Mizpah.

50 Then Laban said, “If you hurt my daughters, remember that God will punish you. If you marry other women, remember that God is watching. 51 Here are the rocks that I have put between us, and here is the special rock to show that we made an agreement. 52 This pile of rocks and this one special rock both help us to remember our agreement. I will never go past these rocks to fight against you, and you must never go on my side of these rocks to fight against me. 53 May the God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their ancestors judge us guilty if we break this agreement.”

Jacob’s father, Isaac, called God “Fear.” So Jacob used that name to make the promise. 54 Then Jacob killed an animal and offered it as a sacrifice on the mountain. And he invited his men to come and share a meal. After they finished eating, they spent the night on the mountain. 55 Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters goodbye. He blessed them and went back home.

a 31:42 Fear of Isaac A name for God.

b 31:47 Yegar Sahadutha Aramaic words meaning “rock pile of the agreement.”

c 31:47 Galeed Another name for Gilead. This Hebrew name means “rock pile of the agreement.”

d 31:49 Mizpah This means “a place to watch from.”
Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

1 Jacob also left that place. While he was traveling, he saw God’s angels.
2 When he saw them, he said, “This is God’s camp!” So Jacob named that place Mahanaim.  

3 Jacob’s brother Esau was living in the area called Seir in the hill country of Edom. Jacob sent messengers to Esau.  
4 He told them, “Tell this to my master Esau: ‘Your servant Jacob says, I have lived with Laban all these years.  
5 I have many cattle, donkeys, flocks, and servants. Sir, I am sending you this message to ask you to accept us.’”

6 The messengers came back to Jacob and said, “We went to your brother Esau. He is coming to meet you. He has 400 men with him.”

7 Jacob was very frightened and worried. He divided the people who were with him and all the flocks, herds, and camels into two groups.  
8 Jacob thought, “If Esau comes and destroys one group, the other group can run away and be saved.”

9 Then Jacob said, “God of my father Abraham! God of my father Isaac! Lord, you told me to come back to my country and to my family. You said that you would do good to me.  
10 You have been very kind to me. You did many good things for me. The first time I traveled across the Jordan River, I owned nothing—only my walking stick. But now I own enough things to have two full groups.  
11 I ask you to please save me from my brother Esau. I am afraid that he will come and kill us all, even the mothers with the children.  
12 Lord, you said to me, ‘I will be good to you. I will increase your family and make your children as many as the sands of the sea. There will be too many to count.’”

13 Jacob stayed in that place for the night. He prepared some things to give to Esau as a gift.  
14 He took 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep.  
15 He took 30 camels and their colts, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys.  
16 He gave each flock of animals to his servants. Then he said to them, “Separate each group of animals. Go ahead of me and keep some space between each herd.”  
17 Jacob gave them their orders. To the servant with the first group of animals he said, “When Esau my brother comes to you and asks you, ‘Whose animals are these? Where are you going? Whose servant are you?’ then you should answer, ‘These animals belong to your servant Jacob. He sent them as a gift to you, my master Esau. And he also is coming behind us.’”

18 Jacob also ordered the second servant, the third servant, and all the other servants to do the same thing. He said, “You will say the same thing to Esau when you meet him.  
20 You will say, ‘This is a gift to you, and your servant Jacob is behind us.’”

Jacob thought, “If I send these men ahead with gifts, maybe Esau will forgive me and accept me.”  
22 So Jacob sent the gifts to Esau, but he stayed that night in the camp.

23 During the night, Jacob got up and began moving his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven sons across the Jabbok River at the crossing.  
24 After he sent his family across the river, he sent across everything he had.

The Fight With God

24 Jacob was left alone, and a man came and wrestled with him. The man fought with him until the sun came up.  
25 When the man saw that he could not defeat Jacob, he touched Jacob’s leg and put it out of joint.  
26 Then the man said to Jacob, “Let me go. The sun is coming up.”

But Jacob said, “I will not let you go. You must bless me.”

27 And the man said to him, “What is your name?”

And Jacob said, “My name is Jacob.”

28 Then the man said, “Your name will not be Jacob. Your name will now be Israel.”

b 32:28 Israel This name might mean “he fights for God,” “he fights with God,” or “God fights.”
fought with God and with men, and you have won.”

29 Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.”

But the man said, “Why do you ask my name?” Then the man blessed Jacob at that place.

30 So Jacob named that place Peniel. He said, “At this place, I saw God face to face, but my life was spared.” Then the sun came up as Jacob left Peniel. He was limping because of his leg. So even today, the people of Israel don’t eat the muscle that is on the hip joint, because this is the muscle where Jacob was hurt.

Jacob Meets Esau

33 Jacob looked and saw Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob divided his family into four groups. Leah and her children were in one group, Rachel and Joseph were in one group, and the two maids and their children were in two groups. Jacob put the maids with their children first. Then he put Leah and her children behind them, and he put Rachel and Joseph in the last place.

Jacob himself went out before them. While he was walking toward his brother Esau, he bowed down to the ground seven times.

When Esau saw Jacob, he ran to meet him. He put his arms around Jacob, hugged his neck, and kissed him. Then they both cried. Esau looked up and saw the women and children. He said, “Who are all these people with you?” Jacob answered, “These are the children that God gave me. God has been good to me.”

Then the two maids and the children with them went to Esau. They bowed down before him. Then Leah and the children with her went to Esau and bowed down. And then Rachel and Joseph went to him and bowed down.

Esau said, “Who were all those people I saw while I was coming here? And what were all those animals for?” Jacob answered, “These are my gifts to you so that you might accept me.”

But Esau said, “You don’t have to give me gifts, brother. I have enough for myself.”

10 Jacob said, “No, I beg you! If you really accept me, please accept the gifts I give you. I am very happy to see your face again. It is like seeing the face of God. I am very happy to see that you accept me.

11 So I beg you to also accept the gifts I give you. God has been very good to me. I have more than I need.” Because Jacob begged Esau to take the gifts, he accepted them.

12 Then Esau said, “Now you can continue your journey. I will go with you.”

13 But Jacob said to him, “You know that my children are weak. And I must be careful with my flocks and their young animals. If I force them to walk too far in one day, all the animals will die. So you go on ahead. I will follow you slowly. I will go slowly enough for the cattle and other animals to be safe and so that my children will not get too tired. I will meet you in Seir.”

15 So Esau said, “Then I will leave some of my men to help you.”

But Jacob said, “That is very kind of you, but there is no need to do that.” So that day Esau started on his trip back to Seir. But Jacob went to Succoth. There he built a house for himself and small barns for his cattle. That is why the place was named Succoth.

18 Jacob safely ended his trip from Pad-dan Aram when he came to the town of Shechem in Canaan. He made his camp in a field near the city. He bought the field where he camped from the family of Hamor, father of Shechem. He paid 100 pieces of silver for it. He built an altar there to honor God. He named the place “El, the God of Israel.”

The Rape of Dinah

34 One day, Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, went out to see the women of that place. She was seen...
by Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, who ruled that area. Shechem took Dinah and raped her. 3 But he was so attracted to her that he fell in love and began expressing his feelings to her. 4 He told his father, “Please get this girl for me so that I can marry her.”

5 Jacob learned that Shechem had done this very bad thing to his daughter. But all his sons were out in the fields with the cattle. So he did nothing until they came home. 6 Then Shechem’s father, Hamor, came out to talk with Jacob.

7 In the fields Jacob’s sons heard the news about what had happened. They were very angry because Shechem had brought shame to Israel by raping Jacob’s daughter. They came in from the fields as soon as they heard about the terrible thing Shechem had done.

8 But Hamor talked to Dinah’s brothers and said, “My son Shechem wants Dinah very much. Please let him marry her.

9 This marriage will show we have a special agreement. Then our men can marry your women, and your men can marry our women. 10 You can live in the same land with us. You will be free to own the land and to trade here.”

11 Shechem also talked to Jacob and to Dinah’s brothers and said, “Please accept me. I will do anything you ask me to do. 12 I will give you any gift a you want if you will only allow me to marry Dinah. I will give you anything you ask, but let me marry her.”

13 Jacob’s sons decided to lie to Shechem and his father because Shechem had done such a bad thing to their sister Dinah. 14 The brothers said to them, “We cannot allow our sister to marry you because you are not yet circumcised. That would bring us shame. 15 But we will allow you to marry her if you do this one thing: Every man in your town must be circumcised like us. 16 Then your men can marry our women, and our men can marry your women. Then we will become one people.

17 If you refuse to be circumcised, we will take Dinah away.”

18 This agreement made Hamor and Shechem very happy. 19 Shechem was very happy to do what Dinah’s brothers asked.

Shechem was the most honored man in his family. 20 Hamor and Shechem went to the meeting place of their city. They spoke to the men of the city and said, “These people want to be friends with us. We want to let them live in our land and be at peace with us. We have enough land for all of us. We are free to marry their women, and we are happy to give them our women to marry. 22 But there is one thing that all our men must agree to do. They must agree to be circumcised as they are. 23 If we do this, we will become rich from all their cattle and other animals. We should make this agreement with them so that they will stay here with us.” 24 All the men who heard this in the meeting place agreed with Hamor and Shechem. And every man was circumcised at that time.

25 Three days later the men who were circumcised were still sore. Two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, knew that the men would be weak at this time. So they went to the city and killed all the men there. 26 Dinah’s brothers, Simeon and Levi, killed Hamor and his son Shechem. Then they took Dinah out of Shechem’s house and left.

27 Jacob’s sons went to the city and stole everything that was there because of what Shechem had done to their sister.

28 So the brothers took all their animals, all their donkeys, and everything else in the city and in the fields. 29 The brothers took everything those people owned. They even took their wives and children.

30 But Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have caused me a lot of trouble. All the people in this place will hate me. All the Canaanites and the Perizzites will turn against me. There are only a few of us. If the people in this place gather together to fight against us, I will be destroyed. And all our people will be destroyed with me.”

31 But the brothers said, “Should we let these people treat our sister like a
prostitute? They were wrong to do that to our sister!”

**Jacob in Bethel**

**35** God said to Jacob, “Go to the town of Bethel.\(^a\) That is where I appeared to you when you were running away from your brother Esau. Live there and make an altar to honor me as El,\(^b\) the God who appeared to you.”

So Jacob told his family and all the other people with him, “Destroy all these foreign gods that you have. Make yourselves pure. Put on clean clothes. \(^3\) We will leave here and go to Bethel. There I will build an altar to the God who has always helped me during times of trouble. He has been with me wherever I have gone.”

So the people gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had, and they gave him all the rings they were wearing in their ears. He buried everything under an oak tree near the town called Shechem.

Then Jacob and his sons left that place. The people in the surrounding cities wanted to follow and kill them, but God filled them with such great fear that they did not go after them. \(^4\) So Jacob and his people went to Luz, which is now called Bethel. It is in the land of Canaan. \(^7\) Jacob built an altar there. He named the place “El Bethel.”\(^c\) Jacob chose this name because that is the place where God first appeared to him when he was running from his brother.

Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died there. They buried her under the oak tree at Bethel. They named that place Allon Bacuth.\(^d\)

**Jacob’s New Name**

When Jacob came back from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again. God blessed Jacob \(^9\) and said to him, “Your name is Jacob, but I will change that name. You will no longer be called Jacob. Your new name will be Israel.\(^e\)” So God named him Israel.

God said to him, “I am God All-Powerful,\(^f\) and I give you this blessing: Have many children and grow into a great nation. Other nations and other kings will come out of you. \(^12\) I gave Abraham and Isaac some special land. Now I give the land to you and to all your people who will live after you.” \(^13\) Then God left that place. \(^14–15\) Jacob set up a memorial stone there. He made the rock holy by pouring wine and oil on it. This was a special place because God spoke to Jacob there, and Jacob named the place Bethel.

**Rachel Dies Giving Birth**

Jacob and his group left Bethel. Before they came to Ephrath, Rachel began giving birth to her baby. \(^17\) She was having a lot of trouble with this birth. She was in great pain. When her nurse saw this, she said, “Don’t be afraid, Rachel. You are giving birth to another son.”

Rachel died while giving birth to the son. Before dying, she named the boy Benoni.\(^g\) But Jacob called him Benjamin.\(^h\)

Rachel was buried on the road to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). \(^20\) Jacob put a special rock on Rachel’s grave to honor her. That special rock is still there today. \(^21\) Then Israel continued his journey. He camped just south of Eder tower.\(^i\)

Israel stayed there for a short time. While he was there, Reuben slept with Israel’s slave woman Bilhah. Israel heard about this, and he was very angry.\(^j\)

**The Family of Israel (Jacob)**

These are the names of Jacob’s twelve sons: \(^23\) His firstborn son was Reuben, whose mother was Leah. Jacob’s other sons by Leah were Simeon, Levi, "35:10 Israel This name might mean “he fights for God,” “he fights with God,” or “God fights.”
35:11 God All-Powerful Literally, “El Shaddai.”
35:18 Benoni This name means “son of my suffering.”
35:18 Benjamin This name means “right-hand” or “favorite son.”
35:21 Eder tower Or “Migdal Eder.”
35:22 and he was very angry These words are from the ancient Greek translation. They are not in the standard Hebrew text. See Gen. 49:4.

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Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.
24 His sons by Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.
25 His sons by Bilhah, Rachel’s maid, were Dan and Naphtali.
26 His sons by Zilpah, Leah’s maid, were Gad and Asher.
These were Jacob’s sons who were born in Paddan Aram.
27 Jacob went to his father Isaac at Mamre in Kiriath Arba (Hebron). This is where Abraham and Isaac had lived. 28 Isaac lived 180 years. 29 Then Isaac became weak and died and went to be with his people. He had lived a long and full life. His sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Esau’s Family
36 1 This is the history of the family of Esau (Edom). 2 Esau married women from the land of Canaan. His wives were Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon the Hivite, and 3 Basemath, Ishmael’s daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. 4 Esau and Adah had a son named Eliphaz. Basemath had a son named Reuel. 5 Oholibamah had three sons: Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These were Esau’s sons who were born in the land of Canaan.
6–8 Jacob and Esau’s families became too big for the land in Canaan to support them all, so Esau moved away from his brother Jacob. He took his wives, sons, daughters, all his slaves, cattle and other animals, and everything else that he had gotten in Canaan and moved to the hill country of Seir. a (Esau is also named Edom.)
9 Esau is the father of the people of Edom. These are the names of Esau’s family living in the hill country of Seir: 10 Esau and Adah’s son was Eliphaz. Esau and Basemath’s son was Reuel.
11 Eliphaz had five sons: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. 12 Eliphaz also had a slave woman named Timna. Timna and Eliphaz had a son named Amalek.
13 Reuel had four sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were Esau’s grandsons from his wife Basemath.
14 Esau’s third wife was Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah. (Anah was the son of Zibeon.) Esau and Oholibamah’s children were Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.
15 These are the family groups that came from Esau:
Esau’s first son was Eliphaz. From Eliphaz came Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, Korah, Gatam, and Amalek. All these family groups came from Esau’s wife Adah.
16 Esau’s son Reuel was the father of these families: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. All these families came from Esau’s wife Basemath.
17 Esau’s wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, gave birth to Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These three men were the leaders of their families.
18 They were all sons of Esau and leaders of the family groups of Edom. b
20 Seir, a Horite man, lived in Edom before Esau. These are the sons of Seir:
Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These sons were all Horite family leaders from Seir in Edom.
22 Lotan was the father of Hori and Heman. c (Timna was Lotan’s sister.)
23 Shobal was the father of Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.
24 Zibeon had two sons, Aiah and Anah. Anah is the man who found the springs in the desert while he was caring for his father’s donkeys.
25 Anah was the father of Dishon and Oholibamah.
26 Dishon had four sons. They were

a 36:6–8 Seir A mountain range in Edom.
b 36:19 Esau … Edom Two names for the man Esau and the country Edom.
c 36:22 Heman Or “Homam.”
Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran.
27 Ezer had three sons. They were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.
28 Dishan had two sons. They were Uz and Aran.
29 These are the names of the leaders of the Horite families: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These men were the leaders of the families that lived in the country of Seir.
30 At that time there were kings in Edom. Edom had kings a long time before Israel did.
31 Bela son of Beor was a king who ruled in Edom. He ruled over the city of Dinhabah.
32 When Bela died, Jobab became king. Jobab was the son of Zerah from Bozrah.
33 When Jobab died, Husham ruled. Husham was from the land of the Temanites.
34 When Husham died, Hadad ruled. Hadad was from the city of Avith.
35 When Hadad died, Samlah ruled that area. Samlah was from Masrekah.
36 When Samlah died, Shaul ruled that area. Shaul was from Rehoboth by the River.
37 When Shaul died, Baal Hanan ruled that country. Baal Hanan was the son of Acbor.
38 When Baal Hanan died, Hadad a ruled that country. Hadad was from the city of Pau. His wife’s name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred. (Mezahab was Matred’s father.)
39 Esau was the father of these Edomite families:
Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram. Each of these families lived in an area that was called by the same name as their family.

### Joseph the Dreamer

1 Jacob stayed and lived in the land of Canaan. This is the same land where his father had lived. This is the story of Jacob’s family.

Joseph was a young man, 17 years old. His job was to take care of the sheep and the goats. Joseph did this work with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. (Bilhah and Zilpah were his father’s wives.) Joseph told his father about the bad things that his brothers did. Joseph was born at a time when his father Israel was very old, so Israel loved him more than he loved his other sons. Jacob gave him a special coat, which was long and very beautiful. When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved them, they hated their brother because of this. They refused to say nice things to him.

One time Joseph had a special dream. Later, he told his brothers about this dream, and after that his brothers hated him even more.

Joseph said, “I had a dream. We were all working in the field, tying stacks of wheat together. Then my stack got up. It stood there while all of your stacks of wheat made a circle around mine and bowed down to it.”

His brothers said, “Do you think this means that you will be a king and rule over us?” His brothers hated Joseph more now because of the dreams he had about them.

Then Joseph had another dream, and he told his brothers about it. He said, “I had another dream. I saw the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowing down to me.”

Joseph also told his father about this dream, but his father criticized him. His father said, “What kind of dream is this? Do you believe that your mother, your brothers, and I will bow down to you?”

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a 36:39 Hadad Or “Hadar.”

b 37:3 beautiful The Hebrew means “striped,” or possibly, “many colored.”
Joseph’s brothers continued to be jealous of him, but his father thought about all these things and wondered what they could mean.

One day Joseph’s brothers went to Shechem to care for their father’s sheep. Jacob said to Joseph, “Go to Shechem. Your brothers are there with my sheep.”

Joseph answered, “I will go.”

His father said, “Go and see if your brothers are safe. Come back and tell me if my sheep are all fine.” So Joseph’s father sent him from the Valley of Hebron to Shechem.

At Shechem, Joseph got lost. A man found him wandering in the fields. The man said, “What are you looking for?”

Joseph answered, “I am looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are with their sheep?”

The man said, “They have already gone away. I heard them say that they were going to Dothan.” So Joseph followed his brothers and found them in Dothan.

**Joseph Sold Into Slavery**

Joseph’s brothers saw him coming from far away. They decided to make a plan to kill him.

They said to each other, “Here comes Joseph the dreamer. We should kill him now while we can. We could throw his body into one of the empty wells and tell our father that a wild animal killed him. Then we will show him that his dreams are useless.”

But Reuben wanted to save Joseph. He said, “Let’s not kill him. We can put him into a well without hurting him.” Reuben planned to save Joseph and send him back to his father. When Joseph came to his brothers, they attacked him and tore off his long and beautiful coat. Then they threw him into an empty well that was dry.

While Joseph was in the well, the brothers sat down to eat. They looked up and saw a group of traders traveling from Gilead to Egypt. Their camels were carrying many different spices and riches. So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit will we get if we kill our brother and hide his death? We will profit more if we sell him to these traders. Then we will not be guilty of killing our own brother.” The other brothers agreed. When the Midianite traders came by, the brothers took Joseph out of the well and sold him to the traders for 20 pieces of silver. The traders took him to Egypt.

Reuben had been gone, but when he came back to the well, he saw that Joseph was not there. He tore his clothes to show that he was upset. Reuben went to the brothers and said, “The boy is not in the well! What will I do?” The brothers killed a goat and put the goat’s blood on Joseph’s beautiful coat. Then the brothers showed the coat to their father. And the brothers said, “We found this coat. Is this Joseph’s coat?”

His father saw the coat and knew that it was Joseph’s. He said, “Yes, that is his! Maybe some wild animal has killed him. My son Joseph has been eaten by a wild animal!” Jacob was so sorry about his son that he tore his clothes. Then Jacob put on special clothes to show that he was sad. He continued to be sad about his son for a long time. All of Jacob’s sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but Jacob was never comforted. He said, “I will be sad about my son until the day I die.” So Jacob continued to mourn his son Joseph.

The Midianite traders later sold Joseph in Egypt. They sold him to Potiphar, an officer of the king of Egypt and the captain of his palace guards.

**Judah and Tamar**

About that time, Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man named Hirah from the town of Adullam. Judah met a Canaanite girl there and married her. The girl’s father was named Shua. The Canaanite girl gave birth to a son and named him Er. Later, she gave birth to another son and named him Onan. Then she had another son named Shelah. Judah lived in Kezib when his third son was born.
Judah chose a woman named Tamar to be the wife of his first son Er. But Er did many bad things. The LORD was not happy with him, so the LORD killed him. Then Judah said to Er’s brother Onan, “Go and sleep with your dead brother’s wife. Become like a husband to her. If children are born, they will belong to your brother Er.”

Onan knew that the children from this union would not belong to him. He had sexual relations with Tamar, but he did not allow himself to stay inside her. This made the LORD angry. So he killed Onan also. Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, “Go back to your father’s house. Stay there and don’t marry until my young son Shelah grows up.” Judah was afraid that Shelah would also be killed like his brothers. So Tamar went back to her father’s home.

Later, Judah’s wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah’s time of sadness, he went to Timnah with his friend Hirah from Adullam. Judah went to Timnah to have the wool cut from his sheep. Tamar learned that Judah, her father-in-law, was going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep. Tamar always wore clothes that showed that she was a widow. So she put on some different clothes and covered her face with a veil. Then she sat down near the road going to Enaim, a town near Timnah. Tamar knew that Judah’s younger son Shelah was now grown up, but Judah would not make plans for her to marry him.

Judah traveled on that road and saw her, but he thought that she was a prostitute. (Her face was covered with a veil like a prostitute.) So he went to her and said, “Let me have sex with you.” (Judah did not know that she was Tamar, his daughter-in-law.)

She said, “How much will you give me?”

Judah answered, “I will send you a young goat from my flock.”

She answered, “I agree to that. But first you must give me something to keep until you send me the goat.”

Judah asked, “What do you want me to give you as proof that I will send you the goat?”

Tamar answered, “Give me your seal and its string and your walking stick.” Judah gave these things to her. Then Judah and Tamar had sexual relations, and she became pregnant. Then Tamar went home, took off her veil that covered her face, and again put on the special clothes that showed she was a widow.

Later, Judah sent his friend Hirah to Enaim to give the prostitute the goat he promised. Judah also told Hirah to get the special seal and the walking stick from her, but Hirah could not find her. He asked some of the men at the town of Enaim, “Where is the prostitute who was here by the road?”

The men answered, “There has never been a prostitute here.”

So Judah’s friend went back to Judah and said, “I could not find the woman. The men who live in that place said that there was never a prostitute there.”

So Judah said, “Let her keep the things. I don’t want people to laugh at us. I tried to give her the goat, but we could not find her. That is enough.”

Tamar Is Pregnant

About three months later, someone told Judah, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar sinned like a prostitute, and now she is pregnant.”

Then Judah said, “Take her out and burn her.”

The men went to Tamar to kill her, but she sent a message to her father-in-law that said, “The man who made me pregnant is the man who owns these things. Look at them. Whose are they? Whose special seal and string is this? Whose walking stick is this?”

Judah recognized these things and

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\[a\] 38:8 Go and sleep ... wife In Israel if a man died without children, one of his brothers would take the widow. If a child was born, it would be considered the dead man’s child.

\[b\] 38:18 seal ... string People wrote a contract, folded it, tied it with string, put wax or clay on the string, and pressed the seal onto it to seal it. This was like signing the agreement. Also in verse 25.
said, “She is right. I was wrong. I did not give her my son Shelah like I promised.” And Judah did not sleep with her again.

27 The time came for Tamar to give birth. She was going to have twins. 28 While she was giving birth, one baby put his hand out. The nurse tied a red string on the hand and said, “This baby was born first.” 29 But that baby pulled his hand back in, so the other baby was born first. So the nurse said, “You were able to break out first!” So they named him Perez. 30 After this, the other baby was born. This was the baby with the red string on his hand. They named him Zerah.

Joseph Is Sold to Potiphar in Egypt

Joseph was a very handsome, good-looking man. 7 After some time, the wife of Joseph’s master began to pay special attention to him. One day she said to him, “Sleep with me.”

8 But Joseph refused. He said, “My master trusts me with everything in his house. He has given me responsibility for everything here. 9 My master has made me almost equal to him in his house. I cannot sleep with his wife! That is wrong! It is a sin against God.”

10 The woman talked with Joseph every day, but he refused to sleep with her. 11 One day Joseph went into the house to do his work. He was the only man in the house at the time. 12 His master’s wife grabbed his coat and said to him, “Come to bed with me.” But Joseph ran out of the house so fast that he left his coat in her hand.

13 The woman saw that Joseph had left his coat in her hand and had run away. She called to the men outside and said, “Look! This Hebrew slave was brought here to make fun of us. He came in and tried to attack me, but I screamed. 15 My scream scared him and he ran away, but he left his coat with me.” 16 Then she kept his coat until her husband, Joseph’s master, came home.

17 She told her husband the same story. She said, “This Hebrew slave you brought here tried to attack me! 18 But when he came near me, I screamed. He ran away, but he left his coat.”

19 Joseph’s master listened to what his wife said, and he became very angry. 20 So Potiphar put Joseph into the prison where the king’s enemies were held, and that is where Joseph remained.

Joseph in Prison

21 The Lord was with Joseph and continued to show his kindness to him, so the commander of the prison guards began to like Joseph. 22 The commander of the guards put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. Joseph was their leader, but he still did the same work they did. 23 The commander of the guards trusted Joseph with everything that was in the prison. This happened because the Lord was with

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Joseph. The LORD helped Joseph be successful in everything he did.

Joseph Explains Two Dreams

1 Later, two of Pharaoh’s servants did something wrong to Pharaoh. These servants were the baker and the man who served wine to Pharaoh. Pharaoh became angry with his baker and wine server, so he put them in the same prison as Joseph. Potiphar, the commander of Pharaoh’s guards, was in charge of this prison. Joseph went to them the next morning and saw that the two men were worried.

2 The two men continued to stay in prison for some time. One night both of the prisoners had a dream. The baker and the wine server each had his own dream, and each dream had its own meaning. 3 Joseph went to them the next morning and said, “Why do you look so worried today?”

4 The two men answered, “We both had dreams last night, but we don’t understand what we dreamed. There is no one to explain the dreams to us.” Joseph said to them, “God is the only one who can understand and explain dreams. So I beg you, tell me your dreams.”

The Wine Server’s Dream

5 So the wine server told Joseph his dream. The server said, “I dreamed I saw a vine. On the vine there were three branches. I watched the branches grow flowers and then become grapes. I was holding Pharaoh’s cup, so I took the grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup. Then I gave the cup to Pharaoh.”

6 Then Joseph said, “I will explain the dream to you. The three branches mean three days. Before the end of three days, the king will take you out of this prison and allow you to do the same work for Pharaoh as you did before.”

7 But when you are free, remember me. Be good to me and help me. Tell Pharaoh about me so that I can get out of this prison. I was kidnapped and taken from the land of my people, the Hebrews. I have done nothing wrong! I should not be in prison.”

The Baker’s Dream

16 The baker saw that the other servant’s dream was good, so he said to Joseph, “I also had a dream. I dreamed there were three baskets of bread on my head. In the top basket there were all kinds of baked food for the king, but birds were eating this food.”

18 Joseph answered, “I will tell you what the dream means. The three baskets mean three days. Before the end of three days, the king will take you out of this prison and cut off your head! He will hang your body on a pole, and the birds will eat it.”

Joseph Is Forgotten

20 Three days later it was Pharaoh’s birthday. He gave a party for all his servants. At the party Pharaoh allowed the wine server and the baker to leave the prison. He freed the wine server and gave him his job back, and once again the wine server put a cup of wine in Pharaoh’s hand.

22 But Pharaoh hanged the baker, and everything happened the way Joseph said it would. But the wine server did not remember to help Joseph. He said nothing about him to Pharaoh. He said nothing about him to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh’s Dreams

41 Two years later Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile River. In the dream, seven cows came out of the river and stood there eating grass. They were healthy, good-looking cows. Then seven more cows came out of the river and stood on the bank of the river by the healthy cows. But these cows were thin and looked sick. The seven sick cows ate the seven healthy cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

5 Pharaoh went back to sleep and began dreaming again. This time he dreamed that he saw seven heads of grain growing on one plant. They were healthy and full of grain. Then he saw seven more heads
of grain sprouting, but they were thin and scorched by the hot wind. 7 The thin heads of grain ate the seven good heads of grain. Then Pharaoh woke up again and realized it was only a dream. 8 The next morning Pharaoh was worried about these dreams, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told these men the dreams, but none of them could explain the dreams.

The Servant Tells Pharaoh About Joseph
9 Then the wine servant remembered Joseph and said to Pharaoh, “I remember something that happened to me. 10 You were angry with the baker and me, and you put us in prison. 11 Then one night he and I had a dream. Each dream had a different meaning. 12 There was a young Hebrew man in prison with us. He was a servant of the commander of the guards. We told him our dreams, and he explained them to us. He told us the meaning of each dream, and what he said came true. He said I would be free and have my old job back, and it happened. He also said the baker would die, and it happened!”

Joseph Is Called to Explain the Dreams
14 So Pharaoh called Joseph from the prison. The guards quickly got Joseph out of prison. Joseph shaved, put on some clean clothes, and went to see Pharaoh. 15 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream, and no one can explain it for me. I heard that you can explain dreams when someone tells you about them.” 16 Joseph answered, “I cannot! But God can explain the dream for you, Pharaoh.”
17 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing by the Nile River. 18 Seven cows came up out of the river and stood there eating the grass. They were healthy, good-looking cows. 19 Then I saw seven more cows come up out of the river after them, but these cows were thin and looked sick. They were the worst cows I had ever seen anywhere in Egypt! 20 The thin, sick cows ate the first healthy cows, 21 but they still looked thin and sick. You couldn’t even tell they had eaten the healthy cows. They looked as thin and sick as they did in the beginning. Then I woke up.

22 “In my next dream I saw seven heads of grain growing on one plant. They were healthy and full of grain. 23 And then seven more heads of grain grew after them, but they were thin and scorched by the hot wind. 24 Then the thin heads of grain ate the seven good heads of grain.

“I told these dreams to my magicians. But no one could explain the dreams to me. What do they mean?”

Joseph Explains the Dream
25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Both of these dreams have the same meaning. God is telling you what will happen soon. 26 The seven good cows and the seven good heads of grain are seven good years. 27 And the seven thin, sick-looking cows and the seven thin heads of grain mean that there will be seven years of hunger in this area. These seven bad years will come after the seven good years. 28 God has shown you what will happen soon. He will make these things happen just as I told you. 29 For seven years there will be plenty of food in Egypt. 30 But then there will be seven years of hunger. The people will forget how much food there had been in Egypt before. This famine will ruin the country. 31 It will be so bad that people will forget what it was like to have plenty of food.

32 “Pharaoh, you had two dreams about the same thing. That means God wanted to show you that he really will make this happen, and he will make it happen soon! 33 So, Pharaoh, you should choose a wise, intelligent man and put him in charge of Egypt. 34 Then you should choose other men to collect food from the people. During the seven good years, the people must give them one-fifth of all the food they grow. 35 In this way these men will collect all the food during the seven good years and store it in the cities until it is needed. Pharaoh, this food will be under your control. 36 Then during the seven years of
hunger, there will be food for the country of Egypt. And Egypt will not be destroyed by the famine.”

37This seemed like a very good idea to Pharaoh, and all his officials agreed. 38Then Pharaoh told them, “I don’t think we can find anyone better than Joseph to take this job! God’s Spirit is in him, making him very wise!”

39So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “God showed these things to you, so you must be the wisest man. 40I will put you in charge of my country, and the people will obey all your commands. I will be the only one more powerful than you.”

41Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I now make you governor over all of Egypt.” 42Then Pharaoh gave his special ring to Joseph. The royal seal was on this ring. Pharaoh also gave Joseph a fine linen robe and put a gold chain around his neck. 43Then he told Joseph to ride in his second chariot. Pharaoh’s officials said, “Let him be the governor over the whole land of Egypt!”

44Then Pharaoh said to him, “I am Pharaoh, the king over everyone in Egypt, but no one else in Egypt can lift a hand or move a foot unless you say he can.” 45Then Pharaoh gave Joseph another name, Zaphenath Paneah. He also gave Joseph a wife named Asenath. She was the daughter of Potiphera, a priest in the city of On. So Joseph became the governor over the whole country of Egypt.

46Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving the king of Egypt. He traveled throughout the country of Egypt. 47During the seven good years, the crops in Egypt grew very well. 48Joseph saved the food in Egypt during those seven years and stored the food in the cities. In every city he stored grain that grew in the fields around the city. 49Joseph stored so much grain that it was like the sands of the sea. He stored so much grain that it could not be measured.

50Joseph’s wife, Asenath, was the daughter of Potiphera, the priest in the city of On. Before the first year of hunger came, Joseph and Asenath had two sons. 51Joseph named the first son Manasseh. He was given this name because Joseph said, “God made me forget all my hard work and everything back home in my father’s house.” 52Joseph named the second son Ephraim. Joseph gave him this name because he said, “I had great troubles, but God has made me successful in everything.”

The Famine Begins

53For seven years people had all the food they needed, but those years ended. 54Then the seven years of hunger began, just as Joseph had said. No food grew anywhere in any of the countries in that area. But in Egypt people had plenty to eat because Joseph had stored the grain. 55The famine began, and the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh said to the Egyptian people, “Go ask Joseph what to do.”

56There was famine everywhere, so Joseph gave the people grain from the warehouses. He sold the stored grain to the people of Egypt. The famine was bad in Egypt, but the famine was bad everywhere. So people from the countries around Egypt had to come to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain.

The Dreams Come True

42During the famine in Canaan, Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt. So he said to his sons, “Why are you sitting here doing nothing? 2I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go there and buy grain for us so that we will live and not die!”

3So ten of Joseph’s brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. 4Jacob did not send Benjamin. (Benjamin was Joseph’s only

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*a* 41:43 Or “Then Pharaoh had Joseph ride in the chariot of his second-in-command, and they said, ‘Bow before Joseph.’ In this way Joseph became the governor over all of Egypt.”

*b* 41:45 Zaphenath Paneah. This Egyptian name probably means “sustainer of life,” but it is like Hebrew words meaning “a person who explains secret things.”

*c* 41:51 Manasseh. This is like the Hebrew word meaning “to forget.”

*d* 41:52 Ephraim. This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “twice fruitful.”

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full brother.\textsuperscript{a} Jacob was afraid that something bad might happen to Benjamin.

5 The famine was very bad in Canaan, so there were many people from Canaan who went to Egypt to buy grain. Among them were the sons of Israel.

6 Joseph was the governor of Egypt at the time. He was the one who checked the sale of grain to people who came to Egypt to buy it. Joseph's brothers came to him and bowed before him. 7 Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted like he didn't know them. He was rude when he spoke to them. He said, "Where do you come from?"

The brothers answered, "We have come from the land of Canaan to buy food."

8 Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not know who he was. \textsuperscript{9}Then Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed about his brothers.

Joseph said to his brothers, "You have not come to buy food! You are spies. You came to learn where we are weak."

9 But the brothers said to him, "No, sir, we come as your servants. We have come only to buy food. \textsuperscript{10}We are all brothers—we all have the same father. We are honest men. We have come only to buy food."

10 Then Joseph said to them, "No, you have come to spy on us!"

11 And the brothers said, "No, sir, we come as servants from Canaan. We are all brothers, sons of the same father. There were twelve brothers in our family. Our youngest brother is still at home with our father, and the other brother died a long time ago."

12 But Joseph said to them, "No! I can see that I am right. You are spies. \textsuperscript{15}But I will let you prove that you are telling the truth. In the name of Pharaoh, I swear that I will not let you go until your youngest brother comes here. \textsuperscript{16}One of you must go back to get your youngest brother while the rest of you stay here in prison. Then we can prove whether you are telling the truth or not. If you are not telling the truth, then by Pharaoh, I swear that you are spies!" Then Joseph put them all in prison for three days.

The Troubles Begin

18 After three days Joseph said to them, "I am a God-fearing man. Do this, and I will let you live. \textsuperscript{19}If you are honest men, one of your brothers can stay here in prison, and the others can go and carry grain back to your people. But then you must bring your youngest brother back here to me. Then I will know that you are telling the truth, and you will not have to die."

The brothers agreed to this. \textsuperscript{21}They said to each other, "We are being punished for the bad thing we did to our younger brother Joseph. We saw the trouble he was in. He begged us to save him, but we refused to listen. So now we are in trouble."

22 Then Reuben said to them, "I told you not to do anything bad to that boy, but you refused to listen to me. Now we are being punished for his death."

23–24 Joseph was using an interpreter to talk to his brothers, so the brothers did not know that he understood their language. He heard and understood everything they said, and that made him want to cry. So he turned away and left the room. When he came back, he took one of the brothers, Simeon, and tied him up while the others watched. \textsuperscript{25}Joseph told the servants to fill the bags with grain. The brothers had given Joseph the money for the grain, but he didn't keep the money. He put the money in their bags of grain. Then he gave them what they would need for their trip back home.

26 So the brothers put the grain on their donkeys and left. \textsuperscript{27}That night the brothers stopped at a place to spend the night. One of the brothers opened his sack to get some grain for his donkey. And there in the sack, he saw his money! \textsuperscript{28}He said to the other brothers, "Look! Here is the money I paid for the grain. Someone put the money back in my sack."

The brothers were very afraid. They said to one another, "What is God doing to us?"

\textsuperscript{a} 42:4 full brother  Literally, "brother." Joseph and Benjamin had the same mother.
The Brothers Report to Jacob

29 The brothers went back to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him about everything that had happened. 30 They said, “The governor of that country spoke rudely to us. He thought that we were spies! 31 We told him, ‘We are honest men, not spies. 32 There are twelve of us brothers, all from the same father. But one of our brothers is no longer living, and the youngest is still at home with our father in Canaan.’

33 Then the governor of that country said to us, ‘Here is a way to prove that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me. Take your grain back to your families. 34 Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know if you are honest men or if you were sent from an army to destroy us. If you are telling the truth, I will give your brother back to you. 35 If you send Benjamin with us, we will go down and buy grain. 36 But if you refuse to send Benjamin, we will not go. The man warned us to not come back without him.’

37 Israel said, “Why did you tell him you had another brother? Why did you do such a bad thing to me?”

7 The brothers answered, “He asked lots of questions. He wanted to know all about us and about our family. He asked us, ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother at home?’ We only answered his questions. We didn’t know he would ask us to bring our brother to him!”

8 Then Judah said to his father Israel, “Let Benjamin go with me. I will take care of him. We have to go to Egypt to get food. If we don’t go, we will all die—including our children. 9 I will make sure he is safe. I will be responsible for him. If I don’t bring him back to you, you can blame me forever. 10 If you had let us go before, we could have already made two trips for food.”

11 Then their father Israel said, “If it is really true, take Benjamin with you. But take some gifts to the governor. Take some of the things we have been able to gather in our land. Take him some honey, pistachio nuts, almonds, spices, and myrrh. 12 Take twice as much money with you this time. Take the money that was given back to you after you paid last time. Maybe the governor made a mistake. 13 Take Benjamin, and go back to the man. I pray that God All-Powerful will help you when you stand before the governor. I pray that he will let Benjamin, and also Simeon, come back safely. If not, I will again be sad from losing my children.”

15 So the brothers took the gifts to give to the governor. And the brothers took twice as much money with them as they took the first time. This time Benjamin went with the brothers to Egypt.

Jacob Lets Benjamin Go to Egypt

43 The famine was very bad in that country. The people ate all the grain they had brought from Egypt. When that grain was gone, Jacob said to his sons, “Go to Egypt and buy some more grain for us to eat.”

3 But Judah said to Jacob, “But the governor of that country warned us. He said, ‘If you don’t bring your brother back to me, I will refuse to talk to you.’ 4 If you send Benjamin with us, we will go down and buy grain. 5 But if you refuse to send Benjamin, we will not go. The man warned us to not come back without him.”

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The Brothers at Joseph’s House

When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his servant, “Bring these men into my house. Kill an animal and cook it. They will eat with me at noon today.” The servant did as he was told. He brought the men into Joseph’s house.

The brothers were afraid when they were taken to Joseph’s house and said, “We have been brought here because of the money that was put back in our sacks the last time. They will use this as proof against us and steal our donkeys and make us slaves.”

So the brothers went to the servant in charge of Joseph’s house. They said, “Sir, I promise this is the truth. The last time we came, we came to buy food. On the way home, we opened our sacks and found our money in every sack. We don’t know how it got there, but we brought that money with us to give it back to you. And we have brought more money to pay for the food that we want to buy this time.”

But the servant answered, “Don’t be afraid; believe me. Your God, the God of your father, must have put the money in your sack as a gift. I remember that you paid me for the grain the last time.”

Then the servant brought Simeon out of the prison. The servant led the men into Joseph’s house. He gave them water, and they washed their feet. Then he fed their donkeys.

The brothers heard that they were going to eat with Joseph, so they worked until noon preparing their gifts for him.

When Joseph came home, the brothers gave him the gifts they had brought with them. Then they bowed down to the ground in front of him.

Joseph asked them how they were doing. Then he said, “How is your elderly father you told me about? Is he still alive?”

The brothers answered, “Yes, sir, our father is still alive.” And they again bowed before Joseph.

Then Joseph saw his brother Benjamin. (Benjamin and Joseph had the same mother.) Joseph said, “Is this your youngest brother that you told me about?” Then Joseph said to Benjamin, “God bless you, my son!

Joseph felt a strong desire to show his brother Benjamin that he loved him. He was about to cry and didn’t want his brothers to see him, so he ran into his private room and cried there. Then Joseph washed his face and came out. He regained control of himself and said, “Now it is time to eat.”

The servants seated Joseph at a table by himself. His brothers were at another table by themselves, and the Egyptians were at a table by themselves. The Egyptians believed that it was wrong for them to eat with Hebrews. Joseph’s brothers were seated at a table facing him. The brothers were looking at each other because, to their surprise, they had been seated in order, from the oldest to the youngest. Servants were taking food from Joseph’s table and bringing it to them. But the servants gave Benjamin five times more than the others. The brothers continued to eat and drink with Joseph until they were drunk.

Joseph Sets a Trap

Then Joseph gave a command to his servant. He said, “Fill the men’s sacks with as much grain as they can carry. Then put each man’s money into his sack with the grain. But also put my special silver cup in his sack.” So the servant obeyed Joseph.

Early the next morning the brothers and their donkeys were sent back to their country. After they had left the city, Joseph said to his servant, “Go and follow the men. Stop them and say to them, ‘We were good to you! So why have you been bad to us? Why did you steal my master’s silver cup?’ My master drinks from that cup. Otherwise how would you know it was mine?”

a 43:32 The Egyptians … Hebrews The Egyptians would not eat with them because they were shepherds and ate meat from cattle, sheep, and goats. To the Egyptians, these animals represented some of their gods. See Gen. 46:34.

b 44:4 Why did … silver cup This is from the ancient Greek version.
cup, and he uses it to learn secret things. What you did was wrong!"

6 So the servant obeyed. He rode out to the brothers and stopped them. The servant said to them what Joseph had told him to say.

7 But the brothers said to the servant, "Why does the governor say these things? We wouldn’t do anything like that! We brought back the money that we found in our sacks before. So surely we wouldn’t steal silver or gold from your master’s house. If you find the silver cup in any of our sacks, let that man die. You can kill him, and we will be your slaves.”

8 The servant said, “I agree, except that only the man who is found to have the cup will be my slave. The others will be free.”

The Trap Is Sprung; Benjamin Is Caught
9 Then every brother quickly opened his sack on the ground.

10 The servant started looking in the sacks. He started with the oldest brother and ended with the youngest. He found the cup in Benjamin’s sack.

11 The brothers were very sad. They tore their clothes to show their sadness. They put their sacks back on the donkeys and went back to the city.

12 When Judah and his brothers went back to Joseph’s house, Joseph was still there. The brothers fell to the ground and bowed down before him.

13 The brothers were very sad. They tore their clothes to show their sadness. They put their sacks back on the donkeys and went back to the city.

14 When Judah and his brothers went back to Joseph’s house, Joseph was still there. The brothers fell to the ground and bowed down before him.

15 Joseph said to them, “Why have you done this? Didn’t you know that I have a special way of learning secrets? No one is better at this than I am!”

16 Judah said, “Sir, there is nothing we can say. There is no way to explain. There is no way to show that we are not guilty. God has judged us guilty for something else we have done. So all of us, even Benjamin, will be your slaves.”

17 But Joseph said, “I will not make you all slaves! Only the man who stole the cup will be my slave. You others can go in peace to your father.”

Judah Pleads for Benjamin
18 Then Judah went to Joseph and said, “Sir, please let me speak plainly with you. Please don’t be angry with me. I know that you are like Pharaoh himself. 19 When we were here before, you asked us, ‘Do you have a father or a brother?’ And we answered you, ‘We have a father—he is an old man. And we have a younger brother. Our father loves him because he was born while our father was old. This youngest son’s brother is dead, so he is the only son who is left from that mother. Our father loves him very much.’ Then you said to us, ‘Bring that brother to me. I want to see him.’ And we said to you, ‘That young boy cannot come. He cannot leave his father. If his father loses him, his father will be so sad that he will die.’ But you said to us, ‘You must bring your youngest brother, or I will not sell you grain again.’

20 So we went back to our father and told him what you said.

21 “Later, our father said, ‘Go back and buy us some more food.’ We said to our father, ‘We cannot go without our youngest brother. The governor said he will not sell us grain again until he sees our youngest brother.’ Then my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife Rachel gave me two sons. I let one son go away, and he was killed by a wild animal. And I haven’t seen him since. If you take my other son away from me, and something happens to him, I will be sad enough to die.’

22 Now, imagine what will happen when we go home without our youngest brother—he is the most important thing in our father’s life! Our father will die if he sees that the boy isn’t with us—and it will be our fault. We will send our father to his grave a very sad man.

23 “I took responsibility for the young boy. I told my father, ‘If I don’t bring him back to you, you can blame me for the rest of my life.’ So now I beg you, please let the boy go back with his brothers, and I will stay and be your slave.

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Joseph Tells Who He Is

1 Joseph could not control himself any longer. He cried in front of all the people who were there. Joseph said, “Tell everyone to leave here.” So all the people left. Only the brothers were left with Joseph. Then he told them who he was. 2 Joseph continued to cry, and all the Egyptian people in Pharaoh’s house heard it. 3 He said to his brothers, “I am your brother Joseph. Is my father doing well?” But the brothers did not answer him because they were confused and afraid.

4 So Joseph said to his brothers again, “Come here to me. I beg you, come here.” When the brothers went to him, he said to them, “I am your brother Joseph. I am the one you sold as a slave to Egypt. 5 Now don’t be worried. Don’t be angry with yourselves for what you did. It was God’s plan for me to come here. I am here to save people’s lives. 6 This terrible famine has continued for two years now, and there will be five more years without planting or harvest. 7 So God sent me here ahead of you so that I can save your people in this country. 8 It was not your fault that I was sent here. It was God’s plan. God made me like a father to Pharaoh. I am the governor over all his house and over all Egypt.”

Israel Invited to Egypt

9 Joseph said, “Hurry up and go to my father. Tell him his son Joseph sent this message: ‘God made me the governor of Egypt. So come here to me quickly. Don’t wait. 10 You can live near me in the land of Goshen. You, your children, your grandchildren, and all of your animals are welcome here. 11 I will take care of you during the next five years of hunger. So you and your family will not lose everything you own.’

12 ‘Surely you can see that I really am Joseph. Even my brother Benjamin knows it is me, your brother, talking to you. 13 So tell my father about the honor I have received here in Egypt. Tell him about everything you have seen here. Now hurry, go bring my father back to me.” 14 Then Joseph hugged his brother Benjamin, and they both began crying. 15 Then Joseph cried as he kissed all his brothers. After this, the brothers began talking with him.

16 Pharaoh learned that Joseph’s brothers had come to him. This news spread throughout Pharaoh’s house. Pharaoh and his servants were very excited! 17 So Pharaoh told Joseph, “Tell your brothers to take all the food they need and go back to the land of Canaan. 18 Tell them to bring your father and their families back here to me. I will give you the best land in Egypt to live on. And your family can eat the best food we have here. 19 Also give your brothers some of our best wagons. Tell them to go to Canaan and bring your father and all the women and children back in the wagons. 20 Don’t worry about bringing all of their belongings. We can give them the best of Egypt.”

21 So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them good wagons just as Pharaoh had promised. And Joseph gave them enough food for their trip. 22 He gave each brother a suit of beautiful clothes. But to Benjamin he gave five suits of beautiful clothes and 300 pieces of silver. 23 Joseph also sent gifts to his father. He sent ten donkeys with bags full of many good things from Egypt. And he sent ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and other food for his father on his trip back. 24 Then Joseph told his brothers to go. While they were leaving, he said to them, “Go straight home, and don’t fight on the way.”

25 So the brothers left Egypt and went to their father in the land of Canaan. 26 They told him, “Father, Joseph is still alive! And he is the governor over the whole country of Egypt.”

Their father did not know what to think. At first he didn’t believe them. 27 But then they told him everything Joseph had said. Then their father saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to bring him back to Egypt, and he became excited and very happy. 28 Israel said, “Now I believe you.
My son Joseph is still alive! I am going to see him before I die!"

**God Assures Israel**

46 So Israel began his trip to Egypt. First he went to Beersheba. There he worshiped God, the God of his father Isaac. He offered sacrifices. During the night God spoke to Israel in a dream and said, "Jacob, Jacob."

Israel answered, “Here I am.” Then God said, “I am God, the God of your father. Don’t be afraid to go to Egypt. In Egypt I will make you a great nation. I will go to Egypt with you, and I will bring you out of Egypt again. You will die there, but Joseph will be with you. His own hands will close your eyes when you die.”

**Israel Goes to Egypt**

5 Then Jacob left Beersheba and traveled to Egypt. His sons, the sons of Israel, brought their father, their wives, and all their children to Egypt. They traveled in the wagons the Pharaoh had sent. They also had their cattle and everything they owned in the land of Canaan. So Israel went to Egypt with all his children and his family. With him were his sons and his grandsons, his daughters and his granddaughters. All of his family went with him.

**The Family of Jacob (Israel)**

8 These are the names of Israel’s sons and family who went to Egypt with him:

- Reuben was Jacob’s first son.
- Reuben’s sons were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.
- Simeon’s sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, and Zohar. There was also Shaul. (Shaul was born from a Canaanite woman.)
- Levi’s sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.
- Judah’s sons were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. (Er and Onan died while still in Canaan.) Perez’s sons were Hezron and Hamul.
- Issachar’s sons were Tola, Puah, Job, and Shimron.
- Zebulun’s sons were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.
- Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were Jacob’s sons from his wife Leah. Leah had these sons in Padan Aram. She also had a daughter named Dinah. There were 33 people in this family.
- Gad’s sons were Zephyon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.
- Asher’s sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. Also there were Beriah’s sons, Heber and Malkiel.
- All these were Jacob’s sons from his wife’s servant, Zilpah. (Zilpah was the maid that Laban had given to his daughter Leah.) There were 16 people in this family.
- Benjamin was also with Jacob. Benjamin was Jacob and Rachel’s son. (Joseph was also Rachel’s son, but he was already in Egypt.)
- In Egypt, Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. (Joseph’s wife was Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest in the city of On.)
- Benjamin’s sons were Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.
- These were the sons of Jacob from his wife Rachel. There were 14 people in this family.
- Dan’s son was Hushim.
- Naphtali’s sons were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.
- These were the sons of Jacob and Bilhah. (Bilhah was the maid that Laban had given to his daughter Rachel.) There were seven people in this family.
- The total number of Jacob’s direct descendants who went with him to Egypt was 66 people. (The wives of Jacob’s sons were not counted in this number.) Also, Joseph had two sons in Egypt. With these two grandsons, Jacob’s family in Egypt numbered 70 people in all.

**Israel Arrives in Egypt**

28 Jacob sent Judah ahead to speak to Joseph. Judah went to Joseph in the land
of Goshen. Then Jacob and his people followed into the land. 29 Joseph learned that his father was coming. So he prepared his chariot and went out to meet his father, Israel, in Goshen. When Joseph saw his father, he hugged his neck and cried for a long time.

30 Then Israel said to Joseph, “Now I can die in peace. I have seen your face, and I know that you are still alive.”

31 Joseph said to his brothers and to the rest of his father’s family, “I will go and tell Pharaoh that you are here. I will say to Pharaoh, ‘My brothers and the rest of my father’s family have left the land of Canaan and have come here to me. 32 They are a family of shepherds. They have always kept sheep and cattle. They have brought all their animals and everything they own with them.’ 33 When Pharaoh calls you, he will ask, ‘What work do you do?’ 34 You tell him, ‘We are shepherds. All our lives we have been shepherds, and our ancestors were shepherds before us.’ Then Pharaoh will allow you to live in the land of Goshen. Egyptians don’t like shepherds, so it is better that you stay in Goshen.”

Israel Settles in Goshen

47 Joseph went in to Pharaoh and said, “My father and my brothers and all their families are here. They have all their animals and everything they own from the land of Canaan with them. They are now in the land of Goshen.” 2 Joseph chose five of his brothers to be with him before the Pharaoh.

3 Pharaoh said to the brothers, “What work do you do?”

The brothers said to Pharaoh, “Sir, we are shepherds, just as our ancestors were shepherds before us.” 4 They said to Pharaoh, “The famine is very bad in Canaan. There are no fields left with grass for our animals, so we have come to live in this land. We ask you to please let us live in Goshen.”

5 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Your father and your brothers have come to you. 6 You can choose any place in Egypt for them to live. Give your father and your brothers the best land. Let them live in the land of Goshen. And if they are skilled shepherds, they can also care for my cattle.”

7 Then Joseph called his father Jacob to come in to meet Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

8 Then Pharaoh said to him, “How old are you?”

9 Jacob said to Pharaoh, “I have had a short life with many troubles. I am only 130 years old. My father and his ancestors lived to be much older than I am.”

10 Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and left from his meeting with him.

11 Joseph did what Pharaoh said and gave his father and brothers land in Egypt. It was the best land in Egypt, in the eastern part of the country, around Rameses. 12 Joseph also gave his father, his brothers, and all their people the food they needed.

Joseph Buys Land for Pharaoh

13 The famine got worse; there was no food anywhere in the land. Egypt and Canaan became very poor because of this bad time. 14 People in the land bought more and more grain. Joseph saved the money and brought it to Pharaoh’s house. 15 After some time, the people in Egypt and Canaan had no money left. They had spent all their money to buy grain. So the people of Egypt went to Joseph and said, “Please give us food. Our money is gone. If we don’t eat, we will die while you are watching.”

16 But Joseph answered, “Give me your cattle, and I will give you food.” 17 So the people used their cattle and horses and all their other animals to buy food. And that year, Joseph gave them food and took their animals.

18 But the next year the people had no animals and nothing to buy food with. So they went to Joseph and said, “You know that we have no money left, and all our animals belong to you. So we have nothing left—only what you see—our bodies and our land.” 19 Surely we will die while you are
watching. But if you give us food, we will give Pharaoh our land, and we will be his slaves. Give us seed so that we can plant. Then we will live and not die, and the land will grow food for us again.”

20 So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. All the people in Egypt sold Joseph their fields. They did this because they were very hungry. 21 And everywhere in Egypt all the people became Pharaoh’s slaves. 22 The only land Joseph didn’t buy was the land that the priests owned. The priests didn’t need to sell their land because Pharaoh paid them for their work. So they used this money to buy food to eat.

23 Joseph said to the people, “Now I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh. So I will give you seed, and you can plant your fields.

24 At harvest time, you must give one-fifth of your crops to Pharaoh. You can keep four-fifths for yourselves. You can use the seed you keep for food and planting the next year. Now you can feed your families and your children.”

25 The people said, “You have saved our lives. We are happy to be slaves to Pharaoh.”

26 So Joseph made a law at that time in the land, and that law continues today. The law says that one-fifth of everything from the land belongs to the Pharaoh who owns all the land. The only land he does not own is the land of the priests.

Don’t Bury Me in Egypt

27 Israel stayed in Egypt. He lived in the land of Goshen. His family grew and became very large. They became landowners there and did very well.

28 Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years, so he was 147 years old. 29 The time came when Israel knew he would soon die, so he called his son Joseph to him. He said, “If you love me, put your hand under my leg and make a promise. 30 Promise that you will do what I say and that you will be truthful with me. When I die, don’t bury me in Egypt. 31 Bury me in the place where my ancestors are buried. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in our family grave.”

Joseph answered, “I promise that I will do what you say.”

32 Then Jacob said, “Make a vow to me.” And Joseph vowed to him that he would do this. Then Israel laid his head back down on the bed.

Blessings for Manasseh and Ephraim

48 1 Some time later Joseph learned that his father was very sick. So he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and went to his father. 2 When Joseph arrived, someone told Israel, “Your son Joseph has come to see you.” Israel was very weak, but he tried hard and sat up in his bed.

3 Then Israel said to Joseph, “God All-Powerful appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan. God blessed me there. 4 He said to me, ‘I will make you a great family. I will give you many children and you will be a great people. Your family will own this land forever.’ 5 Now you have two sons. These two sons were born here in the country of Egypt before I came. Your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, will be like my own sons. They will be like Reuben and Simeon to me. 6 So these two boys will be my sons. They will share in everything I own. But if you have other sons, they will be your sons. But they will also be like sons to Ephraim and Manasseh—that is, in the future, they will share in everything that Ephraim and Manasseh own. 7 On the trip from Paddan Aram, Rachel died in the land of Canaan. This made me very sad. We were still traveling toward Ephrath. I buried her there on the road to Ephrath.” (Ephrath is Bethlehem.)

8 Then Israel saw Joseph’s sons. Israel said, “Who are these boys?”

9 Joseph said to his father, “These are my sons. These are the boys God gave me.”

Israel said, “Bring your sons to me. I will bless them.”

10 Israel was old and his eyes were not

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**Footnotes:**

47:29 put your hand … make a promise This was a sign of a very important promise that Jacob trusted Joseph to keep.

47:31 Then Israel … on the bed Or “Then Israel bowed down at the head of his bed” or “Then Israel worshiped on the head of the staff.”

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good. So Joseph brought the boys close to his father. Israel kissed and hugged the boys. "Then Israel said to Joseph, "I never thought I would see your face again. But look! God has let me see you and your children."

12 Then Joseph took the boys off Israel’s lap, and they bowed down in front of his father. 13 Joseph put Ephraim on his right side and Manasseh on his left side. (So Ephraim was on Israel’s left side, and Manasseh was on Israel’s right side.) 14 But Israel crossed his hands and put his right hand on the head of the younger boy Ephraim. Then he put his left hand on Manasseh, even though Manasseh was the firstborn. 15 And Israel blessed Joseph and said, "My ancestors, Abraham and Isaac, worshiped our God, and that God has led me all my life. 16 He was the Angel who saved me from all my troubles. And I pray that he will bless these boys. Now they will have my name and the name of our ancestors, Abraham and Isaac. I pray that they will grow to become great families and nations on earth."

17 Joseph saw that his father put his right hand on Ephraim’s head. This didn’t make Joseph happy. Joseph took his father’s hand because he wanted to move it from Ephraim’s head and put it on Manasseh’s head. 18 Joseph said to his father, “You have your right hand on the wrong boy. Manasseh is the firstborn. Put your right hand on him.” 19 But his father refused and said, “I know, son. I know. Manasseh is the firstborn. He will be great and will be the father of many people. But his younger brother will be greater than he is. And the younger brother’s family will be much larger.”

20 So Israel blessed them that day. He said, “The Israelites will use your names whenever they bless someone. They will say, ‘May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.’” In this way Israel made Ephraim greater than Manasseh.

21 Then Israel said to Joseph, “Look, my time to die is almost here, but God will still be with you. He will lead you back to the land of your ancestors. 22 I have given you one portion more than I gave to your brothers. I gave you the land that I won from the Amorites. I used my sword and bow to take that land.”

**Jacob Blesses His Sons**

49 1 Then Jacob called all his sons to him. He said, “My sons, come here to me. I will tell you what will happen in the future.

2 “Children of Jacob, gather around. Come listen to Israel, your father.

**Reuben**

3 “Reuben, my first son, you are my strength, the first proof of my manhood. You were the most honored and powerful of all my sons.

4 But your passion was like a flood you couldn’t control. So you will not remain my most honored son. You climbed into your father’s bed and slept with one of his wives. You brought shame to my bed, to the bed you lay on.

**Simeon and Levi**

5 “Simeon and Levi are brothers. They are violent with their swords. I will not join their secret meetings. I will not take part in their evil plans. They have killed people out of anger and crippled animals for fun.

6 Their anger is so strong that it is a curse. They are too cruel when they are angry. They will not get their own land in the
land of Jacob. They will be spread throughout Israel.

Judah

8 “Judah, your brothers will praise you. You will defeat your enemies. Your brothers will bow down to you. 9 Judah is like a young lion. My son, you are like a lion standing over the animal it killed. Like a lion, Judah lies down to rest, and no one is brave enough to disturb him. 10 Men from Judah’s family will be kings. The sign that his family rules will not leave his family before the real king comes. a Then many people will obey and serve him. 11 He ties his donkeys to the best grapevines. He washes his clothes in the best wine. 12 His eyes are red from drinking wine. His teeth are white from drinking milk. b

Zebulun

13 “Zebulun will live near the sea. His seacoast will be a safe place for ships. His land will continue as far as the city of Sidon.

Issachar

14 “Issachar is like a donkey that has worked too hard. He will lie down under his heavy load. 15 He will see his land is pleasant and that his resting place is good. But he will agree to carry heavy loads; he will agree to work as a slave.

Dan

16 “Dan will rule his people as one of the tribes of Israel. 17 Dan will be like a snake at the side of the road. He will be like a dangerous snake lying near the path. That snake bites a horse’s foot, and the rider falls to the ground. 18 “LORD, I am waiting for your salvation.

Gad

19 “A group of robbers will attack Gad, but Gad will chase them away.

Asher

20 “Asher’s land will grow much good food. He will have food fit for a king!

Naphtali

21 “Naphtali is like a deer running free, and his words are beautiful.

Joseph

22 “Joseph is like a wild donkey, like a young donkey by a spring, like colts grazing in a pasture. e 23 People attacked him and made life hard for him. Men with arrows became his enemies. 24 But he won the fight with his mighty bow and his skillful arms. He gets power from the Mighty One of Jacob, from the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, 25 the God of your father who helps you. May God All-Powerful bless you and give you blessings from the sky above and from the deep below.

a 49:10 before the real king comes Or “until Shiloh comes;” “until the man it belongs to comes;” or “until his tribute comes.” b 49:10–12 Or “The ruler’s scepter will not pass from between Judah’s feet before he gets what is his, that is, the people’s obedience. 11His young donkey will be tied to the very best grapevines. He will wash his finest clothes in wine, the blood of grapes. 12His eyes will be redder than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.”

c 49:16 Dan This name means “judge” and is a wordplay with “rule.” d 49:19 A group of robbers will attack The Hebrew words for “group of robbers” and “attack” sound like the name Gad. e 49:22 Or “Joseph is very successful. Joseph is like a vine covered with fruit, like a vine growing by a spring, like a vine growing along a fence.”
May he give you blessings from breast and womb.

26 My parents had many good things happen to them.
And I, your father, was blessed even more.
Your brothers left you with nothing.
But now I pile all my blessings on you, as high as a mountain.

Benjamin

27 “Benjamin is like a hungry wolf.
In the morning he kills and eats.
In the evening he shares what is left.”

28 These are the twelve families of Israel.
And this is what their father said to them.
He gave each son a blessing that was right for him.

29 Then Israel gave them a command. He said, “When I die, I want to be with my people. I want to be buried with my ancestors in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite.

30 That cave is in the field of Machpelah near Mamre in the land of Canaan. Abraham bought that field from Ephron so that he could have a burying place.

31 Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried in that cave. Isaac and his wife Rebekah are buried in that cave. I buried my wife Leah in that cave.

32 That cave is in the field that was bought from the Hittites.”

33 After Jacob finished talking to his sons, he lay down, put his feet back on the bed, and died.

Jacob’s Funeral

50 When Israel died, Joseph was very sad. He hugged his father and cried over him and kissed him. 2 Joseph commanded his servants to prepare his father’s body. (These servants were doctors.) The doctors prepared Jacob’s body to be buried. They prepared the body in the special way of the Egyptians.

3 When the Egyptians prepared the body in this special way, they waited 40 days before they buried the body. Then the Egyptians had a special time of sadness for Jacob. This time was 70 days.

4 After the time of sadness was finished, Joseph spoke to Pharaoh’s officers and said, “Please tell this to Pharaoh: 5 When my father was near death, I made a promise to him. I promised that I would bury him in a cave in the land of Canaan. This is the cave that he prepared for himself. So please let me go and bury my father. Then I will come back here to you.”

6 Pharaoh answered, “Keep your promise. Go and bury your father.”

7 So Joseph went to bury his father. All of Pharaoh’s officials, personal advisors, and all the older leaders of Egypt went with Joseph. 8 All the people in Joseph’s family, his brothers, and all the people in his father’s family went with him. Only the children and the animals stayed in the land of Goshen. 9 So there was a large crowd of people with him. There was even a group of soldiers riding in chariots and some on horses.

10 They went to Goren Atad, east of the Jordan River. There they had a long funeral service for Israel, which continued for seven days. 11 When the people who lived in Canaan saw the funeral service at Goren Atad, they said, “This is a time of great sorrow for those Egyptians.” So now that place across the Jordan River is named Abel Mizraim.

12 So Jacob’s sons did what their father told them. 13 They carried his body to Canaan and buried it in the cave at Machpelah. This was the cave near Mamre in the field that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite. Abraham bought that cave to use as a burial place.

14 After Joseph buried his father, he and everyone in the group with him went back to Egypt.

The Brothers Are Still Afraid of Joseph

15 After Jacob died, Joseph’s brothers were worried. They were afraid that Joseph would still be mad at them for what they had done years before. They said, “Maybe Joseph still hates us for what we did.” 16 So the brothers sent this message to Joseph: “Before your father died, he told us to give

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you a message. Then he said, “Tell Joseph that I beg him to please forgive his brothers for the bad things they did to him.” So now Joseph, we beg you, please forgive us for the bad things we did to you. We are the servants of God, the God of your father.”

That message made Joseph very sad, and he cried. His brothers went to him and bowed down in front of him. They said, “We will be your servants.”

Then Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. I am not God! I have no right to punish you. It is true that you planned to do something bad to me. But really, God was planning good things. God’s plan was to use me to save the lives of many people. And that is what happened. So don’t be afraid. I will take care of you and your children.” And so Joseph said kind things to his brothers, and this made them feel better.

Joseph continued to live in Egypt with his father’s family. He died when he was 110 years old. During Joseph’s life Ephraim had children and grandchildren. And his son Manasseh had a son named Makir. Joseph lived to see Makir’s children.

The Death of Joseph

When Joseph was near death, he said to his brothers, “My time to die is almost here. But I know that God will take care of you and lead you out of this country. God will lead you to the land he promised to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Then Joseph asked his people to make a promise. Joseph said, “Promise me that you will carry my bones with you when God leads you out of Egypt.”

Joseph died in Egypt when he was 110 years old. Doctors prepared his body for burial and put the body in a coffin in Egypt.
Exodus

Jacob's Family in Egypt

1 When Jacob (Israel) went to Egypt, his sons and their families went with him. Here are the names of those sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. Another son, Joseph, was already in Egypt. So Jacob's whole family was with him in Egypt—70 descendants in all.

6 Later, Joseph, his brothers, and all the people of that generation died. But the Israelites had many children, and their number grew until the country of Egypt was filled with them.

Trouble for the Israelites

8 Then a new king began to rule Egypt. He did not know Joseph. This king said to his people, "Look at the Israelites. There are too many of them, and they are stronger than we are! We must make plans to stop them from growing stronger. If there is a war, they might join our enemies, defeat us, and escape from the land!"

10 The Egyptians decided to make life hard for the Israelites, so they put slave masters over the people. These masters forced the Israelites to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses for the king. The king used these cities to store grain and other things.

12 The Egyptians forced the Israelites to work harder and harder. But the harder they worked, the more they grew and spread, and the more the Egyptians became afraid of them. So the Egyptians made them work even harder.

14 They made life hard for the Israelites. They forced the Israelites to work hard at making bricks and mortar and to work hard in the fields. The Egyptians showed no mercy in all the hard work they made the Israelites do!

The Nurses Who Followed God

15 There were two Hebrew nurses who helped the Israelite women give birth. They were named Shiprah and Puah. The king of Egypt said to the nurses, "You will continue to help the Hebrew women give birth to their children. If a girl baby is born, let the baby live. But if the baby is a boy, you must kill him!"

17 But the nurses trusted God, so they did not obey the king's command. They let all the baby boys live.

18 The king of Egypt called for the nurses and asked them, "Why did you do this? Why did you let the baby boys live?"

19 The nurses said to the king, "The Hebrew women are much stronger than the Egyptian women. They give birth to their babies before we can go to help them."

20–21 The nurses trusted God, so he was good to them and allowed them to have their own families.

The Hebrews continued to have more children, and they became very strong.

22 So Pharaoh gave this command to his own people: "If the Hebrew women give birth to a baby girl, let it live. But if they have a baby boy, you must throw it into the Nile River."

Baby Moses

1 There was a man from the family of Levi who decided to marry a woman from the tribe of Levi. She became preg-

a 1:15 Hebrew Or "Israelite." This name might also mean "descendants of Eber" (read Gen. 10:25–31) or "people from beyond the Euphrates River." Also in verse 19.

b 1:17 trusted Literally, "feared" or "respected." Also in verses 20–21.

Exodus 2

and gave birth to a baby boy. The mother saw how beautiful the baby was and hid him for three months. 3 She hid him for as long as she could. After three months she made a basket and covered it with tar so that it would float. Then she put the baby in the basket and put the basket in the river in the tall grass. 4 The baby’s sister stayed and watched to see what would happen to the baby.

5 Just then, Pharaoh’s daughter went to the river to bathe. She saw the basket in the tall grass. Her servants were walking beside the river, so she told one of them to go get the basket. 6 The king’s daughter opened the basket and saw a baby boy. The baby was crying and she felt sorry for him. Then she noticed that it was one of the Hebrew babies.

7 The baby’s sister was still hiding. She stood and asked the king’s daughter, “Do you want me to go find a Hebrew woman who can nurse the baby and help you care for it?”

8 The king’s daughter said, “Yes, please.” So the girl went and brought the baby’s own mother.

9 The king’s daughter said to the mother, “Take this baby and feed him for me. I’ll pay you to take care of him.”

So the woman took her baby and cared for him. 10 The baby grew, and after some time, the woman gave the baby to the king’s daughter. The king’s daughter accepted the baby as her own son. She named him Moses 11 because she had pulled him from the water.

Moses helps his people

11 Moses grew and became a man. He saw that his own people, the Hebrews, were forced to work very hard. One day he saw an Egyptian man beating a Hebrew man. 12 Moses looked around and saw that no one was watching, so he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand.

13 The next day Moses saw two Hebrew men fighting each other. He saw that one man was wrong and said to him, “Why are you hurting your neighbor?”

14 The man answered, “Did anyone say you could be our ruler and judge? Tell me, will you kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?”

Then Moses was afraid. He thought to himself, “Now everyone knows what I did.”

15 Pharaoh heard about what Moses did, so he decided to kill him. But Moses ran away from Pharaoh and went to the land of Midian.

Moses in Midian

Moses stopped near a well in Midian. 16 There was a priest there who had seven daughters. These girls came to that well to get water for their father’s sheep. They were trying to fill the water trough with water. 17 But there were some shepherds there who chased the girls away and would not let them get water. So Moses helped the girls and gave water to their animals.

18 Then they went back to their father, Reuel. 19 He asked them, “Why have you come home early today?”

19 The girls answered, “The shepherds chased us away, but an Egyptian rescued us. He got water for us and gave it to our animals.”

20 So Reuel said to his daughters, “Where is this man? Why did you leave him? Go invite him to eat with us.”

21 Moses was happy to stay with that man. Reuel let Moses marry his daughter, Zipporah. 22 Zipporah became pregnant and had a son. Moses named him Gershom 23 because Moses was a stranger in a land that was not his own.

God decides to help Israel

23 A long time passed and that king of Egypt died. But the Israelites were still forced to work very hard. They cried for help, and God heard them. 24 God heard

a 2:6 Hebrew Or “Israelite.” Also in verses 7, 11, 13.

b 2:10 Moses This name is like a Hebrew word meaning “to pull or draw out.”

c 2:14 yesterday This word is from the ancient Greek version.

d 2:18 Reuel He is also called Jethro.

e 2:22 Gershom This name is like the Hebrew words meaning “a stranger there.”

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their painful cries and remembered the agreement he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 25 God saw the troubles of the Israelites, and he knew that he would soon help them.

The Burning Bush

3 Moses’ father-in-law was named Jethro. a Jethro was a priest of Midian. Moses took care of Jethro’s sheep. One day Moses led the sheep to the west side of the desert. He went to a mountain called Horeb, b the mountain of God. c On that mountain, Moses saw the angel of the LORD in a burning bush.

Moses saw a bush that was burning without being destroyed. d So he decided to go closer to the bush and see how a bush could continue burning without being burned up.

4 The LORD saw Moses was coming to look at the bush. So he called to him from the bush. He said, “Moses, Moses!”

Moses said, “Yes, Lord.”

5 Then God said, “Don’t come any closer. Take off your sandals. You are standing on holy ground. e I am the God of your ancestors. I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

Moses covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

6 Then the LORD said, “I am the God of your ancestors. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This will always be my name. It is how I want the people to remember me from now on. f

7 Then the LORD said, “I have seen the troubles my people have suffered in Egypt, and I have heard their cries when the Egyptians hurt them. g

8 Now I will go down and save my people from Egypt. I will take them from that land and lead them to a good land where they can be free from these troubles. h It is a land filled with many good things. i Many different people live in that land: the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. j I have heard the cries of the Israelites, and I have seen the way the Egyptians have made life hard for them. k So now I am sending you to Pharaoh. Go! Lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

11 But Moses said to God, “I am not a great man! How can I be the one to go to Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of Egypt?”

12 God said, “You can do it because I will be with you. This will be the proof that I am sending you: After you lead the people out of Egypt, you will come and worship me on this mountain.”

13 Then Moses said to God, “But if I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors sent me,’ then the people will ask, ‘What is his name?’ What should I tell them?”

14 Then God said to Moses, “Tell them, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ e When you go to the Israelites, tell them, ‘I AM’ sent me to you.”

15 And God said, “Tell the Israelites that you were sent by YAHWEH, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. This will always be my name. It is how I want the people to remember me from now on.

16 “Now go and call together the elders of the people. Tell them that YAHWEH, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—appeared to you. Give them this message from me: ‘I have been watching over you and have seen what people in Egypt have done to you.

17 And I have decided that I will take you away from the troubles you are suffering in Egypt. I will lead you to the land that now belongs to others—the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. I will lead you to a land filled with many good things.’

18 “The elders will listen to you. And then you and the elders will go to the Pharaoh. You will tell him, ‘YAHWEH is the God of the Hebrews. f He came to us and told us to travel three days into the desert. There we must offer sacrifices to YAHWEH our God.’

19 But I know that the Pharaoh will not

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*a 3:1 Jethro He is also called Reuel.
*b 3:1 A mountain called Horeb That is, “Mount Sinai.”
*c 3:8 land … troubles Or “a spacious land.”
*d 3:8 land … things Literally, “land flowing with milk and honey.” Also in verse 17.
*e 3:14 I AM WHO I AM The Hebrew words are like the name YAHWEH (“LORD”).
*f 3:18 YAHWEH Or “the LORD.” See “YAHWEH” in the Word List.
*g 3:18 Hebrew Or “Israelite.” Also in verse 22.
let you go. Only a great power will force him to let you go, so I will use my great power against Egypt. I will cause amazing things to happen in that land. After I do this, he will let you go. And I will cause the Egyptians to be kind to the Israelites. They will give many gifts to your people when they leave Egypt.

22 All the Hebrew women will ask their Egyptian neighbors and the Egyptian women living in their houses for gifts. And those Egyptian women will give them gifts of silver, gold, and fine clothing. Then you will put those gifts on your children. In this way you will take away the wealth of the Egyptians.”

Proof for Moses

4 Then Moses said to God, “But the Israelites will not believe me when I tell them that you sent me. They will say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you.’”

2 But the Lord said to Moses, “What is that you have in your hand?”

Moses answered, “It is my walking stick.”

3 Then God said, “Throw your walking stick on the ground.”

So Moses threw his walking stick on the ground, and it became a snake. Moses ran from it,

4 but the Lord said to him, “Reach out and grab the snake by its tail.”

When Moses reached out and caught the snake’s tail, the snake became a walking stick again. 5 Then God said, “Use your stick in this way, and the people will believe that you saw the Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

6 Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will give you another proof. Put your hand under your robe.”

So Moses opened his robe and put his hand inside. Then he brought his hand out of the robe and it was changed. His hand was covered with spots that were white like snow.

7 Then God said, “Now put your hand into your robe again.” So Moses put his hand into his robe again. Then he brought his hand out, and his hand was changed. Now his hand was good again, as it was before.

8 Then God said, “If the people don’t believe you when you use your walking stick, then they will believe you when you show them this sign. If they still refuse to believe after you show them both of these signs, then take some water from the Nile River. Pour the water on the ground, and as soon as it touches the ground, it will become blood.”

10 Then Moses said to the Lord, “But, Lord, I am telling you, I am not a good speaker. I have never been able to speak well. And that hasn’t changed since you started talking to me. I am still not a good speaker. You know that I speak slowly and don’t use the best words.”

11 Then the Lord said to him, “Who made a person’s mouth? And who can make someone deaf or not able to speak? Who can make a person blind? Who can make a person able to see? I am the one. I am the Lord. 12 So go. I will be with you when you speak. I will give you the words to say.”

13 But Moses said, “My Lord, I beg you to send someone else, not me.”

14 Then the Lord became angry with Moses and said, “All right! I’ll give you someone to help you. Aaron the Levite is your brother, isn’t he? He is a good speaker. In fact, Aaron is already coming to meet you, and he will be happy to see you. I will tell you what to say. Then you will tell Aaron, and I will help him say it well. I will tell both of you what to do. 16 So Aaron will speak for you. Like God, you will speak to him, and he will tell the people what you say. 17 So go and carry your walking stick with you. Use it and the other miracles to show the people that I am with you.”

Moses Leaves Midian

18 Then Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law. Moses said to him, “Please...
let me go back to Egypt. I want to see if 
my people are still alive.”

Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.”

19 Then, while Moses was still in Midian, 
the LORD said to him, “It is safe for you 
to go back to Egypt now. The men who 
wanted to kill you are now dead.”

20 So Moses put his wife and children 
on the donkey and returned to Egypt. He 
carried his walking stick with him—the 
walking stick with the power of God.

21 While Moses was traveling back to 
Egypt, the LORD spoke to him, “When 
you talk to Pharaoh remember to show 
him all the miracles that I have given you 
the power to do. But I will cause Pharaoh 
to be very stubborn. He will not let the 
people go. 22 Then you should say to Pha-
raoh, ‘This is what the LORD says: Israel 
is my firstborn son. 23 And I am telling you 
to let my son go and worship me. If you 
refuse to let Israel go, then I will kill your 
firstborn son.’ ”

Moses’ Son Circumcised

24 On the way to Egypt, Moses stopped at 
a place to spend the night. The LORD met 
Moses at that place and tried to kill him. a

25 But Zipporah took a flint knife b and cir-
cumcised her son. She took the skin and 
touched his feet. Then she said to Moses, 
“You are a bridegroom of blood to me.”

26 Zipporah said this because she had to 
circumcise her son. So God let Moses live. c

Moses Arrives in Egypt

27 The LORD had spoken to Aaron and told 
him, “Go out into the desert and meet 
Moses.” So Aaron went and met Moses at 
the Mountain of God. d He saw Moses and 
kissed him. 28 Moses told Aaron everything 
the LORD had commanded him to say and 
all the miracles he must do to prove that 
God had sent him.

29 So Moses and Aaron went and gathered 
ethroughout all the elders of the Israelites.

30 Then Aaron spoke to the people and 
told them everything the LORD had told 
Moses. Then Moses did the miracles for 
all the people to see, d and they believed 
what they had heard. Then the Israelites 
understood that the LORD had seen their 
troubles and had come to help them. So 
they bowed down and worshiped God.

Moses and Aaron Before Pharaoh

1 After Moses and Aaron talked to the 
people, they went to Pharaoh and said, 
“The LORD, e the God of Israel, says, ‘Let 
my people go into the desert so that they 
can have a festival to honor me.’ ”

2 But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD? 
Why should I obey him? Why should I 
let Israel go? I don’t even know who this 
LORD is, so I refuse to let Israel go.”

3 Then Aaron and Moses said, “The God 
of the Hebrews f has talked with us. So we 
will offer a sacrifice to the LORD our God. If we don’t do this, he 
might become angry and destroy us. He 
might make us die from sickness or war.”

4 But Pharaoh said to them, “Moses and 
Aaron, you are bothering the workers. Let 
them do their work. Go back to your own 
work! g There are very many workers, and 
you are keeping them from doing their 
jobs.”

Pharaoh Punishes the People

6 That same day Pharaoh gave a command 
to the slave masters and Hebrew fore-
men. h He said, “You have always given 
the people straw to use to make bricks. But 
now, tell them they have to go and find 
their own straw to make bricks. i But they 
must still make the same number of bricks 
as they did before. They have gotten lazy. 
That is why they are asking me to let them 
go. They don’t have enough work to do. 
That is why they asked me to let them 
make sacrifices to their God. j So make 
these people work harder. Keep them

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a 4:24 tried to kill him Or possibly, “wanted to circumcise 
him.”
b 4:25 flint knife A sharp knife made from flint rock.
c 4:26 Or “And he was healed. She said, ‘You are a bridegroom 
of blood’ because of the circumcision.”
d 4:27 Mountain of God That is, Mount Horeb (Sinai).

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busy. Then they will not have enough time to listen to the lies of Moses.”

10So the Egyptian slave masters and the Hebrew foremen went to the Israelites and said, “Pharaoh has decided that he will not give you straw for your bricks. 11You must go and get the straw for yourselves. So go and find straw, but you must still make as many bricks as you made before.”

12So the people went everywhere in Egypt looking for straw. 13The slave masters forced the people to work even harder. They forced the people to make as many bricks as before. 14The Egyptian slave masters had chosen the Hebrew foremen and had made them responsible for the work the people did. The Egyptian slave masters beat these foremen and said to them, “Why aren’t you making as many bricks as you made in the past? If you could do it then, you can do it now!”

15Then the Hebrew foremen went to Pharaoh. They complained and said, “We are your servants. Why are you treating us like this? 16You give us no straw, but you tell us to make as many bricks as before. And now our masters are beating us. Your people are wrong for doing this.”

17Pharaoh answered, “You are lazy, and you don’t want to work! That is why you ask me to let you go. And that is why you want to leave here and make sacrifices to the LORD. 18Now, go back to work! We will not give you any straw. And you must still make as many bricks as you did before.”

19The Hebrew foremen knew they were in trouble, because the Pharaoh had told them, “You must still make as many bricks as you made before.”

20When they were leaving the meeting with Pharaoh, they passed Moses and Aaron. Moses and Aaron were waiting for them. 21So they said to Moses and Aaron, “May the LORD judge and punish you for what you did! You made Pharaoh and his rulers hate us. You have given them an excuse to kill us.”

Moses Complains to God

22Then Moses prayed to the LORD and said, “Lord, why have you done this terrible thing to your people? Why did you send me here? 23I went to Pharaoh and said what you told me to say. But since that time he has made the people suffer, and you have done nothing to help them!”

6Then the LORD said to Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. I will use my great power against him, and he will let my people go. He will be so ready for them to leave that he will force them to go.”

2Then God said to Moses, “I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They called me God All-Powerful. They did not know my name, the LORD. 3I made an agreement with them. I promised to give them the land of Canaan. They lived in that land, but it was not their own. 4Now, I have heard their painful cries. I know that they are slaves in Egypt. And I remember my agreement. 5So tell the Israelites that I say to them, ‘I am the LORD. I will save you. You will no longer be slaves of the Egyptians. I will use my great power to make you free, and I will bring terrible punishment to the Egyptians. 6You will be my people and I will be your God. I am the LORD your God, and you will know that I made you free from Egypt. 7I made a great promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I promised to give them a special land. So I will lead you to that land. I will give you that land. It will be yours. I am the LORD.’ ”

9So Moses told this to the Israelites, but the people would not listen to him. They were working so hard that they were not patient with Moses.

10Then the LORD said to Moses, 11 “Go tell Pharaoh that he must let the Israelites leave his land.”

12But Moses answered, “LORD, the Israelites refuse to listen to me. So surely Pharaoh will also refuse to listen. I am a very bad speaker.”

13But the LORD talked with Moses and Aaron and commanded them to go and talk to the Israelites and to Pharaoh, the
king of Egypt. He commanded them to lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt.

Some of the Families of Israel
14 These are the names of the leaders of the families of Israel:
   Israel's first son, Reuben, had four sons. They were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.
15 Simeon's sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul. (Shaul was the son from a Canaanite woman).
16 Levi lived 137 years. His sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.
17 Gershon had two sons, Libni and Shimei.
18 Kohath lived 133 years. His sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.
19 Merari's sons were Mahli and Mushi. All these families were from Israel's son Levi.
20 Amram lived 137 years. He married his father's sister, Jochebed. Amram and Jochebed gave birth to Aaron and Moses.
21 Izhar's sons were Korah, Nepheg, and Zicri.
22 Uzziel's sons were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.
23 Aaron married Elisheba. (Elisheba was the daughter of Amminadab, and the sister of Nahshon.) Aaron and Elisheba gave birth to Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.
24 The sons of Korah (that is, the ancestors of the Korahites) were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph.
25 Aaron's son, Eleazar, married a daughter of Putiel. She gave birth to Phinehas. All these people were from Israel's son Levi.
26 Aaron and Moses were from this tribe. And they are the men the Lord spoke to and said, “Lead my people out of Egypt in groups.”
27 Aaron and Moses are the men who talked to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and told him to let the Israelites leave Egypt.

God Repeats His Call to Moses
28 The Lord spoke to Moses again in the land of Egypt. 29 He said, “I am the Lord. Tell the king of Egypt everything I tell you.”
30 But Moses, standing there before the Lord, said, “You know me. I'm a very bad speaker. How will I make the king listen to me?”

7 The Lord said to Moses, “See how important I have made you? In speaking to Pharaoh, you will be like God, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet.
2 You will tell Aaron everything that I command you. Then he will tell the king what I say. And Pharaoh will let the Israelites leave this country.
3 But I will make Pharaoh stubborn so that he will not do what you tell him. Then I will do many miracles in Egypt to prove who I am. 4 But he will still refuse to listen. So then I will punish Egypt very much. And I will lead my army, my people, out of that land.
5 I will punish the people of Egypt, and they will learn that I am the Lord. Then I will lead my people out of their country.”
6 Moses and Aaron did what the Lord told them. 7 Moses was 80 years old at the time, and Aaron was 83.

Moses' Walking Stick Becomes a Snake
8 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 9 “Pharaoh will ask you to prove your power. He will ask you to do a miracle. Tell Aaron to throw his walking stick on the ground. While Pharaoh is watching, the stick will become a snake.”
10 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and obeyed the Lord. Aaron threw his walking stick down. While Pharaoh and his officers watched, the stick became a snake.
11 So Pharaoh called for his wise men and magicians. These men used their magic, and they were able to do the same thing as Aaron. 12 They threw their walking sticks on the ground, and their sticks became snakes. But then Aaron's walking stick became a snake. © 2014 Bible League International
stick ate theirs. 13 Pharaoh still refused to let the people go, just as the LORD had said. Pharaoh refused to listen to Moses and Aaron.

The Water Becomes Blood
14 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh is being stubborn. He refuses to let the people go. 15 In the morning Pharaoh will go out to the river. Go to him by the edge of the Nile River. Take the walking stick that became a snake. 16 Tell him this: ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you. He told me to tell you to let his people go worship him in the desert. Until now you have not listened to the LORD. 17 So the LORD says that he will do something to show you that he is the LORD. I will hit the water of the Nile River with this walking stick in my hand, and the river will turn into blood. 18 The fish in the river will die, and the river will begin to stink. Then the Egyptians will not be able to drink the water from the river.’”

19 The LORD said to Moses: “Tell Aaron to hold the walking stick in his hand over the rivers, canals, lakes, and every place where they store water. When he does this, all the water will turn into blood. All the water, even the water stored in wood and stone jars, will turn into blood.”

20 So Moses and Aaron did what the LORD commanded. Aaron raised the walking stick and hit the water in the Nile River. He did this in front of Pharaoh and his officials. So all the water turned into blood. All the fish died, and the river began to stink. The Egyptians could not drink the water from the river.

The Frogs
25 Seven days passed after the LORD changed the Nile River.

8 Then the LORD told Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and tell him that the LORD says, ‘Let my people go to worship me! 9 If you refuse to let my people go, then I will fill Egypt with frogs. 10 The Nile River will be filled with frogs. They will come from the river and enter your houses. They will be in your bedrooms and in your beds. They will be in the houses of your officials and in your ovens and in your jars of water. 11 The frogs will be all over you, your people, and your officials.’”

5 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron to hold the walking stick in his hand over the canals, rivers, and lakes. Then the frogs will come out onto the land of Egypt.”

6 So Aaron raised his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs began coming out of the water and covered the land of Egypt.

7 The magicians used their magic to do the same thing—so even more frogs came out onto the land in Egypt!

8 Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, “Ask the LORD to remove the frogs from me and my people. I will let the people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD.”

9 Moses said to Pharaoh, “I will pray for you, your people, and your officials. Then the frogs will leave you and your houses. They will remain only in the river. When do you want the frogs to go away?”

10 Pharaoh said, “Tomorrow.”

Moses said, “It will happen as you say. In this way you will know that there is no god like the LORD our God. 11 The frogs will leave you, your house, your officials, and your people. They will remain only in the river.”

12 Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh. Moses prayed to the LORD about the frogs he had sent against Pharaoh. 13 And the LORD did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the yards, and in the fields. 14 They began to rot, and the whole country began to stink. 15 But when Pharaoh
saw that they were free of the frogs, he again became stubborn. Pharaoh did not do what Moses and Aaron had asked him to do. This happened just as the LORD had said.

**The Lice**

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron to raise his stick and hit the dust on the ground, and everywhere in Egypt dust will become lice.”

17 They did this. Aaron raised the stick in his hand and hit the dust on the ground, and everywhere in Egypt the dust became lice. The lice got on the animals and the people.

18 The magicians used their magic and tried to do the same thing. But the magicians could not make lice come from the dust. The lice remained on the animals and the people. 19 So the magicians told Pharaoh that the power of God did this. But Pharaoh refused to listen to them. This happened just as the LORD had said.

**The Flies**

20 The LORD said to Moses, “Get up in the morning and go to Pharaoh. He will go out to the river. Tell him that the LORD says, ‘Let my people go and worship me!’

21 If you don’t let my people go, then flies will come into your houses. The flies will be on you and your officials. The houses of Egypt will be full of flies. They will be all over the ground too! 22 But I will not treat the Israelites the same as the Egyptians. There will not be any flies in Goshen, where my people live. In this way you will know that I, the LORD, am in this land. 23 So tomorrow I will treat my people differently from your people. This will be my proof.’”

24 So the LORD did just what he said. Millions of flies came into Egypt. The flies were in Pharaoh’s house, and they were in all his officials’ houses. They were all over Egypt. The flies were ruining the country. 25 So Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and told them, “Offer sacrifices to your God here in this country.”

26 But Moses said, “It would not be right to do that. The Egyptians think it is terrible to kill animals as sacrifices for the LORD our God. If we do this here, the Egyptians will see us and throw stones at us and kill us. 27 Let us go three days into the desert and offer sacrifices to the LORD our God. This is what he told us to do.”

28 So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go and offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the desert, but you must not go very far. Now, go and pray for me.”

29 Moses said, “Look, I will leave and ask the LORD to remove the flies from you, your people, and your officials tomorrow. But you must not stop the people from offering sacrifices to the LORD.”

30 So Pharaoh left Moses and prayed to the LORD. 31 And the LORD did what Moses asked. He removed the flies from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people. None of the flies remained. 32 But Pharaoh again became stubborn and did not let the people go.

**The Disease of the Farm Animals**

Then the LORD told Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him: “The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says, ‘Let my people go to worship me!’

If you continue to hold them and refuse to let them go, then the LORD will use his power against your animals in the fields. He will cause all of your horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, and sheep to get sick with a terrible disease. But the LORD will treat Israel’s animals differently from the animals of Egypt. None of the animals that belong to the Israelites will die. 5 The LORD has set the time for this to happen. He said, ‘Tomorrow the LORD will make this happen in this country.’”

6 The next morning the LORD did what he said. All the farm animals of the Egyptians died, but none of the animals that belonged to the Israelites died. 7 Pharaoh sent people to see if any of the animals of Israel died. Not one of them died. But Pharaoh remained stubborn and did not let the people go.
The Boils

8 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Fill your hands with the ashes from a furnace. Moses, you throw the ashes into the air in front of Pharaoh. This will become dust that will go throughout the land of Egypt. Whenever the dust touches a person or an animal in Egypt, sores will break out on the skin.”

9 So Moses and Aaron took ashes from a furnace and went and stood before Pharaoh. Moses threw the ashes into the air, and sores began breaking out on people and animals. The magicians could not stop Moses from doing this, because even the magicians had the sores. This happened everywhere in Egypt. But the Lord made Pharaoh stubborn, so he refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said.

The Hail

13 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Get up in the morning and go to Pharaoh. Tell him that the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, says, ‘Let my people go to worship me! 14 This time, I will use my full power against you, your officials, and your people. Then you will know that there is no god in the world like me. 15 I could use my power and cause a disease that would wipe you and your people off the earth. 16 But I have put you here for a reason. I have put you here so that I could show you my power. Then people all over the world will learn about me! 17 You are still against my people. You are not letting them go free. 18 So at this time tomorrow, I will cause a very bad hailstorm. There has never been a hailstorm like this in Egypt, not since Egypt became a nation. 19 Now, you must put your animals in a safe place. Everything you own that is now in the fields must be put in a safe place. Any person or animal that remains in the fields will be killed. The hail will fall on everything that is not gathered into your houses.’ ”

20 Some of Pharaoh’s officials paid attention to the Lord’s message. They quickly put all of their animals and slaves into houses. 21 But other people ignored the Lord’s message and lost all their slaves and animals that were in the fields.

22 The Lord told Moses, “Raise your hand into the air and the hail will start falling all over Egypt. The hail will fall on all the people, animals, and plants in all the fields of Egypt.”

23 So Moses raised his walking stick into the air, and the Lord sent hail with thunder and lightning down on the earth. The Lord caused hail to fall all over Egypt. The hail was falling, and lightning was flashing all through it. It was the worst hailstorm that had ever hit Egypt since it had become a nation. The storm destroyed everything in the fields in Egypt. The hail destroyed people, animals, and plants. The hail also broke all the trees in the fields. The only place that did not get hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived.

27 Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and told them, “This time I have sinned. The Lord is right, and I and my people are wrong. We have had enough of this hail and thunder! Ask the Lord to stop the storm, and I will let you go. You don’t have to stay here.”

29 Moses told Pharaoh, “When I leave the city, I will lift my hands in prayer to the Lord, and the thunder and hail will stop. Then you will know that the Lord is in this land. 30 But I know that you and your officials don’t really fear and respect the Lord yet.”

31 The flax had already developed its seeds, and the barley was already blooming. So these plants were destroyed. 32 But wheat and spelt ripen later than the other grains, so these plants were not destroyed.

33 Moses left Pharaoh and went outside the city. He lifted his hands in prayer to the Lord. And the thunder and hail stopped, and then even the rain stopped.

34 When Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail, and thunder had stopped, he again did wrong. He and his officials became stubborn again. Pharaoh refused to let the
Israelites go free, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

The Locusts

10 The LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh. I have made him and his officials stubborn. I did this so that I could show them my powerful miracles. I also did this so that you could tell your children and your grandchildren about the miracles and other wonderful things that I have done in Egypt. Then all of you will know that I am the LORD.”

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh. They told him, “The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says, ‘How long will you refuse to obey me? Let my people go to worship me! If you refuse to let my people go, then tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country. The locusts will cover the land. There will be so many locusts that you will not be able to see the ground. Anything that was left from the hailstorm will be eaten by the locusts. The locusts will eat all the leaves from every tree in the field. They will fill all your houses, and all your officials’ houses, and all the houses in Egypt. There will be more locusts than your fathers or your grandfathers have ever seen. There will be more locusts than there have ever been since people began living in Egypt.’” Then Moses turned and left Pharaoh.

Then the officials asked Pharaoh, “How long will we be trapped by these people? Let the men go to worship the LORD their God. If you don’t let them go, before you know it, Egypt will be destroyed!”

So Pharaoh told his officials to bring Moses and Aaron back to him. Pharaoh said to them, “Go and worship the LORD your God. But tell me, just who is going?”

Moses answered, “All of our people, young and old, will go. And we will take our sons and daughters, and our sheep and cattle with us. We will all go because the LORD’s festival is for all of us.”

Pharaoh said to them, “The LORD really will have to be with you before I let you and all of your children leave Egypt. Look, you are planning something evil. The men can go worship the LORD. That is what you asked for in the beginning. But all of your people cannot go.” Then Pharaoh sent Moses and Aaron away.

The LORD told Moses, “Raise your hand over the land of Egypt and the locusts will come! They will spread all over the land of Egypt and will eat all the plants that the hail did not destroy.”

So Moses raised his walking stick over the land of Egypt, and the LORD caused a strong wind to blow from the east. The wind blew all that day and night. When morning came, the wind had brought the locusts to the land of Egypt. The locusts flew into the country of Egypt and landed on the ground. There were more locusts than there had ever been in Egypt. And there will never again be that many locusts there.

They covered the ground, and the whole country became dark. The locusts ate every plant on the ground and all the fruit in the trees that the hail had not destroyed. There were no leaves left on any of the trees or plants anywhere in Egypt.

Pharaoh quickly called for Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh said, “I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. Now, forgive me for my sins this time. Ask the LORD to remove this ‘death’ from me.”

Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. So the LORD changed the wind. He made a very strong wind blow from the west, and it blew the locusts out of Egypt and into the Red Sea. Not one locust was left in Egypt!

But the LORD caused Pharaoh to be stubborn again, and Pharaoh did not let the Israelites go.

The Darkness

Then the LORD told Moses, “Raise your hand into the air and darkness will cover Egypt. It will be so dark you can feel it!”

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So Moses raised his hand into the air and a cloud of darkness covered Egypt. The darkness stayed in Egypt for three days. None of the people could see each other, and no one got up to go any place for three days. But there was light in all the places where the Israelites lived.

Again Pharaoh called for Moses. He said, “Go and worship the LORD! You can take your children with you. But you must leave your sheep and cattle here.”

Moses said, “No, we will take them all. In fact, you will give us offerings and sacrifices for us to use in worshiping the LORD our God. Yes, we will take our animals with us to worship the LORD our God. Not one hoof will be left behind. We don’t know yet exactly what we will need to worship the LORD. We will learn that only when we get there.”

The LORD made Pharaoh stubborn again, so he refused to let them go. Then Pharaoh told Moses, “Get out of here. I don’t want you to come here again. The next time you come to see me, you will die!”

Then Moses told Pharaoh, “You are right about one thing. I will not come to see you again.”

The Death of the Firstborn

Then the LORD told Moses, “I have one more disaster to bring against Pharaoh and Egypt. After this, he will ask you to leave Egypt. In fact, he will force you to leave this country. You must give this message to the Israelites: ‘Men and women, you must ask your neighbors to give you things made of silver and gold.’”

The LORD caused the Egyptians to be kind to the Israelites. The Egyptians, even Pharaoh’s own officials, already considered Moses to be a great man.

Moses said to the king, “The LORD says, ‘At midnight tonight, I will go through Egypt, and every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, to the firstborn son of the slave girl grinding grain. Even the firstborn animals will die.

The crying in Egypt will be worse than at any time in the past or any time in the future. But none of the Israelites or their animals will be hurt—not even a dog will bark at them.’ Then you will know that the LORD has treated Israel differently from Egypt. All these officials of yours will come down and bow to me. They will say, ‘Leave and take all your people with you.’ Only then will I leave!” Then in anger, Moses left the meeting with Pharaoh.

Then the LORD told Moses, “The reason Pharaoh did not listen to you is so that I could show my great power in Egypt.” That is why Moses and Aaron did all these great miracles in front of Pharaoh. And that is why the LORD made Pharaoh so stubborn that he would not let the Israelites leave his country.

Passover

While Moses and Aaron were still in Egypt, the LORD spoke to them. He said, “This month shall be the first month of the year for you. This command is for the whole community of Israel: On the tenth day of this month each man must get one lamb for the people in his house. If there are not enough people in his house to eat a whole lamb, then he should invite some of his neighbors to share the meal. There must be enough lamb for everyone to eat. The lamb must be a one-year-old male, and it must be completely healthy. This animal can be either a young sheep or a young goat. You should watch over the animal until the 14th day of the month. On that day all the people of the community of Israel must kill these animals just before dark. You must collect the blood from these animals and put it on the top and sides of the doorframe of every house where the people eat this meal. On this night you must roast the lamb and eat all the meat. You must also eat bitter herbs and bread made without yeast. You must not eat the lamb raw or boiled in water. You must roast the whole lamb over a fire. The lamb must still have..."
its head, legs, and inner parts. You must eat all the meat that night. If any of the meat is left until morning, you must burn it in the fire.

10“When you eat the meal, you must be fully dressed and ready to travel. You must have your sandals on your feet and your walking stick in your hand. You must eat in a hurry, because this is the LORD’s Passover.

11“Tonight I will go through Egypt and kill every firstborn man and animal in Egypt. In this way I will judge all the gods of Egypt and show that I am the LORD. But the blood on your houses will be a special sign. When I see the blood, I will pass over your house. I will cause bad things to happen to the people of Egypt. But none of these bad diseases will hurt you.

12“You will always remember tonight—it will be a special festival for you. Your descendants will honor the LORD with this festival forever. For this festival you will eat bread made without yeast for seven days. On the first day, you will remove all the yeast from your houses. No one should eat any yeast for the full seven days of this festival. Anyone who eats yeast must be separated from the rest of Israel. There will be holy assemblies on the first day and the last day of the festival. You must not do any work on these days. The only work you can do is preparing the food for your meals.

13So Moses called all the elders together and told them, “Get the lambs for your families. Kill the lambs for the Passover. Take bunches of hyssop and dip them in the bowls filled with blood. Paint the blood on the sides and top of each doorframe. No one must leave their house until morning. At the time the LORD goes through Egypt to kill the firstborn, he will see the blood on the sides and top of each doorframe. Then he will protect that house and not let the Destroyer come into any of your houses and hurt you. You must remember this command. This law is for you and your descendants forever. You must remember to do this even when you go to the land the LORD is giving you. When your children ask you, ‘Why are we doing this ceremony?’ you will say, ‘This Passover is to honor the LORD, because when we were in Egypt, he passed over the houses of Israel. He killed the Egyptians, but he saved the people in our houses.’”

Then the people bowed down and worshiped the Lord. The LORD had given this command to Moses and Aaron, so the Israelites did what the Lord commanded.

So that night Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said to them, “Get up and leave my people. You and your people can do as you say. Go and worship the LORD. Take all of your sheep and cattle with you, just as you said you would. Go! And has chosen to live among the Israelites and obey their laws and customs. Also in verse 48.

21:23 protect Or “pass over.”

Israel Leaves Egypt

So that night Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said to them, “Get up and leave my people. You and your people can do as you say. Go and worship the LORD. Take all of your sheep and cattle with you, just as you said you would. Go! And
say a blessing for me too.” 33 The people of Egypt also asked them to hurry and leave. They said, “If you don’t leave, we will all die!”

34 The Israelites did not have time to put the yeast in their bread. They just wrapped the bowls of dough with cloth and carried them on their shoulders. 35 Then the Israelites did what Moses asked them to do. They went to their Egyptian neighbors and asked for clothing and things made from silver and gold. 36 The LORD caused the Egyptians to be kind to the Israelites, so the Egyptians gave their riches to the Israelites.

37 The Israelites traveled from Rameses to Succoth. There were about 600,000 men, not counting the small boys. 38 A great number of people who were not Israelites went with them, along with many sheep, cattle, and other livestock. 39 The people did not have time to put yeast in their bread or make any special food for their journey. So they had to bake their bread without yeast.

40 The Israelites had lived in Egypt for 430 years. 41 After 430 years, to the very day, all the armies of the LORD left Egypt. 42 The night they left, the LORD watched over them to bring them safely out of Egypt. So the Israelites will always celebrate this night each year to remember what the LORD did.

43 The LORD told Moses and Aaron, “These are the rules for Passover: No foreigner is allowed to eat the Passover meal. 44–45 A foreigner who is only a hired worker or is only staying in your country is not allowed to eat the meal. But if someone buys a slave and circumcises him, then the slave can eat the Passover meal.

46 Each family must eat the meal in one house. None of the food is to be taken outside the house. Don’t break any of the lamb’s bones. 47 The whole community of Israel must do this ceremony. 48 If a foreigner living among you wants to share in the LORD’s Passover, he must be circumcised. Then he can share in the meal like any other citizen of Israel. But a man who is not circumcised cannot eat the Passover meal. 49 The same rules are for everyone. It doesn’t matter if they are citizens or foreigners living among you.”

50 So all the Israelites obeyed the commands that the LORD gave to Moses and Aaron. 51 On that same day the LORD led all the Israelites out of the country of Egypt. The people left in groups.

13 1 Then the LORD said to Moses,
2 “You must give me every male in Israel who is his mother’s first child. That means that every firstborn baby boy and every firstborn male animal will be mine.”

3 Moses said to the people, “Remember this day. You were slaves in Egypt, but on this day the LORD used his great power and made you free. You must not eat bread with yeast. 4 Today, in the month of Abib, you are leaving Egypt. 5 The LORD made a special promise to your ancestors. He promised to give you the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites. After the Lord leads you to the land filled with many good things, then you must remember this day. You must have a special day of worship on this day during the first month of every year.

6 For seven days, you must eat only bread without yeast. On the seventh day there will be a great festival to show honor to the LORD. 7 So for seven days, you must not eat any bread made with yeast. There must be no bread with yeast any place in your land. 8 On this day you should tell your children, ‘We are having this festival because the LORD took me out of Egypt.’

9 This festival will help you remember; it will be like a string tied on your hand. It will be like a sign before your eyes. e This festival will help you remember the

12:40 Egypt The ancient Greek and Samaritan versions say, “Egypt and Canaan.” This would mean they counted the years from about Abraham’s time, not from Joseph’s. See Gen. 15:12–16 and Gal. 3:17.

12:41 armies of the LORD The Israelites.

12:43 foreigner Here, this means someone who has not agreed to follow the laws and customs of Israel.

d 13:5 land … things Literally, “land flowing with milk and honey.”

e 13:9 string … eyes Literally, “a mark on your hands and a reminder between your eyes.” This might refer to the special things an Israelite ties to his arm and forehead to help him remember God’s laws for him. Also in verse 16.

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LORD’s teachings. It will help you remember that the LORD used his great power to take you out of Egypt. 10 So remember this festival every year at the right time.

11 “The LORD will lead you into the land he promised to give you. The Canaanites live there now. But God promised your ancestors that he would give you this land. When that happens, 12 you must remember to give the LORD every firstborn boy. And every male animal that is the firstborn must also be given to the LORD. 13 Every firstborn donkey can be bought back. You can offer a lamb and keep the donkey. If you don’t want to buy back the donkey like this, then you must break its neck to kill it. But every firstborn baby boy 14 must be bought back from the LORD.

15 “In the future, your children will ask why you do this. They will say, ‘What does all this mean?’ And you will answer, ‘The LORD used his great power to save us from Egypt. We were slaves in that place, but he led us out and brought us here.’

The Lord Leads His People
16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell the people to go back to Pi Hahiroth. Tell them to spend the night between Migdol and the Red Sea, near Baal Zephon. 17 Pharaoh will think that the Israelites are lost in the desert and that the people will have no place to go. 18 I will make Pharaoh brave, and he will chase you. But I will defeat Pharaoh and his army. This will bring honor to me. Then the people of Egypt will know that I am the LORD.” So the Israelites did what he told them.

Pharaoh Chases the Israelites
19 Pharaoh received a report that the Israelites had escaped. When he heard this, he and his officials changed their minds about what they had done. Pharaoh said, “Why did we let the Israelites leave? Why did we let them run away? Now we have lost our slaves!”

20 So Pharaoh prepared his chariot and took his men with him. 21 He took 600 of his best men and all of his chariots. There was an officer in each chariot. 22 The Israelites were leaving with their arms raised in victory. But the LORD caused Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to become brave. And Pharaoh chased the Israelites.

Joseph Goes Home
19 Moses carried the bones of Joseph with him. Before Joseph died, he made the Israelites promise to do this for him. He said, “When God saves you, remember to carry my bones with you out of Egypt.”

The Trip Out of Egypt
17 Pharaoh made the people leave Egypt. God did not let the people take the road leading to the land of the Philistines. That road by the Mediterranean Sea is the shortest way, but God said, “If the people go that way they will have to fight. Then they might change their minds and go back to Egypt.” 18 So God led them another way through the desert by the Red Sea. The Israelites were dressed for war when they left Egypt.

a 13:13 baby boy Or “baby.”
b 13:18 Red Sea Or “Reed Sea.” Also in 14:2, 9, 16, 21, 30. See 1 Kings 9:26.

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The Egyptian army had many horse soldiers and chariots. They chased the Israelites and caught up with them while they were camped near the Red Sea at Pi Hahiroth, east of Baal Zephon.

When the Israelites saw Pharaoh and his army coming toward them, they were very frightened and cried to the Lord for help. They said to Moses, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Did you bring us out here in the desert to die? We could have died peacefully in Egypt; there were plenty of graves in Egypt. We told you this would happen! In Egypt we said, 'Please don’t bother us. Let us stay and serve the Egyptians.' It would have been better for us to stay and be slaves than to come out here and die in the desert."

But Moses answered, "Don’t be afraid! Don’t run away! Stand where you are and watch the Lord save you today. You will never see these Egyptians again. You will not have to do anything but stay calm. The Lord will do the fighting for you."

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you still crying to me? Tell the Israelites to start moving. Raise the walking stick in your hand over the Red Sea, and the sea will split. Then the people can go across on dry land. There was light for the Israelites. But there was darkness for the Egyptians. So the Egyptians did not come any closer to the Israelites that night.

Moses raised his hand over the Red Sea, and the Lord caused a strong wind to blow from the east. The wind blew all night long. The sea split, and the wind made the ground dry. The Israelites went through the sea on dry land. The water was like a wall on their right and on their left. Then all of Pharaoh’s chariots and horse soldiers followed them into the sea. Early that morning the Lord looked down from the tall cloud and column of fire at the Egyptian army. Then he made them panic. The wheels of the chariots became stuck. It was very hard to control the chariots. The Egyptians shouted, "Let’s get out of here! The Lord is fighting against us. He is fighting for the Israelites."

Then the Lord told Moses, "Raise your hand over the sea to make the water fall and cover the Egyptian chariots and horse soldiers."

So just before daylight, Moses raised his hand over the sea. And the water rushed back to its proper level. The Egyptians were running as fast as they could from the water, but the Lord swept them away with the sea. The water returned to its normal level and covered the chariots and horse soldiers. Pharaoh’s army had been chasing the Israelites, but that army was destroyed. None of them survived!

But the Israelites crossed the sea on dry land. The water was like a wall on their right and on their left. So that day the Lord saved the Israelites from the Egyptians. Later, the Israelites saw the dead bodies of the Egyptians on the shore of the Red Sea. The Israelites saw the great power of the Lord when he defeated the Egyptians. So the people feared and respected the Lord, and they began to trust the Lord and his servant Moses.

The Song of Moses

Then Moses and the Israelites began singing this song to the Lord:

"I will sing to the Lord!
He has done great things."
He threw horse and rider into the sea.

2 The LORD is my strength. He saves me, and I sing songs of praise to him. He is my God, and I praise him.

3 The LORD is a great soldier. The LORD is his name.

4 He threw Pharaoh’s chariots and soldiers into the sea. Pharaoh’s very best soldiers drowned in the Red Sea.\(^b\)

5 The deep water covered them, and they sank to the bottom like rocks.

6 “LORD, your right hand is amazingly strong. With your right hand, LORD, you broke the enemy to pieces.

7 In your great majesty you destroyed those who stood against you. Your anger destroyed them, like fire burning straw.

8 The wind you sent in anger piled the water high. The flowing water became a wall, solid to its deepest parts.

9 “The enemy said, ‘I’ll chase them and catch them. I’ll take all their riches. I’ll take it all with my sword. I’ll take everything for myself.’

10 But you blew on them and covered them with the sea. They sank like lead into the deep sea.

11 “Are there any gods like the LORD? No, there are no gods like you—you are wonderfully holy! You are amazingly powerful! You do great miracles!

12 You raised your right hand to punish the enemy, and the ground opened up to swallow them.

13 But with your kindness you led the people you saved. And with your strength you led them to your holy land.\(^c\)

14 “The other nations will hear this story, and they will be frightened. The Philistines will shake with fear.

15 The commanders of Edom will tremble. The leaders of Moab will be afraid. The people of Canaan will lose courage.

16 They will be filled with fear when they see your strength. They will be as still as a rock, LORD, while your people, the ones you made, pass by.

17 You will lead your people to your own mountain. You will let them live by the place that you, LORD, prepared as your home. It is the Temple, Lord, that you yourself built.

18 “The LORD will rule forever and ever!”

19 Yes, it really happened! Pharaoh’s horses and riders, and chariots went into the sea. And the LORD brought all the water of the sea down on top of them. But the Israelites walked through that sea on dry land.

20 Then Aaron’s sister, the woman prophet Miriam, took a tambourine. She and the women began singing and dancing.\(^2\) Miriam repeated the words, “Sing to the LORD! He has done great things. He threw horse and rider into the sea . . .”

Israel Goes Into the Desert

22 Moses led the Israelites away from the Red Sea and into the desert of Shur. They traveled for three days in the desert. They

\(^a\) 15:2 The L o s o . . . him. Literally, “Yah is my strength and praise. He became my salvation.”

\(^b\) 15:4 Red Sea Or “Reed Sea.” Also in verse 22. See 1 Kings 9:26.

\(^c\) 15:13 holy land Israel, the special land God set apart for the Israelites.
could not find any water. Then they came to Marah. There was water at Marah, but it was too bitter to drink. (That is why the place was named Marah.)

The people began complaining to Moses. They said, “Now what will we drink?”

So Moses called to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a large piece of wood. When Moses put the wood in the water, the water became good to drink.

There the LORD put in place a law and a command for him and tested him to see if he would obey. He said to him, “I am the LORD your God. If you listen to me and do what I say is right, and if you obey all my commands and laws, then I will not give you any of the sicknesses that I gave the Egyptians. I am the LORD who heals you.”

Then the people traveled to Elim. At Elim there were twelve springs of water and 70 palm trees. So the people made their camp there near that water.

Israel Complains, So God Sends Food

Then all the Israelites left Elim. They reached the western Sinai desert, between Elim and Mount Sinai, on the 15th day of the second month after leaving Egypt. Then the whole community of Israelites began complaining again. They complained to Moses and Aaron in the desert. They said, “It would have been better if the Lord had just killed us in the land of Egypt. At least there we had plenty to eat. We had all the food we needed. But now you have brought us out here into this desert to make us all die from hunger.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. So tell them, ‘Tonight you will eat meat. And in the morning you will have all the bread you want. Then you will know you can trust the Lord, your God.’”

That evening, flocks of quail came and filled the camp, and in the morning dew lay on the ground all around it. After the dew was gone, something like thin flakes of frost was on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they asked each other, “What is that?” because they did not know what it was. So Moses told them, “This is the food the Lord is giving you to eat. The Lord says, ‘Each of you should gather only enough food for one day. But on Friday, when the people prepare their food, they will see that they have enough food for two days.’”

So Moses and Aaron said to the Israelites, “Tonight you will see the power of the Lord. You will know that he is the one who brought you out of Egypt. You have been complaining about the Lord, and he heard you. So tomorrow morning you will see the Glory of the Lord. You have been complaining and complaining about us. Maybe now we can have a little rest.”

Then Moses said, “In the evening the Lord will give you meat to eat, and in the morning you will have all the bread you want. The Lord will do this because he has heard your complaining, which was against him, not us. What can we do? We do only what he tells us to do, so your complaints are really against the Lord.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Tell the whole community of Israelites to come together before the Lord, because he has heard their complaints.”

So Aaron spoke to all the Israelites. While he was talking, the people turned and looked into the desert. And they saw the Glory of the Lord appear in a cloud.

The Lord said to Moses, “I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. So tell them, ‘Tonight you will eat meat. And in the morning you will have all the bread you want. Then you will know you can trust the Lord, your God.’”

That evening, flocks of quail came and filled the camp, and in the morning dew lay on the ground all around it. After the dew was gone, something like thin flakes of frost was on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they asked each other, “What is that?” because they did not know what it was. So Moses told them, “This is the food the Lord is giving you to eat. The Lord says, ‘Each of you should gather only enough food for one day. But on Friday, when the people prepare their food, they will see that they have enough food for two days.’”

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gather what you need, a basket of manna for everyone in your family.’”

17 So that is what the Israelites did. Some people gathered a large amount, some people gathered a little. 18 But when they measured what they had gathered, there was no shortage and there was none left over. Everyone gathered just what they needed.

19 Moses told them, “Don’t save that food to eat the next day.” 20 But some of the people did not obey Moses. They saved their food for the next day. But worms got into the food and it began to stink. Moses was angry with the people who did this.

21 Every morning the people gathered as much food as they could eat, but by noon the food melted and was gone.

22 On Friday the people gathered twice as much food—two baskets for every person. So all the leaders of the people came and told this to Moses.

23 Moses told them, “This is what the Lord said would happen. It happened because tomorrow is the Sabbath, the special day of rest to honor the Lord. You can cook all the food you need to cook for today, but save the rest of this food for tomorrow morning.”

24 So the people saved the rest of the food for the next day, as Moses had commanded, and none of the food spoiled or had worms in it.

25 On Saturday, Moses told the people, “Today is the Sabbath, the special day of rest to honor the Lord. So none of you should be out in the fields. Eat the food you gathered yesterday. 26 You should gather the food for six days. But the seventh day of the week is a day of rest—so there will not be any of the special food on the ground.”

27 On Saturday, some of the people went out to gather some of the food, but they could not find any.

28 Then the Lord said to Moses, “How long will you people refuse to obey my commands and teachings? 29 Look, the Lord has made the Sabbath a day of rest for you. So on Friday he will give you enough food for two days. Then, on the Sabbath, each of you should sit down and relax. Stay where you are.”

30 So the people rested on the Sabbath.

31 The people called the special food “manna.” It was like small white coriander seeds and tasted like thin cakes made with honey. 

32 Moses told the people what the Lord said: “Save a basket of this food for your descendants. Then they can see the food that I gave to you in the desert when I took you out of Egypt.”

33 So Moses told Aaron, “Take a jar and fill it with a full basket of manna. Save this manna to put before the Lord. Save it for our descendants.” (Aaron did what the Lord had commanded Moses. Aaron put the jar of manna in front of the Box of the Agreement.)

35 The people ate the manna for 40 years, until they came to the land of rest, that is, until they came to the edge of the land of Canaan. (The measure they used for the manna was an omer. An omer was about 8 cups.)

Water From the Rock

17 The Israelites left the western Sinai desert. They traveled all together from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they turned against Moses and started arguing with him. They said, “Give us water to drink.”

Moses said to them, “Why have you turned against me? Why are you testing the Lord?”

3 But the people were very thirsty, so they continued complaining to Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Did you bring us out here so that we, our children, and our cattle will all die without water?”

4 So Moses cried to the Lord, “What can I do with these people? They are ready to kill me.”

d 16:16 basket Literally, “1 omer” (2.2 l). Also in verses 32, 33.

b 16:21 noon Literally, “the heat of the day.”

c 16:22 two baskets Literally, “2 omers” (4.4 l).

d 16:37 manna This name is like the Hebrew phrase in verse 15 meaning “What is that?”

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5The Lord said to Moses, “Go before the Israelites. Take some of the elders of the people with you. Carry your walking stick with you. This is the stick that you used when you hit the Nile River. 6I will stand before you on a rock at Horeb. 7Hit that rock with the walking stick and water will come out of it. Then the people can drink.”

Moses did these things and the elders of Israel saw it. 8Moses named that place Meribah b and Massah, c because this was the place that the Israelites turned against him and tested the Lord. The people wanted to know if the Lord was with them or not.

War With the Amalekites
8At Rephidim the Amalekites came and fought against the Israelites. 9So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some men and go and fight the Amalekites tomorrow. I will stand on the top of the hill and watch you. I will be holding the walking stick God gave me.”

10Joshua obeyed Moses and went to fight the Amalekites the next day. At the same time Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of the hill. 11Any time Moses held his hands in the air, the men of Israel would start winning the fight. But when Moses put his hands down, the men of Israel began to lose the fight.

12After some time, Moses’ arms became tired. So they put a large rock under Moses for him to sit on. Then Aaron and Hur held Moses’ hands in the air, the men of Israel would start winning the fight. But when Moses put his hands down, the men of Israel began to lose the fight.

Advice From Moses’ Father-in-Law
18Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, was a priest in Midian. He heard about the many ways that God helped Moses and the Israelites. He heard about the Lord leading the Israelites out of Egypt. 3So Jethro went to Moses while Moses was camped near the mountain of God. d Jethro brought Moses’ wife, Zipporah, with him. (Zipporah was not with Moses, because Moses had sent her home.) 5Jethro also brought Moses’ two sons with him. The first son was named Gershom, e because when he was born, Moses said, “I am a stranger in a foreign country.” The other son was named Eliezer, f because when he was born, Moses said, “The God of my father helped me and saved me from the king of Egypt.” 5So Jethro went to Moses while Moses was camped in the desert near the mountain of God. Moses’ wife and his two sons were with Jethro.

6Jethro sent a message to Moses that said, “This is your father-in-law Jethro. I am bringing your wife and her two sons to you.”

7So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. Moses bowed down before him and kissed him. The two men asked about each other’s health. Then they went into Moses’ tent to talk more. 8Moses told Jethro everything the Lord had done for the Israelites. He told what the Lord did to Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. He told about all the problems they had along the way. And he told his father-in-law how the Lord saved the Israelites every time there was trouble.

9Jethro was happy when he heard all the good things the Lord had done for Israel. He was glad that the Lord had freed the Israelites from the Egyptians. 9He said,
“Praise the Lord! He freed you from the power of Egypt. He saved you from Pharaoh. "Now I know the Lord is greater than all the gods. They thought they were in control, but look what God did!”

12Jethro got some sacrifices and offerings to honor God. Then Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat with Moses’ father-in-law Jethro. They all ate together there with God.

13The next day, Moses had the special job of judging the people. There were so many people that they had to stand before him all day.

14Jethro saw Moses judging the people. He asked, “Why are you doing this? Why are you the only judge? And why do people come to you all day?”

15Moses said to his father-in-law, “The people come to me and ask me to ask for God’s decision for their problem. If people have an argument, they come to me, and I decide which person is right. In this way I teach the people God’s laws and teachings.”

16But Moses’ father-in-law said to him, "This isn’t the right way to do this. It is too much work for you to do alone. You cannot do this job by yourself. It wears you out. And it makes the people tired too. Now, listen to me. Let me give you some advice. And I pray God will be with you. You should continue listening to the problems of the people. And you should continue to speak to God about these things. You should explain God’s laws and teachings to the people. Warn them not to break the laws. Tell them the right way to live and what they should do. But you should also choose some of the people to be judges and leaders.

“Choose good men you can trust—men who respect God. Choose men who will not change their decisions for money. Make these men rulers over the people. There should be rulers over 1000 people, 100 people, 50 people, and even over ten people. Let these rulers judge the people. If there is a very important case, then they can come to you and let you decide what to do. But they can decide the other cases themselves. In this way these men will share your work with you, and it will be easier for you to lead the people. If you do this as God directs you, then you will be able to do your job without tiring yourself out. And the people can still have all their problems solved before they return home.”

24So Moses did what Jethro told him.

25Moses chose good men from among the Israelites. He made them leaders over the people. There were rulers over 1000 people, 100 people, 50 people, and ten people. These rulers were judges for the people. The people could always bring their arguments to these rulers, and Moses had to decide only the most important cases.

27After a short time Moses said goodbye to his father-in-law Jethro, and Jethro went back to his own home.

God’s Agreement With Israel

1The Israelites reached the desert of Sinai in the third month of their trip from Egypt. 2They had traveled from Rephidim to the Sinai desert. The Israelites camped in the desert near Mount Sinai. Then Moses climbed up the mountain to meet with God. The Lord spoke to him on the mountain and said, “Tell this to the Israelites, the great family of Jacob: "You people saw what I did to the people of Egypt. You saw that I carried you out of Egypt like an eagle and brought you here to me. So now I tell you to obey my commands and keep my agreement. So if you do this, you will be my own special people. The whole world belongs to me, but I am choosing you to be my own special people. You will be a special nation—a kingdom of priests.’ Moses, you must tell the Israelites what I have said.”

7So Moses climbed down the mountain and called the elders of the people together. Moses told the elders everything the Lord had commanded him to tell them. All the people spoke at the same time and said, “We will obey everything the Lord says.”
Then Moses went back up the mountain and told the Lord that the people would obey him. Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will come to you in the thick cloud. I will speak to you. All the people will hear me talking to you. I will do this so that they will always believe what you tell them.”

Then Moses told God everything the people had said.

And the Lord said to Moses, “Today and tomorrow you must prepare the people for a special meeting. They must wash their clothes and be ready for me on the third day. On the third day, the Lord will come down to Mount Sinai. And all the people will see me. But you must tell the people to stay away from the mountain. Make a line and don’t let them cross it. Any person or animal that touches the mountain must be killed with stones or shot with arrows. But don’t let anyone touch them. The people must wait until the trumpet blows. Only then can they go up the mountain.”

So Moses climbed down the mountain and went to the people. He got them ready for the special meeting and they washed their clothes.

Then Moses said to the people, “Be ready for the meeting with God in three days. Until that time do not have sexual relations.”

On the morning of the third day, a thick cloud came down onto the mountain. There was thunder and lightning and a very loud sound from a trumpet. All the people in the camp were frightened.

Then Moses led the people out of the camp to a place near the mountain to meet God. Mount Sinai was covered with smoke. Smoke rose off the mountain like smoke from a furnace. This happened because the Lord came down to the mountain in fire. Also the whole mountain began to shake.

The noise from the trumpet became louder and louder. Every time Moses spoke to God, God answered him with a voice like thunder.

So the Lord came down to Mount Sinai. He came from heaven to the top of the mountain. Then he called Moses to come up to the top of the mountain with him. So Moses went up the mountain.

The Lord said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people not to come near me and look at me. If they do, many will die. Also tell the priests who come near the Lord that they must prepare themselves for this special meeting. If they don’t, I, the Lord, will punish them.”

Moses said to the Lord, “But the people cannot come up the mountain. You yourself told us to make a line and not allow the people to cross the line to holy ground.”

The Lord said to him, “Go down to the people. Get Aaron and bring him back with you. But don’t let the priests or the people come near me. I will punish them if they come too close.”

So Moses went down to the people and told them these things.

The Ten Commandments

These are the things God told his people:

I am the Lord your God. I am the one who freed you from the land of Egypt, where you were slaves.

You must not worship any other gods except me.

You must not make any idols. Don’t make any statues or pictures of anything up in the sky or of anything on the earth or of anything down in the water.

Don’t worship or serve idols of any kind, because I, the Lord, am your God. I hate my people worshiping other gods.

People who sin against me become my enemies, and I will punish them. And I will punish their children, their grandchildren, and even their great-grandchildren. But I will be very kind to people who love me and obey my commands.

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I will be kind to their families for thousands of generations.\(^a\)

7“You must not use the name of the LORD your God to make empty promises. If you do, the LORD will not let you go unpunished.

8“You must remember to keep the Sabbath a special day. 9You may work six days a week to do your job. 10But the seventh day is a day of rest in honor of the LORD your God. So on that day no one should work—not you, your sons and daughters, or your men and women slaves. Even your animals and the foreigners living in your cities must not work! 11That is because the LORD worked six days and made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything in them. And on the seventh day, he rested. In this way the LORD blessed the Sabbath—the day of rest. He made that a very special day.

12“You must honor and respect your father and your mother. Do this so that you will have a full life in the land that the LORD your God gives you.

13“You must not murder anyone.

14“You must not commit adultery.

15“You must not steal anything.

16“You must not tell lies about other people.\(^b\)

17“You must not want to take your neighbor’s house. You must not want his wife. And you must not want his men and women servants or his cattle or his donkeys. You must not want to take anything that belongs to another person.”

The People Are Afraid of God

18During all this time, the people in the valley heard the thundering and saw the lightning rising from the mountain and heard the sound of the trumpet. They were afraid and shook with fear. They stood away from the mountain and watched. 19Then the people said to Moses, “If you want to speak to us, then we will listen. But please don’t let God speak to us. If this happens, we will die.”

20Then Moses said to them, “Don’t be afraid! God has come to test you. He wants you to respect him so that you will not sin.”

21The people stood far away from the mountain while Moses went to the dark cloud where God was. 22Then the LORD told Moses to say this to the Israelites: “You people have seen that I talked with you from heaven. 23So you must not make idols using gold or silver to compete with me. You must not make these false gods.

24“Make a special altar for me. You should use dirt to make this altar. Offer sheep and cattle as burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on this altar. Do this in every place where I tell you to remember me. Then I will come and bless you. 25But if you use stones to make an altar, then don’t use stones that were cut with an iron tool.\(^c\) If you do that, it will make the altar unacceptable. 26And you must not make steps leading up to the altar. If there are steps, when people look up to the altar, they will be able to see under your clothes.”

Other Laws and Commands

211Then God said to Moses, “These are the other laws that you will give to the people:

21“2If you buy a Hebrew\(^d\) slave, then that slave will serve for only six years. After six years, he will be free, and he will have to pay nothing. 3If he is not married when he becomes your slave, when he becomes free, he will leave without a wife. But if the man is married when he becomes your slave, then he will keep his wife at the time he is made free. 4If the slave is not married, the master can give him a wife. If that

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\(^a\) 20:6 Or “But I will show mercy to thousands of people who love me and obey my commands.”

\(^b\) 20:16 Or “You must not be a false witness against your neighbor.”

\(^c\) 20:25 iron tool Literally, “sword.”

\(^d\) 21:2 Hebrew Or “Israelite.”
wife gives birth to sons or daughters, she and her children will belong to the master. After the slave is finished with his years of service, he will be made free.

5“But if the slave decides that he wants to stay with the master, he must say, ‘I love my master. I love my wife and my children. I will not become free—I will stay.’

6If this happens, the master will bring the slave before God. The master will take the slave to a door or the wooden frame around the door and pierce the slave’s ear using a sharp tool to show that the slave will serve that master for all his life.

7“A man might decide to sell his daughter as a slave. If this happens, the rules for making her free are not the same as the rules for making the men slaves free. If the master who chose her for himself is not pleased with her, then he can sell the woman back to her father. If the master broke his promise to marry her, he loses the right to sell her to other people. If the master promised to let the slave woman marry his son, he must treat her like a daughter, not like a slave.

10“Whoever hits and kills someone must be killed too. But if an accident happens, and a person kills someone without planning it, then God allowed that thing to happen. The man who was hurt is not killed, the man who hurt him should not be killed. If the man who was hurt and must stay in bed for some time, the man who hurt him must support him. The man who hurt him must pay for the loss of his time. He must support him until he is completely healed.

12“Whoever hits their father or their mother must be killed.

13“Two men might argue and one might hit the other with a rock or with his fist. If the man who was hurt is not killed, the man who hurt him must pay a fine. The woman’s husband will decide how much the Fine must pay. The judges will help the man decide how much the fine will be. But if the woman was hurt badly, then the man who hurt her must be punished. The punishment must fit the crime. You must trade one life for another life.

21“Two men might be fighting and hurt a pregnant woman. This might make the woman give birth to her baby before its time. If the woman was not hurt badly, the man who hurt her must pay a fine. The woman’s husband will decide how much the man must pay. The judges will help the man decide how much the fine will be. But if the woman was hurt badly, then the man who hurt her must be punished. The punishment must fit the crime. You must trade one life for another life.

24“Whoever hits their father or their mother must be killed.

26“If a man hits a slave in the eye, and the slave is blinded in that eye, then the slave will be allowed to go free. His eye is the payment for his freedom. This is the same for a man or a woman slave.

27“If a master hits his slave in the mouth, and the slave loses a tooth, then the slave must be killed. The slave’s tooth is payment for the slave’s freedom. This is the same for a man or a woman slave.

28“If a man’s bull kills a man or woman, then you should use stones and kill that them as a slave or to keep them for their own slave must be killed.

29“Whoever curses their father or mother must be killed.

30“Two men might argue and one might hit the other with a rock or with his fist. If the man who was hurt is not killed, the man who hurt him should not be killed. If the man who was hurt and must stay in bed for some time, the man who hurt him must support him. The man who hurt him must pay for the loss of his time. He must support him until he is completely healed.

24“Sometimes people beat their slaves. If the slave dies after being beaten, the killer must be punished. But if the slave gets up after a few days, then the master will not be punished. That is because someone paid their money for the slave, and the slave belongs to them.

22“Two men might be fighting and hurt a pregnant woman. This might make the woman give birth to her baby before its time. If the woman was not hurt badly, the man who hurt her must pay a fine. The woman’s husband will decide how much the man must pay. The judges will help the man decide how much the fine will be. But if the woman was hurt badly, then the man who hurt her must be punished. The punishment must fit the crime. You must trade one life for another life.

24You must trade one eye for another eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a bruise for a bruise, a cut for a cut.

26“If a man hits a slave in the eye, and the slave is blinded in that eye, then the slave will be allowed to go free. His eye is the payment for his freedom. This is the same for a man or a woman slave.

27“If a master hits his slave in the mouth, and the slave loses a tooth, then the slave must be killed. The slave’s tooth is payment for the slave’s freedom. This is the same for a man or a woman slave.

28“If a man’s bull kills a man or woman, then you should use stones and kill that
bull. You should not eat the bull. The owner of the bull is not guilty. 29 But if the bull had hurt people in the past, and if the owner was warned, then the owner is guilty. That is because he did not keep the bull tied or locked in its place. So if the bull is allowed to be free and kills someone, the owner is guilty. You should kill the bull with stones and also kill the owner. 30 But the family of the dead man may accept money. If they accept money, the man who owned the bull should not be killed. But he must pay as much money as the judge decides.

31 “This same law must be followed if the bull kills someone’s son or daughter. 32 But if the bull kills a slave, the owner of the animal must pay the master 30 pieces of silver." And the bull must also be killed with stones. This law will be the same for men and women slaves.

33 “A man might take a cover off a well or dig a hole and not cover it. If another man’s animal comes and falls into that hole, the man who owns the hole is guilty. 34 The man who owns the hole must pay for the animal. But after he pays for the animal, he will be allowed to keep the body of that animal.

35 “If one man’s bull kills another man’s bull, they should sell the bull that is alive. Both men will get half of the money that comes from selling the bull, and both men will also get half of the bull that was killed. 36 But if a man’s bull has hurt other animals in the past, that owner is responsible for his bull. If his bull kills another bull, he is guilty because he allowed the bull to be free. That man must pay bull for bull. He must trade his bull for the bull that was killed.

22 "How should you punish a man who steals a bull or a sheep? If the man kills the animal or sells it, then he cannot give it back. So he must pay five bulls for the one he stole. Or he must pay four sheep for the one he stole. He must pay for stealing. 2-4 If he owns nothing, then he will be sold as a slave. But if the man still has the animal and you find it, that man must give the owner two animals for every animal he stole. It doesn’t matter if the animal was a bull, a donkey, or a sheep.

“If a thief is killed while trying to break into a house at night, then no one will be guilty for killing him. But if this happens during the day, the one who killed him will be guilty of murder.

5 “A man might let his animal loose to graze in his field or vineyard. If the animal wanders into another person’s field or vineyard, then the owner must pay. The payment must come from the best of his crop. 6 “A man might start a fire to burn thornbushes on his field. But if the fire grows and burns his neighbor’s crops or the grain growing on the neighbor’s field, the man who started the fire must pay for what he burned.

7 “Someone might give some money or tools to a neighbor for safekeeping. What should you do if someone steals those things from the neighbor’s house? If you find the one who stole them, then that thief must pay twice as much as the things are worth. 8 If you don’t find the thief, then the owner of the house must go before the judges who will decide if that person is guilty.

9 “What should you do if two men disagree about a bull or a donkey or sheep or clothing or something that is lost? One man says, ‘This is mine,’ and the other says, ‘No, it is mine.’ Both men should go before the judges who will decide who is guilty. The one who was wrong must pay the other man twice as much as the thing is worth.

10 “A man might ask his neighbor to take care of an animal for a short time. It might be a donkey, a bull, or a sheep. But what should you do if that animal is hurt or dies or someone takes the animal while no one is looking? 11 That neighbor must explain..."
that he did not steal the animal. If this is true, the neighbor will promise to the LORD that he did not steal it. The owner of the animal must accept this promise. The neighbor does not have to pay the owner for the animal. 12 But if the neighbor stole the animal, then he must pay the owner for the animal. 13 If wild animals killed the animal, then the neighbor should bring the body as proof. The neighbor will not have to pay the owner for the animal that was killed. 14 If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor, and the animal is hurt or dies, then the neighbor must pay the owner for the animal. The neighbor is responsible, because the owner was not there himself. 15 But if the owner was there, then the neighbor does not have to pay. Or if the neighbor was paying money to use the animal for work, he will not have to pay if the animal dies or is hurt. The money he paid to use the animal will be enough payment.

16 “If a man has sexual relations with a virgin who he is not engaged to, then he must pay her father the full amount necessary to marry her. 17 If the father refuses to allow his daughter to marry him, then the man must still pay the full amount for her.

18 “You must not allow any woman to do evil magic. If she does magic, you must not let her live.

19 “You must not allow anyone to have sexual relations with an animal. If this happens, that person must be killed.

20 “Whoever makes a sacrifice to a false god should be destroyed. The LORD is the only one you should make sacrifices to.

21 “Remember, in the past you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. So you should not cheat or hurt anyone who is a foreigner in your land.

22 “You must never do anything bad to women whose husbands are dead or to orphans. 23 If you do anything wrong to these widows or orphans, I will know it. I will hear about their suffering. 24 And I will be very angry. I will kill you with a sword.

Then your wives will become widows, and your children will become orphans.

25 “If you loan money to any of my people, that is, the poor among you, don’t be like a moneylender and charge them interest. 26 You might take their cloak to make sure they pay the money back, but you must give that cloak back to them before sunset. 27 That cloak might be their only protection against the cold when they lie down to sleep. If they call to me for help, I will listen because I am kind.

28 “You must not curse God or the leaders of your people.

29 “At harvest time you should give me the first grain and the first juice from your fruit. Don’t wait until late in the year.

“Give me your firstborn sons. 30 Also, give me your firstborn cattle and sheep. Let the firstborn stay with its mother for seven days. Then on the eighth day, give him to me.

31 “You are my special people. So don’t eat the meat from something that was killed by wild animals. Let the dogs eat that dead animal.

23 “Don’t tell lies against other people. If you are a witness in court, don’t agree to help a bad person tell lies.

2 “Don’t do something just because everyone else is doing it. If you see a group of people doing wrong, don’t join them. You must not let them persuade you to do wrong things—you must do what is right and fair.

3 “In court, don’t treat a person in a special way simply because that person is poor.

4 “If you see a lost bull or donkey, then you must return it to its owner—even if the owner is your enemy.

5 “If you see an animal that cannot walk because it has too much to carry, you must stop and help that animal. You must help that animal even if it belongs to one of your enemies.

6 “In court, don’t let anyone take advantage of a person simply because that person is poor.

7 “Be very careful if you say that

\textit{a 22:16 a virgin \ldots engaged to} Literally, “a virgin who is not engaged.”
someone is guilty of something. Don’t make false charges against a person. Never allow innocent people to be killed as punishment for something they did not do. Whoever kills an innocent person is evil, and I will not treat a guilty person as innocent.

8“If someone tries to pay you to agree with them when they are wrong, don’t accept that payment. A payment like that can blind judges so that they cannot see the truth. It can make good people tell lies.

9“You must never do wrong things to a foreigner. Remember, you know what it is like to be a foreigner because at one time you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

The Special Festivals

10“Plant seeds, harvest your crops, and work the ground for six years. 11But the seventh year must be a special time of rest for the land. Don’t plant anything in your fields. If any crops grow there, allow the poor to have it. And allow the wild animals to eat the food that is left. You should do the same with your vineyards and with your fields of olive trees.

12“Work for six days, but on the seventh day, rest! This will allow your slaves and other workers a time to rest and relax. And your bulls and donkeys will also have a time of rest.

13“Be sure that you obey all these laws. Don’t worship false gods. You should not even speak their names!

14“You will have three special festivals each year. You must come to my special place to worship me during these festivals. 15The first festival is the Festival of Unleavened Bread. This is as I commanded you. During this time you will eat bread that is made without yeast. This will continue for seven days. You will do this during the month of Abib, because this is the time when you came out of Egypt. Everyone must bring a sacrifice to me at that time.

16“The second festival will be the Festival of Harvest. This festival will be during the early summer when you begin harvesting the first crops that you planted in your fields.

“17“The third festival will be the Festival of Shelters. This will be in the fall, when you finish gathering the rest of the crops from your fields.

18“So three times each year all the men will come to the special place to be with the Lord God.

19“When you kill an animal and offer its blood as a sacrifice, you must not include anything that has yeast in it. And when you burn the fat from my sacrifice, don’t let any of it remain until morning.

20“When you gather your crops at harvest time, you should bring the first of everything you harvest to the house of the Lord your God.

“You must not eat the meat from a young goat that is boiled in its mother’s milk.”

God Will Help Israel Take Their Land

20“I am sending an angel before you to protect you along the way and to lead you to the place that I have prepared for you. 21Obey the angel and follow him. Be careful in his presence, and don’t rebel against him. The angel will not forgive the wrong things you do to him. He has my power in him. 22If you listen to what he says and do everything I tell you, then I will be an enemy to all of your enemies. I will be against everyone who is against you.

23“My angel will lead you through the land. He will lead you against many different people—the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites. But I will defeat all of them.

24“Don’t worship their gods. Don’t ever bow down to those gods. You must never live the way those people live. You must destroy their idols. And you must break the stones that help them remember their gods. 25You must serve the Lord your God. If you do this, I will bless you with harvesting the first crops that you planted in your fields.

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plenty of bread and water. I will take away all sickness from you. 26 Your women will all be able to have babies. None of their babies will die at birth. And I will allow you to live long lives.

27 “When you fight against your enemies, I will send my great power before you. I will help you defeat all your enemies. The people who are against you will become confused in battle and run away. 28 I will send the hornet in front of you. He will force your enemies to leave. The Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites will leave your country. 29 But I will not force all of them out of your land quickly. I will not do this in only one year. The land will be empty if I force the people out too fast. Then all the wild animals would increase and control the land. And they would be much trouble for you. 30 So I will force them out of your land very slowly. I will do this as you grow and eventually take the land to be your own.

31 “I will give you all the land from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the desert of Sinai to the Euphrates River. I will let you defeat the people living there and force them all to leave.

32 “You must not make any agreements with any of those people or their gods. Don’t let them stay in your country. If you let them stay, they will be like a trap to you—they will cause you to sin against me. And you will begin worshiping their gods.”

God and Israel Make Their Agreement

24 The Lord told Moses, “You, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the 70 elders of Israel must come up the mountain and worship me from a distance. 2 Then only Moses will come close to the Lord. The other men must not come close, and the rest of the people must not even come up the mountain.”

3 Moses told the people all the rules and commands from the Lord. Then all the people said, “We will obey all the commands that the Lord has spoken.”

4 So Moses wrote down all the commands of the Lord. The next morning he got up and built an altar near the bottom of the mountain. And he set up twelve stones—one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 Then Moses sent young men of Israel to offer sacrifices. These men offered bulls to the Lord as burnt offerings and fellow sacrifices.

6 Moses saved the blood from these animals. He put half of the blood in bowls, and he poured the other half of the blood on the altar.

7 Moses read the scroll with the special agreement written on it. He read the agreement so that all the people could hear him. And the people said, “We have heard the laws that the Lord has given us. And we agree to obey them.”

8 Then Moses held the bowls full of the blood from the sacrifices. He threw that blood on the people. He said, “This blood shows that the Lord has made a special agreement with you. The laws God gave you explain the agreement.”

9 Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the 70 elders of Israel went up the mountain. 10 On the mountain, these men saw the God of Israel. He was standing on something that looked like blue sapphires, as clear as the sky!

11 All the leaders of Israel saw God, but God did not destroy them. They all ate and drank together.

Moses Goes to Get God’s Law

12 The Lord said to Moses, “Come to me on the mountain. I have written my teachings and laws on two stone tablets. These teachings and laws are for the people. I will give these stone tablets to you.”

13 So Moses and his helper, Joshua, went up the mountain of God. 14 Moses said to

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the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you. While I am gone, Aaron and Hur will rule over you. Go to them if anyone has a problem.”

Moses Meets With God
15 Then Moses went up the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. 16 The Glory of the LORD came down on Mount Sinai. The cloud covered the mountain for six days. On the seventh day, the LORD spoke to Moses from the cloud.

17 The Israelites could see the Glory of the LORD. It was like a fire burning on top of the mountain.

18 Then Moses went higher up the mountain into the cloud. He was on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights.

Gifts for the Holy Tent
25 The LORD said to Moses, 2 Tell the Israelites to bring me gifts. You will accept gifts for me from everyone who is willing to give. 3 Here is the list of the things that you should accept from the people: gold, silver, and bronze; 4 blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen; goat hair, 5 ram skins dyed red, and fine leather; acacia wood; 6 oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and spices for the sweet-smelling incense. 7 Also accept onyx stones and other jewels to be put on the ephod and the judgment pouch.

The Holy Tent
8 “The people will build a holy place for me. Then I can live among them. 9 I will show you what the Holy Tent and everything in it should look like. Build everything exactly as I show you.

The Box of the Agreement
10 Use acacia wood and build a special box. This Holy Box must be 2 1/2 cubits long, 1 1/2 cubits wide, and 1 1/2 cubits high. 11 Use pure gold to cover the Box inside and out. Put gold trim around the edges of the Box. 12 Make four gold rings for carrying the Box. Put the gold rings on the four corners, two rings on each side. 13 Then make poles for carrying the Box. These poles should be made from acacia wood and covered with gold. 14 Put the poles through the rings on the corners of the Box. Use these poles to carry the Box. 15 These poles should always stay in the rings of the Box. Don’t take the poles out.

16 “I will give you the Agreement. Put it into this Box. 17 Then make a lid, the mercy-cover. Make it from pure gold. Make it 2 1/2 cubits long and 1 1/2 cubits wide. 18 Then make two Cherub angels and put them on each end of the mercy-cover. Hammer gold to make these angels. 19 Put one angel on one end of the mercy-cover, and put the other angel on the other end. Join the angels together with the mercy-cover to make one piece. 20 The wings of these angels should spread up toward the sky. The angels should cover the Box with their wings and should face each other, looking toward the mercy-cover.

21 “I will give you the Agreement. Put it in the Box, and put the mercy-cover on the Box. 22 When I meet with you, I will speak from between the Cherub angels on the mercy-cover that is on the Box of the Agreement. From that place, I will give all my commands to the Israelites.

The Table
23 Make a table from acacia wood. The table must be 2 cubits long, 1 cubit wide, and 1 1/2 cubits high. 24 Cover the table with pure gold and put gold trim around it. 25 Then make a frame 1 handbreadth wide around the table. And put gold trim on the frame. 26 Then make four gold rings and put them on the four corners of the table, where the four legs are. 27 Put the rings close to the frame around the top of the table. These rings will hold the poles used to carry the table. 28 Use acacia wood to make the poles, and cover them with gold. The poles are for carrying the table.

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Make the plates, the spoons, the pitchers, and the bowls from pure gold. The pitchers and bowls will be used for pouring the drink offerings. Put the special bread before me on the table. It must always be there in front of me.

The Lampstand

Then you must make a lampstand. Use pure gold and hammer it to make the base and the shaft. Make flowers, buds, and petals from pure gold. Join all these things together into one piece.

The lampstand must have six branches—three branches on one side and three branches on the other. Each branch must have three flowers. Make these flowers like almond flowers with buds and petals. Make four more flowers for the lampstand. These flowers must be made like almond flowers with buds and petals. There will be six branches on the lampstand—three branches coming out from each side of the shaft. Make a flower with buds and petals below each of the three places where the branches join the shaft. The whole lampstand with the flowers and branches must be made from pure gold. All this gold must be hammered and joined together into one piece.

Then make seven lamps to go on the lampstand. These lamps will give light to the area in front of the lampstand. Use pure gold to make the lamp snuffers and trays. Use 75 pounds of pure gold to make the lampstand and the things to be used with it. Be very careful to make everything exactly the way I showed you on the mountain.

The Holy Tent

The Holy Tent should be made from ten curtains. These curtains must be made from fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn. A skilled worker should sew pictures of Cherub angels with wings into the curtains. Make each curtain the same size. Each curtain should be 28 cubits long and 4 cubits wide. Join the curtains together into two groups. Join five curtains together to make one group and join five curtains together to make the other group. Use blue cloth to make loops along the edge of the end curtain in one group. Do the same on the end curtain in the other group. There must be 50 loops on the end curtain of the first group. And there must be 50 loops on the end curtain of the other group. These loops must be opposite each other. Then make 50 gold rings to join the curtains together. This will join the Holy Tent together into one piece.

Make another tent that will cover the Holy Tent. Use eleven curtains to make this tent. Make these curtains from goat hair. All these curtains must be the same size. They must be 30 cubits long and 4 cubits wide. Join five of the curtains together into one group. Then join the other six curtains together into another group. Fold back half of the sixth curtain at the front of the Tent. Make 50 loops down the edge of the end curtain of one group. Do the same for the end curtain of the other group. Then make 50 bronze rings to join the curtains together. This will join the tent together into one piece. Half of the end curtain of this tent will hang down below the back edge of the Holy Tent. On the sides, the curtains of this tent will hang down 1 cubit below the bottom edges of the Holy Tent. So this tent will completely cover the Holy Tent. Make two coverings to go over the outer tent. One covering should be made from ram skins dyed red. The other covering should be made from fine leather.

Use acacia wood to make frames to support the Holy Tent. The frames should be 10 cubits high and 1 1/2 cubits/.
wide. 17 Two side poles should be joined together with cross pieces to make each frame. All the frames for the Holy Tent must be the same. 18 Make 20 frames for the south side of the Holy Tent. 19 And make 40 silver bases for the frames. Each frame should have two silver bases to go under it—one base for each side pole. 20 Make 20 more frames for the other side (the north side) of the Holy Tent. 21 And make 40 silver bases for these frames—two bases under each frame. 22 Make six more frames for the back (the west side) of the Holy Tent. 23 Make two frames for the corners at the back of the Holy Tent. 24 The frames at the corners should be joined together at the bottom. At the top a ring will hold the frames together. Do the same for both corners. 25 There will be a total of eight frames for the west end of the Tent. There will be 16 silver bases—two bases under each frame.

26 “Use acacia wood and make braces for the frames of the Holy Tent. There should be five braces for the first side of the Holy Tent. 27 And there should be five braces for the frames on the other side of the Holy Tent. And there should be five braces for the frames at the back (the west side) of the Holy Tent. 28 The middle brace should pass through the frames from one end to the other.

29 “Cover the frames with gold. And make rings for the frames to hold the braces. Make these rings from gold. Also cover the braces with gold. 30 Build the Holy Tent the way I showed you on the mountain.

Inside the Holy Tent
31 “Use fine linen and make a special curtain for the inside of the Holy Tent. Use blue, purple, and red yarn and sew pictures of Cherub angels into the curtain. 32 Make four posts from acacia wood, and cover the posts with gold. Put hooks made from gold on the four posts. Put four silver bases under the posts. Then hang the curtain on the gold hooks. 33 Put the curtain under the gold rings. 34 Then put the Box of the Agreement behind the curtain. This curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. 35 Put the mercy-cover on the Box of the Agreement in the Most Holy Place.

36 “Put the special table you made outside of the curtain. The table should be on the north side of the Holy Tent. Then put the lampstand on the south side, across from the table.

The Door of the Holy Tent
36 “Then make a curtain to cover the entrance to the Holy Tent. Use blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen to make this curtain. Weave pictures into it. 37 Make gold hooks for this curtain. Make five posts using acacia wood covered with gold and make five bronze bases for the five posts.

The Altar for Burning Offerings
27 1 “Use acacia wood and build an altar. The altar should be square. It must be 5 cubits long, 5 cubits wide, and 3 cubits high. 2 Make a horn for each of the four corners of the altar. Join each horn to its corner so that everything is one piece. Then cover the altar with bronze.

3 “Use bronze to make all the tools and dishes that will be used on the altar. Make pots, shovels, bowls, forks, and pans. These will be used for cleaning ashes from the altar. 4 Make a grating for the altar. This grating will be shaped like a net. And make a bronze ring at each of the four corners of the grating. 5 Put the grating under the ledge at the bottom of the altar. The grating will go halfway up into the altar from below.

6 “Use acacia wood to make poles for the altar, and cover them with bronze. 7 Put the poles through the rings on both sides of the altar. Use these poles for carrying the altar. 8 Make the altar like an empty box with the sides made from boards.

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Make the altar just as I showed you on the mountain.

The Courtyard Around the Holy Tent
9aMake a courtyard for the Holy Tent. The south side should have a wall of curtains 100 cubits long. These curtains must be made from fine linen. bUse 20 posts and 20 bronze bases under the posts. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods should be made from silver. cThe north side must also have a wall of curtains 100 cubits long. It must have 20 posts and 20 bronze bases. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods must be made from silver.

dOn the west side of the courtyard there must be a wall of curtains 50 cubits long. There must be ten posts and ten bases. eThe east side of the courtyard must also be 50 cubits long. fHere at the entrance to the courtyard, one side must have curtains 15 cubits long. There must be three posts and three bases on this side. gThe other side of the entrance must also have curtains 15 cubits long. There must be three posts and three bases on that side.

hMake a curtain 20 cubits long to cover the entrance to the courtyard. Make that curtain from fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn. Weave designs into that curtain. There must be four posts and four bases for that curtain. hAll the posts around the courtyard must be joined with silver curtain rods. The hooks on the posts must be made from silver, and the bases for the posts must be bronze. iThe courtyard should be 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide. The wall of curtains around the courtyard should be 5 cubits high. The curtains must be made from fine linen. The bases under the posts must be bronze. jAll the tools, tent pegs, and other things used in the Holy Tent must be made from bronze. kAnd all the pegs for the curtains around the courtyard must be made from bronze.

Oil for the Lamp
20Command the Israelites to bring their best olive oil for the lamp that must be lit each evening. 21This lamp is in the first room of the Meeting Tent, outside the curtain for the room where the Agreement is. Aaron and his sons will make sure this lamp is burning before the LORD every day from evening until morning. The Israelites and their descendants must obey this law forever.

Clothes for the Priests
1Tell your brother Aaron and his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, to come to you from the Israelites. These men will serve me as priests.

2Tell your brother Aaron and his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, to come to you from the Israelites. These men will serve me as priests. 4These are the clothes the men should make: the judgment pouch, the ephod, a blue robe, a white woven robe, a turban, and a cloth belt. They must make these special clothes for your brother Aaron and his sons. Then Aaron and his sons can serve me as priests. 5Tell the men to use gold thread, fine linen, and blue, purple, and red yarn.

The Ephod and the Cloth Belt
6Use gold thread, fine linen, and blue, purple, and red yarn to make the ephod. This must be the work of a very skilled person. 7At each shoulder of the ephod, there should be a shoulder piece. These shoulder pieces should be tied to the two corners of the ephod.

8The men will very carefully weave a cloth belt for the ephod. This belt must be made the same way as the ephod—use gold threads, fine linen, and blue, purple, and red yarn.

9Take two onyx stones. Write the names of the twelve sons of Israel on these jewels. 10Write six names on one jewel and...
six names on the other jewel. Write the names in order, from the oldest son to the youngest. 11Cut the names of the sons of Israel into these stones. Do this the way a worker makes a seal. Put the jewels in gold settings. 12Then put these two jewels on the shoulder pieces of the ephod. Aaron will wear this special coat when he stands before the Lord. And the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel will be on the ephod. These jewels will cause the Lord to remember the Israelites. 13Use fine gold to hold the stones on the ephod. 14Twist chains of pure gold together like a rope. Make two of these gold chains and fasten them to the gold settings.

The Judgment Pouch

15“Make the judgment pouch for the high priest. Skilled workers should make this pouch just as they made the ephod. They must use gold threads, fine linen, and blue, purple, and red yarn. 16The judgment pouch should be folded double to make a square pocket. It should be 1 span long and 1 span wide. 17Put four rows of beautiful jewels on the judgment pouch. The first row of jewels should have a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl. 18The second row should have a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald. 19The third row should have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. 20The fourth row should have a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. Set all these jewels in gold. 21There will be twelve jewels on the judgment pouch—one stone for each of the sons of Israel. Each stone will be like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes cut into it.

22“Make chains of pure gold for the judgment pouch. These chains must be braided like a rope. 23Make two gold rings and put them on two corners of the judgment pouch. 24Put the two golden chains through the two rings at the corners of the judgment pouch. 25Fasten the other ends of the gold chains to the two settings. This will fasten them to the two shoulder pieces of the ephod on the front. 26Make two more gold rings and put them on the other two corners of the judgment pouch. This will be on the inside edge of the judgment pouch next to the ephod. 27Make two more gold rings and put them on the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod. Put the gold rings above the cloth belt of the ephod. 28Use blue ribbon to tie the rings of the judgment pouch to the rings of the ephod. In this way the judgment pouch will rest close to the cloth belt and will be held against the ephod.

29“When Aaron enters the Holy Place, he must wear the judgment pouch. In this way he will wear the names of the twelve sons of Israel over his heart. And the Lord will always be reminded of them. 30Put the Urim and Thummim inside the judgment pouch. They will be over Aaron’s heart when he goes before the Lord. So Aaron will always carry with him a way of judging for the Israelites when he is before the Lord.

Other Clothes for the Priests

31“Make a blue robe for the ephod. 32Make a hole in the center for the head. And sew a piece of cloth around the edge of this hole. This cloth will be like a collar that keeps the hole from tearing. 33Use blue, purple, and red yarn to make cloth pomegranates. Hang these pomegranates around the bottom edge of the robe, and hang gold bells between the pomegranates. 34So around the bottom edge of the robe there should be bells and pomegranates. There should be a bell following each pomegranate. 35Aaron will wear this robe when he serves as a priest. The bells will ring as Aaron goes into the Holy Place to stand before the Lord, and the bells will ring as he leaves the Holy Place. This way Aaron will not die.

36“Make a strip of pure gold and carve these words into the gold like the writing on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD. 37Fasten 28:36 Holy to the Lord. These words were written on everything that was used in the Temple. This showed that these things belonged to the Lord and that they could be used only for special purposes. Dishes with this label could be used only

a 28:16 1 span The distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger, about 9” (23 cm).
the gold strip to a blue ribbon. Tie the blue ribbon around the turban. The gold strip should be on the front of the turban. 38 Aaron will wear this on his head. In this way he will remove the guilt if anything is wrong with the gifts that the Israelites give to God. Aaron will always wear this on his head so that the LORD will accept the gifts of the people.

39 Use fine linen to make the white woven robe and the turban. The cloth belt should have designs sewn into it. 40 Also make coats, belts, and cloth caps for Aaron’s sons. This will give them honor and respect. 41 Put the clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons. Then pour the special oil on them to make them priests. This will make them holy, and they will serve me as priests.

42 Use linen to make underclothes for the priests. These underclothes will cover them from the waist to the thighs. 43 Aaron and his sons must wear these clothes whenever they enter the Meeting Tent. They must wear these clothes when they come near to the altar to serve as priests in the Holy Place. If they don’t wear these clothes, they will be guilty of wrong and will have to die. All this should be a law that continues forever for Aaron and all his family after him.

The Ceremony for Appointing the Priests

11 "Now I will tell you what you must do to show that Aaron and his sons serve me in a special way as priests. Find one young bull and two rams that have nothing wrong with them. 2 Then use fine wheat flour without yeast to make bread. And use the same things to make cakes mixed with olive oil. Make small thin cakes spread with oil. 3 Put this bread and the cakes in a basket. Then give the basket to Aaron and his sons. At the same time, give them the bull and the two rams. 4 Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Wash them with water. 5 Put the special clothes on Aaron. Put on him the white woven robe and the blue robe that is worn with the ephod. Put the ephod and the judgment pouch on him. Then tie the beautiful cloth belt on him. 6 Put the turban on his head and the special crown around the turban. 7 Take the anointing oil and pour it on Aaron’s head. This will show that he is chosen for this work.

8 "Then bring Aaron’s sons to that place. Put the white woven robes on them. 9 Then tie cloth belts around their waists, and give them cloth caps to wear. At that time they will begin to be priests. They will be priests because of the special law that will continue forever. This is the way you will make Aaron and his sons priests.

10 "Then bring the bull to that place at the front of the Meeting Tent. Aaron and his sons must put their hands on the bull’s head. 11 Then kill the bull there in the LORD’s presence at the entrance to the Meeting Tent. 12 Then take some of the bull’s blood and go to the altar. Use your finger to put some blood on the horns of the altar. Pour out all the blood that is left at the bottom of the altar. 13 Then take all the fat from inside the bull, the fatty part of the liver, both kidneys, and the fat around them. Burn this fat on the altar. 14 Then take the bull’s meat, his skin, and his other parts and go outside your camp and burn them. This bull is an offering to take away the sins of the priests.

15 "Then tell Aaron and his sons to put their hands on the head of one of the rams. 16 Kill that ram and save the blood. Throw the blood against the altar on all four sides. 17 Then cut the ram into several pieces. Wash all the parts from inside the ram and the legs. Put these things with the head and the other pieces of the ram. 18 Then burn everything on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the LORD. It is a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

19 "Tell Aaron and his sons to put their hands on the other ram. 20 Kill that ram and save some of its blood. Put that blood on the right ear lobes of Aaron and his sons. Also put some of the blood on the
thumbs of their right hands and on the big
toes of their right feet. Then throw blood
against all four sides of the altar. Then
take some of the blood from the altar. Mix
it with the special oil and sprinkle it on
Aaron and his clothes. And sprinkle it on
his sons and their clothes. This will show
that Aaron and his sons serve me in a spe-
cial way. And it will show that their clothes
are used only at special times.

21“Then take some of the blood from the altar. Mix
it with the special oil and sprinkle it on
Aaron and his clothes. And sprinkle it on
his sons and their clothes. This will show
that Aaron and his sons serve me in a spe-
cial way. And it will show that their clothes
are used only at special times.

22“Then take the fat from the ram.
(This is the ram that will be used in the
ceremony to make Aaron the high priest.)
Take the fat from around the tail and the
fat that covers the organs inside the body.
Then take the fat that covers the liver,
both kidneys and the fat on them, and the
right leg. Then take the basket of bread
that you made without yeast. This is the
basket you put before the Lord. Take
these things out of the basket: one loaf of
bread, one cake made with oil, and one
small thin cake.

23“Give them to Aaron and
his sons. Tell them to hold these things
in their hands before the Lord. This will
be a special offering to the Lord.

24Then take them from Aaron and his sons and
put them on the altar with the ram. Then
burn everything on the altar. It is a burnt
offering to the Lord. It is a sweet-smelling
gift to the Lord.

25“Then take the breast from the ram.
(This is the ram that will be used in the
ceremony to make Aaron the high priest.)
Hold the breast of the ram before the
Lord as a special offering. Then take it
back and keep it. This part of the animal
will be for you.

26“Save these special clothes that were
made for Aaron and his descendants.
They will wear these clothes when they
are chosen to be priests. 30Aaron’s son
will become the next high priest after him.
That son will wear these clothes seven
days when he comes to the Meeting Tent
to serve in the Holy Place.

31“Cook the meat from the ram that was
used to make Aaron the high priest. Cook
that meat in a holy place. Then Aaron
and his sons must eat the meat at the front
doors of the Meeting Tent. And they must
also eat the bread that is in the basket.

32These offerings were used to take away
their sins when they were made priests.
Now they should eat these offerings.

33If any of the meat from that ram or any of the
bread is left the next morning, then it must
be burned. You must not eat that bread or
the meat because it should be eaten only
in a special way at a special time.

34“You must do all these things for
Aaron and his sons. You must do them
exactly as I told you. The ceremony for
appointing them to be priests must con-
tinue for seven days. 36You must kill one
bull every day for seven days. This will be
an offering for the sins of Aaron and his
sons. You will use these sacrifices to make
the altar pure, and pour olive oil on the
altar to make it holy. 37You will make the
altar pure and holy for seven days. At that
time the altar will be most holy. Anything
that touches the altar will also be holy.

38“Every day you must make an offer-
ing on the altar. You must kill two lambs
that are one year old. 39Offer one lamb in
the morning and the other in the evening.

40–41When you kill the first lamb, also offer
8 cups a of fine wheat flour. Mix that flour
with 1 quart b of the best oil. Also offer 1
quart of wine as an offering. When you
kill the second lamb in the evening, also
offer the 8 cups of fine flour mixed with
1 quart of the best oil and offer 1 quart of
wine. This is the same as you did in the
morning. This will be a sweet-smelling gift
to the Lord. When you burn this offering,
he will smell it, and it will please him.

a 29:40–418 cups Literally, “1/10 of a measure” (.2 l).
“You must burn these things as an offering to the Lord every day. Do this at the entrance of the Meeting Tent before the Lord. Continue to do this for all time. When you make the offering, I will meet you there and speak to you. I will meet with the Israelites at that place, and my Glory will make that place holy.

So I will make the Meeting Tent and the altar holy. I will also make Aaron and his sons holy so that they can serve me as priests. I will live with the Israelites. I will be their God. The people will know that I am the Lord their God. They will know that I am the one who led them out of Egypt so that I could live with them. I am the Lord their God.

The Altar for Burning Incense

1“Make an altar from acacia wood. You will use this altar for burning incense. You must make the altar square—1 cubit long and 1 cubit wide. It must be 2 cubits high. There will be horns at the four corners. These horns must be made as one piece with the altar.

2Cover the top, the horns, and all four sides of the altar with pure gold. Then put gold trim all around the altar. Below this trim there should be two gold rings. There should be two gold rings on opposite sides of the altar. These gold rings will be used with poles to carry the altar.

3Make the poles from acacia wood and cover them with gold. Put the altar just outside the special curtain that hangs in front of the Box of the Agreement. So the altar will be in front of the mercy-cover that is above the Agreement. This is the place where I will meet with you.

4“Aaron must burn sweet-smelling incense on the altar every morning. He will do this when he comes to care for the lamps. He must burn incense again when he checks the lamps in the evening so that incense will be burned before the Lord every day forever. Don’t use this altar for offering any other kind of incense or burnt offering or for any kind of grain offering or drink offering.

5“Once a year Aaron must make a special sacrifice. He will use the blood of the sin offering to erase the sins of the people. He will do this at the horns of this altar. This day will be called the Day of Atonement, and it will be a very special day for the Lord.”

The Temple Tax

1“The Lord said to Moses, “Count the Israelites so that you will know how many people there are. Every time this is done, each man must make a payment for himself to the Lord so that nothing terrible will happen to the people. Each man who is counted must pay 1/2 shekel of silver. (That is 1/2 shekel by the official measure. This shekel weighs 20 gerahs.) This half shekel is an offering to the Lord. Every man who is at least 20 years old must be counted. And every man who is counted must give the Lord this offering. The rich must not give more than 1/2 shekel, and the poor must not give less than 1/2 shekel. All people will make the same offering to the Lord. This will be a payment for your life. Gather this money from the Israelites. Use the money for the service in the Meeting Tent. This payment will be a way for the Lord to remember his people. They will be paying for their own lives.”

The Washing Bowl

17“The Lord said to Moses, “Make a bronze bowl and put it on a bronze base. You will use this bowl for washing. Put the bowl between the Meeting Tent and the altar. Fill the bowl with water. Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet with the water from this bowl. Every time they enter the Meeting Tent, they must wash with that water so that they will not die. They must also wash every time they come near the altar to burn incense or to offer gifts to the Lord. They must wash their hands and their feet so that they will...”

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not die. This will be a law that continues forever for Aaron and his people who will live in the future.”

The Anointing Oil

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, 23 “Find the finest spices. Get 12 pounds\(^a\) of liquid myrrh, half that amount (that is, 6 pounds\(^b\)) of sweet-smelling cinnamon, and 12 pounds of sweet-smelling cane, and 12 pounds of cassia. Use the official measure to measure all these things. Also get 1 gallon\(^c\) of olive oil.

25 “Mix all these things to make a special sweet-smelling anointing oil. 26 Pour this oil on the Meeting Tent and on the Box of the Agreement. This will show that these things have a special purpose. 27 Pour the oil on the table and on all the dishes on the table. And pour this oil on the lamp and on all its tools. Pour the oil on the incense altar. 28 Also, pour the oil on the altar for burning offerings to God. Pour this oil on everything on that altar. Pour this oil on the bowl and on the base under the bowl. 29 You will make all these things holy. They will be very special to the Lord. Anything that touches these things will also become holy.

30 “Pour the oil on Aaron and his sons to show that they are separated from the rest of the people to serve as priests. 31 Tell the Israelites that the anointing oil is holy—it must always be used only for me. 32 This oil is holy and you must treat it as something special. Don’t use the same formula for making perfume and don’t let people use this oil like an ordinary perfume. 33 Whoever makes a perfume like that and puts it on anyone except a priest\(^d\) must be separated from the people.”

The Incense

34 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get these sweet-smelling spices: resin, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense. Be sure that you have equal amounts of these spices. 35 Mix the spices together to make a sweet-smelling incense. Do this the same as a perfume maker would do it. Also mix salt with this incense. This will make it pure and special. 36 Grind some of the incense until it becomes a fine powder. Put the powder in front of the Holy Box that holds the Agreement\(^e\) in the Meeting Tent. This is the place where I meet with you. You must use this incense powder only for its very special purpose. 37 You must use it only in this special way for the Lord. You must also make it in a special way. Don’t make any other incense in this way. 38 There may be people who will want to make some of this incense for themselves so that they can enjoy the smell. But whoever does this must be separated from their people.”

Bezalel and Oholiab

31 Then the LORD said to Moses, 2 “I have chosen a man from the tribe of Judah to do some special work for me. His name is Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur. 3 I have filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God—I have given him the skill and knowledge to do all kinds of things. 4 He is a very good designer. And he can make things from gold, silver, and bronze. 5 He can cut and set beautiful jewels. And he can work with wood. He can do all kinds of work. 6 I have also chosen Oholiab to work with him. Oholiab is the son of Ahisamach from the tribe of Dan. And I have given skills to all the other workers so that they can make everything that I have commanded you: 7 the Meeting Tent; 8 the table and everything on it; 9 the altar for burning incense; 10 the altar for burning offerings and the things used at the altar; 11 the bowl and the base under it;
the special clothes for Aaron the priest;  
the special clothes for Aaron’s sons  
when they serve as priests;  
the sweet-smelling anointing oil;  
the sweet-smelling incense for the  
Holy Place.  
These workers must make everything the  
way that I have commanded you.”

The Sabbath

12 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites this: ‘You must follow the rules about my special days of rest. You must do this because they will be a sign between you and me for all generations. This will show you that I, the Lord, have made you my special people.

13 ‘Make the Sabbath a special day. If someone treats the Sabbath like any other day, that person must be killed. Whoever works on the Sabbath day must be separated from their people. 14 There are six other days in the week for working. But the seventh day is a very special day of rest. That is the special day to honor the Lord. Anyone who works during the Sabbath must be killed. 15 The Israelites must remember the Sabbath and make it a special day. They must continue to do this forever. It is an agreement between them and me that will continue forever. 16 The Sabbath will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever.’” (The Lord worked six days and made the sky and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and relaxed.)

18 When God finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two stone tablets of the agreement. God had written on the stones with his finger.

The Golden Calf

32 The people saw that a long time  
had passed and Moses had not  
come down from the mountain. So they  
gathered around Aaron. They said to him,  
“Look, Moses led us out of the land of  
Egypt, but we don’t know what has  
happened to him. So make us some gods to  
go before us and lead us.”

2 Aaron said to the people, “Bring me  
the gold earrings that belong to your  
wives, sons, and daughters.”  
3 So the people collected all their gold  
earrings and brought them to Aaron.  
4 He took the gold from the people and used it  
to make an idol. Using a special tool, he  
shaped the gold into a statue of a calf.  
Then the people said, “Israel, here are  
your gods! These are the gods that brought  
you out of the land of Egypt!”

5 Aaron saw all these things, so he built  
an altar in front of the calf. Then Aaron  
made an announcement. He said, “Tomorrow  
will be a special festival to honor the Lord.”  
6 The people woke up very early the  
next morning. They killed animals and  
offered them as burnt offerings and fellow- 
ship offerings. They sat down to eat  
and drink. Then they got up and had a  
wild party.

7 At the same time, the Lord said to  
Moses, “Go down from this mountain.  
Your people, the people you brought out  
of the land of Egypt, have committed  
a terrible sin. 8 They have very quickly  
turned away from what I commanded  
them to do. They made a calf from melted  
gold for themselves. They are worshiping  
that calf and making sacrifices to it. The  
people have said, ‘Israel, these are the  
gods that led you out of Egypt.’”

9 The Lord said to Moses, “I have  
seen these people, and I know that they  
are very stubborn. They will always turn  
against me. 10 So now let me destroy them  
in anger. Then I will make a great nation  
from you.”

11 But Moses begged the Lord his God,  
“Lord, don’t let your anger destroy your  
people. You brought them out of Egypt  
with your great power and strength. 12 But  
if you destroy your people, the Egyptians  
will say, ‘God planned to do bad things to  
his people. That is why he led them out  
of Egypt. He wanted to kill them in the  
mountains. He wanted to wipe them off  
the earth.’ So don’t be angry with your
people. Please change your mind! Don’t destroy them. 18Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. These men served you, and you used your name to make a promise to them. You said, ‘I will make your people as many as the stars in the sky. I will give your people all this land as I promised. This land will be theirs forever.’ ”

14So the L ORD felt sorry for the people. He did not do what he said he might do—he did not destroy them.

15Then Moses went down the mountain. He had the two stone tablets with the agreement on them. The commandments were written on both sides of the stone, front and back. 16God himself made the stones, and God himself wrote the commandments on them.

17Joshua heard the noise from the party in camp. He said to Moses, “It sounds like war down in the camp!”

18Moses answered, “It is not the noise of an army shouting for victory. And it is not the noise of an army crying from defeat. The noise I hear is the sound of music.a"

19When Moses came near the camp, he saw the golden calf and the people dancing. He became very angry, and he threw the stone tablets on the ground. The stones broke into several pieces at the bottom of the mountain. 20Then Moses destroyed the calf that the people had made. He melted it in the fire. Then he ground the gold until it became dust and threw it into the water. Then he forced the Israelites to drink that water.

21Moses said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you that would make you do this? Why did you lead them to do such a terrible sin?”

22Aaron answered, “Don’t be angry, sir. You know that these people are always ready to do wrong. 23The people said to me, ‘Moses led us out of Egypt, but we don’t know what has happened to him. So make us some gods to lead us.’ 24So I told the people, ‘If you have any gold rings, then give them to me.’ The people gave me their gold. I threw the gold into the fire, and out of the fire came this calf!”

25Moses saw that Aaron had let the people get out of control. They were being wild, and all their enemies could see them acting like fools. 26So Moses stood at the entrance to the camp and said, “Anyone who wants to follow the L ORD should come to me.” Everyone from the tribe of Levi ran to Moses.

27Then Moses said to them, “I will tell you what the L ORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Every man must get his sword and go from one end of the camp to the other. You men must kill [those who are against the L ORD], even if they are your brothers, friends, or neighbors.’ ”

28The people from the tribe of Levi obeyed Moses. That day about 3000 of the people died. 29Then Moses said, “Take your role today as special servants of the L ORD because you were willing to fight against even your own sons and brothers. You will receive a blessing for this.”b

30The next morning Moses told the people, “You have committed a terrible sin! But now I will go up to the L ORD, and maybe I can do something so that he will forgive you for your sin.” 31So Moses went back to the L ORD and said, “Please listen! These people committed a terrible sin and made a god from gold. 32Now, forgive them of this sin. If you will not forgive them, then erase my name from your book.c”

33But the L ORD said to Moses, “The only people I erase from my book are those who sin against me. 34So now, go down and lead the people where I tell you to go. My angel will go before you and lead you. When the time comes to punish those who sinned, they will be punished.”

35So the L ORD caused a terrible sickness to come to the people. He did this because the priests came from the firstborn sons; after this time, they came from the sons of Aaron of the tribe of Levi.

b 32:29 Take your role … blessing for this This seems to be the point when the priesthood changed. Before this time, the priests came from the firstborn sons; after this time, they came from the sons of Aaron of the tribe of Levi.

I Will Not Go With You

Then the Lord said to Moses, “You and the people you brought out of Egypt must leave this place. Go to the land that I promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I promised them that I would give that land to their descendants. So I will send an angel to go before you, and I will defeat the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. I will force them to leave your land. So go to the land filled with many good things, but I will not go with you. You people are very stubborn. If I go with you, I might destroy you along the way.”

The people heard this bad news and became very sad, so they stopped wearing jewelry. This was because the Lord said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stubborn people. I might destroy you even if I travel with you only a short time. So take off all your jewelry while I decide what to do with you.’” So the Israelites stopped wearing their jewelry at Mount Horeb.

The Temporary Meeting Tent

Moses used to take a tent a short way outside the camp. He called it “the meeting tent.” Anyone who wanted to ask something from the Lord would go to the meeting tent outside the camp. Any time Moses went out to the tent, all the people watched him. They stood at the entrance of their tents and watched Moses until he entered the meeting tent. Whenever Moses went into the tent, the tall cloud would come down and stay at the entrance to the tent. And the Lord would speak with Moses.

In this way the Lord spoke to Moses face to face like a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would go back to the camp, but his helper, Joshua son of Nun, always stayed in the tent.

Moses Sees the Glory of the Lord

Moses said to the Lord, “You told me to lead these people, but you did not say who you would send with me. You said to me, ‘I know you very well, and I am pleased with you.’ If I have really pleased you, then teach me your ways. I want to know you. Then I can continue to please you. Remember that these people are your nation.”

The Lord answered, “I myself will go with you. I will lead you.”

Then Moses said to him, “If you don’t go with us, then don’t make us leave this place. Also, how will we know if you are pleased with me and these people? If you go with us, we will know for sure. If you don’t go with us, these people and I will be no different from any other people on the earth.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will do what you ask. I will do this because I am pleased with you and because I know you very well.”

Then Moses said, “Now, please show me your Glory.”

Then the Lord answered, “I will show my love and mercy to anyone I want to. So I will cause my perfect goodness to pass by in front of you, and I will speak my name, YAHWEH, so that you can hear it. But you cannot see my face. No one can see me and continue to live.”

Then the Lord said, “Here is a place for you to stand by me on this large rock. I will put you in a large crack in that rock. Then I will cover you with my hand, and my Glory will pass by. Then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back. But you will not see my face.”

The New Stone Tablets

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make two more stone tablets like the first two that were broken. I will
write the same words on these stones that were written on the first two stones. 2 Be ready tomorrow morning and come up on Mount Sinai. Stand before me there on the top of the mountain. 3 No one will be allowed to come with you. No one should even be seen anywhere on the mountain. Even your herds of animals or flocks of sheep will not be allowed to eat grass at the bottom of the mountain.”

4 So Moses made two more stone tablets like the first ones. Early the next morning Moses went up Mount Sinai, just as the Lord had commanded. Moses carried the two stone tablets with him. 5 Then the Lord came down to him in a cloud, stood there with Moses, and spoke his own name. 6 That is, the Lord passed in front of Moses and said, “Yahweh, the Lord, is a kind and merciful God. He is slow to become angry. He is full of great love. He can be trusted. 7 He shows his faithful love to thousands of people. 8 He forgives people for the wrong things they do, but he does not forget to punish guilty people. Not only will he punish the guilty people, but their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren will also suffer for the bad things these people do.”

8 Then Moses quickly bowed to the ground and worshiped the Lord. Moses said, 9 “Lord, if you are pleased with me, please go with us. I know that these are stubborn people, but forgive us for the bad things we did. Accept us as your people.”

10 Then the Lord said, “I am making this agreement with all of your people. I will do amazing things that have never before been done for any other nation on earth. The people with you will see that I, the Lord, am very great. They will see the wonderful things that I will do for you. 11 Obey what I command you today, and I will force your enemies to leave your land. I will force out the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. 12 Be careful! Don’t make any agreement with the people who live in the land where you are going. If you make an agreement with them, it will bring you trouble. 13 So destroy their altars, break the stones they worship, and cut down their idols. 14 Don’t worship any other god. I am Yahweh Kanah—the jealous Lord. That is my name. I hate for my people to worship other gods. 15 Be careful not to make any agreements with the people who live in that land. If you do this, you might join them when they worship their gods. They will invite you to join them, and you will eat their sacrifices. 16 You might choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons. Those daughters serve false gods. They might lead your sons to do the same thing.

17 Don’t make idols.

18 “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven days, eat the bread made without yeast as I commanded you before. Do this during the month I have chosen, the month of Abib, because that is the month you came out of Egypt.

19 “A woman’s first baby always belongs to me. Even the first animals that are born from your cattle or sheep belong to me. 20 If you want to keep a donkey that is the first born, then you can buy it with a lamb. But if you don’t buy that donkey with a lamb, you must break the donkey’s neck. You must buy back all of your firstborn sons from me. No one should come before me without a gift.

21 “You will work for six days, but on the seventh day you must rest. You must rest even during the times of planting and harvesting.

22 “Celebrate the Festival of Harvest. Use the first grain from the wheat harvest for this festival. And in the fall celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

23 “Three times each year all your men must go to be with the Lord God, the God of Israel.

24 When you go into your land, I will
force your enemies out of that land. I will expand your borders—you will get more and more land. You will go before the LORD your God three times each year. At that time no one will try to take your land from you.

25“When you kill an animal and offer its blood as a sacrifice, you must not include anything that has yeast in it. 

“Don’t let any of the meat from the Passover meal remain until morning.

26“Give the Lord the very first crops that you harvest. Bring them to the house of the LORD your God.

“Never cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

27Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write everything that I have told you. This is the agreement that I made with you and the Israelites.”

28Moses stayed there with the LORD for 40 days and 40 nights. Moses did not eat any food or drink any water. And he wrote the words of the agreement (the Ten Commandments) on the two stone tablets.

Moses’ Shining Face

29When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he carried the two stone tablets of the agreement. Because he had talked with the Lord, his face was shining, but he did not know it. 30Aaron and all the people of Israel saw that Moses’ face was shining bright. So they were afraid to go near him. 31But Moses called to them. So Aaron and all the leaders of the people went to him. Moses talked with them. After that all the Israelites came near Moses, and he gave them the commands that the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

32When Moses finished speaking to the people, he put a covering over his face. 34Any time Moses went before the LORD to speak with him, Moses took off the covering. Then Moses would come out and tell the Israelites what the Lord commanded. 35The people would see that Moses’ face was shining bright, so he would cover his face again. He kept his face covered until the next time he went in to speak with the Lord.

Rules About the Sabbath

35Moses gathered all the Israelites together and said to them, “I will tell you what the LORD has commanded you to do:

2“There are six days for working, but the seventh day will be a very special day of rest for you. You will honor the LORD by resting on that special day. Anyone who works on the seventh day must be killed. 3On the Sabbath you should not even light a fire in any of the places where you live.”

Things for the Holy Tent

4Moses said to all the Israelites, “This is what the LORD commanded: 5Gather special gifts for the LORD. Each of you should decide in your heart what you will give. And then you should bring that gift to the LORD. Bring gold, silver, and bronze; 6blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen; goat hair; 7ram skins dyed red and fine leather; acacia wood; 8oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and spices for the sweet-smelling incense. 9Also, bring onyx stones and other jewels to be put on the ephod and the judgment pouch.

10“All of you who are skilled workers should make all the things the LORD commanded: 11the Holy Tent, its outer tent, and its covering; the hooks, boards, braces, posts, and bases; 12the Holy Box, its poles, the mercy-cover, and the curtain that covers the area where the Box stays; 13the table and its poles, all the things on the table, and the special bread on the table; 14the lampstand that is used for light and the things used with the lampstand, the lamps, and oil for the light; 15the altar for burning incense and its poles; the anointing oil and the sweet-smelling incense; the curtain that covers the door at the entrance to the Holy Tent; 16the altar for burning offerings and its bronze grating, the poles, and all the things used

a 34:26 house The “Holy Tent” where the people went to meet with God. See Ex. 25:8, 9.
at the altar; the bronze bowl and its base; 17the curtains around the yard, their posts and bases, and the curtain that covers the entrance to the yard; 18the pegs used to support the Tent and the wall of curtains around the courtyard, and the ropes that tie to the pegs; 19and the special woven clothes for the priest to wear in the Holy Place. These are the special clothes for Aaron the priest and his sons to wear when they serve as priests.”

The Great Offering From the People
20Then all the Israelites went away from Moses. 21All the people who wanted to give came and brought a gift to the LORD. These gifts were used for making the Meeting Tent, everything in the Tent, and the special clothes. 22All the men and women who wanted to give brought gold jewelry of all kinds. They brought pins, a earrings, rings, and other jewelry. They all gave their jewelry as a special offering to the LORD.

23Everyone who had fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn brought it to the Lord. Anyone who had goat hair or ram skins dyed red or fine leather brought it to the Lord. 24Everyone who wanted to give silver or bronze brought that as a gift to the Lord. Everyone who had acacia wood came and gave it to the Lord. 25Every skilled woman made fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn. 26All the women who were skilled and wanted to help made cloth from the goat hair.

27The leaders brought onyx stones and other jewels. These stones and jewels were put on the ephod and judgment pouch of the priest. 28The people also brought spices and olive oil. These things were used for the sweet-smelling incense, the anointing oil, and the oil for the lamps.

29All the Israelites who wanted to help brought gifts to the LORD. They gave these gifts freely, because they wanted to. These gifts were used to make everything the LORD had commanded Moses and the people to make.

Bezalel and Oholiab
30Then Moses said to the Israelites, “Look, the LORD has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, from the tribe of Judah. (Uri was the son of Hur.) 31And he has filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God—he gave Bezalel special skill and knowledge to do all kinds of things. 32He can design and make things with gold, silver, and bronze. 33He can cut and set stones and jewels. He can work with wood and make all kinds of things. 34The Lord has given Bezalel and Oholiab special skills to teach other people. (Oholiab was the son of Ahisamach from the tribe of Dan.) 35He has given both of these men special skills to do all kinds of work. They are able to do the work of carpenters and metalworkers. They can weave cloth with designs in it from blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen. And they are able to weave things with wool.

36“So Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the other skilled men must do the work the LORD has commanded. The LORD has given these men the wisdom and understanding to do all the skilled work needed to build this holy place.”

Then Moses called Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the other skilled men who the LORD had given special skills to. And they came because they wanted to help with the work. 5Moses gave them everything the Israelites had brought as gifts, and they used these things to build the holy place. The people continued to bring gifts each morning. 4Finally, all the skilled workers left the work they were doing on the holy place, and they went to speak to Moses. They said, “The people have brought too much. We have more than we need to finish the work the LORD told us to do.”

Then Moses sent this message throughout the camp: “No man or woman should make anything else as a gift for the holy place.” So the people were forced to stop giving more. 7The people had brought
more than enough things to finish the work of building God’s holy place.

The Holy Tent

8 Then the skilled workers began making the Holy Tent. They made the ten curtains from fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn. And they sewed pictures of Cherub angels with wings into the curtains. 9 Each curtain was the same size—28 cubits long and 4 cubits wide. 10 The workers joined the curtains together into two groups of curtains. They joined five curtains together to make one group and five curtains together to make the other group. 11 Then they used blue cloth to make loops along the edge of the end curtain of one group. And they did the same on the end curtain in the other group. 12 There were 50 loops on the end curtain in one group and 50 loops on the end curtain in the other group. The loops were opposite each other. 13 Then they made 50 gold rings to join the two curtains together. So the Holy Tent was joined together into one piece.

14 Then the workers made another tent to cover the Holy Tent. They used goat hair to make eleven curtains. 15 All the curtains were the same size—30 cubits long and 4 cubits wide. 16 The workers joined five curtains together into one group and six curtains together into another group. 17 They put 50 loops along the edge of the end curtain of one group. And they did the same on the end curtain of the other group. 18 Then they made 50 bronze rings to join the two groups of curtains together. 19 They did the same on the end of the other group. 20 The workers made 50 bronze rings to join the two groups of curtains together to form one tent. 21 Then they made two more coverings for the Holy Tent. One covering was made from ram skins dyed red. The other covering was made from fine leather.

22 Then the workers made frames from acacia wood to support the Holy Tent. 23 Each frame was 10 cubits long and 1 1/2 cubits wide. 24 There were two side poles joined together with cross pieces to make each frame. Every frame for the Holy Tent was made the same. 25 They made 20 frames for the south side of the Holy Tent. 26 Then they made 40 silver bases for the frames. There were two bases for each frame—one base for each side pole. 27 They also made 20 frames for the other side (the north side) of the Holy Tent. 28 They made 40 silver bases for the frames—two bases for each frame. 29 They made six more frames for the back (the west side) of the Holy Tent. 30 They also made two frames for the corners at the back of the Holy Tent. 31 These frames were joined together at the bottom. And at the top a ring held the corner frames together. They did the same for both corners. 32 There were eight frames for the west side of the Holy Tent. And there were 16 silver bases—two bases for each frame.

33 Then the workers used acacia wood to make the braces for the frames—five braces for the first side of the Holy Tent, 34 five braces for the other side, and five braces for the back of the Holy Tent (that is, the west side). 35 They made the middle brace so that it passed through the frames from one end to the other. 36 They covered these frames with gold. Then they used gold to make the rings to hold the braces, and they covered the braces with gold.

37 They used fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn to make the special curtain for the entrance to the Most Holy Place. And they sewed pictures of Cherub angels into the curtain. 38 They made four posts using acacia wood, and they covered the posts with gold. Then they made gold hooks for the posts and four silver bases for the posts. 39 Then they made the curtain to cover the entrance to the Tent. They used blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen to make this curtain. And they wove pictures into it. 40 Then they made the five posts and the hooks for this curtain over the entrance. They covered the tops of the posts and the curtain rods with gold. And

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a 36:9 28 cubits = 47’ 7 3/8” (14.5 m).
b 36:9 4 cubits = 6’ 9 5/8” (2.1 m). Also in verse 15.
c 36:15 30 cubits = 51’ 3/16” (15.55 m).
d 36:21 10 cubits = 17’ 1/16” (5.18 m).
e 36:21 1 1/2 cubits = 30 5/8” (77.75 cm). Also in 37:1.
f 36:38 curtain rods Or “fasteners.”
they made the five bronze bases for the posts.

The Box of the Agreement

Bezalel made the Holy Box from acacia wood. The Box was 2 1/2 cubits long, 1 1/2 cubits wide, and 1 1/2 cubits high. He covered the inside and outside of the Box with pure gold. Then he put gold trim around the Box. He made four rings of gold and put them on the four corners. These rings were used for carrying the Box. There were two rings on each side. Then he made the poles for carrying the Box. He used acacia wood and covered the poles with pure gold. He put the poles through the rings on each side of the Box. Then he made the mercy-cover from pure gold. It was 2 1/2 cubits long and 1 1/2 cubits wide. Then Bezalel hammered gold to make two Cherub angels. He put the Cherub angels on each end of the mercy-cover. He put one angel on one end and the other angel on the other end. The angels were joined together with the mercy-cover to make one piece. The wings of the angels were spread up toward the sky. The angels covered the Box with their wings and faced each other, looking toward the mercy-cover.

The Special Table

Then he made the table from acacia wood. The table was 2 cubits long, 1 cubit wide, and 1 1/2 cubits high. He covered it with pure gold and put gold trim around it. Then he made a frame 1 handbreadth wide around the table. He put gold trim on the frame. Then he made four gold rings and put them at the four corners of the table, where the four legs were. He put the rings close to the frame. The rings were to hold the poles used to carry the table. Then he used acacia wood to make the poles for carrying the table. He covered the poles with pure gold. Then he made everything that was used on the table. He made the plates, the spoons, the bowls, and the pitchers from pure gold. The bowls and pitchers are used for pouring the drink offerings.

The Lampstand

Then he made the lampstand. He used pure gold and hammered it to make the base and the shaft. Then he made flowers, buds, and petals and joined everything together into one piece. The lampstand had six branches—three branches on one side and three branches on the other side. Each branch had three flowers on it. These flowers were made like almond flowers with buds and petals. The shaft of the lampstand had four more flowers. They were also made like almond flowers with buds and petals. There were six branches—three branches coming out from each side of the shaft. And there was a flower with buds and petals below each of the three places where the branches joined the shaft. The whole lampstand, with the flowers and branches, was made from pure gold. All this gold was hammered and joined together into one piece. He made seven lamps for this lampstand. Then he made lamp snuffers and trays from pure gold. He used 75 pounds of pure gold to make the lampstand and the things used with it.

The Altar for Burning Incense

He made the altar for burning incense from acacia wood. The altar was square. It was 1 cubit long, 1 cubit wide, and 2 cubits high. There were four horns on the altar. There was one horn on each corner. These horns were joined together with the altar to make one piece. He covered the top, all the sides, and the horns with pure gold. Then he put gold trim around the altar. He made two gold rings for the altar. He put the gold rings below the trim on each side of the altar. These gold rings held the poles for carrying the altar. He made the base and the shaft. Or “flared base.”

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poles from acacia wood and covered them with gold.

29 Then he made the holy anointing oil. He also made the pure, sweet-smelling incense. These things were made the same way that a perfume maker would make them.

The Altar for Burning Offerings

38 Then Bezalel used acacia wood to build the altar. This was the altar used for burning offerings. The altar was square. It was 5 cubits\(^a\) long, 5 cubits wide, and 3 cubits\(^b\) high. 2 He made a horn for each of the four corners of the altar. He joined each horn to its corner so that everything was one piece. He covered the altar with bronze. 3 Then he used bronze to make all the tools to be used on the altar. He made the pots, shovels, bowls, forks, and pans. 4 Then he made a bronze grating for the altar. This grating was shaped like a net. The grating was put under the ledge at the bottom of the altar. It went halfway up into the altar from below. 5 Then he made bronze rings to hold the poles for carrying the altar. He put the rings at the four corners of the grating. 6 Then he used acacia wood to make the poles and covered them with bronze. 7 He put the poles through the rings on the sides of the altar to carry it. He used boards to make the sides of the altar. It was hollow, like an empty box.

8 He made the bowl and its base with bronze. He used the bronze mirrors that the women gave. These were the women who served at the entrance to the Meeting Tent.

The Courtyard Around the Holy Tent

9 Then he made a wall of curtains around the courtyard. On the south side, he made a wall of curtains 100 cubits\(^c\) long. The curtains were made from fine linen. 10 The curtains on the south side were supported by 20 posts. The posts were on 20 bronze bases. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods\(^d\) were made from silver.

11 The north side of the courtyard also had a wall of curtains 100 cubits long. There were 20 posts with 20 bronze bases. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods were made from silver.

12 On the west side of the courtyard the wall of curtains was 50 cubits\(^e\) long. There were 10 posts and 10 bases. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods were made from silver.

13 The east side of the courtyard was 50 cubits wide. The entrance to the courtyard was on this side. 14 On one side of the entrance the wall of curtains was 15 cubits\(^f\) long. There were three posts and three bases on this side. 15 The wall of curtains on the other side of the entrance was also 15 cubits long. There were three posts and three bases on that side. 16 All the curtains around the courtyard were made from fine linen. 17 The bases for the posts were made from bronze. The hooks and the curtain rods were made from silver. The tops of the posts were covered with silver also. All the posts in the courtyard had silver curtain rods.

18 The curtain for the entrance of the courtyard was made from fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn. Designs were woven into that curtain. The curtain was 20 cubits\(^g\) long and 5 cubits high. It was the same height as the curtains around the courtyard. 19 The curtain was supported by four posts and four bronze bases. The hooks on the posts were made from silver. The tops on the posts were covered with silver, and the curtain rods were also made from silver. 20 All the tent pegs for the Holy Tent and for the curtains around the courtyard were made from bronze.

21 Moses commanded the Levites to write down everything that was used to make the Holy Tent, that is, the Tent of the Agreement. Ithamar son of Aaron was in charge of keeping the list.

22 Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur,
from the tribe of Judah, made everything the Lord commanded Moses. Also Oholiab son of Ahisamach, from the tribe of Dan, helped him. Oholiab was a skilled worker and designer. He was skilled at weaving fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn.

The people gave over a ton of gold as an offering to the Lord for his holy place. (This was weighed using the official measure.)

All the men 20 years old or older were counted. Each man had to pay a tax of 1 beka of silver. (Using the official measure, 1 beka is 1/5 of an ounce.) There were 603,550 men. So they collected about 7550 pounds of silver.

They used most of the silver to make 100 bases for the Holy Tent and its curtains, 75 pounds for each base.

They used the remaining 44 pounds of silver to make the hooks, the curtain rods, and the silver covers for the posts.

They gave more than 2 1/2 tons of bronze. That bronze was used to make the bases at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. They also used the bronze to make the altar and the bronze grating. And the bronze was used to make all the tools and dishes for the altar.

The Priests’ Special Clothes

The workers used the blue, purple, and red yarn to make special clothes for the priests to wear when they served in the holy place. They also made the special clothes for Aaron as the Lord commanded Moses.

The Ephod

They made the shoulder pieces for the ephod. They tied these shoulder pieces to the two corners of the ephod.

They wove the cloth belt and fastened it to the ephod. It was made the same way as the ephod—they used gold thread, fine linen, and blue, purple, and red yarn, just as the Lord commanded Moses.

The Judgment Pouch

Then they made the judgment pouch. It was the work of a skilled person, just like the ephod. It was made from gold threads, fine linen, and blue, purple, and red yarn.

The judgment pouch was folded in half to make a square pocket. It was 1 span long and 1 span wide. Then the workers put four rows of beautiful jewels on the judgment pouch. The first row had a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl.

The second row had a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald.

The third row had a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst.

The fourth row had a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. All these jewels were set in gold.

There were twelve jewels on the judgment pouch—one jewel for each of the sons of Israel. Each stone had the name of one of the sons of Israel carved onto it, like a seal.

The workers made two chains from pure gold for the judgment pouch. The chains were braided like a rope. The workers made two gold rings and fastened them to two corners of the judgment

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pouch. Then they made two gold settings for the shoulder pieces. Then they fastened the gold chains to the rings at the corners of the judgment pouch. They fastened the other ends of the gold chains to the settings on the shoulder pieces. They fastened these to the front of the ephod. Then they made two more gold rings and put them on the other two corners of the judgment pouch. This was on the inside edge of the judgment pouch next to the ephod. They also put two gold rings on the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod. These rings were near the fastener, just above the cloth belt. Then they used a blue ribbon and tied the rings of the judgment pouch to the rings of the ephod. In this way the judgment pouch would rest close to the cloth belt and would be held tight against the ephod. They did everything just as the Lord commanded.

Other Clothes for the Priests

Then they made the robe for the ephod from blue cloth. It was woven by a skilled worker. They made a hole in the center of the robe and sewed a piece of cloth around the edge of this hole. This cloth kept the hole from tearing. Then they used fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn to make the cloth pomegranates. They hung these pomegranates around the bottom edge of the robe. Then they made bells from pure gold. They hung these bells around the bottom edge of the robe between the pomegranates. Around the bottom edge of the robe there were bells and pomegranates. There was a bell following each pomegranate. This robe was for the priest to wear when he served the Lord. It was made just as the Lord commanded Moses. Skilled workers wove shirts for Aaron and his sons. These shirts were made from fine linen. And the workers made a turban from fine linen. They also used fine linen to make cloth caps and underclothes. Then they made the cloth belt from fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn. Designs were sewn into the cloth. These things were made as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Then they made a strip of pure gold for the holy crown. They carved these words into the gold like the writing on a seal: Holy to the Lord. Then they fastened the gold strip to a blue ribbon. Then they tied the blue ribbon around the turban like the Lord had commanded Moses.

Moses Inspects the Holy Tent

So all the work on the Holy Tent, that is, the Meeting Tent, was finished. The Israelites did everything just as the Lord had commanded Moses. Then they showed the Holy Tent and everything in it to Moses. They showed him the rings, the frames, the braces, the posts, and the bases. They showed him the covering of the Tent that was made from ram skins dyed red and the covering that was made from fine leather. And they showed him the curtain that covered the entrance to the Most Holy Place.

They showed Moses the Box of the Agreement, the poles used for carrying it, and the mercy-cover. They showed him the table with everything on it and the special bread. They showed him the pure gold lampstand and the lamps on it, the oil, and all the other things that were used with the lamps. They showed Moses the golden altar, the anointing oil, the sweet-smelling incense, and the curtain that covered the entrance to the Tent. They showed him the bronze altar, the bronze screen, the poles used for carrying the altar, and everything that was used on the altar. They showed him the bowl and the base under the bowl.

They showed Moses the wall of curtains around the courtyard with the posts and bases. They showed him the curtain

 Holy to the Lord These words were written on everything that was used in the Temple. This showed that these things belonged to the Lord, and that they could be used only for special purposes. Dishes with this label could be used only by the priests in a holy place.

 special bread Also called “bread of the Presence.” Every day this bread was put before God on the special table in the Holy Place.
that covered the entrance to the courtyard. They showed him the ropes and the tent pegs. They showed him everything in the Holy Tent, that is, the Meeting Tent.

41 Then they showed Moses the clothes that were made for the priests serving in the holy area.  They showed him the special clothes for Aaron the priest and his sons to wear when they served as priests.

42 The Israelites did all this work exactly as the LORD had commanded Moses. Moses looked closely at all the work and saw that it was done exactly as the LORD had commanded. So Moses blessed them.

**Moses Sets Up the Holy Tent**

40 Then the LORD said to Moses,

1 “On the first day of the first month, set up the Holy Tent, that is, the Meeting Tent. 2 Put the Box of the Agreement in the Holy Tent. Cover the Box with the curtain. 3 Then bring in the table. Put the things on the table that should be there. Then put the lampstand in the Tent. Put the lamps on the lampstand in the right places. 4 Put the golden altar for offering incense in the Tent in front of the Box of the Agreement. Then put the curtain at the entrance to the Holy Tent.

6 “Put the altar for burning offerings in front of the entrance of the Holy Tent, that is, the Meeting Tent. 7 Put the bowl between the Meeting Tent and the altar. Put water in the bowl. 8 Set up the wall of curtains around the courtyard. Then put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard.

9 “Use the anointing oil and anoint the Holy Tent and everything in it. When you put the oil on these things, you will make them holy. 10 Anoint the altar for burning offerings. Anoint everything on the altar. You will make the altar holy. It will be very holy. 11 Then anoint the bowl and the base under it to make these things holy.

12 “Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Wash them with water. 13 Then put the special clothes on Aaron. Anoint him with the oil and make him holy. Then he can serve me as a priest. 14 Then put the clothes on his sons. 15 Anoint the sons in the same way you anointed their father. Then they can also serve me as priests. When you anoint them, they will become priests. That family will continue to be priests for all time to come.” 16 Moses obeyed the Lord. He did everything that the LORD commanded him.

17 So the Holy Tent was set up at the right time. It was the first day of the first month during the second year from the time they left Egypt. 18 Moses set up the Holy Tent just as the Lord had said. He put the bases down first. Then he put the frames on the bases. Then he put the braces on and set up the posts. 19 After that Moses put the outer tent over the Holy Tent. Then he put the covering over the outer tent. He did these things just as the LORD had commanded.

20 Moses took the Agreement and put it in the Holy Box. He put the poles on the Box and put the mercy-cover on it. 21 Then Moses put the Holy Box into the Holy Tent. He hung the curtain in the right place to protect it. In this way he protected the Box of the Agreement behind the curtain just as the LORD had commanded him. 22 Then Moses put the table in the Meeting Tent on the north side of the Tent, in front of the curtain. 23 Then he put the bread on the table before the LORD. He did this just as the LORD had commanded him. 24 Then Moses put the lampstand in the Meeting Tent on the south side of the Tent, across from the table. 25 Then Moses put the lamps on the lampstand before the LORD. He did this just as the LORD had commanded him.

26 Then Moses put the golden altar in the Meeting Tent, in front of the altar. 27 Then he burned sweet-smelling incense on the altar. He did this as the LORD had commanded him. 28 Then Moses put the altar for burning offerings at the entrance to the Holy Tent.

29 Moses put the altar for burning offerings at the entrance to the Holy Tent, that
is, the Meeting Tent. Then Moses offered a burnt offering on that altar. He also offered grain offerings to the Lord. He did these things just as the Lord had commanded him.

30 Then Moses put the bowl between the Meeting Tent and the altar. He put water in the bowl for washing. 31 Moses, Aaron, and Aaron’s sons used this bowl to wash their hands and feet. 32 They washed themselves every time they entered the Meeting Tent. They also washed themselves every time they went near the altar. They did these things just as the Lord commanded Moses.

33 Then Moses set up the curtains around the courtyard of the Holy Tent. He put the altar in the courtyard. Then he put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. So he finished all the work.

The Glory of the Lord

34 Then the cloud covered the Meeting Tent and the Glory of the Lord filled the Holy Tent. 35 Moses could not go into the Meeting Tent because the cloud had settled on it, and the Glory of the Lord had filled the Holy Tent.

36 When the cloud rose from the Holy Tent, the Israelites would begin to travel. 37 But when the cloud stayed on the Holy Tent, the people did not try to move. They stayed in that place until the cloud rose. 38 So the cloud of the Lord was over the Holy Tent during the day, and at night there was a fire in the cloud. So all the Israelites could see the cloud while they traveled.
Voluntary Sacrifices and Offerings

1 So the Lord called out to Moses from inside the Meeting Tent and said,
2 “Tell the Israelites: When you bring an offering to the Lord, the offering must be one of your tame animals—it can be a sheep, a goat, or one of your cattle.

3 If you offer one of your cattle as a burnt offering, it must be a bull that has nothing wrong with it. You must take the animal to the entrance of the Meeting Tent where the Lord will accept the offering. 4 You must put your hand on the animal’s head while it is being killed. So the Lord will accept it as your burnt offering to make you pure.

5 You must kill the young bull in front of the Lord. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, will bring the blood to the altar that is near the entrance of the Meeting Tent. He will splash the blood on all four sides of the altar. 6 You must remove the skin from that animal and then cut the animal into pieces. 7 Aaron’s sons, the priests, will put the fire on the altar and arrange the wood on the fire. 8 They will lay the pieces of the animal, including the head and fat, on top of the burning wood. 9 You must wash the legs and inner parts of the animal with water. Then the priest will bring all these parts to the altar to be offered as a burnt offering, a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord.

10 If you offer a sheep or a goat as a burnt offering, it must be a male that has nothing wrong with it. 11 You must kill the animal on the north side of the altar in front of the Lord. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, will splash the animal’s blood on all four sides of the altar. 12 You must cut the animal into pieces and remove the head and the fat. The priest will then lay them on the wood that is on the fire of the altar. 13 You must wash the legs and inner parts of the animal with water. Then the priest will bring all these parts to the altar to be offered as a burnt offering, a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord.

14 If you offer a bird as a burnt offering to the Lord, that bird must be a dove or a young pigeon. 15 The priest will bring the offering to the altar. There the priest will remove the bird’s head, drain out the blood on the side of the altar, and burn the bird on the altar. 16 He will remove the bird’s tail and inner parts and throw them onto the pile of ashes east of the altar.

Grain Offerings

1 When you give a grain offering to the Lord, your offering must be made from fine flour. You must pour oil on this flour and put frankincense on it. 2 Then you must bring it to Aaron’s sons, the priests. One of them will take a handful of the fine flour with oil and frankincense in it. He will bring this part, which represents the whole grain offering, to the altar. There it will be burned up as a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord. 3 The rest of that grain offering will belong to Aaron and his sons. This gift to the Lord is very holy.

Baked Grain Offerings

4 If you give a grain offering that was baked in the oven, it must be unleavened
bread made from fine flour mixed with oil, or it must be wafers with oil poured over them. If you bring a grain offering cooked in a baking pan, it must be made from fine flour without yeast and mixed with oil. You must break it into pieces and pour oil over it. It is a grain offering. If you bring a grain offering cooked in a frying pan, it must be made from fine flour mixed with oil.

“When you bring grain offerings made from these things to the Lord, you must give them to the priest, and he will take them to the altar. Then the priest will take part of the grain offering and lift it up as a memorial offering. He will bring it to the altar to be burned up as a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord. The rest of that grain offering will belong to Aaron and his sons. This gift to the Lord is very holy.

“You must not give any grain offering to the Lord that has yeast in it. You must not burn yeast or honey as a gift to the Lord. You may bring yeast and honey to the Lord as an offering from the first harvest, but they must not be put on the altar to be burned as a sweet smell. Also, you must put salt on every grain offering you bring. You must not forget to add salt, because it represents God’s agreement with you. Always put salt on these offerings.

**Grain Offerings From the First Harvest**

“If you bring a grain offering from the first harvest to the Lord, you must bring roasted heads of grain. They must be crushed heads of fresh grain. This will be your grain offering from the first harvest. You must put oil and frankincense on it. It is a grain offering. The priest must burn part of the crushed grain, the oil, and all the frankincense on it as a memorial offering. It is a gift to the Lord.

**Fellowship Offerings**

“If you offer one of your cattle as a fellowship offering, it can be a bull or a cow. But the animal you offer to the Lord must have nothing wrong with it. You must put your hand on the animal’s head and kill the animal at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, will splash the blood on all four sides of the altar. The priest will take a part of that fellowship offering as a gift to the Lord. He will take the fat that is over and around the inner parts. He will take the two kidneys and the fat covering them near the lower back muscle. He will also remove the fat part of the liver that is near the kidneys. Then Aaron’s sons will bring the fat to the altar and put it on the burnt offering that is on the wood on the fire. It is a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord.

“If you offer a sheep or a goat as a fellowship offering to the Lord, whether it is a male or a female, it must have nothing wrong with it. If you bring a lamb as an offering to the Lord, you must put your hand on the animal’s head and kill it in front of the Meeting Tent. Then Aaron’s sons will splash the animal’s blood on all four sides of the altar. The priest will take part of the fellowship offering to the altar as a gift to the Lord. The priest must cut off the tail close to the backbone. Then he will offer the tail with all its fat and the fat that is over and around the animal’s inner parts. He will also offer the two kidneys and the fat covering them near the lower back muscles. He will also offer the fat part of the liver. He must remove it with the kidneys. Then the priest will take that part to the altar to be burned up as food, a gift to the Lord.

“If the offering is a goat, you must bring it before the Lord. You must put your hand on the goat’s head and kill it in front of the Meeting Tent. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, must splash the goat’s blood on all four sides of the altar. The priest will give part of the fellowship offering as a gift to the Lord. He will offer the fat that is over and around the animal’s inner parts. He will offer the two kidneys and the fat covering them near the lower back muscles. He will also offer the fat part of the liver. He will remove it with the kidneys. Then the priest will bring
that food as a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord. The fat belongs to the Lord. 17 This rule will continue forever through all your generations. Wherever you live, you must never eat fat or blood.”

Offerings for Accidental Sins

4 The Lord spoke to Moses and said, 2 “Tell the Israelites this: A person might sin without meaning to and do something that the Lord commanded should not be done. For example:

3 If the anointed priest\(^a\) makes a mistake that leaves the people guilty for their sin, he must offer a young bull to the Lord as a sin offering. The bull must have nothing wrong with it. 4 The anointed priest must bring the bull to the entrance of the Meeting Tent in front of the Lord. He must put his hand on the bull’s head and kill the bull in front of the Lord. 5 Then the anointed priest must get some of the blood from the bull and take it into the Meeting Tent. 6 He must put his finger in the blood and sprinkle the blood seven times before the Lord in front of the curtain of the Most Holy Place. 7 The priest must put some of the blood on the corners of the incense altar. (This altar is inside the Meeting Tent, in front of the Lord.) He must pour out the rest of the bull’s blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. (This altar is at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.) 8 Then the priest must take all the fat from the bull of the sin offering. He must take the fat that is on and around the inner parts. 9 He must take the two kidneys and the fat covering them near the lower back muscle. He must also take the fat part of the liver. He must remove it with the kidneys. 10 The priest must lift up these things and burn them on the altar for burnt offerings, just as he does for the fellowship offering. \(^b\) 11–12 But the priest must carry out the bull’s skin, inner parts and body waste, and all the meat, including the head and legs. He must carry those parts outside the camp to the special place where the ashes are poured out. He must put those parts on the wood and burn them there on the ash pile.

13 “The whole nation of Israel might sin without knowing it. They might break one of the commands of the Lord and become guilty of doing something he said must not be done. 14 When they learn about that sin, the community of Israel must offer a young bull as a sin offering for the whole nation. They must bring the bull to the Meeting Tent. 15 The elders of the people must put their hands on the bull’s head in front of the Lord. Then they must kill the bull in front of the Lord. 16 The anointed priest must get some of the bull’s blood and take it into the Meeting Tent. 17 He must put his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times in front of the curtain before the Lord. 18 He must put some of the blood on the corners of the altar. (This altar is inside the Meeting Tent, in front of the Lord.) He must then pour out all the blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. (This altar is at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.) 19 Then he must take all the fat from the animal and bring it to the altar. 20 He must offer these parts, just as he offered the bull of the sin offering. In this way the priest will make the people pure, and God will forgive them. 21 The priest must carry this bull outside the camp and burn it, just as he burned the other bull. This is the sin offering for the whole community.

22 “A ruler might sin without meaning to and break one of the commands of the Lord. He might do something that his God said must not be done. 23 If he learns about his sin, he must bring a male goat that has nothing wrong with it as his offering. 24 The ruler must put his hand on the goat’s head and kill the goat at the place where they kill the burnt offering before the Lord. The goat is a sin offering. 25 The priest will take some of the blood of the sin offering on his finger and put it on the corners of the altar of burnt offering. He will pour out the rest of the blood at the

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\(^a\) 4:3 anointed priest Special oil was poured on the priest’s head to show that God chose him to serve. Here, this refers to the high priest. Also in verse 16.

\(^b\) 4:10 just as … fellowship offering See Lev. 3:1–5.
Leviticus 5 | 115

base of the altar. 26 The priest will burn all the goat’s fat on the altar, just as he does for the fellowship offerings. In this way the priest will make the ruler pure, and God will forgive him.

27 "Finally, one of you common people might sin without meaning to. You might break one of the commands of the LORD and become guilty of doing something he said must not be done. 28 If you learn about that sin, you must bring a female goat that has nothing wrong with it as your sin offering. 29 You must put your hand on the animal’s head and kill it at the place for the burnt offering. 30 Then the priest will take some of the goat’s blood on his finger and put it on the corners of the altar of burnt offering. He will pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. 31 The priest will then remove all of its fat, just as he does for the fellowship offerings. Then he will bring it to the altar as a sweet smell to the LORD. The priest will do this to make you pure, and God will forgive you.

32 "If you bring a lamb as your sin offering, then you must bring a female lamb that has nothing wrong with it. 33 You must put your hand on the animal’s head and kill it as a sin offering in the place where people kill the burnt offering. 34 The priest will take some of the blood from the sin offering on his finger and put it on the corners of the altar of burnt offering. He will pour out the rest of the lamb’s blood at the base of the altar. 35 He will then remove all the lamb’s fat, just as he does for the fellowship offerings. Then he will bring it to the altar as a gift to the LORD. The priest will do this to make you pure, and God will forgive you.

Different Accidental Sins

5 1 "You might be called as a witness and take an oath to tell the truth. If you saw something or knew something but did not tell it, you are guilty of doing wrong and must bear the responsibility for your guilt.

2 "You might touch something unclean. It might be the dead body of any kind of animal. You might not know that you touched these things, but you will still become unclean and must pay a fine.

3 "You might touch any of the many things that can make a person unclean. You might touch something unclean, but not know about it. When you learn that you have touched something unclean, you must pay a fine.

4 "You might make a quick promise to do something—it makes no difference if it is bad or good. People make many kinds of quick promises. You might make such a promise and forget it. 5 When you remember your promise, you must pay a fine because you did not keep it. 6 If you are guilty of any of these things, you must confess whatever you did wrong. 7 Then you must bring your guilt offering to the LORD for the sin you did. You must bring a female lamb or a female goat as a sin offering. The priest will do this to make you pure from your sin.

8 "If you cannot afford a lamb, you must bring two doves or two young pigeons to the LORD. These will be the guilt offering for your sin. One bird must be for a sin offering, and the other must be for a burnt offering. 9 Take them to the priest. First, the priest will offer one bird for the sin offering. The priest will pull the bird’s head from its neck but he will not pull it off completely. 10 The priest will sprinkle the blood from the sin offering on the side of the altar. Then he will pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. 11 Then he will offer the second bird according to the rules for a burnt offering. The priest will do this to make you pure from the sin you did, and God will forgive you.

12 "If you cannot afford two doves or two pigeons, you must bring 8 cups of fine flour as your sin offering. You must not put oil or frankincense on the flour because it is a sin offering. 13 You must bring the flour to the priest. The priest will take a handful of the flour as the memorial offering and bring it to the altar as a gift to the LORD.

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It is a sin offering. 13 The priest will do this to make you pure, and God will forgive you. The part that is left will belong to the priest, just as the regular grain offering.”

14 The LORD gave this command to Moses for the people: 15 “You might promise to give something to the LORD. You might sin against me without meaning to by not giving what you promised. If you do that, you must bring a ram that has nothing wrong with it (or the same amount in silver using the official measure) as a guilt offering. 16 You must give what you promised and add one-fifth of that amount as a fine. Give it to the priest and he will use the ram to make you pure, and God will forgive you.

17 “If you sin and break any of the commands that the LORD said must not be done, you are guilty. Even if you did not know about it, you are still responsible for your sin. 18 You must bring a ram that has nothing wrong with it (or the same amount in silver) to the priest. The priest will offer the ram, and God will forgive you for the sin you did without knowing it. 19 You are guilty, and you must pay the guilt offering to the LORD.”

Guilt Offerings for Other Sins

1 The LORD told Moses these rules for the people: 2 “You are guilty of sin against the LORD when you do any of these things: when you lie about what happened to something you were taking care of for someone else; when you lie about a deposit you received; when you steal something; when you cheat someone; 3 when you find something that was lost and lie about having it; when you fail to keep a promise; or when you do any other bad things like these. 4 If you do any of these things, you are guilty of doing wrong. You must give back whatever you stole or whatever you took by cheating. You must return whatever you took that another person asked you to hold, or whatever you found and lied about having, 5 or whatever you made a false promise about. You must pay the full price and then add one-fifth of that amount as a fine and give it all to the true owner. 6 You must also bring a ram to the LORD that has nothing wrong with it (or the same amount in silver) to the priest. 7 Then the priest will go to the LORD to make you pure, and God will forgive you for whichever of these things you did that made you guilty.”

Burnt Offerings

8 The LORD said to Moses, 9 “Give this command to Aaron and his sons: This is the law of the burnt offering. The burnt offering must stay on the hearth of the altar all night until morning. The altar’s fire must be kept burning. 10 The priest must change clothes and put on the special linen underwear and linen robe. Then he must gather up the ashes from the fire and burnt offerings and set them down by the altar. 11 Then he must take off the special clothes and put on the other clothes and carry the ashes outside the camp to a special place that is pure. 12 The fire that was started on the altar must never be allowed to stop burning. Every morning the priests must put wood on the altar. They must arrange the burnt offerings on the wood, and they must burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. 13 That fire must always be kept burning on the altar. It must never be allowed to stop burning.

Grain Offerings

14 “This is the law for the grain offering: The sons of Aaron will bring it to the front of the altar as an offering to the LORD. 15 There must be some oil and frankincense on the grain offering. The priest will take a handful of fine flour from the grain offering and burn it on the altar as a sweet-smelling memorial offering to the LORD. 16 Aaron and his sons will use the rest of that grain to make bread without yeast. This must be eaten in a holy place—in the courtyard around the Meeting Tent. 17 I
have given this part of the grain offering as the priests’ share of the gifts offered to me. Like the sin offering and the guilt offering, it is most holy. It must not be baked with yeast. 18 Any male descendant of Aaron may eat from these gifts to the Lord. This is their share forever throughout your generations. Whatever touches these offerings will be made holy.

The Priests’ Grain Offering
19 The Lord said to Moses, "This is the offering that Aaron and his sons must bring to the Lord when Aaron is anointed to be the high priest. They must bring 8 cups of fine flour for a grain offering. This will be offered at the times of the daily offering—half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening. 20 The fine flour must be mixed with oil and baked on a pan. After it is cooked, you must bring it in, break it into pieces, and offer it as a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord.

21 In the future, when Aaron’s descendants take their place as the anointed priests, they will continue to make this grain offering to the Lord. This rule will continue forever. The grain offering must be completely burned for the Lord.
22 Every grain offering that a priest gives must be completely burned. It must not be eaten.”

The Law of the Sin Offering
24 The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons: This is the law of the sin offering. The sin offering must be killed in the place where they kill the burnt offerings. Then he must sprinkle the blood from the guilt offering around the altar.
25 The priest who offers the sin offering must eat it. But he must eat it in a holy place, in the courtyard around the Meeting Tent.
26 The priest who offers the sin offering must eat it. But he must eat it in a holy place, in the courtyard around the Meeting Tent.
27 Touching the meat of the sin offering makes a person or a thing holy.
28 If the sin offering was boiled in a clay pot, the pot must be broken. If the sin offering was boiled in a bronze pot, the pot must be washed and rinsed in water.
29 Any male in a priest’s family may eat the sin offering. It is very holy. 30 But if the blood of the sin offering was taken into the Meeting Tent and used in the Holy Place to make people pure, that sin offering must not be eaten. It must be completely burned in the fire.

Guilt Offerings
1 These are the rules for the guilt offering, which is very holy: 2 A priest must kill the guilt offering in the same place where they kill the burnt offerings. Then he must sprinkle the blood from the guilt offering around the altar.
3 The priest must offer all the fat from the guilt offering. He must offer the fat tail and the fat that covers the inner parts.
4 He must offer the two kidneys and the fat covering them at the lower back muscle. He must also offer the fat part of the liver. He must remove it with the kidneys.
5 He must bring these things to the altar as a gift to the Lord. It is a guilt offering.
6 Any male in a priest’s family may eat the guilt offering. It is very holy, so it must be eaten in a holy place. 7 The guilt offering is like the sin offering. The same rules are for both offerings. The priest who does the sacrificing will get the meat for food.
8 He will also get the skin from the burnt offering.
9 Every grain offering belongs to the priest who offers it. That priest will get the grain offerings that were baked in an oven, or cooked on a frying pan, or in a baking dish.
10 The grain offerings will belong to Aaron’s sons. It doesn’t make any difference if the grain offerings are dry or mixed with oil. The sons of Aaron will all share this food.

Fellowship Offerings
11 This is the law of the sacrifice of a person’s clothes, you must wash the clothes in a holy place. 28 If the sin offering was boiled in a clay pot, the pot must be broken. If the sin offering was boiled in a bronze pot, the pot must be washed and rinsed in water.
29 Any male in a priest’s family may eat the sin offering. It is very holy. 30 But if the blood of the sin offering was taken into the Meeting Tent and used in the Holy Place to make people pure, that sin offering must not be eaten. It must be completely burned in the fire.

a 6:18 Whatever ... holy Or “Whoever touches these offerings will become holy.” This might mean that anyone but the priests must die for touching the sacred food.
6:20 8 cups Literally, “1/10 of an ephah” (2.2 l).
6:22 anointed priests Special oil was poured on the priest’s head to show that God chose him to serve. Here, this refers to the high priest.
7:8 skin This was used for making leather.
fellowship offerings that you bring to the Lord:

12 People can bring fellowship offerings to show their thanks to God. If you bring your sacrifice to give thanks, you should also bring unleavened bread mixed with oil, wafers with oil poured over them, and loaves of fine flour mixed with oil. You must also bring loaves of bread made with yeast to go with your fellowship offering. 13 Offer one each of these different kinds of bread as a gift to the Lord. Then it will belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the fellowship offerings. 14 The meat of the fellowship offering must be eaten on the same day it is offered as a way of showing thanks to God. None of the meat should remain until the next morning.

15 “If you bring a fellowship offering simply because you want to give a gift to God or because it is part of a special promise you made to him, the sacrifice should be eaten the same day you offer it. But if there is any left, it must be eaten the next day. 16 If any meat from this sacrifice is still left over on the third day, it must be burned in the fire. 17 If anyone eats the meat from the fellowship offering on the third day, it will have no value for that person, and to the Lord it will be like rotten meat! Whoever eats it will be responsible for their sin.

18 “People must not eat any of the meat that touches anything unclean. They must burn this meat in the fire. Whoever is clean may eat the meat from the fellowship offering on the third day, the Lord will not accept it as a sacrifice. It will have no value for that person, and to the Lord it will be like rotten meat! Whoever eats it will be responsible for their sin.

19 “Tell the Israelites: You must not eat any fat from your cattle, sheep, or goats. 20 You may use the fat from any animal that has died by itself or was torn by other animals, but you must never eat it. 21 Whoever eats the fat from an animal that was offered as a gift to the Lord must be separated from their people.

26 “No matter where you live, you must never eat blood from any bird or any animal. 27 Anyone who eats blood must be separated from their people.”

Rules for the Offerings Presented to God

28 The Lord said to Moses, 29 “Tell the Israelites: If you bring a fellowship offering to the Lord, you must present that gift to the Lord yourself. 30 You must bring the fat and the breast of the animal to the priest. Then he will lift up the breast in front of the Lord to show it was presented to God. 31 The priest will burn the fat on the altar, but the breast of the animal will belong to Aaron and his sons. 32 You must also give the right thigh from the fellowship offering as a gift to the priest. 33 That part of the fellowship offering will belong to the priest who carries the blood and fat to the altar. 34 I will accept the breast that was lifted up and the gift of the right thigh from the Israelites. Then I will give these things to Aaron and his sons. This is their share from the fellowship offerings of the Israelites forever.”

35 Those parts from the gifts offered to the Lord were given to Aaron and his sons. Whenever Aaron and his sons serve as the Lord’s priests, they get that share of the sacrifices. 36 The Lord commanded the Israelites to give those parts to the priests once they have been anointed. That will be their share from the Israelites forever.

37 These are the laws about burnt offerings, grain offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings, fellowship offerings, and offerings for when the priests are appointed.

38 The Lord gave these laws to Moses on Mount Sinai when he commanded the

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Israelites to bring their offerings to the Lord in the desert of Sinai.

**Moses Appoints the Priests**

8 The Lord said to Moses, “Take Aaron and his sons with him and the clothes, the anointing oil, the bull of the sin offering, the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread. Then gather the people together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.”

Moses did what the Lord commanded him. The people met together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Then Moses said to them, “This is what the Lord has commanded must be done.”

Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. Moses put the woven shirt on Aaron and tied the cloth belt around him. Then Moses put the robe and the ephod on Aaron and tied the beautiful cloth belt around him. Moses put the judgment pouch on Aaron and put the Urim and Thummim inside its pocket. He also put the turban on Aaron’s head. He put the strip of gold on the front of the turban. This strip of gold is the holy crown. Moses did this just as the Lord had commanded.

Then Moses took the anointing oil and sprinkled it on the Holy Tent and on everything in it. In this way he made them holy. He sprinkled some of the anointing oil on the altar seven times. He sprinkled the oil on the altar, on all its tools and dishes, and on the bowl and its base. In this way he made them holy. He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head to make him holy. Then Moses brought Aaron’s sons forward. He put their woven shirts on them, tied belts around them, and put cloth caps on their heads. He did everything just as the Lord had commanded.

Then Moses brought the other ram. This ram was used for appointing Aaron and his sons to become priests. Aaron and his sons put their hands on the ram’s head. Then Moses killed the ram. He sprinkled the blood around on the altar. He cut the ram into pieces. He washed the inner parts and legs with water. Then he burned the whole ram on the altar. He burned the head, the pieces, and the fat as a burnt offering. It was a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord. Moses did everything just as the Lord commanded.

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them before the LORD. Then Moses took these things from the hands of Aaron and his sons and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering. So this was the offering for appointing Aaron and his sons as priests. It was a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. Moses took the breast and lifted it to show he had presented it to the LORD. It was Moses’ share of the ram for appointing the priests. This was just as the LORD had commanded him.

Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the altar. He sprinkled some on Aaron and on Aaron’s clothes. He sprinkled some on Aaron’s sons who were with Aaron and on their clothes. In this way Moses madeAaron, his clothes, his sons, and his sons’ clothes holy.

Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons, “I told you, ‘Aaron and his sons must eat these things.’ So take the basket of bread and meat from the ceremony for appointing the priests. Boil that meat and bread at that place. Do this as I told you. If any of the meat or bread is left, burn it. The ceremony for appointing the priests will last for seven days. You must not leave the entrance of the Meeting Tent until that time is finished. Everything we did today was what the Lord commanded us to do in order to make you pure. You must stay at the entrance of the Meeting Tent day and night for seven days. If you don’t obey the LORD’s commands, you will die! The LORD gave me these commands.”

So Aaron and his sons did everything that the LORD had commanded Moses.

God Accepts the Priests

On the eighth day, Moses called for Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. He said to Aaron, “Take a bull and a ram. There must be nothing wrong with them. The bull will be a sin offering, and the ram will be a burnt offering. Offer these animals to the LORD. Tell the Israelites, ‘Take a male goat for a sin offering, and take a calf and a lamb for a burnt offering. The calf and the lamb must each be one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. Take a bull and a ram for fellowship offerings. Take these animals and a grain offering mixed with oil for an offering to the LORD. Do this because the LORD will appear to you today.’”

So all the people came to the Meeting Tent. They all brought the things that Moses had commanded. All the people stood before the LORD. Moses said, “You must do what the LORD commanded. Then the Glory of the LORD will appear to you.”

Then Moses told Aaron: “Go do what the LORD commanded. Go to the altar and offer sin offerings and burnt offerings. Do what will make you and the people pure. Take the people’s sacrifices and make them pure.”

So Aaron went to the altar. He killed the bull for the sin offering. This sin offering was for himself. Then the sons of Aaron brought the blood to Aaron. Aaron put his finger in the blood and put it on the corners of the altar. Then he poured out the blood at the base of the altar. He took the fat, the kidneys, and the fat part of the liver from the sin offering. He burned them on the altar just as the Lord had commanded Moses. Then Aaron burned the meat and skin on a fire outside the camp.

Next, Aaron killed the animal for the burnt offering. His sons brought the blood to him, and he sprinkled the blood around on the altar. Aaron’s sons gave the pieces and head of the burnt offering to Aaron, and he burned them on the altar. He also washed the inner parts and the legs of the burnt offering and burned them on the altar.

Then Aaron brought the people’s offering. He killed the goat of the sin offering that was for the people. He offered the goat for sin, like the earlier sin offering. He brought the burnt offering and offered it, just as the Lord had commanded. He brought the grain offering.
to the altar. He took a handful of the grain and put it on the altar beside that morning’s daily sacrifice.

18Aaron also killed the bull and the ram that were the fellowship offerings from the people. His sons brought the blood to him, and he sprinkled this blood around on the altar. 19Aaron’s sons also brought him the fat of the bull and the ram. They brought the fat tail, the fat covering the inner parts, the kidneys, and the fat part of the liver. 20Aaron’s sons put these fat parts on the breasts of the bull and the ram. Aaron burned them on the altar. 21He lifted the breasts and the gift of the right thigh to show he was offering them before the LORD, just as Moses had commanded.

22Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them. After he finished offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the fellowship offerings, he came down from the altar.

23Moses and Aaron went into the Meeting Tent. They came out and blessed the people. Then the Glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.

24Fire came out from the Lord and burned the burnt offering and fat on the altar. When all the people saw this, they shouted with joy and then bowed to the ground to show their respect.

God Destroys Nadab and Abihu

1Then Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu made a mistake. They took their incense dishes and put some fire and incense in them. But they did not use the fire that was on the altar—they took fire from some other place and brought it to the LORD. This was not what he had commanded. 2So fire came from the LORD and destroyed Nadab and Abihu, and they died there in front of the LORD.

3Then Moses said to Aaron, “The LORD says, ‘The priests who come near me must respect me. I must be holy to them and to all the people.’” So Aaron did not say anything about his sons dying.

4Aaron’s uncle Uzziel had two sons. They were Mishael and Elzaphan. Moses said to these sons, “Come here and get your cousins’ bodies and carry them away from this holy place and take them outside the camp.”

5So Mishael and Elzaphan obeyed Moses. They carried the bodies of Nadab and Abihu outside the camp. Nadab and Abihu were still wearing their special woven shirts.

6Then Moses spoke to Aaron and his other sons Eleazar and Ithamar. He said, “Don’t show any sadness! Don’t tear your clothes or mess up your hair! If you do anything to show your sadness, you will be killed, and the Lord will show his anger against everyone. But let all the other people of Israel, your relatives, cry for those the LORD destroyed with fire. But you must not even leave the entrance of the Meeting Tent. If you leave, you will die because the LORD’s anointing oil is on you.” So Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar obeyed Moses.

8Then the Lord said to Aaron, “You and your sons must not drink wine or beer when you come into the Meeting Tent. If you do, you will die. This law continues forever through your generations. 10You must be able to clearly tell the difference between what is holy and what is not holy, between what is clean and what is unclean. 11And you must teach the people about all the laws that the LORD gave them through Moses.”

12Aaron had two sons who were still alive, Eleazar and Ithamar. Moses said to Aaron and his two sons, “When people give sacrifices as a gift to the LORD, some of the grain offering is not burned. Use that grain to make bread without yeast. You priests must eat that bread near the altar because that grain is very holy. 13The portion of food for you and your sons will come from the special gifts to the LORD, so you must eat that food in a holy place. 14You, your sons, and your daughters may all eat the breast and thigh that were lifted up before the Lord as an offering.

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But you must eat these in a place that is clean because they come from the fellowship offerings. They are your share of those offerings that the Israelites give to God. They must also bring the thigh of the fellowship offering and the breast that is lifted up to show it is offered in front of the LORD. Then it will be your share of the offering. It will belong to you and your children. That part of the sacrifices will be your share forever, just as the LORD said.”

Moses looked for the goat of the sin offering, but it was already burned up. Moses became very angry with Aaron’s other sons Eleazar and Ithamar. Moses said, “Why did you not eat the sin offering in the holy area! That meat is very holy! God gave it to you to carry away the guilt of the people—to make the people pure before the LORD. That goat’s blood was not brought into the Holy Place. So you should have eaten the meat in the holy area, just as I commanded!”

But Aaron said to Moses, “Look, today they brought their sin offering and burnt offering before the LORD. But you know what happened to me today! Do you think the LORD would be happy if I ate the sin offering today?”

When Moses heard this, he agreed.

Rules About Eating Meat

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Tell the Israelites: These are the animals you can eat: If an animal has hooves that are split into two parts, and if that animal also chews the cud, then you may eat the meat from that animal. Some animals chew the cud, but they don’t have split hooves. Don’t eat these animals. Camels, rock badgers, and rabbits are like that, so they are unclean for you. Other animals have hooves that are split into two parts, but they don’t chew the cud. Don’t eat these animals. Pigs are like that, so they are unclean for you. Don’t eat the meat from these animals. Don’t even touch their dead bodies! They are unclean for you.

Rules About Sea Food

You may eat everything that lives in the sea or in a river that has fins and scales. But you must not eat anything that lives in the sea or in a river and does not have fins and scales. Just the thought of eating such a creature should make you sick. This will never change. So don’t ever eat meat from anything like that. Don’t even touch its dead body! It is a sickening thought for you to touch anything that lives in the water and does not have fins and scales.

Birds That Must Not Be Eaten

You must also treat some birds as things that are wrong to eat. Stay away from them. It is a sickening thought for you to eat any of these birds: eagles, vultures, buzzards, kites, all kinds of falcons, all kinds of black birds, ostriches, night-hawks, sea gulls, all kinds of hawks, owls, cormorants, great owls, water hens, pelicans, carrion vultures, storks, all kinds of herons, hoopoes, and bats.

Rules About Eating Insects

Don’t eat insects that have wings and crawl. Even the thought of eating them should make you sick! But you may eat insects if they have legs with joints above their feet so that they can jump. You may also eat all kinds of locusts, all kinds of winged locusts, all kinds of crickets, and all kinds of grasshoppers.

But stay away from all the other insects that have wings and crawl. They will make you unclean. If you touch the dead bodies of these insects, you will become unclean until evening. If you pick up one of these dead insects, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening.

More Rules About Animals

Some animals have split hooves, but...
the hooves don’t make exactly two parts. Some animals don’t chew the cud. Some animals don’t have hooves—they walk on their paws. All these animals are unclean for you. If you touch them, you will become unclean until evening. If you pick up the dead bodies of these unclean animals, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening. These animals are unclean for you.

### Rules About Crawling Animals

29 These small animals are unclean for you: moles, mice, all kinds of great lizards, geckos, crocodiles, lizards, sand reptiles, and chameleons. Whoever touches their dead bodies will be unclean until evening.

### Rules About Unclean Animals

30 If any of these unclean animals dies and falls on something, that thing will become unclean. It might be something made from wood, cloth, leather, or sackcloth. Whatever it is or is used for, it must be washed with water. It will be unclean until evening. Then it will become clean again. If any of these unclean animals dies and falls into a clay dish, anything in the dish will become unclean. And you must break the dish. If water from the unclean clay dish touches any food, that food will become unclean. Any drink in the unclean dish will become unclean.

31 If any part of a dead, unclean animal falls on something, that thing is unclean. It may be a clay oven or a clay baking pan. It must be broken into pieces. These things will remain unclean. They will always be unclean for you.

32 A spring or a well that collects water will remain clean, but anyone who touches the dead bodies of any unclean animal in that water will become unclean. If any part of a dead, unclean animal falls on seed that is to be planted, that seed is still clean. But if you put water on some seed and if any part of a dead, unclean animal falls on those seeds, they are unclean for you.

33 Also, if an animal which you use for food dies, whoever touches its dead body will be unclean until evening. If you eat meat from this animal’s body, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening. If you pick up the dead body of the animal, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening.

40 If you eat meat from this animal’s body, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening. If you pick up the dead body of the animal, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening.

41 You must treat all the crawling animals that live on the dirt as disgusting things that you must not eat. You must not eat any of the reptiles that crawl on their bellies or that walk on all four feet or that have many feet. Don’t eat these animals! Don’t let them make you filthy. You must not become unclean, because I am the Lord your God. I am holy, so you should keep yourselves holy. Don’t make yourselves unclean with these crawling things. I, the Lord, brought you out of Egypt so that you could be my special people and I could be your God. I am holy, so you must be holy too.

46 These are the rules about all the tame animals, birds, all the animals in the sea, and all the animals that crawl on the ground. These rules will help the people know which animals are unclean and which animals they are allowed to eat and which ones they cannot eat.

### Rules for New Mothers

12 The Lord said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites:

“When a woman gives birth, she will be unclean, just as she is during her monthly time of bleeding. If the baby is a boy, the mother will be unclean for seven days. The baby boy must be circumcised on the eighth day. Because of the blood from childbirth, another 33 days must pass before she can touch anything that is holy. She must not enter the Holy Place until the time of her purification is finished. But if she gives birth to a girl, the mother will be unclean for 14 days, just as she is during her monthly time of bleeding. Because of the blood from childbirth, she will be unclean for seven days. Then on the eighth day, when the baby is circumcised, she will be unclean until the time of her purification is finished.

Also, if an animal which you use for food dies, whoever touches its dead body

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\[a\] 11:26–27 paws  The soft feet with claws on certain animals.

\[b\] 11:43 filthy  Or “hated.” Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

\[c\] 12:4 purification  Being made clean or acceptable to God for worship.
another 66 days must pass before she becomes clean.

6“After the time of her purification is finished, the new mother of a baby girl or boy must bring special sacrifices to the Meeting Tent. She must give her sacrifices to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. She must bring a one-year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a dove or young pigeon for a sin offering. 7–8If the woman cannot afford a lamb, she may bring two doves or two young pigeons. One bird will be for a burnt offering and one for a sin offering. The priest will offer them before the LORD. In this way the priest will make her pure, and she will be clean from the blood of childbirth. These are the rules for a woman who gives birth to a baby boy or a baby girl.”

Rules About Skin Diseases

13The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 14“Someone might have a swelling on their skin, or it may be a rash or a bright spot. If the sore looks like the disease of leprosy, the person must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons, the priests. 15The priest must look at the sore on the person’s skin. If the hair in the sore has become white, and if the sore seems deeper than the person’s skin, the priest must announce that the person is unclean.

16“Sometimes there is a white spot on a person’s skin that does not seem deeper than the skin. If that is true, the priest must separate that person from other people for seven days. 17On the seventh day the priest must look at the person again. If the priest sees that the sore has not changed and has not spread on the skin, he must separate the person for seven more days. 18Seven days later the priest must look at the person again. If the sore has faded and has not spread on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is clean. The sore is only a rash. After washing the clothes, that person will be clean again.

19“But if the rash spreads over the skin after the person has shown himself to the priest to be made clean again, that person must come again to the priest. 20The priest must look, and if the rash has spread, he must announce that the person is unclean. The disease is leprosy.

21“Whoever has leprosy must be brought to the priest. 22He must look at that person. If there is a white swelling on the skin, if the hair has become white, and if the skin looks raw in the swelling, 23it is leprosy that has been there for a long time. The priest must announce that the person is unclean. He does not have to wait until after a period of separation, because he already knows that the person is unclean.

24“Sometimes a skin disease will spread all over a person’s body, covering the skin from head to foot. The priest must look at that person’s whole body. 25If the priest sees that the skin disease covers the whole body and that it has turned all the skin white, the priest must announce that the person is clean. 26But if the skin is raw, that person is not clean. 27When the priest sees the raw skin, he must announce that the person is unclean. The raw skin is not clean. It is leprosy.

28“Sometimes there is a white spot on a person’s skin that does not seem deeper than the skin. If that is true, the priest must separate that person from other people for seven days. 29On the seventh day the priest must look at the person again. If the priest sees that the sore has not changed and has not spread on the skin, he must separate the person for seven more days. 30Seven days later the priest must look at the person again. If the sore has faded and has not spread on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is clean. The sore is only a rash. After washing the clothes, that person will be clean again.

31“But if the rash spreads over the skin after the person has shown himself to the priest to be made clean again, that person must come again to the priest. 32The priest must look, and if the rash has spread, he must announce that the person is unclean. The disease is leprosy.

33“Whoever has leprosy must be brought to the priest. 34He must look at that person. If there is a white swelling on the skin, if the hair has become white, and if the skin looks raw in the swelling, 35it is leprosy that has been there for a long time. The priest must announce that the person is unclean. He does not have to wait until after a period of separation, because he already knows that the person is unclean.

36“Sometimes a skin disease will spread all over a person’s body, covering the skin from head to foot. The priest must look at that person’s whole body. 37If the priest sees that the skin disease covers the whole body and that it has turned all the skin white, the priest must announce that the person is clean. 38But if the skin is raw, that person is not clean. 39When the priest sees the raw skin, he must announce that the person is unclean. The raw skin is not clean. It is leprosy.

40“Sometimes there is a white spot on a person’s skin that does not seem deeper than the skin. If that is true, the priest must separate that person from other people for seven days. 41On the seventh day the priest must look at the person again. If the priest sees that the sore has not changed and has not spread on the skin, he must separate the person for seven more days. 42Seven days later the priest must look at the person again. If the sore has faded and has not spread on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is clean. The sore is only a rash. After washing the clothes, that person will be clean again.

43“But if the rash spreads over the skin after the person has shown himself to the priest to be made clean again, that person must come again to the priest. 44The priest must look, and if the rash has spread, he must announce that the person is unclean. The disease is leprosy.

45“Whoever has leprosy must be brought to the priest. 46He must look at that person. If there is a white swelling on the skin, if the hair has become white, and if the skin looks raw in the swelling, 47it is leprosy that has been there for a long time. The priest must announce that the person is unclean. He does not have to wait until after a period of separation, because he already knows that the person is unclean.

48“Sometimes a skin disease will spread all over a person’s body, covering the skin from head to foot. The priest must look at that person’s whole body. 49If the priest sees that the skin disease covers the whole body and that it has turned all the skin white, the priest must announce that the person is clean. 50But if the skin is raw, that person is not clean. 51When the priest sees the raw skin, he must announce that the person is unclean. The raw skin is not clean. It is leprosy.

52“Sometimes there is a white spot on a person’s skin that does not seem deeper than the skin. If that is true, the priest must separate that person from other people for seven days. 53On the seventh day the priest must look at the person again. If the priest sees that the sore has not changed and has not spread on the skin, he must separate the person for seven more days. 54Seven days later the priest must look at the person again. If the sore has faded and has not spread on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is clean. The sore is only a rash. After washing the clothes, that person will be clean again.

55“But if the rash spreads over the skin after the person has shown himself to the priest to be made clean again, that person must come again to the priest. 56The priest must look, and if the rash has spread, he must announce that the person is unclean. The disease is leprosy.

57“Whoever has leprosy must be brought to the priest. 58He must look at that person. If there is a white swelling on the skin, if the hair has become white, and if the skin looks raw in the swelling, 59it is leprosy that has been there for a long time. The priest must announce that the person is unclean. He does not have to wait until after a period of separation, because he already knows that the person is unclean.

60“Sometimes a skin disease will spread all over a person’s body, covering the skin from head to foot. The priest must look at that person’s whole body. 61If the priest sees that the skin disease covers the whole body and that it has turned all the skin white, the priest must announce that the person is clean. 62But if the skin is raw, that person is not clean. 63When the priest sees the raw skin, he must announce that the person is unclean. The raw skin is not clean. It is leprosy.

64“Sometimes there is a white spot on a person’s skin that does not seem deeper than the skin. If that is true, the priest must separate that person from other people for seven days. 65On the seventh day the priest must look at the person again. If the priest sees that the sore has not changed and has not spread on the skin, he must separate the person for seven more days. 66Seven days later the priest must look at the person again. If the sore has faded and has not spread on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is clean. The sore is only a rash. After washing the clothes, that person will be clean again.

67“But if the rash spreads over the skin after the person has shown himself to the priest to be made clean again, that person must come again to the priest. 68The priest must look, and if the rash has spread, he must announce that the person is unclean. The disease is leprosy.

69“Whoever has leprosy must be brought to the priest. 70He must look at that person. If there is a white swelling on the skin, if the hair has become white, and if the skin looks raw in the swelling, 71it is leprosy that has been there for a long time. The priest must announce that the person is unclean. He does not have to wait until after a period of separation, because he already knows that the person is unclean.

72“Sometimes a skin disease will spread all over a person’s body, covering the skin from head to foot. The priest must look at that person’s whole body. 73If the priest sees that the skin disease covers the whole body and that it has turned all the skin white, the priest must announce that the person is clean. 74But if the skin is raw, that person is not clean. 75When the priest sees the raw skin, he must announce that the person is unclean. The raw skin is not clean. It is leprosy.

76“Sometimes there is a white spot on a person’s skin that does not seem deeper than the skin. If that is true, the priest must separate that person from other people for seven days. 77On the seventh day the priest must look at the person again. If the priest sees that the sore has not changed and has not spread on the skin, he must separate the person for seven more days. 78Seven days later the priest must look at the person again. If the sore has faded and has not spread on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is clean. The sore is only a rash. After washing the clothes, that person will be clean again.

79“But if the rash spreads over the skin after the person has shown himself to the priest to be made clean again, that person must come again to the priest. 80The priest must look, and if the rash has spread, he must announce that the person is unclean. The disease is leprosy.
announce that the person is unclean; it is an infection. 23 But if the bright spot stays in its place and does not spread, it is only the scar from the old boil. The priest must announce that the person is clean.

24–25a Someone might get a burn on the skin. If the raw skin becomes a white spot or a white spot with red streaks in it, the priest must look at it. If that white spot seems to be deeper than the skin, and the hair at that spot has become white, it is leprosy that has broken out in the burn. The priest must announce that the person is unclean. 26 But if the priest looks at the spot, and there is no white hair in the bright spot, and the spot is not deeper than the skin but is faded, the priest must separate the person for seven days. 27 On the seventh day, the priest must look at the person again. If the spot has spread on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is unclean. It is leprosy.

28 But if the bright spot has not spread on the skin but has faded, it is only a scar from the burn. The priest must announce that the person is clean.

29 “Someone might get an infection on the scalp or beard. 30 A priest must look at the infection. If the infection seems to be deeper than the skin, and if the hair around it is thin and yellow, the priest must announce that the person is unclean. It is a serious skin disease. 31 If the disease does not seem deeper than the skin, but there is no dark hair in it, the priest must separate that person for seven days. 32 On the seventh day, the priest must look at it again. If the disease has not spread, and there are no yellow hairs growing in it, and the disease does not seem deeper than the skin, the person must shave. But the diseased area should not be shaved. The priest must separate that person for seven more days. 33 On the seventh day, the priest must look at it again. If the disease has not spread, and it does not seem deeper than the skin, the priest must announce that the person is clean. After washing those clothes, that person will be clean. 35 But if the disease spreads on the skin after the person has become clean, then the priest must look at the person again. If the disease has spread, the priest does not need to look for yellow hair. The person is unclean. 37 But if the priest thinks that the disease has stopped, and black hair is growing in it, the disease has healed. The person is clean, and the priest must announce this.

38 “If anyone has white spots on the skin, a priest must look at them. If the spots on that person’s skin are dull white, the disease is only a harmless rash. That person is clean.

40 “A man might begin to lose the hair on his head. It is only baldness, so he is clean. 41 A man might lose hair from the sides of his head. He is clean. It is only another kind of baldness. 42 But if there is a red and white infection on his scalp, it is a skin disease. 43 A priest must look at him. If the swelling of the infection is red and white and looks like the leprosy on other parts of his body, 44 then he has leprosy on his scalp. The person is unclean. The priest must announce that he is unclean.

45 “People with leprosy must warn other people. They must shout, ‘Unclean, unclean!’ They must tear their clothes at the seams. They must let their hair grow wild, and they must cover their mouth. 46 They are unclean the whole time that they have the infection. They are unclean and must live outside the camp.

47–48a Some clothing might have mildew on it. The cloth could be linen or wool, woven or knitted. Or the mildew might be on a piece of leather or on something made from leather. 49 If the mildew is green or red, it must be shown to the priest. 50 The priest must look at it and put it in a separate place for seven days. 51–52 On the seventh day, he must look at it again. It doesn’t matter if the mildew is on leather or cloth or if the cloth is woven or knitted. And it doesn’t matter what the leather was made from.

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a 13:29 scalp The skin on a person’s head. Also in verse 42.

b 13:30 serious skin disease This could be leprosy, or it could be another kind of contagious skin disease.

c 13:45 They must tear … wild This also showed that a person was very sad about something.
was used for. If the mildew has spread, the object is unclean because of the infection. The priest must burn it.

53“If the priest sees that the mildew did not spread on the object, it must be washed. It doesn’t matter if it is leather or cloth, or if the cloth is knitted or woven, it must be washed. 54He must order the people to wash it. Then he must separate the clothing for seven more days. 55After that time, the priest must look at it again. If the mildew still looks the same, the object is unclean. It doesn’t matter if the infection has not spread; you must burn that cloth or piece of leather.

56“But if the priest looks at that piece of leather or cloth, and the mildew has faded, he must tear the infected spot out of the piece of leather or cloth. It doesn’t matter if the cloth is woven or knitted. 57But the mildew might come back to that piece of leather or cloth. If that happens, the mildew is spreading, and the object must be burned. 58But if the mildew did not come back after washing, that piece of leather or cloth is clean, whether the cloth was woven or knitted.”

59These are the rules for mildew on pieces of leather or cloth, whether the cloth is woven or knitted.

Rules for Those With Skin Diseases

14 The Lord said to Moses, 2“These are the rules for people who have had a skin disease and have been made well. These rules are for making them clean.

3“A priest must look at those who had the skin disease. 4The priest must go to them outside the camp and look to see if the skin disease is healed. 5If they are healthy, the priest will tell them to do these things: They must bring two clean birds that are still alive, a piece of cedar wood, a piece of red cloth, and a hyssop plant. 6Then the priest must order one bird to be killed in a clay bowl over running water. 7He must sprinkle the blood seven times on those who had the skin disease. Then he must announce that they are clean. After that the priest must go to an open field and let the living bird go free.

8“The people going through this purification ceremony must wash their clothes, shave off all their hair, and wash with water. Then they will be clean. They may then go into the camp, but they must stay outside their tent for seven days. 9On the seventh day, they must shave off all their hair. They must shave their head, their beard, and their eyebrows—yes, all their hair. Then they must wash their clothes and bathe their bodies in water. Then they will be clean.

10“On the eighth day, anyone who had a skin disease must take two male lambs that have nothing wrong with them and a one-year-old female lamb that has nothing wrong with it. They must also take 24 cupsa of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering and 2/3 of a pintb of olive oil. 11The priest must bring that person and those sacrifices before the Lord at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. (This must be the same priest who announced that the person is clean.) 12The priest will take one of the lambs and the oil as a guilt offering. He will lift them in front of the Lord to show they were presented to God. 13Then the priest will kill the male lamb in the holy place where they kill the sin offering and the burnt offering. Like the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest. It is very holy.

14“The priest will take some of the blood of the guilt offering. He will put some of this blood on the tip of the right ear of the person to be made clean. The priest will put some of this blood on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the right foot of that person. 15The priest will also take some of the oil and pour it into his own left palm. 16Then the

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14:10 2/3 of a pint Literally, “1 log” (.3 l). Also in verse 21.
priest will dip the finger of his right hand into the oil that is in his left palm. He will use his finger to sprinkle some of the oil seven times before the LORD. 17Then he will put some of the oil that is in his palm on the person to be made clean. He will put that oil on the same places he put the blood of the guilt offering. The priest will put some of the oil on the tip of the person’s right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of the person’s right foot. 18He will put the oil that is left in his palm on the head of the person to be made clean. In this way he will make that person pure before the LORD.

19“Then the priest must offer the sin offering to make that person pure. After that he will kill the animal for the burnt offering. 20He will then offer up the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. In this way the priest will make that person pure, and that person will become clean.

21“A poor person might not be able to afford all these offerings. So that poor person can use one male lamb as a guilt offering. It will be presented to God so that the priest can make that person pure. The poor person must take 8 cups of fine flour mixed with oil. This flour will be used for a grain offering. The poor person must also take 2/3 of a pint of olive oil and two doves or two young pigeons. Even poor people can afford these things. One bird will be a sin offering, and the other will be a burnt offering.

22On the eighth day, that person will bring these things to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. These things will be offered before the LORD so that the person can become clean. 23The priest will take the lamb for the guilt offering and the oil, and he will lift them up to show they were offered before the LORD. 24Then he will kill the lamb of the guilt offering, take some of its blood, and put it on the tip of the right ear of the person to be made clean. The priest will put some of this blood on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the right foot of this person. 25He will also pour some of this oil into his own left palm. 26He will use the finger of his right hand to sprinkle some of the oil that is in his left palm seven times before the LORD. 27Then he will put some of the oil that is in his palm on the same places he put the blood from the guilt offering. He will put some of the oil on the tip of the right ear of the person to be made clean. The priest will put some of the oil on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the person’s right foot. 28He will put the oil that is left in his palm on the head of the person to be made clean. In this way he will make that person pure before the LORD.

29“Then the priest must offer one of the doves or young pigeons. (He must offer whichever the person can afford.) 30He must offer one of these birds as a sin offering and the other bird as a burnt offering. He must offer the birds with the grain offering. In this way the priest will make that person pure before the LORD, and that person will become clean.”

31These are the rules for making people clean after they become well from a skin disease. These are the rules for those who cannot afford the regular sacrifices for becoming clean.

Rules for Mildew in a House
32The LORD also said to Moses and Aaron,
33“I am giving the land of Canaan to your people. Your people will enter that land. At that time I might cause mildew to grow in someone’s house. 34The person who owns that house must come and tell the priest, ‘I see something like mildew in my house.’

35Then the priest must order the people to take everything out of the house before he goes in to look at the mildew. Then the priest will not have to say everything in the house is unclean. After the people have taken everything out of the house, the priest will go in to look at the house. 36He will look at the mildew. If the mildew on the walls of the house has holes...
that are a green or red color, and if the mildew goes into the wall’s surface, he must go out of the house and lock the house for seven days.

38 “On the seventh day the priest must come back and check the house. If the mildew has spread on the walls of the house, then he must order the people to tear out the stones with the mildew on them and throw them away. They must put these stones at a special unclean place outside the city. Then the priest must have the entire house scraped inside. The people must throw away the plaster that was scraped off the walls. They must put that plaster at a special unclean place outside the city.

41 Then new stones must be put in the walls, and the walls must be covered with new plaster.

43 “Maybe someone took away the old stones and plaster and put in new stones and plaster. And maybe mildew again appears in that house. Then the priest must come in and check the house. If the infection has spread in the house, it is a disease that spreads quickly to other places. So the house is unclean. The house must be torn down. All the stones, plaster, and pieces of wood must be taken to the special unclean place outside the city.

46 Anyone who goes into that house will be unclean until evening. Anyone who eats in that house or lies down in there must wash their clothes.

48 “After new stones and plaster are put in a house, the priest must check the house. If the mildew has not spread through the house, the priest will announce that the house is clean, because the mildew is gone.

50 Then, to make the house clean, the priest must take two birds, a piece of cedar wood, a piece of red cloth, and a hyssop plant. He will kill one bird in a clay bowl over running water. Then he will take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the piece of red cloth, and the living bird and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed over running water. Then he will sprinkle that blood on the house seven times. In this way he will use these things to make the house clean.

53 He will go to an open field outside the city and let the living bird go free. In this way the priest will make the house pure. The house will be clean.”

54 These are the rules for any infection of leprosy, for mildew on pieces of cloth or in a house. These are the rules for swellings, rashes, or bright spots on the skin. These rules teach when something is clean and when something is unclean. These are the rules about these kinds of disease.

Rules for Discharges From the Body

15 The Lord also said to Moses and Aaron, “Say to the Israelites: Whoever has a genital discharge is unclean. The person is unclean whether the discharge continues to flow or whether it stops.

4 If a man with a discharge lies on a bed, that bed becomes unclean. Everything he sits on will become unclean. If you touch that bed, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening. If you sit on anything that he sat on, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening. If you touch him, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening.

14 If a man with a discharge touches a clay bowl, that bowl must be broken. If he touches a wooden bowl, that bowl must be washed in water.

19 When it comes time for a man with a discharge to be made clean, he must wait seven days. Then he must wash his clothes and bathe his body in running water. Then he will become clean. On the eighth day, he must take for himself two doves or two young pigeons and come before the Lord
at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. He will give the two birds to the priest. 

The priest will offer the birds, one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. In this way the priest will make that man pure before the LORD. 

16“If a man has a flow of semen, he must bathe his whole body in water. He will be unclean until evening. 17If the semen is on any clothing or leather, that clothing or leather must be washed with water. It will be unclean until evening. 18If a woman has sexual relations with a man, and he has a flow of semen, both the man and the woman must bathe in water. They will be unclean until evening. 

19“If a woman has a discharge from her monthly time of bleeding, she will be unclean for seven days. Anyone who touches her will be unclean until evening. 20Everything she lies on during her monthly time of bleeding will be unclean. And everything she sits on during that time will be unclean. 21Whoever touches her bed must wash their clothes and bathe in water. They will be unclean until evening. 22Whoever touches anything she has sat on must wash their clothes and bathe in water. They will be unclean until evening. 23It doesn’t matter if they touched the woman’s bed or if they touched something she sat on, they will be unclean until evening. 

24“If a man has sexual relations with a woman during her monthly time of bleeding, he will be unclean for seven days. Every bed he lies on will be unclean. 

25“If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not during her time of monthly bleeding, or if she has a discharge after that time, she will be unclean, just as during the time of her monthly bleeding. She will be unclean for as long as she has a discharge. 26Any bed she lies on during the time of her discharge will be like her bed during the time of her monthly bleeding. Everything she sits on will be unclean, just as it is during the time she is unclean from her monthly bleeding. 

27Whoever touches these things will be unclean until evening. They must wash their own clothes and bathe in water. 28After the woman’s discharge stops, she must wait seven days. After that she will be clean. 29Then on the eighth day, she must bring two doves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Then the priest must offer one bird for a sin offering and the other bird for a burnt offering. In this way the priest will make her pure before the LORD. 

31“So you must warn the Israelites about being unclean. If you don’t warn the people, they might make my Holy Tent unclean. And then they would have to die!” 

32These are the rules for anyone with a discharge from the body. These rules are for men who become unclean from a flow of semen. 33And these rules are for women who become unclean from their monthly time of bleeding. And these are the rules for anyone who becomes unclean by sleeping with another person who is unclean.

The Day of Atonement

16Two of Aaron’s sons died while offering incense to the LORD. After that time, the LORD spoke to Moses. The LORD said, “Talk to your brother Aaron. Tell him that he cannot go behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place anytime he wants to. The mercy-cover is in the room behind that curtain on top of the Holy Box, and I appear in a cloud over that mercy-cover. If Aaron goes into that room, he will die!

3Before Aaron enters the Most Holy Place, he will offer a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. Aaron will wash his whole body with water and put on the special clothes. He will put on the linen underwear next to his body, the linen robe, the linen belt, and then he will put the linen turban on his head.

4From the whole community of Israel, Aaron will accept two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. Then he will offer the bull for the sin offering and the ram for the burnt offering before the LORD at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. He will give the two birds to the priest. The priest will offer the birds, one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. In this way the priest will make that man pure before the LORD.
offering. This sin offering is for himself. He will do this to purify\(^a\) himself and his family.

77Then Aaron will take the two goats and bring them before the LORD at the doorway of the Meeting Tent. 8Aaron will throw lots for the two goats. One lot will be for the LORD. The other lot will be for Azazel.\(^b\)

9Then Aaron will offer the goat chosen by the lot for the LORD. Aaron will make this goat a sin offering. 10But the goat chosen by the lot for Azazel will be brought alive before the LORD. Then this goat will be sent out to Azazel in the desert. This is to make the people pure.

11Then Aaron will offer the bull as a sin offering for himself. He will purify himself and his family. He will kill the bull for the sin offering for himself. 12Then he will take a firepan full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD. Aaron will take two handfuls of sweet incense that has been ground into powder and take it into the room behind the curtain. 13He will put the incense on the fire before the LORD. Then the cloud of incense will hide the mercy-cover that is over the Box that holds the Agreement.\(^c\) This way Aaron will not die. 14Aaron will dip his finger into the bull’s blood and sprinkle it on the front of the Holy Box. Then he will sprinkle the blood seven times onto the front of the mercy-cover.

15Then Aaron will kill the goat of the sin offering for the people. He will bring this goat’s blood into the room behind the curtain. He will do with the goat’s blood as he did with the bull’s blood. He will sprinkle the goat’s blood on the mercy-cover and in front of it. 16In this way Aaron will purify the Most Holy Place from all the uncleanness and sins of the Israelites. He will also purify the Meeting Tent, because it stands in the middle of people whose sins have made them unclean.

17“\(^a\)No one must be in the Meeting Tent when Aaron goes in to purify the Most Holy Place. No one is to go in there until Aaron comes out after purifying himself, his family, and all the Israelites. 18Then Aaron will go out to the altar that is before the LORD. Aaron will make the altar pure. He will take some of the blood from the bull and from the goat and put it on the corners of the altar on all four sides. 19Then he will dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it on the altar seven times. In this way Aaron will make the altar holy and clean from all the sins of the Israelites.

20“\(^a\)So Aaron will make the Most Holy Place, the Meeting Tent, and the altar pure. Then he will bring the living goat to the front of the tent. 21He will put both his hands on the head of the living goat. Then he will confess the sins and crimes of the Israelites over the goat. In this way Aaron will lay the people’s sins on the goat’s head. Then he will send the goat away into the desert. A man will be standing by, ready to lead this goat away. 22So the goat will carry all the people’s sins on itself into the empty desert. The man who leads the goat will let it loose in the desert.

23Then Aaron will enter the Meeting Tent. He will take off the linen clothes that he put on when he went into the Holy Place. He will leave these clothes there. 24He will wash his whole body with water in a holy place. Then he will put on his clothes. He will come out and offer his burnt offering and the people’s burnt offering. He will make himself and the people pure. 25Then he will burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

26“The man who led the goat to Azazel must wash his clothes and his whole body with water. After that he may come into the camp.

27“The bull and the goat for the sin offerings will be taken outside the camp. (The blood from these animals was brought into the Holy Place to make the holy things pure.) The skins, bodies, and body

\(^{a}\) 16:6 purify Or “make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," or "to erase" a person’s sins. Also in verses 11, 16, 17, 34.

\(^{b}\) 16:8 Azazel This name means "scapegoat," "the goat for God," or "the goat demon." This might be the name of a particular place in the desert where the goat was released. Also in verse 10, 26.

\(^{c}\) 16:13 Box that holds the Agreement Literally, "Testimony." See "AGREEMENT" in the Word List.
waste of those animals will be burned in the fire. 28 Then the man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe his whole body with water. After that he may come into the camp.

29“This law will always continue for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month, you must not eat food.  30 Because on this day, the priest will do this to make you pure and wash away your sins. Then you will be clean to the Lord.  31 You must humble yourselves  because this day is a very important day of rest for you. This law will continue forever.

32“In the future, this ceremony will be done by the priest who will be anointed and appointed to serve after his father. That priest will put on the holy linen clothes  and make the Most Holy Place, the Meeting Tent, and the altar pure. He will also make the priests and all the people pure.  33 That law will continue forever. Once every year you will purify the Israelites from all their sins.”

So they did everything that the Lord had commanded Moses.

Rules About Killing and Eating Animals

17  1“Speak to Aaron and to his sons, and to all the Israelites. Tell them this is what the Lord has commanded:  2 Any one of you Israelites might kill a bull, a lamb, or a goat. You might be in the camp or outside the camp.  3 It doesn’t matter; you must bring that animal to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. You must give a part of that animal as a gift to the Lord. You spilled blood, so you must take a gift to the Lord’s Holy Tent. If you don’t take part of the animal as a gift to the Lord, you must be separated from your people!  4 This rule is so that you will bring your fellowship offering to the Lord. You must bring any animal that you kill in the field to the Lord at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Bring those animals to the priest.  5 Then the priest will throw their blood onto the Lord’s altar near the entrance of the Meeting Tent. And the priest will burn the fat from those animals on the altar as a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord.  6 In this way you will stop being unfaithful to me by offering sacrifices to your ‘goat gods.’ This law will continue forever.

8“Tell the people: Any citizen of Israel, traveler, or foreigner living among you might want to offer a burnt offering or some other sacrifice.  9 They must take the sacrifice to the entrance of the Meeting Tent and offer it to the Lord. Whoever does not do this will be separated from their people.

10“I will turn against those who eat blood whether they are citizens of Israel or foreigners living among you, I will separate them from their people.  11 This is because the life of the body is in the blood. I have told you that you must pour the blood on the altar to purify yourselves. It is the blood that makes a person pure.  12 That is why I am telling you Israelites and the foreigners living among you that you must not eat blood.

13“If any of you, whether Israelite or foreigner living among you, goes hunting and kills a wild animal or bird that you are allowed to eat, you must pour the blood of that animal on the ground and cover it with dirt.  14 This is because the life of every kind of animal is in its blood. So I give this command to the Israelites: Don’t eat meat that still has blood in it! Whoever eats blood must be separated from their people.

15“If any of you, whether Israelite or foreigner living among you, eats an animal that died by itself or was killed by some other animal, you will be unclean until evening. You must wash your clothes and bathe your whole body with water.  16 If you don’t wash your clothes and bathe your whole body, you will be responsible for your guilt.”
Rules About Sexual Relations

18 The Lord said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites: I am the Lord your God. You must not follow the customs of Egypt where you lived, and you must not follow the customs of the Canaanites where I am leading you. You must not live the way they do. You must obey my rules and follow my laws. Be sure to follow my rules because I am the Lord your God. You must obey my rules and my laws, because whoever obeys them will live. I am the Lord.

6 “You must never have sexual relations with your close relatives. I am the Lord.

7 “You must never have sexual relations with your father or mother. She is your mother, so you must not have sexual relations with her. You must not have sexual relations with your father’s wife, even if she is not your mother, because that is like having sexual relations with your father.

9 “You must not have sexual relations with your sister. It doesn’t matter if she is the daughter of your father or your mother. And it doesn’t matter if your sister was born in your house or at some other place.

10 “You must not have sexual relations with your granddaughter. It doesn’t matter whether she is the daughter of your son or the daughter of your daughter—they are all a part of you!

11 “If your father and his wife have a daughter, she is your sister. You must not have sexual relations with her.

12 “You must not have sexual relations with your father’s sister. She is your father’s close relative.

13 You must not have sexual relations with your mother’s sister. She is your mother’s close relative. You must not have sexual relations with the wife of your father’s brother. You must not go near your uncle’s wife for sexual relations. She is your aunt.

15 “You must not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son’s wife, so you must not have sexual relations with her.

16 “You must not have sexual relations with your brother’s wife. That would be like having sexual relations with your brother.

17 “You must not have sexual relations with a mother and her daughter or her granddaughter. It doesn’t matter if this granddaughter is the daughter of this woman’s son or daughter. Her granddaughters are her close relatives. It is wrong to do this.

18 While your wife is still living, you must not take her sister as another wife. This will make the sisters become enemies. You must not have sexual relations with your wife’s sister.

19 “You must not go near a woman to have sexual relations with her during her monthly time of bleeding. She is unclean during this time.

20 “You must not have sexual relations with your neighbor’s wife. This will only make you filthy.

21 “You must not give any of your children through the fire to Molech. If you do this, you will show that you don’t respect the name of your God. I am the Lord.

22 “Men, you must not have sexual relations with another man as with a woman. That is a terrible sin!

23 “Men, you must not have sexual relations with any animal. This will make you filthy. And women, you must not have sexual relations with any animal. It is against nature!

24 “Don’t make yourself unclean by doing any of these wrong things! I am throwing nations off their land and giving it to you because they did those terrible sins. They made the land filthy. Now...
the land is sick of those things, and it will vomit out the people who live there.

26 “So you must obey my laws and rules. You must not do any of these terrible sins. These rules are for the citizens of Israel and the people living among you. 27 Those who lived in the land before you have done all these terrible things. So the land became filthy. 28 If you do these things, you will make the land filthy. And it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were there before you. 29 Whoever does any of these terrible sins must be separated from their people! 30 Other people have done these terrible sins, but you must obey my laws. You must not do any of these terrible sins. Do not make yourself filthy with these terrible sins. I am the Lord your God.”

Israel Belongs to God

19 The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Tell all the Israelites: I am the Lord your God. I am holy, so you must be holy.

3 “Each of you must honor your mother and father and keep my special days of rest. I am the Lord your God!

4 “Do not worship idols. Do not make statues of gods for yourselves. I am the Lord your God.

5 “When you offer a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the Lord, you must offer it in the right way so that you will be accepted. You may eat it the same day you offer it and on the next day. But if any of that sacrifice is left on the third day, you must burn it in the fire. 7 You must not eat any of that sacrifice on the third day. It will be unclean, and it will not be accepted. 8 You will be guilty of sin if you do that because you did not respect the holy things that belong to the Lord. If you do that, you will be separated from your people.

9 “When you cut your crops at harvest time, don’t cut all the way to the corners of your fields. And if grain falls on the ground, you must not gather up that grain. 10 Don’t pick all the grapes in your vineyards or pick up the grapes that fall to the ground. You must leave those things for your poor people and for people traveling through your country. I am the Lord your God.

11 “You must not steal. You must not cheat people. You must not lie to each other. 12 You must not use my name to make false promises. If you do that, you will show that you don’t respect the name of your God. I am the Lord!

13 “You must not cheat or rob your neighbor. You must not hold a hired worker’s salary overnight until morning.

14 “You must not curse anyone who is deaf. You must not do anything to make a blind person fall. But you must respect your God. I am the Lord.

15 “You must be fair in judgment. You must not show special favor to the poor. And you must not show special favor to important people. You must be fair when you judge your neighbor. 16 You must not go around spreading false stories against other people. Don’t do anything that would put your neighbor’s life in danger. I am the Lord.

17 “Don’t secretly hate any of your neighbors. But tell them openly what they have done wrong so that you will not be just as guilty of sin as they are. 18 Forget about the wrong things people do to you. Don’t try to get even. Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

19 “You must obey my laws. You must not let your animals mate with animals of a different kind. You must not sow your field with two kinds of seed. You must not wear clothing made from two kinds of material mixed together.

20 “It may happen that a man has sexual relations with a woman who is the slave of another man. But this slave woman has not been bought or given her freedom. If this happens, there must be punishment. But they will not be put to death because

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the woman was not free. 21 The man must bring his guilt offering to the LORD at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. He must bring a ram for a guilt offering. 22 The priest will make him pure by offering the ram as a guilt offering before the LORD. The offering is for the man’s sins, which will then be forgiven.

23 “In the future, when you enter your country, you will plant many kinds of trees for food. After planting a tree, you must wait three years before you can use any of the fruit from that tree. You must not use that fruit. 24 In the fourth year, the fruit from that tree will belong to the LORD, a holy offering of praise to him. 25 Then, in the fifth year, you can eat the fruit from that tree. And the tree will produce more and more fruit for you. I am the LORD your God.

26 “You must not eat any meat with blood still in it.

“You must not try to use different kinds of magic to tell the future.

27 “You must not round off the hair that grows on the side of your face. You must not cut your beard that grows on the side of your face. 28 You must not cut your body as a way to remember the dead. You must not make any tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.

29 “Do not dishonor your daughters by making them become prostitutes. If you do that, your whole country will turn away from God and be filled with all kinds of sinful things.

30 “You must not work on my special days of rest. You must honor my holy place. I am the LORD.

31 “Do not go to mediums or wizards for advice—they will only make you unclean. I am the LORD your God.

32 “Show honor to old people. Stand up when they come into the room. And show respect to your leaders. I am the LORD.

33 “Do not do bad things to foreigners living in your country. You must treat them the same as you treat your own citizens. Love them as you love yourselves.

Remember, you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God!

35 “You must be fair when you judge people, and you must be fair when you measure and weigh things. 36 Your baskets should be the right size. Your jars should hold the right amount of liquids. Your weights and balances should weigh things correctly. I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 “You must remember all my laws and rules. And you must obey them. I am the LORD.”

Warning Against Worshiping Idols

The LORD said to Moses, "You must also tell the Israelites these things: Anyone living in Israel who gives one of their children to the false god Molech must be killed! It doesn’t matter if they are a citizen of Israel or a foreigner, you must throw stones at them and kill them. I will be against them and separate them from their people, because they gave their children to Molech. They showed that they did not respect my holy name. And they made my holy place unclean. Maybe the common people will ignore them. Maybe they will not kill those who gave their children to Molech. But I will be against these people and their families. I will separate them from their people. I will separate anyone who is unfaithful to me and chases after Molech.

I will be against anyone who goes to mediums and wizards for advice. Whoever does this is being unfaithful to me. So I will separate them from their people.

Be special. Make yourselves holy, because I am the LORD your God. Remember and obey my laws. I am the LORD. And I have made you my special people.

Whoever curses their father or mother must be put to death. They cursed their father or mother, so they are responsible for their own death."
Punishments for Sexual Sins

10 “If a man has sexual relations with his neighbor’s wife, both the man and the woman are guilty of adultery and must be put to death! 11 If a man has sexual relations with his father’s wife, both the man and the woman must be put to death. They are responsible for their own death. It is as if that man had sexual relations with his father. 12 If a man has sexual relations with his daughter-in-law, both of them must be put to death. They have committed a terrible sexual sin! They are responsible for their own death.

13 “If a man has sexual relations with another man as with a woman, they have committed a terrible sin. They must be put to death. They are responsible for their own death.

14 “It is a sexual sin if a man has sexual relations with a woman and her mother. The people must burn that man and the two women in fire! Don’t let this sexual sin happen among your people.

15 “If a man has sexual relations with an animal, both the man and the animal must be put to death. 16 If a woman has sexual relations with an animal, you must kill the woman and the animal. They must be put to death. They are responsible for their own death.

17 “It is a shameful thing for a brother and his sister or half-sister to marry each other and have sexual relations with each other. They must be punished in public. They must be separated from their people. The man who has sexual relations with his sister must be punished for his sin.

18 “If a man has sexual relations with a woman during her monthly time of bleeding, both the woman and the man must be separated from their people. They sinned because they exposed her source of blood.

19 “You must not have sexual relations with your mother’s sister or your father’s sister. That is a sin of incest. You must be punished for your sins.

20 “A man must not have sexual relations with his uncle’s wife. It would be like having sexual relations with his uncle. That man and his uncle’s wife will be punished for their sins. They will die without children.

21 “It is wrong for a man to take his brother’s wife. It would be like having sexual relations with his brother! They will have no children.

22 “You must remember all my laws and rules. And you must obey them. I am leading you to your land. You will live in that country. If you obey my laws and rules, that land will not vomit you out. 23 I am forcing other people to leave that country because they committed all those sins. I hate those sins! So don’t live the way those people lived. 24 But I have told you that you will get their land. I will give their land to you. It will be your land! It is a land filled with many good things. I am the Lord your God.

“I have treated you differently from other people. 25 So you must treat clean animals differently from unclean animals. You must also treat clean birds differently from unclean birds. Don’t eat any of these unclean birds or animals or things that crawl on the ground. I have made these things unclean.

26 I have separated you from other nations to be my own special people. So you must be holy because I am the Lord, and I am holy.

27 “A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard must be put to death. The people must kill them with stones. They are responsible for their own death.”

20:11 They... death Literally, “Their blood is on them.” Also in verses 12, 13, 16, 27.
20:11 man... father Literally, “he uncovered his father’s nakedness.”
20:17 sexual relations with each other Literally, “he sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness.”
20:17 The man... sin Literally, “He will carry his guilt.”
20:19 have sexual relations with Literally, “uncover the nakedness of.” Also in verse 21.
20:19 incest Having sexual relations with a close relative.
20:19 You... sins Literally, “You will carry your guilt.”
20:20 That man... children Literally, “They must bear their childlessness. They will die.”
20:24 land... things Literally, “land flowing with milk and honey.”
The Lord said to Moses, “Tell these things to Aaron’s sons, the priests: A priest must not make himself unclean by touching a dead person. But if the dead person was one of his close relatives, he can touch the dead body. The priest can make himself unclean if the dead person is his mother or father, his son or daughter, his brother or his unmarried sister. (This sister is close to him because she has no husband. So the priest may make himself unclean for her if she dies.) But a priest must not make himself unclean if the dead person was only one of his slaves. 

Priests must not shave their heads bald. They must not shave off the edges of their beards. They must not make any cuts in their bodies. Priests must be holy for their God. They must show respect for God’s name. They offer the bread and special gifts to the Lord, so they must be holy.

A priest serves God in a special way, so he must not marry a woman who has had sexual relations with any other man. He must not marry a prostitute or a divorced woman. A priest serves God in a special way. So you must treat him in a special way, because he carries holy things. He brings the holy bread to me, and I am holy. I am the Lord, and I make you holy.

“The high priest was chosen from among his brothers. The anointing oil was poured on his head. In this way he was chosen for the special job of being high priest. He was chosen to wear the special clothes, so he must not do things to show his sadness in public. He must not let his hair grow wild. He must not tear his clothes. He must not make himself unclean by touching a dead body. He must not go near a dead body, even if it is his own father or mother.

If one of Aaron’s descendants has something wrong with him, he cannot approach the altar to bring gifts to the Lord. And he cannot carry the special bread to God. He is from the family of priests, so he can eat the holy bread. He can also eat the very holy bread. But he cannot go through the curtain into the Most Holy Place and he cannot go near the altar. This is because he has something wrong with him. He must not make my holy places unholy. I am the Lord, and I make these places holy.”

So Moses told these things to Aaron, Aaron’s sons, and all the Israelites.

The Lord God said to Moses, “Tell Aaron and his sons: The
gifts that the Israelites bring to me become holy. They belong to me, so you priests must show respect for these things. If you don’t, you will show that you don’t respect my holy name. I am the LORD. If any one of your descendants touches these things, that person will become unclean. That person must be separated from me. The Israelites gave these things to me. I am the LORD.

If any of your descendants touches these things, that person will become unclean. That person must be separated from me. The Israelites gave these things to me. I am the LORD.

If any of Aaron’s descendants has a serious skin disease or a discharge, he cannot eat the holy food until he becomes clean. This rule is for any priest who becomes unclean. That priest can become unclean from a dead body or from his own semen. He can also become unclean if he touches any unclean crawling animal. And he can become unclean if he touches an unclean person. It doesn’t matter what made that person unclean. If he touches any of these things, he will become unclean until evening. He must not eat any of the holy food. Even if he washes with water, he cannot eat the holy food. He will be clean only after the sun goes down. Then he can eat the holy food because it is his share.

A priest must not eat any animal that died by itself or that was killed by wild animals. If he eats that animal, he will be unclean. I am the LORD.

The priests must be very careful when it comes time to serve me. They must be careful not to dishonor the holy things. If they are careful, they will not die. I, the LORD, have separated them from the rest of the people for this special job. Only a priest’s family can eat the holy food. A visitor staying with the priest or a hired worker must not eat any of the holy food. But if the priest buys a person as a slave with his own money, that person may eat some of the holy things. Slaves who were born in the priest’s house may also eat some of the priest’s food. A priest’s daughter might marry a man who is not a priest. If she does that, she cannot eat any of the holy offerings. A priest’s daughter might become a widow, or she might be divorced. If she does not have any children to support her, and she goes back to her father’s house where she lived as a child, she can eat some of her father’s food. But only people from a priest’s family can eat this food.

Whoever eats some of the holy food by mistake must give the priest the price of that food and add another one-fifth of the price as a fine.

The Israelites will bring offerings to the LORD. These offerings become holy, so the priests must not let them be used in a wrong way. They must not let the people eat these offerings. If they do, they are guilty of doing wrong, and they must pay for it. I am the LORD, the one who makes these offerings holy.

The LORD God said to Moses, “Tell Aaron and his sons and all the Israelites: A citizen of Israel or a foreigner might want to bring an offering. It might be because of a promise that person made, or it might just be a special sacrifice that person wanted to give to the LORD as a burnt offering.

These are gifts that the people bring because they really want to give a gift to God. If the gift is a bull, or a sheep, or a goat, the animal must be a male. And it must not have anything wrong with it. You must not accept any offering that has anything wrong with it. I will not accept that gift.

You might bring a fellowship offering to the LORD. That fellowship offering might be payment for a special promise that you made. Or maybe it is a special gift that you wanted to give to the Lord. It can be a bull or a sheep, but it must be healthy. There must be nothing wrong with that animal. You must not offer to the LORD any animal that is blind, that has broken bones or is crippled, or that has a discharge or a serious skin disease. You must not offer sick animals as a gift to the LORD. You must not put anything like that on his altar.

Sometimes a bull or lamb will have a

—22:4 serious skin disease This could be leprosy, or it could be another kind of contagious skin disease. Also in verse 22.
leg that is too long, or a foot that did not grow right. If you want to give that animal as a special gift to the Lord, it will be accepted. But it will not be accepted as payment for a special promise that you made.

24 “If an animal has bruised, crushed, or torn testicles, you must not offer that animal to the Lord. You must not do this anywhere in your land.

25 “You must not take animals from foreigners as sacrifices to your God. The animals might have been hurt in some way. They might have something wrong with them, so they will not be accepted.”

26 The Lord said to Moses, 27 “When a calf, or a sheep, or a goat is born, it must stay seven days with its mother. Then from the eighth day on, this animal will be accepted as a sacrifice offered as a gift to the Lord. 28 But you must not kill the animal and its mother on the same day. This rule is the same for cattle and sheep.

29 “If you want to offer some special offering of thanks to the Lord, you are free to offer that gift. But you must do it in a way that pleases God. 30 You must eat the whole animal that day. You must not leave any of the meat for the next morning. I am the Lord.

31 “Remember my commands, and obey them. I am the Lord. 32 Show respect for my holy name. I must be very special to the Israelites. I, the Lord, have made you my special people. 33 I brought you out of Egypt in order to be your God. I am the Lord.”

The Special Festivals

23 The Lord said to Moses, 24 “Tell the Israelites: You will announce the Lord’s chosen festivals as holy meetings. These are my special festivals.

Sabbath

34 Work for six days, but the seventh day, the Sabbath, will be a special day of rest, a holy meeting. You must not do any work. It is a day of rest to honor the Lord in all your homes.

Passover

4 “These are the Lord’s chosen festivals. You will announce the holy meetings at the times chosen for them. 5 The Lord’s Passover is on the 14th day of the first month 6 just before dark.

Festival of Unleavened Bread

6 “The Lord’s Festival of Unleavened Bread is on the 15th day of the same month. You will eat unleavened bread for seven days. 7 On the first day of this festival, you will have a special meeting. You must not do any work on that day. 8 For seven days, you will bring sacrifices offered as gifts to the Lord. Then there will be another special meeting on the seventh day. You must not do any work on that day.”

Festival of the First Harvests

9 The Lord said to Moses, 10 “Tell the Israelites: You will enter the land that I will give you and reap its harvest. At that time you must bring in the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. 11 The priest will lift the sheaf to show it was offered before the Lord. Then you will be accepted. The priest will present the sheaf on Sunday morning. 12 “On the day when you present the sheaf, you will offer a one-year-old male lamb. There must be nothing wrong with that lamb. That lamb will be a burnt offering to the Lord. 13 You must also offer a grain offering of 16 cups of fine flour mixed with olive oil. You must also offer 1 quart of wine. The smell of that offering will please the Lord. 14 You must not eat any of the new grain, or fruit, or bread made from the new grain until you bring that offering to your God. This law will always continue through your generations, wherever you live.

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Festival of Harvest
15“From that Sunday morning (the day you bring the sheaf to be presented to God), count seven weeks. 16On the Sunday following the seventh week (that is, 50 days later), you will bring a new grain offering to the LORD. On that day bring two loaves of bread from your homes. That bread will be lifted up to show it was offered to God. Use yeast and 16 cups of flour to make those loaves of bread. That will be your gift to the LORD from your first harvest.

18“With these grain offerings bring one bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old male lambs for burnt offerings to the LORD. There must be nothing wrong with these animals. Offer them together with the grain offerings and the drink offerings. The smell of these offerings made by fire will be pleasing to the LORD. You will also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering.

20“The priest will lift them up with the bread from the first harvest to show they were offered with the two lambs before the LORD. They are holy to the LORD. They will belong to the priest. On that same day you will call a holy meeting. You must not do any work. This law continues forever in all your homes.

22“Also, when you harvest the crops on your land, don’t cut all the way to the corners of your field. Don’t pick up the grain that falls on the ground. Leave it for poor people and for foreigners traveling through your country. I am the LORD your God.”

Day of Atonement
26The LORD said to Moses, 27“The Day of Atonement will be on the tenth day of the seventh month. There will be a holy meeting. You must not eat food, and you must bring an offering as a gift to the LORD. 28You must not do any work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement. On that day the priests will go before the LORD and perform the ceremony that makes you pure.

29“Anyone who refuses to fast on this day must be separated from their people. 30If anyone does any work on this day, I will destroy that person from among the people. You must not do any work at all. This is a law that continues forever for you, wherever you live. It will be a special day of rest for you. You must not eat food. You will start this special day of rest on the evening following the ninth day of the month. This special day of rest continues from that evening until the next evening.”

Festival of Shelters
33Again the LORD said to Moses, 34“Tell the Israelites: On the 15th day of the seventh month is the Festival of Shelters. This festival to the LORD will continue for seven days.

35There will be a holy meeting on the first day. You must not do any work.

36You will bring offerings as gifts to the LORD for seven days. On the eighth day, you will have another holy meeting. You must not do any work. You will bring an offering as a gift to the LORD.

37“These are the LORD’s special festivals. There will be holy meetings during these festivals. You will bring offerings as gifts to the LORD—burnt offerings, grain offerings, sacrifices, and drink offerings. You will bring these gifts at the right time.

38You will celebrate these festivals in addition to remembering the LORD’s Sabbath days. You will offer these gifts in addition to your other gifts and any offerings you give as payment for your special promises.

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They will be in addition to any special offerings you want to give to the LORD.

39 “On the 15th day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you will celebrate the LORD’s festival for seven days. The first day will be a special day of rest, and then the eighth day will also be a special day of rest. 40 On the first day you will take good fruit from fruit trees. And you will take branches from palm trees, poplar trees, and willow trees by the brook. You will celebrate before the LORD your God for seven days.

41 You will celebrate this festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This law will continue forever. You will celebrate this festival in the seventh month.

42 You will live in temporary shelters for seven days. All the people born in Israel will live in them.

43 Why? So all your descendants will know that I made the Israelites live in temporary shelters during the time I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

44 So Moses told the Israelites about all the special meetings to honor the LORD.

The Lampstand and the Holy Bread

24 The LORD said to Moses, “Command the Israelites to bring to you pure oil from crushed olives. That oil is for the lamps that must burn without stopping. 2 Aaron will keep the light burning in the Meeting Tent before the LORD from evening until morning. This light will be outside the curtain that hangs in front of the Box that holds the Agreement. This law will continue forever. 4 Aaron must always keep the lamps burning on the lampstand of pure gold before the LORD.

5 Take fine flour and bake twelve loaves with it. Use 16 cups of flour for each loaf. 6 Put them in two rows on the golden table before the LORD. Six loaves will be in each row. 7 Put pure frankincense on each row. This will help the LORD remember the gift. 8 Every Sabbath day Aaron will put the bread in order before the LORD. This must be done forever. This agreement with the Israelites will continue forever. 9 That bread will belong to Aaron and his sons. They will eat the bread in a holy place, because that bread is one of the special gifts to the LORD. It is Aaron’s share forever.”

The Man Who Cursed God

10 There was a son of an Israelite woman and an Egyptian father. He was walking among the Israelites, and he started fighting in camp. 11 The Israelite woman’s son began cursing, using the Lord’s name in a bad way, so the people brought him to Moses. (The name of the man’s mother was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, from the tribe of Dan.) 12 The people held him as a prisoner and waited for the LORD’s command to be made clear to them.

13 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Bring the man who cursed to a place outside the camp. Then bring together everyone who heard him curse. They will put their hands on his head and then all the people must throw stones at him and kill him. 15 You must tell the Israelites: Anyone who curses their God must be punished. 16 Anyone who speaks against the name of the LORD must be put to death. All the people must stone him. Any foreigner or anyone born in Israel who uses the Lord’s name in a bad way must be put to death.

17 And whoever kills another person must be put to death. 18 Whoever kills an animal that belongs to another person must give another animal to take its place.

19 And whoever causes an injury to their neighbor must be given the same kind of injury: 20 a broken bone for a broken bone, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. The same kind of injury a person gives another person must be given that person. 21 Whoever kills an animal must pay for the animal. But whoever kills another person must be put to death.

22 The law will be the same for
foreigners and for people from your own country. This is because I am the LORD your God.”

23 Then Moses spoke to the Israelites, and they took the man who cursed to a place outside the camp. Then they killed him with stones. So the Israelites did just what the LORD had commanded Moses.

A Time of Rest for the Land

1 The LORD spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai. He said, 2 “Tell the Israelites: When you enter the land that I am giving to you, you must let the land have a special time of rest. This will be a special time of rest to honor the LORD. 3 You will plant seed in your field for six years. You will trim your vineyards for six years and bring in its fruits. 4 But during the seventh year, you will let the land rest. This will be a special time of rest to honor the LORD. You must not plant seed in your field or trim your vineyards. 5 You must not cut the crops that grow by themselves after your harvest. You must not gather the grapes from your vines that are not trimmed. The land will have a year of rest.

6 “The land will have a year of rest, but you will still have enough food. There will be enough food for your men and women servants. There will be food for your hired workers and for the foreigners living in your country. 7 And there will be enough food for your cattle and other animals to eat.

Jubilee—the Year of Release

8 You will also count seven groups of seven years. This will be 49 years. During that time there will be seven years of rest for the land. 9 On the Day of Atonement, you must blow a ram’s horn. That will be on the tenth day of the seventh month. You must blow the ram’s horn through the whole country. 10 You will make the 50th year a special year. You will announce freedom for everyone living in your country. This time will be called ‘Jubilee.’ Each of you will go back to your own property. 11 The 50th year will be a special celebration for you. Don’t plant seeds, don’t harvest the crops that grow by themselves, and don’t gather grapes from the vines that are not trimmed. 12 That year is Jubilee. It will be a holy time for you. You will eat the crops that come from the field. 13 In the year of Jubilee, you will go back to your own property.

14 “Don’t cheat your neighbors when you sell your land to them. Don’t cheat one another when you buy or sell land. 15 If you want to buy your neighbor’s land, count the number of years since the last Jubilee, and use that number to decide the right price. You are only buying the rights for harvesting crops until the next Jubilee. 16 If there are many years before the next Jubilee, the price will be high. If the years are few, the price will be lower. So your neighbor is really only selling a number of crops to you. 17 At the next Jubilee, the land will again belong to that family. 18 You must not cheat each other. You must honor your God. I am the LORD your God.

19 “Remember my laws and rules. Obey them and you will live safely in your country. 20 And the land will produce good crops for you. Then you will have plenty of food, and you will live safely on the land.

21 “But maybe you will say, ‘If we don’t plant seeds or gather our crops, we will not have anything to eat during the seventh year.’ 22 I will order my blessing to come to you during the sixth year. The land will continue growing crops for three years. 23 When you plant in the eighth year, you will still be eating from the old crop. You will eat the old crop until the ninth year, when the crop you planted in the eighth year comes in.

Property Laws

24 “The land really belongs to me, so you cannot sell it permanently. You are only to sell it to the family or tribe. A person might sell his land, but at Jubilee that land again belonged to the family and tribe that it was originally given to.

25:10 own property In Israel, the land belonged to the family and each of you will go back to your own property. 25:11 special celebration Literally, ‘Jubilee.’ See “Jubilee” in the Word List.
foreigners and travelers living on my land with me. 24 People might sell their land, but the family will always get their land back. 25 If someone in your country becomes very poor and must sell their property, a close relative must come and buy it back. 26 If there is not a close relative to buy back the land, the person might get enough money to buy it back. 27 Then the years must be counted since the land was sold. That number must be used to decide how much to pay for the land. The person must then buy back the land, and it will be their property again. 28 But if this first owner cannot find enough money to buy the land back, it will stay in the hands of the one who bought it until the year of Jubilee. Then during that special celebration, the land will go back to the first owner’s family. So the property will again belong to the right family.

29 “Anyone who sells a home in a walled city still has the right to get it back until a full year after it was sold. Their right to get the house back will continue one year. 30 But if the owner does not buy back the house before a full year is finished, the house that is in the walled city will belong to the one who bought it and to their descendants. The house will not go back to the first owner at the time of Jubilee. 31 Towns without walls around them will be treated like open fields. So houses built in these small towns will go back to the first owners at the time of Jubilee.

32 “But about the cities of the Levites: The Levites can buy back at any time their houses in the cities that belong to them. 33 If someone buys a house from a Levite, that house in the Levites’ city will again belong to the Levites at the time of Jubilee. This is because houses in Levite cities belong to those from the tribe of Levi. The Israelites gave these cities to the Levites. 34 Also, the fields and pastures around the Levite cities cannot be sold. They belong to the Levites forever.

Rules for Slave Owners

35 “If anyone from your own country becomes too poor to support themselves, you must let them live with you like a visitor. 36 Don’t charge them any interest on money you might loan to them. Respect your God and let those from your own country live with you. 37 Don’t charge them interest on any money you lend them. And don’t try to make a profit from the food you sell them. 38 I am the Lord your God. I brought you out of the land of Egypt to give the land of Canaan to you and to become your God.

39 “If anyone from your own country becomes so poor that they must sell themselves to you, don’t make them work like slaves. 40 They will be like hired workers and visitors with you until the year of Jubilee. 41 Then they can leave you, take their children, and go back to their family. They can go back to the property of their ancestors, because they are my servants. I brought them out of slavery in Egypt. They must not become slaves again. 42 You must not be a cruel master to them. You must respect your God.

44 “About your men and women slaves: You may get men and women slaves from the other nations around you. 45 Also, you may get children as slaves if they come from the families of the foreigners living in your land. These child slaves will belong to you. 46 You may even pass these foreign slaves on to your children after you die so that they will belong to them. They will be your slaves forever. You may make slaves of these foreigners. But you must not be a cruel master over your own brothers, the Israelites.

47 “Maybe a foreigner or visitor among you becomes rich. Or maybe someone from your own country becomes so poor that they sell themselves as slaves to a foreigner living among you or to a member of a foreigner’s family. 48 These people have the right to be bought back and become free. Someone from their own country can buy them back. 49 Or their uncle, their cousin, or one of their close relatives from their family can buy him back. Or if
they get enough money, they can pay the money themselves and become free again.

50 “You must count the years from the time they sold themselves to the foreigner up to the next year of Jubilee. Use that number to decide the price, because really the person only ‘hired’ them for a few years. 51 If there are still many years before the year of Jubilee, the one sold must give back a large part of the price. It all depends on the number of years. 52 If only a few years are left until the year of Jubilee, the one who was sold must pay a small part of the original price. 53 But that person will live like a hired worker with the foreigner every year. Don’t let the foreigner be a cruel master over that person.

54 “Those who sold themselves will become free, even if no one buys them back. At the year of Jubilee, they and their children will become free. 55 This is because the Israelites are my servants. They are the servants who I brought out of slavery in Egypt. I am the Lord your God!

Rewards for Obeying God

26 1 “Don’t make idols for yourselves. Don’t set up statues or memorial stones in your land to bow down to, because I am the Lord your God!

2 “Remember my special days of rest a and honor my holy place. I am the Lord.

3 “Remember my laws and commands, and obey them. 4 If you do these things, I will give you rains at the time they should come. The land will grow crops and the trees of the field will grow their fruit. 5 Your threshing will continue until it is time to gather grapes. And your grape gathering will continue until it is time to plant. Then you will have plenty to eat. And you will live safely in your land. 6 I will give peace to your country. You will lie down in peace. No one will come to make you afraid. I will keep harmful animals out of your country. And armies will not come through your country.

7 “You will chase your enemies and defeat them. You will kill them with your swords. 8 Five of you will chase 100 men, and 100 of you will chase 10,000 men. You will defeat your enemies and kill them with your sword.

9 “Then I will turn to you. I will let you have many children. I will keep my agreement with you. 10 You will have enough crops to last for more than a year. You will harvest the new crops. But then you will have to throw out the old crops to make room for the new crops. 11 Also, I will place my Holy Tent among you. I will not turn away from you. 12 I will walk with you and be your God. And you will be my people.

13 If I am the Lord your God. You were slaves in Egypt, but I brought you out of Egypt. You were bent low from the heavy weights you carried as slaves, but I broke the poles that were on your shoulders. I let you walk proudly again.

Punishment for Not Obeying God

14 “But if you don’t obey me and all my commands, bad things will happen to you.

15 If you refuse to obey my laws and commands, you have broken my agreement. 16 If you do that, I will cause terrible things to happen to you. I will cause you to have disease and fever. They will destroy your eyes and take away your life. You will not have success when you plant your seed. And your enemies will eat your crops. 17 I will be against you, so your enemies will defeat you. These enemies will hate you and rule over you. You will run away even when no one is chasing you.

18 “After these things, if you still don’t obey me, I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 And I will also destroy the great cities that make you proud. The skies will not give rain, and the earth will not produce crops. b 20 You will work hard, but it will not help. Your land will not give any crops, and your trees will not grow their fruit.

21 “If you still turn against me and refuse to obey me, I will beat you seven times

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harder! The more you sin, the more you will be punished. 22 I will send wild animals against you. They will take your children away from you. They will destroy your animals. They will kill many of your people. The roads will all be empty.

23 “If you don’t learn your lesson after all this, and if you still turn against me, 24 then I will also turn against you. I—yes, I myself—will punish you seven times for your sins. 25 You will have broken my agreement, so I will punish you. I will bring armies against you. You will go into your cities for safety, but I will cause diseases to spread among you. And your enemies will defeat you. 26 I will give you a share of the grain left in that city. But there will be very little food to eat. Ten women will be able to cook all their bread in one oven. They will measure each piece of bread. You will eat, but you will still be hungry.

27 “If you still refuse to listen to me, and if you still turn against me, 28 then I will really show my anger! I—yes, I myself—will punish you seven times for your sins. 29 You will become so hungry that you will eat the bodies of your sons and daughters. 30 I will destroy your high places. I will cut down your incense altars. I will put your dead bodies on the dead bodies of your idols. You will be disgusting to me. 31 I will destroy your cities. I will make your holy places empty. I will stop smelling your offerings. 32 I will make your land empty. And your enemies who come to live there will be shocked at it. 33 I will scatter you among the nations. I will pull out my sword and destroy you. Your land will become empty, and your cities will be destroyed.

34 “You will be taken to your enemy’s country. Your country will be empty. So your land will finally get its rest. The land will enjoy its time of rest. 35 During the time that the land is empty, it will get the time of rest that you did not give it while you lived there. 36 The survivors will lose their courage in the land of their enemies. They will be afraid of everything. They will run around like a leaf blown by the wind. They will run as if someone is chasing them with a sword. They will fall even when no one is chasing them. 37 They will run as if someone is chasing them with a sword. They will fall over each other—even when no one is chasing them.

“You will not be strong enough to stand up against your enemies. 38 You will be lost in other nations. You will disappear in the land of your enemies. 39 So the survivors will rot away in their sin in their enemies’ countries. They will rot away in their sins just as their ancestors did.

There Is Always Hope

40 “But maybe the people will confess their sins. And maybe they will confess the sins of their ancestors. Maybe they will admit that they turned against me. Maybe they will admit that they sinned against me. 41 Maybe they will admit that I turned against them and brought them into the land of their enemies. These people will be like strangers to me. But maybe they will become humble and accept the punishment for their sin. 42 If they do, I will remember my agreement with Jacob. I will remember my agreement with Isaac. I will remember my agreement with Abraham, and I will remember the land.

43 “The land will be empty. The land will enjoy its time of rest. Then the survivors will accept the punishment for their sins. They will learn that they were punished because they hated my laws and refused to obey my rules. 44 They have sinned. But if they come to me for help, I will not turn away from them. I will listen to them, even if they are in the land of their enemies. I will not completely destroy them. I will not break my agreement with them, because I am the LORD their God. 45 For them, I will remember the agreement with their ancestors. I brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt so that I could become their God. The other nations saw these things. I am the LORD.”

46 These are the laws, rules, and

\[26:41\] These people … humble Literally, “If they humble their uncircumcised heart.”
teachings that the Lord gave to the Israelites. These laws are the agreement between the Lord and the Israelites. The Lord gave these laws to Moses at Mount Sinai.

Promises Are Important

27 "The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites: You might promise to give someone to the Lord as a servant. The priest must set a price for that person. 3The price for a man from 20 to 60 years old is 50 shekels of silver. (You must use the official measure for the silver.) 4The price for a woman who is 20 to 60 years old is 30 shekels. 5The price for a man from 5 to 20 years old is 20 shekels. For a woman the price is 10 shekels. 6The price for a boy from one month to five years old is 5 shekels. For a girl, the price is 3 shekels. 7The price for a man who is 60 years old or older is 15 shekels. The price for a woman is 10 shekels.

8"If anyone is too poor to pay the price, bring that person to the priest. The priest will decide how much money the person can afford to pay.

Gifts to the Lord

9"You might promise to give an animal to the Lord. If it is a clean animal—one that is acceptable as an offering to the Lord—then the animal you bring will become holy. 10You must not put any other animal in its place. Don’t try to trade a good animal for a bad one or a bad animal for a good one. If you try to change animals, both animals will become holy—they will both belong to the Lord.

11"The animal you promised might be one that is not acceptable as an offering to the Lord. If you promised one of these unclean animals, you must bring it to the priest. 12The priest will decide a price for that animal. It doesn’t make any difference if the animal is good or bad. If the priest decides on a price, that is the price for the animal. 13If you want to buy back the animal, then you must add one-fifth to the price.

The Value of a House

14"If you dedicate your house as holy to the Lord, the priest must decide its price. It doesn’t make any difference if the house is good or bad. If the priest decides on a price, that is the price for the house. 15But if you want to get the house back, you must add one-fifth to the price. Then you will get the house back.

The Value of a Field

16"You might dedicate a field to the Lord. The value of this field will depend on how much seed is needed to plant it. It will be 50 shekels of silver for each homer of barley seed. 17If you give your field to God during the year of Jubilee, then its value will be whatever the priest decides. 18But if you give your field after the Jubilee, the priest must decide its exact price. He must count the number of years to the next year of Jubilee and use that number to decide the price. If you want to buy the field back, you must add one-fifth to that price. Then you will get the field back. 20If you don’t buy the field back and the land is sold to someone else, you cannot get the land back. 21If you don’t buy the land back by the year of Jubilee, the field will remain holy to the Lord—it will belong to the priest forever. It will be treated like any other thing that was given completely to the Lord.

22"If you dedicate a field to the Lord that you had bought, and it is not a part of your family’s property, then the priest must count the years to the year of Jubilee and decide the price for the land. Then that land will belong to the Lord. 24At the year of Jubilee, the land will go to the family that originally owned the land.

25"You must use the official measure

b 27:13 buy back the animal  See Ex. 13:1–16 for the laws about giving to God or “buying back” firstborn children or animals.

b 27:16 homer A measure equal to about 7 bushels or about 60 gallons (220 l).

b 27:22 family’s property In ancient Israel, land was given by God to the family, not the individual. Usually it could not be sold, only leased for up to 50 years.
in paying these prices. The shekel by that measure weighs 20 gerahs.\(^a\)

**Value of Animals**

26“You can give cattle and sheep as special gifts to the LORD. But if the animal is the firstborn, it already belongs to the LORD. So you cannot give these animals as special gifts. 27If the firstborn animal is an unclean animal, you must buy back that animal. The priest will decide the price of the animal, and you must add one-fifth to that price. If you don’t buy that animal back, the priest will sell the animal for whatever price he decides.

**Special Gifts**

28“There is a special kind of gift\(^b\) that people give to the LORD. It belongs only to him, and it cannot be bought back or sold. This gift belongs to the LORD. This type of gift includes people, animals, and fields from the family property. 29If this gift is a person, that person cannot be bought back. That person must be killed.

30“A tenth of all crops belongs to the LORD. This means the crops from fields and the fruit from trees—a tenth belongs to the LORD. 31So if you want to get back your tenth, you must add one-fifth to its price and then buy it back.

32“The priests will take every tenth animal from a person’s cattle or sheep. Every tenth animal will belong to the LORD. 33The owner should not worry if the chosen animal is good or bad or change the animal for another animal. If this happens, both animals will belong to the LORD. That animal cannot be bought back.”

34These are the commands that the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

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\(^a\) 27:25 gerahs 1/50 of an ounce (.6 g).

\(^b\) 27:28 special kind of gift. This usually means things taken in war. These things (gifts) belonged only to the Lord, so they could not be used for anything else.
The Lord spoke to Moses in the Meeting Tent. This was in the desert of Sinai. It was on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites left Egypt. He said to Moses: "Count all the Israelites. List the name of each man with his family and his family group. You and Aaron must count the men of Israel who are 20 years old or older. (These are all the men who are able to serve in the army of Israel.) List them by their divisions. One man from each tribe will help you. This man will be the leader of his tribe. These are the names of the men who will stand with you and help you:

- from the tribe of Reuben—Elizur son of Shedeur;
- from the tribe of Simeon—Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;
- from the tribe of Judah—Nahshon son of Amminadab;
- from the tribe of Issachar—Nethanel son of Zuar;
- from the tribe of Zebulun—Eliab son of Helon;
- from the descendants of Joseph:
  - from the tribe of Ephraim—Elishama son of Ammihud;
  - from the tribe of Manasseh—Gamaliel son of Pedahzur;
- from the tribe of Benjamin—Abidan son of Gideoni;
- from the tribe of Dan—Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai;
- from the tribe of Asher—Pagiel son of Ocran;
- from the tribe of Gad—Eliasaph son of Deuel;  
- from the tribe of Naphtali—Ahira son of Enan."

All these men were the leaders of their families. The people also chose them to be leaders of their tribes. Moses and Aaron took the men who had been chosen to be leaders and called all the Israelites together on the first day of the second month. Then the people were listed by their families and their family groups. All the men who were 20 years old or older were listed. Moses did exactly what the Lord commanded—he counted the people while they were in the desert of Sinai. The tribe of Reuben was counted. (Reuben was the firstborn son of Israel.) The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. The total number of men counted from the tribe of Reuben was 46,500.

The tribe of Simeon was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. The total number of men counted from the tribe of Simeon was 59,300.

The tribe of Gad was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. The total number of men counted from the tribe of Gad was 45,650.

The tribe of Judah was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.
The number of men counted from the tribe of Judah was 74,600.

The tribe of Issachar was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

The total number of men counted from the tribe of Issachar was 54,400.

The tribe of Zebulun was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

The total number of men counted from the tribe of Zebulun was 57,400.

The tribe of Ephraim was counted. (Ephraim was Joseph’s son.) The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

The total number of men counted from the tribe of Ephraim was 40,500.

The tribe of Manasseh was counted. (Manasseh was also Joseph’s son.) The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

The total number of men counted from the tribe of Manasseh was 32,200.

The tribe of Benjamin was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

The total number of men counted from the tribe of Benjamin was 35,400.

The tribe of Dan was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

The total number of men counted from the tribe of Dan was 62,700.

The tribe of Asher was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

The total number of men counted from the tribe of Asher was 41,500.

The tribe of Naphtali was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed by name with their families and family groups.

The total number of men counted from the tribe of Naphtali was 53,400.

Moses, Aaron, and the twelve leaders of Israel counted these men. (There was one leader from each tribe.) They counted every man who was 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army. Each man was listed with his family.

The total number of men counted was 603,550 men.

The families from the tribe of Levi were not counted with the other Israelites.

The Lord had told Moses:

“Don’t count the men from the tribe of Levi or include them with the other Israelites.

Tell the Levites that they are responsible for the Tent of the Agreement. They must take care of that tent and everything that is with it. They must carry the Holy Tent and everything in it. They must make their camp around it and take care of it.

Whenever the Holy Tent is moved, the Levites must do it. Whenever the Holy Tent is set up, the Levites must do it. They are the men who will take care of the Holy Tent. Anyone else who tries to take care of the tent must be killed.

The Israelites will make their camps in separate divisions. Everyone must camp near their family flag. The Levites will set up their tents so that they surround the Tent of the Agreement. They will serve as guards and keep the people away from the Tent. This
will protect the Israelites from the Lord’s anger.”

54 The Lord had given these commandments to Moses. So the Israelites did everything he commanded.

The Camp Arrangement

1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron:
2 “The Israelites should make their camps around the Meeting Tent. Each division will have its own special flag, and everyone will camp near their group’s flag.
3 “The flag of the camp of Judah will be on the east side, where the sun rises. The people of Judah will camp near its flag. The leader of the people of Judah is Nahshon son of Amminadab. 4 There are 74,600 men in his division.
5 “The tribe of Issachar will camp next to the tribe of Judah. The leader of the tribe of Issachar is Nethanel son of Zuar. 6 There are 54,400 men in his division.
7 “The tribe of Zebulun will also camp next to the tribe of Judah. The leader of the tribe of Zebulun is Eliab son of Helon. 8 There are 57,400 men in his division.
9 “The total number of men in Judah’s camp is 186,400. All these men are divided into their different tribes. Judah will be the first group to move when the people travel from one place to another.
10 “The flag of Reuben’s camp will be south of the Holy Tent. Each group will camp near its flag. The leader of the tribe of Reuben is Elizur son of Shedeur. 11 There are 46,500 men in this division.
12 “The tribe of Simeon will camp next to the tribe of Reuben. The leader of the tribe of Simeon is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. 13 There are 59,300 men in this division.
14 “The tribe of Gad will also camp next to the tribe of Reuben. The leader of the tribe of Gad is Eliasaph son of Deuel. 15 There are 45,650 men in this division.
16 “The total number of men in all the divisions of Reuben’s camp is 151,450. His camp will be the second group to move when the people travel from place to place.
17 “When the people travel, Levi’s camp will move next. The Meeting Tent will be with them between the other camps. The people will make their camps in the same order that they move.
18 “The flag of the camp of Ephraim will be on the west side. The division of Ephraim will camp there. The leader of the tribe of Ephraim is Elishama son of Ammihud. 19 There are 40,500 men in this division.
20 “The tribe of Manasseh will camp next to Ephraim’s family. The leader of the tribe of Manasseh is Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. 21 There are 32,200 men in this division.
22 “The tribe of Benjamin will also camp next to Ephraim’s family. The leader of the tribe of Benjamin is Abidan son of Gideoni. 23 There are 35,400 men in this division.
24 “The total number of men in Ephraim’s camp is 108,100. They will be the third family to move when the people travel from one place to another.
25 “The flag of Dan’s camp will be on the north side. The tribes of Dan will camp there. The leader of the tribe of Dan is Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. 26 There are 62,700 men in this division.
27 “The people from the tribe of Asher will camp next to the tribe of Dan. The leader of the tribe of Asher is Pagiel son of Ocran. 28 There are 41,500 men in this division.
29 “The tribe of Naphtali will also camp next to the tribe of Dan.

q 2:14 Deuel Or “Reuel.”
The leader of the tribe of Naphtali is Ahira son of Enan. There are 53,400 men in this division.

There are 157,600 men in Dan’s camp. They will be the last to move when the people travel from place to place. Each group will have its own flag.”

So these were the Israelites. They were counted by families. The total number of Israelite men in the camps, counted by divisions, is 603,550. Moses obeyed the LORD and did not count the Levites with the other Israelites.

So the Israelites did everything the LORD told Moses. Each group camped under its own flag. And everyone stayed with their own family and family group.

Aaron’s Family, the Priests

This is the family history of Aaron and Moses at the time the LORD talked to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Aaron had four sons. Nadab was the firstborn son. Then there were Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. These sons were the chosen priests. They were given the special work of serving the LORD as priests.

But Nadab and Abihu died while serving the LORD. They used fire that the LORD did not allow when they made an offering to him. So Nadab and Abihu died there, in the desert of Sinai. They had no sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar took their place and served the LORD as priests. This happened while their father Aaron was still alive.

Levites—the Priests’ Helpers

The LORD said to Moses, “Bring all the men from the tribe of Levi. Bring them to Aaron the priest. These men will be his helpers. The Levites will help him when he serves at the Meeting Tent. And they will help all the Israelites when they come to worship at the Holy Tent. The Israelites should protect everything in the Meeting Tent; it is their duty. But the Levites will serve the Israelites by caring for these things. This will be their way of serving at the Holy Tent.

“Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons. The Levites were chosen from all the Israelites to help Aaron and his sons.

“Appoint Aaron and his sons to be priests. They must do their duty and serve as priests. Anyone else who tries to come near the holy things must be killed.”

The LORD also said to Moses, “I destroyed all the firstborn in Egypt. At that time I chose all the firstborn from every family in Israel to be mine in a special way. That included all the firstborn men and animals. But now I am choosing the Levites to take their place. Now they will be my special servants. I, the LORD, give this command!”

The LORD again said to Moses in the desert of Sinai, “Count all the families and family groups in the tribe of Levi. Count every man or boy who is one month old or older.” So Moses obeyed the LORD. He counted them all.

Levi had three sons. Their names were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Each son was the leader of several family groups.

The Gershon family groups were Libni and Shimei.

The Kohath family groups were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

The Merari family groups were Mahli and Mushi.

These are the families that belonged to Levi’s family group.

The families of Libni and Shimei belonged to the family of Gershon. They were the Gershonite family groups.

There were 7500 men and boys over one month old in these two family groups.

The Gershonite family groups were told to camp in the west. They made their camp behind the Holy Tent. The leader of the family groups of the Gershonites was Eliasaph son of Lael. In the Meeting Tent, the Gershonites had the job of taking care of the Holy Tent, the outer tent, and the covering. They also took care of

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*a* 3:3 chosen Or “anointed.” See “anoint” in the Word List.

*b* 3:10 tries … holy things Or “tries to serve as a priest.”
the curtain at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. They cared for the curtain in the courtyard. And they cared for the curtain at the entrance of the courtyard. This courtyard was around the Holy Tent and the altar. And they cared for the ropes and for everything that was used with the curtains.

27 The families of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel belonged to the family of Kohath. They were the Kohathite family groups. 28 In this family group there were 8300 men and boys a month old or over. The Kohathites were given the job of taking care of the things in the Holy Place. 29 The Kohathite family groups were given the area to the south of the Holy Tent. This was the area where they camped. 30 The leader of the Kohathite family groups was Elizaphan son of Uzziel. 31 Their job was to take care of the Holy Box, the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the dishes of the Holy Place. They also cared for the curtain and all the things that were used with the curtain.

32 The leader over the leaders of the Levites was Eleazar son of Aaron the priest. Eleazar was in charge of everyone who took care of the holy things.

33–34 The family groups of Mahli and Mushi belonged to the Merari family. There were 6200 men and boys who were one month old or older in the Mahli family group. 35 The leader of the Merari family group was Zuriel son of Abihail. This family group was given the area to the north of the Holy Tent. This is the area where they camped. 36 The people from the Merari family were given the job of caring for the frames of the Holy Tent. They cared for all the braces, posts, bases, and everything that was used with the frames of the Holy Tent. 37 They also cared for all the posts in the courtyard around the Holy Tent. This included all the bases, tent pegs, and ropes.

38 Moses, Aaron, and his sons camped east of the Holy Tent, in front of the Meeting Tent. They were given the work of caring for the Holy Place. They did this for all the Israelites. Anyone else who came near the Holy Place was to be killed.

39 The Lord commanded Moses and Aaron to count all the men and boys one month old or older in Levi’s family group. The total number was 22,000.

Levites Take the Place of the Firstborn

40 The Lord said to Moses, “Count all the firstborn men and boys in Israel who are at least one month old. Write their names on a list. 41 I am the Lord. I will take the Levites instead of all the firstborn men and boys of Israel. I will also take the animals from the Levites instead of taking all the firstborn animals from the other people in Israel.”

42 So Moses did what the Lord commanded. He counted all the firstborn children of the Israelites. 43 He listed all the firstborn men and boys who were one month old or older. There were 22,273 names on that list.

44 The Lord also said to Moses, 45 “I, the Lord, give this command: ‘Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn men from the other families of Israel. And I will take the animals of the Levites instead of the animals of the other people. The Levites are mine. 46 There are 22,000 Levites, but there are 22,273 firstborn sons from the other families. This leaves 273 more firstborn sons than Levites. 47 Using the official measure, collect five shekelsb of silver for each of the 273 people. (The shekel by the official measure weighs 20 gerahsc.) Collect that silver from the Israelites. 48 Give the silver to Aaron and his sons as payment for the 273 Israelites.’ ”

49 There were not enough Levites to take the place of all the men from the other family groups, so Moses gathered the money for them. 50 Moses collected the silver from the firstborn men of the Israelites. He collected 1365 shekeld of silver, using the official measure. 51 Moses obeyed the Lord’s command and gave the silver...
to Aaron and his sons. He did it just as the Lord had told him.

The Jobs of the Kohath Family

1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 2 Count the men in the families of the Kohath family group. (The Kohath family group is a part of Levi’s family group.) 3 Count all the men from 30 to 50 years old who come to serve. These men will work in the Meeting Tent. 4 Their job is to take care of the most holy things in the Meeting Tent.

5 “When the Israelites travel to a new place, Aaron and his sons must go into the Meeting Tent and take down the curtain and cover the Box of the Agreement with it. 6 Then they must cover all of this with covering made from fine leather. Then they must spread the solid blue cloth over the leather and put the poles in the rings on the Holy Box.

7 Then they must spread a blue cloth over the holy table. Then they must put the plates, spoons, bowls, and the jars for drink offerings on the table. Put the special bread on the table. 8 Then you must put a red cloth over all these things, cover everything with fine leather, and put the poles in the rings of the table.

9 “Then they must cover the lampstand and its lamps with a blue cloth. They must also cover all the things used to keep the lamps burning and all the jars of oil that are used in the lamps. 10 Then wrap everything in fine leather. Then they must put all these things on poles used for carrying them.

11 “They must spread a blue cloth over the golden altar. They must cover that with fine leather. Then they must put the poles for carrying it in the rings on the altar.

12 “Then they must gather together all the special things that are used for worship in the Holy Place. They must gather them together and wrap them in a blue cloth. Then they must cover that with fine leather. They must put these things on a frame for carrying them.

13 “They must clean the ashes out of the bronze altar and spread a purple cloth over it. 14 Then they must gather together all the things that are used for worship at the altar. These are the firepans, forks, shovels, and the bowls. They must put these things on the bronze altar. Then they must spread a covering of fine leather over the altar and put the poles for carrying it in the rings on the altar.

15 “Aaron and his sons must finish covering all the holy things in the Holy Place. Then the men from the Kohath family can go in and begin carrying these things. In this way they will not touch the holy things and die.

16 Eleazar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for the Holy Tent. He will be responsible for everything in it, including the holy things. He will be responsible for the oil for the lamp, the sweet-smelling incense, the daily offering, and the anointing oil.”

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 17 Be careful! Don’t let these Kohathite men be destroyed. 18 You must do these things so that the Kohathite men can go near the most holy things and not die. Aaron and his sons must go in and show each Kohathite man what to do and what to carry. 19 If you don’t do this, the Kohathite men might go in and look at the holy things. If they look at these things, even for a moment, they must die.”

The Jobs of the Gershon Family

21 The Lord said to Moses, 22 Count all the people of the Gershon family. List them by family and family group. 23 Count all the men who are from 30 to 50 years old who come to serve. These men will have the job of caring for the Meeting Tent.

24 “This is what the Gershonite family must do and the things they must carry: 25 They must carry the curtains of the Holy Tent, the Meeting Tent, its covering, and the covering made from fine leather. They must also carry the curtain at the entrance

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4:16 daily offering Offerings that were made twice each day as a gift to God.
of the Meeting Tent. 26 They must carry the curtains of the courtyard that are around the Holy Tent and the altar. And they must carry the curtain for the entrance of the courtyard. They must also carry all the ropes and all the things that are used with the curtains. The Gershonite men will be responsible for anything that needs to be done with these things. 27 Aaron and his sons will watch all the work that is done. Everything the Gershonites carry and the other work they do will be watched by Aaron and his sons. You must tell them what they are responsible for carrying.

This is the work that the men of the Gershonite family group must do for the Meeting Tent. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for their work.”

The Jobs of the Merari Family

29 “Count all the men in the families and family groups in the Merari family group. 30 Count all the men who are from 30 to 50 years old and come to serve. These men will do a special work for the Meeting Tent. 31 When you travel, it is their job to carry the frames of the Meeting Tent. They must carry the braces, the posts, and the bases. 32 They must also carry the posts that are around the courtyard. They must carry the bases, the tent pegs, the ropes, and everything that is used for the poles around the courtyard. List the names and tell each man exactly what he must carry. 33 This is what the people from the Merari family will do to serve in the work for the Meeting Tent. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for their work.”

The Levite Families

34 Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the Israelites counted the Kohathites. They counted them by families and family groups. 35 They counted all the men from 30 to 50 years old who were able to serve. These men were given special work to do for the Meeting Tent. 36 There were 2750 men in the Kohath family group who were qualified to do this work. 37 So these men from the Kohath family group were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent. Moses and Aaron did this the way the LORD had told Moses to do.

38 Also, the Gershonite family group was counted. 39 All the men from 30 to 50 years old who qualified to serve were counted. These men were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent. 40 There were 2630 men in the families of the Gershon family group who were qualified. 41 So these men from the Gershon family group were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent. Moses and Aaron did this the way the LORD had told Moses to do.

42 Also, the men in the families and family groups of the Merari family were counted. 43 All the men from 30 to 50 years old who qualified to serve were counted. These men were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent. 44 There were 3200 men in the families of the Merari family group who were qualified. 45 So these men from the Merari family group were given their special work. Moses and Aaron did this the way the LORD told Moses to do.

46 So Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the Israelites counted all the people in Levi’s family group. They had counted each family and each family group. 47 All the men between the ages of 30 and 50 who qualified to serve were counted. These men were given a special work to do for the Meeting Tent. They did the work of carrying the Meeting Tent when they traveled. 48 The total number was 8580. 49 Each man was counted just as the LORD commanded Moses. Each man was given his own work and told what he must carry just as the LORD had said.

Rules About Cleanliness

5 The LORD said to Moses, 2 “Tell the people to send away from the camp anyone who is unclean, that is, anyone who has a serious skin disease or

footnote: 5:2 serious skin disease This could be leprosy, or it could be another kind of contagious skin disease.
discharge and anyone who has touched a dead body. 3 Whether they are a man or a woman, send them away so that the camp where I am living among you will not be made unclean.”

4 So the Israelites obeyed God’s command. They sent those people outside the camp. They did what the LORD had told Moses.

Paying for Doing Wrong

5 The LORD said to Moses, “Tell this to the Israelites: You might do something wrong to another person. When you do that, you are really sinning against God. So you are guilty of doing wrong. 6 You must confess that sin. Then you must fully pay for that wrong thing you did. You must add one-fifth to the payment and give it all to the person you had done wrong to. 7 But maybe the person is dead and does not have any close relatives to accept the payment. In that case, you will give the payment to the LORD. That is, you will give the full payment to the priest. The priest must sacrifice the ram that makes people pure. This ram will be sacrificed to cover over your sins, but the priest will keep the rest of the payment.

9 “If any of you Israelites gives a special gift to God, the priest who accepts that gift can keep it. It is his. 10 You don’t have to give these special gifts, but if you do, the gifts belong to the priest.”

Jealous Husbands

11 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites this: A man’s wife might be unfaithful to him. 12 She might have sexual relations with another man and hide this from her husband. And there might not be anyone to tell him that his wife committed this sin. Her husband might never know about the wrong thing she did, and she might not tell her husband about her sin. 14 But the husband might begin to think that his wife sinned against him, whether she has or not. He might become jealous. He might begin to believe that she is not pure and true to him. 15 If that happens, he must take his wife to the priest. The husband must also take an offering of 8 cups of barley flour. He must not pour oil or incense on the barley flour. This barley flour is a grain offering to the LORD that is given because the husband is jealous. This offering will show that he thinks his wife has been unfaithful to him.

16 “The priest will take the woman before the LORD and make her stand there. 17 Then he will take some special water and put it in a clay jar. He will put some dirt from the floor of the Holy Tent into the water. 18 He will force the woman to stand before the LORD. Then he will loosen her hair and put the grain offering in her hand. This is the barley flour that her husband gave because he was jealous. At the same time, he will hold the clay jar of special water. This is the special water that can bring trouble to the woman.

19 “Then the priest will make the woman promise to tell the truth and say to her: ‘If you have not slept with another man, and if you have not sinned against your husband while you were married to him, then this water that causes trouble will not hurt you. 20 But if you have sinned against your husband—if you had sexual relations with a man who is not your husband—then you are not pure. 21 If that is true, you will have much trouble when you drink this special water. You will not be able to have any children. And if you are pregnant now, your baby will die. And the LORD will cause your people to speak evil of you and curse you.’”

22 Then the priest must tell the woman to make an oath. She must agree for the LORD to cause these things to happen to her if she lies. 23 The priest must say, ‘You must drink this water that causes trouble. If you have sinned, you will not be able to have children. Any baby you have will die before it is born.’ And the woman should say, ‘I agree to do as you say.’

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the words off into the water. 24 Then the woman must drink the water that brings trouble. This water will enter her and, if she is guilty, it will cause her much suffering.

25 "Then the priest will take the grain offering from her (the offering for jealousy) and raise it before the LORD. Then he will carry it to the altar. 26 The priest will fill his hands with some of the grain and put it on the altar and let it burn there. After that he will tell the woman to drink the water. 27 If the woman has sinned against her husband, the water will go into her body and cause her much suffering. Any baby that is in her will die before it is born, and she will never be able to have children. All the people will turn against her.

28 But if the woman has not sinned against her husband and she is pure, the priest will say that she is not guilty. Then she will be normal and able to have children.

29 "So this is the law about jealousy. This is what you should do when a woman sins against her husband while she is married to him. 30 Or if the man becomes jealous and thinks his wife has sinned against him, this is what the man should do. The priest must tell her to stand before the LORD. Then the priest will do all these things. This is the law. 31 The husband will not be guilty of doing anything wrong, but the woman will suffer if she has sinned."

Nazirites

6 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Tell the Israelites this: If there are people, men or women, who want to make a vow dedicating themselves to the LORD as Nazirites for a time, this is what they must do: They must stay away from wine or other strong drink. They must not drink vinegar that is made from wine or from other strong drink. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. 4 During that special time of dedication, they must not eat anything that comes from grapes. They must not even eat the seeds or the skins from grapes.

5 The whole time of their Nazirite vow they must not cut their hair. They must be holy until this time of special dedication to the LORD is ended. They must let their hair grow long.

6 "If you have taken the Nazirite vow, you must not go near someone who is dying during that special time of dedication. You have given yourself fully to the LORD, so you must not let yourself become unclean like this—even for your own father or mother, brother or sister when they die. This is because you have the hair that you dedicated to God on your head! It is holy because you have given yourself fully to the LORD for the full time of that dedication. 9 So if you are with someone when they suddenly die, you will be unclean and you will have to shave the hair from your head. You must do that on the seventh day of your purification ceremony when you are made clean. 10 Then on the eighth day, you must bring two doves or two young pigeons and give them to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. 11 Then the priest will offer one bird as a sin offering and the other one as a burnt offering. The burnt offering will be a payment for the sin of touching a dead body during your special time of dedication. Then you must again promise to give the hair on your head as a gift to God. 12 This means you must again give yourself to the LORD for another time of dedication. You must bring a one-year-old male lamb to offer as a guilt offering. You must start over from the beginning with a new time of dedication because you touched a dead body during your first time of dedication.

13 "After their time of dedication is ended, Nazirites must go to the entrance of the Meeting Tent and give their offering to the LORD. Their offering must be: a one-year-old male lamb that has nothing wrong with it for a burnt offering;

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a one-year-old female lamb that has nothing wrong with it for a sin offering;
one ram that has nothing wrong with it for a fellowship offering;
a basket of bread made without yeast—bread made with fine flour mixed with oil and wafers with oil spread on top;and the grain offerings and drink offerings that are a part of these gifts.

16 “The priest will give these things to the LORD, and then the priest will make the sin offering and the burnt offering. He will give the basket of bread without yeast to the LORD. Then he will kill the ram as a fellowship offering to the Lord. He will give it to the Lord with the grain offering and the drink offering.

17 The Nazirites must go to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. There they must shave off their hair that they grew as a dedication to the Lord. That hair will be put in the fire that is burning under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering.

18 “After the Nazirites have cut off their hair, the priest will give them a boiled shoulder from the ram and a large and a small cake from the basket. Both of these cakes are made without yeast. Then the priest will lift these things up to show that they were presented before the Lord. These things are holy and belong to the priest. Also, the ram’s breast and thigh that were lifted up and presented belong to the priest. After that the Nazirites can drink wine.

19 “These are the rules for those who decide to make the Nazirite vow. They must give all these gifts to the LORD. But they might be able to give much more. If they promise to do more, they must keep their promise. But they must give at least all the things listed in these rules for the Nazirite vow.”

The Priests’ Blessings

22 The LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron and his sons that when they bless the Israelites, this is what they should say:
24 ‘May the LORD bless you and keep you.
25 May the LORD smile down on you and show you his kindness.
26 May the LORD answer your prayers and give you peace.’
27 In this way Aaron and his sons will use my name to give a blessing to the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

Dedicating the Holy Tent

1 Moses finished setting up the Holy Tent. On that day he dedicated it to God. Moses anointed the Tent and everything in it. He also anointed the altar and all the things used with it.

2 Then the leaders of Israel gave offerings to God. These men were the heads of their families and leaders of their tribes. These were the same men who were in charge of counting the people. These leaders brought gifts and gave them to the LORD in front of the Holy Tent. They brought six covered wagons and twelve oxen for pulling the wagons. Each leader gave an ox and joined with another leader to give a wagon.

4 The LORD said to Moses, “Accept these gifts from the leaders. These gifts can be used in the work of the Meeting Tent. Give them to the Levites to help them do their work.”

6 So Moses accepted the wagons and the oxen and gave them to the Levites.
7 He gave two wagons and four oxen to the men in Gershon’s group. They needed the wagons and oxen for their work.
8 Then Moses gave four wagons and eight oxen to the men in Merari’s group. They needed the wagons and oxen for their work. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest was responsible for the work of all these men.
9 Moses did not give any oxen or wagons to the men in Kohath’s group, because their
job was to carry the holy things on their shoulders.

10 When Moses anointed the altar, the leaders brought offerings for its dedication. They gave their offerings to the Lord at the altar. 11 The Lord told Moses, “Each day one leader must bring his gift for the dedication of the altar.”

12–83 a Each of the twelve leaders brought these gifts:

Each leader brought one silver plate that weighed about 3 1/4 pounds. b Each leader brought one silver bowl that weighed about 1 3/4 pounds. c Both of these gifts were weighed by the official measure. The bowl and the plate were each filled with fine flour mixed with oil. This was to be used as a grain offering. Each leader also brought a large gold spoon that weighed about 4 ounces. d The spoon was filled with incense.

Each leader also brought 1 young bull, 1 ram, and 1 male lamb a year old. These animals were for a burnt offering. Each leader also brought 1 male goat to be used as a sin offering. Each leader also brought 1 male goat to be used as a sin offering. Each leader also brought 1 male goat to be used as a sin offering. Each leader also brought 1 male goat to be used as a sin offering. Each leader also brought 1 male goat to be used as a sin offering. Each leader also brought 1 male goat to be used as a sin offering.

On the first day, the leader of the tribe of Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab brought his gifts.

On the second day, the leader of the tribe of Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar brought his gifts.

On the third day, the leader of the tribe of Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon brought his gifts.

On the fourth day, the leader of the tribe of Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur brought his gifts.

On the fifth day, the leader of the tribe of Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai brought his gifts.

On the sixth day, the leader of the tribe of Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel e brought his gifts.

On the seventh day, the leader of the tribe of Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud brought his gifts.

On the eighth day, the leader of the tribe of Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur brought his gifts.

On the ninth day, the leader of the tribe of Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideoni brought his gifts.

On the tenth day, the leader of the tribe of Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai brought his gifts.

On the eleventh day, the leader of the tribe of Asher, Pagiel son of Ocran brought his gifts.

On the twelfth day, the leader of the tribe of Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan brought his gifts.

84 So all these things were the gifts from the leaders of the Israelites. They brought them during the time that Moses dedicated the altar by anointing it. They brought 12 silver plates, 12 silver bowls, and 12 gold spoons. 85 Each silver plate weighed about 3 1/4 pounds. And each bowl weighed about 1 3/4 pounds. The silver plates and the silver bowls together all weighed about 60 pounds, f using the official measure. 86 The 12 gold spoons filled with incense weighed 4 ounces each, using the official measure. The 12 gold spoons all together weighed about 3 pounds. g

87 The total number of animals for the burnt offering was 12 bulls, 12 rams, and 12 one-year-old male lambs. There were also the grain offerings that must be given with these offerings. And there were 12 male goats to be used for a sin offering. 88 The leaders also gave animals to be killed and used as a fellowship offering. The total number of these animals was 24 bulls, 60 rams, 60 male goats, and 60 one-year-old male lambs. In this way they dedicated the altar after Moses anointed it.

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When Moses went into the Meeting Tent to speak to the Lord, he heard the Lord’s voice speaking to him. The voice was coming from the area between the two Cherub angels on the mercy-cover on top of the Box of the Agreement. In this way the Lord spoke to Moses.

The Lampstand

1 The Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron to put the seven lamps in the place I showed you. These lamps will light the area in front of the lampstand.”

2 Aaron did this. He put the lamps in the right place so that they lighted the area in front of the lampstand. He obeyed the command that the Lord gave Moses.

3 This is how the lampstand was made: It was made from hammered gold, all the way from the gold base at the bottom to the gold flowers at the top. It looked just like the pattern that the Lord had shown to Moses.

Dedicating the Levites

4 The Lord said to Moses, “Separate the Levites from the other Israelites. Make these Levites clean.

5 This is what you should do to make them clean: Sprinkle the special water from the sin offering on them. This water will make them clean. Then they must shave their bodies and wash their clothes. This will make their bodies clean.

6 “They must take a young bull and the grain offering that must be offered with it. This grain offering will be flour mixed with oil. Then take another young bull for a sin offering. 7 Bring the Levites to the area in front of the Meeting Tent. Then bring all the Israelites together at that place. 8 Bring the Levites before the Lord. The Israelites will put their hands on them. 9 Aaron will give the Levites to the Lord as an offering from the Israelites. Then the Levites will be ready to do their special work for the Lord.

10 “Tell the Levites to put their hands on the heads of the bulls. One bull will be a sin offering and the other bull will be used as a burnt offering to the Lord. These offerings will make the Levites pure.

11 Tell the Levites to stand in front of Aaron and his sons. Then give the Levites to the Lord. They will be like an offering. This will make the Levites holy. They will be different from the other Israelites. The Levites will belong to me.

12 “So make the Levites pure and give them to the Lord as a special offering. After you do this, they can come and do their work at the Meeting Tent. The Israelites will give me the Levites in place of these firstborn sons from the other families in Israel. Every firstborn in Israel—man or animal—is mine, because I killed all the firstborn children and animals in Egypt. And I chose to take the firstborn sons to belong to me. But now I am taking the Levites in place of these firstborn sons from the other families in Israel. I chose the Levites from among all the Israelites. And I give them as gifts to Aaron and his sons. I want them to do the work at the Meeting Tent. They will serve for all the Israelites. They will help make the sacrifices that make the Israelites pure. Then no great sickness or trouble will come to the Israelites when they come near the holy place.”

14 So Moses, Aaron, and all the Israelites obeyed the Lord. They did with the Levites everything that the Lord commanded Moses.

a 8:7 water from the sin offering In this water were the ashes from the red cow that had been burned on the altar as a sin offering.

b 8:10 put their hands on them This showed that the people shared in appointing the Levites to their special work.

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their work. Aaron and his sons watched them. They were responsible for the work of the Levites. Aaron and his sons did what the LORD commanded Moses.

23 Then the LORD said to Moses, 24 "This is a special command for the Levites: Every Levite man who is 25 years old or older must come and share in the work at the Meeting Tent. 25 But when a man is 50 years old, he will retire from this hard work. 26 Men who are at least 50 years old will be on duty to help their brothers, but they will not do the work themselves. That is what you must do for the Levites so that they can do their duty."

### Passover

9 The LORD spoke to Moses in the desert of Sinai. This was during the first month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He said to Moses, 10 "Tell the Israelites to celebrate Passover at the chosen time. 11 They must eat the Passover meal just before dark on the 14th day of this month. They must do this at the chosen time, and they must follow all the rules about Passover."

12 So Moses told the Israelites to celebrate Passover. 13 The people did this in the desert of Sinai just before dark on the 14th day of the first month. The Israelites did everything just as the LORD commanded Moses.

14 But some of the people could not celebrate Passover that day. They were unclean because they had touched a dead body. So they went to Moses and Aaron that day and said to Moses, "We touched a dead body and became unclean. But why must we be kept from offering our gifts to the LORD at the chosen time with the rest of the Israelites?"

15 Moses said to them, "I will ask the LORD what he says about this."

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, 17 "Tell the Israelites this: It might happen sometimes that you or your descendants cannot celebrate the LORD’s Passover at the right time. Someone might be unclean because they touched a dead body, or they might be away on a trip. They will still be able to celebrate Passover at another time. 18 They must celebrate Passover just before dark on the 14th day of the second month. At that time they must eat the lamb, the bread made without yeast, and the bitter herbs. 19 They must not leave any of that food until the next morning. And they must not break any of the bones of the lamb. They must follow all the rules about Passover. 20 But anyone who is able must celebrate Passover at the right time. If they are clean and they are not away on a trip, there is no excuse for them not to do it. If they don’t celebrate Passover at the right time, they must be separated from their people. They are guilty and must be punished, because they did not give the LORD his gift at the right time.

21 "A foreigner living among you might want to share in the LORD’s Passover with you. This is allowed, but that person must follow all the rules about Passover. The same rules are for everyone."

### The Cloud and the Fire

15 On the day the Holy Tent, the Tent of the Agreement, was set up, a cloud covered it. At night the cloud over the Holy Tent looked like fire. 16 The cloud stayed over the Holy Tent all the time. And at night the cloud looked like fire. 17 When the cloud moved from its place over the Holy Tent, the Israelites followed it. When the cloud stopped, that is the place where the Israelites camped. 18 This was the way the LORD showed the Israelites when to move and when to stop and set up camp. While the cloud stayed over the Holy Tent, the people continued to camp in that same place. 19 Sometimes the cloud would stay over the Holy Tent for a long time. The Israelites obeyed the LORD and did not move. 20 Sometimes the cloud was over the Holy Tent for only a few days. So the people obeyed the LORD’s command—they followed the cloud when it moved. 21 Sometimes the cloud stayed only during the night—the next morning the cloud moved. So the people gathered their
things and followed it. If the cloud moved, during the day or during the night, they followed it. 22 If the cloud stayed over the Holy Tent for two days, a month, or a year, the people stayed at that place. They did not leave until the cloud moved. When the cloud rose from its place and moved, they also moved. 23 So the people obeyed the LORD’s commands. They camped when the LORD told them to, and they moved when he told them to. They watched carefully and obeyed the LORD’s commands to Moses.

The Silver Trumpets

10 The LORD said to Moses, “Make two trumpets. Use silver and hammer it to make the trumpets. These trumpets will be for calling the people together and for telling them when it is time to move the camp. 3 If you blow long blasts on both trumpets, all the people must meet together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. 4 But if you blow long blasts on only one trumpet, only the leaders will come to meet with you. (These are the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel.)

5 Short blasts on the trumpets will be the way to tell the people to move the camp. The first time you blow a short blast on the trumpets, the tribes camping on the east side of the Meeting Tent must begin to move. 6 The second time you blow a short blast on the trumpets, the tribes camping on the south side of the Meeting Tent will begin to move. 7 But if you want to gather the people together for a special meeting, blow the trumpets in a different way—blow a long steady blast on the trumpets. 8 Only Aaron’s sons, the priests, should blow the trumpets. This is a law for you that will continue forever, for generations to come.

9 If you are fighting an enemy in your own land, blow loudly on the trumpets before you go to fight them. The LORD your God will hear you, and he will save you from your enemies. 10 Also blow these trumpets for your special meetings, New Moon celebrations, and all your happy times together. Blow the trumpets when you give your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. This will be a special way for your God to remember you. I command you to do this; I am the LORD your God.”

The Israelites Move Their Camp

11 On the 20th day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites left Egypt, the cloud rose from above the Tent of the Agreement. 12 So the Israelites began their journey. They left the desert of Sinai and traveled until the cloud stopped in the desert of Paran. 13 This was the first time the people moved their camp. They moved it the way the LORD commanded Moses.

14 The three divisions from Judah’s camp went first. They traveled under their flag. The first group was the tribe of Judah. Nahshon son of Amminadab was the commander of that group. 15 Next came the tribe of Issachar. Nethanel son of Zuar was the commander of that group. 16 And then came the tribe of Zebulun. Eliab son of Helon was the commander of that group.

17 Then the Holy Tent was taken down. And the men from the Gershon and the Merari families carried the Holy Tent. So the people from these families were next in line.

18 Then came the three divisions from Reuben’s camp. They traveled under their flag. The first group was the tribe of Reuben. Elizur son of Shedeur was the commander of that group. 19 Next came the tribe of Simeon. Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai was the commander of that group. 20 And then came the tribe of Gad. Eliasaph son of Deuel was the commander of that group. 21 Then came the Kohath family. They carried the holy things from inside the Holy Tent. These people came at this time so that the other people could set up the Holy Tent and make it ready at the new camp before these people arrived.

22 Next came the three groups from Ephraim’s camp. They traveled under

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their flag. The first group was the tribe of Ephraim. Elishama son of Ammihud was the commander of that group. 23 Next came the tribe of Manasseh. Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was the commander of that group. 24 Then came the tribe of Benjamin. Abidan son of Gideoni was the commander of that group.

25 The last three tribes in the line were the rear guard for all the other tribes. These were the groups from Dan’s camp. They traveled under their flag. The first group was the tribe of Dan. Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai was their commander. 26 Next came the tribe of Asher. Pagiel son of Ocran was the commander of that group. 27 Then came the tribe of Naphtali. Ahira son of Enan was the commander of that group. 28 That was the way the Israelites marched when they moved from place to place.

29 Hobab was the son of Reuel, the Midianite. (Reuel was Moses’ father-in-law.) Moses said to Hobab, “We are traveling to the land that the Lord promised to give to us. Come with us and we will be good to you. The Lord has promised good things to the Israelites.”

30 But Hobab answered, “No, I will not go with you. I will go back to my homeland and to my own people.”

31 Then Moses said, “Please don’t leave us. You know more about the desert than we do. You can be our guide. 32 If you come with us, we will share with you all the good things that the Lord gives us.”

33 So they began traveling from the mountain of the Lord. The priests took the Box of the Lord’s Agreement and walked in front of the people. They carried the Holy Box for three days, looking for a place to camp. 34 The Lord’s cloud was over them every day. And when they left their camp every morning, the cloud was there to lead them.

35 When the people lifted the Holy Box to move the camp, Moses always said, “Get up, Lord! May your enemies be scattered. May your enemies run away from you.”

36 And when the Holy Box was put in its place, Moses always said, “Come back, Lord, to the millions of Israelites.”

The People Complain Again

11 The people started complaining about their troubles. The Lord heard their complaints. He heard these things and became angry. Fire from the Lord burned among the people. The fire burned some of the areas at the edge of the camp. 3 So the people cried to the Lord for help. He prayed to the Lord and the fire stopped burning. 4 So that place was called Taberah. 4 The people gave the place that name because the Lord caused a fire to burn in their camp.

The 70 Older Leaders

4 The foreigners who had joined the Israelites began wanting other things to eat. Soon all the Israelites began complaining again. The people said, “We want to eat meat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt. That fish cost us nothing. We also had good vegetables like cucumbers, melons, chives, onions, and garlic. 6 But now we have lost our strength. We never eat anything—only this manna!”

7 (The manna was like small coriander seeds, and it looked like sap from a tree. 8 The people gathered the manna. Then they used rocks to crush it and cooked it in a pot. Or they ground it into flour and made thin cakes with it. The cakes tasted like sweet cakes cooked with olive oil. 9 The manna fell on the ground each night when the ground became wet with dew.)

10 Moses heard the people complaining. People from every family were sitting by their tents and complaining. The Lord became very angry, and this made Moses very upset. 11 He asked the Lord, “Why did you bring this trouble on me? I am your servant. What did I do wrong? What did I do to upset you? Why did you give me responsibility over all these people?

11:3 Taberah This name means “burning.”
You know that I am not the father of all these people. You know that I did not give birth to them. But I must take care of them, like a nurse carrying a baby in her arms. Why do you force me to do this? Why do you force me to carry them to the land that you promised to our fathers? I don’t have enough meat for all these people! And they continue complaining to me. They say, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ I cannot take care of all these people alone. The burden is too heavy for me.

If you plan to continue giving me their troubles, kill me now. If you accept me as your servant, let me die now. Then I will be finished with all my troubles!”

The LORD said to Moses, “Bring to me 70 of the elders of Israel. These men are the leaders among the people. Bring them to the Meeting Tent. Let them stand there with you. Then I will come down and speak with you there. The Spirit is on you now. But I will also give some of that Spirit to them. Then they will help you take care of the people. In this way you will not have to be responsible for these people alone.

“Tell the people this: Make yourselves ready for tomorrow. Tomorrow you will eat meat. The LORD heard you when you cried out and said, ‘We need meat to eat! It was better for us in Egypt!’ So now the LORD will give you meat. And you will eat it. You will eat it for more than one, or two, or five, or ten, or even twenty days! You will eat that meat for a whole month until you are sick of it. This will happen to you because you complained against the LORD. He lives among you and knows what you need, but you cried and complained to him! You said, ‘Why did we ever leave Egypt?’ ”

Moses said, “There are 600,000 soldiers here, and you say, ‘I will give them enough meat to eat for a whole month!’ If we were to kill all the sheep and cattle, that would still not be enough to feed this many people for a month. And if we caught all the fish in the sea, it would not be enough for them!”

But the LORD said to Moses, “Don’t limit my power! You will see that I can do what I say I can do.”

So Moses went out to speak with the people. He told them what the LORD said. Then he gathered 70 of the elders together and told them to stand around the Tent.

Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to Moses. He put on the 70 elders some of the same Spirit that was on Moses. After the Spirit came down on them, they began to prophesy. But that was the only time they ever did this.

Two of the elders, Eldad and Medad, did not go out to the Tent. Their names were on the list of elders, but they stayed in camp. But the Spirit also came on them, and they began prophesying in camp.

Joshua son of Nun said to Moses, “Moses, sir, you must stop them!” ( Joshua had been Moses’ helper since Joshua was a boy.)

But Moses answered, “Are you afraid the people will think that I am not the leader now? I wish that all the LORD’s people were able to prophesy. I wish that the LORD would put his Spirit on all of them!” Then Moses and the leaders of Israel went back to the camp.

The Quail Come

Then the LORD made a powerful wind to blow in from the sea, and it blew quail into the area all around the camp. There were so many birds that the ground was covered. They were about three feet deep on the ground. There were quail in every direction as far as a man can walk in one day. They went out and gathered quail all that day and all that night. And they gathered quail all the next day too! The smallest amount anyone gathered was 60

a 11:17 Spirit Or “spirit.” Also in verses 25, 29.

b 11:25 prophesy Usually this means “to speak for God.” But here, it might mean that God’s Spirit took control of these men in some special way. Also in verse 26.

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bushels. Then the people spread the quail meat all around the camp to dry in the sun.

33 People began to eat the meat, but the LORD became very angry. While the meat was still in their mouths, before the people could finish eating it, the LORD caused the people to become very sick and die. 34 So the people named that place Kibroth Hattaavah,\textsuperscript{a} because there they buried those who had the strong desire for meat.

35 From Kibroth Hattaavah the people traveled to Hazeroth and stayed there.

Miriam and Aaron Criticize Moses

12 Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses. They criticized him because he married an Ethiopian\textsuperscript{b} woman.

2 They said to themselves, “Moses is not the only one the LORD has used to speak to the people. He has also spoken through us!”

The LORD heard this. 3 (Moses was a very humble man. He was more humble than any other man on earth.) 4 So suddenly, the LORD came and spoke to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. He said, “You three, come to the Meeting Tent, now!”

So Moses, Aaron, and Miriam went to the Tent. 5 The LORD came down in the tall cloud and stood at the entrance to the Tent. He called out, “Aaron and Miriam!” They went to him.

6 God said, “Listen to me! You will have prophets. I, the LORD, will let them learn about me through visions. I will speak to them in dreams.

7 But Moses is not like that. He is my faithful servant—I trust him with everyone in my house. 8 When I speak to him, I talk face to face with him. I don’t use stories with hidden meanings—I show him clearly what I want him to know. And Moses can look at the very image of the LORD. So why were you brave enough to speak against my servant Moses?”

9 The LORD was very angry with them, and he left them. 10 The cloud rose from the Tent. Aaron turned and looked at Miriam.

\textsuperscript{a} 11:34 Kibroth Hattaavah This name means “Graves of Strong Desire.”

\textsuperscript{b} 12:1 Ethiopian Or “Cushite,” a person from Ethiopia, in Africa.

Her skin was white like snow—she had a terrible skin disease!

11 Then Aaron said to Moses, “Please, sir, forgive us for the foolish sin that we did. 12 Don’t let her lose her skin like a baby who is born dead.” (Sometimes a baby will be born like that, with half of its skin eaten away.)

13 So Moses prayed to the LORD, “God, please heal her from this sickness!”

14 The LORD answered Moses, “If her father spit in her face, she would be shamed for seven days. So put her outside the camp for seven days. After that she can come back into the camp.”

15 So they took Miriam outside the camp for seven days. And the people did not move from that place until she was brought in again. 16 After that the people left Hazeroth and traveled to the desert of Paran where they set up camp.

The Spies Go to Canaan

13 The LORD said to Moses, “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan. I will give this land to the Israelites. Send one leader from each of the twelve tribes.”

3 So Moses obeyed the LORD’s command and sent out the Israelite leaders while the people were camped in the desert of Paran. 4 These are their names:

from the tribe of Reuben—Shammua\textsuperscript{c} son of Zaccur;
5 from the tribe of Simeon—Shaphat son of Hori;
6 from the tribe of Judah—Caleb son of Jephunneh;
7 from the tribe of Issachar—Igal son of Joseph;
8 from the tribe of Ephraim—Hoshea\textsuperscript{c} son of Nun;
9 from the tribe of Benjamin—Palti son of Raphu;
10 from the tribe of Zebulun—Gaddiel son of Sodi;
11 from the tribe of Manasseh (a tribe from Joseph)—Gaddi son of Susi;
12 from the tribe of Dan—Ammiel son of

\textsuperscript{c} 13:8 Hoshea Or “Joshua.”

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Gemallī;
from the tribe of Asher—Sethur son of Michael;
from the tribe of Naphtali—Nahbi son of Vophshi;
from the tribe of Gad—Geuel son of Maki.

These are the names of the men Moses sent to look at and study the land. (Moses called Hoshea son of Nun by another name. Moses called him Joshua.)

When Moses was sending them out to explore Canaan, he said, “Go through the Negev and then into the hill country. See what the land looks like. Learn about the people who live there. Are they strong or are they weak? Are they few or are they many? Learn about the land that they live in. Is it good land or bad land? What kind of towns do they live in? Do the towns have walls protecting them? Are the towns strongly defended? And learn other things about the land. Is the soil good for growing things, or is it poor soil? Are there trees on the land? Try to bring back some of the fruit from that land.” (This was during the time when the first grapes should be ripe.)

So they went to explore the country. They explored the area from the desert of Zin to Rehob and Lebo Hamath. They entered the country through the Negev and went to Hebron. (The town of Hebron was built seven years before the town of Zoan in Egypt.) Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai lived there. These men were descendants of Anak. Then the men went to Eshcol Valley. There they cut off a branch from a grapevine that had a bunch of grapes on it. They put that branch on a pole, and two men carried it between them. They also carried some pomegranates and figs. That place is called the Eshcol Valley, because there the men of Israel cut off the bunch of grapes.

The men explored that country for 40 days, and then they went back to the camp. The Israelites were camped near Kadesh, in the desert of Paran. The men went to Moses and Aaron and all the Israelites. They told Moses, Aaron, and all the people what they saw and showed them the fruit from the land. The men told Moses, “We went to the land where you sent us. It is a land filled with many good things! Here is some of the fruit that grows there. But the people living there are very powerful. The cities are very large and strongly defended. We even saw some Anakites there. The Amalekites live in the Negev. The Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live near the sea and by the Jordan River.”

Caleb told the people near Moses to be quiet. Then Caleb said, “We should go up and take that land for ourselves. We can easily take that land.”

But the men who had gone with him said, “We cannot fight those people! They are much stronger than we are.” So those men gave a report that discouraged the people. They said, “The land we saw is full of strong people. They are strong enough to easily defeat anyone who goes there. We saw the giant Nephilim people there! (The descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim.) We felt like little grasshoppers. Yes, we were like grasshoppers to them!”

The People Complain Again

That night all the people in the camp began shouting loudly. The Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron. All the people came together and said to Moses and Aaron, “We should have died in Egypt or in the desert. The enemy will kill us and take our wives and children! It would be better for us to go back to Egypt.”

Then the people said to each other, “Let’s choose another leader and go back to Egypt.”

Moses and Aaron bowed low to the ground in front of all the people gathered there. Joshua and Caleb became very...
upset. (Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were two of the men who explored the land.) They said, “The land that we saw is very good. It is a land filled with many good things. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land. And he will give that land to us. So don’t turn against the Lord! Don’t be afraid of the people in that land. We can defeat them. They have no protection, nothing to keep them safe. But we have the Lord with us, so don’t be afraid!”

All the people began talking about killing Joshua and Caleb with stones. But the glory of the Lord appeared over the Meeting Tent where all the people could see it. The Lord spoke to Moses and said, “How long will these people continue to turn against me? They show that they don’t trust me or believe in my power, in spite of the many miracles I have done among them. I will kill them all with a terrible sickness. I will destroy them, and I will use you to make another nation. Your nation will be greater and stronger than these people.”

Then Moses said to the Lord, “If you do that, the Egyptians will hear about it! They know that you used your great power to bring your people out of Egypt. The Egyptians have already told the people in Canaan about it. They know you are the Lord. They know that you are with your people. They know that the people saw you. Those people know about the special cloud. They know you use the cloud to lead your people during the day. And they know the cloud becomes a fire to lead your people at night. So you must not kill these people now. If you kill them, all the nations who have heard about your power will say, ‘The Lord was not able to bring them into the land he promised them. So he killed them in the desert.’”

“Now, show your great love to these people. Forgive their sin. Forgive them the same way you have been forgiving them since the time they left Egypt until now.”

The Lord answered, “Yes, I will forgive the people as you asked. But I tell you the truth. As surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth, I make you this promise: None of the people I led out of Egypt will ever see the land of Canaan. They saw my glory and the great signs that I did in Egypt and in the desert. But they disobeyed me and tested me ten times. I promised their ancestors that I would give them that land. But none of those people who turned against me will ever enter that land! But my servant Caleb was different. He follows me completely. So I will bring him into the land that he has already seen, and his people will get that land. The Amalekites and the Canaanites are living in the valley. So tomorrow you must leave this place. Go back to the desert on the road to the Red Sea.”

The Lord Punishes the People

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “How long will these evil people continue to complain against me? I have heard their complaints and their griping. So tell them, ‘The Lord says that he will surely do all those things to you that you complained about. This is what will happen to you: You will die in this desert. Every person who is 20 years old or older and was counted as one of my people will die. You complained against me. So none of you will ever enter and live in the land that I promised to give you. Only Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun will enter that land. You were afraid and complained that your enemies in that new land would take your children away from

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you. But I tell you that I will bring them into the land. They will enjoy what you refused to accept. 32 As for you people, you will die in this desert.

33 “Your children will wander around like shepherds here in the desert for 40 years. They will suffer because you were not faithful to me. They must suffer until all of you lie dead in the desert. 34 For 40 years you will suffer for your sins. (That is one year for each of the 40 days that the men explored the land.) You will know that it is a terrible thing for me to be against you.’

35 “I am the LORD, and I have spoken. And I promise that I will do these things to all these evil people. They have come together against me. So they will all die here in this desert.”

36 The men Moses sent to explore the new land were the ones who came back complaining about him to all the Israelites. They said that the people were not strong enough to enter that land. 37 The men were responsible for spreading the trouble among the Israelites. So the LORD caused a sickness to kill all those men. 38 But Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were among the men who were sent out to explore the land. They are the only ones who did not get the sickness that caused the others to die.

The People Try to Go Into Canaan

39 When Moses told the Israelites this, they were very sad. 40 Early the next morning the people started to go up to the high hill country. They said, “We have sinned. We are sorry that we did not trust the LORD. We will go to the place that the LORD promised.”

41 But Moses said, “Why are you not obeying the LORD’s command? You will not be successful! 42 Don’t go into that land. The LORD is not with you, so your enemies will easily defeat you. 43 The Amalekites and Canaanites will fight against you there. You have turned away from the LORD, so he will not be with you when you fight them. And you will all be killed in battle.”

44 But the people did not believe Moses. They went toward the high hill country. But Moses and the Box of the LORD’s Agreement did not go with the people. 45 The Amalekites and the Canaanites living in the hill country came down and attacked the Israelites and easily defeated them and chased them all the way to Hormah.

Rules About Sacrifices

15 The LORD said to Moses, 2 “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: I am giving you a land to be your home. When you enter that land, 3 you must give special gifts to the LORD. Their smell will please the LORD. You will use your cattle, sheep, and goats for burnt offerings, sacrifices, special promises, special gifts, fellowship offerings, or at your special festivals.

4 At the time someone brings their offering, they must also give a grain offering to the LORD. The grain offering will be 8 cups of fine flour mixed with 1 quart of olive oil. 5 Each time you offer a lamb as a burnt offering or sacrifice, you must also prepare a quart of wine as a drink offering.

6 If you are giving a ram, you must also prepare a grain offering. This grain offering should be 16 cups of fine flour mixed with 1 1/4 quarts of olive oil. 7 And you must prepare 1 1/4 quarts of wine as a drink offering.

8 You might prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, a sacrifice, a fellowship offering, or to keep a special promise to the LORD. 9 At that time you must also bring a grain offering with the bull. That grain offering should be 2 1/4 cups of fine flour mixed with 2 quarts of olive oil. 10 Also bring 2 quarts of wine as a drink offering as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

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in this way. Do this for every one of these animals that you give.

13“This is the way every citizen of Israel must give gifts to please the LORD. Foreigners will live among you. If they give gifts to please the LORD, they must offer them the same way you do. The same rules will be for everyone—the Israelites and the foreigners living among you. This law will continue forever. You and the people living among you will be the same before the LORD. This means that you must follow the same laws and the same rules. These laws and rules are for you Israelites and for the other people who are living among you.”

17The LORD said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites this: I am taking you to another land. When you eat the food that grows in that land, you must give part of that food as an offering to the LORD. You will gather grain and grind it into flour to make dough for bread. You must give the first bread from that flour as a gift to the Lord. It will be like the grain offering that comes from the threshing floor. You and all your descendants must give part of the first dough you make from that flour as a gift to the Lord.

22“As you try to obey all the commands that the LORD gave Moses, you might fail and make a mistake. The LORD gave you those commands through Moses, and they have been in effect from the day they were given throughout the generations until today. If you made this mistake where everyone could see it, the whole community must offer a young bull as a burnt offering, as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. You must also offer the grain offering and the drink offering with the bull. And you must also give a male goat as a sin offering.

25“So the priest will make the whole community of Israel pure, and they will be forgiven for the mistake they made. Since they made the mistake, they must bring a gift and a sin offering to the LORD. Then the whole community of Israel and any foreigners among them will be forgiven for the mistake.

27“But if only one person makes a mistake and sins, that person must bring a female goat that is one year old. That goat will be the sin offering. The priest will make purification before the LORD for the one who sinned, and that person will be forgiven. This law is for everyone who makes a mistake and sins. The same law is for the people born in the family of Israel and for the foreigners living among you.

30“If someone sins and knows they are doing wrong, they are rebelling against the LORD. They must be separated from their people. The same law applies to citizens of Israel and to foreigners living among you. They thought the LORD’s word was not important, so they broke his commands. That is why they must be separated from their people—they must bear the responsibility for their guilt.”

A Man Works on the Day of Rest

32While the Israelites were in the desert, some of them saw a man gathering firewood on the Sabbath day. The people who saw him gathering the wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole community of Israel.

34They guarded the man carefully because they did not know how they should punish him.

36So the people took him outside the camp and killed him with stones. They did this just as the LORD commanded Moses.

A Way to Remember God’s Commands

37The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites. Tell them this: Tie several pieces of thread together and tie them in the corner of your clothes. Put a piece of blue thread in each one of these tassels. You must wear these things now and forever. You will be able to look at these tassels and remember all the commands that the LORD has given you. Then you will obey the commands. You will not do...
wrong by forgetting about the commands and doing the things that your own bodies and eyes want. 40You will remember to obey all my commands. Then you will be God’s special people. 41I am the LORD your God. I am the one who brought you out of Egypt. I did this to be your God. I am the LORD your God.”

Some Leaders Turn Against Moses

16Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On turned against Moses. (Korah was the son of Izhar. Izhar was the son of Kohath, and Kohath was the son of Levi. Dathan and Abiram were brothers, the sons of Eliab. And On was the son of Peleth. Dathan, Abiram, and On were descendants of Reuben.) 2These four men gathered 250 other men from Israel together and came against Moses. They were leaders who had been chosen by the people. All the people knew them. 3They came as a group to speak against Moses and Aaron and said, “You have gone too far—you are wrong! All the Israelites are holy—the LORD still lives among them. You are making yourselves more important than the rest of the LORD’s people.”

4When Moses heard this, he bowed his face to the ground to show he was not being proud. 5Then Moses said to Korah and all his followers, “Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who belongs to him. He will show who is holy, and he will bring that man near to him. He will choose him and bring that man near to him. 6So Korah, you and all your followers should do this: 7Tomorrow put fire and incense in some special pans. Then bring those pans before the LORD. He will choose the man who is holy. You Levites have gone too far—you are wrong!”

8Moses also said to Korah, “You Levites, listen to me. 9You should be happy that the God of Israel chose you to be different from the rest of the Israelites. He lets you come near to him to do the special work in the LORD’s Holy Tent to help the Israelites worship him. Isn’t that enough? 10He brought you Levites near to him to help the priests, but now you are trying to become priests also. 11You and your followers have joined together and turned against the LORD! Did Aaron do anything wrong? No, so why are you complaining against Aaron?”

12Then Moses called Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But the two men said, “We will not come! 13You have brought us out of a land filled with many good things. You brought us to the desert to kill us. And now you want to show that you have even more power over us. 14Why should we follow you? You did not bring us into the new land filled with many good things. You did not give us the land God promised. You did not give us the fields or the vineyards. Will you make these men your slaves? No! We will not come.”

15So Moses became very angry. He said to the LORD, “I never did anything wrong to these people. I never took anything from them—not even a donkey! Don’t accept their gifts!”

16Then Moses said to Korah, “You and all your followers will stand before the LORD tomorrow. Aaron will also be there with you and your followers. 17Each of you must bring a pan, put incense in it, and present it to the LORD. There will be 250 pans for the leaders and one pan for you and one pan for Aaron.”

18So each man got a pan and put burning incense in it. Then they stood at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Moses and Aaron also stood there. 19Korah also gathered all the people together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Then the Glory of the LORD appeared to everyone there.

20The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 21“Move away from these men! I want to destroy them now!”

22But Moses and Aaron bowed to the ground and cried out, “God, you know what people are thinking. Please don’t

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be angry with all these people. Only one man really sinned.”

23 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Tell the people to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.”

24 Moses stood and went to Dathan and Abiram. All the elders of Israel followed him. 26 Moses warned the people, “Move away from the tents of these evil men. Don’t touch anything that belongs to them! If you do, you will be destroyed because of their sins.”

27 So the men moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram went to their tents. They stood outside of their tents with their wives, children, and little babies.

28 Then Moses said, “I will show you proof that the Lord sent me to do all the things I told you. I will show you that all these things were not my own idea.

29 These men will die, but if they die in a normal way—the way people always die—then that will show that the Lord did not really send me. 30 But if the Lord causes them to die in a different way, then you will know that these men have sinned against the Lord. This is the proof: The earth will open and swallow them. They will go down to their grave still alive. And everything that belongs to these men will go down with them.”

31 When Moses finished saying these things, the ground under the men opened.

32 It was as if the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them. All of Korah’s men, their families, and everything they owned went down into the earth. 33 They went down into their grave alive. Everything they owned went with them. Then the earth closed over them. They were finished—gone from the camp!

34 The Israelites heard the cries of the men being destroyed. So they all ran in different directions and said, “The earth will swallow us too!”

35 Then a fire came from the Lord and destroyed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

36 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to get all the incense pans from the fire. Tell him to scatter the coals and ashes. These men sinned against me, and their sin cost them their lives. But the incense pans are still holy. The pans became holy when people gave them to the Lord. Hammer the pans into flat sheets. Use the metal sheets to cover the altar. This will be a warning to all the Israelites.”

39 So Eleazar the priest gathered together all the bronze pans that the men had brought. These men were all burned up, but the pans were still there. Then Eleazar told some men to hammer the pans into flat metal. Then he put the metal sheets on the altar. 40 He did this the way the Lord commanded him through Moses. This was a sign to help the Israelites remember that only someone from the family of Aaron should burn incense before the Lord. Any other person who burns incense before the Lord will die like Korah and his followers.

Aaron Saves the People

41 Then the next day all the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron. They said, “You killed the Lord’s people.”

42 Moses and Aaron were standing at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. The people gathered together at that place to complain against Moses and Aaron. But when they looked toward the Meeting Tent, the cloud covered it and the Glory of the Lord appeared there.

43 Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the Meeting Tent.

44 The Lord said to Moses, “Move away from these people so that I can destroy them now.” So Moses and Aaron bowed with their faces to the ground.

45 Then Moses said to Aaron, “Get your bronze pan and some fire from the altar. Then put incense in it. Hurry to the people and do the things that will make them pure. The Lord is angry with them. The trouble has already started.”

47–48 So Aaron got the incense and the fire, and he ran to the middle of the people.
But the sickness had already started among them. So Aaron stood between the dead and those who were still alive. He did what Moses said to remove their sin, and the sickness stopped there. 49 But 14,700 people died from that sickness—and that is not counting the people who died because of Korah. 50 So the terrible sickness was stopped, and Aaron went back to Moses at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.

God Proves Aaron Is the High Priest

17 The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Speak to the Israelites. Get twelve wooden walking sticks from them. Get one from the leader of each of the twelve tribes. Write the name of each man on his walking stick. 3 On the stick from Levi, write Aaron’s name. There must be one stick for the head of each of the twelve tribes. 4 Put these walking sticks in the Meeting Tent in front of the Box of the Agreement. This is the place where I meet with you. 5 I will choose one man to be the true priest. You will know which man I choose because his walking stick will begin to grow new leaves. In this way I will stop the people from always complaining against you and me.”

6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites. Each of the leaders gave him a walking stick. There were twelve walking sticks. There was one stick from each leader of each tribe. One of the walking sticks belonged to Aaron. 7 Moses put the walking sticks before the Lord in the Tent of the Agreement.

8 The next day Moses entered the Tent. He saw that Aaron’s walking stick, the stick from the family of Levi, was the one that had grown new leaves. That walking stick had even grown branches and made almonds. 9 So Moses brought out all the sticks from the Lord’s place. He showed the walking sticks to the Israelites. They all looked at the sticks, and each man took his own stick back.

10 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Put Aaron’s walking stick back in front of the Box that holds the Agreement. 11 This will be a warning for these people who are always turning against me. This will stop their complaining against me so that I will not destroy them.” 12 So Moses did what the Lord commanded him.

13 The Israelites said to Moses, “We know that we will die! We are lost! We will all be destroyed! 14 Anyone who even comes near the Lord’s holy place will die. Is it true that we will all die?”

The Work of the Priests and Levites

18 The Lord said to Aaron, “You, your sons, and all the people in your father’s family must bear the responsibility for any wrong that is done against the holy place or against the priests. 2 To prevent that from happening, you must bring the rest of the men from the tribe of Levi to join you. These Levites will help you and your sons do your work in the Tent of the Agreement. 3 These Levites will be under your control. They will do all the work that needs to be done in the Tent. But they must not go near the things in the Holy Place or the altar. If they do, they will die—and you also will die. 4 They will join you and work with you. They will be responsible for caring for the Meeting Tent. All the work that must be done in the Tent will be done by them. No one else may come near the place where you are.

5 You are responsible for caring for the holy place and the altar. I don’t want to become angry with the Israelites again. 6 I myself chose the Levites from among all the Israelites. They are as a gift to you. I gave them to you to serve the Lord and work in the Meeting Tent. 7 But, Aaron, only you and your sons may serve as priests. You are the only ones who can go near the altar or behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place. I am giving you a gift—your service as a priest. Anyone else who tries to come too close must be killed.” 8 Then the Lord said to Aaron, “I myself gave you responsibility over all
the special gifts people give to me. All the holy gifts that the Israelites give to me, I give to you. You and your sons can share in these gifts. They will always belong to you. The people will bring gifts, grain offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings. These offerings are most holy. Your share in the most holy offerings will come from the parts that are not burned. All these things will be for you and your sons. Every male in your family may eat them, but you must remember that these offerings are holy.

11“The Israelites will bring special gifts that you will lift up to me. I give these gifts to you and your sons and daughters. That is your share. Everyone in your family who is clean will be able to eat it.

12“And I give you all the best olive oil and all the best new wine and grain. These are the things that the Israelites give to me, the LORD. These are the first things that they gather in their harvest. When the people gather a harvest, they bring all the first things to the LORD. So these things I will give to you. And everyone in your family who is clean may eat it.

13“Anything in Israel that is a special gift to God is yours.

14“A woman’s first baby and an animal’s first baby must be given to the LORD. That baby will belong to you. If the firstborn animal is unclean, then it must be bought back. If the baby is a child, that child must be bought back. They must make the payment when the baby is one month old. The cost will be 5 shekels of silver. You must use the official measure to weigh this silver. A shekel by the official measure is 20 gerahs.

15“But you must not make a payment for the firstborn cow, sheep, or goat. These animals are holy. Sprinkle their blood on the altar and burn their fat as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. But the meat from these animals will be yours.

And also the breast that was lifted up to the Lord will be yours. And the right thigh from other offerings will be yours. I, the LORD, give you everything that the people offer as holy gifts. This is your share. I give it to you and your sons and daughters. This law will continue forever. It is an agreement with the LORD that cannot be broken. I make this promise to you and to your descendants.”

20“The LORD also said to Aaron, “You will not get any of the land. And you will not own anything that the other people own. I myself will be yours. The Israelites will get the land that I promised, but I am my gift to you.

21“The Israelites will give one-tenth of everything they have. So I give that one-tenth to the Levites. This is their payment for the work that they do while they serve at the Meeting Tent. But the other Israelites must never go near that Meeting Tent. If they do, they must be put to death! The Levites will do the work of caring for the Meeting Tent. They must bear the responsibility for anything done against it. This is a law that will continue forever. The Levites will not get any of the land that I promised to the other Israelites. But the Israelites will give one-tenth of everything they have to the LORD, and I will give that one-tenth to the Levites. That is why I said these words about the Levites: They will not get the land that I promised the Israelites.”

25The Lord said to Moses,

26“Speak to the Levites and tell them: The Israelites will give one-tenth of everything they own to the LORD. That one-tenth will belong to the Levites. But you must give one-tenth of that to the Lord as your offering. That tenth will be your offering to the Lord. It will be like grain from your own threshing floor or wine from your own winepress.

28In this way you will also give an offering to the Lord just as the other Israelites do. You will get the one-tenth that the Israelites give to the Lord, and then you will
give one-tenth of that to Aaron the priest. 29 When the Israelites give you one-tenth of everything that they own, then you must give the best and the holiest part of these things as your gift to the LORD.

30 “Moses, tell this to the Levites: When you give the best part of what you receive to the Lord, it will be the same as grain from your own threshing floor and wine from your own winepress. 31 You and your families can eat all that is left. This is your payment for the work you do in the Meeting Tent. 32 And if you always give the best part of it to the Lord, you will never be guilty. You will always remember that these gifts are the holy offerings from the Israelites. And you will not die.”

The Ashes of the Red Cow

19 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, 2 “These are the laws from the teachings that the Lord gave to the Israelites. Get a red cow that has nothing wrong with it. That cow must not have any bruises. And it must never have worn a yoke. 3 Give that cow to Eleazar, and he will take it outside the camp and kill it there. 4 Then Eleazar the priest must put some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle some of the blood toward the Holy Tent. He must do this seven times.

5 Then the whole cow must be burned in front of him; the skin, the meat, the blood, and the intestines must all be burned. 6 Then the priest must take a cedar stick, a hyssop branch, and some red string. He must throw these things into the fire where the cow is burning. 7 Then the priest must wash himself and his clothes with water. Then he must come back into the camp. He will be unclean until evening. 8 The man who burns that cow must wash himself and his clothes in water. He will be unclean until evening.

9 Then someone who is clean will collect the ashes from the cow and put them in a clean place outside the camp. These ashes will be used when someone must keep a special ceremony to become clean. These ashes will also be used to remove a person’s sins.

10 “The man who collected the cow’s ashes must wash his clothes. He will be unclean until evening.

“This rule will continue forever. This rule is for the citizens of Israel and for the foreigners living with you. 11 Those who touch a dead body will be unclean for seven days. 12 They must wash themselves with the special water on the third day and again on the seventh day. If they don’t do this, they will remain unclean.

13 Those who touch the body of someone who has died are unclean. If they stay unclean and then go to the Lord’s Holy Tent, they make it unclean. So they must be separated from the Israelites. Because the special water was not thrown on them, they remain unclean.

14 “This is the rule about those who die in their tents: If someone dies in the tent, everyone in the tent will be unclean for seven days. 15 And every jar or pot without a lid becomes unclean. 16 If there is a dead body out in a field, whether the person died in battle or for some other reason, whoever touches that dead body, or its bones, or even its grave will be unclean for seven days.

17 If you have become unclean, someone must use the ashes from the burned cow to make you clean again. They must pour fresh water over the ashes into a jar. 18 That clean person must take a hyssop branch and dip it into the water. The clean person must sprinkle it over the tent, the dishes, and any people who were in the tent. That clean person must do this for anyone who touches that dead body, its bones, or even a grave.

19 Then that clean person must sprinkle this water on you on the third day and again on the seventh day. On the seventh day you will become clean. You must wash your clothes in water and you will become clean in the evening.

20 Whoever becomes unclean and

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does not become clean must be separated from the community. If an unclean person is not sprinkled with that special water and does not become clean, that person might make the LORD’s Holy Tent unclean. 20 This rule will be for you forever. And whoever sprinkled the special water must wash their clothes because they will be unclean until evening. 21 And whoever an unclean person touches will be unclean until evening.”

Miriam Dies

20 The Israelites arrived at the desert of Zin in the first month of the year. The people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died and was buried there.

Moses Makes a Mistake

2 There was not enough water for the people at that place. So the people met together to complain against Moses and Aaron. 3 The people argued with Moses and said, “Maybe we should have died in front of the LORD like our brothers did. 4 Why did you bring the LORD’s people into this desert? Do you want us and our animals to die here? 5 Why did you bring us from Egypt? Why did you bring us to this bad place? There is no grain. There are no figs, grapes, or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink.”

6 So Moses and Aaron left the crowd of people and went to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. They bowed down to the ground, and the Glory of the LORD appeared to them.

7 The LORD spoke to Moses and said, 8 “Get the special walking stick. Take your brother Aaron and the crowd of people and go to that rock. Speak to the rock in front of the people. Then water will flow from the rock, and you can give that water to the people and to their animals.”

9 The walking stick was in the Holy Tent, in front of the LORD. Moses took the walking stick as the Lord said. 10 Moses and Aaron told the people to meet together in front of the rock. Then Moses said, “You people are always complaining. Now listen to me. I will cause water to flow from this rock.” 11 Moses lifted his arm and hit the rock twice. Water began flowing from the rock, and the people and their animals drank that water.

12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “You did not trust me enough to honor me and show the people that I am holy. You did not show the Israelites that the power to make the water came from me. So you will not lead the people into the land that I have given them.”

13 This place was called the waters of Meribah. This is where the Israelites argued with the LORD and where he showed them that he was holy.

Edom Will Not Let Israel Pass

14 While Moses was at Kadesh, he sent some men with a message to the king of Edom. The message said, “This is what your brothers, the Israelites, say to you: You know about all the troubles we have had. 15 Many years ago our ancestors went down into Egypt, and we lived there for many years. The people of Egypt were cruel to us. 16 But we asked the LORD for help, and he heard us and sent an angel to help us. The Lord has brought us out of Egypt.

“Now we are here at Kadesh, where your land begins. Please let us travel through your country. We will not travel through any fields or vineyards. We will not drink water from any of your wells. We will travel only along King’s Road. We will not leave that road to the right or to the left. We will stay on the road until we have traveled through your country.”

18 But the king of Edom answered, “You may not travel through our land. If you try to travel through our land, we will come and fight you with swords.”

19 The Israelites answered, “We will travel along the main road. If our animals...
drink any of your water, we will pay you for it. We only want to walk through your country. We don’t want to take it for ourselves.”

20 But again the king of Edom answered, “We will not allow you to come through our country.”

Then the king of Edom gathered a large and powerful army and went out to fight against the Israelites. 21 The king of Edom refused to let the Israelites travel through his country, so the Israelites turned around and went another way.

Aaron Dies
22 All the Israelites traveled from Kadesh to Mount Hor. 23 Mount Hor was near the border of Edom. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 24 “It is time for Aaron to die and go to be with his ancestors. Aaron will not enter the land that I promised to the Israelites. Moses, I say this to you because both you and Aaron did not fully obey the command I gave you at the waters of Meribah.

25 “Now, bring Aaron and his son Eleazar up to Mount Hor. 26 Take Aaron’s special clothes from him and put these clothes on his son Eleazar. Aaron will die there on the mountain. And he will go to be with his ancestors.”

27 Moses obeyed the Lord’s command. Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar went up on Mount Hor. All the Israelites watched them go. 28 Moses removed Aaron’s special clothes and put them on Aaron’s son Eleazar. Then Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Moses and Eleazar came back down the mountain. 29 All the Israelites learned that Aaron was dead. So everyone in Israel mourned for 30 days.

War With the Canaanites
21 The Canaanite king of Arad lived in the Negev. He heard that the Israelites were coming on the road to Atharim, so the king went out and attacked the Israelites. Arad captured some of the people and made them prisoners. 22 Then the Israelites made a special promise to the Lord: “Please help us defeat these people. If you do this, we will give their cities to you. We will totally destroy them.”

3 The Lord listened to the Israelites and helped them defeat the Canaanites. They completely destroyed the Canaanites and their cities. So that place was named Hormah. a

The Bronze Snake
4 The Israelites left Mount Hor and traveled on the road that goes to the Red Sea. They did this to go around the country of Edom. But the people became impatient. 5 They began complaining against God and Moses. The people said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt? We will die here in the desert! There is no bread and no water! And we hate this terrible food!”

6 So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people. The snakes bit the people, and many of the Israelites died. 7 The people came to Moses and said, “We know that we sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord. Ask him to take away these snakes.” So Moses prayed for them.

8 The Lord said to Moses, “Make a bronze snake and put it on a pole. If anyone is bitten by a snake, that person should look at the bronze snake on the pole. Then that person will not die.” 9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Then when a snake bit anyone, that person looked at the bronze snake on the pole and lived.

The Trip to Moab
10 The Israelites left that place and camped at Oboth. 11 Then they left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim in the desert east of Moab. 12 They left that place and camped in Zered Valley. 13 Then they moved and camped across from the Arnon River in the desert. This river started at the Ammonite border. The valley was the border between Moab and the Amorites. 14 That is

a 21:3 Hormah This name means “completely destroyed” or “a gift given totally to God.” See Lev. 27:28–29.
why these words are written in the Book of the Wars of the Lord:

“...and Waheb in Suphah, and the Valleys of the Arnon, and the hills by the valleys that lead to the town of Ar. These places are at the border of Moab.”

16 The Israelites left that place and traveled to Beer. There is a well in Beer, where the Lord said to Moses, “Bring the people together here, and I will give them water.” Then the Israelites sang this song:

“Well, flow with water! Sing about it!

Great men dug this well. Important leaders dug this well. They dug this well with their staffs and walking sticks.

It is a gift in the desert.”

19 The people traveled from Mattanah to Nahaliel. Then they traveled from Nahaliel to Bamoth. They traveled from Bamoth to the Valley of Moab. In this place the top of the Pisgah Mountain looks over the desert.

Sihon and Og

21 The Israelites sent some men to King Sihon of the Amorites. The men said to the king,

“Allow us to travel through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard. We will not drink water from any of your wells. We will travel only along King’s Road. We will stay on that road until we have traveled through your country.”

23 But King Sihon would not allow the Israelites to travel through his country. He gathered together his army and marched out to the desert to fight against the Israelites. The king’s army fought against the Israelites at Jahaz.

24 But the Israelites defeated the king and took his land from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River. The Israelites took the land as far as the Ammonite border. They stopped at that border because it was strongly defended by the Ammonites.

25 Israel took all the Amorite cities and began living in them. They even defeated the city of Heshbon and all the small towns around it. Heshbon was the city where Sihon, the Amorite king, lived. In the past Sihon had fought with the king of Moab. Sihon had taken the land as far as the Arnon River. That is why the singers sing this song:

“Go in and rebuild Heshbon! Make Sihon’s city strong.

A fire began in Heshbon. That fire began in Sihon’s city. The fire destroyed Ar in Moab. It burned the hills above Arnon River.

It is bad for you, Moab. You lost Chemosh’s people. His sons ran away. His daughters were taken prisoners by Sihon, king of the Amorites.

30 But we defeated those Amorites. We destroyed their towns from Heshbon to Dibon, from Nashim to Nophah, near Medeba.”

31 So the Israelites made their camp in the land of the Amorites.

32 Moses sent some men to look at the town of Jazer. Then the Israelites captured that town and the small towns that were around it. They forced the Amorites who were living there to leave.

33 Then the Israelites traveled on the road toward Bashan. King Og of Bashan got his army and marched out to meet the Israelites. He fought against them at Edrei.

34 But the Lord said to Moses, “Don’t be afraid of that king. I will allow you to defeat him. You will take his whole army and all his land. Do the same to him as you did to Sihon, the Amorite king who lived in Heshbon.”

35 So the Israelites defeated Og and his army. They killed him, his sons, and all his army. Then the Israelites took all his land.
Then the Israelites traveled to the Jordan Valley in Moab. They camped near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

Balak son of Zippor saw everything the Israelites had done to the Amorites. The king of Moab was very frightened of the Israelites because there were so many of them. He was very afraid.

The king of Moab said to the leaders of Midian, “This large group of people will destroy everything around us, the way an ox eats all the grass in a field.”

Balak son of Zippor was the king of Moab at this time. He sent some men to Balaam son of Beor. Balaam was at Pethor, near the Euphrates River. This was where Balaam’s people lived. This was Balak’s message:

“A new nation of people has come out of Egypt. There are so many people that they cover all the land. They have camped next to me. Come and help me. These people are too powerful for me. I know that you have great power. If you bless people, good things happen to them. And if you curse people, bad things happen to them. So come and curse these people. Maybe then I will be able to defeat them and force them to leave my country.”

The leaders of Moab and Midian left. They went to talk to Balaam. They carried with them money to pay him for his service. Then they told him what Balak had said.

Balaam said to them, “Stay here for the night. I will talk to the LORD and tell you the answer he gives me.” So the leaders of Moab stayed there with Balaam that night.

God came to Balaam and asked, “Who are these men with you?”

Balaam said to God, “The king of Moab, Balak son of Zippor, sent them to give me a message. This is the message: A new nation of people has come out of Egypt. There are so many people that they cover the land. So come and curse these people. Then maybe I will be able to fight them and force them to leave my land.”

But God said to Balaam, “Don’t go with them. You must not curse those people. They are my people.”

The next morning Balaam got up and said to leaders from Balak, “Go back to your own country. The LORD will not let me go with you.”

So the leaders of Moab went back to Balak and told him this. They said, “Balaam refused to come with us.”

So Balak sent other leaders to Balaam. This time he sent many more than the first time. And these leaders were much more important than the first ones he sent.

They went to Balaam and said, “This is what Balak son of Zippor says to you: Please don’t let anything stop you from coming. I will pay you very much, and I will do whatever you ask. Come and curse these people for me.”

Balaam gave Balak’s officials his answer. He said, “I must obey the LORD my God. I cannot do anything, great or small, against his command. Even if King Balak gives me his beautiful home filled with silver and gold, I will not do anything against the Lord’s command. But you can stay here tonight like the other men did, and during the night I will learn what the LORD wants to tell me.”

That night, God came to Balaam. God said, “These men have come again to ask you to go with them. So you can go with them. But do only what I tell you to do.”

Balaam and His Donkey

The next morning, Balaam got up, put a saddle on his donkey, and went with the Moabite leaders. Balaam was riding on his donkey. Two of his servants were with
him. While Balaam was traveling, God became angry. So the LORD’s angel stood in the road in front of Balaam to stop him.

23 When Balaam’s donkey saw the LORD’s angel standing in the road with a sword in his hand, the donkey turned from the road and went into the field. Balaam could not see the angel, so he was very angry at the donkey. He hit the donkey and forced it to go back on the road.

24 Later, the LORD’s angel stood at a place where the road became narrow. This was between two vineyards. There were walls on both sides of the road. 25 Again the donkey saw the LORD’s angel. So the donkey walked very close to one wall. This crushed Balaam’s foot against the wall. So Balaam hit his donkey again.

26 Later, the LORD’s angel stood at another place where the road became narrow. There was no place where the donkey could go around him. It could not turn to the left or to the right. 27 The donkey saw the LORD’s angel. So the donkey lay down with Balaam sitting on top of it. Balaam was very angry at the donkey. So he hit it with his walking stick.

28 Then the LORD caused the donkey to speak. The donkey said to Balaam, “Why are you angry at me? What have I done to you? You have hit me three times!”

29 Balaam answered the donkey, “You have made me look foolish. If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now!”

30 But the donkey said to Balaam, “Look, I am your donkey. You have ridden me for so many years. And you know that I have never done this to you before!”

31 “That is true,” Balaam said.

32 Then the LORD allowed Balaam to see the angel. The LORD’s angel was standing in the road, holding a sword in his hand. Balaam bowed low to the ground.

33 Then the LORD’s angel asked Balaam, “Why did you hit your donkey three times? I am the one who came to stop you. But just in time, your donkey saw me and turned away from me. That happened three times. If the donkey had not turned away, I probably would have killed you already. And I would have let your donkey live.”

34 Then Balaam said to the LORD’s angel, “I have sinned. I did not know that you were standing in the road. If I am doing wrong, I will go back home.”

35 Then the LORD’s angel said to Balaam, “No, you can go with these men. But be careful. Speak only the words that I will tell you to say.” So Balaam went with the leaders that Balak had sent.

36 Balak heard that Balaam was coming. So Balak went out to meet him at the Moabite town near the Arnon River. This was at the northern border of his country.

37 When Balak saw Balaam, he said to him, “I asked you before to come. I told you it was very important. Why didn’t you come to me? Did you think I might not be able to pay you?”

38 Balaam answered, “Well, I am here now. I came, but I might not be able to do what you asked. I can only say the words God tells me to say.”

39 Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth.

40 Balak killed some cattle and some sheep as his sacrifice. He gave some of the meat to Balaam and some to the leaders who were with him.

41 The next morning Balak took Balaam to the town of Bamoth Baal. From there they could see part of the Israelite camp.

**Balaam’s First Message**

1 Balaam said, “Build seven altars here. And prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me.”

2 Balak did what Balaam asked. Then Balak and Balaam killed a ram and a bull on each of the altars.

3 Then Balaam said to Balak, “Why did you hit your donkey three times? I am the one who came to stop you. But just in time, your donkey saw me and turned away from me. That happened three times. If the donkey had not turned away, I probably would have killed you already. And I would have let your donkey live.”

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6 Balak heard that Balaam was coming. So Balak went out to meet him at the Moabite town near the Arnon River. This was at the northern border of his country.

7 When Balak saw Balaam, he said to him, “I asked you before to come. I told you it was very important. Why didn’t you come to me? Did you think I might not be able to pay you?”

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5 Then the LORD’s angel said to Balaam, “No, you can go with these men. But be careful. Speak only the words that I will tell you to say.” So Balaam went with the leaders that Balak had sent.

6 Balak heard that Balaam was coming. So Balak went out to meet him at the Moabite town near the Arnon River. This was at the northern border of his country.

7 When Balak saw Balaam, he said to him, “I asked you before to come. I told you it was very important. Why didn’t you come to me? Did you think I might not be able to pay you?”

8 Balaam answered, “Well, I am here now. I came, but I might not be able to do what you asked. I can only say the words God tells me to say.”

9 Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth.

10 Balak killed some cattle and some sheep as his sacrifice. He gave some of the meat to Balaam and some to the leaders who were with him.

11 The next morning Balak took Balaam to the town of Bamoth Baal. From there they could see part of the Israelite camp.
Balaam said, “I have prepared seven altars. And I have killed a bull and a ram as a sacrifice on each altar.”

5 Then the LORD gave Balaam a message for Balak and said, “Go back to Balak and say the things that I have given you to say.”

6 So Balaam went back to Balak. Balak was still standing near the altar, and all the leaders of Moab were standing there with them. Then Balaam spoke, and this was his message:

   “Balak, the king of Moab,
   brought me here from the eastern
   mountains of Aram.

   Balak said to me,
   ‘Come, curse Jacob for me.
   Come, speak against the Israelites.’

8 But God is not against them,
so I cannot speak against them
either!
   The LORD has not asked for bad things
to happen to these people.
   So I cannot do that either.

9 I see these people from the mountain.
   I see them from the high hills.
   They live alone.
   They are not part of another nation.

10 Who can count Jacob’s people?
   They are as many as the grains of
dust.
   No one can count even a fourth of
   the Israelites.
   Let me die like a good man.
   Let my life end as happy as theirs!”

11 Balak said to Balaam, “What have you
done to me? I brought you here to curse
my enemies, but you have blessed them!”

12 But Balaam answered, “I must say the
things that the LORD tells me to say.”

13 Then Balak said to him, “So come
with me to another place. At that place
you can see more of these people. You cannot
see all of them—you can only see part
of them. Maybe from that place you can
curse them for me.”

14 So Balaam led Balaam to Watchmen Hills. This was on top of Mount Pisgah. There Balak built seven altars and killed a bull and a ram on each altar as a sacrifice.

15 Then Balaam said to Balak, “Stay here
by this altar while I go meet with God over
there.”

16 So the LORD came to Balaam and told
Balaam what to say. Then he told Balaam
to go back to Balak and say these things.

17 So Balaam went to Balak. Balak was still standing near the altar. The leaders of Moab were there with him. Balak saw Balaam coming and said, “What did the LORD say?”

Balaam’s Second Message

18 Then Balaam said this:

   “Stand up, Balak, and listen to me.
   Hear me, Balak son of Zippor.

19 God is not a man;
   he will not lie.
   God is not a human being;
   his decisions will not change.
   If he says he will do something,
   then he will do it.
   If he makes a promise,
   then he will do what he promised.

20 He told me to bless them.
   He blessed them, so I cannot
   change that.

21 God saw no wrong in Jacob’s people.
   He saw no sin in the Israelites.
   The LORD is their God,
   and he is with them.
   The Great King is with them!

22 God brought them out of Egypt.
   They are as strong as a wild ox.

23 There is no power that can defeat the
   people of Jacob.
   There is no magic that can stop the
   Israelites.
   People will say this about Jacob and
   the Israelites:
   ‘Look at the great things God did!’

24 The people are as strong as lions,
   and they fight like lions.
   And a lion will not rest until it eats
   what it has caught,
   until it drinks the blood of what it
   has killed.”

25 Then Balak said to Balaam, “You

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\*23:14 Watchmen Hills Or “the fields of Zophim.”

\*23:23 Or “There is no fortunetelling in Jacob, no magic in Israel. God tells them immediately what he plans to do.”
didn’t ask for good things to happen to these people, but you didn’t ask for bad things to happen to them either!”

20 Balaam answered, “I told you before that I can only say what the LORD tells me to say.”

21 Then Balak said to Balaam, “So come with me to another place. Maybe God will be pleased and will allow you to curse them from that place.” 28 So Balak led Balaam to the top of Mount Peor, which looks out over the desert.

22 Balaam said, “Build seven altars here. Then prepare seven bulls and seven rams for the altars.” 30 Balak did what Balaam asked. Balak offered the bulls and rams on the altars.

Balaam’s Third Message

24 Balaam saw that the LORD wanted to bless Israel, so he did not try to change that by using any kind of magic. But Balaam turned and looked toward the desert. 2 He looked out across the desert and saw all the Israelites. They were camped with the tribes in their different areas. Then the Spirit of God came on him, 3 and he gave this message:

“This message is from Balaam son of Beor.
I am speaking about things I see clearly.
4 These are the words I heard from God.
I saw what God All-Powerful showed me.
I humbly tell what I clearly see.

5 “People of Jacob, your tents are beautiful!
Israelites, your homes are beautiful!
6 You are like rows of palm trees planted by the streams.
You are like gardens growing by the rivers.
You are like sweet-smelling bushes planted by the LORD.
You are like cedar trees growing by the water.

7 You will always have enough water, enough water for your seeds to grow.
Your king will be greater than King Agag.
Your kingdom will be very great.

8 “God brought them out of Egypt.
They are as strong as a wild ox.
They will defeat all their enemies.
They will break their bones and shatter their arrows.

9 Israel is like a lion,
curled up and lying down.
Yes, they are like a young lion,
and no one wants to wake him!
Anyone who blesses you will be blessed.
And anyone who curses you will have great troubles.”

10 When Balak heard this, he angrily struck his fist against his hand and said to Balaam, “I called you to come and curse my enemies. But you have blessed them. You have blessed them three times. 12 Now leave and go home! I told you that I would give you a very good payment, but the LORD has caused you to lose your reward.”

12 Balaam said to Balak, “You sent men to ask me to come. Don’t you remember what I told them? I said, 13 Even if Balak gives me his most beautiful house filled with silver and gold, I can still say only what the LORD commands me to say. I cannot do anything myself, good or bad. I must say what the LORD commands.’

14 Now I am going back to my own people. But I will give you this warning. I will tell you what these Israelites will do to you and your people in the future.”

Balaam’s Last Message

15 Then Balaam gave this message:
“This message is from Balaam son of Beor.
I am speaking about things I see clearly.

16 I heard this message from God.
I learned what God Most High taught me.

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I saw what God All-Powerful showed me.
I humbly tell what I clearly see.

17 “I see him coming, but not now.
I see him coming, but not soon.
A star will come from the family of Jacob.
A new ruler will come from the Israelites.
He will smash the heads of the Moabites and crush the heads of all the sons of Sheth."a

18 Israel will grow strong!
He will get the land of Edom.
He will get the land of Seir, his enemy.

19 “A new ruler will come from the family of Jacob.
That ruler will destroy the people left alive in that city.”

20 Then Balaam saw the Amalekites and said this:
“Amalek is the strongest of all nations, but even Amalek will be destroyed!”

21 Then Balaam saw the Kenites and said this:
“You believe that your country is safe, like a bird’s nest high on a mountain.

22 But you Kenites will be destroyed, just as the Lord destroyed Cain. Assyria will make you prisoners.”

23 Then Balaam said this:
“No one can live when God does this.

24 Ships will come from Cyprus. They will defeat Assyria and Eber,e but those ships will also be destroyed.”

a 24:17 sons of Sheth Or “Seth.” Seth was Adam’s third son. This might be like the phrases “son of Man” (Adam) and “son of Enosh” and mean simply “all these people.”
b 24:18 Seir Another name for Edom.
c 24:21 nest, Kenite, Cain A play on words. The names “Cain” and “Kenite” are like the Hebrew word meaning “nest.”
d 24:24 Cyprus Literally, “Kittim.” This might be Cyprus, Crete, or other places west of Israel in the Mediterranean Sea.
e 24:24 Eber This might mean the people living west of the Euphrates River, or it might mean the “Hebrews,” the descendants of Eber. See Gen. 10:21.

25 Then Balaam got up and went back home, and Balak went his own way.

Israel at Peor

1While the Israelites were camped near Acacia, the men committed sexual sinsf with Moabite women. 2-3 The Moabite women invited the men to come and join in their sacrifices to their false gods. So the Israelites joined in worshipping these false gods—they ate the sacrifices and worshiped these gods. There the Israelites began worshipping the false god, Baal of Peor. And the Lord became very angry with them.

4 The Lord said to Moses, “Get all the leaders of these people. Then kill them so that all the people can see. Lay their bodies before the Lord. Then the Lord will not show his anger against all the Israelites.”

5 So Moses said to Israel’s judges, “Each of you must find the men in your tribe who have led people to worship the false god, Baal of Peor. Then you must kill these men.”

6 At the time Moses and all the elders of Israel were gathered together at the entrance to the Meeting Tent. An Israelite man brought a Midianite woman home to his brothers. He did this where Moses and all the leaders could see. Moses and the leaders were very sad. 7 Phinehas was the son of Eleazar and the grandson of Aaron the priest. Phinehas saw this man bring the woman into camp. So he left the meeting and got his spear. 8 He followed the Israelite into the tent. Then he used the spear to kill the Israelite man and the Midianite woman in her tent. He pushed the spear through both of their bodies. At that time there was a great sickness among the Israelites. But when Phinehas killed these two people, the sickness stopped.

f 25:1 sexual sins Sexual sin was often connected with temples for false gods. So this can mean that the men were unfaithful to their wives and also that they were unfaithful to God by going to their temples.

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A total of 24,000 people died from that sickness.

The Lord said to Moses, “I was so angry with the Israelites that I wanted to kill them. But Phinehas, son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron the priest, has saved them from my anger. He did this by showing that he feels strongly, just as I do, that my people must worship only me. Tell Phinehas that I am making a peace agreement with him. This is the agreement: He and all of his family who live after him will always be priests, because he had strong feelings for his God. And he did what was needed to make the Israelites pure.”

The Israelite man who was killed with the Midianite woman was named Zimri son of Salu. He was the leader of a family in the tribe of Simeon. And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi. She was the daughter of Zur. Zur was the head of a family and leader of a Midianite tribe.

The Lord said to Moses, “The Midianites are your enemies. You must kill them. They have already made you their enemies. They tricked you at Peor. And they tricked you with the woman named Cozbi. She was the daughter of Zur. That sickness was caused because the people were tricked into worshiping the false god Baal of Peor.”

The People Are Counted

After the great sickness, the Lord spoke to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron the priest. He said, “Count the Israelites. Count all the men who are 20 years old or older and list them by families. These are the men who are able to serve in the army of Israel.”

At this time the people were camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was near the Jordan River, across from Jericho. So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke to the people. They said, “You must count every man who is 20 years old or older. The Lord gave Moses this command.”

Here is the list of the Israelites who came out of Egypt:

These are the people from the tribe of Reuben. (Reuben was the firstborn son of Israel.) The family groups were
- Hanoch—the Hanochite family group;
- Pallu—the Palluite family group;
- Hezron—the Hezronite family group;
- Carmi—the Carmite family group.

These are the family groups from the tribe of Simeon:
- Nemuel—the Nemuelite family group;
- Jamin—the Jaminite family group;
- Jakin—the Jakinite family group;
- Zerah—the Zerahite family group;
- Shaul—the Shaulite family group.

The total number of men in these family groups from the tribe of Simeon was 43,730.

Pallu’s son was Eliab. Eliab had three sons—Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. Remember, Dathan and Abiram were the two leaders who turned against Moses and Aaron. They followed Korah when Korah turned against the Lord. That was the time when the earth opened and swallowed Korah and all of his followers. And 250 men died! That was a warning to all the Israelites. But the other people who were from the family of Korah did not die.

These are the family groups from the tribe of Simeon:
- Zephon—the Zephonite family group;
- Haggi—the Haggite family group;
- Shuni—the Shunite family group;
- Ozni—the Oznite family group;
- Eri—the Erite family group;
- Arodi—the Arodite family group;
- Areli—the Arelite family group.

The total number of men in these family groups from the tribe of Simeon was 22,200.

These are the family groups in the tribe of Gad:
- Zephon—the Zephonite family group;
- Haggi—the Haggite family group;
- Shuni—the Shunite family group;
- Ozni—the Oznite family group;
- Eri—the Erite family group;
- Arodi—the Arodite family group;
- Areli—the Arelite family group.

The total number of men in these family groups from the tribe of Gad was 40,500.

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The family groups from the tribe of Judah:
Shelah—the Shelanite family group;
Perez—the Perezite family group;
Zerah—the Zerahite family group.
(Two of Judah’s sons, Er and Onan, died in Canaan.)

These are the family groups from Perez:
Hezron—the Hezronite family group;
Hamul—the Hamulite family group.

These were the family groups from the tribe of Judah. The total number of men was 76,500.

The family groups from the tribe of Issachar were
Tola—the Tolaite family group;
Puah—the Puite family group;
Jashub—the Jashubite family group;
Shimron—the Shimronite family group.

These were the family groups from the tribe of Issachar. The total number of men was 64,300.

The family groups from the tribe of Zebulun were
Sered—the Seredite family group;
Elon—the Elonite family group;
Jahleel—the Jahleelite family group.

These were the family groups from the tribe of Zebulun. The total number of men was 60,500.

Joseph’s two sons were Manasseh and Ephraim. Each son became a tribe with its own family groups.

Manasseh’s family groups were
Makir—the Makirite family groups.
(Makir was the father of Gilead.)
Gilead—the Gileadite family groups.

The family groups from Gilead were
Iezer—the Iezerite family group;
Helek—the Helekite family group;
Asriel—the Asrielite family group;
Shechem—the Shechemite family group;
Shemida—the Shemidaite family group;
Hepher—the Hepherite family group.

Zelophehad was the son of Hepher. But he had no sons—only daughters. His daughters’ names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

These are all the family groups from the tribe of Manasseh. The total number of men was 52,700.

The family groups from the tribe of Ephraim were
Shuthelah—the Shuthelahite family group;
Beker—the Bekerite family group;
Tahan—the Tahanite family group.

Eran was from Shuthelah’s family group;
Eran—the Eranite family group.

These were the family groups from the tribe of Ephraim. The total number of men was 32,500.

These family groups of Manasseh and Ephraim are all the descendants of Joseph.

The family groups from the tribe of Benjamin were
Bela—the Belaite family group;
Ashbel—the Ashbelite family group;
Ahiram—the Ahiramite family group;
Shupham—the Shuphamite family group;
Hupham—the Huphamite family group.

The family groups from Bela were
Ard—the Ardite family group;
Naaman—the Naamanite family group.

These were all the family groups from the tribe of Benjamin. The total number of men was 45,600.

The family groups from the tribe of Dan were
Shuham—the Shuhamite family group.
That was the family group from the tribe of Dan. There were many family groups in the Shuhamite tribe. The total number of men was 64,400.

The family groups from the tribe of Asher were
Imnah—the Imnite family group;  
Ishvi—the Ishvite family group;  
Beriah—the Beriite family group.  
45 The family groups from Beriah were  
Heber—the Heberite family group;  
Malkiel—the Malkielite family group.  
46 (Asher also had a daughter named  
Serah.) 47 These were the family groups  
in the tribe of Asher. The total number of  
men was 53,400.

48 The family groups from the tribe of  
Naphtali were  
Jahzeel—the Jahzeelite family group;  
Guni—the Gunite family group;  
49 Jezer—the Jezerite family group;  
Shillem—the Shillemite family group.  
50 These were the family groups from the  
tribe of Naphtali. The total number of men  
was 45,400.

51 So the total number of men of Israel was  
601,730.  
52 The LORD said to Moses, 53 “The land  
will be divided and given to these people.  
Each tribe will get enough land for all the  
people who were counted. 54 A large tribe  
will get much land, and a small tribe will  
get less land. The land that they get will  
be equal to the number of people who  
were counted. 55 But you must use lots to  
decide which tribe gets which part of the  
land. Each tribe will get its share of the  
land, and that land will be given the name  
of that tribe. 56 Land will be given to each  
tribe—large and small. And you will throw  
 lots to make the decisions.”

57 They also counted the tribe of Levi. These are the family groups from the tribe  
of Levi:  
Gershon—the Gershonite family  
group;  
Kohath—the Kohathite family group;  
Merari—the Merarite family group.  
58 These are also family groups from the  
tribe of Levi:  
the Libnite family group;  
the Hebronite family group;  
the Mahlite family group;  
the Mushite family group;  
the Korahite family group.

Amram was from the Kohath family  
group. 59 Amram’s wife was named Joch-  
ebed. She was also from the tribe of Levi.  
She was born in Egypt. Amram and Joch-  
ebed had two sons, Aaron and Moses.  
They also had a daughter, Miriam.  
60 Aaron was the father of Nadab, Abihu,  
Eleazar, and Ithamar. 61 But Nadab and  
Abihu died. They died because they made  
an offering to the LOR D with fire that was  
not allowed.  
62 The total number of males one month  
or older from the tribe of Levi was 23,000.  
But these men were not counted with the  
other Israelites. They did not get a share  
of the land that the Lord gave to the other  
p eople.  
63 Moses and Eleazar the priest counted  
all these people. They counted the Israel-  
ites while they were in the Jordan Valley  
in Moab. This was near the Jordan River  
across from Jericho. 64 Many years before,  
in the desert of Sinai, Moses and Aaron  
the priest counted the Israelites. But all  
these people were dead. Not one of them  
was still alive, 65 because the LOR D told  
them that they would all die in the des-  
ert. The only two men who were left alive  
were Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua  
son of Nun.

Zelophehad’s Daughters

27 Zelophehad was the son of Hepher.  
Hepher was the son of Gilead. Gile-  
ead was the son of Makir. Makir was the  
son of Manasseh. Manasseh was the son  
of Joseph. Zelophehad had five daughters.  
Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah,  
Milcah, and Tirzah. 2 These five women  
grew to the Meeting Tent and stood before  
Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders, and  
all the Israelites.  

The five daughters said, 3 “Our father  
died while we were traveling through the  
desert. He died a natural death. He was  
not one of the men who joined Korah’s  
group. (Korah was the man who turned  
against the LOR D.) But our father had no  
sons. 4 This means that our father’s name
will not continue. It is not fair that our father’s name will not continue. His name will end because he had no sons. So we ask you to give us some of the land that our father’s brothers will get.”

So Moses asked the LORD what he should do. The LORD said to him, “The daughters of Zelophehad are right. They should share the land with their father’s brothers. So give them the land that you would have given to their father.

“So tell the Israelites, ‘If a man has no son, when he dies everything he owns will be given to his daughter. If he has no daughter, everything he owns will be given to his brothers. If his father had no brothers, everything he owns will be given to the closest relative in his family. This will be a law among the Israelites. The LORD has given this command to Moses.’”

Joshua Is the New Leader

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go up on one of mountains in the desert east of the Jordan River. There you will see the land that I am giving to the Israelites. After you have seen this land, you will die like your brother Aaron.

Remember when the people became angry at the water in the desert of Zin. Both you and Aaron refused to obey my command. You did not honor me and show the people that I am holy.” (This was at the water of Meribah near Kadesh in the desert of Zin.)

Moses said to the LORD, “LORD, you are the God who knows what people are thinking. I pray that you will choose a leader for these people. I pray that you will choose a leader who will lead them out of this land and bring them into the new land. Then your people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

So the LORD said to Moses, “Joshua son of Nun is very wise. You will place your hand on him and make him the new leader. Tell him to stand before Eleazar the priest and all the people. Then make him the new leader.

Show the people that you are making him leader, then all the people will obey him. If Joshua needs to make a decision, he will go to Eleazar the priest. Eleazar will use the Urim to learn the LORD’s answer. Then Joshua and all the Israelites will do the things God says. If he says, ‘go to war,’ they will go to war. And if he says, ‘go home,’ they will go home.”

Moses obeyed the LORD. Moses told Joshua to stand before Eleazar the priest and all the Israelites. Then Moses put his hands on him to show that he was the new leader. He did this just as the LORD told him to.

Daily Offerings

Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, “Give this command to the Israelites. Tell them to be sure to give the grain offerings and sacrifices to me at the right time as sweet-smelling gifts. These are gifts that they must give to the LORD. Every day they must give 2 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. Offer one of the lambs in the morning and the other lamb just before dark.

Also give a grain offering of 8 cups of fine flour mixed with 1 quart of olive oil.” (They started giving the daily offerings at Mount Sinai as sweet-smelling gifts to the LORD.) The people must also give the drink offerings that go with the gifts. They must give 1 quart of wine with every lamb. Pour that drink offering on the altar in the Holy Place. This is a gift to the LORD. Offer the second lamb just before dark. Offer it just as the morning offering. Also give the drink offering that goes with it. This will be a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

—27:14 water of Meribah Or “water of rebellion.”
—27:16 Lord ... these people Literally, “May the Lorp, the God of the spirits of all people, appoint a man for this community.”
—27:18 Joshua ... is very wise Literally, “Take Joshua son of Nun. He is a man with a spirit in him.” This might mean that Joshua was very wise, or it might mean that God’s Spirit was with him.
—27:20 Show ... leader Literally, “Give him some of your glory.”
—28:5 8 cups Literally, “1/10 of an ephah” (2.2 l). Also in verses 13, 20–21, 29.

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Sabbath Offerings

9 On the Sabbath you must give 2 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. You must also give a grain offering of 16 cups of fine flour mixed with olive oil, and a drink offering. 10 This is a special offering for the day of rest. This offering is in addition to the regular daily offering and drink offering.

Monthly Meetings

11 On the first day of each month you will offer a special burnt offering to the Lord. This offering will be 2 male bulls, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 12 With each bull, you must give a grain offering of 24 cups of fine flour mixed with olive oil. And with the ram, you must give a grain offering of 16 cups of fine flour mixed with olive oil. 13 Also give a grain offering of 8 cups of fine flour mixed with olive oil with each lamb. This will be a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord. 14 The drink offering will be 2 quarts of wine with each bull, 1 1/4 quarts of wine with the ram, and 1 quart of wine with each lamb. That is the burnt offering that must be offered each month of the year. 15 In addition to the regular daily burnt offering and drink offering, you must also give 1 male goat to the Lord. That goat will be a sin offering.

Passover

16 “The Lord’s Passover will be on the 14th day of the first month. 17 The Festival of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th day of that month. This festival lasts for seven days. The only bread you can eat is bread made without yeast. 18 You must have a special meeting on the first day of this festival. You will not do any work on that day. 19 You will give burnt offerings to the Lord. The burnt offerings will be 2 bulls, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them.

20-21 You must also give a grain offering of 24 cups of fine flour mixed with olive oil with each bull, and 16 cups of fine flour mixed with oil with the ram, and 8 cups of fine flour mixed with oil for each lamb. 22 You must also give a male goat as a sin offering to make you pure. 23 You must give these offerings in addition to the morning burnt offerings that you give every day.

24 In this way, each day for seven days, you must bring the food that is offered by fire. The smell of these offerings will please the Lord. You must give these offerings in addition to the daily burnt offering and the drink offering that goes with it.

25 “Then, on the seventh day of this festival, you will have another special meeting. You will not do any work on that day.

Festival of Harvest

26 “The first day of the Festival of Harvest is the day you bring the first of your new crops and give them as a grain offering to the Lord. At that time you must also call a special meeting. You must not do any work on that day. 27 You must offer a burnt offering as a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord. You must offer 2 bulls, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 28 You must also give 24 cups of fine flour mixed with oil with each bull, and 16 cups with each ram, 29 and 8 cups with each lamb. 30 You must also sacrifice a male goat to make you pure. 31 You must give these offerings in addition to the daily burnt offerings and the grain offering you give with them. Be sure there is nothing wrong with the animals or the drink offerings that you give with them.

Festival of Trumpets

29 “There will be a special meeting on the first day of the seventh month. You will not do any work on that day. That is the day for blowing the trumpets. 2 You will offer burnt offerings. Their smell will please the Lord. You will offer 1 bull, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them.
old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 3 You will also offer 24 cups of fine flour mixed with oil with the bull, 16 cups with the ram, 4 and 8 cups with each of the 7 lambs. 5 Also offer a male goat as a sin offering to make you pure. 6 These offerings are in addition to the New Moon sacrifice and its grain offering. And they are in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings. These must be done according to the rules. They will be sweet-smelling gifts to the LORD.

The Day of Atonement

7 There will be a special meeting on the tenth day of the seventh month. During that day you must not eat any food, 8 and you must not do any work. 8 You will offer burnt offerings. Their smell will please the LORD. You must offer 1 bull, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 9 You must also offer 24 cups of fine flour mixed with olive oil with the bull, 16 cups with the ram, 10 and 8 cups with each of the 7 lambs. 11 You will also offer 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the sin offering for the Day of Atonement. This will also be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

Festival of Shelters

12 There will be a special meeting on the 15th day of the seventh month. 13 You must not do any work on that day. You must celebrate a special festival for the LORD for seven days. 14 You will offer burnt offerings as sweet-smelling gifts to the LORD. You will offer 13 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 15 You must also offer 24 cups of fine flour mixed with oil with each of the 13 bulls, 16 cups with each of the 2 rams, 16 and 8 cups with each of the 14 lambs. 16 You must also offer 1 male goat. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

17 On the second day of this festival, you must offer 12 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 18 You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. 19 You must also offer 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

20 On the third day of this festival, you must offer 11 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 21 You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. 22 You must also give 1 goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

23 On the fourth day of this festival, you must offer 10 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 24 You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. 25 You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

26 On the fifth day of this festival, you must offer 9 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 27 You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. 28 You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

29 On the sixth day of this festival, you must offer 8 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 30 You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs. 31 You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering.
offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

32"On the seventh day of this festival, you must offer 7 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 33You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. 34You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

35"The eighth day of this festival is a very special meeting for you. You must not do any work on that day. 36You must offer a burnt offering as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. You must offer 1 bull, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. 37You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bull, ram, and lambs. 38You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

39"At the special festivals you must bring your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings, and fellowship offerings. You must give these offerings to the LORD. They are in addition to any special gift you might want to give him and any offering that is part of a special promise you make."

40Moses told the Israelites everything the LORD had commanded him.

**Special Promises**

30 1Moses spoke with all the leaders of the Israelite tribes and told them about these commands from the LORD:

2"If a man makes a special promise to the LORD or makes a promise with an oath, he must not break his promise. He must do everything he said he would do.

3"A young woman might still be living in her father’s house. And that young woman might make a special promise to give something to the LORD. 4If her father hears about the promise and agrees, the young woman must do what she promised. 5But if her father hears about the promise and does not agree, she is free from her promise. She does not have to do what she promised. Her father stopped her, so the LORD will forgive her.

6"A woman might make a special promise to give something to the Lord and then get married. 7If the husband hears about the promise and does not object, the woman must do what she promised. 8But if the husband hears about the promise and refuses to let her keep her promise, the wife does not have to do what she promised. Her husband broke the promise—he did not let her do what she said. So the LORD will forgive her.

9"A widow or a divorced woman might make a special promise. If she does, she must do exactly what she promised.

10"A married woman might make a promise to give something to the Lord. 11If her husband hears about the promise and lets her keep her promise, she must do exactly what she promised. She must give everything she promised. 12But if her husband hears about the promise and refuses to let her keep the promise, she does not have to do what she promised. Her husband broke the promise—he did not let her do what she said. So the Lord will forgive her.

13"A widow or a divorced woman might make a special promise. If she does, she must do exactly what she promised.

14"A married woman might make a promise to give something to the Lord. 15If her husband hears about the promise and lets her keep her promise, she must do exactly what she promised. It doesn’t matter what she promised to do; if her husband is against it, this ends her duty to do it. And the LORD will forgive her. 16A married woman might promise to give something to the LORD, or she might promise to do without something, or she might make some other special promise to God. The husband can stop any of these promises, and the husband can let her keep any of these promises. 17How does the husband let his wife keep her promises? If he hears about the promises and does not stop them, the woman must do exactly what she promised. 18But if the husband hears about the promises and stops them, he is responsible for breaking her promises."b

These are the commands that the

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*a 30:13 do without something* Literally, “humble her soul.” Usually this means to make the body suffer in some way, such as by not eating food.

*b 30:15 he … her promises* Literally, “he carries her guilt.”
Lord gave to Moses. These are the commands about a man and his wife, and about a father and his daughter who is still young and living at home in her father’s house.

Israel Fights Back Against the Midianites

The Lord spoke to Moses and said, “Moses, tell the Israelites this: ‘Go and attack the Midianites, and do to them what they did to you.’ After that Moses, you will die.” a

3So Moses spoke to the people. He said, “Choose some of your men to be soldiers. The Lord will use these men to do to the Midianites what they did to you. 4Choose 1000 men from each of the tribes of Israel. 5There will be a total of 12,000 soldiers from the tribes of Israel.”

6Moses sent these 12,000 men to war. He sent Phinehas son of Eleazar with them as the priest. Phinehas took the holy things and the horns and trumpets with him. 7The Israelites fought the Midianites as the Lord had commanded. They killed all the Midianite men. 8Among the people who they killed were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with a sword.

9The Israelites took the Midianite women and children as prisoners. They also took all their sheep, cattle, and other things. 10Then they burned all their towns and villages. 11They took all the people and animals and brought them to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the other Israelites. They brought all the things they took in war to the camp of Israel. The Israelites were camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab, on the east side of the Jordan River across from Jericho. 12Then Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the people went out of the camp to meet with the soldiers.

13Moses was very angry with the leaders of the army, the commanders of 1000 men, and the commanders of 100 men, who came back from the war. 14Moses said to them, “Why did you let the women live? 15These are the women who listened to Balaam and caused the men of Israel to turn away from the Lord that time at Peor. The disease will come to the Lord’s people again. 16Now, kill all the Midianite boys, and kill all the Midianite women who have had sexual relations with a man. 17You can let all the young girls live—but only if they never had sexual relations with any man. 18And then, all you men who killed other people must stay outside the camp for seven days. You must stay outside the camp even if you just touched a dead body. On the third day you and your prisoners must make yourselves pure. You must do the same thing again on the seventh day. 19You must wash all of your clothes. You must wash anything made with leather, wool, or wood. You must purify yourselves.”

Then Eleazar the priest spoke to the soldiers. He said, “These are the rules that the Lord gave to Moses for soldiers coming back from war. 20You must put gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, or lead into the fire and then wash these things with the special water to make them pure. If something can be put in the fire, you must put it in fire to purify it. If things cannot be put in fire, you must still wash them with the special water. 21On the seventh day you must wash all of your clothes. Then you will be pure. After that you can come into camp.”

25Then the Lord said to Moses, “You, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders should count all the prisoners, animals, and everything the soldiers took in war. 26Then divide these things between the soldiers who went to war and the rest of the Israelites. 27Take part of these things from the soldiers who went to war. That part will belong to the Lord. His share is one from every 500 items. This includes people, cattle, donkeys, and sheep. 28Take that share from the soldiers’ half of the things they took in war. Then give these things to Eleazar the priest. That part will belong to the Lord. 29And then, from the
people’s half, take one thing for every 50 items. This includes people, cattle, donkeys, sheep, or any other animal. Give that share to the Levites, because they take care of the Lord’s Holy Tent.”

So Moses and Eleazar did what the Lord commanded Moses. The soldiers had taken 675,000 sheep, 337,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys, and 32,000 women. (These are only the women who had not had sexual relations with any man.) The soldiers who went to war got 337,500 sheep. They gave 675 sheep to the Lord. The soldiers got 36,000 cattle. They gave 72 cattle to the Lord. The soldiers got 30,500 donkeys. They gave 61 donkeys to the Lord. The soldiers got 16,000 women. They gave 32 women to the Lord. Moses gave all these gifts for the Lord to Eleazar the priest, as the Lord had commanded.

Then Moses counted the people’s half. This was their share that Moses had taken from the soldiers who had gone to war. The people got 337,500 sheep, 36,000 cattle, 30,500 donkeys, and 16,000 women. Moses took one out of every 50 women and animals. He gave them to the Levites because they took care of the Lord’s Holy Tent. Moses did this as the Lord had commanded.

Then Moses counted the people’s half. This was their share that Moses had taken from the soldiers who had gone to war. The people got 337,500 sheep, 36,000 cattle, 30,500 donkeys, and 16,000 women. Moses took one out of every 50 women and animals. He gave them to the Levites because they took care of the Lord’s Holy Tent. Moses did this as the Lord had commanded.

Then the leaders of the army (the leaders over 1000 men and the leaders over 100 men) came to Moses. They told Moses, “We, your servants, have counted our soldiers. We have not missed any of them. So we are bringing the Lord’s gift from every soldier. We are bringing things that are made of gold—armbands, bracelets, rings, earrings, and necklaces. This gift to the Lord is to make us pure.”

So Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted all these gold items from them. The gold that the commanders gave to the Lord weighed about 424 pounds.

The gold from the commanders and captains and then put that gold in the Meeting Tent. This present was a memorial before the Lord for the Israelites.

Tribes East of the Jordan River

The tribes of Reuben and Gad had many cattle. These people looked at the land near Jazer and Gilead. They saw that this land was good for their cattle. So the people from the tribes of Reuben and Gad came to Moses. They spoke to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the people. They said, “We, your servants, have many cattle. And the land that the Lord let the people of Israel capture is good land for cattle. This land includes the area around Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sibmah, Nebo, and Beon. If it pleases you, we would like this land to be given to us. Don’t take us to the other side of the Jordan River.”

Moses told the people from the tribes of Reuben and Gad, “Will you let your brothers go and fight while you settle here? Why are you trying to discourage the Israelites? You will make them not want to cross the river and take the land that the Lord has given to them? Your fathers did the same thing to me. In Kadesh Barnea I sent spies to look at the land. These men went as far as Eshcol Valley. They saw the land, and they discouraged the Israelites. These men made the Israelites not want to go into the land that the Lord had given to them. The Lord became very angry with the people. He made this promise: ‘None of the people who came from Egypt and are 20 years old or older will be allowed to see this land. I made a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I promised to give this land to these people, but they did not really follow me. Only Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun really followed the Lord!’

The Lord was very angry with the Israelites. So he made the people stay in...
the desert for 40 years. He made them stay there until all the people who had sinned against the Lord were dead. 14 And now you are doing the same thing that your fathers did. You sinful people, do you want the Lord to be even more angry with his people? 15 If you stop following the Lord, he will make Israel stay even longer in the desert. Then you will destroy all these people!"

16 But the people from the tribes of Reuben and Gad went to Moses. They said, “We will build cities for our children and barns for our animals here. 17 Then our children can be safe from the other people who live in this land. But we will gladly come and help the other Israelites. We will bring them to their land. 18 We will not come back home until everyone in Israel has taken his part of the land. 19 We will not take any of the land west of the Jordan River. No, our part of the land is east of the Jordan River.”

20 So Moses told them, “If you do all these things, this land will belong to you. But your soldiers must go before the Lord into battle. 21 Your soldiers must cross the Jordan River and be ready to fight for the Lord until he forces the enemy to leave. 22 After the Lord helps us all take the land, you can go back home. Then the Lord and Israel will not think that you are guilty. And the Lord will let you have this land. 23 But if you don’t do these things, you will be sinning against the Lord. And know for sure that you will be punished for your sin. 24 Build cities for your children and barns for your animals. But then, you must do what you promised.”

25 Then the people from the tribes of Gad and Reuben said to Moses, “We are your servants. You are our master, so we will do what you say. 26 Our wives, children, and all our animals will stay in the cities of Gilead. 27 But we, your servants, will cross the Jordan River. We will march before the Lord into battle, as our master says.”

28 So Moses, Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and all the leaders of the tribes of Israel heard them make that promise. 29 Moses said to them, “The people of Gad and Reuben will cross the Jordan River. They will march before the Lord into battle. They will help you take the land. And you will give the land of Gilead as their part of the country. 30 But if they do not cross the river with you ready to fight, they will not get any land on this side. They will get only a share of the land of Canaan with the rest of you.”

31 The people of Gad and Reuben answered, “We promise to do what the Lord commanded. 32 We will cross the Jordan River and march before the Lord into the land of Canaan. And our part of the country is the land east of the Jordan River.”

33 So Moses gave that land to the people of Gad, to the people of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh. (Manasseh was Joseph’s son.) That land included the kingdom of Sihon the Amorite and the kingdom of King Og of Bashan and all the cities around that area.

34 The people of Gad built the cities of Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, 35 Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, 36 Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran. They built cities with strong walls, and they built barns for their animals.

37 The people of Reuben built Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, 38 Nebo, Baal Meon, and Sibmah. They used the names of the cities that they rebuilt. But they changed the names of Nebo and Baal Meon.

39 People from Makir’s family group went to Gilead. 40 (Makir was Manasseh’s son.) They defeated the city. They defeated the Amorites who lived there. 41 Jair, from the family of Manasseh, defeated the small towns there. Then he called them Towns of Jair. 42 Nobah defeated Kenath and the small towns near it. Then he called that place by his own name.

32:39 Gilead Here, this seems to refer to a city, perhaps Ramoth Gilead. But it might refer to the whole area. See Hos. 6:8.
Here is a list of the places the Israelites went when they left Egypt. They were organized in groups like an army and were led by Moses and Aaron.

Following the LORD’s command, Moses kept a record of each place they stayed before moving on to the next place. These are all the places they went:

1. On the 15th day of the first month, they left Rameses. That morning after Passover, the Israelites marched out of Egypt with their arms raised in victory. All the people of Egypt saw them. The Egyptians were burying all the people the LORD killed. They were burying all their firstborn sons. The LORD had shown his judgment against the gods of Egypt.

2. The Israelites left Rameses and traveled to Succoth.

3. From Succoth they traveled to Etham. They camped there at the edge of the desert. This was near Baal Zephon. They camped near Migdol.

4. They left Pi Hahiroth and walked through the middle of the sea. They went toward the desert. Then they traveled for three days through the desert of Etham. The people camped at Marah.

5. They left Marah and went to Elim and camped there. There were 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees there.

6. They left Elim and camped near the Red Sea. They left the Red Sea and camped in the western Sinai desert.

7. They left Etham and went to Pi Hahiroth. This was near Baal Zephon. They camped near Migdol.

8. They left Pi Hahiroth and walked through the middle of the sea. They went toward the desert. Then they traveled for three days through the desert of Etham. The people camped at Marah.

9. They left Marah and went to Elim and camped there. There were 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees there.

10. They left Elim and camped near the Red Sea. They left the Red Sea and camped in the western Sinai desert.

11. They left there and camped at Dophkah.

12. They left Dophkah and camped at Alush.

13. They left Alush and camped at Rephidim. There was no water for the people to drink at that place.

14. They left Rephidim and camped in the desert of Sinai.

15. They left the desert of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah.

16. They left Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.

17. They left Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.

18. They left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez.

19. They left Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah.

20. They left Libnah and camped at Rissah.

21. They left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.

22. They left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.

23. They left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.

24. They left Haradah and camped at Makeloth.

25. They left Makeloth and camped at Tahath.

26. They left Tahath and camped at Terah.

27. They left Terah and camped at Mithcah.

28. They left Mithcah and camped at Hashmonah.

29. They left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.

30. They left Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan.

31. They left Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Haggidgad.

32. They left Hor Haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

33. They left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.

34. They left Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber.

35. They left Ezion Geber and camped at Kadesh, in the desert of Zin.

36. They left Kadesh and camped at Hor. This was the mountain at the border of the country of Egypt.
Edom. 38 Aaron the priest obeyed the LORD and went up Mount Hor. Aaron died at that place on the first day of the fifth month. That was the 40th year after the Israelites had left Egypt. 39 Aaron was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor.

40 Arad was a town in the Negev, in the land of Canaan. The Canaanite king in that place heard that the Israelites were coming.

41 The people left Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.

42 They left Zalmonah and camped at Punon.

43 They left Punon and camped at Oboth.

44 They left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim. This was at the border of the country of Moab.

45 They left Iye Abarim and camped at Dibon Gad.

46 They left Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim.

47 They left Almon Diblathaim and camped on the mountains of Abarim near Nebo.

48 They left the mountains of Abarim and camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab. Their camp went from Beth Jeshimoth to Acacia Field.

49 There, the LORD spoke to Moses and said, 50 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them this: You will soon enter the land of Canaan. I am giving you that land to be your very own. These will be its borders:

3 On the south, you will get part of the desert of Zin near Edom. Your southern border will start at the south end of the Dead Sea.

4 It will cross south of Scorpion Pass. It will go through the town of Zin to Kadesh Barnea and then to Hazar Addar, and then it will pass through Azmon.

5 From Azmon the border will go to the River of Egypt, and it will end at the Mediterranean Sea.

6 Your western border will be the Mediterranean Sea.

7 Your northern border will begin at the Mediterranean Sea and go to Mount Hor.

8 From Mount Hor it will go to Lebo Hamath, and then to Zedad.

9 Then that border will go to Ziphron and it will end at Hazar Enan. So that will be your northern border.

10 Your eastern border will begin at Enan and it will go to Shepham.

11 From Shepham the border will go east of Ain to Riblah. The border will continue along the hills by Lake Galilee.

12 Then the border will continue along the Jordan River. It will end at the Dead Sea. These are the borders around your country.”

13 So Moses gave this command to the Israelites, “That is the land that you will get. You will throw lots to divide the land.

Small family groups will get small parts of the land. The lots will show which family group gets which part of the land. Each tribe will get its part of the land.

55 “You must force these other people to leave the country. If you let them stay in your country, they will bring many troubles to you. They will be like a needle in your eye and a thorn in your side. They will bring many troubles to the country where you will be living. 56 I showed you what I would do—and I will do that to you!”

The Borders of Canaan

1 The LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 2 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them this: You will soon enter the land of Canaan. I am giving you that land to be your very own. These will be its borders:

3 On the south, you will get part of the desert of Zin near Edom. Your southern border will start at the south end of the Dead Sea.

4 It will cross south of Scorpion Pass. It will go through the town of Zin to Kadesh Barnea and then to Hazar Addar, and then it will pass through Azmon.

5 From Azmon the border will go to the River of Egypt, and it will end at the Mediterranean Sea.

6 Your western border will be the Mediterranean Sea.

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13 So Moses gave this command to the Israelites, “That is the land that you will get. You will throw lots to divide the land.

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among the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh, as the LORD commanded. 14 The tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have already taken their land. 15 These two and a half tribes took the land near Jericho—they took the land east of the Jordan River."

Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said, 16 “These are the men who will help you divide the land: Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of all the tribes. There will be one leader from each tribe. These men will divide the land. 19 These are the names of the leaders: from the tribe of Judah—Caleb son of Jephunneh; from the tribe of Simeon—Shemuel son of Ammihud; from the tribe of Benjamin—Elidad son of Kislon; from the tribe of Dan—Bukki son of Jogli; from the descendants of Joseph; from the tribe of Manasseh—Hanniel son of Ephod; from the tribe of Ephraim—Kemuel son of Shiphtan; from the tribe of Zebulun—Elizaphan son of Parnach; from the tribe of Issachar—Paltiel son of Azizan; from the tribe of Asher—Ahihud son of Shelomi; from the tribe of Naphtali—Pedahel son of Ammihud.”

Then the LORD chose these men to divide the land of Canaan among the Israelites.

**The Levites’ Towns**

1 The LORD spoke to Moses. This was in the Jordan Valley in Moab, near the Jordan River, across from Jericho. He said, 2 “Tell the Israelites that they should give some of the cities in their part of the land to the Levites. The Israelites should give these cities and the pastures around them to the Levites. The Levites will be able to live in them. And all the cattle and other animals that belong to the Levites will be able to eat from the pastures around these cities. How much of your land should you give to the Levites? From the walls of the cities, go out 1500 feet—all of that land will belong to the Levites. 5 Measure off an area around the city for the Levites. Start at the northeast corner and measure 3000 feet to the south. Then from this corner, measure 3000 feet to the west. From there measure 3000 feet to the north and from that corner, 3000 feet to the east. The city will be in the center of this area. Six of those cities will be cities of safety. If a person accidentally kills someone, that person can run to those towns for safety. In addition to those six cities, you will also give 42 more cities to the Levites. So you will give a total of 48 cities to the Levites. You will also give them the land around those cities. The large tribes of Israel will get large pieces of land. The small tribes of Israel will get small pieces of land. So the large tribes will give more cities and the small tribes will give fewer cities to the Levites.”

9 Then the LORD said to Moses, 10 “Tell the people this: You will cross the Jordan River and go into the land of Canaan. 11 You must choose towns to be cities of safety. If someone accidentally kills another person, that person can run to one of those towns for safety. 12 That person will be safe from anyone from the dead man’s family who wants to punish the killer until that person is judged in court. 13 There will be six cities of safety. Three of them will be east of the Jordan River and three of them will be in the land of Canaan, west of the Jordan River. 15 These cities will be places of safety for citizens of Israel and for foreigners and travelers. Any of these people will be able to run to one of these cities if they accidentally kill someone.

16 “If you use an iron weapon to kill someone, you are a murderer, and you must die. If you use a rock large enough to
kill someone and you kill another person, you are a murderer, and you must die. If you use a piece of wood large enough to kill someone and you kill another person, you are a murderer, and you must die. A member of the dead person's family can chase you and kill you.

20–21 “You might hit someone with your hand or push someone or throw something at them and kill them. If you did that from hate, you are a murderer, and you must be killed. A member of the dead person’s family can chase you and kill you.

22 “You might accidentally kill someone, maybe by pushing or by accidentally hitting them with a tool or weapon. Perhaps you threw a rock that was large enough to kill, but it hit someone you didn’t see and killed them. You didn’t plan to kill anyone. You didn’t hate the person you killed—it was only an accident. If that happens, the community must decide what to do. The court must decide if a member of the dead person's family can kill you. If the community decides to protect you from the dead person’s family, the community must take you back to your city of safety. You must stay there until the official high priest dies.

26–27 “You must never go outside the limits of your city of safety. If you do and if a member of the dead person's family catches you and kills you, that family member will not be guilty of murder. Whoever accidentally killed someone must stay in their city of safety until the high priest dies. After the high priest dies, that person can go back to their own land. These rules will be the law forever in all the towns of your people.

30 “A killer should be put to death as a murderer only if there are witnesses. No one can be put to death if there is only one witness.

31 “A murderer must be put to death. Don’t take money to change the punishment. That murderer must be killed.

32 If a person killed someone and then ran to one of the cities of safety, don’t take money to let that person go home. That person must stay in that city until the high priest dies.

33 “Don’t let your land be polluted with innocent blood. If a person murders someone, the only payment for that crime is that the murderer must be killed! There is no other payment that will free the land from that crime. I am the LORD. I will be living in your country with the Israelites, so don’t make it unclean with the blood of innocent people.”

The Land of Zelophehad’s Daughters

1 Manasseh was Joseph’s son. Makir was Manasseh’s son. Gilead was Makir’s son. The leaders of Gilead’s family went to talk to Moses and the leaders of the tribes of Israel. They said, “Sir, the LORD commanded us to get our land by throwing lots. And sir, the LORD commanded that the land of Zelophehad our brother be given to his daughters. Maybe a man from one of the other tribes will marry one of Zelophehad’s daughters. Will that land leave our family? Will the people of that other tribe get the land? Will we lose the land that we got by throwing lots?

4 People might sell their land, but in the Jubilee year, all the land is returned to the tribe that really owns it. At that time who will get the land that belongs to Zelophehad’s daughters? Will our tribe lose that land forever?”

Moses gave this command from the LORD to the Israelites: “These men from the tribe of Joseph are right. This is the LORD’s command to Zelophehad’s daughters: If you want to marry someone, you must marry someone from your own tribe. If you want to marry someone, you must marry someone from your own tribe. In this way land will not be passed from tribe to tribe among the Israelites. Each Israelite will keep the land that belonged to their own ancestors. And if a woman gets her father’s land, she must marry someone from her own tribe. That way everyone will keep the land that belonged to his ancestors. So the land must not be
passed from tribe to tribe among the Israelites. Each Israelite will keep the land that belonged to their own ancestors.”

10 So Zelophehad’s daughters obeyed the LORD’s command to Moses. 11 Zelophehad’s daughters—Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah—married their cousins on their father’s side of the family. 12 Their husbands were from Manasseh’s family groups, so their land remained within their father’s family group and tribe.

13 So these are the laws and commands that the LORD gave to Moses in the Jordan Valley in Moab by the Jordan River, across from Jericho.
Deuteronomy

Moses Talks to the Israelites

1 These are the commands that Moses gave the Israelites while they were in the Jordan Valley, in the desert east of the Jordan River. This was across from Suph, between the desert of Paran and the cities Tophel, Laban, Hazerath, and Dizahab.

2 The trip from Mount Horeb through the mountains of Seir to Kadesh Barnea takes only eleven days. But it was 40 years from the time the Israelites left Egypt until the time they came to this place. On the first day of the eleventh month of the 40th year, Moses spoke to the people and told them everything the LORD commanded.

3 This was after he defeated Sihon and Og. (Sihon was the king of the Amorites and lived in Heshbon. Og was the king of Bashan and lived in Ashteroth and Edrei.) The Israelites were in Moab on the east side of the Jordan River when Moses began to explain what God had commanded:

4 “At Mount Horeb the LORD our God spoke to us. He said, ‘You have stayed at this mountain long enough. Go to the hill country where the Amorites live and to all the neighboring areas in the Jordan Valley, the hill country, the western slopes, the Negev, and the seacoast. Go throughout the land of Canaan and Lebanon as far as the great river, the Euphrates. Look, I am giving you this land. Go and take it. It is the land that I, the LORD, promised to give to your ancestors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I promised to give this land to them and to their descendants.’

Moses Chooses Leaders

9 “At that time I told you, ‘I can’t take care of you by myself. And now, there are even more of you. The LORD your God has added more and more people, so that today you are as many as the stars in the sky. May the LORD, the God of your ancestors, give you 1000 times more people than you are now! May he bless you as he promised. But I cannot take care of you and solve all your arguments by myself. So choose some men from each tribe, and I will make them leaders over you. Choose wise men with experience who understand people.’

14 “And you said, ‘That is a good thing to do.’

15 “So I took the wise, experienced men you chose from your tribes, and I made them your leaders. In this way I gave you leaders over 1000 people, over 100 people, over 50 people, and over 10 people. I also gave you officers for each of your tribes.

16 “At that time I told these judges, ‘Listen to the arguments between your people. Be fair when you judge each case. It doesn’t matter if the problem is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner. You must judge each case fairly. You must treat everyone the same when you judge. You must listen carefully to everyone—whether they are important or not. Don’t be afraid of anyone, because your decision is from God. But if there is a case too hard for you to judge, bring it to me and I will judge it.’ At that same time I also told you everything you must do.

The Spies Go to Canaan

19 “So we obeyed the LORD our God. We left Mount Horeb and went to the hill country of the Amorites. You remember that big, terrible desert that we walked through. We came as far as Kadesh Barnea.

20 “Then I said to you, ‘You have now come to the hill country of the Amorites. The
LORD our God will give us this country. 21Look, there it is! Go up and take the land for your own. The LORD, the God of your ancestors, told you to do this, so don’t be afraid or worry about anything.’

22But all of you came to me and said, ‘Let’s send some men to look at the land first. They can spy out the land and come back and tell us the way we should go and which cities we will come to.’

23“I thought that was a good idea. So I chose twelve men from among you, one man from each tribe. 24Then they left and went up to the hill country. They came to the Valley of Eshcol and explored it. 25They took some of the fruit from that land and brought it back to us. They told us about the land and said, ‘The LORD our God is giving us a good land.’

26“But you refused to go into the land. You refused to obey the LORD your God. 27You went to your tents and began to complain. You said, ‘The Lord hates us! He brought us out of the land of Egypt just to let the Amorites destroy us.

28Where can we go now? The men we sent have frightened us with their report. They said, “The people there are bigger and taller than we are. The cities are big and have walls as high as the sky. And we saw giants there!”’

29“So I said to you, ‘Don’t be upset or afraid of those people. 30The LORD your God is in front, leading you. He will fight for you just as he did in Egypt. 31You saw what happened in the desert. You saw how the LORD your God carried you like a man carries his child. He brought you safely all the way to this place.’

32“But you didn’t trust the LORD your God then either. 33But he was always in front, going ahead to find a place for you to camp. At night, he was in the fire that showed you where to go. And during the day, he was in the cloud.

People Not Allowed to Enter Canaan

34“The LORD heard what you said, and he was angry. He made a vow. He said, 35‘Not one of you evil people who are alive now will go into the good land that I promised to your ancestors. 36Only Caleb son of Jephunneh will see that land. I will give Caleb the land he walked on, and I will give that land to his descendants, because he did all that I, the LORD, commanded.’

37“The LORD was also angry with me because of you. He said to me, ‘Moses, you cannot enter the land, either. 38But your helper, Joshua son of Nun, will go into the land. Encourage Joshua, because he will lead the Israelites to take the land for their own. 39You thought your little children would be taken by your enemies. But those children, who are still too young to know right from wrong, will go into the land. I will give it to them. Your children will take the land for their own. 40But you—you must turn around, take the road to the Red Sea and go back into the desert.’

41”Then you said, ‘Moses, we sinned against the LORD, but now we will do what the LORD our God commanded us before—we will go and fight.’

42“Then each of you put on your weapons. You thought it would be easy to go and take the hill country. 43But the LORD said to me, ‘Tell the people not to go up there and fight, because I will not be with them. Their enemies will defeat them!’

44“I spoke to you, but you did not listen. You refused to obey the LORD’s command. You thought you could use your own power, so you went up into the hill country. 45The Amorites who lived there came out like a swarm of bees and chased you all the way from Seir to Hormah.

46Then you came back crying to the LORD for help, but the LORD refused to listen to you. 46So you stayed at Kadesh for such a long time.

Israel Wanders Through the Desert

1”Then we did what the LORD told me to do. We went back into the desert on the road that leads to the Red Sea. We traveled for many days to go around the mountains of Seir. 2Then the LORD said
to me, 3 You have traveled around these mountains long enough. Turn north. 4 Tell the people this: You will pass through the land of Seir. This land belongs to your relatives, the descendants of Esau. They will be afraid of you. Be very careful. 5 Don’t fight them. I will not give you any of their land—not even a foot of it, because I gave the hill country of Seir to Esau to keep as his own. 6 You must pay the people of Esau for any food you eat or water you drink there. 7 Remember that the LORD your God has blessed you in everything you have done. He knows about everything that happened on the trip through this great desert. The LORD your God has been with you these 40 years. You have always had everything you needed.’

8 “So we passed by our relatives, the people of Esau living there in Seir. We left the road that leads from the Jordan Valley to the towns of Elath and Ezion Geber. We turned onto the road that goes to the desert in Moab.

Israel at Ar
9 “The LORD said to me, ‘Don’t bother the Moabites. Don’t start a war against them. I will not give you any of their land. They are the descendants of Lot, a and I gave them the city of Ar.’”

10 (In the past, the Emites lived in Ar. They were strong people, and there were many of them. They were very tall, like the Anakites. 11 The Anakites were part of the Rephaites. People thought the Emites were also Rephaites, but the people of Moab called them Emites. 12 The Horites also lived in Seir in the past. Then Esau’s people destroyed the Horites, took their land, and settled there, just as the Israelites did to the people in the land that the LORD gave them.)

13 “The Lord told me, ‘Now, go to the other side of Zered Valley.’ So we crossed Zered Valley. 14 It was 38 years from the time we left Kadesh Barnea until the time we crossed Zered Valley. As the LORD had promised, all the fighting men in our camp from that generation had died. 15 The LORD had opposed those men until they were all dead and gone from our camp.

16 “After all the fighting men were dead and gone, 17 the LORD said to me, 18 “Today you must cross the border at Ar and go into Moab. 19 You will be just across from the Ammonites. Don’t bother them or fight with them, because I will not give you their land. They are descendants of Lot, and I have given that land to them.’”

20 (That country is also known as the Land of Rephaim. The Rephaites lived there in the past. The people of Ammon called them the Zamzummites. 21 There were many Rephaites, and they were very strong and tall like the Anakites. But the LORD helped the Ammonites destroy them. The Ammonites took that land and live there now. 22 God did the same thing for Esau’s people. In the past the Horites lived in Seir. 23 But Esau’s people destroyed the Horites, and Esau’s descendants still live there today. 24 God did the same thing for some people from Crete. The Avvites lived in the towns around Gaza, but the Cretans destroyed them, took the land, and live there now.)

Fighting the Amorites
25 “The Lord told me, ‘Get ready to go across Arnon Valley. I will let you defeat Sihon the Amorite, the king of Heshbon. I will let you take his country. So fight against him and take his land.
26 “While we were in the desert of Kedemoth, I sent messengers to King Sihon of Heshbon. The messengers offered peace to Sihon. They said, 27 ‘Let us go through your land. We will stay on the road. We will not turn off the road to the right or to the left. 28 We will pay you in silver for any food we eat or any water we drink. We only want to march through your country. 29 Let us go through your land until we

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a 2:9 descendants of Lot Lot’s sons were Moab and Ammon. See Gen. 19:30–38.
b 2:22 Seir The hill country of Edom.
Deuteronomy 3

We went across the Jordan River into the land that the LORD our God is giving us. Other people have let us go through their land—the people of Esau living in Seir and the Moabites living in Ar.'

But King Sihon of Heshbon would not let us pass through his country. The LORD your God had made him very stubborn and ready to fight. The LORD did this so that he could help you defeat King Sihon. And today we know that is what happened.

The LORD said to me, 'I am giving King Sihon and his country to you. Now, go take his land!'

Then King Sihon and all his people came out to fight against us at Jahaz. But the LORD our God gave him to us. We defeated King Sihon, his sons, and all his people. We captured all the cities that belonged to King Sihon at that time. We completely destroyed the people in every city—the men, women, and children. We did not leave anyone alive! We took only the cattle and the valuable things from those cities. We defeated the town of Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley and the other town in the middle of that valley. The LORD let us defeat all the cities between the Arnon Valley and Gilead. No city was too strong for us. But you did not go near the land that belongs to the people of Ammon. You did not go near the shores of the Jabbok River or the cities of the hill country. You did not go near any place that the LORD our God would not let us have.

Fighting the People of Bashan

We turned and went on the road to Bashan. King Og of Bashan and all his men came out to fight against us at Edrei. The LORD said to me, 'Don’t be afraid of Og. I have decided to give him to you. I will give you all his men and his land. You will defeat him just as you defeated Sihon, the Amorite king who ruled in Heshbon.'

So the LORD our God let us defeat King Og of Bashan. We destroyed him and all his men. Not one of them was left. Then we took all the cities that belonged to Og at that time. We took all the cities from Og’s people—60 cities in the area of Argob, Og’s kingdom in Bashan. All these cities were very strong. They had high walls, gates, and strong bars on the gates. There were also many towns that did not have walls. We destroyed them just as we destroyed the cities of King Sihon of Heshbon. We completely destroyed every city and all the people in them, even the women and the babies. But we kept all the cattle and the valuable things from the cities for ourselves.

In that way we took the land from the two Amorite kings. We took that land on the east side of the Jordan River, from Arnon Valley to Mount Hermon. (The people from Sidon call Mount Hermon, Sirion, but the Amorites called it Senir.) We took all the cities in the high plain and all of Gilead. We took all of Bashan, all the way to Salecah and Edrei. Salecah and Edrei were cities of Og’s kingdom of Bashan.”

(Og was the king of Bashan. He was one of the few Rephaites still alive. His bed was made from iron, and it was over 13 feet long and 6 feet wide. The bed is still in the city of Rabbah, where the Ammonites live.)

The Land East of the Jordan River

So we took that land to be ours. I gave part of this land to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. I gave them the land from Aroer in the Arnon Valley to the hill country of Gilead with the cities in it. They got half of the hill country of Gilead. I gave the other half of Gilead and the whole area of Bashan to half the tribe of Manasseh.”

(Bashan was Og’s kingdom. Part of Bashan was called Argob. It was also called the Land of Rephaim. Jair, from the tribe of Manasseh, took the whole area of Argob. That area went all the way to the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites. It was

11 feet long and 6 feet wide Literally, “9 cubits long and 4 cubits wide, following the measure of a man’s cubit.”
named for Jair, and even today, people call Bashan the Towns of Jair.

15“I gave Gilead to Makir. 16And to the tribe of Reuben and the tribe of Gad, I gave the land that begins at Gilead and goes from the Arnon Valley to the Jabbok River. The middle of the valley is one border. The Jabbok River is the border for the Ammonites. 17The Jordan River near the desert is their western border. Lake Galilee is north of this area and the Dead Sea is to the south. It is at the bottom of the cliffs of Pisgah, which are to the east.

18“At that time I gave those tribes this command: ‘The Lord your God has given you the land on this side of the Jordan River to live in. But now your fighting men must take their weapons and lead the other Israelite tribes across the river. 19Your wives, your little children, and your cattle (I know you have many cattle) will stay here in the cities I have given you. 20But you must help your Israelite relatives until they take the land that the Lord is giving them on the other side of the Jordan River. Help them until the Lord gives them peace there, just as he did for you here. Then you may come back to this land that I have given you.’

21“I then told Joshua, ‘You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings. The Lord will do the same thing to all the kingdoms you will enter. 22Don’t fear the kings of these lands, because the Lord your God will fight for you.’

23“I then begged the Lord to do something special for me. I said, 24‘Lord God, I am your servant. I know that you have shown me only a small part of the wonderful and powerful things you will do. There is no god in heaven or earth that can do the great and powerful things you have done. 25Please let me go across the Jordan River and see the good land on the other side. Let me see the beautiful hill country and Lebanon.’

26“But the Lord was angry with me because of you and refused to listen to me. The Lord said to me, ‘That’s enough! Don’t say another word about this. 27Go up to the top of Mount Pisgah. Look to the west, to the north, to the south, and to the east. You may see these things with your eyes, but you can never go across the Jordan River. 28You must give instructions to Joshua. Encourage him. Make him strong, because Joshua must lead the people across the Jordan River. You can see the land, but Joshua will lead them into that land. He will help them take the land and live in it.’

29“So we stayed in the valley across from Beth Peor.

Moses’ Warning to Obey God’s Laws

4 “Now, Israel, listen to the laws and to the commands that I teach you. Obey them and you will live. Then you can go in and take the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. 2You must not add to what I command you. And you must not take anything away. You must obey the commands of the Lord your God that I have given you.

3“You have seen what the Lord did at Baal Peor. The Lord your God destroyed all your people who followed the false god Baal at that place. 4But all of you who stayed with the Lord your God are alive today.

5“I taught you the laws and rules that the Lord my God commanded me. I did this so you could obey them in the land you are ready to enter and take for your own. 6Obey these laws carefully. This will show the people of the other nations that you are wise and sensible. They will hear about these laws and say, ‘Truly, the people of this great nation are wise and sensible.’

7“The Lord our God is near when we ask him to help us. No other nation has a god like that! 8And no other nation is great enough to have laws and rules as good as

a 3:17 Lake Galilee Literally, “Kinnereth Lake.”
b 3:17 Dead Sea Literally, “Arabah Sea.” Also called the “Salt Sea.”
the teachings I give you today. But you must be careful! Be sure that as long as you live you never forget what you have seen. You must teach these things to your children and grandchildren. Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Mount Horeb. The Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people together to listen to what I have to say. Then they will learn to respect me as long as they live on earth. And they will teach these things to their children.’ You came near and stood at the bottom of the mountain. The mountain burned with fire that reached up to the sky. There were thick black clouds and darkness.

Then the Lord spoke to you from the fire. You heard the sound of someone speaking, but you did not see any form. There was only a voice. The Lord told you about his agreement, which he commanded you to obey. He told you about the Ten Commandments, which he wrote on two stone tablets. At that time the Lord also commanded me to teach you the other laws and rules that you must follow in the land you are going to take and live in.

On the day the Lord spoke to you from the fire at Mount Horeb, you did not see him—there was no shape for God. So be careful! Don’t sin and destroy yourselves by making false gods or statues in the shape of any living thing. Don’t make an idol that looks like a man or a woman, or like an animal on the earth, or like a bird that flies in the sky. And don’t make an idol that looks like anything that crawls on the ground or like a fish in the sea. And be careful when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon, and the stars—all the many things in the sky. Be careful that you are not tempted to worship and serve them. The Lord your God lets the other people in the world do this. But the Lord brought you out of Egypt to make you his own special people. He saved you from Egypt. It was as if he pulled you from a hot furnace. And now you are his people.

The Lord was angry with me because of you. He swore that I could not go across the Jordan River into the good land that the Lord your God is giving you. So I must die here in this land. I cannot go across the Jordan River, but you will soon go across it and take that good land and live there. You must be careful not to forget the agreement that the Lord your God made with you. You must obey the Lord’s command. Don’t make any idols in any form, because the Lord your God hates for his people to worship other gods. And he can be like a fire that destroys!

You will live in the country a long time. You will have children and grandchildren there. After all that time, be sure that you do not then ruin your lives by making any kind of idol! That is something the Lord your God considers evil, and it would make him very angry! So I am warning you now. Heaven and earth are my witnesses! If you do such an evil thing, you will quickly be destroyed! You are crossing the Jordan River now to take that land. But if you make any idols, you will not live there very long. No, you will be destroyed completely! The Lord will scatter you among the nations. And only a few of you will be left alive to go to the countries where the Lord will send you. There you will serve gods made by men—things made of wood and stone that cannot see or hear or eat or smell! But there in these other lands you will look for the Lord your God. And if you look for him with all your heart and soul, you will find him. When you are in trouble—when all these things happen to you—then you will come back to the Lord your God and obey him. The Lord your God is a merciful God! He will not leave you there or destroy you completely. He will not forget the agreement that he made with your ancestors.

Think about the Great Things God Did

Has anything this great ever happened before? Never! Look at the past. Think
about everything that happened before you were born. Go all the way back to the time when God made people on the earth. Look at everything that has happened anywhere in the world. Has anyone ever heard about anything as great as this? No! 33You people heard God speaking to you from a fire, and you are still alive. Has that ever happened to anyone else? No! 34Has any other god ever tried to go and take a people for himself from inside another nation? No! But you yourselves have seen everything that the Lord your God did for you. He showed you his power and strength. You saw the troubles that tested the people. You saw miracles and wonders. You saw war and the terrible things that happened. 35The Lord showed you all this so that you would know that he is God. There is no other god like him. 36He let you hear his voice from heaven so that he could teach you a lesson. On earth he let you see his great fire, and he spoke to you from it.

37“He loved your ancestors. That is why he chose you, their descendants. And that is why he brought you out of Egypt. He was with you and brought you out with his great power. 38When you moved forward, he forced out nations that were greater and more powerful than you. And he led you into their land. He gave you their land to live in, as he is still doing today. 39“So today you must remember and accept that the Lord is God. He is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other god! 40And you must obey his laws and commands that I give you today. Then everything will go well with you and your children who live after you. And you will live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you—it will be yours forever.”

Moses Chooses the Cities of Safety
41Then Moses chose three cities on the east side of the Jordan River. 42Any person who killed someone by accident and not out of hate could run away to one of these three cities and not be put to death. 43The three cities that Moses chose were Bezer in the high plains for the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead for the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan for the tribe of Manasseh.

Introduction to the Law of Moses
44Moses gave God’s law to the Israelites. 45Moses gave these teachings, laws, and rules to the people after they came out of Egypt. 46He gave them these laws while they were on the east side of the Jordan River, in the valley across from Beth Peor. They were in the land of Sihon, the Amorite king who lived at Heshbon. Moses and the Israelites had defeated Sihon when they came out of Egypt. 47They took Sihon’s land to keep. They also took the land of King Og of Bashan. These two Amorite kings lived on the east side of the Jordan River. 48This land goes from Aror on the edge of the Arnon Valley all the way to Mount Sirion, that is, Mount Hermon. 49This land also included the whole Jordan Valley on the east side of the Jordan River. To the south, this land reached to the Dead Sea. To the east, it reached to the foot of Mount Pisgah.

The Ten Commandments
51Moses called together all the Israelites and said to them, “Israelites, listen to the laws and rules that I tell you today. Learn these laws and be sure to obey them. 2The Lord our God made an agreement with us at Mount Horeb. 3The Lord did not make this agreement with our ancestors, but with us—yes, with all of us who are alive here today. 4The Lord spoke with you face to face at that mountain. He spoke to you from the fire. 5But you were afraid of the fire. And you did not go up the mountain. So I stood between you and the Lord to tell you what the Lord said. He said,

6“I am the Lord your God. I am the one who freed you from Egypt, where you were slaves.

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You must not worship any other gods except me.
You must not make any idols. Don’t make any statues or pictures of anything up in the sky or of anything on the earth or of anything down in the water. Don’t worship or serve idols of any kind, because I am the LORD your God. I hate for my people to worship other gods. People who sin against me become my enemies. And I will punish them, and their children, their grandchildren, and even their great-grandchildren. But I will be very kind to people who love me and obey my commands. I will be kind to their families for thousands of generations!

You must not use the name of the LORD your God to make empty promises. If you do, the LORD will not let you go unpunished. You must keep the Sabbath a special day like the LORD your God commanded. Work six days a week and do your job, but the seventh day is a day of rest in honor of the LORD your God. So on that day no one should work—not you, your sons and daughters, foreigners living in your cities or your men and women slaves. Not even your cattle, donkeys, and other animals should do any work! Your slaves should be able to rest just as you do. Don’t forget that you were slaves in the land of Egypt. The LORD your God brought you out of Egypt with his great power and made you free. That is why the LORD your God commands you to always make the Sabbath a special day.

You must honor your father and your mother. The LORD your God has commanded you to do this. If you follow this command, you will live a long time, and everything will go well for you in the land that the LORD your God gives you.

You must not murder anyone. You must not commit the sin of adultery. You must not steal. You must not tell lies about other people.

You must not want another man’s wife. You must not want his house, his fields, his men and women servants, his cattle, or his donkeys. You must not want to take anything that belongs to another person.’”

The People Were Afraid of God
Moses said, “The LORD gave these commands to all of you when you were together there at the mountain. He spoke in a loud voice that came from the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness. After he gave us these commands, he didn’t say any more. He wrote his words on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

The Lord Speaks to Moses
The Lord heard what you said and told me, ‘I heard what the people said. And
that is fine. 29 I only wanted to change their way of thinking—I wanted them to respect me and obey all my commands from the heart. Then everything would be fine with them and with their descendants forever.

30 “Go and tell the people to go back to their tents, but you stand here near me. I will tell you all the commands, laws, and rules that you must teach them. They must do these things in the land that I am giving them to live in.’

31 So you people must be careful to do everything the LORD commanded you. Do not stop following God! 32 You must live the way the LORD your God commanded you. Then you will continue to live, and everything will be fine with you. You will live a long life in the land that will belong to you.

Always Love and Obey God

1 “These are the commands, the laws, and the rules that the LORD your God told me to teach you. Obey these laws in the land that you are entering to live in. 2 You and your descendants must respect the LORD your God as long as you live. You must obey all his laws and commands that I give you. If you do this, you will have a long life in that new land. 3 Israelites, listen carefully and obey these laws. Then everything will be fine with you. You will have many children, and you will get the land filled with many good things—a just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised.

4 “Listen, people of Israel! The LORD is our God. The LORD is the only God. 5 You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 Always remember these commands that I give you today. 7 Be sure to teach them to your children. Talk about these commands when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road. Talk about them when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them on your hands and wear them on your foreheads to help you remember my teachings. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

10 “The LORD your God made a promise to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He promised to give you this land, and he will give it to you. He will give you great and rich cities that you did not build. 11 He will give you houses full of good things that you did not put there. He will give you wells that you did not dig. He will give you vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant, and you will have plenty to eat.

12 “But be careful! Don’t forget the LORD. You were slaves in Egypt, but he brought you out of the land of Egypt. 13 Respect the LORD your God and serve only him. You must use only his name to make promises. 14 You must not follow other gods. You must not follow the gods of the people who live around you. 15 The LORD your God is always with you, and he hates for his people to worship other gods! 16 So if you follow those other gods, the Lord will become very angry with you. He will destroy you from the face of the earth.

17 “You must not test the LORD your God like you tested him at Massah. 18 You must be sure to obey the commands of the LORD your God. You must follow all the teachings and laws he has given you. 19 You must do what is right and good—what pleases the LORD. Then everything will go well for you, and you can go in and take the good land that the LORD promised your ancestors. 20 And you will force out all your enemies, just as the LORD said.

Teach Your Children the Things God Did

21 “In the future, your children might ask you, ‘The LORD our God gave you teachings, laws, and rules. What do they mean?’ 22 Then you will say to them, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with his great power. 23 The LORD did great and amazing

\[6:3 \text{ land ... things} \] Literally, “land flowing with milk and honey.”

\[6:15 \text{ he ... gods} \] Or “The LORD your God is El Kanah—the Jealous God.”
things. We saw him do these things to the Egyptian people, to Pharaoh, and to the people in Pharaoh’s house. He brought us out of Egypt so that he could give us the land that he promised our ancestors. The LORD commanded us to follow all these teachings. We must respect the LORD our God. Then he will always keep us alive and doing well, as we are today. If we carefully obey the whole law, exactly as the LORD our God told us to, he will say that we have done a very good thing. 

Israel, God’s Special People

7 14“The LORD your God will lead you into the land that you are entering to take for your own. He will force out many nations for you—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites—seven nations greater and more powerful than you. 2The LORD your God will put these nations under your power. And you will defeat them. You must destroy them completely. Don’t make an agreement with them or show them mercy. 3Don’t marry any of them, and don’t let your sons or daughters marry any of the people from those other nations. 4If you do, they will turn your children away from following me. Then your children will serve other gods, and the LORD will be very angry with you. He will quickly destroy you!

Destroy False Gods

5“This is what you must do to those nations: You must smash their altars and break their memorial stones into pieces. Cut down their Asherah poles and burn their statues. 6Do this because you are the LORD’s own people. From all the people on earth, the LORD your God chose you to be his special people—people who belong only to him. 7Why did the LORD love and choose you? It was not because you are such a large nation. You had the fewest of all people! 8But the LORD brought you out of Egypt with great power and made you free from slavery. He freed you from the control of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. The LORD did this because he loves you and he wanted to keep the promise he made to your ancestors.

9“So remember that the LORD your God is the only God, and you can trust him! He keeps his agreement. He shows his love and kindness to all people who love him and obey his commands. He continues to show his love and kindness through a thousand generations, but the LORD punishes people who hate him. He will destroy them. He will not be slow to punish those who hate him. 10So you must be careful to obey the commands, laws, and rules that I give you today.

12“If you listen to these laws, and if you are careful to obey them, the LORD your God will keep his agreement of love with you. He promised this to your ancestors. 13He will love you and bless you. He will make your nation grow. He will bless your children. He will bless your fields with good crops and will give you grain, new wine, and oil. He will bless your cows with calves and your sheep with lambs. You will have all these blessings in the land that he promised your ancestors to give you.

14“You will be blessed more than all people. Every husband and wife will be able to have children. Your cows will be able to have calves. 15The LORD will take away all sickness from you and he will not let you catch any of the terrible diseases that you had in Egypt. But he will make your enemies catch those diseases. 16You must destroy all the people the LORD your God helps you defeat. Don’t feel sorry for them, and don’t worship their gods! They will trap you—they will ruin your life.

The Lord Promises to Help His People

17”Don’t say in your heart, ‘These nations are stronger than we are. How can we force them out?’ 18You must not be afraid of them. You must remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all the people of Egypt. 19You saw the great troubles he gave them and the amazing
things he did. You saw the LORD use his great power and strength to bring you out of Egypt. The LORD your God will use that same power against all the people you fear.

20“The LORD your God will send the hornet against them. He will do this until he destroys all the people who escaped and tried to hide. 21Don’t be afraid of them, because the LORD your God is with you. He is a great and awesome God. 22The LORD your God will force those nations to leave your country little by little. You will not destroy them all at once. If you did, the wild animals would grow to be too many for you. 23But the LORD your God will let you defeat those nations. He will confuse them in battle, until they are destroyed. 24He will help you defeat their kings. You will kill them, and the world will forget they ever lived. No one will be able to stop you. You will destroy them all!

25“You must throw the statues of their gods into the fire and burn them. You must not want to keep the silver or the gold that is on those statues for yourselves. It will be like a trap to you—it will ruin your life. The LORD your God hates those idols. 26You must not bring any of those disgusting idols into your homes, or you will be destroyed just as they will be. You must treat them as the disgusting things they are! They are to be destroyed.

Remember the Lord

8“Be careful. Don’t forget the LORD your God! Be careful to obey the commands, laws, and rules that I give you today. 12Then you will have plenty to eat, and you will build good houses and live in them. 13Your cattle, sheep, and goats will grow large. You will get plenty of gold and silver. You will have plenty of everything.

It was something your ancestors had never seen. Why did the Lord do this? Because he wanted you to know that it is not just bread that keeps people alive. People’s lives depend on what the LORD says. 4These past 40 years, your clothes did not wear out, and your feet did not swell. 5You must remember that the LORD your God teaches and corrects you as a father teaches and corrects his son.

6“You must obey the commands of the LORD your God. Follow him and respect him. 7The LORD your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with rivers and pools of water. Water flows out of the ground in the valleys and hills. 8It is a land with wheat and barley, grapevines, fig trees, and pomegranates. It is a land with olive oil and honey. 9There you will have plenty of food and everything you need. It is a land where the rocks are iron. You can dig copper out of the hills. 10You will have all you want to eat. Then you will praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

Don’t Forget What the Lord Did

11“Be careful. Don’t forget the LORD your God! Be careful to obey the commands, laws, and rules that I give you today. 12Then you will have plenty to eat, and you will build good houses and live in them. 13Your cattle, sheep, and goats will grow large. You will get plenty of gold and silver. You will have plenty of everything.

14When that happens, you must be careful not to become proud. You must not forget the LORD your God. You were slaves in Egypt, but he made you free and brought you out of that land. 15He led you through that great and terrible desert where there were poisonous snakes and scorpions. The ground was dry, and there was no water anywhere. But he gave you water out of a solid rock. 16In the desert he fed you manna—something your ancestors had never seen. He tested you to make you humble so that everything would go well for you in the end. 17Don’t ever say to yourself, ‘I got all this wealth by my own power
Remember the Lord’s Anger

13 Remember how you made the Lord your God angry in the desert. Never forget that! From the day you left the land of Egypt to the day you came to this place, you have refused to obey the Lord. 14 You made the Lord angry at Mount Horeb. The Lord was angry enough to destroy you! 15 I went up the mountain to get the stone tablets. The agreement that the Lord made with you was written on those stones. I stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights. I did not eat any food or drink any water. 16 The Lord gave me the two stone tablets. He wrote his commands on the stones with his finger. The Lord wrote everything he said to you from the fire when you were gathered together at the mountain.

11 So at the end of 40 days and 40 nights, the Lord gave me two stone tablets—the stones of the agreement. 12 Then the Lord said to me, ‘Get up and quickly go down from here. The people you brought out of Egypt have ruined themselves. They stopped obeying my commands so quickly. They melted gold and made an idol for themselves.’

13 The Lord also said to me, ‘I have watched these people. They are very stubborn! 14 Let me destroy these people completely, so no one will even remember their names. Then I will make another nation from you that is stronger and greater than these people.’

The Golden Calf

15 Then I turned and came down from the mountain. The mountain was burning with fire. And the two stone tablets of the agreement were in my hands. 16 I looked and I saw you had sinned against the Lord your God. I saw the calf you made from melted gold! You stopped obeying the Lord so quickly. 17 So I took the two stone tablets and threw them down. There before your eyes I broke the stones into pieces. 18 Then I bowed down before the Lord with my face to the ground for 40 days and 40 nights, as I did before. I
did not eat any food or drink any water. I did this because you had sinned so badly. You did the thing that is evil to the LORD, and you made him angry. 9I was afraid of the LORD’s terrible anger. He was angry enough to destroy you, but the LORD listened to me again. 10The LORD was very angry with Aaron—enough to destroy him! So I also prayed for Aaron at that time. 11I took that terrible thing, the calf you made, and burned it in the fire. I broke it into small pieces. And I crushed the pieces until they were dust. Then I threw the dust into the river that came down from the mountain.

Moses Asks God to Forgive Israel
22“Also, at Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth Hattaavah you made the LORD angry. 23And you did not obey when the LORD told you to leave Kadesh Barnea. He said, ‘Go up and take the land I am giving you.’ But you refused to obey the LORD your God. You did not trust him. You did not listen to his command. 24All the time that I have known you, you have refused to obey the LORD.

25“So I bowed down before the LORD 40 days and 40 nights, because the LORD said he would destroy you. 26I prayed to the LORD. I said, ‘Lord God, don’t destroy your people. They belong to you. You freed them and brought them out of Egypt with your great power and strength. 27Remember your promise to your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Forget how stubborn these people are. Don’t look at their evil ways or their sins. 28If you punish your people, the Egyptians might say, “The LORD was not able to take his people into the land he promised them. And he hated them. So he took them into the desert to kill them.” 29But they are your people, Lord. They belong to you. You brought them out of Egypt with your great power and strength.’

New Stone Tablets
101“At that time the LORD said to me, ‘You must cut out two stone tablets like the first two stones. Then you must come up to me on the mountain. Also make a wooden box. I will write on the stone tablets the same words that were on the first stones—the stones you broke. Then you must put these new stones in the Box.’ 3“So I made a box from acacia wood. I cut two stone tablets like the first two stones. Then I went up on the mountain. I had the two stone tablets in my hand. 4And the LORD wrote on the stones the same words he had written before—the Ten Commandments he spoke to you from the fire, when you were gathered together at the mountain. Then the LORD gave the two stone tablets to me. 5I came back down from the mountain. I put the stones in the Box I had made. The LORD commanded me to put them there. And the stones are still there in that Box.”

6(The Israelites traveled from the wells of the people of Jaakan to Moserah. There Aaron died and was buried. Aaron’s son Eleazar served in Aaron’s place as priest. 7Then the Israelites went from Moserah to Gudgodah. And they went from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of rivers. 8At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi from the other tribes for his special work. They had the work of carrying the LORD’s Box of the Agreement. They also served as priests before the LORD. And they had the work of blessing people in the LORD’s name. They still do this special work today. 9That is why the people from the tribe of Levi did not get any share of land like the other tribes did. They have the LORD for their share. That is what the LORD your God promised them.)

10“I stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights, like the first time. The LORD also listened to me at that time. He decided not to destroy you. 11The LORD said to me, ‘Go and lead the people on their trip. They will go in and live in the land that I promised to give to their ancestors.’

What the Lord Really Wants
12“Now, Israelites, listen! What does the
The LORD your God really want from you? The LORD your God wants you to respect him and do what he says. He wants you to love him and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. So obey the laws and commands of the LORD that I am giving you today. These laws and commands are for your own good.

14“Everything belongs to the LORD your God. The heavens, even the highest heavens, belong to him. The earth and everything on it belong to him. The LORD loved your ancestors very much. He loved them so much that he chose you, their descendants, to be his people. He chose you instead of any other nation, and you are still his chosen people today.

15“Stop being stubborn. Give your hearts to God. 16The LORD is your God. He is the God of gods and the Lord of lords. He is the great God. He is the amazing and powerful fighter. To him everyone is the same. He does not accept money to change his mind. 17He defends widows and orphans. He loves even the strangers living among us. He gives them food and clothes. 18So you must also love them, because you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt.

19“You must respect the LORD your God and worship only him. Never leave him. When you make promises, you must use his name only. 20He is the one you should praise. He is your God. He has done great and amazing things for you. You have seen them with your own eyes. 21When your ancestors went down into Egypt, there were only 70 people. Now the LORD your God has made you as many as the stars in the sky.

Remember the Lord

12“Remember today all the great things the LORD your God has done to teach you. It was you, not your children, who saw those things happen and lived through them. You saw how great he is. You saw how strong he is, and you saw the powerful things he does. 13You, not your children, saw the miracles he did in Egypt. You saw what he did to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and to his whole country. 14You, not your children, saw what he did to the Egyptian army—to their horses and chariots. They were chasing you, but you saw him cover them with the water from the Red Sea. You saw how the LORD completely destroyed them. 15It was you, not your children, who saw everything he did for you in the desert until you came to this place. 16You saw what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab from Reuben’s family. All the Israelites watched as the ground opened up like a mouth and swallowed them, their families, their tents, and all of their servants and animals. 17It was you, not your children, who saw all the great things the LORD did.

8“So you must obey every command I tell you today. Then you will be strong. And you will be able to go across the Jordan River and take the land that you are ready to enter. 9Then you will live a long life in that country. The LORD promised to give that land to your ancestors and all their descendants. It is a land filled with many good things. 10The land that you will get is not like the land of Egypt that you came from. In Egypt you planted your seeds and used your feet to pump water from the canals to water your fields like a vegetable garden. 11But the land that you will soon get is not like that. In Israel there are mountains and valleys, and the land gets its water from the rain that falls from the sky. 12The LORD your God cares for that land. The LORD your God watches over it, from the beginning to the end of the year.

13“The Lord says, ‘You must listen carefully to the commands I give you today: You must love the LORD your God, and serve him with all your heart and all your soul. If you do that, 14I will send rain for your land at the right time. I will send the

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autumn rain and the spring rain. Then you can gather your grain, your new wine, and your oil. \(d\) And I will make grass grow in your fields for your cattle. You will have plenty to eat.

16“‘He says, ‘Be careful! Don’t be fooled. Don’t turn away from me to serve other gods and to bow down to them.’ If you do that, the \textbf{LORD} will become very angry with you. He will shut the skies, and there will be no rain. The land will not make a harvest, and you will soon die in the good land that the \textbf{LORD} is giving you.

17“Remember these commands I give you. Keep them in your hearts. Write them down and tie them on your hands and wear them on your foreheads as a way to remember my laws. \(e\) Teach these laws to your children. Talk about these things when you sit in your houses, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. \(f\) Write these commands on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates. \(g\) Then both you and your children will live a long time in the land that the \textbf{LORD} promised to give to your ancestors. You will live there as long as the skies are above the earth.

22“Be careful to obey every command I have told you to follow: Love the \textbf{LORD} your God, follow all his ways, and be faithful to him. \(h\) Then, when you go into the land, the \textbf{LORD} will force all those other nations out. You will take the land from nations that are larger and more powerful than you. \(i\) All the land you walk on will be yours. Your land will go from the desert in the south all the way to Lebanon in the north. It will go from the Euphrates River in the east all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. \(j\) No one will be able to stand against you. The \textbf{LORD} your God will make the people fear you wherever you go in that land. That is what he promised you before.

\textbf{Israel’s Choice: Blessings or Curses}

26“Today I am giving you a choice. You may choose the blessing or the curse. \(k\) You will get the blessing if you listen and obey the commands of the \textbf{LORD} your God that I have told you today. \(l\) But you will get the curse if you refuse to listen and obey the commands of the \textbf{LORD} your God. So don’t stop living the way I command you today, and don’t follow other gods that you don’t know.

29“‘The \textbf{LORD} your God will lead you to your land. You will soon go in and take that land. At that time you must go to the top of Mount Gerizim and read the blessings to the people from there. And then you must go to the top of Mount Ebal and read the curses to the people from there. \(m\) These mountains are on the other side of the Jordan River in the land of the Canaanites living in the Jordan Valley. These mountains are toward the west, not far from the oak trees of Moreh near the town of Gilgal. \(n\) You will go across the Jordan River. You will take the land that the \textbf{LORD} your God is giving you. This land will belong to you. When you are living in this land, \(o\) you must carefully obey all the laws and rules I give you today.

\textbf{The Place for Worshiping God}

12“‘These are the laws and rules that you must obey in your new land. You must carefully obey them as long as you live in this land. The \textbf{LORD} is the God of your ancestors, and he is giving this land to you. \(p\) You will take that land from the nations that live there now. You must completely destroy all the places where the people of these nations worship their gods. These places are on high mountains, on hills, and under green trees. \(q\) You must smash their altars and break their memorial stones into pieces. You must burn their Asherah poles and cut down the statues of their gods. Wipe out everything that would remind you of those gods. \(r\) You must not worship the \textbf{LORD} your God in the same way these people worship their gods. \(s\) The \textbf{LORD} your God will choose a special place among your tribes. That will be the home for his name. You must go to that place to worship him. \(t\) There you must bring your burnt
offerings, your sacrifices, one-tenth of your crops and animals, your special gifts, any gifts you promised to him, any special gift you want to give, and the first animals born in your herds and flocks. You and your families will eat together at that place, and the Lord your God will be there with you. You will enjoy sharing the things you worked for there. You will remember that the Lord your God blessed you and gave you these good things.

8 “You must not continue to worship the way we have been worshiping. Until now each of us has been worshiping God any way we wanted. 9 This is because we have not yet entered the peaceful land that the Lord your God is giving you. But you will go across the Jordan River and live in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. There he will give you rest from all your enemies, and you will be safe. 10 Then the Lord your God will choose a place that will be the home for his name. You must bring everything I command you to that place. Bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, one-tenth of your crops and animals, your special gifts, and any gifts that you promised to give to the Lord. 11 Come to that place with all your people—your children, all your servants, and the Levites living in your towns. (These Levites will not have a share of the land for their own.) Enjoy yourselves together there with the Lord your God. Enjoy what you have worked for. 12 But be sure that you always share these meals with the Levites. Do this as long as you live in your land.

20–21 “The Lord your God promised to make your country larger. When he does this, you might live too far from the place the Lord your God chooses to be the home for his name. If it is too far, and you are hungry for meat, you may eat any meat you have. You may kill any animal from the herd or flock that he has given you. Do this the way I have commanded you. You may eat this meat where you live any time you want. 22 You may eat this meat the same as you would eat gazelle or deer meat. Anyone can do this—people who are clean and people who are unclean. 23 But be especially careful not to eat the blood, because the life is in the blood. You must not eat meat that still has its life in it. 24 Don’t eat the blood. Pour it out like water onto the ground. 25 So don’t eat blood. You must do what the Lord says is right, and good things will happen to you and to your descendants.

26 “If you decide to give something special to God, you must go to the special place that the Lord your God will choose. And if you make a special promise, you must go to that place to give that gift to God. 27 You must offer your burnt offerings in that place. Offer the meat and the blood of your burnt offerings on the altar of the Lord your God. For your other sacrifices, you must pour the blood on the altar of the Lord your God. Then you may eat the
meat. 28Carefully obey all the commands that I give you. When you do what is good and right—what pleases the Lord your God—then everything will go well for you and for your descendants forever.

29“You are going to take your land from other people. The Lord your God will destroy these people for you. You will force them out of that land, and then you will live there. 30But be careful that you don’t fall into the same trap they did! Don’t go to their false gods for help. Don’t say to yourself, ‘They worshiped these gods, so I will worship them too.’ 31Don’t do that to the Lord your God! These people do all kinds of bad things that the Lord hates. They even burn their children as sacrifices to their gods!

32“You must be careful to do everything I command you. Don’t add anything to what I tell you, and don’t take anything away.

Don’t Serve Other Gods

131“A prophet or someone who explains dreams might come to you and tell you that they will show you a sign or a miracle. 2And the sign or miracle they told you about might come true. Then they might ask you to follow other gods (gods you don’t know) and say to you, ‘Let’s worship these gods!’ 3Don’t listen to them, because the Lord your God is testing you. He wants to know if you love him with all your heart and all your soul. 4You must follow the Lord your God. Respect him. Obey his commands and do what he tells you. Serve the Lord your God, and never leave him. 5Also, you must kill that prophet or person who explains dreams, because they told you to turn against the Lord your God. And it was the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where you were slaves. 6Then all the Israelites will hear about it and be afraid. And they will not do those evil things anymore.

12The Lord your God has given you cities to live in. Sometimes you might hear some bad news about one of these cities. You might hear that some troublemakers from your own nation are persuading the people of their city to do bad things. They might say to the people of their city, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods.’ (These gods would be gods that you never knew before.) 14If you hear this kind of news, you must do all you can to learn if it is true. If you learn that it is true, if you prove that such a terrible thing really did happen, 16then you must kill all the people of that city and their animals too. You must destroy that city completely.

17You must gather up everything of value and take it to the center of the city. Burn the whole city and everything in it as a burnt offering to the Lord your God. You must turn that city into an empty pile of rocks forever, and that city must never be rebuilt. 18Everything in that city must be destroyed as an offering to God. So you must not keep any of the things for yourselves. If you follow this command, the Lord will stop being so angry with you. He will be kind to you. He will feel sorry for you. He will let your nation grow larger, as he promised your ancestors. 19This will happen if you listen to the Lord your God—if
you obey all his commands that I give you today. You must do what the LORD your God says is right.

Israel, God’s Special People

14 “You are the children of the LORD your God. When someone dies, you must not cut yourselves or shave your heads to show your sadness. 2 This is because you are different from other people. You belong to the LORD your God. From all the people in the world, the LORD chose you to be his own special people.

Food the Israelites Are Allowed to Eat

3 “Don’t eat anything that the Lord hates. 4 You may eat these animals: cattle, sheep, goats, deer, gazelles, roe deer, wild sheep, wild goats, antelopes, and mountain sheep. 5 You may eat any animal that has hooves divided into two parts and that chews the cud. 6 But don’t eat camels, rabbits, or rock badgers. These animals chew the cud, but they don’t have split hooves. So these animals are not a clean food for you. 7 And you must not eat pigs. Their hooves are divided, but they don’t chew the cud. So pigs are not a clean food for you. Don’t eat any meat from pigs. Don’t even touch a pig’s dead body.

8 “You may eat any kind of fish that has fins and scales. 9 But don’t eat anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales. It is not a clean food for you.

10 “You may eat any clean bird. 11 But don’t eat any of these birds: eagles, vultures, buzzards, red kites, falcons, any kind of kite, any kind of raven, horned owls, screech owls, sea gulls, any kind of hawk, little owls, great owls, white owls, desert owls, ospreys, cormorants, storks, any kind of heron, hoopoes, or bats.

12 “All insects with wings are unclean, so don’t eat them. 13 But you may eat any clean bird.

14 “Don’t eat any animal that has died by itself. You may give the dead animal to the foreigner in your town, and he can eat it. Or you may sell the dead animal to a foreigner. But you yourselves must not eat the dead animal, because you belong to the LORD your God. You are his special people.

15 “Don’t cook a baby goat in its mother’s milk.

Giving One-Tenth

22 “Every year you must be sure to save one-tenth of all the crops that grow in your fields. 23 Then you must go to the place the Lord chooses to be the home for his name. You will go there to be with the LORD your God. At that place you will eat the tenth of your crops—one-tenth of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first animals born in your herds and flocks. In this way you will always remember to respect the LORD your God. 24 But that place might be too far for you to travel to. Maybe you will not be able to carry one-tenth of all the crops that the LORD has blessed you with. If that happens, 25 sell that part of your crops and take the money with you to the special place the LORD has chosen. 26 Use the money to buy anything you want—cattle, sheep, wine or beer or any other food. Then you and your family should eat and enjoy yourselves there in that place with the LORD your God. 27 But don’t forget the Levites living in your town. Share your food with them because they don’t have a share of the land like you have.

28 “At the end of every three years, you must gather one-tenth of your harvest for that year. Store this food in your towns. 29 Keep this food for the Levites, because they don’t have any land of their own. Also keep this food for the foreigners, orphans, and widows who live in your towns. This will provide enough for them to come and eat all they want. If you do this, the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

The Special Year of Canceling Debts

15 “At the end of every seven years, you must cancel debts. 2 This is the way you must do this: Everyone who
has lent money to another Israelite must cancel the debt. He should not ask a fellow Israelite to repay the debt, because the LORD said to cancel debts during that year. You may require a foreigner to repay you, but you must cancel any debt another Israelite owes you. There should not be any poor people in your country, because the LORD your God is giving you this land. And the LORD will greatly bless you. But this will happen only if you obey the LORD your God. You must be careful to obey every command that I have told you today. Then the LORD your God will bless you, as he promised. And you will have enough money to make loans to many nations. But you will not need to borrow from anyone. You will rule over many nations. But none of these nations will rule over you.

When you are living in the land the LORD your God is giving you, there might be some poor people living among you. You must not be selfish. You must not refuse to give help to them. You must be willing to share with them. You must lend them whatever they need.

Don’t ever refuse to help someone simply because the seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near. Don’t let an evil thought like that enter your mind. You must never have bad thoughts about someone who needs help. You must not refuse to help them. If you don’t help the poor, they might complain to the LORD, and he will judge you guilty of sin.

So be sure to give to the poor. Don’t hesitate to give to them, because the LORD your God will bless you for doing this good thing. He will bless you in all your work and in everything you do. There will always be poor people in the land. That is why I command you to be ready to help your brother or sister. Give to the poor in your land who need help.

Letting Slaves Go Free

You might buy a Hebrew man or woman to serve you as a slave. You may keep that person as a slave for six years. But in the seventh year, you must let that person go free. But when you let your slave go free, don’t send him away with nothing. You must give him some of your animals, grain, and wine. The LORD your God blessed you and gave you plenty of good things. In the same way you must give plenty of good things to your slave. Remember, you were slaves in Egypt. And the LORD your God set you free. So that is why I am giving you this command today.

But one of your slaves might say to you, ‘I will not leave you.’ He might say this because he loves you and your family and because he has a good life with you. Make this servant put his ear against your door and use a sharp tool to make a hole in his ear. This will show that he is your slave forever. You must do this even to the women slaves who want to stay with you.

Don’t regret letting your slave go free. Remember, he served you six years for half of what you would have paid a hired worker. The LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

Rules About Firstborn Animals

All the first male animals born in your herd and flock are special. You must give them to the LORD. Don’t use any of these animals for your work and don’t cut wool from any of these sheep. Every year you must take these animals to the place the LORD your God will choose. There with the LORD, you and your family will eat these animals.

But if an animal has something wrong with it—if it is crippled or blind or has something else wrong with it—then you must not sacrifice that animal to the LORD your God. But you may eat the meat from that animal at home. Anyone may eat it—people who are clean and people who are unclean. The rules for eating this meat are the same as the rules for eating gazelles and deer. But you must not eat the blood from the animal. You must pour the blood out on the ground like water.

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Passover

16 Remember, in the month of Abib you must celebrate Passover to honor the LORD your God. It was that night in Abib when the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt. You must go to the place the LORD your God will choose to be the home for his name. There you must offer the Passover sacrifice to honor the LORD. You must offer the cattle and goats. Don’t eat bread that has yeast in it with this sacrifice. You must eat unleavened bread for seven days. This bread is called ‘Bread of Trouble.’ It will help you remember the troubles you had in Egypt. Remember how quickly you had to leave that country. You must remember that day as long as you live. There must be no yeast in anyone’s house anywhere in the country for seven days. And all the meat you sacrifice on the evening of the first day must be eaten before morning.

You must not sacrifice the Passover animal in any of the towns that the LORD your God gives you. You must sacrifice the Passover animal only at the place that the LORD your God will choose to be the home for his name. There you must sacrifice the Passover animal in the evening when the sun goes down. This is the festival when you remember that God brought you out of Egypt. You must cook the meal and eat it at the place the LORD your God will choose. The next morning you may go back home. You must eat unleavened bread six days. On the seventh day you must not do any work. On this day the people will come together for a special meeting to honor the LORD your God.

Festival of Harvest

You must count seven weeks from the time you begin to harvest the grain. Then celebrate the Festival of Harvest for the LORD your God. Do this by bringing him some special gift you want to bring. Decide how much to give by thinking about how much the LORD your God has blessed you. Go to the place the LORD will choose to be the home for his name.

You and your people should enjoy yourselves together there with the LORD your God. Take all your people with you—your sons, your daughters, and all your servants. And take the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows living in your towns. Remember, you were slaves in Egypt. So be sure to obey these laws.

Festival of Shelters

Seven days after you have gathered your harvest in from your threshing floor and from your winepress, you should celebrate the Festival of Shelters. Enjoy yourselves at this festival—you, your sons, your daughters, all your servants, and the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows living in your towns. Celebrate this festival for seven days at the special place the LORD will choose. Do this to honor the LORD your God. The LORD your God blessed your harvest and all the work you did, so be very happy!

Three times a year all your men must come to meet with the LORD your God at the special place he will choose. They must come for the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Harvest, and the Festival of Shelters. Everyone who comes to meet with the LORD must bring a gift. Each man should give as much as he can. He should decide how much to give by thinking about how much the LORD has given him.

Judges and Officers for the People

Choose men to be judges and officers in every town that the LORD your God gives you. Every tribe must do this. And these men must be fair in judging the people. You must always be fair. You must not favor some people over other people. You must not take money to change your mind in judgment. Money blinds the eyes of wise people and changes what a good person will say. Goodness and Fairness! You must try very hard to be good and fair all the time. Then you will live and keep the land that the LORD your God is giving you.
God Hates Idols

21 “When you set up an altar for the Lord your God, you must not place beside the altar any of the wooden poles that honor the goddess Asherah. 22 You must not set up special stones for worshipping false gods. The Lord your God hates them.

Use Only Good Animals for Sacrifices

17 “You must not sacrifice to the Lord your God an ox or sheep that has anything wrong with it. The Lord your God would hate that.

Punishment for Worshipping Idols

24 You might hear about an evil thing that happens in one of the cities that the Lord your God is giving you. You might hear that a man or woman in your group has sinned against the Lord your God. You might hear that they have broken his agreement or that they have worshiped other gods or maybe the sun, the moon or the stars. I never told you to do that! 4 If you hear bad news like this, you must check it carefully. You must learn if it is true that this terrible thing has really happened in Israel. If you prove that it is true, 5 you must punish the person who did this evil thing. You must take that man or woman out to a public place near the city gates and kill them with stones. 6 But no one should be punished with death if only one witness says that person did that evil thing. But if two or three witnesses say it is true, the person must be killed. 7 The witnesses must throw the first stones to kill that person. Then the other people should throw stones to finish killing that person. In this way you will remove this evil from your group.

Difficult Court Decisions

8 “There might be some problems that are too hard for your courts to judge. It might be a murder case or an argument between two people. Or it might be a fight in which someone was hurt. When these cases are argued in your towns, your judges there might not be able to decide what is right. Then you must go to the special place that the Lord your God will choose. 9 You must go to the priests who are Levites and to the judge on duty at that time. They will decide what to do about that problem. 10 There at the Lord’s special place they will tell you their decision. You must do whatever they say. Be sure to do everything they tell you to do. 11 You must accept their decision and follow their instructions exactly—don’t change anything!

12 “You must punish anyone who refuses to obey the judge or the priest who is there at that time serving the Lord your God. That person must die. You must remove this evil person from Israel. 13 All the people will hear about this punishment and be afraid. Then they will not be stubborn anymore.

How to Choose a King

14 “You will enter the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You will take that land and live in it. Then you will say, ‘We will put a king over us, like all the nations around us.’ 15 When that happens, you must be sure to choose the king that the Lord your God chooses. The king over you must be one of your own people. You must not make a foreigner your king. 16 The king must not get more and more horses for himself. And he must not send people to Egypt to get more horses, because the Lord has told you, ‘You must never go back that way.’ 17 Also, the king must not have too many wives, because that will make him turn away from the Lord. And he must not make himself rich with silver and gold.

18 “When the king begins to rule, he must write a copy of the law for himself in a book. He must make that copy from the books that the priests from the tribe of Levi keep. 19 He must keep that book with him and read from it all his life, because he must learn to respect the Lord his God. He must learn to completely obey everything the law commands. 20 Then the king will not think that he is better than any of his own people. He will not turn away
from the law, but he will follow it exactly. Then he and his descendants will rule the kingdom of Israel a long time.

Supporting the Priests and Levites

18 "The tribe of Levi will not get any share of land in Israel. The priests come from that tribe and they will eat the special sacrifices that are offered as gifts to the LORD. That is the share for the people from the tribe of Levi. 2 The tribe of Levi will not get any share of land like the other tribes. Their share is the LORD himself, as he said to them.

3 "When you kill one of your sheep or cattle for a sacrifice, you must give the priests these parts: the shoulder, both cheeks, and the stomach. 4 You must give the priests the first part of your harvest. You must give them the first part of your grain, your new wine, and your oil. You must give the Levites the first wool cut from your sheep. 5 This is because the LORD your God looked at all your tribes and chose Levi and his descendants to serve him as priests forever.

6 "Any Levite living in any town anywhere in Israel may leave his home and come to the LORD's special place. He may do this anytime he wants. 7 And this Levite may serve in the name of the LORD his God, the same as all his brother Levites who are on duty before the LORD. 8 And that Levite will get an equal share with the other Levites, in addition to the share his family normally gets.\a

Israel Must Not Live Like Other Nations

9 "When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, don’t learn to do the terrible things the people of the other nations there do. 10 Don’t sacrifice your sons or daughters in the fires on your altars. Don’t try to learn what will happen in the future by talking to a fortune-teller or by going to a magician, a witch, or a sorcerer. 11 Don’t let anyone try to put magic spells on other people. Don’t let any of your people become a medium or a wizard. And no one should try to talk with someone who has died. 12 The LORD hates anyone who does these things. And because these other nations do these terrible things, the LORD your God will force them out of the land as you enter it. 13 You must be faithful to the LORD your God, never doing anything he considers wrong.

The Lord’s Special Prophet

14 "You will force the other nations out of your land. They listen to people who use magic and try to tell the future. But the LORD your God will not let you do these things. 15 The LORD your God will send to you a prophet. This prophet will come from among your own people, and he will be like me. You must listen to him. 16 God will send you this prophet because that is what you asked him to do. When you were gathered together at Mount Horeb, you became frightened and said, ‘Don’t let us hear the voice of the LORD our God again! Don’t let us see that great fire or we will die!’

17 "The LORD said to me, ‘What they ask for is good. 18 I will send them a prophet like you. This prophet will be one of their own people. I will tell him what he must say, and he will tell the people everything I command. 19 This prophet will speak for me, and I will punish anyone who refuses to listen to my commands.’

How to Know False Prophets

20 "But a prophet might say something that I did not tell him to say. And he might tell people that he is speaking for me. If this happens, that prophet must be killed. Also a prophet might come that speaks for other gods. That prophet must also be killed. 21 You might be thinking, ‘How can we know if something a prophet says is not from the LORD?’ 22 If a prophet says he is speaking for the LORD, but what he says does not happen, you will know that the LORD did not say it. You will know that this prophet was speaking his own ideas. You don’t need to be afraid of him.

\a 18:8 in addition ... gets Or “without regard to gifts from family and friends.”
Cities of Safety

19 “The Lord your God is giving you land that belongs to other nations. The Lord your God will destroy those nations. You will live where these people lived. You will take their cities and their houses. When that happens, 2–3 you must divide the land that the Lord your God is giving you. Divide it into three parts and choose a city in the middle of each part that can be a place of safety. You must also build good roads to these cities. Then whoever kills another person may run to the closest city of safety.

4 “This is the rule for someone who kills another person and runs to one of these three cities for safety: It must be someone who killed another person accidentally, not out of hatred. 5 Here is an example: A man goes into the forest with another person to cut wood. The man swings his ax to cut down a tree, but the head of the ax separates from the handle. The ax head hits the other person and kills him. The man who swung the ax may then run to one of these three cities and be safe.

6 But if the city is too far away, he might not be able to run there fast enough. A close relative of the person he killed might run after him and catch him before he reaches the city. The relative might kill the man in anger, even though he did not deserve to die because he did not mean to harm anyone. 7 That is why I commanded you to choose three special cities.

8 “The Lord your God promised your fathers that he would make your land larger. He will give you all the land that he promised to give to your ancestors. 9 He will do this if you completely obey his commands that I give you today—if you love the Lord your God and always live the way he wants. Then, when he gives you more land, you should choose three more cities for safety. They should be added to the first three cities. 10 Then innocent people will not be killed in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. And you will not be guilty for any such deaths.

11 “But suppose there is a man who hates his neighbor. That man might hide and wait to kill the person he hates. If he kills that person and runs to one of these cities of safety, 12 the elders in his hometown must send someone to get him and take him away from the city of safety. These leaders must hand him over to the close relative. He is a murderer and he must die. 13 Don’t feel sorry for him. He is guilty of killing an innocent person, and you must remove that guilt from Israel. Then everything will go well for you.

Property Lines

14 “You must not move the stones that mark your neighbor’s property. People put them there in the past to mark each person’s property. These stones mark the land that the Lord your God gave you.

Witnesses

15 If someone is accused of doing something against the law, one witness is not enough to prove that the person is guilty. There must be two or three witnesses to prove that the person really did wrong.

16 “A witness might try to hurt another person by lying and saying that this person did wrong. 17 If that happens, both of them must go to the Lord’s special house and be judged by the priests and judges who are on duty at that time. 18 When the judges carefully ask their questions, they might find that the witness lied against the other person. If the witnesses tell lies, 19 you must punish them with the same punishment the other person would have received. In this way you will remove this evil from your group. 20 Other people will hear about this and be afraid, and people will not do evil things like that again.

21 “Don’t feel sorry about punishing someone who does wrong. If a life is taken, a life must be paid for it. The rule is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot—the punishment must equal the crime.

\[a\] 19:6 close relative Literally, “avenger of blood.” When a person was killed, his relative had to be sure the killer was punished. Also in verse 12.
Rules for War

20 1“When you go out to battle against your enemies, and you see horses, chariots, and many more people than you have, you must not be afraid of them. The LORD your God is with you—and he brought you out of Egypt.

2“When you go to the battle, the priest must go to the soldiers and speak to them. 3The priest will say, ‘Men of Israel, listen to me! Today you are going against your enemies in battle. Don’t lose your courage. Don’t be troubled or upset. Don’t be afraid of the enemy. 4The LORD your God is going with you to help you fight against your enemies. He will help you win!’

5“The Levite officials will say to the soldiers, ‘Is there any man here who has built a new house but has not yet dedicated it? That man should go back home. He might be killed in the battle, and then another person will dedicate that man’s house. 6Is there any man here who has planted a vineyard but has not yet gathered any of the grapes? That man should go back home. If that man dies in the battle, someone else will enjoy the fruit from his field. 7Is there any man here who is engaged to be married? That man should go back home. If he dies in the battle, another man will marry the woman he is engaged to.’

8“These Levite officials must also say to the people, ‘Is there any man here who has lost his courage and is afraid? He should go back home. Then he will not cause the other soldiers to lose their courage too.’

9Then, after the officers have finished speaking to the army, they must choose captains to lead the soldiers.

10“When you go to attack a city, you must first offer peace to the people there. 11If they accept your offer and open their gates, all the people in that city will become your slaves and be forced to work for you. 12But if the city refuses to make peace with you and fights against you, you should surround the city. 13And when the LORD your God lets you take the city, you must kill all the men in it. 14But you may take for yourselves the women, the children, the cattle, and everything else in the city. You may use all these things. The LORD your God has given these things to you. 15That is what you must do to all the cities that are very far from you—the cities that are not in the land where you will live.

16“But when you take cities in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you must kill everyone. 17You must completely destroy all the people—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. The LORD your God has commanded you to do this. 18So then they will not be able to teach you to sin against the LORD your God or to do any of the terrible things they do when they worship their gods.

19“When you are making war against a city, you might surround that city for a long time. You must not cut down the fruit trees around that city. You may eat the fruit from these trees, but you must not cut them down. These trees are not the enemy, so don’t make war against them. 20But you may cut down the trees that you know are not fruit trees. You may use these trees to build weapons for making war against that city. You may use them until the city falls.

If Someone Is Found Murdered

21 1“In the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you might find a dead body in a field, but no one knows who killed that person. 2Your leaders and judges must come out and measure the distance to the towns around the dead body. 3When you learn which town is nearest to the dead body, the leaders of that town must take a cow from their herds. 4The leaders of that town must then bring the cow down to a valley with running water. It must be a valley that has never been plowed or had anything planted in it. Then the leaders must break the cow’s neck there in that valley. 5The priests, the descendants of Levi, must also go there. (The LORD your God has chosen these priests to serve him
and to bless people in the name of the Lord. The priests will decide who is right in every lawsuit and whenever someone is hurt.) All the leaders of the town nearest the dead body must wash their hands over the cow that had its neck broken in the valley. These leaders must say, ‘We did not kill this person, and we did not see it happen.’ LORD, you saved your people Israel. Now make us pure. Don’t blame us for killing an innocent person. In this way these men will not be blamed for killing an innocent person. In this way you will remove that guilt from your group by doing what the Lord said.

Women Captured in War

You might fight against your enemies, and the Lord your God might let you defeat them and take them as captives. You might see a beautiful woman among the captives who you want to be your wife. You must then bring her into your house where she will shave her head and cut her nails. She must change her clothes and take off the clothes she was wearing when she was captured in war. She will stay in your house and be sad about losing her father and her mother for a full month. After that you may go to her to be her husband, and she will be your wife. If you are not pleased with her and choose to divorce her, set her free. You cannot sell her. You had sexual relations with her, so you must not treat her like a slave.

The Oldest Son

A man might have two wives. He might love one wife more than the other. Both wives might have children for him, but the firstborn son might be from the wife he does not love. When the man divides his property among his children, he cannot give the rights of the firstborn to the son of his favorite wife. The man must accept the firstborn son from the wife he does not love. The man must give that son a double share of everything he owns because that son is his first child. The right of the firstborn belongs to that son.

Children Who Refuse to Obey

A man might have a son who is stubborn and refuses to obey. This son does not obey his father or mother. They punish the son, but he still refuses to listen to them. His father and mother must then take him to the leaders of the town at the town meeting place. They must say to the leaders of the town: ‘Our son is stubborn and refuses to obey. He does not do anything we tell him to do. He eats and he drinks too much.’ Then the men in the town must kill the son with stones. By doing this you will remove this evil from your group. Everyone in Israel will hear about this and be afraid.

Criminals Killed and Hanged on a Tree

A man might be guilty of a sin that must be punished by death. People might kill him and hang his body on a tree. You must not let that body stay on the tree overnight. You must be sure to bury this man on the same day, because the one who hangs on a tree is cursed by God, and you must not let the land that the Lord your God is giving you become unclean.

Other Laws

If you see that your neighbor’s ox or sheep is loose, you must not ignore it. Be sure to take it back to its owner. If the owner does not live near you or if you don’t know who it belongs to, take the ox or sheep to your house. Keep it there until the owner comes looking for it; then give it back. You must do the same thing when you find anything that your neighbor might have lost. Don’t try selling it to your neighbor—you must give it back. If your neighbor’s donkey or ox has fallen down on the road, you must not ignore it. You must help your neighbor lift it up again.

A woman must not wear men’s clothes, and a man must not wear women’s clothes. That is disgusting to the Lord your God.

You might be walking along a path and find a bird’s nest in a tree or on the
ground. If the mother bird is sitting with her baby birds or on the eggs, you must not take the mother bird with the babies. You may take the babies for yourself, but you must let the mother go. If you obey these laws, things will go well for you, and you will live a long time.

8“When you build a new house, you must build a wall around your roof.” Then you will not be guilty for the death of a person who falls from the house.

Things That Must Not Be Put Together
9“You must not plant seeds of grain in the same fields as your grapevines. Why? Because then they become useless—both the grapes and the grain produced by the seeds you planted.
10“You must not plow with an ox and a donkey together.
11“You must not wear clothes made by weaving together wool and linen.
12“Tie several pieces of thread together. Then put these tassels on the four corners of the robes you wear.

Marriage Laws
13“A man might marry a woman and have sexual relations with her. Then he might decide that he does not like her. 14He might accuse her of doing wrong and say, ‘I married this woman, but when we had sexual relations, I found she was not a virgin.’ By saying this against her, people might think bad things about her. 15If this happens, the girl’s father and mother must bring the proof that the girl was a virgin to the town elders at the meeting place of the town.
16“The girl’s father must say to the leaders, ‘I gave my daughter to this man to be his wife, but now he does not want her. 17This man accused my daughter of doing wrong and said, “I did not find the proof that your daughter is a virgin.” But here is the proof that my daughter was a virgin.’ Then they should show the cloth to the town leaders. 18Then the leaders of that town must take that man and punish him. 19They must fine him 40 ounces of silver. They will give the money to the girl’s father because her husband brought shame to an Israelite girl. And the girl will continue to be the man’s wife. He cannot divorce her for the rest of his life.
20“But what the husband said about his wife might be true. The wife’s parents might not have the proof that she was a virgin. If this happens, the town elders must bring the girl to the door of her father’s house. Then the men of the town must kill her with stones, because she has done a shameful thing in Israel. She has acted like a prostitute in her father’s house. You must remove this evil from your group.

Sexual Sins
22“If a man is found having sexual relations with another man’s wife, both of them must die—the woman and the man who had sexual relations with her. You must remove this evil from Israel.
23“A man might meet a virgin girl engaged to another man. He might have sexual relations with her. If this happens in the city, you must bring them both out to the public place near the gate of that city, and you must kill them with stones. You must kill the man, because he used another man’s wife for sexual sin. And you must kill the girl, because she was in the city but did not call for help. You must remove this evil from your people.
24“But if a man finds an engaged girl out in the field and forces her to have sexual relations with him, only the man must die. 25You must do nothing to the girl. She did nothing that deserves the punishment of death. This is like someone attacking their neighbor and killing them. 26“The man found the engaged girl out in the field and

d 22:8 wall around your roof In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used as an extra room. This law made the roof a safer place.

d 22:9 they become useless Literally, “they become holy.” This means these things belonged only to God, so they couldn’t be used by the people.
c 22:12 tassels These pieces of string were made from different materials, so they became holy. This helped the people remember God and his commands.

d 22:17 cloth The bloodstained bed cover that the bride kept from her wedding night to prove she was a virgin when she married.
e 22:19 40 ounces of silver This is probably twice the amount of money that a man usually paid the father of the bride to seal the marriage agreement. See Deut. 22:29.
attacked her. Maybe she called for help, but there was no one to help her.

28“A man might find a virgin girl who is not engaged and force her to have sexual relations with him. If other people see this happen, 29he must pay the girl’s father 20 ounces of silver.\(^a\) And the girl will become the man’s wife, because he used her for sexual sin. He cannot divorce her all his life.

30“A man must not bring shame to his father by marrying his father’s wife.

People Who Cannot Join in Worship

231“A man with a crushed testicle or part of his sex organ cut off may not join with the men of Israel to worship the LORD. 2If a man’s parents were not legally married, that man may not join with the men of Israel to worship the LORD. And none of his descendants to the tenth generation—may join in that group.

3“An Ammonite or Moabite may not join with the men of Israel when they gather to worship the LORD. And none of their descendants, to the tenth generation—may join in the worship of the LORD.

4The Ammonites and Moabites refused to give you bread and water on your trip at the time you came from Egypt. They also tried to hire Balaam, the son of Beor from the Mesopotamian city of Pethor, to curse you. 5But the LORD your God refused to do what Balaam asked. Instead, the LORD changed the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you.

6You must never try to make peace with the Ammonites or Moabites. As long as you live, don’t be friendly to them.

People the Israelites Must Accept

7“You must not hate Edomites, because they are your relatives. You must not hate Egyptians, because you were a stranger in their land. 8The children of the third generation born to the Edomites and Egyptians may join with the people of Israel to worship the LORD.

Keeping the Army Camp Clean

9“When your army goes to fight against your enemies, stay away from everything that would make you unclean. 10If there is any man who is unclean because he had a flow of semen during the night, he must go out of the camp. He must stay away from the camp. 11Then, when evening comes, the man must bathe himself in water. And when the sun goes down, he may come into the camp again.

12“You also must have a place outside the camp where people can go to relieve themselves. 13Among your weapons, you must also carry a stick to dig with. Then, when you relieve yourself, you must dig a hole and cover it up. 14This is because the LORD your God is there with you in your camp to save you and to help you defeat your enemies. So the camp must be holy. Then he will not see something disgusting and leave you.

Other Laws

15“If slaves run away and come to you, don’t force them to go back to their masters. 16Runaway slaves may live with you wherever they like in whatever city they choose. You must not trouble them.

17“An Israelite man or woman must never become a temple prostitute. 18The money earned by a prostitute, either a male or female, must not be brought to the special house of the LORD your God. That money cannot be used to pay for a gift that was promised to the LORD your God, because that kind of sin is disgusting to him.

19“When you loan something to another Israelite, you must not charge interest. Don’t charge interest on money, on food or on anything that may earn interest. 20You may charge interest to a foreigner. But you must not charge interest to another Israelite. If you follow these rules, the LORD your God will bless you in
everything you do in the land where you are going to live.

21“When you make a promise to the LORD your God, don’t be slow to pay everything you promised. The LORD your God will demand that you pay it. You will sin if you don’t pay what you promised. 22If you don’t make a promise, you are not sinning. 23But you must do what you say you will do. If you choose to make a promise to the LORD your God, you must do what you promised.

24“When you go through another person’s vineyard, you may eat as many grapes as you want. But you cannot put any of the grapes in your basket. 25When you go through another person’s field of grain, you may eat all the grain you can pick with your hands. But you cannot use a sickle to cut that person’s grain and take it with you.

1“A man might marry a woman, and then find some secret thing about her that he does not like. If that man is not pleased with her, he must write the divorce papers and give them to her. Then he must send her from his house. 2When she has left his house, she may go and become another man’s wife. 3But suppose the new husband also does not like her and sends her away. If that man divorces her, the first husband may not take her again to be his wife. Or if the new husband dies, her first husband may not take her again to be his wife. She has become unclean to him. If he married her again, he would be doing something the LORD hates. You must not sin like this in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

5“When a man is newly married, he must not be sent into the army. And he must not be given any other special work. For one year he must be free to stay home and make his new wife happy.

6“When you lend someone something, you must not take as security any part of the stones used to grind flour. That would be the same as taking away their food.

7“Someone might kidnap another Israelite—one of their own people. And that kidnapper might sell that person as a slave. If that happens, that kidnapper must be killed. You must remove this evil from your group.

8“When you have a very bad skin disease, be very careful to follow everything the Levite priests teach you. You must follow carefully what I told the priests to do. 9Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on your trip out of Egypt.

10“When you give someone any kind of loan, you must not go into their house to get security. 11You must stand outside. Then the person who you gave the loan to will bring out the security to you. 12If he is a poor man, then he might give the clothes that keep him warm. You must not keep that security overnight. 13You must give his security back to him every evening. Then he will have clothes to sleep in. He will bless you, and the LORD your God will accept this as living right and doing good.

14“You must not cheat a hired servant who is poor and needy. It does not matter if he is an Israelite or if he is a foreigner living in one of your cities. 15Give him his pay every day before sunset, because he is poor and depends on the money. If you don’t pay him, he will complain against you to the LORD, and you will be guilty of sin.

16“Parents must not be put to death for something their children did. And children must not be put to death for something their parents did. People should be put to death only for a bad thing that they themselves did.

17“You must make sure that foreigners and orphans are treated fairly. And you must never take clothes from a widow as security. 18Remember, you were poor slaves in Egypt. And the LORD your God took you from that place and set you free.

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That is why I tell you to do these things for the poor.

19 “You might be gathering your harvest in the field, and you might forget and leave some grain there. You must not go back to get it. It will be for the foreigners, the orphans, and the widows. If you leave some grain for them, the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do. 20 When you beat your olive trees, you must not go back to check the branches. The olives you leave will be for the foreigners, the orphans, and the widows. 21 When you gather the grapes from your vineyard, you must not go back to gather the grapes you left. They will be for the foreigners, the orphans, and the widows. 22 Remember you were poor slaves in Egypt. That is why I tell you to do these things for the poor.

25 14 When two people have an argument, they should go to the court. The judges will decide which person is right and which is wrong. 2 If the judge decides a person must be beaten with a whip, the judge must make that person lie face down. Someone will beat the guilty person while the judge watches. The number of times he must be hit depends on the crime. 3 Don’t hit anyone more than 40 times during punishment, because more than that means that their life is not important to you. 4 When an animal is being used to separate grain, you must not cover its mouth to stop it from eating. 5 If two brothers live together, and one of them dies without a son, the wife of the dead man must not marry a stranger outside the family. Her husband’s brother must take her as his wife and have sexual relations with her. He must do the duty of a husband’s brother for her. 6 Then the first son she has will be considered the dead man’s son in order to keep the dead man’s name alive in Israel. 7 If the man does not want to take his brother’s wife, she must go to the town meeting place and tell the leaders, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to keep his brother’s name alive in Israel. He will not do the duty of a husband’s brother to me.’ 8 Then the leaders of the city must call the man and talk to him. If the man is stubborn and says, ‘I don’t want to take her,’ 9 then his brother’s wife must come to him in front of the leaders. She must take his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. She must say, ‘This is being done to the man who will not give his brother a son!’ 10 From then on, the brother’s family will be known in Israel as, ‘the family of the man whose sandal was removed.’ 11 Two men might be fighting against each other. One man’s wife might come to help her husband, but she must not grab the other man’s private parts. 12 If she does that, cut off her hand. Don’t feel sorry for her.

13 Don’t use weights that are too heavy or too light. 14 Don’t keep measures in your house that are too large or too small. 15 You must use weights and measures that are correct and accurate. Then you will live a long time in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. 16 The LORD your God hates people who cheat with false weights and measures. Yes, he hates all people who do wrong.

The Amalekites Must Be Destroyed

17 Remember what the Amalekites did to you when you were coming from Egypt. 18 The Amalekites did not respect God. They attacked you when you were weak and tired. They killed all your people who were slow and walking behind everyone else. 19 That is why you must destroy the memory of the Amalekites from the world. You will do this when you enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you. There he will give you rest from all the enemies around you. But do not forget to destroy the Amalekites!

The First Harvest

26 14 You will soon enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You will take that land and live there. 2 You will gather the crops that grow in the land the LORD your God is giving
You. You must take some of the first crops you gather and put them in baskets. Then take that part of your harvest to the place that the Lord your God chooses to be the home for his name. Go to the priest who is serving at that time. Tell him, ‘The Lord promised our ancestors that he would give us some land. Today I come to announce to the Lord your God that I have come to that land.’

Then the priest will take the basket from you. He will put it down in front of the altar of the Lord your God. Then there before the Lord your God you will say: ‘My ancestor was a wandering Aramean. He went down into Egypt and stayed there. When he went there, he had only a few people in his family. But in Egypt he became a great nation—a powerful nation with many people. The Egyptians treated us badly. They made us slaves. They hurt us and forced us to work very hard. He went down into Egypt and stayed there. When he went there, he had only a few people in his family. But in Egypt he became a great nation—a powerful nation with many people. The Egyptians treated us badly. They made us slaves. They hurt us and forced us to work very hard. Then we prayed to the Lord, the God of our ancestors, and complained about them. And the Lord heard us. He saw our trouble, our hard work, and our suffering. Then the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his great power and strength. He used great miracles and wonders and did amazing things. So he brought us to this place. He gave us this land—a land filled with many good things. Then you must put the harvest down before the Lord your God and bow down to worship him. Then you must have a meal together and enjoy all the good things that the Lord your God has given to you and your family. You must share them with the Levites and the foreigners living among you.

Every third year is the Year of Tithes. In that year, you must give one-tenth of your harvest to the Levites, to the foreigners living in your country, and to the widows and orphans. Then they will have plenty to eat in every city. You must say to the Lord your God, ‘I have taken out of my house the holy part of my harvest. I have given it to the Levites, to the foreigners, and to the orphans and widows. I have followed all the commands you gave me. I have not refused to obey any of your commands. I have not forgotten them. I have not eaten this food when I was sad. I was not unclean when I collected this food. I have not offered any of this food for dead people. I have obeyed you, Lord my God. I have done everything you commanded me. Look down from your holy home, from heaven, and bless your people Israel. And bless the land that you gave us. You promised our ancestors to give us this land—a land filled with many good things.’

Obey the Lord’s Commands

Today the Lord your God commands you to obey all these laws and rules. Be careful to follow them with all your heart and soul. Today you have said that the Lord is your God. You have promised to live the way he wants. You promised to follow his teachings and to obey his laws and commands. You said you would do everything he tells you to do. And today the Lord has accepted you to be his own people. He has promised you this. The Lord also said that you must obey all his commands. The Lord will make you greater than all the nations he made. He will give you praise, fame, and honor. And you will be his own special people, as he promised.”

Stone Memorials for the People

Moses and the elders of Israel spoke to the people. Moses said, “Obey all the commands that I give you today. You will soon go across the Jordan River into the land that the Lord your God is giving you. On that day you must put up large stones. Cover them with plaster. Then write on the stones all

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these commands and teachings. You must do this when you go across the Jordan River. Then you may go into the land that the LORD your God is giving you—a land filled with many good things.\(^a\) The LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised to give you this land.

4“After you go across the Jordan River, you must do what I command you today. You must set up the stones on Mount Ebal. You must cover these stones with plaster. 5Also, use some stones there to build an altar to the LORD your God. Don’t use iron tools to cut the stones. 6You must not use cut stones to build the altar for the LORD your God. Offer burnt offerings on this altar to the LORD your God.

7And you must sacrifice and eat fellowship offerings there. Eat and enjoy yourselves there together with the LORD your God.

8You must write all these teachings on the stones that you set up. Write clearly so that they are easy to read.”

The People Must Agree to God’s Rules

9Moses and the Levite priests spoke to all the Israelites. Moses said, “Be quiet and listen, Israel! Today you have become the people of the LORD your God. 10So you must do everything that the LORD your God tells you. You must obey his commands and his laws that I am giving you today.”

11That day Moses also told the people, “After you have gone across the Jordan River, these tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim to read the blessings to the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. 12And these tribes will stand on Mount Ebal to read the curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

13“And the Levites will say to all the Israelites in a loud voice:

14“Cursed is the one who makes a false god and puts it in its secret place. These false gods are only statues that some worker makes from wood, stone or metal. The LORD hates these things!”

“Then all the people will answer, ‘Amen!’

16“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed is the one who does not show respect to their father or their mother!’

“Then all the people will answer, ‘Amen!’

17“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed is the one who moves a neighbor’s landmark\(^b\)!’

“Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

18“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed is the one who tricks a blind man into going the wrong way!’

“Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

19“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed is the one who does not give fair judgment for the foreigners, orphans, and widows!’

“Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

20“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed is the one who shames his father by having sexual relations with his father’s wife.’

“Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

21“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed is the one who has sexual relations with any kind of animal!’

“Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

22“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed is the one who has sexual relations with his sister or half sister!’

“Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

23“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed is the one who has sexual relations with his mother-in-law!’

“Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

24“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed

\(^a\) 27:3 land ... things  Literally, “land flowing with milk and honey.”

\(^b\) 27:17 landmark  A stone or sign that showed where the limits of a person’s property were.
is the one who kills anyone, even if he is not caught!’

“Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

25“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed is the one who takes money to kill an innocent person!’

“Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

26“The Levites will say, ‘Cursed is the one who does not support this law and agree to obey it.’

“Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

Blessings for Obeying the Law

11“Now, if you will be careful to obey the Lord your God and follow all his commands that I tell you today, the Lord your God will put you high above all the nations on earth. If you will obey the Lord your God, all these blessings will come to you and be yours:

3 “He will bless you in the city and in the field.
4 He will bless you and give you many children.
   He will bless your land and give you good crops.
   He will bless your animals and let them have many babies. He will bless you with calves and lambs.
5 He will bless your baskets and pans and fill them with food.
6 He will bless you at all times in everything you do.
7“The Lord will help you defeat your enemies who come to fight against you. Your enemies will come against you one way, but they will run away from you seven different ways!
8“The Lord will bless you and fill your barns. He will bless everything you do. The Lord your God will bless you in the land that he is giving you. If you follow the Lord your God and obey his commands, he will do what he promised. The Lord will make you his own special people.
9Then all the people in that land will see that you are called to be the Lord’s people, and they will be afraid of you.
11“And the Lord will give you many good things. He will give you many children. He will give your cows many calves. He will give you a good harvest in the land that the Lord promised your ancestors to give you. The Lord will open his storehouse where he keeps his rich blessings. He will send rain at the right time for your land. He will bless everything you do. You will have money to lend to many nations. And you will not need to borrow anything from them. The Lord will make you be like the head, not the tail. You will be on top, not on the bottom. This will happen if you listen to the commands of the Lord your God that I tell you today. You must carefully obey these commands. You must not turn away from any of the teachings that I give you today. You must not turn away to the right or to the left. You must not follow other gods to serve them.

Curses for Not Obeying the Law

15“But if you don’t listen to what the Lord your God tells you—if you don’t obey all his commands and laws that I tell you today—then all these bad things will happen to you:
16“ The Lord will curse you in the city and in the field.
17 He will curse you with empty baskets and pans.
18 He will curse you, and you will not have many children.
   He will curse your land, and you will not have good crops.
   He will curse your animals, and they will not have many babies.
   He will curse your calves and lambs.
19 He will curse you at all times in everything you do.
20“ If you do evil and turn away from the Lord, he will make bad things happen to you. You will have frustration and trouble in everything you do. He will continue to do this until you are quickly and completely destroyed. He will do this
because you turned away from him and left him. 21 The LORD will send you terrible diseases until you no longer exist, until you are completely gone from the land. 22 The LORD will punish you with diseases, fever, and swelling. He will send you terrible heat and you will have no rain. Your crops will die from the heat and disease. All these bad things will happen until you are destroyed!

23 There will be no clouds in the sky—the sky will look like polished brass. And the ground under you will be hard like iron. 24 The LORD will not send rain—only sand and dust will fall from the sky. It will come down on you until you are destroyed.

25 "The LORD will let your enemies defeat you. You will go to fight against your enemies one way, but you will run away from them seven different ways. The bad things that happen to you will make all the people on earth afraid. 26 Your dead bodies will be food for the wild birds and animals. There will be no one to scare them away from your dead bodies.

27 The LORD will punish you with boils, like those he sent on the Egyptians. He will punish you with tumors, sores that run, and an itch that cannot be cured. The LORD will punish you by making you crazy. He will make you blind and confused. In daylight you will have to feel your way like a blind man. You will fail in everything you do. Again and again people will hurt you and steal from you. And there will be no one to save you.

28 "You will be engaged to a woman, but another man will have sexual relations with her. You will build a house, but you will not live in it. You will plant a vineyard, but you will not gather anything from it. 29 People will kill your cattle in front of you, but you will not eat any of the meat. People will take your donkeys, and they will not give them back to you. Your enemies will get your sheep, and there will be no one to help you.

30 "Other people will be allowed to take your sons and your daughters. Day after day you will look for your children. You will look for them until your eyes become weak and blind—but you will not find them. And God will not help you.

31 "A nation that you don’t know will take all your crops and everything you worked for. People will treat you badly and abuse you. 32 The things you see will make you go crazy. The LORD will punish you with sores that cannot be healed. These boils will be on your knees and legs. The boils will be on every part of your body—from the bottom of your feet to the top of your head.

33 "The LORD will send you and your king away to a nation you don’t know. You and your ancestors have never seen that nation. There you will serve false gods made of wood and stone. In the countries where the LORD will send you, the people will be shocked at the terrible things that happen to you. They will laugh at you and say bad things about you.

The Curse of Failure

34 "Your fields will produce plenty of grain. But your harvest will be small, because the locusts will eat your harvest. 35 You will plant vineyards and work hard in them. But you will not gather the grapes or drink the wine from them, because the worms will eat them. 36 You will have olive trees everywhere on your land. But you will not have any of the oil to use, because the olives will drop to the ground and rot. 37 You will have sons and daughters. But you will not be able to keep them, because they will be captured and taken away. 38 Locusts will destroy all your trees and the crops in your fields. The foreigners living among you will get more and more power, and you will lose the power you had. 39 The foreigners will have money to loan you, but you will not have any money to loan them. They will control you the way the head controls the body. You will be like the tail.

40 "All these curses will come on you. They will keep chasing you and catching...
you, until you are destroyed, because you did not listen to what the LORD your God told you. You did not obey the commands and laws that he gave you. These curses will show people that God judged you and your descendants forever. People will be amazed at the terrible things that happen to you.

46 These curses will show people that God judged you and your descendants forever. People will be amazed at the terrible things that happen to you.

47 “The Lord your God gave you many blessings. But you did not serve him with joy and a glad heart. 48 So you will serve the enemies the LORD will send against you. You will be hungry, thirsty, naked, and poor. He will put a load on you that cannot be removed. You will carry that load until he destroys you.

The Curse of an Enemy Nation

49 “The Lord will bring a nation from far away to fight you. You will not understand their language. They will come quickly, like an eagle coming down from the sky. 50 These people will be cruel. They will not care about old people or show mercy to young children. 51 They will take your animals and the food you grow. They will take everything until they destroy you. They will not leave you any grain, wine, oil, cattle, sheep, or goats. They will take everything, until they destroy you.

52 “That nation will surround and attack your cities. You think that the tall, strong walls around your cities will protect you. But those walls will fall down. The enemy will surround all your cities everywhere in the land the LORD your God is giving you. 53 You will suffer very much. The enemy will surround your cities. They will not let you have any food. You will get very hungry. You will be so hungry that you will eat your own sons and daughters—you will eat the bodies of the children the LORD your God gave you.

54 “Even the most kind and gentle man among you will become cruel. He will be cruel to his family, and he will be cruel to his wife he loves so much. And he will be cruel to his children who are still alive.

55 He will have nothing left to eat, so he will eat his own children. And he will not share that meat with anyone—not even the other people in his own family. All these bad things will happen when your enemy comes to surround your cities and make you suffer.

56 “Even the most kind and gentle woman among you will become cruel. She might be a lady so gentle and delicate that she never put her feet on the ground to walk anywhere. But she will become cruel to her husband she loves so much. And she will be cruel to her own son and daughter. 57 She will hide and give birth to a baby. And she will eat the baby and everything that comes out of her body with it. All these bad things will happen when your enemy comes to surround your cities and make you suffer.

58 "You must obey all the commands and teachings that are written in this book. And you must respect the wonderful and awesome name of the LORD your God. If you don’t obey, 59 the LORD will punish you and your descendants with terrible diseases. He will cause you to suffer illnesses that have no cure. And you will find no relief for your misery! 60 He will bring on you all the diseases you saw in Egypt that filled you with fear, and you will not be able to avoid them. 61 The Lord will even bring troubles and diseases that are not written in this Book of Teachings. He will continue to do this until you are destroyed. 62 You might have as many people as the stars in the sky. But only a few of you will be left, because you did not listen to the LORD your God.

63 "The LORD was happy to be good to you and to make your nation grow. In the same way the LORD will be happy to ruin and destroy you. You are going to take that land to be yours. But people will take you out of that land! 64 The LORD will scatter you among all the people in the world. He will scatter you from one end of the earth to the other. There you will serve false gods made of wood and stone. They are
false gods that you or your ancestors never worshiped.

65“You will not have any peace among these nations. You will have no place to rest. The LORD will fill your mind with worry. Your eyes will feel tired. You will be very upset. You will live with danger and always be afraid. You will be afraid night and day. You will never feel sure about your life. 66In the morning you will say, ‘I wish it were evening!’ In the evening you will say, ‘I wish it were morning!’ This will happen because of the fear in your heart and the terrible things you will see. 68The LORD will send you back to Egypt in ships. I said you would never have to go to that place again, but he will send you there. In Egypt you will try to sell yourselves as slaves to your enemies, but no one will buy you.”

The Agreement in Moab

29The LORD made an agreement with the Israelites at Mount Horeb. In addition to that agreement, he also commanded Moses to make another agreement with them while they were in Moab. This is that agreement.

2Moses called together all the Israelites. He said to them, “You saw everything the LORD did in the land of Egypt. You saw what he did to Pharaoh, to Pharaoh’s officers, and to his whole country. 3You saw the great troubles he gave them. You saw the miracles and amazing things he did. 4But even today, you still don’t understand what happened. The LORD has not let you really understand what you saw and heard. 5He led you through the desert for 40 years, and in all that time, your clothes and sandals did not wear out. 6You did not have any food with you. You did not have any wine or anything else to drink. But he took care of you so that you would understand that he is the LORD your God.

7“You came to this place, and King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan came out to fight against us. But we defeated them. 8Then we took their land and gave it to the people in the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to half the tribe of Manasseh. 9If you obey all the commands in this agreement, you will continue to succeed in everything you do.

10“Today all of you are standing here before the LORD your God. Your leaders, your officials, your elders, and all the other men are here. 11Your wives and children are here and also the foreigners living among you—the people who cut your wood and bring you water. 12You are all here to enter into an agreement with the LORD your God. The LORD your God is making this agreement with you today. 13With this agreement he is making you his own special people, and he himself will become your God. He told you this. He promised this to your ancestors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 14The LORD is making this agreement with its promises with you people, but not only with you. 15Yes, he is making this agreement with all of you who stand here with us today before the LORD our God. But this agreement is also for our descendants who are not here with us today. 16You remember how we lived in the land of Egypt. And you remember how we traveled through the countries that were on our way here. 17You saw their hated things—the idols they had made from wood, stone, silver, and gold. 18Be sure that there is no man, woman, family or tribe here today who turns away from the LORD our God. No one should go and serve the gods of the other nations. People who do that are like a plant that grows bitter and poisonous fruit.

19“Some people might hear these curses and comfort themselves by saying, ‘I will continue doing what I want. Nothing bad will happen to me.’ But that attitude will bring total disaster. 20–21The LORD will not forgive them for that. No, the LORD will be angry and upset with them and punish them. The LORD will separate them from the tribes of Israel. He will completely destroy them. All the curses that are written in this book will happen to them. They are a part of the agreement that is written in this Book of Teachings.

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22“Then the Lord your God will bring you back from the nations where he sent you. 23Even if you were sent to the farthest parts of the earth, the Lord your God will gather you from there and bring you back. 24The Lord your God will bring you into the land your ancestors had, and the land will become yours. He will do good to you, and you will have more than your ancestors had. You will have more people in your nation than they ever had. 25The Lord your God will make you and your descendants want to obey him. 26Then you will love the Lord your God with all your heart. And you will live!

7“Then the Lord your God will make all these bad things happen to your enemies, who hate you and cause you trouble. 8And you will again obey the Lord. You will obey all his commands that I give you today. 9The Lord your God will make you successful in everything you do. He will bless you with many children. He will bless your cows—they will have many calves. He will bless your fields—they will grow many good crops. He will be good to you. The Lord will again enjoy doing good for you, the same as he enjoyed doing good for your ancestors. 10But you must do what the Lord your God tells you to do. You must obey his commands and follow the rules that are written in this Book of Teachings. You must obey the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Then these good things will happen to you.

Life or Death
11“Then the Lord your God will bring you into the land that you love and which you have come to occupy. 12That land is rich with all kinds of good things. 13There is gold and silver there. 14There are precious stones and a lot of other things. 15The Lord your God will bring you into the land. He will make it happen. Then you will have a lot of food. 16Then you will have to decide what you want to do. It is not too hard for you. It is not a secret hidden in some faraway land. 17This command is not in heaven so that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us and bring it to us, so that we can hear and do it?’ 18This command is not on the other side of the sea so that you should say, ‘Who will go across the sea for us and bring it to us, so that we can hear it and do it?’ 19No, the word is very near to you. It is

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in your mouth and in your heart. So you can obey it.

15 “Today I have given you a choice between life and death, success and disaster. a I command you today to love the LORD your God. I command you to follow him and to obey his commands, laws, and rules. Then you will live, and your nation will grow larger. And the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take for your own. b But if you turn away from your God and refuse to listen, if you are led away to worship and serve other gods, c you will be destroyed. I am warning you today, if you turn away from God, you will not live long in that land across the Jordan River that you are ready to enter and take for your own.

18 “Today I am giving you a choice of two ways. And I ask heaven and earth to be witnesses of your choice. You can choose life or death. The first choice will bring a blessing. The other choice will bring a curse. So choose life! Then you and your children will live. d You must love the LORD your God and obey him. Never leave him, because he is your life. And he will give you a long life in the land that he, the LORD, promised to give to your ancestors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Joshua Will Be the New Leader

31 Then Moses went and spoke these words to all the Israelites. e Moses said to them, “I am now 120 years old. I cannot lead you anymore. The LORD said to me, ‘You will not go across the Jordan River.’ 3 But the LORD your God will lead your people into that land. He will destroy these nations for you. f You will take their land away from them. The LORD said that Joshua must lead you.

4 “The LORD destroyed Sihon and Og. He destroyed those Amorite kings and he will do the same thing for you again! g The LORD will help you defeat these nations. But you must do to them everything I told you to do. h Be strong and be brave. Don’t be afraid of those people because the LORD your God is with you. He will not fail you or leave you.”

7 Then Moses called Joshua. All the Israelites watched while Moses said to Joshua, “Be strong and brave. You will lead these people into the land that the LORD promised to give to their ancestors. You will help the Israelites take that land and divide it among them. h The LORD will lead you. He himself is with you. He will not fail you or leave you. Don’t worry. Don’t be afraid!”

Moses Writes the Book of Teachings

9 Then Moses wrote this Book of Teachings and gave it to the priests, who are from the tribe of Levi. They have the work of carrying the LORD’s Box of the Agreement. Moses also gave it to all the elders of Israel. 10 Then Moses spoke to the leaders. He said, “At the end of every seven years, in the Year of Freedom, b read these teachings at the Festival of Shelters. c At that time all the Israelites must come to meet with the LORD your God at the special place he will choose. Then you must read the teachings to the people so that they can hear them. d Bring together all the people—the men, the women, the little children, and the foreigners living in your cities. They will hear the teachings, and they will learn to respect the LORD your God. Then they will be able to do everything in this Book of Teachings. e If their descendants don’t know the teachings, they will hear them, and they will learn to respect the LORD your God. They will respect him as long as you live in your country. You will soon go across the Jordan River and take that land to be your own.”

The Lord Calls Moses and Joshua

14 The LORD said to Moses, “Now the time is near for you to die. Get Joshua and come to the Meeting Tent. I will tell Joshua what he must do.” So Moses and Joshua went to the Meeting Tent.

15 The LORD appeared at the Tent in a tall cloud. The tall cloud stood over the

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a 30:15 success and disaster Or “good and evil.”

b 31:10 Year of Freedom That is, the year for canceling debts.
The Lord said to Moses, “You will die soon. And after you have gone to be with your ancestors, these people will not continue to be faithful to me. They will break the agreement I made with them. They will leave me and begin worshiping other gods—the false gods of the land where they are going. At that time I will become very angry with them, and I will leave them. I will refuse to help them, and they will be destroyed. Terrible things will happen to them, and they will have many troubles. Then they will say, ‘These bad things happened to us because our God is not with us.’ And I will refuse to help them, because they have done evil and worshiped other gods.

“So write down this song, and teach it to the Israelites. Teach them to sing this song. Then this song will be a witness for me against the Israelites. I will take them into the land that I promised to give to their ancestors—a land filled with many good things. And they will have all they want to eat. They will have a rich life. But then they will turn to other gods and serve them. They will turn away from me and break my agreement. Then many terrible things will happen to them. They will have many troubles. At that time their descendants will still know this song, and it will show them how wrong they are. I have not yet taken them into the land I promised to give them. But I already know what they are planning to do there.”

So that same day Moses wrote down the song and taught it to the Israelites.

Then the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun and said, “Be strong and brave. You will lead the Israelites into the land I promised them, and I will be with you.”

Moses Warns the Israelites

Moses carefully wrote all these teachings in a book. When he finished, he gave a command to the Levites. (These men carry the Lord’s Box of the Agreement.) Moses said, “Take this Book of Teachings and put it by the side of the Box of the Agreement of the Lord your God. Then it will be a witness against you. I know you are very stubborn. I know you want to live your own way. Look, you refused to obey the Lord while I was with you. So I know you will refuse to obey him after I die. Bring together all the officers and leaders of your tribes. I will tell them these things. And I will call heaven and earth to be witnesses against them. I know that after my death you will become evil. You will turn from the way I commanded you to follow. Terrible things will happen to you in the future, because you want to do what the Lord says is wrong. You will make him angry because of the evil things you do.”

The Song of Moses

All the Israelites were gathered together, and Moses sang this whole song for them:

Skies, listen and I will speak. Earth, hear the words of my mouth.

My teachings will come like the rain, like a mist falling to the ground, like a gentle rain on the soft grass, like rain on the green plants.

Praise God as I speak the Lord’s name!

“The Lord is the Rock, and his work is perfect! Yes, all his ways are right! God is true and faithful. He is good and honest. And you are not really his children. You are completely unfaithful to him. You are crooked liars.

Is this the way you repay the Lord for all he has done for you? You are stupid, foolish people. He is your Father and your Creator. He made you, and he supports you.

“Remember the days of the past.

\[31:20\] land … things Literally, “land flowing with milk and honey.”

\[32:3\] Praise God Or “Give honor to God” or “Speak of the greatness of God.”
Think about what happened so long ago.
Ask your father; he will tell you.
Ask your leaders; they will tell you.

8 God Most High separated the people on earth
and gave each nation its land.
He set up borders for all people.
He made as many nations as there are angels.\(^a\)

9 The LORD chose his people to be his own.
The people of Jacob belong to him.

10 “The Lord found them in the desert,
in an empty, windy land.
He surrounded them and watched over them.
He protected them like the pupil of his eye,
like an eagle when she makes her young leave the nest to fly.
She stays close to them, ready to help.
She spreads her wings to catch them when they fall and carries them to a safe place.

11 The LORD alone led his people.
They had no help from any foreign god.

12 The Lord helped them take control of the hill country.
They took the harvest in the fields.
He gave them honey from the cliffs and olive oil from the rocky ground.

13 He gave his people butter from the herd and milk from the flock.
He gave them lambs and goats.
They had the best rams from Bashan and the finest wheat.
They drank the best wine made from the juice of red grapes.

15 “But Jeshurun\(^b\) became fat and kicked like a bull.
(Yes, you people were fed well and became full and fat.)
They left the God who made them!
They ran away from the Rock who saved them.

16 They made him jealous by worshiping other gods.
They made him angry with those disgusting idols.

17 They offered sacrifices to demons—
gods that are not God.
These were new gods they had not known before,
gods their ancestors never knew.

18 You people left the Rock who made you;
you forgot the God who gave you life.

19 “The LORD saw this and became upset.
His sons and daughters made him angry!

20 So he said, ‘I will turn away from them,
then let’s see what happens!
They are a rebellious people.
They are like children who will not learn their lessons.

21 They made me jealous with things that are not really gods.
They made me angry with their worthless idols.
So I will use people who are not really a nation to make them jealous.
I will use a worthless nation to make them angry.

22 My anger will burn like a fire,
burning down to the deepest grave,
burning the earth and all it produces,
burning deep down below the mountains.

23 “I will bring troubles to the Israelites.
I will shoot all my arrows at them.

24 They will become thin from hunger.
Terrible diseases will destroy them.
I will send wild animals against them.
Poisonous snakes and lizards will bite them.

25 In the streets, soldiers will kill them.

\(^a\) 32:8 angels This is from the ancient Greek version. Some Hebrew copies at Qumran have “sons of God,” which can also mean “angels.” The standard Hebrew text has “sons of Israel.”

\(^b\) 32:15 Jeshurun Another name for Israel. It means “good” or “honest.”

\(^C\) 32:21 worthless Literally, “foolish,” used as a wordplay because in Hebrew it sounds like the word “worthless” used earlier in this verse.
In their houses, terrible things will happen. Soldiers will kill young men and women. They will kill babies and old people.

26 “I thought about destroying the Israelites so that people would forget them completely!

27 But I know what their enemies would say. The enemy would not understand. They would brag and say, “The LORD did not destroy Israel. We won by our own power!”

28 “They are foolish. They don’t understand.

29 If they were wise, they would understand; they would know what would happen to them.

30 Can one person chase away 1000 men? Can two men cause 10,000 men to run away?

   It will happen only if the LORD gives them to their enemy.
   This will happen only if their Rock sells them like slaves.

31 The ‘rock’ of our enemies is not strong like our Rock.

   Even our enemies know that.

32 Their vines and fields will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah.

   Their grapes are like bitter poison.

33 Their wine is like the poison of deadly snakes.

34 “The Lord says, ‘I am saving that punishment. I have it locked up in my storehouse! I will punish them for the bad things they did. But I am saving that punishment for when they slip and do bad things. Their time of trouble is near. Their punishment will come quickly.’

35 “The LORD will judge his people. They are his servants, and he will show them mercy. He will see that their power is gone. He will see that they are all helpless—the slaves and free people too.

36 Then the Lord will say, ‘Where are the false gods? Where is the “rock” that you ran to for protection? Those false gods ate the fat of your sacrifices. And they drank the wine of your offerings. So let them get up and help you! Let them protect you!’

37 “Now, see that I, and only I, am God! There is no other God! I put people to death, and I let people live. I can hurt people, and I can make them well. No one can save another person from my power!

38 I raise my hand toward heaven and make this promise. As surely as I live forever, these things will happen!

39 I swear,

   I will sharpen my flashing sword. I will use it to punish my enemies. I will give them the punishment they deserve.

40 My enemies will be killed and taken as prisoners. My arrows will be covered with their blood. My sword will cut off the heads of their soldiers.’

41 “The whole world should be happy for God’s people! God punishes people who kill his servants. He gives his enemies the punishment they deserve. And he makes his land and people pure.”
Moses Teaches the People His Song

44 Moses and Joshua son of Nun came and sang all the words of this song for the Israelites to hear. 45 When Moses finished giving these teachings to the people, he said to them, “You must be sure to pay attention to all the commands I tell you today. And you must tell your children to obey completely the commands in this Law. Don’t think these teachings are not important. They are your life! Through these teachings you will live a long time in the land across the Jordan River that you are ready to take.”

Moses on Mount Nebo

48 The Lord spoke to Moses that same day. He said, 49 “Go to the Abarim Mountains. Go up on Mount Nebo in the land of Moab across from the city of Jericho. Then you can look at the land of Canaan that I am giving to the Israelites to live in. 50 You will die on that mountain. You will go to be with your people, the same as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor. 51 This is because you both sinned against me. You were at the waters of Meribah near Kadesh, in the desert of Zin. There, in front of the Israelites, you did not honor me and show that I am holy. 52 So now you may see the land that I am giving to the Israelites. But you cannot go into that land.”

Moses Blesses the People

1 This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, gave the Israelites before he died:

2 “The Lord came from Sinai, like a light shining at dawn over Seir, like a light shining from Mount Paran. He came with 10,000 holy ones. God’s mighty soldiers were by his side.

3 Yes, the Lord loves his people.
All his holy people are in his hand.
They sit at his feet
and learn his teachings!

4 Moses gave us the law.
These teachings are for Jacob’s people.
5 At that time the Israelites and their leaders met together, and the Lord became Jeshurun’s king!

Reuben’s Blessing

6 “Let Reuben live, and not die!
But let there be only a few people in his tribe!”

Judah’s Blessing

7 Moses said this about Judah: “Lord, listen to the leader from Judah when he calls for help.
Bring him to his people.
Make him strong,
and help him defeat his enemies!”

Levi’s Blessing

8 Moses said this about Levi: “Levi is your true follower.
He keeps the Urim and Thummim.
At Massah you tested the people of Levi.
At the waters of Meribah, you challenged them.
9 They were more loyal to you, Lord, than to their own families.
They ignored their fathers and mothers.
They did not recognize their brothers.
They did not pay attention to their children.
But they obeyed your commands.
They kept your agreement.
They will teach your rules to Jacob and your Law to Israel.
They will burn incense before you.
They will offer burnt offerings on your altar.

11 “Lord, bless everything Levi has.
Accept what he does.
Destroy those who attack him!

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\(33:2\) holy one Here, this probably means an angel.
\(33:2\) side Or “He came from 10,000 holy angels where his troops were by his right side.”

\(33:5\) Jeshurun Another name for the people of Israel. It means “good” or “honest.” Also in verse 26.
\(33:8\) Massah … Meribah See Num. 20:1–13 for the story.
Defeat his enemies so that they will never attack again.”

Benjamin’s Blessing
12 Moses said this about Benjamin:
“Benjamin is loved by the Lord and lives close to him in safety.
The Lord protects him all the time like a child at rest on its mother’s back.”

Joseph’s Blessing
13 Moses said this about Joseph:
“May the Lord bless Joseph’s land with rain from the skies above and water from the ground below.
Let the sun give them good fruit.
Let each month bring its best fruit.
Let the hills and ancient mountains produce their best fruit.
Let the earth give its best to Joseph.
He was separated from his brothers.
So may the Lord in the burning bush give his best to Joseph.
Joseph is like a powerful bull.
His two sons are like bull’s horns.
They will attack other people and push them to the ends of the earth!
Yes, Manasseh has thousands of people, and Ephraim has ten thousands.”

Zebulun and Issachar’s Blessing
18 Moses said this about Zebulun:
“Zebulun, be happy when you go out.
Issachar, be happy in your tents at home.
They will call the people to their mountain.
There they will offer good sacrifices.
They will take riches from the sea and treasures from the shore.”

Gad’s Blessing
20 Moses said this about Gad:
“Praise God who gave Gad more land!
Gad is like a lion that lies down and waits.
Then he attacks and tears the animal in pieces.
He chose the best part for himself.
He took the king’s share.
The leaders of the people come to him.
He did what the Lord says is good.
He did what is right for the Israelites.”

Dan’s Blessing
22 Moses said this about Dan:
“Dan is a lion’s cub that jumps out from Bashan.”

Naphtali’s Blessing
23 Moses said this about Naphtali:
“Naphtali, you will get all you want.
The Lord will really bless you.
You will get the land by Lake Galilee.”

Asher’s Blessing
24 Moses said this about Asher:
“Asher is the most blessed of the sons.
Let him be the favorite of his brothers.
And let him wash his feet in olive oil.
Your gates will have locks made from iron and bronze.
You will be strong all your life.”

Moses Gives Praise to God
26 “There is no one like the God of Israel!
He rides on the clouds in his divine greatness.
He comes riding through the skies to help you.
God lives forever.
He is your place of safety.
His power continues forever!
He is protecting you.
He will force your enemies to leave your land.
He will say, ‘Destroy the enemy!’
So Israel will live in safety.
Jacob’s well belongs to them.
They will get a land of grain and wine.
And that land will get plenty of rain.
Israel, you are blessed.

a 33:12 like a child … back Literally, “and he rests between his shoulders.” The metaphor may refer to the custom of a mother carrying her baby tied on her back as she works. See Ps. 131:2.

b 33:24 Asher This name means “blessed” or “happy.”
No other nation is like you. The L ORD saved you. He is like a strong shield protecting you. He is like a powerful sword. Your enemies will be afraid of you, and you will put your foot on their backs!a"

Moses Dies

1Moses climbed Mount Nebo. Moses went from the Jordan Valley in Moab to the top of Mount Pisgah. This was across the Jordan River from Jericho. The L ORD showed Moses all the land from Gilead to Dan. 2He showed him all the land of Naphtali, Ephraim, and Manasseh. He showed him all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea. 3He showed Moses the Negev and the valley that goes from Zoar to Jericho, the city of palm trees. 4The L ORD said to Moses, “This is the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I said to them, ‘I will give this land to your descendants. I have let you see the land, but you cannot go there.’”

5Then Moses, the L ORD’s servant, died there in the land of Moab. The L ORD had told Moses this would happen. 6He buried Moses in Moab. This was in the valley across from Beth Peor. But even today, no one knows exactly where Moses’ grave is. 7Moses was 120 years old when he died. He was as strong as ever, and his eyes were still good. 8The Israelites cried for Moses for 30 days. They stayed in the Jordan Valley in Moab until the time of sadness was finished.

Joshua Becomes the New Leader

9Moses had put his hands on Joshua and appointed him to be the new leader. Then Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom. So the Israelites began to obey Joshua, and they did what the L ORD had commanded Moses.

10Israel never had another prophet like Moses: The L ORD knew Moses face to face. 11The L ORD sent Moses to do powerful miracles in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh, all his officers, and all the people in Egypt saw those miracles. 12No other prophet ever did as many powerful and amazing things as Moses did for the Israelites to see.

a 33:29 and you … backs Or “You will trample their holy places.”
Joshua

God Chooses Joshua to Lead Israel

1 Moses was the LORD’s servant, and Joshua son of Nun was Moses’ helper. After Moses died, the LORD spoke to Joshua and said, 2 “My servant Moses is dead. Now you and all these people must go across the Jordan River. You must go into the land I am giving to the Israelites. 3 I promised Moses that I would give you this land, so I will give you all the land wherever you go. 4 All the land from the desert to Lebanon all the way to the great river (that is, the Euphrates River) and all the land of the Hittites will be yours. And all the land from here to the Mediterranean Sea in the west (that is, the place where the sun sets) will be within your borders. 5 Just as I was with Moses, I will be with you. No one will be able to stop you all your life. I will not abandon you. I will never leave you.

6 “Joshua, you must be strong and brave! You must lead these people so that they can take their land. I promised their fathers that I would give them this land. So he has given you this land east of the Jordan River. But now you must help your relatives get their land. Your wives and children can stay here with your animals. But all your fighting men must prepare for battle and lead the men of the other tribes across the river. 15 The LORD has given you a place to live, and he will do the same for your brothers. But you must help them until they take control of the land the LORD your God is giving them. Then you can come back and settle here on the east side of the river. This is the land that the LORD’s servant Moses said would be yours.”

16 Then the people answered Joshua, “We will do whatever you command us to do. We will go wherever you tell us to go. 17 We will obey whatever you say, just as we obeyed Moses. We only ask that the LORD your God be with you just as he was with Moses. 18 Then anyone who refuses to obey your commands or turns against you will be killed. Just be strong and brave!”

Spies in Jericho

2 Joshua son of Nun and all the people were camped at Acacia. 2:1 Joshua sent out two spies. No one knew that Joshua sent out these men. Joshua said to them,
“Go and look at the land, especially the city of Jericho.”

So the men went to the city of Jericho and stayed at the house of a prostitute named Rahab.

2But someone told the king of Jericho, “Last night some men from Israel came to look for weaknesses in our country.”

3So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: “Do not hide the men who came and stayed in your house. Bring them out. They have come to spy on our country.”

4Rahab had hidden the two men, but she said, “They did come here, but I didn’t know where they came from. In the evening, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don’t know where they went. But if you go quickly, maybe you can catch them.”

5(Rahab said this, but really she had taken the men up to the roof and had hidden them in the flax that she had piled up there.)

6So the king’s men went out of the city, and the people closed the city gates. The king’s men went to look for the two men from Israel. They went to the Jordan River and looked at all the places where people cross the river.

7The two men were ready to sleep for the night, but Rahab went to the roof to talk to them. She said, “I know that the LORD has given this land to your people. You frighten us. Everyone living in this country is afraid of you. We are afraid because we have heard about the ways that the LORD helped you. We heard that he dried up the Red Sea when you came out of Egypt. We also heard what you did to the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og. We heard how you destroyed those kings living east of the Jordan River. When we heard about this, we were very afraid. And now, not one of our men is brave enough to fight you, because the LORD your God rules the heavens above and the earth below! So now, I want you to make a promise to me. I was kind to you and helped you. So promise me before the LORD that you will be kind to my family. Please tell me that you will do this. Tell me that you will allow my family to live—my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all their families. Promise me that you will save us from death.”

14The men agreed and said, “We will trade our lives for yours. Don’t tell anyone what we are doing. Then, when the LORD gives us the land, we will be kind to you. You can trust us.”

15Rahab’s house was built into the city wall, so she used a rope to let the men down through a window. Then she said to them, “Go into the hills so that the king’s men will not accidentally find you. Hide there for three days. After the king’s men come back, you can go on your way.”

17The men said to her, “We made a promise to you. But you must do one thing, or we will not be responsible for our promise. When we come back to this land, you must tie in your window this red rope you are using to help us escape. You must bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your family into your house with you. We will protect everyone who stays in this house. If anyone in your house is hurt, we will be responsible. But if they go out of your house and are killed, we will not be responsible. It will be their own fault. We are making this agreement with you. But if you tell anyone about what we are doing, we will be free from this agreement.”

21Rahab answered, “I will do just what you said.” She said goodbye, and the men left her house. Then she tied the red rope in the window.

22The men left her house and went into the hills. They stayed there for three days. The king’s men looked all along the road. After three days, they stopped looking and went back to the city. Then the two men went back to Joshua. They left the hills and crossed the river. They went to Joshua and told him everything that they had learned. They said to him, “The LORD really has given us all the land. All the people in that country are afraid of us.”
Miracle at the Jordan River

1 Early the next morning, Joshua and all the Israelites got up and left Acacia. They traveled to the Jordan River and camped there before they crossed it.

2 After three days the leaders went through the camp. They gave orders to the people: “When you see the Levite priests carrying the Box of the Agreement of the LORD your God, follow them. But do not follow too closely. Stay about 1000 yards behind them. You have not been here before, but if you follow them, you will know where to go.”

3 Then Joshua told the people, “Make yourselves pure. Tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among us.”

4 Then Joshua said to the priests, “Take the Box of the Agreement and go across the river in front of the people.” So the priests lifted the Box and carried it in front of the people.

5 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to make you a great man for all the Israelites to see. Then the people will know that I am with you just as I was with Moses. The priests will carry the Box of the Agreement. Tell them this, ‘Walk to the shore of the Jordan River and stop just before you step into the water.’”

6 Then Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come and listen to the words of the Lord your God. Here is proof that the living God is really with you and that he will surely defeat your enemies. He will defeat the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites; he will force them to leave their land. The Box of the Agreement of the Lord of the whole world will go before you as you cross the Jordan River. Now choose twelve men, one from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The priests will carry the Holy Box of the Lord. He is the Lord of the whole world. They will carry that Box in front of you into the Jordan River. Then they enter the water, the water of the Jordan River will stop flowing and fill behind that place like at a dam.”

7 Then Joshua said to the Israelites, “Today I will begin to make you a great man for all the Israelites to see. Then the people will know that I am with you just as I was with Moses. The priests will carry the Box of the Agreement. Tell them this, ‘Walk to the shore of the Jordan River and stop just before you step into the water.’”

8 Then the priests carried the Box of the Agreement, and the people left the place they had camped. The people started going across the Jordan River. (During harvest time the Jordan River overflows its banks, so the river was at its fullest.) The priests who were carrying the Box came to the shore of the river. When they stepped into the water, immediately the water stopped flowing and piled up like a wall. The water piled up high a long way up the river—all the way to Adam (a town near Zarethan). And the water flowing down to the sea of Arabah (the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. The people crossed the river near Jericho. The ground at that place became dry, and the priests carried the Box of the Agreement of the Lord to the middle of the river and stopped. They waited there while all the Israelites walked across the Jordan River on dry land.

Rocks to Remind the People

1 After all the people had crossed the Jordan River, the Lord said to Joshua, “Choose twelve men, one from each tribe. Tell them to look in the river where the priests were standing and get twelve rocks from that place. Carry these rocks with you and put them where you stay tonight.”

2 So Joshua chose one man from each tribe. Then he called the twelve men together. He said to them, “Go out into the river where the Holy Box of the Lord your God is. Each of you must find one rock. There will be one rock for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Carry that rock on your shoulder. These rocks will be a sign for you. In the future, your children will ask you, ‘What do these rocks mean?’ You will tell them that the Lord stopped the water from flowing in the Jordan River. When the Holy Box of the Lord’s Agreement crossed the river, the water stopped flowing. These rocks will help the Israelites remember this forever.”

3 So the Israelites obeyed Joshua. They carried twelve rocks from the middle of the Jordan River. There was one rock for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. They
did this as the Lord had commanded Joshua. The men carried the rocks with them. Then they put the rocks at the place where they made their camp. Joshua also put twelve rocks in the middle of the Jordan River. He put them at the place where the priests had stood while carrying the Holy Box. These rocks are still there today.

The Lord had commanded Joshua to tell the people what to do. This is what Moses had said Joshua must do. So the priests carrying the Holy Box stood in the middle of the river until everything was done. Meanwhile, the people hurried across the river. After the people finished crossing the river, the priests carried the Lord’s Holy Box to the front of the people.

The men from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh obeyed Moses. These men crossed the river in front of the other people. These men were prepared for war. They were going to help the rest of the Israelites take the land God had promised to give them.

About 40,000 soldiers, prepared for war, passed before the Lord. They were marching toward the plains of Jericho.

That day the Lord made Joshua a great man to all the Israelites. From that time on, they respected Joshua just as they had Moses.

Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Command the priests carrying the Box that holds the Agreement to come out of the river.”

So Joshua commanded the priests, “Come out of the Jordan River.”

The priests obeyed Joshua. They carried the Box of the Lord’s Agreement with them and came out of the river. When their feet touched the land on the other side of the river, the water in the river began flowing again. The water again overflowed its banks just as it had before the people crossed.

The people crossed the Jordan River on the tenth day of the first month and camped at Gilgal, east of Jericho. They carried with them the twelve rocks that they had taken from the Jordan River, and Joshua set them up at Gilgal. Then Joshua told the Israelites, “In the future your children will ask you, ‘What do these rocks mean?’ Tell them, ‘These rocks help us remember the way the people of Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry land.’ The Lord your God caused the water in the Jordan River to stop flowing so that you could cross it on dry land—just as the Lord had stopped the water at the Red Sea so that we could cross it on dry land.

The Lord did this so that all the people in this country would know that he is very powerful. Then they will always be afraid of the Lord your God.”

So the Lord dried up the Jordan River until the Israelites finished crossing it. The kings of the Amorites living west of the Jordan River and the Canaanites living by the Mediterranean Sea heard about this and became very frightened. After that they were not brave enough to stand and fight against the Israelites.

The Israelites Are Circumcised

At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “Make knives from flint rocks and circumcise the men of Israel.”

So Joshua made knives from flint rocks and circumcised the men of Israel at Gibeath Haaraloth.

This is why Joshua circumcised the men: After the Israelites left Egypt, all the men who were able to serve in the army were circumcised. While in the desert, many of the fighting men did not listen to the Lord. So the Lord promised that they would not see the “land where much food grows.” He promised our ancestors to give us that land, but because of those men, he forced the people to wander in the desert for 40 years. That way all those fighting men would die. So all the fighting men died, and their sons took their place. But none of the boys who were born in the desert on the trip from Egypt had been circumcised. So Joshua circumcised them.

4:16 Box that holds the Agreement Literally, “Testimony.” See “AGREEMENT” in the Word List.

5:3 Gibeath Haaraloth This name means “Circumcision Hill.”
Joshua finished circumcising all the men. The people camped at that place until all the men were healed.

First Passover in Canaan

Then the Lord said to Joshua, “You were slaves in Egypt, and this made you ashamed. But today I have taken away that shame.” So Joshua named that place Gilgal. And that place is still named Gilgal today.

The Israelites celebrated Passover while they were camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho. This was on the evening of the 14th day of the month. The day after Passover, the people ate food that grew in that land. They ate bread made without yeast and roasted grain.

The next morning, the manna from heaven stopped coming. This happened the first day after the people ate the food that grew in the land of Canaan. From that time on, the Israelites did not get the manna from heaven.

The Battle Against Jericho

So Joshua son of Nun called the priests together and said to them, “Carry the Holy Box of the LORD. Tell seven priests to carry the trumpets and march in front of it.”

Then Joshua ordered the people, “Now go! March around the city. The soldiers with weapons will march in front of the Holy Box of the LORD.”

After Joshua finished speaking to the people, the seven priests with the trumpets began marching before the Lord, blowing the trumpets as they marched. The priests carrying the Lord’s Holy Box followed them. The soldiers with weapons marched in front of the priests who were blowing the horns. And the rest of the men walked behind the Holy Box, marching and blowing their trumpets.

Joshua had told the people not to give a war cry. He said, “Don’t shout. Don’t say a word until the day I tell you. Then you will shout.”

So Joshua made the priests carry the Holy Box of the Lord around the city one time. Then they went back to the camp and spent the night there.

Early the next morning Joshua got up, and the priests carried the Lord’s Holy Box again. The seven priests with the trumpets marched in front of the Lord’s
Holy Box, blowing their trumpets. The soldiers with weapons marched in front of them. The rest of the people marched behind the LORD’s Holy Box. During the whole time they marched, the priests were blowing the trumpets. On the second day, they all marched around the city one time. And then they went back to the camp. They continued to do this every day for six days.

On the seventh day, they got up at dawn and marched around the city seven times. They marched in the same way they had marched on the days before, but on that day they marched around the city seven times. The seventh time they marched around the city, the priests blew their trumpets. Then Joshua gave the command: “Now, shout! The LORD is giving you this city! The city and everything is to be destroyed as an offering to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and everyone in her house will be left alive. These people must not be killed because she helped the two spies. Remember, we must destroy everything else. Don’t take anything. If you take anything and bring it into our camp, you yourselves will be destroyed, and you will cause trouble for the rest of our people. All the things made from silver, gold, bronze, and iron belong to the LORD. They must be put in the LORD’s treasury.”

So then the priests blew the trumpets. When the people heard the trumpets, they began shouting. The walls fell down, and the people ran up into the city. So the Israelites defeated that city.

On the seventh day, they got up at dawn and marched around the city seven times. They marched in the same way they had marched on the days before, but on that day they marched around the city seven times. The seventh time they marched around the city, the priests blew their trumpets. Then Joshua gave the command: “Now, shout! The LORD is giving you this city! The city and everything is to be destroyed as an offering to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and everyone in her house will be left alive. These people must not be killed because she helped the two spies. Remember, we must destroy everything else. Don’t take anything. If you take anything and bring it into our camp, you yourselves will be destroyed, and you will cause trouble for the rest of our people. All the things made from silver, gold, bronze, and iron belong to the LORD. They must be put in the LORD’s treasury.”

So then the priests blew the trumpets. When the people heard the trumpets, they began shouting. The walls fell down, and the people ran up into the city. So the Israelites defeated that city. The people destroyed everything in the city. They destroyed everything that was living there. They killed the young and old men, the young and old women, and the cattle, sheep, and donkeys.

Joshua talked to the two spies. He said, “You made a promise to the prostitute. So go to her house and bring her out and all those who are with her.”

So the two men went into the house and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, brothers, all her family, and all those who were with her. They put all the people in a safe place outside the camp of Israel.

Then the Israelites burned the whole city and everything in it except for the things made from silver, gold, bronze, and iron. They put these things in the LORD’s treasury. Joshua saved Rahab the prostitute, her family, and all those who were with her. Joshua let them live because Rahab helped the spies Joshua had sent out to Jericho. Rahab still lives among the Israelites today.

At that time Joshua made this important promise. He said, “Whoever rebuilds Jericho will be in danger from the LORD. When he lays the foundation, he will lose his oldest son. When he sets up the gates, he will lose his youngest son.”

So the LORD was with Joshua, and Joshua became famous throughout the whole country.

Achan’s Sin

But the Israelites did not obey God. There was a man from the tribe of Judah named Achan son of Carmi, grandson of Zimri, great-grandson of Zerah. Achan kept some of the things that should have been destroyed. So the LORD became very angry with the Israelites.

After they defeated Jericho, Joshua sent some men to Ai. Ai was near Beth Aven, east of Bethel. Joshua told them, “Go to Ai and look for weaknesses in that area.” So the men went to spy on that land.

Later, the men came back to Joshua. They said, “Ai is a weak area. We will not need all of our people to defeat them. Send 2000 or 3000 men to fight there. There is no need to use the whole army. There are only a few men there to fight against us.”

So about 3000 men went to Ai, but the people of Ai killed about 36 men of Israel. And the Israelites ran away. The people of Ai chased them from the city.

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2:6-26 When he . . . son See 1 Kings 16:34.
7:2 Ai The name of this town means “the ruins.”
gates all the way to the quarries. The people of Ai beat them badly. When the people from Israel saw this, they became very frightened and lost their courage. When Joshua heard about this, he tore his clothes to show his sadness. He bowed down to the ground before the Holy Box and stayed there until evening. The leaders of Israel did the same thing. They also threw dirt on their heads to show their sadness.

Joshua said, “Lord God, you brought our people across the Jordan River. Why did you bring us this far and then allow the Amorites to destroy us? We should have been satisfied and stayed on the other side of the Jordan River. I promise by my life, Lord! There is nothing I can say now. Israel has surrendered to the enemy. The Canaanites and all the other people in this country will hear about what happened. Then they will attack us and kill all of us! Then what will you do to protect your great name?”

The Lord said to Joshua, “Why are you down there with your face on the ground? Stand up! The Israelites sinned against me. They have broken the agreement that I commanded them to obey. They took some of the things that I commanded them to destroy. They have stolen from me. They have lied. They have taken those things for themselves. That is why the army of Israel turned and ran away from the fight. They did that because they have done wrong. They should be destroyed. I will not continue to help you or be with you unless you destroy everything I commanded you to destroy.

Now go and make the people pure. Tell them, ‘Make yourselves pure. Prepare for tomorrow. The Lord, the God of Israel, says that some people are keeping things that he commanded to be destroyed. You will never be able to defeat your enemies until you throw away those things.’

Tomorrow morning you must all stand before the Lord. All the tribes will stand before the Lord, and he will choose one tribe. Only that tribe will stand before him. Then the Lord will choose one family group from that tribe. Only that family group must stand before him. Then he will look at each family in that family group, and the Lord will choose one family. Then he will look at each man in that family. The man who is keeping those things that we should have destroyed will be caught. Then he will be destroyed by fire, and everything that he owns will be destroyed with him. He broke the agreement with the Lord. He has done a very bad thing to the Israelites!”

Early the next morning, Joshua led out all the Israelites. Each tribe came forward to stand before the Lord, and he chose the tribe of Judah. So then all the family groups of Judah stood before the Lord, and he chose the Zerah family group. Then all the families of the Zerah group stood before the Lord, and he chose the family of Zimri. Then Joshua told all the men in that family to come before the Lord. He chose Achan the son of Carmi. (Carmi was the son of Zimri. And Zimri was the son of Zerah.)

Then Joshua said to Achan, “Son, you must honor the Lord, the God of Israel. Praise him and confess your sins to him. Tell me what you did, and don’t try to hide anything from me.”

Achan answered, “It is true! I sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I did: In Jericho, I saw a beautiful coat from Babylonia, about 5 pounds of silver, and about a pound of gold. I wanted these things for myself, so I took them. You will find them buried in the ground under my tent. The silver is under the coat.”

So Joshua sent some men to the tent. They ran to the tent and found the things hidden there. The silver was under the coat. The men brought the things out of the tent and took them to Joshua and

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*a 7:4–5 quarries Places where people cut stones from the solid rock.

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all the Israelites. They threw them on the ground before the Lord.

24 Then Joshua and all the people led Achan son of Zerah to the Valley of Achor. They also took the silver, the coat, the gold, Achan’s sons and daughters, his cattle, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and everything he owned. They took all these things to the Valley of Achor with Achan. 25 Then Joshua said, “You caused much trouble for us, but now the Lord will bring trouble to you.” Then all the people threw stones at Achan and his family until they died. Then the people burned them and everything he owned. 26 After they burned Achan, they put many rocks over his body. The rocks are still there today. That is why it is called the Valley of Achor. After this the Lord was not angry with the people.

**Ai Destroyed**

8 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Don’t be afraid; don’t give up. Lead all your fighting men to Ai. I will help you defeat the king of Ai. I am giving you his people, his city, and his land. 2 You will do to Ai and its king the same thing you did to Jericho and its king. Only this time you can take all the wealth and animals and keep it for yourselves. You will share the wealth with your people. Now, tell some of your soldiers to hide behind the city.”

3 So Joshua led his whole army toward Ai. Then Joshua chose 30,000 of his best fighting men and sent them out at night. 4 Joshua gave them this command: “Listen carefully to what I tell you. You must hide in the area behind the city. Wait for the time to attack. Don’t go far from the city. Continue to watch and be ready. I will lead the men with me; we will march toward the city. The men in the city will come out to fight against us. We will turn and run away from them as we did before. 6 These men will chase us away from the city, so we will run away. They will think that we are running away from them as we did before. 7 Then you should come out of your hiding place and take control of the city. The Lord your God will give you the power to win.

8 “You must do what the Lord says. Watch me and I will give you the command to attack the city. When you have taken control of the city, burn it.” 9 Then Joshua sent them to their hiding place and waited. They went to a place west of Ai, between Bethel and Ai. But Joshua stayed the night with his people.

10 Early the next morning Joshua gathered the men together. Then Joshua and the leaders of Israel led the men to Ai. 11 All the soldiers who were with Joshua marched to Ai. They stopped in front of the city. The army made its camp north of the city. There was a valley between the army and Ai.

12 Then Joshua chose about 5000 men. He sent these men to hide in the area west of the city, between Bethel and Ai. 13 So Joshua had prepared his men for the fight. The main camp was north of the city. The other men were hiding to the west. That night Joshua went down into the valley.

14 Later, the king of Ai saw the army of Israel. The king and his people hurried out to fight the army of Israel. The king of Ai went out the east side of the city toward the Jordan Valley, so he did not see the soldiers hiding behind the city.

15 Joshua and all the men of Israel let the army of Ai push them back. Joshua and his men began running east toward the desert. 16 The people in the city began to shout and started to chase them. All the people left the city. 17 All the men of Ai and Bethel chased the army of Israel. The city was left open—no one stayed to protect the city.

18 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Hold your spear toward the city of Ai, because I will give you that city.” So Joshua held his spear toward the city of Ai. 19 When the Israelites who were hiding saw this, they quickly came out from their hiding place and hurried toward the city. They entered the city and took control of it. Then the soldiers started fires to burn the city.

20 The men from Ai looked back and
saw their city burning. When they saw the smoke rising into the sky, they lost their strength and courage. They stopped chasing the men of Israel. The Israelites stopped running away. They turned and went to fight the men from Ai. There was no safe place for the men from Ai to run to. Then the men who were hiding came out of the city to help with the fight. The army of Israel was on both sides of the men of Ai—the men of Ai were trapped. Israel defeated them. They fought until none of the men from Ai were left alive—none of the enemy escaped. But the king of Ai was left alive. Joshua’s men brought him to Joshua.

A Review of the Fighting

During the fighting, the army of Israel chased the men from Ai into the fields and into the desert. So the army of Israel finished killing all the men from Ai in the fields and in the desert. Then the Israelites went back to Ai and killed all the people who were still alive in the city. All the people of Ai died that day; there were 12,000 men and women. Joshua had held his spear toward Ai as a sign to his people to destroy the city. And he did not stop until all the people of Ai were destroyed. The Israelites kept the animals and other things from the city for themselves. This is what the LORD said they could do when he gave Joshua the commands.

Then Joshua burned the city of Ai. That city became an empty pile of rocks. It is still like that today. Joshua hanged the king of Ai on a tree and left him hanging there until evening. At sunset Joshua told his men to take the king’s body down from the tree. They threw his body down at the city gate. Then they covered the body with many rocks. That pile of rocks is still there today.

Reading the Blessings and Curses

Then Joshua built an altar for the LORD, the God of Israel. He built the altar on Mount Ebal. The LORD’s servant Moses told the Israelites how to build altars. So Joshua built the altar the way it was explained in the Book of the Law of Moses. The altar was made from stones that were not cut. No tool had ever been used on those stones. They offered burnt offerings to the LORD on that altar. They also gave fellowship offerings.

There Joshua copied onto the stones the law Moses had written down. This was for all the people of Israel to see. The elders, officers, judges, and all the Israelites were standing around the Box of the LORD’s Agreement. They were standing in front of the priests, the Levites who carried the Holy Box. The Israelites and the other people with them were all standing there. Half of the people stood in front of Mount Ebal and the other half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim. The LORD’s servant Moses had told the people to do this. He told them to do this to be blessed.

Then Joshua read all the words from the law. He read the blessings and the curses. He read everything the way it was written in the Book of the Law. All the Israelites were gathered together there. All the women and children and all the foreigners who lived with the Israelites were there. And Joshua read every command that Moses had given.

The Gibeonites Trick Joshua

All the kings west of the Jordan River heard about these things. They were the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. They lived in the hill country and in the plains. They also lived along the seacoast of the Mediterranean Sea as far as Lebanon. All these kings came together and made plans to fight against Joshua and the Israelites.

The people from the city of Gibeon

9

8:31 Law Or “Teachings.” Also in verses 32, 34.
heard about the way Joshua had defeated Jericho and Ai. So they decided to try to trick the Israelites. This was their plan: They gathered together old wineskins that were cracked and broken. They put these old wineskins on the backs of their animals. They put old pieces of cloth on their animals to look as if they had traveled from far away. The men put old sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. They found some old bread that was dry and moldy. Then they went to the camp of the Israelites. This camp was near Gilgal.

The men went to Joshua and said to him, “We have traveled from a faraway country. We want to make a peace agreement with you.”

The men of Israel said to these Hivite men, “Maybe you are trying to trick us. Maybe you live near us. We cannot make a peace agreement with you until we know where you are from.”

The Hivite men said to Joshua, “We are your servants.” But Joshua asked, “Who are you? Where do you come from?”

The men answered, “We are your servants. We have come from a faraway country. We came because we heard of the great power of the Lord your God. We heard about what he has done and about everything he did in Egypt. And we heard that he defeated the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan River. This was King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan in the land of Ashtaroth. So our elders and our people said to us, ‘Take enough food for your journey. Go and meet with the Israelites.’ Tell them, ‘We are your servants. Make a peace agreement with us.’

“Look at our bread. When we left home, it was warm and fresh. But now you can see that it is dry and old. Look at our wineskins. When we left home, they were new and filled with wine. But now you can see that they are cracked and old. Look at our clothes and sandals. You can see that the long journey has almost destroyed the things we wear.”

The men of Israel wanted to know if these men were telling the truth. So they tasted the bread—but they did not ask the Lord what they should do. Joshua agreed to make peace with them. He agreed to let them live. The leaders of Israel agreed with this promise of Joshua.

Three days later the Israelites learned that these men lived very near their camp. So the Israelites went to the place where they lived. On the third day the Israelites came to the cities of Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim. But the army of Israel did not try to fight against those cities. They had made a peace agreement with them. They had made a promise to them before the Lord, the God of Israel.

All the people complained against the leaders who made the agreement. But the leaders answered, “We have given our promise. We promised before the Lord, the God of Israel. We cannot fight against them now. This is what we must do. We must let them live. We cannot hurt them or God will be angry with us because we broke the promise we made to them. So let them live, but they will be our servants. They will cut wood for us and carry water for all our people.” So the leaders did not break their promise of peace to them.

Joshua called the Gibeonites together. He said, “Why did you lie to us? Your land was near our camp. But you told us you were from a faraway country. Now, your people will have many troubles. All of your people will be slaves—they will have to cut wood and carry water for the house of God.”

The Gibeonites answered, “We lied to you because we were afraid you would kill us. We heard that God commanded his servant Moses to give you all this land. And God told you to kill all the people who lived in this land. That is why we lied to you. Now we are your servants. You can do whatever you think is right.”

So the Gibeonites became slaves, but

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Joshua let them live. He did not allow the Israelites to kill them. He made them slaves of the Israelites. They cut wood and carried water for the Israelites and for the altar of the LORD—wherever the LORD chose it to be. They are still slaves today.

The Day the Sun Stood Still

10 At this time Adoni Zedek was the king of Jerusalem. He heard that Joshua had defeated Ai and completely destroyed it. The king learned that Joshua had done the same thing to Jericho and its king. He also learned that the Gibeonites had made a peace agreement with Israel and that they lived very near Jerusalem.

So Adoni Zedek and his people were very frightened. Gibeon was not a small town like Ai. It was a very big city—as big as any royal city. And all the men in that city were good fighters, so the king was afraid.

So Adoni Zedek of Jerusalem talked with King Hoham of Hebron. He also talked with King Piram of Jarmuth, King Japhia of Lachish, and King Debir of Eglon. The king of Jerusalem begged these men, “Come with me and help me attack Gibeon. Gibeon has made a peace agreement with Joshua and the Israelites.”

5 So these five Amorite kings joined their armies together. (The five kings were the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.) Their armies went to Gibeon, surrounded the city, and began fighting against it.

6 The people in the city of Gibeon sent a message to Joshua at his camp at Gilgal: “We are your servants! Don’t leave us alone. Come and help us! Hurry! Save us! All the Amorite kings from the hill country have brought their armies together to fight against us.”

7 So Joshua marched out of Gilgal with his whole army. His best fighting men were with him. The LORD said to Joshua, “Don’t be afraid of those armies. I will allow you to defeat them. None of them will be able to defeat you.”

9 Joshua and his army marched all night to Gibeon, so it was a complete surprise when he attacked them.

10 The LORD caused those armies to be very confused when Israel attacked. So Israel defeated them and won a great victory. Israel chased the enemy from Gibeon along the road going up to Beth Horon. The army of Israel killed men all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. Then they chased the enemy down the road from Beth Horon to Azekah. While they were chasing the enemy, the LORD caused large hailstones to fall from the sky. Many of the enemy were killed by these large hailstones. More men were killed by the hailstones than by the swords of the soldiers of Israel.

12 On that day the LORD gave Israel the victory against the Amorites. Joshua stood before all the Israelites and said to the LORD:

“Sun, stop over Gibeon. Moon, stand still over the Valley of Aijalon.”

13 So the sun did not move, and the moon stopped until the people defeated their enemies. This story is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky. It did not move for a full day. “That had never happened before, and it has never happened again. That was the day the LORD obeyed a man. The LORD really was fighting for Israel!

15 After this, Joshua and his army went back to the camp at Gilgal. But during the fight, the five kings ran away. They hid in a cave near Makkedah, but someone found them hiding in that cave. Joshua learned about this. He said, “Cover the entrance to the cave with large rocks. Put some men there to guard the cave. But don’t stay there yourselves. Continue chasing the enemy and attacking them from behind. Don’t let the enemy get back to their cities. The LORD your God has given you the victory over them.”

20 So Joshua and the Israelites killed the
enemy. But some of them were able to go to their cities that had tall walls around them and hide. These men were not killed. 21After the fighting, Joshua’s men came back to him at Makkedah. Not one of the people in that country was brave enough to say anything against the Israelites.

22Joshua said, “Move the rocks that are covering the entrance to the cave. Bring the five kings to me.” 23So Joshua’s men brought the five kings out of the cave—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. 24When they brought the five kings to Joshua, he called all his men to come to that place. He said to the officers of his army, “Come here! Put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So the officers of Joshua’s army came close and put their feet on the necks of the kings.

25Then Joshua said to his men, “Be strong and brave! Don’t be afraid. I will show you what the Lord will do to all the enemies you will fight in the future.” 26Then Joshua killed the five kings and hanged their bodies on five trees. He left them hanging in the trees until evening.

27At sunset Joshua told his men to take the bodies down from the trees. So they threw the bodies into the cave where the kings had been hiding and covered the entrance of the cave with large rocks. Their bodies are still in that cave today.

28That day Joshua defeated Makkedah. He killed the king and the people in that city. No one was left alive. Joshua did the same thing to the king of Makkedah that he had done to the king of Jericho.

Taking the Southern Cities
29Then Joshua and all the Israelites traveled from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked that city. 30The Lord allowed the Israelites to defeat that city and its king. They killed everyone in the city. No one was left alive. And they did the same thing to that king as they had done to the king of Jericho.

31Then Joshua and all the Israelites left Libnah and went to Lachish. Joshua and his army camped around that city and attacked it. 32The Lord allowed them to defeat the city of Lachish. They defeated it on the second day. The Israelites killed everyone in the city, just as they had done in Libnah. 33King Horam of Gezer came to help Lachish, but Joshua also defeated him and his army. No one was left alive.

34Then Joshua and all the Israelites traveled from Lachish to Eglon. They camped around Eglon and attacked it. 35That day they captured the city and killed everyone in the city. This was the same thing they had done to Lachish.

36Then Joshua and all the Israelites traveled from Eglon to Hebron. They camped around Hebron and attacked it. 37They captured the city and all the small towns near Hebron. The Israelites killed everyone in the city, just as they did to Eglon. No one was left alive there. They destroyed the city and killed all the people in it as an offering to the Lord.

38Then Joshua and all the Israelites went back to Debir and attacked it. 39They captured the city, its king, and all the towns near Debir. They killed everyone in the city, just as they had done to Libnah and its king. No one was left alive there. They destroyed the city and killed all the people in it as an offering to the Lord.

40Then Joshua defeated all the kings of the cities of the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills, and the eastern foothills. The Lord, the God of Israel, had told Joshua to kill all the people, so Joshua did not leave anyone alive in those places.

41Joshua captured all the cities from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza. He captured all the cities from Goshen to Gibeon.

42Joshua captured all these cities and their kings in one series of battles. He did this because the Lord, the God of Israel, was fighting for Israel. 43Then Joshua and all the Israelites returned to their camp at Gilgal.

Defeating the Northern Cities
111King Jabin of Hazor heard about everything that had happened. So he decided to call together the armies of

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several kings. He sent a message to King Jobab of Madon to the king of Shimron, to the king of Acrsaph, and to the kings of the north in the hill country and in the desert. Jabin sent the message to the kings of the Kinnereth, the Negev, and the western foothills. He also sent the message to the king of Naphoth Dor in the west. Jabin sent the message to the kings of the Canaanites in the east and in the west. He sent the message to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, and Jebusites living in the hill country. He also sent the message to the Hivites living below Mount Hermon near Mizpah. So the armies of all these kings came together. There were many fighting men and many horses and chariots. It was a very large army—it looked as if there were as many men as grains of sand on the seashore.

All these kings met together at the small river of Merom. They joined their armies together into one camp and made plans for the battle against Israel.

Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Don’t be afraid of that army, because I will allow you to defeat them. By this time tomorrow, you will have killed them all. You will cut the legs of the horses and burn all their chariots.”

So Joshua and his whole army surprised the enemy and attacked them at the river of Merom. The Lord allowed Israel to defeat them. The army of Israel defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, Misrephoth Maim, and the Valley of Mizpah in the east. The army of Israel fought until none of the enemy was left alive. Joshua did what the Lord said to do; he cut the legs of their horses and burned their chariots.

Then Joshua went back and captured the city of Hazor and killed its king. (Hazor was the leader of all the kingdoms that fought against Israel.) The army of Israel killed everyone in that city and completely destroyed all the people. There was nothing left alive. Then they burned the city.

Joshua captured all these cities and killed all their kings. He completely destroyed everything in these cities—just as Moses, the Lord’s servant, had commanded. But the army of Israel did not burn any cities that were built on hills. The only city built on a hill that they burned was Hazor. This is the city Joshua burned. The Israelites kept for themselves all the things and all the animals they found in the cities. But they killed all the people there. They left no one alive. Long ago the Lord commanded his servant Moses to do this. Then Moses commanded Joshua to do this. So Joshua obeyed God. He did everything that the Lord had commanded Moses.

So Joshua defeated all the people in that whole area. He had control over the hill country, the Negev, all the area of Goshen, the western foothills, the Jordan Valley, and the mountains of Israel and all the hills near them. Joshua had control of all the land from Mount Halak near Seir to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all the kings in that land and killed them. Joshua fought against them for many years. Only one city in all the land made a peace agreement with Israel. That was the Hivite city of Gibeon. All the other cities were defeated in war. The Lord made those people feel brave enough to fight against Israel. This was so that Israel could destroy them completely without mercy just as the Lord had commanded Moses to do.

The Anakites lived in the hill country in the area of Hebron, Debir, Anab, and Judah. Joshua fought them and completely destroyed all the people and their towns. There were no Anakites left living in the land of Israel. The only Anakites who were left alive were in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. Joshua took control of the whole land of Israel as the Lord had told Moses long ago. The Lord gave that land to Israel as he promised. And Joshua divided the land among the tribes of Israel. Finally, the fighting ended and there was peace in the land.

\[d \text{ 11:2 Kinnereth The area near the Sea of Galilee.}\]
Kings Defeated by Israel

1 The Israelites had taken control of the land east of the Jordan River. They had all the land from Arnon Ravine to Mount Hermon and all the land along the eastern side of the Jordan Valley. These are all the kings the Israelites defeated to take this land:

2 They defeated King Sihon of the Amorites living in the city of Heshbon. He ruled the land from Aroer at the Arnon Ravine to the Jabbok River. His land started in the center of that ravine. This was their border with the Ammonites. Sihon ruled over half of the land of Gilead. 3 He also ruled over the eastern side of the Jordan Valley from Lake Galilee to the Dead Sea (Salt Sea). And he ruled from Beth Jeshimoth to the south to the hills of Pisgah.

4 They also defeated King Og of Bashan. Og was from the Rephaites. He ruled the land in Ashtaroth and Edrei. 5 Og ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, and all the area of Bashan. His land ended where the people of Geshur and Maacah lived. Og also ruled half of the land of Gilead. This land ended at the land of King Sihon of Heshbon.

6 The Lord's servant Moses and the Israelites defeated all these kings. And Moses gave that land to the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. Moses gave them this land to be their own.

7 Joshua and the Israelites defeated the kings of the land west of the Jordan River. This land was in the area west of Baal Gad in the Lebanon Valley as far as Mount Halak that rises toward Seir. Joshua divided it among the tribes. 8 This included the hill country, the western foothills, the Jordan Valley, the eastern mountains, the desert, and the Negev. This was where the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites had lived. These are the kings the Israelites defeated:

9 the king of Jericho, the king of Ai near Bethel, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron,
10 the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, the king of Gezer, the king of Debir, the king of Geder, the king of Hormah, the king of Arad, the king of Libnah, the king of Adullam, the king of Makkedah, the king of Bethel, the king of Tappuah, the king of Heftpner, the king of Aphek, the king of Sharon, the king of Madon, the king of Hazor, the king of Shimron Meron, the king of Aschaph, the king of Taanach, the king of Megiddo, the king of Kedesh, the king of Jokneam in Carmel, the king of Dor at Mount Dor, the king of Goyim in Gilgal, and the king of Tirzah.

The total number of kings was 31.

Land Not Yet Taken

13 When Joshua was very old, the Lord said to him, "Joshua you have grown old, but there is still much land for you to take control of. 2 You have not yet taken the land of Geshur or the land of the Philistines. 3 You have not yet taken the area from the Shihor River at Egypt to the border of Ekron and the land further north. That land still belongs to the Canaanites. You must still defeat the five Philistine leaders at Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. You must also defeat the Avvites who live south of the Canaanite land. And you must still go north to take Mearah, which the Sidonians control. From there you must still go as far as Aphek on the Amorite border. 5 You have not yet defeated the area of the Gebalites.

13:3 Shihor River Probably one of the eastern branches of the Nile River.
And also there is the area of Lebanon east of Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

6“The people of Sidon are living in the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim. But I will force them out for the Israelites. Be sure to remember this land when you divide the land among the Israelites. Do this as I told you. 7Now divide the land among the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh.”

Dividing the Land

8The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the other half of the tribe of Manasseh had already received all their land. The LORD’s servant, Moses, gave them the land east of the Jordan River. 9Their land started at Aroer by the Arnon Ravine and continued to the town in the middle of the ravine. And it included the whole plain from Medeba to Dibon. 10All the towns that King Sihon of the Amorites ruled were in that land. He ruled in the city of Heshbon. The land continued to the area where the Ammonites lived. 11Also the town of Gilead was in that land. And the area where the people of Geshur and Maacah lived was in that land. All of Mount Hermon and all of Bashan as far as Salekah was in that land. 12All the kingdom of King Og was in that land. King Og ruled in Bashan. In the past he ruled in Ashtaroth and Edrei. Og was from the Rephaites. In the past Moses had defeated those people and had taken their land. 13The Israelites did not force out the people of Geshur and Maacah. They still live among the Israelites today.

14The tribe of Levi is the only tribe that did not get any land. Instead, the Levites were given all the animals offered by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel. That is what the Lord promised them.

15Moses had given each family group from the tribe of Reuben some land. This is the land they received: 16It was the land from Aroer near the Arnon Ravine to the town of Medeba. This included the whole plain and the town in the middle of the ravine. 17The land continued to Heshbon. It included all the towns on the plain. Those towns were Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, 18Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, 19Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley, 20Beth Peor, the hills of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth. 21So that land included all the towns on the plain and all the area that King Sihon of the Amorites had ruled. He ruled in the town of Heshbon, but Moses had defeated him and the leaders of the Midianites. Those leaders were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba. (They all fought together with Sihon.) All of them lived in that country. 22The Israelites defeated Balaam son of Beor. (Balaam tried to use magic to tell the future.) The Israelites killed many people during the fighting. 23The land that was given to Reuben stopped at the shore of the Jordan River. So the land that was given to the family groups of Reuben included all these towns and their fields that were listed.

24This is the land Moses gave to the tribe of Gad. He gave this land to each tribe:

25He gave them the land of Jazer, all the towns of Gilead, and half of the land of the Ammonites that went as far as Aroer near Rabbah. 26Their land included the area from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Bethonim, from Mahanaim to the land of Debir, 27the valley of Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth and Zaphon, including the rest of the kingdom of King Sihon of Heshbon, along the Jordan all the way up to Lake Galilee on the eastern side of the river. 28All this land is the land Moses gave the family groups of Gad. That land included all the towns that were listed. Moses gave that land to each family group.

29This is the land Moses gave to half the tribe of Manasseh. Half of all the families in the tribe of Manasseh got this land:

30The land started at Mahanaim. The land included all of Bashan, all the land ruled by King Og of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair in Bashan. (In all, there were 60 cities.) 31The land also included half of Gilead, Ashtaroth, and Edrei. (Gilead,
Ashtaroth, and Edrei were the cities where King Og had lived.) All this land was given to the family of Makir son of Manasseh. Half of all his sons got this land.

32Moses gave all this land to these tribes. He did this while the people were camped on the plains of Moab. This was across the Jordan River, east of Jericho.

33Moses did not give any land to the tribe of Levi. The LORD, God of Israel, promised that he himself would be the gift for the tribe of Levi.

14 Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of all the tribes of Israel decided what land to give to the people. The LORD had commanded Moses long ago how he wanted the people to choose their land. The people of the nine and a half tribes threw lots to decide which land they would get. Moses had already given the two and a half tribes their land east of the Jordan River. The tribe of Levi did not receive any land like the other tribes. The descendants of Joseph had divided into two tribes—Manasseh and Ephraim. Each of these tribes received some land; the tribe of Levi was not given any land. They were given only some towns scattered throughout the other tribes and some fields around those towns for their animals.

5 The LORD had told Moses how to divide the land among the tribes of Israel. The Israelites divided the land the way the Lord had commanded.

Caleb Gets His Land

6 One day some people from the tribe of Judah went to Joshua at Gilgal. One of them was Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite. Caleb said to Joshua, “You remember what the LORD said at Kadesh Barnea. The Lord was speaking to Moses, his servant. The Lord was talking about you and me. Moses, the Lord’s servant, sent me to look at the land where we were going. I was 40 years old at that time. When I came back, I told Moses what I thought about the land.”

7 The other men who went with me told the people things that made them afraid. But I really believed that the LORD would allow us to take that land. So that day Moses made a promise to me. He said, ‘The land where you went will become your land. Your children will own that land forever. I will give you that land because you really believed in the LORD, my God.’

10 “Now the LORD has kept me alive for 45 more years—as he said he would. During that time we all wandered in the desert. Now, here I am, 85 years old. I am still as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. I am as ready to fight as I was then. So give me the hill country that the LORD promised me that day long ago. At that time you heard that the strong Anakites lived there and the cities were very big and well protected. But now, maybe the LORD will be with me, and I will take that land just as the LORD said.”

13 Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh. Joshua gave him the city of Hebron as his own. And that city still belongs to the family of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite. That land still belongs to his people because he trusted and obeyed the LORD, God of Israel. In the past that city was called Kiriath Arba. It was named for the greatest man among the Anakites—a man named Arba.

After this there was peace in the land.

Land for Judah

15 The land that was given to Judah was divided among the families of that tribe. That land went to the border of Edom and south all the way to the desert of Zin at the edge of Teman. The southern border of Judah’s land started at the south end of the Dead Sea. The border went south to Scorpion Pass and continued on to Zin. Then the border continued south to Kadesh Barnea. It continued past Hezron to Addar. From Addar the border turned and continued to Karka. The border continued to Azmon, the brook of Egypt, and then to the Mediterranean Sea. All that land was on their southern border.
Their eastern border was the shore of the Dead Sea to the area where the Jordan River flowed into the sea.

Their northern border started at the area where the Jordan River flowed into the Dead Sea. Then the northern border went to Beth Hoglah and continued north of Beth Arabah. The border continued to the stone of Bohan. (Bohan was the son of Reuben.) Then the northern border went through the Valley of Achor to Debir. There the border turned to the north and went to Gilgal. Gilgal is across from the road that goes through the mountain of Adummim. It is on the south side of the brook. The border continued along the waters of En Shemesh. The border stopped at En Rogel. Then the border went through the Valley of Ben Hinnom beside the southern side of the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem). There the border went to the top of the hill on the west side of Hinnom Valley. This was at the northern end of Rephaim Valley. From there the border went to the spring of water of Nephtoah. Then the border went to the cities near Mount Ephron. There the border turned and went to Baalah. (Baalah is also called Kiriath Jearim.) At Baalah the border turned west and went to the hill country of Seir. The border continued along the north side of Mount Jearim (Kesalon) and continued down to Beth Shemesh. From there the border went past Timnah. Then the border went to the hill north of Ekron. From there the border turned to Shikkeron and went past Mount Baalah. The border continued on to Jabneel and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. The Mediterranean Sea was the western border. So the land of Judah was inside these four borders. The families of Judah lived in this area.

The Lord had commanded Joshua to give Caleb son of Jephunneh part of the land in Judah. So Joshua gave Caleb the land God had commanded. Joshua gave him the town of Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron. (Arba was the father of Anak.) Caleb forced the three Anakite families living in Hebron to leave there. Those families were Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai. They were from the family of Anak. Then Caleb fought against the people living in Debir. (In the past, Debir was also called Kiriath Sepher.) Caleb said, “I will give my daughter in marriage to the man who attacks and conquers Kiriath Sepher.”

Othniel was the son of Caleb’s brother Kenaz. Othniel defeated that city, so Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to Othniel to be his wife. Acsah went to live with Othniel. Othniel told Acsah to ask her father Caleb for some more land. Acsah went to her father. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, “What do you want?” Acsah answered, “Give me a blessing. You gave me dry desert land in the Negev. Please give me some land with water on it.” So Caleb gave her what she wanted. He gave her the upper and lower pools of water in that land.

The tribe of Judah got the land that God promised them. Each family group got part of the land.

The tribe of Judah got all the towns in the southern part of the Negev. These towns were near the border of Edom. Here is a list of the towns:

Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, Hazor Hadattah, Keroith Hezron (Hazor), Amam, Shema, Moladah, Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah, Baalah, Jem, Ezem, Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon. In all, there were 29 towns and all their fields.

The tribe of Judah also got these towns in the western foothills:

Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, Shaaraim, Adithaim, and Gederah

8 Or “Acsah told Othniel.”
9 Or “Please welcome me” or “Give me a stream of water.”
The tribe of Judah was also given these towns:

- Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad,
- Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel,
- Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon,
- Cabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish,
- Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah. In all, there were 16 towns and all the fields around them.

The people of Judah also got these towns:

- Libnah, Ether, Ashan, Iphtah,
- Ashnah, Nezib, Keilah, Aczib, and Mareshah. In all, there were nine towns and all the fields around them.

The people of Judah also got the town of Ekron and all the small towns and fields near it. They also got the area west of Ekron and all the fields and towns near Ashdod. All the area around Ashdod and the small towns there were part of the land of Judah. The people of Judah also got the area around Gaza and the fields and towns that were near it. Their land continued to the River of Egypt. And their land continued along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

The people of Judah were also given these towns in the desert:

- Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah,
- Nibshan, Salt City, and En Gedi. In all, there were six towns and all the fields around them.

The army of Judah was not able to force out the Jebusites living in Jerusalem. So today there are still Jebusites living among the people of Judah in Jerusalem.

**Land for Ephraim and Manasseh**

This is the land that the family of Joseph received. This land started at the Jordan River near Jericho and continued to the waters of Jericho. (This was just east of Jericho.) The border went up from Jericho to the hill country of Bethel. Then the border continued from Bethel (Luz) to the Arkite border at Ataroth. Then the border went west to the border of the Japhletites. The border continued to Lower Beth Horon. Then the border went to Gezer and continued to the Mediterranean Sea.

So the people of Manasseh and Ephraim got their land. (Manasseh and Ephraim were sons of Joseph.)

This is the land that was given to the people of Ephraim: Their eastern border started at Ataroth Addar near Upper Beth Horon. And the western border started at Micmethath. The border turned to the east to Taanath Shiloh and continued east to Janoah. Then it went from Janoah down to Ataroth and to Naarah. The border continued until it touched Jericho and ended at the Jordan River. The border went
from Tappuah west to Kanah Ravine and ended at the sea. This is all the land that was given to the Ephraimites. Each family in that tribe got a part of this land. Many of the border towns of Ephraim were actually in Manasseh’s borders, but the Ephraimites got the towns and the fields around them. But the Ephraimites were not able to force the Canaanites to leave the town of Gezer. So the Canaanites still live among the Ephraimites today, although they did become slaves of the Ephraimites. Then land was given to the tribe of Manasseh. Manasseh was Joseph’s first son. Manasseh’s first son was Makir, the father of Gilead. Makir was a great soldier, so the areas of Gilead and Bashan were given to his family. Land was also given to the other families in the tribe of Manasseh. These families were Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hepher, and Shemida. All these men were the other sons of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. The families of these men got their share of the land. Zelophehad was the son of Hepher. Hepher was the son of Gilead. Gilead was the son of Makir, and Makir was the son of Manasseh. Zelophehad did not have any sons, but he had five daughters. The daughters were named Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. The daughters went to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and all the leaders. The daughters said, “The Lord told Moses to give us land the same as our male relatives.” So Eleazar obeyed the Lord and gave the daughters some land, just like their uncles. So the tribe of Manasseh had ten areas of land west of the Jordan River and two more areas of land, Gilead and Bashan, on the other side of the Jordan River. So these women from the tribe of Manasseh got land the same as the men. The land of Gilead was given to the rest of the families of Manasseh. The lands of Manasseh were in the area between Asher and Micmethath. This is near Shechem. The border went south to the En Tappuah area. The land around Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but the town itself did not. The town of Tappuah was at the border of Manasseh’s land, and it belonged to the people of Ephraim. The border of Manasseh continued south to Kanah Ravine. This area belonged to the tribe of Manasseh, but the cities belonged to the people of Ephraim. The Mediterranean Sea was the western border. The border touched Asher’s land in the north and Issachar’s land in the east. The people of Manasseh had towns in the area of Issachar and Asher. Beth Shan, Ibleam, and the small towns around them also belonged to them. The people of Manasseh also lived in Dor, Endor, Taanach, Megiddo, and the small towns around these cities. They also lived in the three towns of Naphoth. The people of Manasseh were not able to defeat those cities. So the Canaanites continued to live there. But the Israelites grew strong. When this happened, they forced the Canaanites to work for them. But they did not force them to leave that land. The tribe of Joseph spoke to Joshua and said, “You gave us only one area of land, but we are many people. Why did you give us only one part of all the land that the Lord gave his people?” Joshua answered them, “If you have too many people, go up to the wooded area in the hill country and clear that land for a place to live. That land now belongs to the Perizzites and the Rephaites. But if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go take that land.” The people of Joseph said, “It is true that the hill country of Ephraim is not large enough for us. But the Canaanites living there have powerful weapons—they have iron chariots! And they control Jezreel Valley, Beth Shean, and all the small towns in that area.”
Then Joshua said to the people of Joseph, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, “You have many people and you are very strong, so you should get more than one share of the land. You will take these mountains. It is a forest, but you can cut down the trees and make it a good place to live. You can take it from the Cannanites and force them to leave. You can defeat them, even if they are strong and have iron chariots.”

Dividing the Rest of the Land

18 All the Israelites gathered together at Shiloh where they set up the Meeting Tent. The Israelites controlled that country. They had defeated all the enemies in that land. But at this time there were still seven tribes of Israel that had not yet received their land.

So Joshua said to the Israelites, “Why do you wait so long to take your land? The LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given this land to you. So each of your tribes should choose three men. I will send them out to study the land. They will describe that land, and then they will come back to me. They will divide the land into seven parts. The people of Judah will keep their land in the south. The people of Joseph will keep their land in the north. You should describe the land and divide it into seven parts. Bring the map to me, and we will throw lots to let the LORD our God decide how to divide the land among the tribes.

The Levites don’t get a share of the land. Their share is to serve the LORD as priests. Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have already received the land that was promised to them. They are on the east side of the Jordan River. Moses, the LORD’s servant, gave them that land.”

So the men who were chosen went to look at the land and write down what they saw. They listed all the cities and divided the land into seven parts. Then they went back to Joshua at Shiloh. Joshua threw lots for them in front of the LORD at Shiloh. In this way Joshua divided the land and gave each tribe its part of the land.

Land for Benjamin

11 The tribe of Benjamin was given the land that was between the areas of Judah and Joseph. Each family in the tribe of Benjamin got its land. This is the land that was chosen for Benjamin: The northern border started at the Jordan River. It went along the northern edge of Jericho. Then the border went west into the hill country. It continued until it was just east of Beth Aven. Then the border went south to Luz (Bethel), then down to Ataroth Addar. Ataroth Addar is on the hill south of Lower Beth Horon. At the hill south of Beth Horon, the border turned south and went along the west side of the hill. The border went to Kiriath Baal (also called Kiriath Jearim). This town belonged to the people of Judah. This was the western border.

15 The southern border started near Kiriath Jearim and went to the River of Nephtoah. Then the border went down to the bottom of the hill near the valley of Ben Hinnom, north of Rephaim Valley. It continued down Hinnom Valley just south of the Jebusite city. Then the border went on to En Rogel. There it turned north, went to En Shemesh, and then continued on to Geliloth. (Geliloth is near the Adummim Pass in the mountains.) The border went down to the Great Stone that was named for Bohan, the son of Reuben. It continued to the northern part of Beth Arabah. Then the border went down into the Jordan Valley. Then it went to the northern part of Beth Hoglah and ended at the north shore of the Dead Sea. This is where the Jordan River flows into that sea. That was the southern border.

20 The Jordan River was the eastern
border. So this was the land that was given to the tribe of Benjamin. These were the borders on all sides. 21 Each family got its land. These are their cities: Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, 22 Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, 23 Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, 24 Kephar Ammoni, Ophni, and Geba. There were twelve cities and the fields around them.

25 The tribe of Benjamin also got Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, 26 Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah, 27 Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, 28 Zelah, Haeleph, the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah, and Kiriath. There were 14 cities and the fields around them.

So these are the towns and fields around them that were given to Zebulun. Each family in Zebulun got its part of the land.

**Land for Simeon**

19 Then Joshua gave all the families in the tribe of Simeon their share of the land. The land they got was inside the area that belonged to Judah. 20 This is the land that was given to that tribe: Beersheba (also called Sheba), Moladah, 21 Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, 22 Eltoled, Bethul, Hormah, 23 Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah, 24 Beth Lebaoth, and Sharuhen. There were 13 towns and all the fields around them.

7 They also got the towns of Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan. There were four towns and all the fields around them. 8 They also got all the fields around the cities as far as Baalath Beer (Ramah in the Negev). So this was the area that was given to the tribe of Simeon. Each family got its land. 9 Simeon’s share of land was within the area that Judah got. The people of Judah had more land than they needed, so the people of Simeon got part of their land.

**Land for Issachar**

17 The fourth part of the land was given to the tribe of Issachar. Each family in that tribe got its part of the land. 18 This is the land that was given to that tribe: Jezeel, Kesulloth, Shunem, 19 Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, 20 Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez, 21 Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah, and Beth Pазzez.

22 The border of their land touched Tabor, Shahazumah, and Beth Shemesh. It ended at the Jordan River. In all, there were 16 towns and the fields around them. 23 These cities and towns were part of the land that was given to the tribe of Issachar. Each family got its part of the land.

**Land for Asher**

24 The fifth part of land was given to the tribe of Asher. Each family in that tribe got its part of the land. 25 This is the land that was given to that tribe: Helkath, Hali, Beten, Acshaph, 26 Allammelech, Amad, and Mishal.

The western border continued to Mount Carmel and Shihor Libnath. 27 Then the border turned to the east. It went to Beth Dagon. The border touched Zebulun and the Valley of Iphtah El. Then it went north of Beth Emek and Neiel. It passed north of Cabul. 28 Then the border went to Abdon, 29 Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah. It continued to the Greater Sidon

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\[\text{Joshua } 19:28 \text{ Abdon Or } “\text{Ebron}.”\]
area. Then the border went back south to Ramah. It continued to the strong city of Tyre. Then the border turned and went to Hosah. It ended at the sea, near Aczib, Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob.

In all there were 22 towns and the fields around them. These cities and the fields around them were given to the tribe of Asher. Each family in that tribe got its share of the land.

**Land for Naphtali**

The sixth part of land was given to the tribe of Naphtali. Each family in that tribe got its share of the land. The border of their land started at the large tree near Zaanannim. This is near Heleph. Then the border went through Adami Nekeb and Jabneel. It continued to Lakkum and ended at the Jordan River. Then the border went to the west through Aznoth Tabor. It ended at Hukkok. The southern border touched Zebulun and the western border touched Asher. The border went to Judah, at the Jordan River to the east. There were some very strong cities inside these borders. They were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Kinnereth, Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath, and Beth Shemesh. In all, there were 19 towns and all the fields around them.

These cities and the fields around them were given to the tribe of Naphtali. Each family in that tribe got its land.

**Land for Dan**

Then land was given to the tribe of Dan. Each family in that tribe got its land. This is the land that was given to them: Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, Shaalabbin, Ajalon, Ithlah, Elon, Timnah, Ekron, Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, Me Jarkon, Rakkon, and the area near Joppa.

But the people of Dan had trouble taking their land. There were strong enemies there and the people of Dan could not easily defeat them. So the people of Dan went to the northern part of Israel and fought against Laish. They defeated Laish and killed the people who lived there. So the people of Dan lived in the town of Laish. They changed the name to Dan because that was the name of the father of their tribe. All these cities and fields around them were given to the tribe of Dan. Each family got its share of the land.

**Land for Joshua**

So the leaders finished dividing the land and giving it to the different tribes. After they finished, all the Israelites decided to give Joshua son of Nun some land too. This was land that was promised to him. The Lord had commanded that he get this land. So they gave Joshua the town of Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim. This was the town that Joshua told them he wanted. So he built the town stronger and lived there.

All these lands were given to the different tribes of Israel. Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of each tribe met together at Shiloh to divide the land. They met before the Lord at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. So they finished dividing the land.

**Cities of Safety**

Then the Lord said to Joshua: Through Moses, I told you to choose some cities to be cities of safety. Anyone who kills someone accidentally can go to a city of safety to hide from the relatives who want to kill him. If you accidentally kill someone and you run away to one of those cities, you must stop at the entrance of the city and tell the leaders of the people what happened. Then the leaders can allow you to enter the city. They will give you a place to live among them. If someone chases you and follows you to that city, the leaders of the city must not give you up. They must protect you because you came to them for safety after killing someone by
accident—you were not angry and did not plan to kill the person. It was something that just happened. 

6 You should stay in that city until the court has judged you and until the high priest dies. Then you may go back to your hometown.”

7 So the Israelites chose some cities to be called cities of safety. These are the cities: Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali; Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim; Kiriath Arba (Hebron) in the hill country of Judah; 

8 Bezer, east of the Jordan River across from Jericho, in the desert area in the land of Reuben; Ramoth in Gilead in the land of Gad; and Golan in Bashan in the land of Manasseh.

9 All Israelites or any foreigners living among them who killed someone by accident were allowed to run away to one of these cities of safety. They could be safe there and not be killed by anyone chasing them. The court in that city would judge them.

Towns for Priests and Levites

1 The family rulers of the Levite tribe went to talk to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua son of Nun, and to the rulers of the other tribes of Israel. At Shiloh in the land of Canaan, the Levite rulers said to them, “The LORD gave Moses a command. He commanded that you give us towns to live in and that you give us fields where our animals can eat.” So the Israelites obeyed this command from the LORD and gave the Levites these towns and the land around them for their animals:

2 The Kohath family groups were descendants of Aaron the priest from the tribe of Levi. Part of the Kohath family was given 13 towns in the areas that belonged to Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.

3 The other Kohath families were given ten towns in the areas that belonged to Ephraim, Dan, and half of Manasseh.

4 The people from the Gershon family were given 13 towns. These towns were in the areas that belonged to Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the half of Manasseh that was in Bashan.

5 The people from the Merari family were given 12 towns. These towns came from the areas that belonged to Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

6 So the Israelites gave the Levites these towns and the fields around them, just as the LORD had told Moses.

7 The people from the Merari family were given 12 towns. These towns came from the areas that belonged to Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

8 So the Israelites gave the Levites these towns and the fields around them, just as the LORD had told Moses.

9 These are the names of the towns that were in the areas that belonged to Judah and Simeon. 

10 The first choice of towns was given to the Levites from the Kohath family group. They gave them Kiriath Arba. (This is Hebron. It was named for a man named Arba. Arba was the father of Anak.) They also gave them some land near the town for their animals. But the fields and the small towns around the city of Kiriath Arba belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh. 

11 So they gave the city of Hebron to Aaron's descendants. (Hebron was a city of safety.) They also gave Aaron's descendants the towns of Libnah, Jattir, Eshtemoa, Holon, Debir, Ain, Juttah, and Beth Shemesh. They also gave them some of the land near these towns for their animals. These two tribes gave them nine towns.

12 They also gave Aaron’s descendants cities that belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. These cities were Gibeon, Geba, Anathoth, and Almon. They gave them these four towns and some of the land near the towns for their animals. In all, they gave 13 towns to the priests. (All priests were descendants of Aaron.) They also gave them some land near each town for their animals.

13 The other people from the Kohathite family groups were given towns that were in the areas that belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. They got these towns: the city of Shechem from the hill country of Ephraim (which was a city of safety), Gezer, Kibzaim, and Beth Horon. In all, Ephraim gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

14 The tribe of Dan gave them Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Aijalon, and Gath Rimmon. In all, Dan gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.
Half the tribe of Manasseh gave them Taanach and Gath Rimmon. In all, this half of Manasseh gave them two towns and some land around each town for their animals.

In all, the rest of the people from the Kohath family groups got ten towns and some land around each town for their animals.

The Gershon family groups were also from the tribe of Levi. They got these towns:

Half the tribe of Manasseh gave them Golan in Bashan. (Golan was a city of safety.) Manasseh also gave them Be Eshtaroth. In all, this half of Manasseh gave them two towns and some land around each town for their animals.

The tribe of Issachar gave them Kishion, Daberath, Jarmuth, and En Gannim. In all, Issachar gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

The tribe of Asher gave them Mishal, Abdon, Helkath, and Rehob. In all, Asher gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

The tribe of Naphtali gave them Kedesh in Galilee. (Kedesh was a city of safety.) Naphtali also gave them Hammoth Dor and Kartan. In all, Naphtali gave them three towns and some land around each town for their animals.

In all, the Gershon family groups got 13 towns and some land around each town for their animals.

The other Levite group was the Merari family group. They were given these towns: The tribe of Zebulun gave them Jokneam, Kartah, Dimnah, and Nahalal. In all, Zebulun gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals. The tribe of Reuben gave them Bezer, Jahaz, Kedemoth, and Mephaath. In all, Reuben gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals. The tribe of Gad gave them Ramoth in Gilead. (Ramoth was a city of safety.) They also gave them Mahanaim, Heshbon, and Jazer. In all, Gad gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

In all, the last family of Levites, the Merari family, got 12 towns.

So the Levites were given a total of 48 towns and some land around each town for their animals. All these towns were in areas that belonged to the other tribes.

Each of these towns had some land in it for their animals. That was true for every town.

So the Lord kept the promise that he had made to the Israelites and gave the people all the land that he had promised. The people took the land and lived there. And the Lord allowed them to have peace on all sides of their land, just as he had promised their ancestors. None of their enemies defeated them. The Lord allowed the Israelites to defeat every enemy. The Lord kept every promise that he made to the Israelites. There were no promises that he failed to keep. Every promise came true.

**Three Tribes Go Home**

Then Joshua called a meeting of all the people from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. Joshua said to them, “Moses was the Lord’s servant. You obeyed everything that Moses told you to do. And you also obeyed all of my commands. All this time you have supported all the other Israelites. You carefully obeyed all the commands that the Lord your God gave you.

The Lord’s servant Moses gave you the land on the east side of the Jordan River. Now you can go home to that land. But remember—continue to obey the law that the Lord’s servant Moses gave you. You must love the Lord your God and obey his commands. You must continue to follow him and serve him the very best that you can.”

Then Joshua said goodbye to them, and they left and went home. Moses had
given the land of Bashan to half of the Manasseh tribe. Joshua gave land on the west side of the Jordan River to the other half of the Manasseh tribe. Joshua blessed them and sent them home. 8 He said, “You have become very rich. You have many animals. You have gold, silver, and expensive jewelry. You have many beautiful clothes. You have taken many things from your enemies. Go home and divide these things among yourselves.”

9 So the people from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh left the other Israelites at Shiloh in Canaan. They went back home to Gilead. This was their own land, the land that Moses gave them, as the LORD had commanded.

10 They went to the place called Gilloth, near the Jordan River in the land of Canaan. There they built a beautiful altar. 11 But the other Israelites who were still at Shiloh heard about the altar that these three tribes built. They heard that the altar was at the border of Canaan at the place called Gilloth. It was near the Jordan River on Israel’s side. 12 All the Israelites became very angry with these three tribes. They met together and decided to fight against them.

13 So the Israelites sent some men to talk to the people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. The leader of these men was Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest. 14 They also sent ten of the leaders of the tribes there. There was one man from each family group of Israel who was at Shiloh.

15 So these eleven men went to Gilead. They went to talk to the people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. The leader of these men was Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest. 14 They also sent ten of the leaders of the tribes there. There was one man from each family group of Israel who was at Shiloh.

16 So these eleven men went to Gilead. They went to talk to the people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. The leader of these men was Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest. 14 They also sent ten of the leaders of the tribes there. There was one man from each family group of Israel who was at Shiloh.

17 Remember what happened at Peor? Was the sin we committed there not bad enough? Because of that sin, the LORD punished his people with a terrible sickness. And we are still suffering from that sin. 18 And now you are doing the same thing. You are turning against the LORD. Will you refuse to follow the LORD? If you don’t stop what you are doing, he will be angry with everyone in Israel.

19 “If your land is not a good place to worship God, come over to the LORD’s land. This is where the LORD’s Tent is. You can have some of the land and live here. But don’t turn against the LORD or against us by building another altar. We already have the altar of the LORD our God at the Meeting Tent.

20 “Remember how Achan son of Zerah refused to obey the command about things that must be destroyed. That one man broke God’s law, but all the Israelites were punished. Achan died because of his sin, but also many other people died.”

21 The people from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh answered the eleven men. They said, 22 “The LORD is our God! Again we say that the LORD is our God! And God knows why we did this thing. We want you to know also. You can judge what we did. If you think we did it because we are against the LORD or refuse to obey him, you can kill us today. 23 Do you think we built our own altar because we want to turn away from the LORD? Do you think we built another altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings, and fellowship offerings? If that is why we built this altar, we ask the LORD himself to punish us. 24 But that is not why we built it. We built it because we were afraid that in the future your descendants might not accept us as part of God’s people. So your children might say to our children, ‘You people have no reason to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. 25 The LORD separated you people of Reuben and Gad from us by giving you the land on the other side of the Jordan River. So you are not part of the LORD’s people.’ If your children said that, it might make our children stop worshiping the LORD.

26 “So we decided to build this altar. But we did not plan to use it for burning
offerings and sacrifices. The real reason we wanted our altar was to show our people that we worship the same God you do. This altar will be the proof to you and us and to all our future children that we worship the LORD. We give our sacrifices, grain offerings, and fellowship offerings to the LORD. We wanted your children to grow up and know that we are also Israelites like yourselves. In the future, if it happens that your children say that we don’t belong to Israel, then our children can say, ‘Look, our fathers who lived before us made an altar. That altar is exactly like the LORD’s altar at the Holy Tent. We don’t use this altar for sacrifices—this altar is proof that we are part of Israel.’ The truth is, we don’t want to be against the LORD. We don’t want to stop following him now. We know that the only true altar is the one that is in front of the Holy Tent. That altar belongs to the LORD our God.”

Phinehas the priest and the leaders with him heard what the people from Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh said. They were satisfied that they were telling the truth. So Phinehas the priest said, “Now we know that the LORD is with us and that you did not turn against him. We are happy that the Israelites will not be punished by the LORD.”

Then Phinehas and the leaders left that place and went home. They left the people of Reuben and Gad in the land of Gilead and went back to Canaan. They went back to the Israelites and told them what had happened. The Israelites were also satisfied. They were happy and thanked God. They decided not to go and fight against the people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. They decided not to destroy the land where those people live. The people of Reuben and Gad named the altar “Proof That We Believe the LORD is God.”

Joshua Encourages the People

The LORD gave Israel peace from their enemies around them. He made Israel safe. Many years passed, and Joshua became very old. At this time Joshua called a meeting of all the older leaders, heads of families, judges, and officers of the Israelites. Joshua said, “I have grown very old. You have seen what the LORD did to our enemies. He did this to help us. The LORD your God fought for you. Remember that I told you that your people could have the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. I promised to give you that land, but you don’t control it yet. I have taken the land away from those nations, but they are still living there. But the LORD your God will force the people living there to leave. You will take that land. The LORD will force them to leave, just as he promised.

You must be careful to obey every command written in the Book of the Law of Moses. Never turn away from that law. That’s why you must not make friends with the people of other nations who still live among you. You must not serve or worship their gods. Don’t even mention the names of their gods when you pray or make an oath. You must continue to follow the LORD your God as you have done in the past.

The LORD helped you defeat many great and powerful nations. He forced them to leave. No nation has been able to defeat you. With his help, one man from Israel could defeat 1000 enemy soldiers, because the LORD your God fights for you, as he promised. So you must continue to love the LORD your God.

Never stop following him. Don’t become friends with those people who did not leave when you took the land. They are not part of Israel. Don’t marry any of their people. If you become friends with those people, the LORD your God will not help you defeat your enemies. They will become like a trap for you. They will cause you pain—like smoke and dust in your eyes. And you will be forced to leave this good land. The LORD your God

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gave you this land. But you can lose it if you don’t obey this command.

14 “It is almost time for me to die. You know and really believe that the Lord has done many great things for you. You know that the LORD your God has not failed in any of his promises. He has kept every promise that he has made to us. Every good promise that the LORD your God made to us has come true. But in the same way, the LORD will make his other promises come true: If you do wrong, bad things will happen to you. You will be forced to leave this good land that the LORD your God has given to you. This will happen if you refuse to keep your agreement with the LORD your God. You will lose this land if you go and serve other gods. You must not worship those other gods. If you do, the LORD will become very angry with you. Then you will quickly be forced to leave this good land that he gave you.”

Joshua Says Goodbye

24 Then Joshua called all the tribes of Israel to meet together at Shechem. Then Joshua called the older leaders, heads of the families, judges, and the officers of Israel. These men stood before God.

2 Then Joshua spoke to all the people. He said, “I am telling you what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to you: ‘A long time ago, your ancestors lived on the other side of the Euphrates River. I am talking about men like Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor. At that time they worshiped other gods. But I took your father Abraham out of the land on the other side of the River. I led him through the land of Canaan and gave him many children. I gave Abraham his son Isaac. And I gave Isaac two sons, Jacob and Esau. To Esau, I gave the land around the mountains of Seir. Jacob and his sons did not live there. They went to live in the land of Egypt.

5 “Then I sent Moses and Aaron to Egypt. I wanted them to bring my people out of Egypt. I caused many terrible things to happen to the people of Egypt. Then I brought your people out of Egypt. When I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, they came to the Red Sea, and the men of Egypt were chasing them. There were chariots and men on horses. So the people asked me, the LORD, for help. And I caused great trouble to come to the men of Egypt. I caused the sea to cover them. You yourselves saw what I did to the army of Egypt.

6 “After that you lived in the desert for a long time. Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, east of the Jordan River. Those people fought against you, but I allowed you to defeat them. I gave you the power to destroy them, and you took control of that land.

7 “Then Balak, the son of Zippor, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against the Israelites. The king sent for Balaam the son of Beor to curse you, but I refused to listen to Balaam’s prayer. So he asked me to bless you, and I saved you from the enemy.

8 “Then you went across the Jordan River to the city of Jericho. The people in Jericho fought against you. Also, the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites, and Jebusites fought against you. But I allowed you to defeat them all. As your army went forward, I sent the Hornet ahead of them and made the people leave the land, as I did to the two Amorite kings. It was not your swords and bows that brought you victory!

9 “I, the Lord, gave that land to you. You didn’t work for that land—I gave it to you. You did not build those cities—I gave them to you. And now you live in that land and in those cities. You have vineyards and olive trees, but you did not have to plant those gardens.’”

10 Then Joshua said to the people, “Now you have heard the Lord’s words. So you must respect the LORD and sincerely serve him. Throw away the false gods that your

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ancestors worshiped. That was something that happened a long time ago on the other side of the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Now you must serve only the LORD.

15 “But maybe you don’t want to serve the LORD. You must choose for yourselves today. Today you must decide who you will serve. Will you serve the gods that your ancestors worshiped when they lived on the other side of the Euphrates River? Or will you serve the gods of the Amorites who lived in this land? You must choose for yourselves. But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”

16 Then the people answered, “We will never stop following the LORD. We will never serve other gods! We know that it was the LORD God who brought our people out of Egypt. We were slaves in that land, but he did great things for us there. He brought us out of that land and protected us while we traveled through other lands. The LORD helped us defeat the people living in these lands. He helped us defeat the Amorites who lived in this land where we are now. So we will continue to serve the LORD, because he is our God.”

17 Then Joshua said, “You will not be able to continue serving the LORD. God is holy. And God hates his people worshiping other gods. He will not forgive you if you turn against him like that. If you leave the LORD and serve other gods, he will cause terrible things to happen to you. He will destroy you. He has been good to you, but if you turn against him he will destroy you.”

18 Then the people said to Joshua, “No, we will serve the LORD!”

19 Then Joshua said, “Look around at yourselves and the people with you. Do you all know and agree that you have chosen to serve the LORD? Are you all witnesses to this?”

The people answered, “Yes, it is true. We all see that we have chosen to serve the LORD.”

20 Then Joshua said, “So throw away the false gods that you have among you. Love the LORD, the God of Israel, with all your heart.”

24 Then the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God. We will obey him.”

25 So that day Joshua made an agreement for the people. He made this agreement at the town called Shechem. It became a law for them to follow. Then Joshua wrote these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he found a large stone to be the proof of this agreement. He put the stone under the oak tree near the LORD’s Holy Tent.

27 Then Joshua said to all the people, “This stone will help you remember what we said today. This stone was here when the LORD was speaking to us today. So this stone will be something that helps you remember what happened today. The stone will be a witness against you. It will stop you from turning against your God.”

28 Then Joshua told the people to go home. So everyone went back to his own land.

Joshua Dies

29 After that the LORD’s servant Joshua son of Nun died. He was 110 years old. 30 Joshua was buried on his own land at Timnath Serah, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

31 The Israelites served the LORD during the time Joshua was living. After Joshua died, the people continued to serve the Lord while their leaders were alive. These were the leaders who had seen what the LORD had done for Israel.

Joseph Comes Home

32 When the Israelites left Egypt, they carried the bones from the body of Joseph with them. They buried the bones of Joseph at Shechem on the land that Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of the man named Shechem. Jacob had bought that land for 100 pieces of pure silver. This land belonged to Joseph’s children.

33 Aaron’s son, Eleazar, died and was buried at Gibeah in the hill country of Ephraim. Gibeah had been given to Eleazar’s son Phinehas.
Judah Fights the Canaanites

1After Joshua died, the Israelites prayed to the Lord, “Which of our tribes should be the first to go and fight for us against the Canaanites?”

2The Lord said to the Israelites, “The tribe of Judah will go. I will let them take this land.”

3The men of Judah went to their relatives from the tribe of Simeon and asked for help. They said, “Brothers, if you will come and help us fight for the land God gave us, we will go and help you fight for your land.” The men of Simeon agreed and went with them.

4The Lord helped the men of Judah defeat the Canaanites and the Perizzites. They killed 10,000 men at the city of Bezek. In the city of Bezek, they found the ruler of Bezek \(^a\) and fought him, and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

5The ruler of Bezek tried to escape, but the men of Judah chased him and caught him. When they caught him, they cut off his thumbs and big toes. 7Then the ruler of Bezek said, “I cut off the thumbs and big toes of 70 kings. And they had to eat pieces of food that fell from my table. Now God has paid me back for what I did to them.” The men of Judah took the ruler of Bezek to Jerusalem, and he died there.

6The men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it. They used their swords to kill the people of Jerusalem. Then they burned the city. 9Later, they went down to fight against some more Canaanites who lived in the hill country, in the Negev, and in the western foothills.

7Then the men of Judah went to fight against the Canaanites who lived in the city of Hebron. (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba.) They defeated the men named Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.\(^b\)

Caleb and His Daughter

11The men of Judah left that place. They went to the city of Debir to fight against the people there. (In the past, Debir was called Kiriath Sepher.) 12Before they started to fight, Caleb made a promise to the men. He said, “I will give my daughter Acsah in marriage to whoever attacks and conquers Kiriath Sepher.”

13Caleb had a younger brother named Kenaz. Kenaz had a son named Othniel. Othniel captured the city of Kiriath Sepher. So Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to Othniel to be his wife.

14Acsah went to live with Othniel. Othniel told Acsah \(^c\) to ask her father for some land. She went to her father. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, “What is wrong?”

15Acsah answered him, “Give me a blessing.\(^d\) You gave me dry desert land in the Negev. Please give me some land with water on it.” So Caleb gave her what she wanted. He gave her the upper and lower pools of water in that land.

16The Kenites left the City of Palm Trees\(^e\) and went with the men of Judah. They went to the desert of Judah to live with the people there. This was in the Negev near the city Arad. (The Kenites were from the family of Moses’ father-in-law.)

17Some Canaanites lived in the city of

\(^a\) 1:5 ruler of Bezek Or “Adoni Bezek.”
\(^b\) 1:10 Sheshai, Ahiman, Talmai Three sons of a man named Anak. They were giants. See Num. 13:22.
\(^c\) 1:14 Othniel told Acsah Or “Acsah told Othniel.”
\(^d\) 1:15 Give me a blessing Or “Welcome me” or “Give me a stream of water.”
\(^e\) 1:16 City of Palm Trees Another name for Jericho.
Zephat. The men of Judah and men from the tribe of Simeon attacked them and completely destroyed the city. So they named the city Hormah.\(^a\)

18 The men of Judah also captured the cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron and all the small towns around them.

19 The LORD was on the side of the men of Judah when they fought. They took the land in the hill country, but they failed to take the land in the valleys, because the people living there had iron chariots.

20 Moses had promised to give the land near Hebron to Caleb, so that land was given to Caleb’s family. The men of Caleb forced the three sons of Anak\(^b\) to leave that place.

21 The tribe of Benjamin could not force the Jebusites to leave Jerusalem. So even today,\(^c\) the Jebusites live with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem.

Joseph’s Descendants Capture Bethel

22 The descendants of Joseph went to fight against the city of Bethel, and the LORD was with them.\(^2\) They sent some spies to the city of Bethel (which was then called Luz).\(^3\) While the spies were watching, they saw a man come out of the city. They said to the man, “Show us a secret way into the city. If you help us, we will not hurt you.”

25 The man showed the spies the secret way into the city. The men of Joseph used their swords to kill the people of Bethel. But they did not hurt the man who helped them or anyone in his family. The man and his family were allowed to go free.\(^4\) He went to the land where the Hittites lived and built a city. He named it Luz, and that city is still called Luz today.

Other Tribes Fight the Canaanites

27 There were Canaanites living in the cities of Beth Shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo, and the small towns around the cities. The people from the tribe of Manasseh could not force those people to leave their towns. So the Canaanites stayed. They refused to leave their homes.\(^5\) Later, the Israelites grew stronger and forced the Canaanites to work as slaves for them. But the Israelites could not force all the Canaanites to leave their land.

29 There were Canaanites living in Gezer. And the Ephraimites did not make all the Canaanites leave their land. So they continued to live in Gezer with the Ephraimites.

30 Some Canaanites lived in the cities of Kitron and Nahalol. The people of Zebulun did not force those people to leave their land. They stayed and lived with the people of Zebulun. But the people of Zebulun made them work as slaves.

31 The people of Asher did not force the other people to leave the cities of Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Aczib, Helbah, Aphek, and Rehob.\(^6\) The people of Asher did not force those Canaanites to leave their land, so the Canaanites continued to live with them.

33 The people of Naphtali did not force the people to leave the cities of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath, so the people of Naphtali continued to live with the people in those cities. Those Canaanites worked as slaves for the people of Naphtali.

34 The Amorites forced the tribe of Dan to live in the hill country. They had to stay in the hills because the Amorites would not let them come down to live in the valleys.\(^7\) The Amorites decided to stay in Mount Heres, Aijalon, and Shaalbim. Later, when the descendants of Joseph grew stronger, they made the Amorites work as slaves for them.\(^8\) The land of the Amorites was from Scorpion Pass to Sela and up into the hill country past Sela.

The Angel of the Lord at Bokim

1 The angel of the LORD went up to the city of Bokim from the city of Gilgal. The angel spoke this message from the Lord to the Israelites: “I brought you out of Egypt and led you to the land that I promised to give to your ancestors. I told
you I would never break my agreement with you. 2But in return, you must never make any agreement with the people living in that land. You must destroy their altars. I told you that, but you didn’t obey me.

3“Now I will tell you this, ‘I will not force the other people to leave this land any longer. These people will become a problem for you. They will be like a trap to you. Their false gods will become like a net to trap you.’”

4After the angel gave the Israelites this message from the LORD, the people cried loudly. 5So they named the place Bokim. 6There they offered sacrifices to the LORD.

Disobedience and Defeat
6Then Joshua told the people to go home, so each tribe went to take their area of land. 7The Israelites served the LORD as long as Joshua was alive, and they continued serving the Lord during the lifetimes of the elders who lived after Joshua had died. These old men had seen all the great things the LORD had done for the Israelites. 8Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years. 9The Israelites buried Joshua on the land that he had been given. That was at Timnath Heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

10After that whole generation died, the next generation grew up. This new generation did not know about the LORD or what he had done for the Israelites. 11So the Israelites did something very evil before the LORD. They began serving the false god Baal. 12It was the LORD, the God their ancestors worshiped, who had brought the Israelites out of Egypt. But they stopped following him and began to worship the false gods of the people living around them. This made the LORD angry. 13The Israelites stopped following the LORD and began worshiping Baal and Ashtoreth.

14The LORD was angry with the Israelites, so he let enemies attack them and take their possessions. He let their enemies who lived around them defeat them. The Israelites could not protect themselves from their enemies. 15When the Israelites went out to fight, they always lost. They lost because the LORD was not on their side. He had already warned them that they would lose if they served the gods of the people living around them. The Israelites suffered very much.

16Then the LORD chose leaders called judges. These leaders saved the Israelites from the enemies who took their possessions. 17But the Israelites did not listen to their judges. The Israelites were not faithful to God—they followed other gods. In the past, the ancestors of the Israelites obeyed the LORD’s commands. But now the Israelites changed and stopped obeying the Lord.

18Many times the enemies of Israel did bad things to the people, so the Israelites would cry for help. And each time the LORD felt sorry for the people and sent a judge to save them from their enemies. The LORD was always with those judges. Each time the Israelites were saved from their enemies. 19But when each judge died, the Israelites again sinned and started worshiping the false gods. They acted worse than their ancestors did. The Israelites were very stubborn and refused to change their evil ways.

20So the LORD became angry with the Israelites, and he said, “This nation has broken the agreement that I made with their ancestors. They have not listened to me. 21So I will no longer defeat the nations and clear the way for the Israelites. Those nations were still in this land when Joshua died, and I will let them stay in this land. 22I will use them to test the Israelites. I will see if the Israelites can keep the LORD’s commands as their ancestors did.”

23The LORD allowed those nations to stay in the land. He did not quickly force them to leave the country. He did not help Joshua’s army defeat them.

2:5 Bokim This name means “people crying.”

2:17 were not faithful... gods Literally, “acted like a prostitute with other gods.”
The Lord did not force all the other nations to leave Israel’s land. He wanted to test the Israelites. None of the Israelites living at this time had fought in the wars to take the land of Canaan. So he let those other nations stay in their country. (He did this to teach the Israelites who had not fought in those wars.) These are the nations the Lord left in the land: the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the people of Sidon, and the Hivites who lived in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath. He left those nations in the land to test the Israelites. He wanted to see if the Israelites would obey the Lord’s commands that he had given to their ancestors through Moses.

The Israelites lived with the Canaanites, Hittites, the Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. The Israelites began to marry the daughters of those people. They allowed their own daughters to marry the sons of those people. The Israelites also began to worship their gods.

Othniel, the First Judge

The Lord saw that the Israelites did evil things. They forgot about the Lord their God and served the false gods Baal and Asherah. The Lord was angry with the Israelites, so he allowed King Cushan Rishathaim of Aram Naharaim to defeat the Israelites and to rule over them. The Israelites were under that king’s rule for eight years. But the Israelites cried to the Lord for help, so he sent a man named Othniel to save them. Othniel saved the Israelites.

The Spirit of the Lord filled Othniel, and he became a judge for the Israelites. He led the Israelites to war. The Lord helped Othniel defeat King Cushan Rishathaim of Aram. So the land was at peace for 40 years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died.

Ehud, the Judge

Again the Israelites did things the Lord considered evil, and the Lord saw them doing these things. So the Lord gave King Eglon of Moab power to defeat the Israelites. Eglon got help from the Ammonites and the Amalekites. They joined him and attacked the Israelites. Eglon and his army defeated the Israelites and forced them to leave the City of Palm Trees. King Eglon of Moab ruled over the Israelites for 18 years.

The Israelites cried to the Lord for help, so he sent a man named Ehud son of Gera to save them. Ehud was from the tribe of Benjamin and was trained to fight with his left hand. The Israelites sent Ehud with a gift to King Eglon of Moab. Ehud made himself a sword with two sharp edges that was about 12 inches long. He tied the sword to his right thigh and hid it under his uniform.

So Ehud brought the gift to King Eglon of Moab. Eglon was a very fat man. After offering the gift, Ehud left the palace with the men who had carried the gift. When Ehud reached the statues near Gilgal, he turned and went back to King Eglon and said, “King, I have a secret message for you.”

The king told him to be quiet and then sent all the servants out of the room. Ehud went to King Eglon. The king was sitting all alone in the upper room of his palace.

Then Ehud said, “I have a message from God for you.” The king stood up from his throne. He was very close to Ehud. As the king was getting up from his throne, Ehud reached with his left hand and took out the sword that was tied to his right thigh. Then he pushed the sword into the king’s belly. The sword went into Eglon’s belly so far that even the handle sank in

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3:8 Aram Naharaim The area in northern Syria between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

b 3:13 City of Palm Trees Another name for Jericho.

c 3:16 12 inches Or 30 cm. Literally, “gomed,” probably equivalent to 2/3 of a cubit.

d 3:19 statues These were probably statues of gods or animals that “protected” the entrance to the city. Also in verse 26.

e 3:20–21 He was very close . . . throne This section of the text is found in the ancient Greek version but not in the standard Hebrew text.
and the fat closed around it. The point of the blade came out his back. Ehud left the sword inside Eglon.

23 Then Ehud went out of the private room, closed the doors to the upper room, and locked the king inside. 24 Ehud then left the main room, and the servants went back in. The servants found the doors to the upper room locked, so they said, “The king must be relieving himself in his private toilet.” 25 The servants waited for a long time, but the king never opened the doors to the upper room. Finally, the servants got worried. They got the key and unlocked the doors. When the servants entered, they saw their king lying dead on the floor.

26 While the servants were waiting for the king, Ehud had time to escape. He passed by the statues and went toward the place named Seirah. 27 When Ehud came to Seirah, he blew a trumpet there in the hill country of Ephraim. The Israelites heard the trumpet and went down from the hills with Ehud leading them.

28 He said to the Israelites, “Follow me! The Lord has helped us defeat our enemies, the Moabites.” So the Israelites followed Ehud. They went down with him to take control of the places where people could easily cross the Jordan River into the land of Moab. The Israelites did not allow any one to go across the Jordan River. 29 They killed about 10,000 strong and brave men from Moab. Not one Moabite man escaped. 30 So on that day the Israelites began to rule over the Moabites, and there was peace in the land for 80 years.

Shamgar, the Judge
31 After Ehud saved the Israelites, another man saved Israel. That man’s name was Shamgar son of Anath. 3 Shamgar used an ox goad to kill 600 Philistine men.

Deborah, the Judge
4 After Ehud died, the people again did what the Lord said was wrong. 2 So the Lord allowed King Jabin of Canaan to defeat the Israelites. Jabin ruled in a city named Hazor. A man named Sisera was the commander of King Jabin’s army. Sisera lived in a town called Haroseth Haggoyim. 3 Sisera had 900 iron chariots, and he was very cruel to the Israelites for 20 years. So they cried to the Lord for help.

4 There was a woman prophet named Deborah. She was the wife of a man named Lappidoth. She was judge of Israel at that time. 5 One day Deborah was sitting under the Palm Tree of Deborah, and the Israelites came up to her to ask what to do about Sisera. (The Palm Tree of Deborah is between the cities of Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim.) 6 Deborah sent a message to a man named Barak and asked him to come meet with her. Barak was the son of a man named Abinom. Barak lived in the city of Kedesh, which is in the area of Naphtali. Deborah said to Barak, “The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go and gather 10,000 men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun. Lead them to Mount Tabor. 7 I will make Sisera, the commander of King Jabin’s army, come to you. I will make Sisera, his chariots, and his army come to the Kishon River. 8 I will help you defeat Sisera there.’”

8 Then Barak said to Deborah, “I will go and do this if you will go with me. But if you will not go with me, I will not go.” 9 “Of course I will go with you,” Deborah answered. “But because of your attitude, you will not be honored when Sisera is defeated. The Lord will allow a woman to defeat Sisera.”

So Deborah went with Barak to the city of Kedesh. 10 At the city of Kedesh, Barak called the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali together. He gathered 10,000 men to follow him from these tribes, and Deborah also went with him.

11 There was a man named Heber who...
was from the Kenites. The Kenites were descendants of Moses’ father-in-law, Hobab. Heber had left the other Kenites and had made his home by the oak tree in Zaanannim, near the city of Kedesh.

15 Someone told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam was at Mount Tabor. 16 So Sisera gathered his 900 iron chariots and all the men with him, and they marched from the city of Haroseth Haggoyim to the Kishon River.

17 Then Deborah said to Barak, “Today the Lord will help you defeat Sisera. Surely you know that the Lord has already cleared the way for you.” So Barak led the 10,000 men down from Mount Tabor. 18 Barak and his men attacked Sisera. During the battle, the Lord confused Sisera and his army and chariots. They did not know what to do. Barak and his men defeated Sisera’s army, but Sisera left his chariot and ran away on foot. 19 Barak continued fighting Sisera’s army. He and his men chased Sisera’s chariots and army all the way to Haroseth Haggoyim. They used their swords to kill all of Sisera’s men. Not one of Sisera’s men was left alive.

20 But Sisera ran away to the tent where a woman named Jael lived. Jael was the wife of Heber the Kenite. His family was at peace with King Jabin of Hazor. That is why Sisera ran to Jael’s tent. 21 Jael saw him coming, so she went out to meet him and said, “Sir, come into my tent. Come in. Don’t be afraid.” So Sisera went into Jael’s tent, and she covered him up with a blanket.

22 Then Sisera said to Jael, “Go stand at the entrance to the tent. If anyone comes by and asks you, ‘Is anyone in there?’ say, ‘No.’”

23 But first, Sisera asked Jael for a drink of water. Jael had some milk in a bottle made from animal skin. So she gave him a drink of the milk and then covered him up.

24 Then Sisera said to Jael, “Go stand at the entrance to the tent. If anyone comes by and asks you, ‘Is anyone in there?’ say, ‘No.’”

25 But Jael found a tent peg and a hammer. She quietly went to Sisera. Sisera was very tired, so he was sleeping. She put the tent peg to the side of Sisera’s head and hit it with a hammer. The tent peg went through the side of his head and into the ground. Sisera died.

26 Just then Barak came by Jael’s tent, looking for Sisera. Jael went out to meet Barak and said, “Come in here, and I will show you the man you are looking for.” So Barak entered the tent with Jael. There Barak found Sisera lying dead on the ground, with the tent peg through the side of his head.

27 On that day God defeated King Jabin of Canaan for the Israelites. 28 So the Israelites became stronger and stronger until they defeated King Jabin of Canaan. The Israelites finally destroyed him.

The Song of Deborah

5 b On the day that the Israelites defeated Sisera, Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song:

2 “The men of Israel prepared for battle. They volunteered to go to war. Praise the Lord!

3 “Listen, kings.
Pay attention, rulers.
I will sing.
I myself will sing to the Lord.
I will make music to the Lord, to the God of the Israelites.

4 “Lord, in the past you came from Seir. You marched from the land of Edom.
You marched and the earth shook.
The skies rained.
The clouds dropped water.

5 The mountains shook before the Lord, the God of Mount Sinai, before the Lord, the God of Israel!

6 “In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, and in the days of Jael, the main roads were empty.

b 5:1 Chapter 5 This is a very old song, and many of the lines are hard to understand in the Hebrew text.

b 5:2 The men…battle This might also mean “When leaders led in Israel” or “When men wore long hair in Israel.” Soldiers often dedicated their hair as a special gift to God.

b 5:4 Seir Another name for the land of Edom.

Caravans and travelers traveled on the back roads.

7 “There were no soldiers in Israel until you came, Deborah, until you came to be a mother to Israel.⁵

8 “God chose new leaders to fight at the city gates.⁶ No one could find a shield or a spear among the 40,000 soldiers of Israel.

9 “My heart is with the commanders of Israel. They volunteered to go to war. Praise the LORD!

10 “Pay attention you people riding on white donkeys, sitting on saddle blankets, and walking along the road.

11 At the watering holes for the animals, we hear the music of cymbals. People sing about the victories of the LORD, the victories of his soldiers in Israel when the LORD’s people fought at the city gates and won!

12 “Wake up, wake up, Deborah! Wake up, wake up, sing the song! Get up, Barak! Go capture your enemies, son of Abinoam!

13 “Now, survivors, go to the leaders. People of the LORD, come with me and the soldiers.

14 “The men of Ephraim came from the hill country of Amalek. Benjamin, those men followed you and your people. And there were commanders from the family of Makir.⁶ Leaders from the tribe of Zebulun came with their bronze clubs.

15 The leaders of Issachar were with Deborah. The family of Issachar was true to Barak. Those men marched to the valley on foot.

16 “Reuben, there are many brave soldiers in your army groups. So why did you sit there against the walls of your sheep pens? The brave soldiers of Reuben thought hard about war. But they stayed home listening to the music they played for their sheep.

17 The people of Gilead stood in their camps on the other side of the Jordan River. As for you, people of Dan, why did you stay by your ships? The people of Asher remained by the sea, camped near their safe harbors.

18 “But the men of Zebulun and Naphtali risked their lives fighting on those hills.

19 The kings of Canaan came to fight, but they didn’t carry any treasures home. They fought at the city of Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo.

20 The stars fought them from heaven. From their paths across the sky, they fought against Sisera.

21 The Kishon River, that ancient river, swept Sisera’s men away. My soul, march on with strength! The horses’ hooves hammered the

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⁵ 5:7 until you ... to Israel Or “until I came, Deborah, until I came, mother of Israel.” Or “until I established you, Deborah, until I established you, mother of Israel.”

⁶ 5:8 God chose ... gates Or “They chose to follow new gods. So they had to fight at their city gates.” The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.

⁷ 5:10 saddle blankets The meaning of this Hebrew word is uncertain.

⁸ 5:14 hill country of Amalek The area settled by the tribe of Ephraim. See Judges 12:15.

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ground. Sisera’s mighty horses ran and ran.

23 “The angel of the LORD said, ‘Curse the city of Meroz.
Curse its people! They did not come to help the LORD fight.’
They did not help the LORD against his powerful enemies.

24 Jael was the wife of Heber the Kenite. She will be blessed above all women.

25 Sisera asked for water. Jael gave him milk.
In a bowl fit for a ruler, she brought him cream.

26 Then Jael reached out and took a tent peg.
Her right hand reached for a workman’s hammer.
She put the peg against the side of Sisera’s head and hit it with the hammer.

27 He sank down between Jael’s feet. He fell, and there he lay.
He sank down between her feet. He fell there.
Where Sisera sank, he fell, and there he lay, dead!

28 “There is Sisera’s mother, looking out the window,
looking through the curtains and crying.
‘Why is Sisera’s chariot so late? Why can’t I hear his wagons?’

29 “Her wisest servant girl answers her.
Yes, the servant gives her an answer:

30 ‘I’m sure they won the war, and they are now taking things from the people they defeated.
They are dividing those things among themselves.
Each soldier is taking a girl or two.
Maybe Sisera found a piece of dyed cloth.
That’s it! Sisera found a piece of fancy cloth,
or maybe two, to wear around his neck in victory.’

31 “May all your enemies die like this, LORD!
But may all those who love you be as strong as the rising sun!”
And there was peace in the land for 40 years.

The Midianites Fight Israel

6 1Again the Israelites did what the LORD said was wrong. So for seven years the LORD allowed the Midianites to defeat the Israelites.

2 The Midianites were very powerful and were cruel to the Israelites. So the Israelites made many hiding places in the mountains. They hid their food in caves and places that were hard to find. They did that because the Midianites and Amalekites from the east always came and destroyed their crops. They camped in the land and destroyed the crops that the Israelites had planted. They ruined the crops of the Israelites as far as the land near the city of Gaza. They did not leave anything for the Israelites to eat. They did not even leave them any sheep, cattle, or donkeys. The Midianites came with their families, animals, and tents. They were like a swarm of locusts! They and their camels were too many to count. They came into the land and ruined it. The Israelites became very poor because of the Midianites. So the Israelites cried to the LORD for help.

7 a The Midianites did all these bad things, so the Israelites cried to the LORD for help. The LORD sent a prophet to them. He said, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘You were slaves in the land of Egypt. I made you free and brought you out of that land. I saved you from the powerful Egyptians. Then the Canaanites hurt you, so I saved you again. I made them leave their land. And I gave their land to you.’ Then I said to you, ‘I...
am the LORD your God. You will live in the land of the Amorites, but you must not worship their false gods.’ But you did not obey me.”

The Angel of the Lord Visits Gideon 11–12 One time the angel of the LORD came to a place called Ophrah and sat under an oak tree. This oak tree belonged to a man named Joash from the Abiezer family. His son Gideon was beating some wheat\(^d\) in a winepress. He was hiding so that the Midianites could not see the wheat. The angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon and said, “The LORD be with you, brave soldier.”

13 Then Gideon said, “Pardon me, sir, but if the LORD is with us, why are we having so many troubles? We heard that he did wonderful things for our ancestors. They tell us that the LORD took them out of Egypt. But now it seems the LORD has left us and is letting the Midianites defeat us.”

14 The LORD turned toward Gideon and said, “Then use your great power and go save the Israelites from the Midianites. I am sending you to save them.”

15 But Gideon answered and said, “Pardon me, sir. How can I save Israel? My family group is the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh, and I am the youngest one in my family.”

16 The LORD answered Gideon and said, “I will be with you, so you can defeat the Midianites as easily as if they were only one man.”

17 Then Gideon said to him, “If you would, please give me some proof that you really are the Lord. Please wait here. Don’t go away until I come back to you. Let me bring my offering and set it down in front of you.”

18 The angel of God said to Gideon, “Put the meat and the bread on that rock over there. Then pour the broth on it.” Gideon did as he was told.

19 So Gideon went in and cooked a young goat in boiling water. He also took about 20 pounds\(^c\) of flour and made bread without yeast. Then he put the meat into a basket and the broth from the meat into a pot. He brought out the meat, the broth, and the bread without yeast and gave them to the Lord under the oak tree.

20 The angel of God said to Gideon, “Put the meat and the bread on that rock over there. Then pour the broth on it.” Gideon did as he was told.

21 The angel of the LORD had a walking stick in his hand. He touched the meat and the bread with the end of the stick, and fire jumped up out of the rock and burned up the meat and the bread. Then the angel of the LORD disappeared.

22 Then Gideon realized that he had been talking to the angel of the LORD. So he shouted, “Oh, Lord GOD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!”

23 But the LORD said to Gideon, “Calm down! Don’t be afraid! You will not die!”

24 So Gideon built an altar there to worship the LORD and named it “The Lord is Peace.” It still stands in the city of Ophrah, where the Abiezer family lives.

Gideon Tears Down the Altar of Baal 25 That same night the LORD said to Gideon, “Choose your father’s best bull, the one that is seven years old. First, use it to pull down the altar your father built to worship Baal. Also, cut down the Asherah pole beside the altar. 26 Then build the right kind of altar for the LORD your God. Build it on this high ground. Then kill and burn the bull on this altar. Use the wood from the Asherah pole to burn your offering.”

27 So Gideon took ten of his servants and did what the LORD had told him to do. But Gideon was afraid that his family and the men of the city might see what he was doing, so he did it all at night, not in the daytime.

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\(^c\) 6:19 20 pounds Literally, “1 ephah” (22 l).
\(^d\) 6:23 Calm down Literally, “Peace.”
\(^e\) 6:23 You will not die Gideon thought he would die because he had seen the LORD face to face.

Add different vowels to the Hebrew text gives a meaning similar to that in the translation above.
The men of the city got up the next morning and saw that the altar for Baal had been destroyed! They also saw that the Asherah pole had been cut down. It had been sitting next to the altar for Baal. They also saw the altar that Gideon had built. And they saw the bull that had been sacrificed on that altar.

The men of the city looked at each other and asked, “Who pulled down our altar? Who cut down our Asherah pole? Who sacrificed this bull on this new altar?” They asked many questions and tried to learn who did this.

Someone told them, “Gideon son of Joash did this.”

So the men of the city came to Joash and said, “You must bring your son out. He pulled down the altar for Baal, and he cut down the Asherah pole that was beside it. So your son must die.”

Then Joash spoke to the crowd that was standing around him. Joash said, “Are you going to take Baal’s side? Are you going to rescue Baal? If anyone takes Baal’s side, let him be put to death by morning. If Baal really is a god, let him defend himself when someone pulls down his altar.”

Joash said, “If Gideon pulled Baal’s altar down, let Baal argue with him.” On that day Joash gave Gideon a new name. He called him Jerub-Baal.

Gideon Defeats the Midianites

The Midianites, Amalekites, and other people from the east joined together to fight against the Israelites. They went across the Jordan River and camped in the Jezreel Valley.

Then the Lord said to Gideon, “I am going to help your men defeat the Midianites, but you have too many men. I don’t want the Israelites to forget me and brag that they saved themselves. So make an announcement to your men. Tell them, ‘Anyone who is afraid may leave Mount Gilead and go back home.’”

At that time 22,000 men left Gideon and went back home, but 10,000 still remained.

Then the Lord said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take the men down to the water, and I will test them for you there. If I say, ‘This man will go with you,’ he will go. But if I say, ‘That one will not go with you,’ then he will not go.”

So Gideon led the men down to the water. There the Lord said to him, “Separate the men like this: Those who drink the water by using their tongue to lap it up like a dog will be in one group. And
those who bend down to drink will be in the other group.”

6 There were 300 men who used their hands to bring water to their mouth and lapped it like a dog does. All the other people bent down and drank the water.

7 The Lord said to Gideon, “I will use the 300 men who lapped the water like a dog. I will use them to save you, and I will allow you to defeat the Midianites. Let the other men go home.”

8 So Gideon sent the other men of Israel home. He kept the 300 men with him. Those 300 men kept the supplies and the trumpets of the other men who went home.

The Midianites were camped in the valley below Gideon’s camp. 9 During the night the Lord spoke to Gideon and said, “Get up. I will let you defeat the Midianite army. Go down to their camp. 10 If you are afraid to go alone, take your servant Purah with you. Go into the camp of the Midianites. 11 Listen to what they are saying. After that you will not be afraid to attack them.”

So Gideon and his servant Purah went down to the edge of the enemy camp. 12 The Midianites, the Amalekites, and all the other people from the east were camped in that valley. There were so many people that they seemed like a swarm of locusts. It seemed like they had as many camels as there are grains of sand on the seashore.

13 Gideon came to the enemy camp, and he heard a man talking. That man was telling his friend about a dream that he had. He was saying, “I dreamed that a round loaf of bread came rolling into the camp of the Midianites. That loaf of bread hit the tent so hard that the tent turned over and fell flat.”

14 The man’s friend knew the meaning of the dream. He said, “Your dream can only have one meaning. Your dream is about that man from Israel. It is about Gideon son of Joash. It means that God will let Gideon defeat the whole army of Midian.”

15 After he heard the men talking about the dream and what it meant, Gideon bowed down to God. Then Gideon went back to the camp of the Israelites and called out to the people, “Get up! The Lord will help us defeat the Midianites.”

16 Then Gideon divided the 300 men into three groups. He gave each man a trumpet and an empty jar with a burning torch inside it. 17 Then Gideon told the men, “Watch me and do what I do. Follow me to the edge of the enemy camp. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly what I do. 18 You men surround the enemy camp. I and all the men with me will blow our trumpets. When we blow our trumpets, you blow your trumpets too. Then shout these words: ‘For the Lord and for Gideon!’ ”

19 So Gideon and the 100 men with him went to the edge of the enemy camp. They came there just after the enemy changed guards. It was during the middle watch of the night. Gideon and his men blew their trumpets and smashed their jars. 20 Then all three groups of Gideon’s men blew their trumpets and smashed their jars. The men held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands. As they blew their trumpets, they shouted, “A sword for the Lord and a sword for Gideon!”

21 Gideon’s men stayed where they were. But inside the camp, the men of Midian began shouting and running away. 22 When Gideon’s 300 men blew their trumpets, the Lord caused the men of Midian to kill each other with their swords. The enemy army ran away to the city of Beth Shittah, which is toward the city of Zererah. They ran as far as the border of the city of Abel Meholah, which is near the city of Tabbath.

23 Then soldiers from the tribes of Naphtali, Asher, and all of Manasseh were told to chase the Midianites. 24 Gideon sent messengers through all the hill country of Ephraim. The messengers said, “Come down and attack the Midianites. Take control of the river as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan River. Do this before the Midianites get there.”
So they called all men from the tribe of Ephraim. They took control of the river as far as Beth Barah. 25 The men of Ephraim caught two of the Midianite leaders named Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at a place named the Rock of Oreb and Zeeb at a place named the Winepress of Zeeb. They continued chasing the Midianites, but first they cut off the heads of Oreb and Zeeb and took the heads to Gideon. Gideon was at the place where people cross the Jordan River.

8 The men of Ephraim were angry with Gideon. When they found him, they asked, “Why did you treat us this way? Why didn’t you call us when you went to fight against the Midianites?”

But Gideon answered the men of Ephraim, “I have not done as well as you. You people of Ephraim have a much better harvest than my family, the Abiezers. At harvest time you leave more grapes in the vineyard than my family gathers! Isn’t that true? 3 In the same way you have a better harvest now. God allowed you to capture Oreb and Zeeb, the leaders of Midian. How can I compare my success with what you did?” When the men of Ephraim heard Gideon’s answer, they were not as angry as they had been.

Gideon Captures Two Kings of Midian

4 Then Gideon and his 300 men came to the Jordan River and went across to the other side, but they were tired and hungry. 5 Gideon said to the men of the city of Succoth, “Give my soldiers something to eat. They are very tired. We are still chasing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.”

But the leaders of the city of Succoth said to Gideon, “Why should we give your soldiers something to eat? You haven’t caught Zebah and Zalmunna yet.”

Then Gideon said, “The L ORD will help me capture Zebah and Zalmunna. And since you would not give us any food, I will come back and beat you with thorns and briers from the desert.”

8 Gideon left the city of Succoth and went to the city of Penuel. He asked the men of Penuel for food, just as he had asked the men of Succoth. But the men of Penuel gave Gideon the same answer that the men of Succoth had given. 9 So Gideon said to the men of Penuel, “After I win the victory, I will come back here and pull this tower down.”

10 Zebah and Zalmunna and their army were in the city of Karkor. Their army had 15,000 soldiers in it. These soldiers were all who were left of the army of the people of the east. 120,000 strong soldiers of that army had already been killed.

11 Gideon and his men used Tent Dwellers’ Road, which is east of the cities of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the enemy at Karkor. The enemy army did not expect the attack. 12 Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of the Midianites, ran away. But Gideon chased and caught them. Gideon and his men defeated the enemy army.

13 Then Gideon son of Joash returned from the battle. He and his men returned by going through a mountain pass called the Pass of Heres. 14 Gideon captured a young man from the city of Succoth. He asked the young man some questions. The young man wrote down some names for Gideon. The young man wrote down the names of the leaders and elders of the city of Succoth. He gave Gideon the names of 77 men.

15 When Gideon came to the city of Succoth, he said to the men of that city, “Here are Zebah and Zalmunna. You made fun of me by saying, ‘Why should we give food to your tired soldiers? You have not caught Zebah and Zalmunna yet.’ ” 16 Gideon took the elders of the city of Succoth and beat them with thorns and briers from the desert. 17 Gideon also pulled down the tower in the city of Succoth and killed the men living in that city.

18 Then Gideon said to Zebah and Zalmunna, “You killed some men on Mount Tabor. What were the men like?”

Zebah and Zalmunna answered, “They
were like you. Each one of them seemed like a prince.”

19 Gideon said, “Those men were my brothers, my mother’s sons! As the LORD lives, if you had not killed them, I would not kill you now.”

20 Then Gideon turned to Jether, his oldest son, and said, “Kill these kings.” But Jether was only a boy and was afraid, so he would not take out his sword.

21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said to Gideon, “Come on, kill us yourself. You are a man and strong enough to do the job.” So Gideon got up and killed Zebah and Zalmunna. Then Gideon took the decorations shaped like the moon off their camels’ necks.

Gideon Makes an Ephod

22 The Israelites said to Gideon, “You saved us from the Midianites. So now rule over us. We want you, your son, and your grandson to rule over us.”

23 But Gideon told the Israelites, “The LORD will be your ruler. I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you.”

24 Some of the people who the men of Israel defeated were Ishmaelites. And the Ishmaelite men wore gold earrings. So Gideon said to the Israelites, “I want you to do this one thing for me. I want each of you to give me a gold earring from the things you took in the battle.”

25 The Israelites said to Gideon, “We will gladly give you what you want.” So they put a coat down on the ground, and each man threw an earring onto the coat. When the earrings were gathered up, they weighed about 43 pounds.’ This did not include the other gifts the Israelites gave to Gideon. They also gave him jewelry shaped like the moon and jewelry shaped like teardrops. And they gave him purple robes. The kings of the Midianites had worn these things. They also gave him the chains from the camels of the Midianite kings.

27 Gideon used the gold to make an ephod, b which he put in his hometown, the town called Ophrah. All the Israelites worshiped the ephod. In this way the Israelites were not faithful to God—they worshiped the ephod. c The ephod became a trap that caused Gideon and his family to sin.

The Death of Gideon

28 The Midianites were forced to be under the rule of the Israelites. The Midianites did not cause trouble anymore. And the land was at peace for 40 years, as long as Gideon was alive.

29 Gideon d son of Joash went home.

30 Gideon had 70 sons of his own. He had so many sons because he had many wives.

31 He had a slave woman who lived in the city of Shechem. He had a son by her. He named that son Abimelech.

32 So Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age. He was buried in the tomb that Joash, his father, owned. That tomb is in the city of Ophrah, where the family of Abiezer lives. 33 As soon as Gideon died, the Israelites again were not faithful to God—they followed Baal. e They made Baal Berith f their god. 34 The Israelites did not remember the LORD their God, who had saved them from all their enemies living around them. 35 The Israelites were not loyal to the family of Jerub-Baal (Gideon), even though he had done many good things for them.

Abimelech Becomes King

1 Abimelech was the son of Gideon. Abimelech went to his uncles who lived in the city of Shechem. He said to his uncles and all of his mother’s family, “Ask the leaders of the city of Shechem this question: ‘Is it better for you to be

b 8:27 ephod This may have been a special vest or coat like that worn by the high priest (see Ex. 28:2–14), or it may have been a kind of idol.

c 8:27 were not faithful ... ephod Literally, “acted like a prostitute to it.”


1 8:33 were not faithful ... Baal Literally, “they acted like a prostitute to Baal.”

1 8:33 Baal Berith A name that means “Lord of the Agreement.” It shows that the people were confusing the worship of the true God with the worship of local idols. Also in 9:4.
ruled by the 70 sons of Gideon or to be ruled by only one man? Remember, I am your relative.’”

3 Abimelech’s uncles spoke to the leaders of Shechem and asked them that question. The leaders of Shechem decided to follow Abimelech. They said, “After all, he is our brother.” 4 So the leaders of Shechem gave Abimelech 70 pieces of silver. That silver was from the temple of the god Baal Berith. Abimelech used the silver to hire some men. These men were worthless, reckless men. They followed Abimelech wherever he went.

5 Abimelech went to his father’s house at Ophrah and murdered his brothers. He killed the 70 sons of his father Gideon. He killed them all at the same time, \(^a\) but Gideon’s youngest son hid from Abimelech and escaped. The youngest son’s name was Jotham.

6 Then all the leaders in Shechem and the house of Millo \(^b\) came together. Everyone gathered beside the big tree of the pillar in Shechem and made Abimelech their king.

Jotham’s Story
7 Jotham heard that the leaders of the city of Shechem had made Abimelech king. When he heard this, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim \(^c\) and shouted out this story to the people:

“Listen to me you leaders of the city of Shechem. Then let God listen to you.

8 “One day the trees decided to choose a king to rule over them. The trees said to the olive tree, ‘You be king over us.’

9 “But the olive tree said, ‘My oil is used to honor gods and humans. Should I stop making my oil just to go and sway over the other trees?’

10 “Then the trees said to the fig tree, ‘Come and be our king.’

11 “But the fig tree answered, ‘Should I stop making my good, sweet fruit just to go and sway over the other trees?’

12 “Then the trees said to the vine, ‘Come and be our king.’

13 “But the vine answered, ‘My wine makes men and kings happy. Should I stop making my wine just to go and sway over the trees?’

14 “Finally, all the trees said to the thornbush, ‘Come and be our king.’

15 “But the thornbush said to the trees, ‘If you really want to make me king over you, come and find shelter in my shade. But if you don’t want to do this, let fire come out of the thornbush. Let the fire burn even the cedar trees of Lebanon.’

16 “Now if you were completely honest when you made Abimelech king, may you be happy with him. And if you have been fair to Gideon and his family, and if you have treated him as you should, this is also good. \(^b\) But remember what my father did for you. He fought for you and risked his life when he saved you from the Midianites. \(^b\) But now you have turned against my father’s family. You have killed 70 of his sons all at the same time. You made Abimelech the new king over the city of Shechem. He is only the son of my father’s slave girl. But you made him king because he is your relative. \(^b\) So if you have been completely honest to Gideon and his family today, then may you be happy with Abimelech as your king. And may he be happy with you. \(^b\) But leaders of Shechem and the house of Millo, \(^d\) if you have not acted right, may Abimelech destroy you. And may Abimelech be destroyed too!”

21 After Jotham had said this, he ran away and escaped to the city named Beer. He stayed there because he was afraid of his brother Abimelech.

\(a\) 9:5 all at the same time Literally, “on one stone.” Also in verse 16.

\(b\) 9:6 Millo This was probably a well-protected part of the city, perhaps even the palace area. It might have been in the city itself or somewhere near the city.

\(c\) 9:7 Mount Gerizim This mountain is right beside the city of Shechem.

\(d\) 9:20 house of Millo Or “Royal Family of Millo.”
Abimelech Fights Against Shechem

Abimelech ruled the Israelites for three years. 23–24 Abimelech had killed Gideon’s 70 sons—and they were his own brothers. The leaders of Shechem had supported him in doing this evil thing. So God caused trouble between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem. And they began planning ways to hurt Abimelech. 25 The leaders of the city of Shechem did not like Abimelech anymore. They put men on the hilltops to attack and rob everyone who went by. Abimelech found out about the attacks.

26 A man named Gaal son of Ebed and his brothers moved to the city of Shechem. The leaders of the city of Shechem decided to trust and follow Gaal.

27 One day the people of Shechem went out to the vineyards to pick grapes. They squeezed the grapes to make wine. And then they had a party at the temple of their god. The people ate and drank and cursed Abimelech.

28 Then Gaal son of Ebed said, “We are the men of Shechem. Why should we obey Abimelech? Who does he think he is? Abimelech is one of Gideon’s sons, right? And Abimelech made Zebul his officer, right? We should not obey Abimelech. We should follow our own people, men from Hamor. a (Hamor was the father of Shechem.) 29 If you make me the commander of these people, I will destroy Abimelech. I will say to him, ‘Get your army ready and come out to battle.’ ”

30 Zebul was the governor of the city of Shechem. Zebul heard what Gaal son of Ebed said, and he became very angry. 31 Zebul sent messengers to Abimelech in the city of Arumah. b This is the message:

“Gaal son of Ebed and Gaal’s brothers have come to the city of Shechem. They are making trouble for you. Gaal is turning the whole city against you. 32 So now you and your men should come tonight and hide in the fields outside the city. 33 When the sun comes up in the morning, attack the city. Gaal and his men will come out of the city to fight you. When they come out to fight, do what you can to them.”

34 So Abimelech and all his soldiers got up during the night and went to the city. The soldiers separated into four groups. They hid near the city of Shechem. 35 Gaal son of Ebed went out and was standing at the entrance to the gate of the city of Shechem. While Gaal was standing there, Abimelech and his soldiers came out of their hiding places.

36 When Gaal saw the soldiers, he said to Zebul, “Look, there are people coming down from the mountains.” But Zebul said, “You are only seeing the shadows of the mountains. The shadows just look like people.”

37 But again Gaal said, “Look, there are some people coming down from that place over there by Land’s Navel. And there! I saw someone’s head over by Magician’s Tree. c” 38 Zebul said to Gaal, “Why aren’t you bragging now? You said, ‘Who is Abimelech? Why should we obey him?’ You made fun of these men. Now go out and fight them.”

39 So Gaal led the leaders of Shechem out to fight Abimelech. 40 Abimelech and his men chased Gaal and his men. Gaal’s men ran back toward the gate of the city of Shechem, but many were killed before they could get back to the gate.

41 Then Abimelech returned to the city of Arumah. Zebul forced Gaal and his brothers to leave the city of Shechem.

42 The next day the people of Shechem went out to the fields to work. Abimelech found out about it. 43 So Abimelech separated his men into three groups. He wanted to attack the people of Shechem by surprise. So he hid his men in the fields. When he saw the people coming out of

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a 9:28 men from Hamor This refers to native born citizens of Shechem. Hamor was the father of Shechem in a story in Gen. 34. The city of Shechem is said to have been named after Hamor’s son.

b 9:31 in the city of Arumah Or “secretly” or “in Tormah,” the town where Abimelech lived as king. It was probably about eight miles south of Shechem.

c 9:37 Land’s Navel ... Magician’s Tree Two places in the hills near Shechem.
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the city, he jumped up and attacked them. Abimelech and his group ran to a place near the gate to Shechem. The other two groups ran out to the people in the fields and killed them. Abimelech and his men fought against the city of Shechem all that day. They captured the city of Shechem and killed its people. Then Abimelech tore down the city and threw salt over the ruins.

46 There were some people who lived at the Tower of Shechem. When they heard what had happened to Shechem, they gathered together in the safest room of the temple of the god El Berith.

47 Abimelech heard that all the leaders of the Tower of Shechem had gathered together. So Abimelech and all his men went up to Mount Zalmon. Abimelech took an ax and cut off some branches and carried them on his shoulders. Then Abimelech said to the men with him, “Hurry! Do the same thing that I have done.” So all the men cut branches and followed Abimelech. They piled the branches against the safest room of the temple of the god El Berith. Then they set the branches on fire and burned the people in the room. About 1000 men and women living near the Tower of Shechem died.

Abimelech’s Death

50 Then Abimelech and his men went to the city of Thebez and captured that city. But inside the city there was a strong tower, so all the leaders and other men and women of that city ran to the tower. When the people were inside the tower, they locked the door behind them. Then Abimelech went up to the door of the tower and attacked it. Abimelech went up to the door of the tower to burn it. But, while Abimelech was standing at the door of the tower, a woman on the roof dropped a grinding stone on his head. The grinding stone crushed his skull. Abimelech quickly said to the servant who carried his weapons, “Take out your sword and kill me. I want you to kill me so that people will not say, ‘A woman killed Abimelech.’” So the servant stabbed Abimelech with his sword, and he died. The Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead, so they all went back home.

56 In that way God punished Abimelech for all the bad things he had done. Abimelech sinned against his own father by killing his 70 brothers. God also punished the men of the city of Shechem for the bad things they had done. So the things said by Jotham son of Gideon came true.

Tola, the Judge

1 After Abimelech died, God sent another judge to save the Israelites. His name was Tola. He was the son of Puah, who was the son of Dodo. Tola was from the tribe of Issachar and lived in the city of Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim.

2 Tola was a judge for the Israelites for 23 years. Then he died and was buried in the city of Shamir.

Jair, the Judge

3 After Tola died, God sent another judge. His name was Jair, and he lived in the area of Gilead. He was a judge for the Israelites for 22 years. Jair had 30 sons who rode 30 donkeys. These 30 sons controlled 30 towns in the area of Gilead. These towns are called the Towns of Jair to this very day. Jair died and was buried in the city of Kamon.

The Ammonites Fight Against Israel

6 Again the Israelites did what the LORD said was wrong. They began worshiping the false gods Baal and the Ashtoreth. They also worshiped the gods of the people of Aram, the gods of the people of Sidon, the gods of the Moabites, the...
gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines. The Israelites left the Lord and stopped serving him.

7 So the Lord became angry with the Israelites and allowed the Philistines and the Ammonites to defeat them. In that same year those people destroyed the Israelites who lived on the east side of the Jordan River, in the area of Gilead. That is the land where the Amorites had lived. The Israelites suffered for 18 years. 8 The Ammonites then went across the Jordan River to fight against the people of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. The Ammonites brought many troubles to the Israelites.

9 So the Israelites cried to the Lord for help. They said, “God, we have sinned against you. We left our God and worshiped the false god Baal.”

10 So the Lord answered the Israelites, “You cried to me when the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, and the Philistines hurt you. I saved you from these people. 11 You cried to me when the people of Sidon, the Amalekites, and the Midianites hurt you. I also saved you from those people. 12 But you left me and started worshiping other gods, so I refuse to save you again. 13 You like worshiping those gods, so go call to them for help. Let them save you when you are in trouble.”

14 But the Israelites said to the Lord, “We have sinned. Do whatever you want to do to us, but please save us today.” 15 Then the Israelites threw away the foreign gods and began to worship the Lord again. So he felt sorry for them when he saw them suffering.

**Jephthah Is Chosen as a Leader**

16 The Ammonites gathered together for war. Their camp was in the area of Gilead. The Israelites gathered together. Their camp was at the city of Mizpah. 17 The leaders of the people living in the area of Gilead said, “Whoever leads us in the attack against the Ammonites will become the head of all the people living in Gilead.”

11 Jephthah was from the tribe of Gilead. He was a strong soldier. But Jephthah was the son of a prostitute. His father was a man named Gilead. 2 Gilead’s wife had several sons. When they grew up, they did not like Jephthah. They forced Jephthah to leave his hometown. They said to him, “You will not get any of our father’s property, because you are the son of another woman.” 3 So Jephthah went away because of his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. In the land of Tob, some rough men began to follow Jephthah.

4 After a time the Ammonites fought with the Israelites. 5 The Ammonites were fighting against Israel, so the elders in Gilead went to Jephthah. They wanted Jephthah to leave the land of Tob and come back to Gilead.

6 The elders said to Jephthah, “Come and be our leader so that we can fight the Ammonites.”

7 But Jephthah said to the elders of the land of Gilead, “You forced me to leave my father’s house. You hate me. So why are you coming to me now that you are having trouble?”

8 The elders from Gilead said to Jephthah, “That is the reason we have come to you now. Please come with us and fight against the Ammonites. You will be the commander over all the people living in Gilead.”

9 Then Jephthah said to the elders from Gilead, “If you want me to come back to Gilead and fight the Ammonites, I will do it. But if the Lord helps me win, I will be your new leader.”

10 The elders from Gilead said to Jephthah, “The Lord is listening to everything we are saying. And we promise to do everything you tell us to do.”

11 So Jephthah went with the elders from Gilead, and the people made him their leader and commander. Jephthah repeated all of his words in front of the Lord at the city of Mizpah.

**Jephthah Warns the King of Ammon**

12 Jephthah sent messengers to the king of
the Ammonites with this message: “What is the problem between the Ammonites and the Israelites? Why have you come to fight in our land?”

13 The king of the Ammonites said to the messengers of Jephthah, “We are fighting Israel because the Israelites took our land when they came up from Egypt. They took our land from the Arnon River to the Jab- bok River to the Jordan River. Now, tell the Israelites to give our land back to us without fighting for it.”

14 So the messengers of Jephthah took this message back to Jephthah. Then Jephthah sent the messengers to the king of the Ammonites again. 15 They took this message:

“This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take the land of the Moabites or the land of the Ammonites. 16 When the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt, they went into the desert. They went to the Red Sea. Then they went to Kadesh. 17 The Israelites sent messengers to the king of Edom. The messengers asked for a favor. They said, ‘Let the Israelites pass through your land. We want to go to our land.’ But the king of Edom didn’t let us go through his land. We also sent the same message to the king of Moab. But the king of Moab would not let us go through his land either. So the Israelites stayed at Kadesh.

18 Then the Israelites went through the desert and around the edges of the land of Edom and the land of Moab. They traveled east of the land of Moab. They made their camp on the other side of the Arnon River. They did not cross the border of the land of Moab. (The Arnon River was the border of the land of Moab.)

19 Then the Israelites sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites. Sihon was the king of the city of Heshbon. The messengers asked Sihon, ‘Let the Israelites pass through your land. We want to go to our land.’ But King Sihon of the Amorites would not let the Israelites cross his borders. So Sihon gathered all of his people and made a camp at Jahaz. Then the Amorites fought with the Israelites. 20 But the LORD, the God of Israel, helped the Israelites defeat Sihon and his army. So the land of the Amorites became the property of the Israelites. The Israelites got all the land of the Amorites from the Arnon River to the Jab- bok River. The land also went from the desert to the Jordan River.

21 It was the LORD, the God of Israel, who forced the Amorites to leave their land. And he gave the land to the Israelites. Do you think you can make the Israelites leave this land? 22 Surely you can live in the land that your god Chemosh has given to you. So we will live in the land that the LORD our God has given to us. 23 Are you any better than Balak son of Zippor? He was the king of the land of Moab. Did he argue with the Israelites? Did he actually fight with the Israelites? 24 The Israelites have lived in the city of Heshbon and the towns around it for 300 years. They have lived in the city of Aroer and the towns around it for 300 years. They have lived in all the cities along the side of the Arnon River for 300 years. Why have you not tried to take these cities in all that time? 25 The Israelites have not sinned against you. But you are doing a very bad thing against them. May the LORD, the true Judge, decide whether the Israelites or the Ammonites are right.”

26 The king of the Ammonites refused to listen to this message from Jephthah.

\[a\] 11:14 So the messengers … Jephthah This is from the ancient Greek version.

\[b\] 11:25 Balak son of Zippor See Num. 22–24 for his story.
Jephthah’s Promise

29 Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Jephthah, and he passed through the area of Gilead and Manasseh. He went through the city of Mizpah in Gilead on his way to the land of the Ammonites.

30 Jephthah made a promise to the Lord. He said, “If you will let me defeat the Ammonites, 31 I will give you the first thing that comes out of my house when I come back from the victory. I will give it to the Lord as a burnt offering.”

32 Then Jephthah went to the land of the Ammonites. He fought the Ammonites, and the Lord helped him defeat them. 33 He defeated them from the city of Aroer to the city of Minnith. Jephthah captured 20 cities. Then he fought the Ammonites to the city of Abel Keramim. The Israelites defeated them. It was a very great defeat for the Ammonites.

34 Jephthah went back to Mizpah. He went to his house, and his daughter came out to meet him. She was playing a tambourine and dancing. She was his only daughter, and Jephthah loved her very much. He did not have any other sons or daughters. 35 When Jephthah saw that his daughter was the first thing to come out of his house, he tore his clothes to show his sadness. Then he said, “Oh, my daughter! You have ruined me! You have made me very sad! I made a promise to the Lord, and I cannot change it!”

36 Then his daughter said to Jephthah, “Father, you have made a promise to the Lord, so keep your promise. Do what you said you would do. After all, the Lord did help you defeat your enemies, the Ammonites.”

37 Then Jephthah’s daughter said to her father, “But do this one thing for me first. Let me be alone for two months. Let me go to the mountains. I will not marry and have children, so let me and my friends go and cry together.”

38 Jephthah said, “Go.” He sent her away for two months. Jephthah’s daughter and her friends stayed in the mountains. They cried for her because she would not marry and have children.

39 At the end of two months, Jephthah’s daughter returned to her father, and Jephthah did what he had promised. His daughter never had sexual relations with anyone. So this became a custom in Israel.

40 Every year the young women of Israel would go out for four days to remember the daughter of Jephthah from Gilead and to cry for her.

Jephthah and Ephraim

12 Then the men from the tribe of Ephraim called all their soldiers together. Then they went across the river to the city of Zaphon. They said to Jephthah, “Why didn’t you call us to help you fight the Ammonites? We will burn your house down with you in it.”

2 Jephthah answered them, “The Ammonites have been giving us many problems. So my people and I fought against them. I called you, but you didn’t come to help us. I saw that you would not help us, so I risked my own life. I went across the river to fight against the Ammonites. The Lord helped me defeat them. Now why have you come to fight against me today?”

3 Then Jephthah called the men of Gilead together. They fought against the men from the tribe of Ephraim because they had insulted the men of Gilead. They had said, “You men of Gilead are nothing but survivors of the men of Ephraim. Part of you belongs to Ephraim, and part of you belongs to Manasseh.” The men of Gilead defeated the men of Ephraim.

4 The men of Gilead captured the places where people cross the Jordan River. Those places led to the country of Ephraim. Any time a survivor from Ephraim came to the river and said, “Let me cross,” the men of Gilead would ask him, “Are you from Ephraim?” If he said, “No,” they would say, “Say the word ‘Shibboleth.’” The men of Ephraim could not say that word correctly. They pronounced the word “Sibboleth.” So if the man said, “Sibboleth,” then the men of Gilead knew
he was from Ephraim. So they would kill him at the crossing place. They killed 42,000 men from Ephraim.

7 Jephthah was a judge for the Israelites for six years. Then Jephthah from Gilead died and was buried in his town in Gilead.

Ibzan, the Judge
8 After Jephthah, a man named Ibzan was a judge for the Israelites. Ibzan was from the city of Bethlehem. 9 Ibzan had 30 sons and 30 daughters. He told his 30 daughters to marry men who were not his relatives. And he found 30 women who were not his relatives, and his sons married these women. Ibzan was a judge for the Israelites for seven years. 10 Then Ibzan died and was buried in the city of Bethlehem.

Elon, the Judge
11 After Ibzan, a man named Elon was a judge for the Israelites. Elon was from the tribe of Zebulun. He was a judge for the Israelites for ten years. 12 Then Elon from the tribe of Zebulun died and was buried in the city of Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

Abdon, the Judge
13 After Elon died, a man named Abdon son of Hillel was a judge for the Israelites. Abdon was from the city of Pirathon. 14 Abdon had 40 sons and 30 grandsons. They rode on 70 donkeys. 15 Then Abdon son of Hillel died and was buried in the city of Pirathon. Pirathon is in the land of Ephraim in the hill country where the Amalekites lived.

The Birth of Samson
13 1 Again the people started doing what the LORD said was wrong. So the LORD allowed the Philistines to rule over them for 40 years.

2 There was a man named Manoah from the city of Zorah. He was from the tribe of Dan. Manoah had a wife, but she was not able to have any children. 3 The angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah’s wife and said, “You have not been able to have children. But you will become pregnant and have a son. 4 Don’t drink any wine or any other strong drink. Don’t eat any food that is unclean, 5 because you are pregnant, and you will have a son. He will be dedicated to God in a special way. He will be a Nazirite. So you must never cut his hair. He will be God’s special person from before he is born. He will save the Israelites from the power of the Philistines.” 6 Then the woman went to her husband and told him what had happened. She said, “A man of God came to me. He looked like the angel of God. He frightened me. I didn’t ask him where he was from, and he didn’t tell me his name. 7 But he said to me, ‘You are pregnant and will have a son. Don’t drink any wine or other strong drink. Don’t eat any food that is unclean, because the boy will be dedicated to God in a special way. The boy will be God’s special person from before he is born until the day he dies.’” 8 Then Manoah prayed to the LORD. He said, “Lord, I beg you to send the man of God to us again. We want him to teach us what we should do for the boy who will soon be born.” 9 God heard Manoah’s prayer. The angel of God came to the woman again. She was sitting in a field and her husband Manoah was not with her. 10 So the woman ran to tell her husband, “The man is back! The man who came to me the other day is here.” 11 Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, “Are you the same man who spoke to my wife before?” 12 The angel said, “I am.” 13 So Manoah said, “May what you say happen. Tell me, what kind of life will the boy live? What will he do?” 14 The angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Your wife must do everything I told her. 15 She must not eat anything that grows on a grapevine. She must not drink any wine or strong drink. She must not eat any food...
that is unclean. She must do everything that I have commanded her to do.”

15 Then Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, “We would like for you to stay a while. We want to cook a young goat for you to eat.”

16 The angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Even if you keep me from leaving, I will not eat your food. But if you want to prepare something, offer a burnt offering to the LORD.” (Manoah did not understand that the man was really the angel of the LORD.)

17 Then Manoah asked the angel of the LORD, “What is your name? We want to know so that we can honor you when what you have said really happens.”

18 The angel of the LORD said, “Why do you ask my name? It is too amazing for you to believe.”

19 Then Manoah sacrificed a young goat on a rock. He offered the goat and a grain offering as a gift to the LORD and to the One Who Does Amazing Things. b

20 Manoah and his wife were watching what happened. As the flames went up to the sky from the altar, the angel of the LORD went up to heaven in the fire.

When Manoah and his wife saw that, they bowed down with their faces to the ground. 21 He finally understood that the man was really the angel of the LORD. The angel of the LORD did not appear to Manoah and his wife again.

22 Manoah said to his wife, “We have seen God. Surely we will die because of this.”

23 But his wife said to him, “The LORD does not want to kill us. If he wanted to kill us, he would not have accepted our burnt offering and grain offering. He would not have shown us all these things or told us this.”

24 So the woman had a boy. She named him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed him.

Samson’s Marriage

14 Samson went down to the city of Timnah. He saw a young Philistine woman there. 2 When he returned home, he said to his father and mother, “I saw a Philistine woman in Timnah. I want you to get her for me. I want to marry her.”

3 His father and his mother answered, “But surely there is a woman from the Israelites you can marry. Do you have to marry a woman from the Philistines? Their men are not even circumcised.”

But Samson said, “Get that woman for me! She is the one I want!” 4 (Samson’s parents did not know that the LORD wanted this to happen. He was looking for a way to do something against the Philistines. They were ruling over the Israelites at that time.)

5 Samson went down with his father and mother to the city of Timnah. They went as far as the vineyards near that city. There a young lion suddenly roared and jumped at Samson! 6 The Spirit of the LORD came on Samson with great power. He tore the lion apart with his bare hands. It seemed easy to him. It was as easy as tearing apart a young goat. But Samson did not tell his father or mother what he had done.

7 So Samson went down to the city and talked to the Philistine woman. She pleased him. 8 Several days later, Samson came back to marry her. On his way, he went over to look at the dead lion. He found a swarm of bees in its body. They had made some honey. 9 Samson got some of the honey with his hands. He walked along eating the honey. When he came to his parents, he gave them some of the honey, and they ate it too. But Samson did not tell his parents that he had taken the honey from the body of the dead lion.

10 Samson’s father went down to see the Philistine woman. The custom was for the bridegroom to give a party. So Samson gave a party. "When the Philistines saw..."
that he was having a party, they sent 30 men to be with him.

Then Samson said to the 30 men, “I want to tell you a story. This party will last for seven days. Try to find the answer during that time. If you can answer the riddle in that time, I will give you 30 linen shirts and 30 changes of clothes. But if you cannot find the answer, you must give me 30 linen shirts and 30 changes of clothes.” So the 30 men said, “Tell us your riddle, we want to hear it.”

Samson told them this riddle:

“Out of the eater came something to eat.
Out of the strong came something sweet.”

The 30 men tried for three days to find the answer, but they couldn’t.

On the fourth day, the men came to Samson’s wife. They said, “Did you invite us here just to make us poor? You must trick your husband into telling us the answer to the riddle. If you don’t get the answer for us, we will burn you and everyone in your father’s house to death.”

So Samson’s wife went to him and began crying. She said, “You just hate me! You don’t really love me! You told my people a riddle, and you will not tell me the answer.”

Samson said to her, “Look, I have not even told my father and mother. So why should I tell you?”

Samson’s wife cried for the rest of the seven days of the party. So he finally gave her the answer to the riddle on the seventh day. He told her because she kept bothering him. Then she went to her people and told them the answer to the riddle.

So before the sun went down on the seventh day of the party, the Philistine men had the answer. They came to Samson and said,

“What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?”

Then Samson said to them, “If you had not plowed with my cow, you would not have solved my riddle!”

Samson was very angry. The Spirit of the LORD came on Samson with great power. He went down to the city of Ashkelon and killed 30 Philistine men. He took all the clothes and property from the dead bodies and gave them to the men who had answered his riddle. Then he went to his father’s house. So Samson’s wife was given to his best man.

Samson Makes Trouble for the Philistines

At the time of the wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife. He took a young goat with him as a gift. He said, “I am going to my wife’s room.” But her father would not let Samson go in. He said, “I thought you hated her, so I let her marry the best man at the wedding. Her younger sister is more beautiful. Take her younger sister.”

But Samson said to him, “Now I have a good reason to hurt you Philistines. No one will blame me now.”

So Samson went out and caught 300 foxes. He took two foxes at a time and tied their tails together to make pairs. Then he tied a torch between the tails of each pair of foxes. He lit the torches that were between the foxes’ tails and let them run through the grain fields of the Philistines. In this way he burned up the plants growing in their fields and the stacks of grain they had cut. He also burned up their vineyards and their olive trees.

The Philistines asked, “Who did this?” Someone told them, “Samson, the son-in-law of the man from Timnah, did this. He did this because his father-in-law gave Samson’s wife to the best man at his wedding.” So the Philistines burned Samson’s wife and her father to death.

Then Samson said to the Philistines, “You did this bad thing to me, so now I will do bad things to you. Then I will be finished with you!”

Samson attacked the Philistines and killed many of them. Then he went and
stayed in a cave in a place named the Rock of Etam.

9 The Philistines went to the land of Judah and stopped near a place named Lehi. Their army camped there. 10 The men of the tribe of Judah asked them, “Why have you Philistines come here to fight us?” They answered, “We have come to get Samson. We want to make him our prisoner. We want to punish him for what he has done to our people.”

11 Then 3000 men from the tribe of Judah went to the cave near the Rock of Etam and said to Samson, “What have you done to us? Don’t you know that the Philistines rule over us?”

Samson answered, “I only punished them for what they did to me.”

12 Then they said to Samson, “We have come to tie you up. We will give you to the Philistines.”

Samson said to the men from Judah, “Promise me that you yourselves will not hurt me.”

13 The men from Judah said, “We agree. We will just tie you up and give you to the Philistines. We promise that we will not kill you.” So they tied Samson with two new ropes and led him up from the cave in the rock.

14 When Samson came to the place called Lehi, the Philistines came to meet him. They were shouting with joy. Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Samson with great power. Samson broke the ropes—they were like burned strings falling from his arms and the ropes on his hands seemed to melt away. 15 Samson found a jawbone of a dead donkey and killed 1000 Philistine men with it.

16 Later, Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, who was from Sorek Valley.

5 The rulers of the Philistines went to Delilah and said, “We want to know what makes Samson so strong. Try to trick him into telling you his secret. Then we will know how to capture him and tie him up. Then we will be able to control him. If you do this, each one of us will give you 28 pounds of silver.”

18 Samson was very thirsty. So he cried to the LORD. He said, “I am your servant. You gave me this great victory. Please don’t let me die from thirst now. Please don’t let me be captured by men who are not even circumcised.”

19 There is a hole in the ground at Lehi. God made that hole crack open, and water came out. Samson drank the water and felt better. He felt strong again. So he named that water spring En Hakkore. 20 It is still there in the city of Lehi today.

20 Samson was a judge for the Israelites for 20 years during the time of the Philistines.

Samson Goes to the City of Gaza

16 One day Samson went to the city of Gaza. He saw a prostitute there and went in to stay the night with her. 2 Someone told the people of Gaza, “Samson has come here.” They wanted to kill him, so they surrounded the city. They hid near the city gate and waited all night for him. They were very quiet all night long. They had said to each other, “When morning comes, we will kill Samson.”

3 But Samson only stayed with the prostitute until midnight. Then he got up and grabbed the doors of the city gate and pulled them loose from the wall. He pulled down the doors, the two posts, and the bars that lock the doors shut. He put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill near the city of Hebron.

Samson and Delilah

4 Later, Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, who was from Sorek Valley.

5 The rulers of the Philistines went to Delilah and said, “We want to know what makes Samson so strong. Try to trick him into telling you his secret. Then we will know how to capture him and tie him up. Then we will be able to control him. If you do this, each one of us will give you 28 pounds of silver.”

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6So Delilah said to Samson, “Tell me why you are so strong. How could someone tie you up and make you helpless?”

7Samson answered, “Someone would have to tie me up with seven fresh, new bowstrings. a If someone did that, I would be as weak as any other man.”

8Then the rulers of the Philistines brought seven fresh, new bowstrings to Delilah, and she tied Samson with the bowstrings. b Some men were hiding in the next room. Delilah said to Samson, “Samson, the Philistine men are going to capture you!” But Samson easily broke the bowstrings. They snapped like a string when it comes too close to a flame. So the Philistines did not find out the secret of Samson’s strength.

9Then Delilah said to Samson, “You lied to me. You made me look foolish. Please tell me the truth. How could someone tie you up?”

10Then Delilah said to Samson, “You lied to me. You made me look foolish. Please tell me the truth. How could someone tie you up?”

11Samson said, “Someone would have to tie me up with new ropes. They would have to tie me with ropes that have not been used before. If someone did that, I would become as weak as any other man.”

12So Delilah took some new ropes and tied up Samson. Some men were hiding in the next room. Then Delilah called out to him, “Samson, the Philistine men are going to capture you!” But he broke the ropes easily as if they were threads.

13Then Delilah said to Samson, “You lied to me again. You made me look foolish. Now, tell me how someone could tie you up.”

Samson said, “If you use the loom to weave the seven braids of hair on my head and tighten it with a pin, I will become as weak as any other man.”

14Later, Samson went to sleep, so Delilah used the loom to weave the seven braids of hair on his head. b Then Delilah fastened the loom to the ground with a tent peg. Again she called out to him, “Samson, the Philistine men are going to capture you!” Samson pulled up the tent peg, the loom, and the shuttle. c

15Then Delilah said to Samson, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when you don’t even trust me? You refuse to tell me your secret. This is the third time you made me look foolish. You haven’t told me the secret of your great strength.” 16She kept bothering Samson day after day. He got so tired of her asking him about his secret that he felt like he was going to die.

17Finally, Samson told Delilah everything. He said, “I have never had my hair cut. I was dedicated to God before I was born. If someone shaved my head, I would lose my strength. I would become as weak as any other man.”

18Delilah saw that Samson had told her his secret. She sent a message to the rulers of the Philistines. She said, “Come back again. Samson has told me everything.” So the rulers of the Philistines came back and brought the money that they had promised to give her.

19Delilah got Samson to go to sleep with his head lying in her lap. Then she called in a man to shave off the seven braids of Samson’s hair. In this way she made Samson weak, and his strength left him. 20Then Delilah called out to him, “Samson, the Philistine men are going to capture you!” He woke up and thought, “I will escape as I did before and free myself.” But Samson did not know that the Lord had left him.

21The Philistine men captured Samson. They tore out his eyes and took him down to the city of Gaza. Then they put chains on him to keep him from running away. They put him in prison and made him work grinding grain.

22But his hair began to grow again.

23The Philistine rulers came together to celebrate. They were going to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They said, “Our god helped us defeat Samson our enemy.” 24When the Philistines saw Samson, they praised their god. They said,
“This man destroyed our people! He killed many of our people! But our god helped us take our enemy!”

The people were having a good time at the celebration. So they said, “Bring Samson out. We want to make fun of him.” So they brought Samson from the prison and made fun of him. They made him stand between the columns in the temple of the god Dagon. A servant was holding his hand. Samson said to him, “Put me where I can feel the columns that hold this temple up. I want to lean against them.”

The temple was crowded with men and women. All the Philistine rulers were there. There were about 3000 men and women on the roof of the temple. They were laughing and making fun of Samson.

Then Samson said a prayer to the Lord, “Lord God, remember me. God, please give me strength one more time. Let me do this one thing to punish these Philistines for tearing out both of my eyes!”

Then Samson took hold of the two columns in the center of the temple that supported the whole temple. He braced himself between the two columns. One column was at his right side and the other at his left side. Samson said, “Let me die with these Philistines!” Then he pushed as hard as he could, and the temple fell on the rulers and everyone in it. In this way Samson killed many more Philistines when he died than when he was alive.

Samson’s brothers and all the people in his father’s family went down to get his body. They brought him back and buried him in his father’s tomb, which is between the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol. Samson was a judge for the Israelites for 20 years.

Micah’s Idols

17 There was a man named Micah who lived in the hill country of Ephraim. Micah said to his mother, “Do you remember that someone stole 28 pounds of silver from you? I heard you say a curse about that. Well, I have the silver. I took it.”

His mother said, “The Lord bless you, my son.” Micah gave the 28 pounds of silver back to his mother. Then she said, “I will give this silver as a special gift to the Lord. I will give it to my son so that he can make a statue and cover it with the silver. So now, son, I give the silver back to you.”

But Micah gave the silver back to his mother. So she took about 5 pounds of the silver and gave them to a silversmith. He used the silver to make a statue covered with silver. The statue was put in Micah’s house. Micah had a temple for worshipping idols. He made an ephod and some house idols. Then Micah chose one of his sons to be his priest. (At that time the Israelites did not have a king, so everyone did what they thought was right.)

There was a young man who was a Levite from the city of Bethlehem in Judah. He had been living among the tribe of Judah. He left Bethlehem to look for another place to live. As he was traveling, he came to Micah’s house in the hill country of the land of Ephraim. Micah asked him, “Where have you come from?”

The young man answered, “I am a Levite from the city of Bethlehem in Judah. I am looking for a place to live.”

Then Micah said to him, “Live with me. Be my father and my priest. I will give you 4 ounces of silver each year. I will also give you clothes and food.”

The Levite did what Micah asked. The young Levite agreed to live with Micah. He became like one of Micah’s own sons. Micah chose him to be his priest. So the young man became a priest and lived in Micah’s house. And Micah said, “Now I know that the Lord will be good to me. I know this because I have a man from the tribe of Levi to be my priest.”

a 17:2 28 pounds Literally, “1100 shekels” (12.6 kg). Also in verse 3.

b 17:4 about 5 pounds Literally, “200 shekels,” (9.3 kg).

c 17:4 silversmith A person who makes things from silver.

d 17:5 ephod This may have been a special vest or coat like that worn by the high priest (see Ex. 28:2–14), or it may have been a kind of idol. Also in 18:14.

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Dan Captures the City of Laish

1At that time the Israelites did not have a king. And the tribe of Dan was still looking for a place to live. They did not have their own land yet. The other tribes of Israel already had their land, but the tribe of Dan had not taken their land yet.

2So the tribe of Dan sent five soldiers to look for some land. They went to search for a good place to live. These five men were from the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol. They were chosen because they were from all the families of Dan. They were told, “Go, look for some land.”

3The five men came to the hill country of Ephraim. They came to Micah’s house and spent the night there. When the five men came close to Micah’s house, they heard the voice of the young Levite. They recognized his voice, so they stopped at Micah’s house. They asked the young man, “Who brought you to this place? What are you doing? Why are you here?”

4The young man told them what Micah had done for him. “Micah hired me,” he said. “I am his priest.”

5So they said to him, “Please ask God if our search for a place to live will be successful.”

6The priest said to the five men, “Yes. Go in peace. The Lord will lead you on your way.”

7So the five men left. They came to the city of Laish and saw that the people of that city lived in safety. They were ruled by the people of Sidon. Everything was peaceful and quiet. The people had plenty of everything, and they didn’t have any enemies nearby to hurt them. Also they lived a long way from the city of Sidon, and they did not have any agreements with the people of Aram.

8The five men went back to the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol. Their relatives asked them, “What did you learn?”

9The five men answered, “We have found some land, and it is very good. We should attack them. Don’t wait! Let’s go and take that land! When you come to that place, you will see that there is plenty of land. There is plenty of everything there. You will also see that the people are not expecting an attack. Surely God has given that land to us.”

10So 600 men from the tribe of Dan left the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol. They were ready for war. On their way to the city of Laish, they stopped near the city of Kiriath Jearim in the land of Judah. They set up a camp there. That is why the place west of Kiriath Jearim is named Mahaneh Dan to this very day. From there the 600 men traveled on to the hill country of Ephraim. Then they came to Micah’s house.

14So the five men who had explored the land around Laish spoke. They said to their relatives, “There is an ephod in one of these houses. And there are also household gods, a carved statue, and a silver idol. You know what to do.” So they stopped at Micah’s house, where the young Levite lived. They asked the young man how he was. The 600 men from the tribe of Dan stood at the entrance of the gate. They all had their weapons and were ready for war.

17–18The five spies went into the house. The priest stood just outside by the gate with the 600 men who were ready for war. The men took the carved idol, the ephod, the household idols, and the silver idol. The young Levite priest said, “What are you doing?”

19The five men answered, “Be quiet! Don’t say a word. Come with us. Be our father and our priest. You must choose. Is it better for you to be a priest for just one man or for a whole tribe of Israelites with many family groups?”

20This made the Levite happy. So he took the ephod, the household idols, and the idol. He went with the men from the tribe of Dan.

21Then the 600 men from the tribe of Dan and the Levite priest turned and left Micah’s house. They put their little
children, their animals, and all their things in front of them.  

22 The men from the tribe of Dan went a long way from that place. But the people living near Micah met together. Then they began chasing the men of Dan and caught up with them. 23 The men with Micah were shouting at the men of Dan. The men of Dan turned around and said to Micah, “What’s the problem? Why are you shouting?”  

24 Micah answered, “You men from Dan took my idols. I made them for myself. You have also taken my priest. What do I have left now? How can you ask me, ‘What’s the problem?’”  

25 The men from the tribe of Dan answered, “You had better not argue with us. Some of our men become angry easily. If you shout at us, they will attack you. You and your families will be killed.”  

26 Then the men of Dan turned around and went on their way. Micah knew that these men were too strong for him, so he went back home.  

27 So the men of Dan took the idols that Micah made. They also took the priest who had been with Micah. Then they came to Laish. They attacked the people living in Laish. Those people were at peace. They were not expecting an attack. The men of Dan killed them with their swords and then burned the city.  

28 The people living in Laish did not have anyone to rescue them. They lived too far from the city of Sidon for the people there to help. And the people of Laish did not have any agreements with the people of Aram—so they did not help them. The city of Laish was in a valley, which belonged to the town of Beth Rehob. The people from Dan built a new city in that place, and it became their home. 29 The people of Dan gave the city a new name. That city had been called Laish, but they changed the name to Dan. They named the city after their ancestor Dan, one of the sons of Israel.  

30 The people of the tribe of Dan set up the idol in the city of Dan. They made Jonathan son of Gershom their priest. Gershom was the son of Moses. 3 Jonathan and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time when the Israelites were taken into captivity. 31 The people of Dan set up for themselves the idol that Micah had made. That idol was there the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.  

A Levite and His Woman Servant  

1 At that time the Israelites did not have a king.  

There was a Levite who lived far back in the hill country of Ephraim. He had taken as a wife a slave woman. She was from the city of Bethlehem in the country of Judah. 2 But his slave woman had an argument with him. She left him and went back to her father’s house in Bethlehem in Judah. She stayed there for four months. 3 Then her husband went after her. He wanted to speak kindly to her so that she would come back to him. He took with him his servant and two donkeys. The Levite came to her father’s house. Her father saw the Levite and came out to greet him. The father was very happy. 4 The woman’s father led the Levite into his house. The Levite’s father-in-law invited him to stay. So he stayed for three days. He ate, drank, and slept in his father-in-law’s house.  

5 On the fourth day, they got up early in the morning. The Levite was getting ready to leave. But the young woman’s father said to his son-in-law, “Eat something first. After you eat, you can go.” 6 So the Levite and his father-in-law sat down to eat and drink together. After that the young woman’s father said to the Levite, “Please stay tonight. Relax and enjoy yourself.” So they both ate together. 7 The Levite got up to leave, but his father-in-law persuaded him to stay the night again.  

8 Then, on the fifth day, the Levite got up early in the morning. He was ready to leave. But the woman’s father said to his son-in-law, “Eat something first. Relax and stay until this afternoon.” So they both ate together again.

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Then the Levite, his slave woman, and his servant got up to leave. But the young woman’s father said, “It is almost dark. The day is almost gone. So stay the night here and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow morning you can get up early and go on your way.”

But the Levite did not want to stay another night. He took his two donkeys and his slave woman. He traveled as far as the city of Jebus (that is, Jerusalem).

The day was almost over. They were near the city of Jebus. So the servant said to his master, the Levite, “Let’s stop at this Jebusite city. Let’s stay the night here.”

But his master, the Levite man, said, “No, we will not go inside a strange city. Those people are not Israelites. We will go to the city of Gibeah."

The Levite said, “Come on. Let’s try to make it to Gibeah or Ramah. We can stay the night in one of those cities.”

So the Levite and those with him traveled on. The sun was going down just as they entered the city of Gibeah. Gibeah is in the area that belongs to the tribe of Benjamin. They planned to stop there and stay the night. They came to the city square and sat down, but no one invited them home to stay the night.

That evening an old man came into the city from the fields. His home was in the hill country of Ephraim, but now he was living in the city of Gibeah. (The men of Gibeah were from the tribe of Benjamin.) The old man saw the traveler in the public square and asked, “Where are you going? Where did you come from?”

The Levite answered, “We have come from Bethlehem in Judah, where I went for a visit. Now I am on my way home, which is a long way into the hill country of Ephraim. I expected that someone here would invite us in for the night, but no one has. We already have straw and food for our donkeys. There is also bread and wine for me, the young woman, and my servant. We don’t need anything.”

The old man said, “You are welcome to stay at my house. I will give you anything you need, but don’t stay the night in the public square.” Then the old man took the Levite and the people with him to his house. He fed their donkeys. They washed their feet and then had something to eat and drink.

While the Levite and those who were with him were enjoying themselves, some very bad men from the city surrounded the house. They began beating on the door. They shouted at the old man who owned the house. They said, “Bring out the man who came to your house. We want to have sex with him.”

The old man went outside and said to them, “My friends, don’t do such an evil thing! This man is a guest in my house. Don’t commit this terrible sin. Look, here is my daughter. She has never had sex before. I will bring her out to you now. This man also has a slave woman. You can use them any way you want, but don’t do such a terrible sin against this man.”

But those evil men would not listen to the old man. So the Levite took his slave woman and put her outside with them. They hurt her and raped her all night long. Then, at dawn, they let her go. At dawn, the woman came back to the house where her master was staying. She fell down at the front door and lay there until it was daylight.

The Levite got up early the next morning. He wanted to go home. He opened the door to go outside, and a hand fell across the threshold of the door. There was his slave woman. She had fallen down against the door. The Levite said to her, “Get up; let’s go.” But there was no answer. The Levite put her body on his donkey and went home. When he arrived at his house, he took a knife and cut her body into 12 parts. Then he sent the 12 parts of the woman to each of the areas where the...
Israelites lived. Everyone who saw this said, “Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel before. We haven’t seen anything like this from the time we came out of Egypt. Discuss this and tell us what to do.”

The War Between Israel and Benjamin

1So all the Israelites joined together. They all came together to stand before the LORD in the city of Mizpah. People came from everywhere in Israel. Even the Israelites from Gilead were there. The leaders of all the tribes of Israel were there. They took their places in the public meeting of God’s people. There were 400,000 soldiers with swords in that place. The people from the tribe of Benjamin heard that the Israelites were meeting together in Mizpah. The Israelites said, “Tell us how this terrible thing happened.”

2So the Levite, the husband of the woman who had been murdered, told them the story. He said, “My slave woman and I came to the city of Gibeah in the area of Benjamin. We spent the night there. But during the night the men of the city of Gibeah came to the house where I was staying. They surrounded the house, and they wanted to kill me. They raped my slave woman, and she died. So I took her and cut her into pieces. Then I sent one piece to each of the tribes of Israel. I sent the 12 pieces to the lands we have received. I did that because the people of Benjamin have done this terrible thing in Israel. Now, all you men of Israel, speak up. Give your decision about what we should do.”

3Then all the people stood up at the same time. They said together, “None of us will go home. No, not one of us will go back to his house. Now this is what we will do to the city of Gibeah. We will throw lots to let God show us who will lead the attack. We will choose ten men from every 100 from all the tribes of Israel. And we will choose 100 men from every 1000. We will choose 1000 men from every 10,000. These men we have chosen will get supplies for the army. Then the army will go to the city of Gibeah in the area of Benjamin. The army will punish those people for the terrible thing they did among the Israelites.”

4So all the men of Israel gathered together at the city of Gibeah, united together and in agreement as to what they were doing. The tribes of Israel sent men to the tribe of Benjamin with this message: “What about this terrible thing that some of your men have done? Send the bad men from the city of Gibeah to us so that we can put them to death. We must remove the evil from among the Israelites.”

5But the people from the tribe of Benjamin would not listen to the messengers from their relatives, the other Israelites.

6The people from the tribe of Benjamin left their cities and went to the city of Gibeah. They went to Gibeah to fight against the other tribes of Israel. The people from the tribe of Benjamin got 26,000 soldiers together who were trained for war. They also had 700 trained soldiers from the city of Gibeah. There were also 700 trained soldiers who were trained to fight with their left hand. Each one of them could use a sling with great skill. They all could use a sling to throw a stone at a hair and not miss!

7All the tribes of Israel, except Benjamin, gathered together 400,000 fighting men with swords. Each one was a trained soldier. The Israelites went up to the city of Bethel. At Bethel they asked God, “Which tribe will be first to attack the tribe of Benjamin?”

8The LORD answered, “The tribe of Judah will go first.”

9The next morning the Israelites got up. They made a camp near the city of Gibeah. Then the army of Israel took their positions for battle against the army of Benjamin at the city of Gibeah. Then the army of Benjamin came out of the city of Gibeah. The army of Benjamin killed
22,000 men in the army of Israel during the battle that day.

22-23 The Israelites went to the LORD and cried until evening. They asked the LORD, “Should we go to fight the people of Benjamin again? They are our relatives.”

The LORD answered, “Go fight against them.” The men of Israel encouraged each other. So they again went out to fight, as they had done the first day.

24 Then the army of Israel came near the army of Benjamin. This was the second day of the war. 25 The army of Benjamin came out of the city of Gibeah to attack the army of Israel on the second day. This time, the army of Benjamin killed another 18,000 men from the army of Israel. All the men in the army of Israel were trained soldiers.

26 Then all the Israelites went up to the city of Bethel. There they sat down and cried to the LORD. They did not eat anything all day, until evening. They also offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD. 27 The men of Israel asked the LORD a question. (In those days God’s Box of the Agreement was there at Bethel. Phinehas was the priest who served God there. Phinehas was the son of Eleazar. Eleazar was the son of Aaron.) The Israelites asked, “The people of Benjamin are our relatives. Should we again go to fight against them? Or should we stop fighting?”

The LORD answered, “Go. Tomorrow I will help you defeat them.”

29 Then the army of Israel hid some men all around the city of Gibeah. 30 The army of Israel went to fight against the city of Gibeah on the third day. They got ready for battle as they had done before. 31 The army of Benjamin came out of the city of Gibeah to fight the army of Israel. The army of Israel backed up and let the army of Benjamin chase them. In this way the army of Benjamin was tricked into leaving the city far behind them.

The army of Benjamin began to kill some of the men in the army of Israel, as they had done before. They killed about 30 men from Israel. They killed some of them in the fields, and they killed some of them on the roads. One road led to the city of Bethel. The other road led to the city of Gibeah. 32 The men of Benjamin said, “We are winning as before!”

The men of Israel were running away, but it was a trick. They wanted to lead the men of Benjamin away from their city and onto the roads. 33 So all the men ran away. They stopped at a place named Baal Tamar. Some of the men of Israel were hiding west of Gibeah. They ran from their hiding places. 34,000 of Israel’s best-trained soldiers attacked the city of Gibeah. The fighting was very heavy. But the army of Benjamin did not know that a terrible thing was about to happen to them.

35 The LORD used the army of Israel and defeated the army of Benjamin. On that day the army of Israel killed 25,100 soldiers from Benjamin. All of them had been trained for war. 36 So the people of Benjamin saw that they were defeated.

The army of Israel had moved back because they were depending on the surprise attack. They had men hiding near Gibeah. 37 The men who were hiding rushed into the city of Gibeah. They spread out and killed everyone in the city with their swords. 38 Now the men of Israel had made a plan with the men who were hiding. The men who were hiding were supposed to send a special signal. They were supposed to make a big cloud of smoke.

39-41 The army of Benjamin had killed about 30 Israelite soldiers. So the men of Benjamin were saying, “We are winning, as before.” But then a big cloud of smoke began to rise from the city. The men of Benjamin turned around and saw the smoke. The whole city was on fire. Then the army of Israel stopped running away. They turned around and began to fight. The men of Benjamin were afraid because they knew that a terrible thing had happened to them.

42 So the army of Benjamin ran away from the army of Israel. They ran toward
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the desert. But they could not escape the fighting. And the men of Israel came out of the cities and killed them. 43 The men of Israel surrounded the men of Benjamin and began chasing them. They did not let them rest. They defeated them in the area east of Gibeah. 44 So 18,000 brave and strong fighters from the army of Benjamin were killed.

45 The army of Benjamin turned around and ran toward the desert. They ran to a place called the Rock of Rimmon, but the army of Israel killed 5000 soldiers from Benjamin along the roads. They kept chasing the men of Benjamin. They chased them as far as a place named Gidom. The army of Israel killed 2000 more men from Benjamin in that place.

46 On that day 25,000 men of the army of Benjamin were killed. All of them fought bravely with their swords. 47 But 600 men from Benjamin ran into the desert to the place called the Rock of Rimmon and stayed there for four months. 48 The men of Israel went back to the land of Benjamin. They killed the people and all the animals in every city. They destroyed everything they could find and burned every city they came to.

Getting Wives for the Men of Benjamin

1 At Mizpah, the men of Israel made a promise. This was their promise: “Not one of us will let his daughter marry a man from the tribe of Benjamin.”

2 The Israelites went to the city of Bethel. There they sat before God until evening. They cried loudly as they sat there. 3 They said to God, “LORD, you are the God of the Israelites. Why has this terrible thing happened to us? Why has one tribe of the Israelites been taken away?”

4 Early the next day, the Israelites built an altar. They put burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to God on that altar. 5 Then the Israelites said, “Are there any tribes of Israel who did not come here to meet with us before the LORD?” They asked this question because they had made a serious promise. They promised that anyone who did not come together with the other tribes at the city of Mizpah would be killed.

6 Then the Israelites felt sorry for their relatives, the people of Benjamin. They said, “Today, one tribe has been separated from Israel. 7 We made a promise with an oath before the LORD. We promised not to allow our daughters to marry a man from Benjamin. How can we make sure that the men of Benjamin will have wives?”

8 Then the Israelites asked, “Which one of the tribes of Israel did not come here to Mizpah? We have come together before the LORD. Surely one family was not here!” Then they found that no one from the city of Jabesh Gilead had met together with the other Israelites. 9 The Israelites counted everyone to see who was there and who was not. They found that no one from Jabesh Gilead was there. 10 So the Israelites sent 12,000 soldiers to the city of Jabesh Gilead. They told the soldiers, “Go to Jabesh Gilead, and use your swords to kill everyone who lives there, even the women and children. 11 You must do this! You must kill every man in Jabesh Gilead and every woman who has had sexual relations with a man. But do not kill any woman who has never had sex with a man.” So the soldiers did these things. 12 The 12,000 soldiers found 400 young women in the city of Jabesh Gilead who had never had sex with a man. They brought these women to the camp at Shiloh in the land of Canaan.

13 Then the Israelites sent a message to the men of Benjamin. They offered to make peace with the men of Benjamin. The men of Benjamin were at the place named the Rock of Rimmon. 14 So the men of Benjamin came back to Israel. The Israelites gave them the women from Jabesh Gilead who they had not killed. But there were not enough women for all the men of Benjamin.

15 The Israelites felt sorry for the men of Benjamin. They felt sorry for them.

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because the LORD had separated them from the other tribes of Israel. 16 The elders of the Israelites said, “The women of the tribe of Benjamin have been killed. Where can we get wives for the men of Benjamin who are still alive? 17 The men of Benjamin who are still alive must have children to continue their families. This must be done so that a tribe in Israel will not die out! 18 But we cannot allow our daughters to marry the men of Benjamin. We have made this promise: ‘Bad things will happen to anyone who gives a wife to a man of Benjamin.’ 19 We have an idea! This is the time for the festival of the LORD at the city of Shiloh. This festival is celebrated every year there.” (The city of Shiloh is north of the city of Bethel and east of the road that goes from Bethel to Shechem. And it is also to the south of the city of Lebanon.)

20 So the elders told the men of Benjamin about their idea. They said, “Go and hide in the vineyards. 21 Watch for the time during the festival when the young women from Shiloh come out to join the dancing. Then run out from where you are hiding in the vineyards. Each of you should take one of the young women from the city of Shiloh. Take them to the land of Benjamin and marry them. 22 The fathers or brothers of the young women will come and complain to us. But we will say, ‘Be kind to the men of Benjamin. Let them marry the women. We could not get wives for each of them during the war. And you did not willingly give the women to the men of Benjamin, so you did not break your promise.’”

23 So that is what the men of the tribe of Benjamin did. While the young women were dancing, each man caught one of them. They took them away and married them. Then they went back to their land. The men of Benjamin built cities again in that land, and they lived in them. 24 Then the Israelites went home. They went to their own land and tribe.

25 In those days the Israelites did not have a king, so everyone did whatever they thought was right.
Famine in Judah

1 Long ago, during the time the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man named Elimelech left the town of Bethlehem in Judah. He, his wife, and his two sons moved to the country of Moab. 2 The man’s wife was named Naomi, and his two sons were named Mahlon and Kilion. They were from the Ephrathah family of Bethlehem in Judah. The family traveled to the hill country of Moab and stayed there.

Later, Naomi’s husband, Elimelech, died, so only Naomi and her two sons were left. 4 Her sons married women from the country of Moab. One wife’s name was Orpah, and the other wife’s name was Ruth. They lived in Moab about ten years; 5 then Mahlon and Kilion also died. So Naomi was left alone without her husband or her two sons.

Naomi Goes Home

6 While Naomi was in the country of Moab, she heard that the LORD had helped his people. He had given food to his people in Judah. So Naomi decided to leave the hill country of Moab and go back home. Her daughters-in-law also decided to go with her. 7 They left the place where they had been living and started walking back to the land of Judah.

8 Then Naomi told her daughters-in-law, “Each of you should go back home to your mother. You have been very kind to me and my sons who are now dead. So I pray that the LORD will be just as kind to you. 9 I pray that the LORD will help each of you find a husband and a good home.” Naomi kissed her daughters-in-law, and they all started crying.

10 Then the daughters said, “But we want to come with you and go to your family.” 11 But Naomi said, “No, daughters, go back to your own homes. Why should you go with me? I can’t have any more sons to be your husbands. 12 Go back home. I am too old to have a new husband. Even if I thought I could be married again, I could not help you. If I became pregnant tonight and had two sons, 13 you would have to wait until they grew to become men before you could marry them. I cannot make you wait that long for husbands. That would make me very sad. And I am already sad enough—the LORD has done many things to me!” 14 So again they cried very much. Then Orpah kissed Naomi goodbye, but Ruth hugged her and stayed.

15 Naomi said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her own people and her own gods. You should do the same.” 16 But Ruth said, “Don’t force me to leave you! Don’t force me to go back to my own people. Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go. Wherever you sleep, I will sleep. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. 17 Where you die, I will die, and that is where I will be buried. I ask the LORD to punish me if I don’t keep this promise: Only death will separate us.”

The Homecoming

18 Naomi saw that Ruth wanted very much to go with her. So Naomi stopped arguing with her. 19 Naomi and Ruth traveled until they came to the town of Bethlehem. When the two women entered Bethlehem, all the people were very excited. They said, “Is this Naomi?”

a 1:17 I ask … separate us Literally, “May the LORD do this to me, and even more, unless death separates us!”
But Naomi told the people, “Don’t call me Naomi; call me Marah. Use this name because God All-Powerful has made my life very sad. I had everything I wanted when I left, but now, the Lord brings me home with nothing. The Lord has made me sad, so why should you call me ‘Happy’? God All-Powerful has given much trouble to me.”

So Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth, the Moabite, came back from the hill country of Moab. These two women came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Ruth Meets Boaz

There was a rich man named Boaz living in Bethlehem. Boaz was one of Naomi’s close relatives from Elimelech’s family.

One day Ruth, the Moabite, said to Naomi, “I think I will go to the fields. Maybe I can find someone who will be kind to me and let me gather the grain they leave in their field.”

Naomi said, “Fine, daughter, go ahead.”

So Ruth went to the fields. She followed the workers who were cutting the grain and gathered the grain that was left. It happened that part of the field belonged to Boaz, the man from Elimelech’s family.

Later, Boaz came to the field from Bethlehem and greeted his workers. He said, “The Lord be with you!” And the workers answered, “And may the Lord bless you!”

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen, child. Stay here in my field to gather grain for yourself. There is no need for you to go to any other field. Continue following behind my women workers. Watch to see which fields they go into to cut the grain and follow them. I have warned the young men not to bother you. When you are thirsty, go and drink from the same water jug my men drink from.”

Then Ruth bowed very low to the ground. She said to Boaz, “I am a foreigner, so I am surprised you even noticed me.”

Boaz answered her, “I know about all the help you have given to your mother-in-law Naomi. I know you helped her even after your husband died. And I know that you left your father and mother and your own country and came here to this country. You did not know anyone from this country, but you came here with Naomi. The Lord will reward you for all the good things you have done. The Lord, the God of Israel, will pay you in full. You have come to him for safety, and he will protect you.”

Then Ruth said, “I hope I can continue to please you, sir. You are very kind. I am only a servant and not even one of your own servants. But you have said kind words to me and comforted me.”

At mealtime, Boaz told Ruth, “Come and eat some of our bread. Here, dip your bread in our vinegar.” So Ruth sat down with the workers. Boaz gave her some roasted grain. Ruth ate until she was full, and there was some food left. Then Ruth got up and went back to work.

Then Boaz told his servants, “Let Ruth gather even around the piles of grain. Don’t stop her. And make her work easier by dropping some full heads of grain this morning and asked me if she could follow the workers and gather the grain that was left on the ground. She rested only a short time in that shelter.”

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen, child. Stay here in my field to gather grain for yourself. There is no need for you to go to any other field. Continue following behind my women workers. Watch to see which fields they go into to cut the grain and follow them. I have warned the young men not to bother you. When you are thirsty, go and drink from the same water jug my men drink from.”

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**Naomi Hears About Boaz**

17 Ruth worked in the fields until evening. Then she separated the grain from the chaff. There was about one-half bushel of barley.

18 Ruth carried the grain into town to show her mother-in-law what she had gathered. She also gave her the food that was left from lunch.

19 Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you gather all this grain? Where did you work? Bless the man who noticed you.”

Then Ruth told her who she had worked with. She said, “The man I worked with today is a man named Boaz.”

20 Naomi told her daughter-in-law, “The Lord bless him! He has continued showing his kindness to the living as well as the dead.” Then Naomi told her daughter-in-law, “Boaz is one of our relatives. He is one of our protectors.”

21 Then Ruth said, “Boaz also told me to come back and continue working. He said that I should work closely with his servants until the harvest is finished.”

22 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, “It is good for you to continue working with his women servants. If you work in another field, some man might hurt you.”

23 So Ruth continued working closely with the women servants of Boaz. She gathered grain until the barley harvest was finished. She also worked there through the end of the wheat harvest. Ruth continued living with her mother-in-law Naomi.

**The Threshing Floor**

3 Then Naomi, Ruth’s mother-in-law, said to her, “My daughter, maybe I should find a husband and a good home for you. That would be good for you.

2 Boaz is our close relative. You worked with his women servants. Tonight he will be working at the threshing floor. Go wash yourself and get dressed. Put on a nice dress, and go down to the threshing floor. But don’t let Boaz see you until he has finished eating his dinner.

4 After he eats, he will lie down to rest. Watch him so that you will know where he lies down. Go there and lift the cover off his feet. Then lie down there with Boaz. He will tell you what you should do about marriage.”

5 Then Ruth answered, “I will do what you say.”

6 So Ruth went down to the threshing floor and did everything that her mother-in-law told her to do. After eating and drinking, Boaz was very satisfied. He went to lie down near the pile of grain. Then Ruth went to him very quietly and lifted the cover from his feet and lay down by his feet.

8 About midnight, Boaz rolled over in his sleep and woke up. He was very surprised. There was a woman lying near his feet.

9 Boaz said, “Who are you?”

She said, “I am Ruth, your servant girl. Spread your cover over me. You are my protector.”

10 Then Boaz said, “May the Lord bless you, young woman. You have been very kind to me. Your kindness to me is greater than the kindness you showed to Naomi in the beginning. You could have looked for a young man to marry, rich or poor. But you did not. Now, young woman, don’t be afraid. I will do what you ask. All the people in our town know that you are a very good woman.

12 And it is true that I am a close relative. But there is a man who is a closer relative to you than I am. Stay here tonight. In the morning we will see if he will help you. If he decides to help you, care for this family, but this family and their property would not belong to him. They would belong to Ruth’s dead husband. Also in 3:9, 12; 4:1, 6.

14 Then Boaz said, “May the Lord bless you, young woman. You have been very kind to me. Your kindness to me is greater than the kindness you showed to Naomi in the beginning. You could have looked for a young man to marry, rich or poor. But you did not. Now, young woman, don’t be afraid. I will do what you ask. All the people in our town know that you are a very good woman. And it is true that I am a close relative. But there is a man who is a closer relative to you than I am. Stay here tonight. In the morning we will see if he will help you, care for this family, but this family and their property would not belong to him. They would belong to Ruth’s dead husband. Also in 3:9, 12; 4:1, 6.

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22 “Spread your cover over me.” This showed that Ruth was asking Boaz to be her protector.

23 “Spread your cover over me.” This showed that Ruth was asking Boaz to be her protector. This meant the close relative would care for and protect the dead man’s family and property, but that property would not be his.
that is fine. If he refuses to help, I promise, as surely as the Lord lives, I will marry you and buy back Elimelech’s land for you. So lie here until morning.”

“Then Boaz said, “If you buy the land from her, you must also marry the dead man’s wife, Ruth, the Moabite woman. Then the first child will get the land, and it will stay in the dead man’s family.”

The close relative answered, “Then I cannot buy the land. If I do, I might lose my own land. So I cannot do it. You buy the land.” Then he gave Boaz something to show that he was serious. During that time in Israel, when people bought property, one person took off a sandal and gave it to the other person. This was like signing an agreement. So when the close relative said to Boaz, “You buy the land,” he took off his sandal and gave it to Boaz.

Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I am buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon. I also take Ruth to be my wife. Then the dead man’s property will continue to belong to his family. And he will always be remembered by his family and the people in his hometown. You are all witnesses of what I am doing today.”

So all the elders and the people who were near the city gates said, “We are witnesses to all of this. And may the Lord bless this woman who is coming into your home to be like Rachel and Leah. They are the ones who had many children to make the people of Israel strong. And may you become powerful in the tribe of Ephraim and famous in Bethlehem! May the Lord bless you with many children through Ruth. May your family become great like the family of Perez, the son Tamar bore for Judah.”

So Boaz married Ruth. The Lord allowed Ruth to become pregnant, and

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a 3:13 I will marry … you Literally, “I will redeem you.”

b 3:15 bushel of barley Literally, “six measures of barley.”

c 4:8 and gave it to Boaz This is from the ancient Greek version.

d 4:12 Perez One of Boaz’s ancestors.
she had a son. 14 The women there said to Naomi, “Praise the Lord who gave you this child." May he become famous in Israel. 15 He will make you alive again and care for you in your old age. Your daughter-in-law made it happen because she bore this child for you. She loves you, and she is better for you than seven sons.”

16 Naomi took the boy, held him in her arms, and cared for him. 17 The neighbors gave the boy his name. These women said, “Naomi has a son now!” They named him Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David.

The Family of Ruth and Boaz
18 This is the family history of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron was the father of Ram. Ram was the father of Amminadab. Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the father of Salmon. Salmon was the father of Boaz. Boaz was the father of Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David.

\*4:14 child Literally, “protector” or “redeemer.” This might refer to Boaz, or the women might have used this name for the baby because he would be the one to care for Naomi and her family and to carry on the name of Elimelech.
\*4:17 Naomi … now Literally, “A son was born for Naomi.”
1 Samuel

**Elkanah’s Family Worships at Shiloh**

1 There was a man named Elkanah from the Zuph family who lived in Ramah in the hill country of Ephraim. Elkanah was the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph from the tribe of Ephraim.

2 Elkanah had two wives. One wife was named Hannah and the other wife was named Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not.

3 Every year Elkanah left his town of Ramah and went up to Shiloh. He worshiped the Lord All-Powerful at Shiloh and offered sacrifices to the Lord there. Shiloh was where Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas, served as priests of the Lord.

4 Whenever Elkanah offered his sacrifices, he always gave one share of the food to his wife Peninnah and a share of the food to each of Peninnah’s children. Elkanah always gave an equal share of the food to Hannah. He did this because he loved her very much, even though the Lord had not let Hannah have any children.

**Peninnah Upsets Hannah**

6 Peninnah always upset Hannah and made her feel bad because the Lord had not made her able to have children. This happened every year when their family went to the Lord’s house at Shiloh. Peninnah would upset Hannah so much that she would begin to cry and would not eat anything. One year when this happened, her husband Elkanah said to her, “Hannah, why are you crying? Why won’t you eat? Why are you so sad? You have me. Isn’t that better than having even ten sons?”

**Hannah’s Prayer**

9 After eating and drinking, Hannah quietly got up and went to pray to the Lord. Eli the priest was sitting on a chair near the door of the Lord’s Holy Building. 10 Hannah was so sad that she cried the whole time she was praying to the Lord. 11 She made a special promise to God and said, “Lord All-Powerful, you can see how sad I am. Remember me. Don’t forget me. If you will give me a son, I will give him to you. He will be yours his whole life, and as a Nazirite, he will not drink wine or strong drink, and no one will ever cut his hair.”

12 Hannah prayed to the Lord a long time. Eli was watching her mouth while she was praying. 13 Hannah was praying in her heart. Her lips were moving, but since she did not say the words out loud, Eli thought she was drunk. 14 He said to her, “You have had too much to drink. It is time to put away the wine.”

15 Hannah answered, “Sir, I have not drunk any wine or beer. I am deeply troubled, and I was telling the Lord about all my problems. Don’t think I am a bad woman. I have been praying so long because I have so many troubles and am very sad.”

16 Eli answered, “Go in peace. May the God of Israel give you what you asked for.”

18 Hannah said, “May you be happy with me.” Then she left and ate something. She was not sad anymore.

19 Early the next morning Elkanah’s...
family got up. They worshiped the LORD and then went back home to Ramah.

Samuel’s Birth
Elkanah had sexual relations with his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered Hannah. By that time the following year, Hannah had become pregnant and had a son. She named him Samuel. She said, “His name is Samuel because I asked the LORD for him.”

Elkanah went to Shiloh to offer the sacrifice for that year and the gift he had promised to the LORD. He took his family with him. But Hannah did not go. She told Elkanah, “When the boy is old enough to eat solid food, I will take him to Shiloh. Then I will give him to the LORD. He will become a Nazirite. He will stay there at Shiloh.”

Hannah’s husband Elkanah said to her, “Do what you think is best. You may stay home until the boy is old enough to eat solid food. May the LORD do what you have said.” So Hannah stayed at home to nurse her son until he was old enough to eat solid food.

Hannah Takes Samuel to Eli at Shiloh
When the boy was old enough to eat solid food, Hannah took him to the LORD’s house at Shiloh. She also took a bull that was three years old, 20 pounds of flour, and a bottle of wine.

They went before the Lord. Elkanah killed the bull as a sacrifice to the Lord as he usually did. Then Hannah gave the boy to Eli. She said to him, “Pardon me, sir. I am the same woman who stood near you praying to the Lord. I promise that I am telling the truth. I prayed for this child, and the LORD answered my prayer.

Then Hannah left the boy there and worshiped the LORD.

Hannah Gives Thanks
Hannah said, “My heart is happy in the LORD. I feel very strong in my God. I laugh at my enemies. I am very happy in my victory.

There is no holy God like the LORD. There is no God but you. There is no Rock like our God.

Don’t continue bragging. Don’t speak proud words, because the LORD God knows everything. He leads and judges people.

The bows of strong soldiers break, and weak people become strong.

People who had plenty of food in the past must now work to get food. But those who were hungry in the past now grow fat on food. The woman who was not able to have children now has seven children. But the woman who had many children is sad because her children are gone.

The LORD causes people to die, and he causes them to live. He sends people down to the grave, and he can raise them up to live again.

The LORD makes some poor, and he makes others rich. He humbles some people, and he honors others.

He gave me this child. And now I give this child to the LORD. He will serve the LORD all his life.”

Then Hannah left the boy there and worshiped the LORD.
8 He raises the poor from the dust, and he takes away their sadness. He makes them important and seats them with princes and at the places for honored guests. The LORD made the whole world, and the whole world belongs to him.

9 He protects his holy people. He keeps them from stumbling. But evil people will be destroyed. Their power won’t help them win. The LORD destroys his enemies. God Most High will thunder in heaven against people. The LORD will judge even the lands that are far away. He will give power to his king. He will make his chosen king strong.”

10 The boy Samuel grew up at the holy place near the Lord. Eli Fails to Control His Evil Sons
11 Elkanah and his family went home to Ramah, but the boy stayed in Shiloh and served the LORD under Eli the priest.

12 Eli’s sons were evil men who did not care about the LORD. They did not care about how priests were supposed to treat people. Whenever someone brings a sacrifice, priests are supposed to put the meat in a pot of boiling water. Then their servant is supposed to get the three-pronged fork and use it to get some meat out of the pot or kettle. The priest is supposed to take whatever his helper removes from the pot with the special fork. This is what the priests should have done for the Israelites who came to offer sacrifices at Shiloh. But that is not what the sons of Eli did. Even before the fat was burned on the altar, their servant would go to the people offering sacrifices and say, “Give the priest some meat to roast. The priest won’t accept boiled meat from you.”

13 They did not care about the Lord’s people. The Lord’s people were saying bad things about you. But who can help you if you sin against the Lord?”

14 Maybe the man offering the sacrifice would say, “Burn the fat first, and then you can take whatever you want.” But the servant would answer: “No, give me the meat now. If you don’t give it to me, I’ll take it from you!”

15 In this way Hophni and Phinehas showed that they did not respect the offerings made to the LORD. This was a terrible sin against the LORD.

16 But Samuel served the LORD. He was a helper who wore the linen ephod. Every year Samuel’s mother made a robe for Samuel. She took the little robe to Shiloh when she went up to Shiloh with her husband for the sacrifice every year.

17 Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife. He would say, “May the LORD give you more children through Hannah who will take the place of the boy she prayed for and gave to the LORD.”

18 Elkanah and Hannah went home. The LORD was kind to Hannah, and she had three sons and two daughters. The boy Samuel grew up at the holy place near the LORD.

19 Eli’s sons refused to listen to him, so the Lord decided to kill them.

20 The boy Samuel kept growing. He was pleasing to the LORD and to the people.

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25 Eli Fail to Control His Evil Sons
26 The boy Samuel kept growing. He was pleasing to the Lord and to the people.
The Terrible Prophecy About Eli’s Family

27A man of God came to Eli and said, “The Lord says, ‘I appeared to your ancestors when they were slaves of Pharaoh. 28From all the tribes of Israel, I chose your tribe to be my priests. I chose them to offer sacrifices on my altar, to burn incense, and wear the ephod. I also let your tribe have the meat from the sacrifices that the Israelites give to me. 29So why don’t you respect these gifts and sacrifices? You honor your sons more than me. You become fat eating the best parts of the meat that the Israelites bring to me.’

30“The Lord, the God of Israel, promised that your father’s family would serve him forever. But now the Lord says, ‘That will never be! I will honor people who honor me, but bad things will happen to those who refuse to respect me. 31The time is coming when I will destroy all your descendants. No one in your family will live to be an old man. 32Good things will happen to Israel, but you will see bad things happening at home. 33There is only one man I will save to serve as priest at my altar. He will live until his eyes wear out and his strength is gone. But all of your descendants will die by the sword. 34I will give you a sign to show that these things will come true. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will die on the same day. 35I will choose a priest I can trust. This priest will listen to me and do what I want. I will make his family strong, and he will always serve before my chosen king. 36Then whoever is left in your family will come and bow down before this priest and beg for a little money or a piece of bread. They will say, “Please give me a job as priest so that I can have some food to eat.”’”

God Calls Samuel

3The boy Samuel was Eli’s helper and served the Lord with him. At that time the Lord did not speak directly to people very often. There were very few visions.

2Eli’s eyes were getting so weak that he was almost blind. One night he went to his room to go to bed. 3The special lamp in the Lord’s temple was still burning, so Samuel lay down in the temple near where the Holy Box was. 4The Lord called Samuel, and Samuel answered, “Here I am.” 5Samuel thought Eli was calling him, so he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am. You called me.” But Eli said, “I didn’t call you. Go back to bed.”

So Samuel went back to bed. 6Again the Lord called, “Samuel!” Again Samuel ran to Eli and said, “Here I am. You called me.”

Eli said, “I didn’t call you. Go back to bed.”

7Samuel did not yet know the Lord because the Lord had not spoken directly to him before.

8The Lord called Samuel the third time. Again Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am. You called me.”

Finally, Eli understood that the Lord was calling the boy. 9Eli told Samuel, “Go to bed. If he calls you again, say, ‘Speak, Lord. I am your servant, and I am listening.’”

So Samuel went back to bed. 10The Lord came and stood there. He called as he did before, saying, “Samuel, Samuel!”

Samuel said, “Speak. I am your servant, and I am listening.”

11The Lord said to Samuel, “I will soon do things in Israel that will shock anyone who hears about them. 12I will do everything I said I would do against Eli and his family, everything from the beginning to the end. 13I told Eli I would punish his family forever. I will do this because Eli knew...”
his sons were saying and doing bad things against God. But he failed to control them. 14 That is why I swore an oath that sacrifices and offerings will never take away the sins of the people in Eli’s family.\(^d\)

15 Samuel lay down in bed until the morning came. He got up early and opened the doors of the Lord’s house. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli about the vision.

16 But Eli said to Samuel, “Samuel, my son.”

Samuel answered, “Yes, sir.”

17 Eli asked, “What did God say to you? Don’t hide it from me. God will punish you if you hide anything from the message he spoke to you.”

18 So Samuel told Eli everything. He did not hide anything from him.

Eli said, “He is the Lord. Let him do whatever he thinks is right.”

19 The Lord was with Samuel while he grew up. He did not let any of Samuel’s messages prove false. 20 Then all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was a true prophet of the Lord. 21 And the Lord continued to appear to Samuel at Shiloh. There he told Samuel what he wanted.

\(4\) Then Samuel would announce the Lord’s message to all the people of Israel. When Eli was very old, his sons lived more and more in a way the Lord considered evil.\(^b\)

The Philistines Defeat the Israelites

At that time the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites made their camp at Ebenezer. The Philistines made their camp at Aphek. 2 The Philistines lined up their soldiers in front of the Israelites and began the attack.

The Philistines defeated the Israelites. They killed about 4000 soldiers from Israel’s army. 3 The rest of the Israelite soldiers went back to their camp. The elders of Israel asked, “Why did the Lord let the Philistines defeat us? Let’s bring the Lord’s Box of the Agreement from Shiloh. God will go with us into battle and save us from our enemies.”

4 So the people sent men to Shiloh. The men brought back the Lord All-Powerful’s Box of the Agreement. On top of the Box are the Cherub angels. They are like a throne where the Lord sits. Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, came with the Box.

5 When the Lord’s Box of the Agreement came into the camp, all the Israelites gave a great shout loud enough to make the ground shake. 6 The Philistines heard Israel’s shout and asked, “Why are the people so excited in the Hebrew\(^c\) camp?”

Then the Philistines learned that the Lord’s Holy Box had been brought into Israel’s camp. 7 They became afraid and said, “Gods have come to their camp! We’re in trouble. This has never happened before. 8 We are worried. Who can save us from these powerful gods? These gods are the same ones that gave the Egyptians those diseases and terrible sicknesses. 9 Be brave, Philistines. Fight like men. In the past they were our slaves, so fight like men or you will become their slaves.”

10 So the Philistines fought very hard and defeated the Israelites. The Israelite soldiers ran away and went home. It was a terrible defeat for Israel. 30,000 Israeli soldiers were killed. 11 The Philistines took God’s Holy Box and killed Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

12 One of the men who ran from the battle was a man from the tribe of Benjamin. He tore his clothes and put dust on his head to show his great sadness.

13 Eli was worried about the Holy Box, so he was sitting there by the city gate waiting and watching when the Benjamite man came into Shiloh and told the bad news. All the people in town began to cry loudly. 14–15 Eli was 98 years old. He was blind, so he could not see what was happening, but he could hear the loud noise of the people crying.

\(d\) 3:14 Or “That is why I swore an oath that Eli’s family would not be forgiven for their sins against the offerings and sacrifices.”

\(b\) 4:1 When Eli … evil The ancient Greek version has these words at the end of chapter 3.

\(c\) 4:6 Hebrew Or “Israelite.”
Eli asked, “Why are the people making this loud noise?”

The Benjamite man ran to Eli and told him what happened. He said, “I am the man who just came from the battle. I ran away from the battle today.”

Eli asked, “What happened, son?”

The Benjamite man answered, “Israel ran away from the Philistines. The Israelite army has lost many soldiers. Your two sons are both dead, and the Philistines took God’s Holy Box.”

When the Benjamite man mentioned God’s Holy Box, Eli fell backward off his chair near the gate and broke his neck. Eli was old and fat, so he died. He had led Israel for 20 years.a

The Glory Is Gone
19 Eli’s daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant. It was nearly time for her baby to be born. She heard the news that God’s Holy Box was taken. She also heard that her father-in-law Eli and her husband Phinehas were both dead. As soon as she heard the news, her pain started and she began giving birth to her baby. 20 She was about to die when the women who were helping her said, “Don’t worry, you have given birth to a son.” But she did not answer or pay attention.

She named the baby Ichabod, b that is to say, “Israel’s glory has been taken away.” She did this because God’s Holy Box was taken away and because both her father-in-law and her husband were dead. 22 She said, “Israel’s glory has been taken away” because the Philistines had taken God’s Holy Box.

The Holy Box Troubles the Philistines
5 The Philistines carried God’s Holy Box, from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2 They carried God’s Holy Box into the temple of Dagon and put it next to the statue of Dagon. 3 That is why, even today, the priests or other people refuse to step on the threshold when they enter Dagon’s temple at Ashdod.

The Lord made life hard for the people of Ashdod and their neighbors. He gave them many troubles and caused them to get tumors. He also sent mice to them. The mice ran all over their ships and then onto their land. The people in the city were very afraid. 7 They saw what was happening and said, “The Holy Box of the God of Israel can’t stay here. God is punishing us and Dagon our god.”

The people of Ashdod called the five Philistine rulers together and asked them, “What must we do with the Holy Box of the God of Israel?”

The rulers answered, “Move the Holy Box of the God of Israel to Gath.” So the Philistines moved God’s Holy Box.

But after the Philistines had moved God’s Holy Box to Gath, the Lord punished that city. The people became very frightened. God caused many troubles for all the people—young and old. He caused the people in Gath to have tumors. 9 So the Philistines sent God’s Holy Box to Ekron.

But when God’s Holy Box came into Ekron, the people of Ekron complained. They said, “Why are you bringing the Box of the God of Israel to our city Ekron? Do you want to kill us and our people?”

The people of Ekron called all the Philistine rulers together and said to the rulers,

Ashdod got up and found Dagon lying face down on the ground before the Lord’s Box.

The people of Ashdod put the statue of Dagon back in its place. 4 But the next morning when the people of Ashdod got up, they found Dagon on the ground again. Dagon had fallen down before the Lord’s Holy Box. This time, Dagon’s head and hands were broken off and were lying in the doorway. Only his body was still in one piece. 5 That is why, even today, the priests or other people refuse to step on the threshold when they enter Dagon’s temple at Ashdod.

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The people of Ekron called all the Philistine rulers together and said to the rulers,
“Send the Box of the God of Israel back home before it kills us and our people!”

The people of Ekron were deathly afraid because God severely punished them there. Many people died, and those who did not, had tumors. The people of Ekron cried loudly to heaven.

**God’s Holy Box Is Sent Back Home**

1 The Philistines kept the LORD’s Holy Box in their land for seven months. 2 The Philistines called their priests and magicians and said, “What must we do with the LORD’s Box? Tell us how to send it back home.”

3 The priests and magicians answered, “If you send back the Holy Box of the God of Israel, don’t send it away empty. You must offer gifts to the God of Israel. Then you will be healed. You must do this so that God will stop punishing you.”

4 The Philistines asked, “What kind of gifts should we send for Israel’s God to forgive us?”

The priests and magicians answered, “There are five Philistine leaders, one leader for each city. All of you and your leaders had the same problems. So you must make five gold models to look like five tumors. And you must make five gold models to look like five mice. 5 So make models of the tumors and models of the mice that are ruining the country. Give these gold models to the God of Israel as payment. Then maybe the God of Israel will stop punishing you.”

6 The Philistines did what the priests and magicians said. They found two cows that had just had calves and tied them to the wagon. But they kept the calves at home in a pen.

7 “You must build a new wagon and get two cows that have just had calves. These must be cows that have never worked in the fields. Tie the cows to the wagon so that they can pull it. Then take the calves back home and put them in their pen. Don’t let them follow their mothers. 8 Put the LORD’s Holy Box on the wagon. You must put the golden models in the bag beside the Box. They are your gifts for God to forgive your sins. Send the wagon straight on its way. 9 Watch the wagon. If the wagon goes toward Beth Shemesh in Israel’s own land, then it is their God who has given us this great sickness. But if the cows don’t go straight to Beth Shemesh, we will know it was not their God who brought this sickness to us. It was just one of those things that sometimes happen.”

10 The Philistines did what the priests and magicians said. They found two cows that had just had calves and tied them to the wagon. But they kept the calves at home in a pen. 11 Then the Philistines put the LORD’s Holy Box on the wagon along with the bag with the golden models of the tumors and mice. 12 The cows went straight to Beth Shemesh. The cows stayed on the road, mooing all the way. They did not turn right or left. The Philistine rulers followed the cows as far as the city limits of Beth Shemesh.

13 The people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley. They looked up and saw the Holy Box. They were very happy to see it again. They ran to get it. 14–15 The wagon came to the field that belonged to Joshua of Beth Shemesh and stopped there near a large rock. Some Levites took down the LORD’s Holy Box and the bag that had the golden models. The Levites put the LORD’s Box and the bag that was with it on the large rock. The people of Beth Shemesh cut up the wagon and killed the cows. That day, they sacrificed the cows as burnt offerings to the LORD. 16 The five Philistine rulers watched the people of Beth Shemesh do this and then went back to Ekron that same day.

17 In this way the Philistines sent golden models of tumors as gifts for their sins to the LORD. They sent one golden model of...
a tumor for each of the Philistine towns of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. 18 The Philistines also sent golden models of mice. The number of these golden mice was the same number as the towns that belonged to the five Philistine rulers. These towns had walls around them, and each town had villages around it.

The people of Beth Shemesh put the LORD’s Holy Box on a rock. That rock is still in the field of Joshua from Beth Shemesh. 19 But no priests were there to lead the celebration when the men of Beth Shemesh saw the LORD’s Holy Box. So the LORD killed 70 men from Beth Shemesh. The people of Beth Shemesh cried loudly because of this hard punishment. 20 They said, “Where is a priest who can care for the Holy Box? Where should the Box go from here?”

21 There was a priest at Kiriath Jearim. The people of Beth Shemesh sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim. The messengers said, “The Philistines have brought back the LORD’s Holy Box. Come down and take it to your city.”

The men of Kiriath Jearim came and took the LORD’s Holy Box up the hill to the house of Abinadab the priest. They performed a special ceremony to prepare Abinadab’s son, Eleazar, to guard the LORD’s Holy Box.

The Lord Saves the Israelites
Twenty years passed while the Holy Box was in Kiriath Jearim, and the Israelites began to follow the LORD again. 3 Samuel told the Israelites, “If you are really coming back to the LORD with all your heart, you must throw away your foreign gods and your idols of Ashtoreth. You must give yourselves fully to the LORD and serve only him. Then he will save you from the Philistines.”

4 So the Israelites threw away their statues of Baal and Ashtoreth. The Israelites served only the LORD.

5 Samuel said, “All Israel must meet at Mizpah. I will pray to the LORD for you.”

6 The Israelites met together at Mizpah. They got water and poured it out before the LORD. In this way they began a time of fasting. They did not eat any food that day, and they confessed their sins. They said, “We have sinned against the LORD.” So Samuel served as a judge of Israel at Mizpah.

7 When the Philistines heard that the Israelites were meeting at Mizpah, they went to fight them. The Israelites were frightened when they heard the Philistines were coming and said to Samuel, “Don’t stop praying to the LORD our God for us. Ask him to save us from the Philistines.”

8 Samuel took a baby lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He prayed to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered his prayer.

9 The Philistines came closer and closer to fight the Israelites while Samuel offered the sacrifice. But then, the LORD caused a loud clap of thunder to hit near the Philistines. The thunder scared the Philistines, and they became confused, so the Israelites defeated them in battle. 11 The men of Israel ran out of Mizpah and chased the Philistines all the way to Beth Car. They killed Philistine soldiers all along the way.

Peace Comes to Israel
12 After this Samuel set up a special stone to help people remember what God did. Samuel put the stone between Mizpah and Shen and named the stone “Stone of Help.” 13 Samuel said, “The LORD helped us all the way to this place.”

14 The Philistines were defeated and did not enter the land of Israel again. The LORD was against the Philistines during the rest of Samuel’s life. The Philistines had taken some cities from Israel, but the Israelites won them back. They recovered

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*a* 6:19 no priests Only priests were allowed to carry the Box of the Agreement.

*b* 6:19 But no … celebration This is based on the ancient Greek version and Josephus.

*c* 6:19 This is found in a few Hebrew copies. Most Hebrew copies and the ancient versions have “70 men, 50,000 men.”

*d* 7:12 Shen Or “Jeshanah,” a town about 17 miles north of Jerusalem.

*e* 7:12 Stone of Help Or “Ebenezer.”
those cities throughout the Philistine area, from Ekron to Gath.

There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites.

Samuel led Israel all his life. He went from place to place judging the Israelites. Every year he traveled around the country. He went to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah and he judged the Israelites in all these places. But Samuel always went back to his home in Ramah. There he built an altar to the LORD and judged Israel.

Israel Asks for a King

When Samuel was old, he appointed his sons to be judges for Israel. Samuel’s first son was named Joel. His second son was named Abijah. Joel and Abijah were judges in Beersheba. But Samuel’s sons did not live the same way he did. Joel and Abijah accepted bribes. They took money secretly and changed their decisions in court. They cheated people in court. So all the elders of Israel met together and went to Ramah to meet with Samuel. The elders said to Samuel, “You’re old, and your sons don’t live right. They are not like you. Now, give us a king to rule us like all the other nations.”

So the elders asked for a king to lead them. Samuel thought this was a bad idea, so he prayed to the LORD. The LORD told Samuel, “Do what the people tell you. They have not rejected you. They have rejected me. They don’t want me to be their king. They are doing the same thing they have always done. I took them out of Egypt, but they left me and served other gods. They are doing the same to you. So listen to the people and do what they say. But give them a warning. Tell the people what a king will do to them. Tell them how a king rules people.”

Those people asked for a king. So Samuel told them everything the LORD said. Samuel said, “If you have a king ruling over you, this is what he will do: He will take away your sons and force them to serve him. He will force them to be soldiers—they must fight from his chariots and become horse soldiers in his army. Your sons will become guards running in front of the king’s chariot.

A king will force your sons to become soldiers. He will choose which of your sons will be officers over 1000 men and which will be officers over 50 men.

A king will force some of your sons to plow his fields and gather his harvest. He will force some of your sons to make weapons for war and to make things for his chariots.

A king will take your daughters and force some of them to make perfume for him and some to cook and bake for him.

A king will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves. He will take them from you and give them to his officers.

He will take one-tenth of your grain and grapes, and he will give them to his officers and servants.

A king will take your men and women servants. He will take your best cattle and your donkeys. He will use them all for his own work.

He will take one-tenth of your flocks.

And you yourselves will become slaves of this king. When that time comes, you will cry because of the king you chose. But the LORD won’t answer you at that time.”

But the people would not listen to Samuel. They said, “No, we want a king to rule over us. Then we will be the same as all the other nations. Our king will lead us. He will go before us and fight our battles.”

Samuel listened to the people and then repeated their words to the LORD. The LORD answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.”

Then Samuel told the Israelites, “You will have a king. Now go home.”

Saul Looks for His Father’s Donkeys

Kish was an important man from the tribe of Benjamin. He was the son of Abiel. Abiel was the son of Zeror. Zeror was the son of Becorath. Becorath was the son of Aphiah, a man from Benjamin.

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Kish had a son named Saul, who was a handsome young man. There was no one more handsome than Saul. He stood a head taller than any other man in Israel.

One day Kish's donkeys got lost. So he said to his son Saul, “Take one of the servants and go look for the donkeys.” Saul went to look for the donkeys. He walked through the hills of Ephraim and through the area around Shalisha. But Saul and the servant could not find Kish's donkeys. So they went to the area around Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there either. Then Saul traveled through the land of Benjamin, but he and the servant still could not find the donkeys.

Finally, Saul and the servant came to the town named Zuph. Saul said to his servant, “Let's go back. My father will stop worrying about the donkeys and start worrying about us.”

But the servant answered, “A man of God is in this town. People respect him. Everything he says comes true, so let's go into town. Maybe the man of God will tell us where we should go next.”

Saul said to his servant, “Sure, we can go into town, but what can we give to him? We have no gift to give the man of God. Even the food in our bags is gone. What can we give him?”

Again the servant answered Saul. “Look, I have a little bit of money. Let's give it to the man of God. Then he will tell us where we should go.”

Saul said to his servant, “That is a good idea. Let's go.” So they went to the town where the man of God was.

Saul and the servant were walking up the hill toward town when they met some young women on the road. The young women were coming out to get water. Saul and the servant asked the young women, “Is the seer here?” (In the past, people in Israel called a prophet a “seer.” So if they wanted to ask something from God, they would say, “Let's go to the seer.”)

The young women answered, “Yes, the seer is here. He is just up the road. He came to town today. Some people are meeting together today to share in a fellowship offering at the place for worship. So go into town and you will find him. If you hurry, you can catch him before he goes up to eat at the place for worship. The seer blesses the sacrifice, so the people won't begin eating until he gets there. If you hurry, you can find him.”

Saul and the servant started walking up the hill to town. Just as they came into town, they saw Samuel coming out of town, walking toward them. He was on his way to the place for worship.

The day before, the Lord had told Samuel, “At this time tomorrow I will send a man to you. He will be from the tribe of Benjamin. You must anoint him and make him the new leader over my people Israel. This man will save my people from the Philistines. I have seen my people suffering, and I have heard their cries for help.”

When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to Samuel, “This is the man I told you about. He will rule my people.”

Saul went up to a man near the gate to ask directions. This man just happened to be Samuel. Saul said, “Excuse me. Could you tell me where the seer’s house is?”

Samuel answered, “I am the seer. Go on up ahead of me to the place for worship. You and your servant will eat with me today. I will let you go home tomorrow morning. I will answer all your questions. And don't worry about the donkeys that you lost three days ago. They have been found. Now, there is something that everyone in Israel is looking for and that something is you and your family.”

Saul answered, “But I am a member of the tribe of Benjamin. It is the smallest tribe in Israel. And my family is the smallest in the tribe of Benjamin. Why do you say Israel wants me?”

Then Samuel took Saul and his servant to the eating area. About 30 people

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a 9:8 a little bit of money Literally, “1/4 shekel of silver” (about 1/10 of an ounce).
had been invited to eat together and share the sacrifice. Samuel gave Saul and his servant the most important place at the table. 23 Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the meat I gave you. It is the share I told you to save.”

24 The cook brought out the thigh and put it on the table in front of Saul. Samuel said, “Eat the meat that was put in front of you. It was saved for you for this special time when I called the people together.” So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

25 After they finished eating, they came down from the place for worship and went back to town. Samuel made a bed for Saul on the roof, and Saul went to sleep.

Early the next morning, Samuel shouted to Saul on the roof and said, “Get up. I will send you on your way.” Saul got up and went out of the house with Samuel.

26 Saul, his servant, and Samuel were walking together near the edge of town. Samuel said to Saul, “Tell your servant to go on ahead of us. I have a message for you from God.” So the servant walked ahead of them.

Samuel Anoints Saul

10 Samuel took a jar of the special oil and poured the oil on Saul’s head. Samuel kissed Saul and said, “The LORD has anointed you to be the leader over the people who belong to him. You will control the people. You will save them from the enemies that are all around them. He has anointed you to be ruler over his people. Here is a sign that will prove this is true: 2 After you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel’s tomb on the border of Benjamin at Zelzah. The two men will say to you, ‘Someone found the donkeys you were looking for. Your father stopped worrying about you. He is worrying about you. He is saying: What will I do about my son?’ ”

3 Samuel said, “Then you will go until you come to the large oak tree at Tabor. Three men will meet you there. They will be on their way to worship God at Bethel. One man will be carrying three young goats. The second man will be carrying three loaves of bread. And the third man will have a leather bag full of wine. 4 These three men will say hello to you. They will offer you two bread offerings reserved for priests, and you will accept that bread. 5 Then you will go to Gibeah Elohim. There is a Philistine fort in that place. When you come to this town, a group of prophets will come out. These prophets will come down from the place for worship. They will be prophesying. They will be playing harps, tambourines, flutes, and lyres. 6 Then the LORD’s Spirit will come on you with great power. You will be changed. You will be like a different man. You will begin to prophesy with these prophets. 7 After that happens, you can do whatever you choose to do, because God will be with you.

8 “Go to Gilgal before me. Then I will come there to you. And I will offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. But you must wait seven days. Then I will come and tell you what to do.”

Saul Becomes Like the Prophets

9 Just as Saul turned to leave Samuel, God turned Saul’s life around. All these things happened that day. 10 When Saul and his servant came to Gibeah Elohim, Saul met a group of prophets. God’s Spirit came on Saul with great power, and Saul prophesied with the prophets. 11 Some of the people who had known Saul before saw him prophesying with the prophets. So they asked each other, “What has
happened to Kish’s son? Is Saul also one of the prophets?”

A man living in Gibeath Elohim said, “Yes, and it seems that he is their leader.”

That is why this became a famous saying: “Is Saul also one of the prophets?”

**Saul Arrives Home**

13 After Saul finished prophesying, he went to the place of worship.

14 Saul’s uncle asked Saul and his servant, “Where have you been?”

Saul said, “We were looking for the donkeys. When we couldn’t find them, we went to see Samuel.”

15 Saul’s uncle said, “Please tell me, what did Samuel say to you?”

16 Saul answered, “Samuel told us the donkeys were already found.” He did not tell his uncle everything. Saul did not tell him what Samuel said about the kingdom.

**Samuel Announces Saul as King**

17 Samuel told all the Israelites to meet together with the Lord at Mizpah. 18 Samuel told the Israelites, “The Lord, the God of Israel says, ‘I led Israel out of Egypt. I saved you from Egypt’s control and from the other kingdoms that tried to hurt you.’

19 But today you have rejected your God. Your God saves you from all your troubles and problems. But you said, ‘No, we want a king to rule us.’ Now come, stand before the Lord in your family groups and tribes.”

20 Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near. Then Samuel began to choose the new king. First, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. 21 Samuel told each family in the tribe of Benjamin to pass by. Matri’s family was chosen. Then Samuel told each man in Matri’s family to walk by. Saul son of Kish was chosen.

But when the people looked for Saul, they could not find him. 22 Then they asked the Lord, “Has Saul come here yet?”

The Lord said, “Saul is hiding behind the supplies.”

23 The people ran and took Saul out from behind the supplies. Saul stood up among the people. He was a head taller than anyone else.

24 Samuel said to all the people, “See the man the Lord has chosen. There is no one like Saul among the people.”

Then the people shouted, “Long live the king!”

25 Samuel explained the rules of the kingdom to the people. He wrote the rules in a book and put the book before the Lord. Then Samuel told the people to go home.

26 Saul also went to his home in Gibeah. God touched the hearts of brave men who then began to follow Saul. 27 But some troublemakers said, “How can this man save us?” They said bad things about Saul and refused to bring gifts to him. But Saul said nothing.

**Nahash, King of the Ammonites**

King Nahash of the Ammonites had been hurting the tribes of Gad and Reuben. Nahash poked out the right eye of each of the men and did not allow anyone to help them. He poked out the right eye of every Israeliite man living in the area east of the Jordan River. But 7000 Israeliite men ran away from the Ammonites and came to Jabesh Gilead.

1 About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite and his army surrounded Jabesh Gilead. All the people of Jabesh said to Nahash, “If you will make a treaty with us, we will serve you.”

2 But he answered, “I will make a treaty with you people only if I can poke out the right eye of each person. Then all Israel will be ashamed.”

3 The leaders of Jabesh said to Nahash, “Let us have seven days. We will send messengers through all Israel. If no one comes to help us, we will come up to you and surrender to you.”

**Saul Saves Jabesh Gilead**

4 The messengers came to Gibeah where...

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*a: 10:12 Yes ... leader* Literally, “And who is their father?” Often the man who taught and led other prophets was called “father.”

*b: 10:27 Nahash ... came to Jabesh Gilead* This is found in some ancient versions and in a Hebrew scroll from Qumran but not in the standard Hebrew text.
Saul lived. They told the news to the people. The people cried loudly. Saul had been out in the field with his oxen. When he came in from the field he heard the people crying and asked, “What’s wrong with the people? Why are they crying?”

Then the people told Saul what the messengers from Jabesh said. Saul listened to their story. Then God’s Spirit came on him with great power. Saul became very angry.

He took a pair of oxen and cut them in pieces. Then he gave the pieces of the oxen to messengers. He ordered the messengers to carry the pieces throughout the land of Israel. He told them to give this message to the Israelites: “Come follow Saul and Samuel. If anyone doesn’t come and help them, this same thing will happen to his oxen.”

A great fear from the LORD came on the people. They all came together like one person. Saul gathered the men together at Bezek. There were 300,000 men from Israel and 30,000 men from Judah.

Saul and his army told the messengers from Jabesh, “Tell the people at Jabesh in Gilead that by noon tomorrow, you will be saved.”

The messengers told Saul’s message to the people at Jabesh, and they were very happy. Then the people of Jabesh said to Nahash the Ammonite, “Tomorrow we will come to you, and you can do whatever you want to us.”

The next morning Saul separated his soldiers into three groups. At sunrise, Saul and his soldiers entered the Ammonite camp. Saul attacked while they were changing guards that morning. He and his soldiers defeated the Ammonites before noon. The Ammonite soldiers all ran away in different directions—no two soldiers stayed together.

Then the people said to Samuel, “Where are the people who said they didn’t want Saul to rule as king? Bring them here, and we will kill them.”

But Saul said, “No, don’t kill anyone today! The LORD saved Israel today.”

Then Samuel said to the people, “Come, let’s go to Gilgal. At Gilgal we will again make Saul the king.”

All the people went to Gilgal. There, in front of the LORD, the people made Saul king. They offered fellowship offerings to the LORD. Saul and all the Israelites had a great celebration.

Samuel Speaks About the King

12 Samuel said to all Israel: “I have done everything you wanted me to do. I have put a king over you. Now you have a king to lead you. I am old and gray, but my sons are here with you. I have been your leader since I was young. Here I am. If I have done anything wrong, you must tell these things to the LORD and his chosen king. Did I steal anyone’s ox or donkey? Did I hurt or cheat anyone? Did I ever take money, or even a pair of sandals, to do something wrong? If I did any of these things, I will make it right.”

The Israelites answered, “No, you never did anything bad to us. You never cheated us or took things from us.”

5 Samuel said to the Israelites, “The LORD and his chosen king are witnesses today. They heard what you said—that you found nothing wrong with me.” The people answered, “Yes, the Lord is witness!”

Then Samuel said to the people, “The LORD has seen what happened. He is the one who chose Moses and Aaron and brought your ancestors out of Egypt. Now, stand there. I will accuse you before the LORD and I will tell you about the good things the LORD did for you and your ancestors.

Jacob went to Egypt. Later, the Egyptians made life hard for his descendants. So they cried to the LORD for help. The LORD sent Moses and Aaron, and they took your ancestors out of Egypt and led them to live in this place.

But your ancestors forgot the LORD their God. So he let them become the slaves of Sisera, the commander of the army at Hazor. Then the Lord let them

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become the slaves of the Philistines and the king of Moab. They all fought against your ancestors. 10 But your ancestors cried to the LORD for help. They said, ‘We have sinned. We left the LORD, and we served the false gods Baal and Ashtoreth. But now save us from our enemies, and we will serve you.’

11 “So the LORD sent Gideon, a Barak, b Jephthah, and Samuel. c He saved you from your enemies around you, and you lived in safety. d But then you saw King Nahash of the Ammonites coming to fight against you. You said, ‘No, we want a king to rule over us!’ You said that, even though the LORD your God was already your king.

12 Now, here is the king you chose. The LORD put this king over you.

13 But you saw King Nahash of the Ammonites coming to fight against you. You said, ‘No, we want a king to rule over us!’ You said that, even though the LORD your God was already your king.

14 Now, here is the king you chose. The LORD put this king over you. 15 You must fear and respect the LORD. You must serve him and obey his commands. You must not turn against him. You and the king ruling over you must follow the LORD your God. If you do, God will save you. d

16 But if you don’t listen to the LORD, if you refuse to do what the LORD says, he will be against you. The LORD will destroy you and your king.

17 “Now stand still and see the great thing the LORD will do before your eyes. Now is the time of the wheat harvest. e I will pray to the LORD and ask him to send thunder and rain. Then you will know you did a very bad thing against the LORD when you asked for a king.”

18 So Samuel prayed to the LORD. That same day the LORD sent thunder and rain. And the people became very afraid of the LORD and Samuel. 19 All the people said to Samuel, “Pray to the LORD your God for us, your servants. Don’t let us die! We have sinned many times. And now we have added to these sins—we have asked for a king.”

19 Saul was 30 f years old when he became king. He ruled over Israel 42 years. g

20 Saul chose 3000 men from Israel. There were 2000 men who stayed with him at Micmash in the hill country of Bethel. There were 1000 men who stayed with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. Saul sent the other men in the army back home.

21 Jonathan defeated the Philistines at their camp in Geba. The Philistines heard about this. They said, “The Hebrews have rebelled.” h

Saul said, “Let the Hebrew people hear what happened.” So Saul told the men to blow trumpets through all the land of Israel. 4 All the Israelites heard this news: “Saul has killed the Philistine leader. Now the Philistines will really hate the Israelites!”

The Israelites were called to join Saul at Gilgal. 5 The Philistines gathered to fight

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Israel. The Philistines camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven. They had 3000 chariots and 6000 horse soldiers. There were so many Philistines that they were like sand on the seashore.

6 The Israelites saw that they were in trouble. They felt trapped. They ran away to hide in caves and cracks in the rock. They hid among the rocks, in wells, and in other holes in the ground. 7 Some Hebrews even went across the Jordan River to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal. All the men in his army were shaking with fear.

8 Samuel said he would meet Saul at Gilgal. Saul waited there seven days. But Samuel had not yet come to Gilgal, and the soldiers began to leave Saul. 9 So Saul said, “Bring me the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings.” Then Saul offered the burnt offering. 10 As soon as Saul finished offering that sacrifice, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet him.

11 Samuel asked, “What have you done?” Saul answered, “I saw the soldiers leaving me. You were not here on time, and the Philistines were gathering at Micmash. I thought to myself, ‘The Philistines will come here and attack me at Gilgal, and I haven’t asked the Lord to help us yet.’ So I forced myself to offer the burnt offering.”

12 Samuel said, “You did a foolish thing. You did not obey the Lord your God. If you had done what he commanded, the Lord would have let your family rule Israel forever. 13 But now your kingdom won’t continue. The Lord was looking for a man who wants to obey him. He has found that man—and the Lord has chosen him to be the new leader of his people, because you didn’t obey his command.” 14 Then Samuel got up and left Gilgal.

### The Battle at Micmash

Saul and the rest of his army left Gilgal and went to Gibeah in Benjamin. Saul counted the men who were still with him. There were about 600. 16 Saul, his son Jonathan, and the soldiers went to Geba in Benjamin.

The Philistines were camped at Micmash. 17 So their best soldiers began the attack. The Philistine army split into three groups. One group went north on the road to Ophrah, near Shual. 18 The second group went southeast on the road to Beth Horon, and the third group went east on the road to the border. That road looks over the Valley of Zeboim toward the desert.

19 There were no blacksmiths in Israel. The Philistines would not allow them because they were afraid the Israelites would make iron swords and spears. 20 Only the Philistines could sharpen iron tools. So if the Israelites needed to sharpen their plows, hoes, axes, or sickles, they had to go to the Philistines. 21 The Philistine blacksmiths charged 1/3 ounce of silver for sharpening plows and hoes and 1/6 ounce of silver for sharpening picks, axes, and the iron tip on ox goads. 22 So on the day of battle, none of the Israelite soldiers with Saul had iron swords or spears. Only Saul and his son Jonathan had such weapons.

23 A group of Philistine soldiers guarded the mountain pass at Micmash.

### Jonathan Attacks the Philistines

1 That day, Saul’s son Jonathan was talking with the young man who carried his weapons. Jonathan said, “Let’s go to the Philistine camp on the other side of the valley.” But Jonathan did not tell his father.

2 Saul was sitting under a pomegranate tree at the threshing floor at the edge of the hill. 3 Saul had about 600 men with him. 4 One of the men was named Ahijah. Ahijah was a son of Ichabod’s brother Ahitub. Ahitub was the son of Phinehas. Phinehas

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ehas was the son of Eli. Eli had been the LORD’s priest at Shiloh. Now Ahijah was the priest who wore the ephod. These men did not know that Jonathan had left. Jonathan was planning to go through a pass to get to the Philistine camp. There was a large rock on each side of the pass. The large rock on one side was named Bozez. The large rock on the other side was named Seneh. One of the rocks faced north toward Micmash, and the other faced south toward Geba.

Jonathan said to his young helper who carried his weapons, “Come on, let’s go to the camp of those foreigners. Maybe the LORD will use us to defeat them. Nothing can stop the LORD—it doesn’t matter if we have many soldiers or just a few soldiers.”

The young man who carried Jonathan’s weapons said to him, “Do what you think is best. Whatever you decide, I am with you all the way.”

Jonathan said, “Let’s go! We’ll cross the valley and go to the Philistine guards. We’ll let them see us. If they say to us, ‘Stay there until we come to you,’ we will stay where we are. We won’t go up to them. But if the Philistine men say, ‘Come up here,’ then we will climb up to them. That will be a sign from God. That will mean that the LORD will allow us to defeat them.”

So Jonathan and his helper let the Philistines see them. The Philistine guards said, “Look! The Hebrews are coming out of the holes they were hiding in.” The Philistines in the fort shouted to Jonathan and his helper, “Come up here. We’ll teach you a lesson.”

Jonathan said to his helper, “Follow me up the hill. The LORD is letting Israel defeat the Philistines.”

So Jonathan climbed up the hill with his hands and feet, and his helper was right behind him. Jonathan and his helper attacked them. In the first attack, they killed 20 Philistines in an area about one-half acre in size. Jonathan fought the men who attacked from the front. His helper came behind him and killed the men who were only wounded.

Great fear spread among the Philistine soldiers—those in the field, in the camp, and at the fort. Even the bravest soldiers were afraid. The ground began to shake, and they were completely overcome with fear.

Saul’s guards at Gibeah in the land of Benjamin saw the Philistine soldiers running away in different ways. Saul said to the army with him, “Count the men. I want to know who left camp.”

They counted the men. Jonathan and his helper were gone.

Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring God’s Holy Box!” (At that time God’s Holy Box was there with the Israelites.) Saul was talking to Ahijah the priest waiting for advice from God. But the noise and confusion in the Philistine camp was growing and growing. Saul was becoming impatient. Finally, he said to Ahijah the priest, “That’s enough. Put your hand down and stop praying.”

Saul gathered his army together and went to the battle. The Philistine soldiers were very confused. They were even fighting each other with their swords. There were Hebrews who served the Philistines in the past and who stayed in the Philistine camp. But now these Hebrews joined the Israelites with Saul and Jonathan. All the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard the Philistine soldiers were running away. So these Israelites also joined in the battle and began chasing the Philistines.

So the LORD saved the Israelites that day. The battle moved on past Beth Aven. The whole army was with Saul—he now had about 10,000 men. The battle spread to every city in the hill country of Ephraim.

\[\text{Footnotes:}\]
\[\text{a 14:6 foreigners} \quad \text{Literally, } “uncircumcised.” \text{This means people who did not share in the agreement God made with Israel. See “CIRCUMCISE, CIRCUMCISION” in the Word List.}\]
\[\text{b 14:18 The ancient Greek and Latin versions have “Saul said to Ahijah, ‘Bring the ephod!’ (At that time Ahijah was wearing the ephod.”}\]
\[\text{c 14:23 The whole army} \ldots \text{Ephraim} \quad \text{This is from the ancient Greek version.}\]
But Saul made a big mistake that day. He made this oath: “If any man eats food before evening comes, before I finish defeating my enemies, he will be under a curse.” He made the soldiers promise not to eat. So none of them ate anything.

Because of the fighting, the people went into some woods. Then they saw a honeycomb on the ground. The Israelites went up to the honeycomb, but they didn’t eat any of it. They were afraid to break the promise. But Jonathan didn’t know about the oath. He didn’t hear his father make the soldiers promise not to eat. Jonathan had a stick in his hand, so he dipped the end of the stick into the honeycomb and pulled out some honey. He ate the honey and began to feel much better.

One of the soldiers told Jonathan, “Your father forced the soldiers to make a special promise. He said that any man who eats today will be under a curse. So the men have not eaten anything. That’s why they are weak.”

Jonathan said, “My father has brought a lot of trouble to the land. See how much better I feel after tasting just a little of this honey. It would have been much better for the men to eat the food that they took from their enemies today. We could have killed more Philistines.”

That day the Israelites defeated the Philistines. They fought them all the way from Micmash to Aijalon. So the people were very tired and hungry.

They had taken sheep, cattle, and calves from the Philistines. Now they were so hungry that they killed the animals on the ground and ate them. And the blood was still in the animals.

Someone said to Saul, “Look, the men are sinning against the Lord. They’re eating meat that still has blood in it!”

Saul said, “You have sinned. Roll a large stone over here now!”

Go to the men and tell them that each one must bring his bull and sheep to me. Then the men must kill their bulls and sheep here. Don’t sin against the Lord! Don’t eat meat that still has blood in it.”

That night everyone brought their animals and killed them there. Then Saul built an altar for the Lord. Saul himself began building that altar for the Lord.

Saul said, “Let’s go after the Philistines tonight. We will take everything from them. We will kill them all!”

The army answered, “Do whatever you think is best.”

But the priest said, “Let’s ask God.”

So Saul asked God, “Should I go chase the Philistines? Will you let us defeat the Philistines?” But God did not answer Saul that day.

So Saul said, “Bring all the leaders to me! Let’s find who committed the sin today. I swear by the Lord who saves Israel, that even if my own son Jonathan sinned, he must die.” None of the people said a word.

Then Saul said to all the Israelites, “You stand on this side. I and my son Jonathan will stand on the other side.”

The soldiers answered, “As you wish, sir.”

Then Saul prayed, “Lord, God of Israel, why haven’t you answered me today? Show us who sinned. If it was I or my son Jonathan, give Urim. But if it was your people Israel who sinned, give Thummim.”

Saul and Jonathan were shown to be the ones who sinned, and the people went free. Saul said, “Throw them again to show the guilty one—me or my son Jonathan.” Jonathan was shown to be the one.

Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you have done.”

Jonathan told Saul, “I only tasted a little honey from the end of my stick. Should I die for doing that?”

Saul said, “I made an oath and asked God to punish me if I didn’t keep it. Jonathan, you must die.”

\[14:24\] But Saul ... that day This is from the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has “The Israelites were very tired and hungry that day.”

\[14:41\] Then Saul prayed ... give Thummim This is found in the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has, “Then Samuel prayed to the Lord, God of Israel, ‘Give the right answer.’”

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But the soldiers said to Saul, “Jonathan led Israel to a great victory today. Must Jonathan die? Never! As surely as the Lord lives, not one hair of Jonathan’s head will fall to the ground! God helped Jonathan fight against the Philistines today.” So the people saved Jonathan from death.

Saul did not chase the Philistines. The Philistines went back to their place.

Saul Fights Israel’s Enemies
47Saul took full control of Israel and fought all the enemies who lived around Israel. Saul fought Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the king of Zobah, and the Philistines. He defeated Israel’s enemies wherever he went. 48Saul was very brave. He saved Israel from all the enemies who tried to take things from the Israelites. He even defeated the Amalekites.

49Saul’s sons were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malki Shua. Saul’s older daughter was named Merab. Saul’s younger daughter was named Michal. 50Saul’s wife was named Ahinoam. Ahinoam was the daughter of Ahimaaz.

The commander of Saul’s army was named Abner son of Ner. Ner was Saul’s uncle. 51Saul’s father Kish and Abner’s father Ner were sons of Abiel.

52Saul was brave all his life. He fought hard against the Philistines. Any time Saul saw a man who was strong or brave, he took that man and put him into the group of soldiers who stayed near the king and protected him.

Saul Destroys the Amalekites
15One day Samuel said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel. Now listen to his message. 2The Lord All-Powerful says: ‘When the Israelites came out of Egypt, the Amalekites tried to stop them from going to Canaan. I saw what the Amalekites did. 3Now go fight against the Amalekites. You must completely destroy the Amalekites and everything that belongs to them. Don’t let anything live; you must kill all the men and women and all of their children and little babies. You must kill all of their cattle and sheep and all of their camels and donkeys.’ ”

4Saul gathered the army together at Telaim. There were 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 other men, including the men from Judah. 5Then Saul went to the city of Amalek and waited in the valley. 6He said to the Kenites, “Go away! Leave the Amalekites. Then I won’t destroy you with the Amalekites. You showed kindness to the Israelites when they came out of Egypt.” So the Kenites left the Amalekites.

7Saul defeated the Amalekites. He fought them and chased them all the way from Havilah to Shur, at the border of Egypt. 8Agag was the king of the Amalekites. Saul captured Agag alive. Saul let Agag live, but he killed all the men in Agag’s army. 9Saul and the Israelite soldiers felt bad about destroying everything. So they let Agag live. They also kept the fat cattle, the best sheep, and the lambs. They kept everything that was worth keeping. They didn’t want to destroy those things. They destroyed only what was not worth keeping.

Samuel Tells Saul About His Sin
10Then Samuel received this message from the Lord: 11“Saul has stopped following me, so I am sorry that I made him king. He is not doing what I tell him.” Samuel became angry and cried to the Lord all night.

12Samuel got up early the next morning and went to meet Saul. But the people told Samuel, “Saul went to Carmel. He went there to set up a stone monument to honor himself. Then he left there and went down to Gilgal.”

So Samuel went to Saul. Saul had just offered the first part of the things he took from the Amalekites as a burnt offering to the Lord. 13When Samuel came near to Saul, Saul greeted him and said, “The
LORD bless you! I have obeyed the LORD’s commands.”

14But Samuel said, “Then what is that sound I hear? Why do I hear sheep and cattle?”

15Saul said, “The soldiers took them from the Amalekites. They saved the best sheep and cattle to burn as sacrifices to the LORD your God. But we destroyed everything else.”

16Samuel said to Saul, “Stop! Let me tell you what the LORD told me last night.” Saul answered, “Tell me what he said.”

17Samuel said, “In the past you didn’t think that you were important, but the LORD chose you to be the king. So you became the leader of the tribes of Israel.

18The LORD sent you on a special mission. He said, ‘Go and destroy all the Amalekites. They are evil people. Destroy them all! Fight them until they are completely finished.’ So why didn’t you listen to the LORD? You did what the LORD said is wrong because you wanted to keep what you took in battle.”

20Saul said, “But I did obey the LORD! I went where the LORD sent me. I destroyed all the Amalekites. I brought back only one—their king Agag. 21And the soldiers took the best sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal.”

22But Samuel answered, “Which pleases the LORD more: burnt offerings and sacrifices or obeying his commands? It is better to obey the LORD than to offer sacrifices to him. It is better to listen to him than to offer the fat from rams. 23Refusing to obey is as bad as the sin of sorcery. Being stubborn and doing what you want is like the sin of worshiping idols. You refused to obey the LORD’s command, so he now refuses to accept you as king.”

24Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I did not obey the LORD’s commands, and I did not do what you told me. I was afraid of the people, and I did what they said. 25Now I beg you, forgive me for doing this sin. Come back with me, so I may worship the LORD.”

26But Samuel said to Saul, “I won’t go back with you. You rejected the LORD’s command, and now the LORD rejects you as king of Israel.”

27When Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught Samuel’s robe. The robe tore.

28Samuel said to Saul, “In this same way the LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today. He has given the kingdom to one of your friends, a man who is a better person than you. 29The one who lives forever, the God of Israel, does not lie and will not change his mind. He is not like a man who is always changing his mind.”

30Saul answered, “All right, I sinned! But please come back with me. Show me some respect in front of the leaders and the Israelites. Come back with me so that I may worship the LORD your God.”

31Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

32Samuel said, “Bring King Agag of the Amalekites to me.”

Agag came to Samuel. Agag was tied with chains and thought, “Surely he won’t kill me.”

33But Samuel said to Agag, “Your sword took babies from their mothers. So now, your mother will have no children.” And Samuel cut Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

34Then Samuel left and went to Ramah. And Saul went up to his home in Gibeah.

35After that Samuel never saw Saul again. Samuel was very sad for Saul. And the LORD was very sorry that he had made Saul king of Israel.

Samuel Goes to Bethlehem

16The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you feel sorry for Saul? I have rejected him as king of Israel. Fill your horn with oil and go to Bethlehem. I am sending you to Jesse who lives in Bethlehem, because I have chosen one of his sons to be the new king.”

2But Samuel said, “If I go, Saul will hear the news and try to kill me.”

3But Samuel said to Agag, “Your sword took babies from their mothers. So now, your mother will have no children.” And Samuel cut Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

4Then Samuel left and went to Ramah. And Saul went up to his home in Gibeah.

5After that Samuel never saw Saul again. Samuel was very sad for Saul. And the LORD was very sorry that he had made Saul king of Israel.

a 15:32 Surely ... kill me The ancient Greek version has “This treatment is worse than death.”

b 16:1 horn An animal’s horn is hollow and often used like a bottle.
The LORD said, “Go to Bethlehem. Take a young calf with you and tell them, ‘I have come to make a sacrifice to the LORD.’ 3Invite Jesse to the sacrifice. Then I will show you what to do. You must anoint the person I show you.”

4Samuel did what the LORD told him to do and went to Bethlehem. The elders of Bethlehem shook with fear. They met Samuel and asked, “Do you come in peace?”

5Samuel answered, “Yes, I come in peace. I come to make a sacrifice to the LORD. Prepare yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Samuel prepared Jesse and his sons. Then he invited them to come and share the sacrifice.

6When Jesse and his sons arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely this is the man who the LORD has chosen.”

7But the LORD said to Samuel, “Eliab is tall and handsome, but don’t judge by things like that. God doesn’t look at what people see. People judge by what is on the outside, but the LORD looks at the heart. Eliab is not the right man.”

8Then Jesse called his second son, Abinadab. Abinadab walked by Samuel. But Samuel said, “No, this is not the man who the LORD has chosen.”

9Then Jesse told Shammah to walk by Samuel. But Samuel said, “No, the LORD did not choose this man, either.”

10Jesse showed seven of his sons to Samuel. But Samuel said, “The LORD has not chosen any of these men.”

11Then he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?”

Jesse answered, “No, I have another son—my youngest, but he is out taking care of the sheep.”

Samuel said, “Send for him. Bring him here. We won’t sit down to eat until he arrives.”

12Jesse sent someone to get his youngest son. This son was a good-looking, healthy young man. He was very handsome.

a 16:12 healthy The Hebrew word means “red,” “ruddy,” or “red-haired.”

The LORD said to Samuel, “Get up and anoint him. He is the one.”

13Samuel took the horn with the oil in it, and poured the special oil on Jesse’s youngest son in front of his brothers. The Spirit of the LORD came on David with great power from that day on. Then Samuel went back home to Ramah.

An Evil Spirit Bothers Saul

14The LORD’s Spirit left Saul. Then the LORD sent an evil spirit to Saul that caused him much trouble. 15Saul’s servants said to him, “An evil spirit from God is bothering you. Give us the command and we will look for someone who can play the harp. If the evil spirit from God comes on you, this person will play music for you. Then you will feel better.”

17So Saul said to his servants, “Find someone who plays music well and bring him to me.”

18One of the servants said, “There is a man named Jesse living in Bethlehem. I saw Jesse’s son. He knows how to play the harp. He is also a brave man and fights well. He is smart and handsome, and the LORD is with him.”

19So Saul sent messengers to Jesse. They told Jesse, “You have a son named David. He takes care of your sheep. Send him to me.”

20So Jesse got some things as a gift for Saul. Jesse got a donkey, some bread and a leather bag full of wine, and a young goat. He gave them to David and sent him to Saul. 21So David went to Saul and stood in front of him. Saul loved David very much. David became the helper who carried Saul’s weapons. 22Saul sent a message to Jesse. “Let David stay and serve me. I like him very much.”

23Any time the evil spirit from God came on Saul, David would take his harp and play it. The evil spirit would leave Saul and he would begin to feel better.

Goliath Challenges Israel

17The Philistines gathered their armies together for war. They met at
Socoh in Judah. Their camp was between Socoh and Azekah, at a town called Ephes Dammim.

2 Saul and the Israelite soldiers also gathered together. Their camp was in the Valley of Elah. Saul’s soldiers were lined up and ready to fight the Philistines. The Philistines were on one hill. The Israelites were on the other hill. The valley was between them.

4 The Philistines had a champion fighter named Goliath, who was from Gath. He was over 9 feet tall. Goliath came out of the Philistine camp. He had a bronze helmet on his head. He wore a coat of armor that was made like the scales on a fish. This armor was made of bronze and weighed about 125 pounds. Goliath wore bronze protectors on his legs. He had a bronze javelin tied on his back. The wooden part of his spear was as big as a weaver’s rod. The spear’s blade weighed 15 pounds. Goliath’s helper walked in front of him, carrying Goliath’s shield.

8 Each day Goliath would come out and shout a challenge to the Israelite soldiers. He would say, “Why are all of your soldiers lined up ready for battle? You are Saul’s servants. I am a Philistine. So choose one man and send him to fight me. If that man kills me, he wins and we Philistines will become your slaves. But if I kill your man, then I win, and you will become our slaves. You will have to serve us.”

10 The Philistine also said, “Today I stand and make fun of the army of Israel. I dare you to send me one of your men and let us fight.”

11 Saul and the Israelite soldiers heard what Goliath said, and they were very afraid.

David Goes to the Battle Front

12 David was the son of Jesse. Jesse was from the Ephrathah family in Bethlehem, Judah. Jesse had eight sons. In Saul’s time Jesse was an old man. Jesse’s three oldest sons went with Saul to the war. The first son was Eliab, the second was Abinadab, and the third was Shammah. David was the youngest son. The three oldest sons were in Saul’s army, but David left Saul from time to time to take care of his father’s sheep at Bethlehem.

16 The Philistine came out every morning and evening and stood before the Israelite army. Goliath insulted Israel like this for 40 days.

17 One day Jesse said to his son David, “Take this basket of cooked grain and these ten loaves of bread to your brothers in the camp. Also take these ten pieces of cheese for the officer who commands your brothers’ group of 1000 soldiers. See how your brothers are doing. Bring back something to show me your brothers are all right. Your brothers are with Saul and all the Israelite soldiers in the Valley of Elah. They are there to fight against the Philistines.”

20 Early in the morning, David had another shepherd take care of the sheep while he took the food and left as Jesse had told him to. David drove their wagon to the camp. The soldiers were going out to their battle positions just as David arrived. The soldiers began shouting their war cry. The Israelites and Philistines were lined up and ready for battle.

22 David left the food with the man who kept supplies. Then he ran to the place where the Israelite soldiers were and asked about his brothers. While David was talking with his brothers, the Philistine champion fighter came out from the Philistine army. This was Goliath, the Philistine from Gath. Goliath shouted things against Israel as usual. David heard what he said.

24 The Israelite soldiers saw Goliath and ran away. They were all afraid of him. One of the Israelite men said, “Did you see that man? Look at him! He comes out of the Ephrathah family in Bethlehem, Judah. Jesse had eight sons. In Saul’s time Jesse was an old man. Jesse’s three oldest sons went with Saul to the war. The first son was Eliab, the second was Abinadab, and the third was Shammah. David was the youngest son. The three oldest sons were in Saul’s army, but David left Saul from time to time to take care of his father’s sheep at Bethlehem.

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each day and makes fun of Israel. Whoever kills him will get rich. King Saul will give him a lot of money. Saul will also let his daughter marry the man who kills Goliath. He will also make that man’s family free from taxes in Israel.”

26David asked the men standing near him, “What did he say? What is the reward for killing this Philistine and taking away this shame from Israel? Who is this Goliath anyway? He is only some foreigner, a nothing but a Philistine. Why does he think he can speak against the army of the living God?”

27So the Israelite told David about the reward for killing Goliath. 28David’s oldest brother Eliab heard David talking with the soldiers and became angry. Eliab asked David, “Why did you come here? Who did you leave those few sheep with in the desert? I know why you came down here. You didn’t want to do what you were told to do. You just wanted to come down here to watch the battle.”

29David said, “What did I do now? I didn’t do anything wrong! I was only talking.” 30He turned to some other people and asked them the same questions. They gave him the same answers as before.

31Some men heard David talking. They took David to Saul and told him what David had said. 32David said to Saul, “People shouldn’t let Goliath discourage them. I am your servant. I will go fight this Philistine.”

33Saul answered, “You can’t go out and fight against this Philistine. You’re not even a soldier! Goliath has been fighting in wars since he was a boy.”

34But David said to Saul, “There were times when I was taking care of my father’s sheep that wild animals came to take some sheep from the flock. Once there was a lion and another time, a bear. 35I chased that wild animal, attacked it, and took the sheep from its mouth. The wild animal jumped on me, but I caught it by the fur under its mouth. And I hit it and killed it. 36I killed both a lion and a bear like that! And I will kill that foreigner, Goliath, just like them. Goliath will die because he made fun of the army of the living God. 37The Lord saved me from the lion and the bear. He will also save me from this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go and may the Lord be with you.” 38Saul put his own clothes on David. He put a bronze helmet on David’s head and armor on his body. 39David put on the sword and tried to walk around. He tried to wear Saul’s uniform, but David was not used to all those heavy things.

David said to Saul, “I can’t fight in these things. I’m not used to them.” So David took them all off. 40He took his walking stick in his hand and went to find five smooth stones from the stream. He put the five stones in his shepherd’s bag and held his sling in his hand. Then he went out to meet the Philistine.

David Kills Goliath

41The Philistine slowly walked closer and closer to David. Goliath’s helper walked in front of him, carrying a large shield. 42Goliath looked at David with disgust. He saw that David was only a handsome, healthy boy. 43Goliath said to David, “What is that stick for? Did you come to chase me away like a dog?” Then Goliath used the names of his gods to say curses against David. 44He said to David, “Come here, and I’ll feed your body to the birds and wild animals.”

45David said to the Philistine, “You come to me using sword, spear, and javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord All-Powerful, the God of the armies of Israel. You have said bad things about him. Today the Lord will let me defeat you. I will kill you. I will cut off your head and feed your body to the birds and wild animals. And we will do the same thing to

—a 17:26 foreigner Literally, “uncircumcised.” This means a person who did not share in the agreement God made with Israel. See “CIRCUMCISE, CIRCUMCISION” in the Word List. Also in verse 36.

b 17:33 You’re not even a soldier Or “You are only a boy!” The Hebrew word for “boy” often means “servant” or “the helper who carries a soldier’s weapons.”

c 17:42 healthy The Hebrew word means “red,” “ruddy,” or “red-haired.”

d 17:42 boy Or “teenager” or “soldier’s helper.”
all the other Philistines too. Then all the world will know there is a God in Israel. All the people gathered here will know that the LORD doesn’t need swords or spears to save people. The battle belongs to the LORD, and he will help us defeat all of you.”

Goliath the Philistine started to attack David. He slowly walked closer and closer toward David, but David ran out to meet Goliath.

David took out a stone from his bag. He put it in his sling and swung the sling. The stone flew from the sling and hit Goliath right between the eyes. The stone sank deep into his head, and Goliath fell to the ground—face down.

So David defeated the Philistine with only a sling and one stone! He hit the Philistine and killed him. David didn’t have a sword, so he ran and stood beside the Philistine. Then David took Goliath’s own sword out of its sheath and used it to cut off his head. That is how David killed the Philistine.

When the other Philistines saw their hero was dead, they turned and ran. The soldiers of Israel and Judah shouted and started chasing the Philistines. The Israelites chased them all the way to the city limits of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. They killed many of the Philistines. Their bodies were scattered along the Shaaraim road all the way to Gath and Ekron. After chasing the Philistines, the Israelites came back to the Philistine camp and took many things from that camp.

David took the Philistine’s head to Jerusalem, but he kept the Philistine’s weapons at home.

Saul Begins to Fear David

Saul watched David go out to fight Goliath. Saul spoke to Abner, the commander of the army. “Abner, who is that young man’s father?”

Abner answered, “I swear I don’t know, sir.”

King Saul said, “Find out who his father is.”

When David came back after killing Goliath, Abner brought him to Saul. David was still holding the Philistine’s head.

Saul asked him, “Young man, who is your father?”

David answered, “I am the son of your servant Jesse, from Bethlehem.”

David and Jonathan Become Friends

Saul decided to take David with him. He would not let David go back home to his father. After David finished talking with Saul, Jonathan developed a strong friendship with David.a

Jonathan loved David as much as himself, so they made a special agreement. Jonathan took off the coat he was wearing and gave it to David. In fact, Jonathan gave David his whole uniform—including his sword, his bow, and even his belt.

Saul Notices David’s Success

David went to fight wherever Saul sent him. He was very successful, so Saul put him in charge of the soldiers. This pleased everyone, even Saul’s officers. David would go out to fight against the Philistines. On the way home, after the battles, women in every town in Israel would come out to meet him. They sang and danced for joy as they played their tambourines and lyres. They did this right in front of Saul! The women sang, “Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed tens of thousands.”

This song upset Saul and he became very angry. Saul thought, “The women give David credit for killing tens of thousands of the enemy, and they give me credit for only thousands. A little more of this and they will give him the kingdom itself! b” So from that time on, Saul watched David very closely.

Saul Is Afraid of David

The next day, an evil spirit from God a

a 18:1–2 Jonathan ... with David Literally, “Jonathan’s soul was tied to David’s soul.”

b 18:8 A little more ... itself This is not in one of the oldest and best copies of the ancient Greek version.
took control of Saul and he went wild in his house. David played the harp to calm him as he usually did, but Saul had a spear in his hand. He thought, “I’ll pin David to the wall.” Saul threw the spear twice, but David jumped out of the way both times.

11 The LORD had left Saul and was now with David, so Saul was afraid of David. Saul sent David away and made him a commander over 1000 soldiers. This put David out among the men even more as they went into battle and returned. The LORD was with David, so he was successful in everything. Saul saw how successful David was and became even more afraid of him. But all the people in Israel and Judah loved David because he was out among them and led them into battle.

Saul Wants His Daughter to Marry David

17 One day Saul said to David, “Here is my oldest daughter, Merab. I will let you marry her. Then you will be like a son to me and you will be a real soldier. Then you will go and fight the LORD’s battles.” Saul was really thinking, “Now I won’t have to kill David. I will let the Philistines kill him for me.”

18 But David said, “I am not an important man from an important family. I can’t marry the king’s daughter.”

19 So when the time came for David to marry Saul’s daughter, Saul let her marry Adriel from Meholah.

20 People told Saul that his daughter Michal loved David. This made Saul happy. He thought, “I will use Michal to trap David. I will let Michal marry David, and then I will let the Philistines kill him.” So Saul said to David a second time, “You can marry my daughter today.”

21 Saul commanded his officers to speak to David in private. He told them to say, “Look, the king likes you. His officers like you. You should marry his daughter.”

22 Saul’s officers told these things to David, but David answered, “Do you think it is easy to become the king’s son-in-law? I am just a poor, ordinary man.”

24 Saul’s officers told Saul what David said. Saul told them, “Say this to David, ‘David, the king doesn’t want you to pay money for his daughter.’ He wants to get even with his enemy, so the price for marrying his daughter is 100 Philistine foreskins.” That was Saul’s secret plan. He thought the Philistines would kill David.

26 Saul’s officers told this to David. David was happy that he had a chance to become the king’s son-in-law, so immediately he and his men went out to fight the Philistines. They killed 200 Philistines. David took these Philistine foreskins and gave them to Saul. He did this because he wanted to become the king’s son-in-law.

Saul let David marry his daughter Michal. He saw that the LORD was with David and he also saw that his daughter, Michal, loved David. So Saul became even more afraid of David and was against him all that time.

30 The Philistine commanders continued to go out to fight the Israelites, but David defeated them every time. He became famous as Saul’s best officer.

Jonathan Helps David

19 Saul told his son Jonathan and his officers to kill David. But Jonathan liked David very much, so he warned him. “Be careful! Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. In the morning go into the field and hide. I will go out into the field with my father. We will stand in the field where you are hiding. I will talk to my father about you, and I will tell you what I learn.”

4 Jonathan talked to his father Saul. Jonathan said good things about David. He said, “You are the king. David is your servant. David hasn’t done anything wrong to you, so don’t do anything wrong to him. He has always been good to you.”

C 18:25 money for his daughter In Bible times a man usually had to give money to a woman’s father before he could marry her.

d 18:27 200 The ancient Greek version has “100.”
risked his life when he killed the Philistine. The Lord won a great victory for all Israel. You saw it, and you were happy. Why do you want to hurt David? He’s innocent. There is no reason to kill him.”

6 Saul listened to Jonathan and made a promise. He said, “As surely as the Lord lives, David won’t be put to death.”

7 So Jonathan called David and told him everything that was said. Then Jonathan brought David to Saul, and David was with Saul as before.

Saul Tries Again to Kill David

8 Once again there was war with the Philistines, and David went out to fight. He defeated them badly, and they ran away. 9 Later, in Saul’s house, David was playing the harp. Saul was there with his spear in his hand. Then an evil spirit from the Lord came on Saul. 10 Saul threw his spear at David and tried to pin him to the wall. David jumped out of the way, so the spear missed him and stuck in the wall. That night, David ran away.

11 Saul sent men to watch David’s house. They stayed there all night. They were waiting to kill David in the morning, but David’s wife Michal warned him. She said, “You must run away tonight and save your life. If you don’t, you will be killed tomorrow.”

12 Then Michal let David down out of a window, and he escaped and ran away.

13 Michal took the household god, put clothes on it, and put goats’ hair on its head. Then she put the statue in the bed. 14 Saul sent messengers to take David prisoner. But Michal said, “David is sick.”

15 The men went and told Saul, but he sent the messengers back to see David. Saul told these men, “Bring David to me. Bring him lying on his bed if you must, even if it kills him.”

16 The messengers went to David’s house. They went inside to get him, but they saw it was only a statue and that its hair was only goats’ hair.

17 Saul said to Michal, “Why did you trick me like this? You let my enemy escape, and now he is gone.”

Michal answered Saul, “David told me he would kill me if I didn’t help him escape.”

David Goes to the Camps at Ramah

18 David escaped and ran away to Samuel at Ramah. He told Samuel everything that Saul had done to him. Then David and Samuel went to the camps where the prophets stayed. David stayed there.

19 Saul heard that David was there in the camps near Ramah. So he sent some men to arrest David. But when they came to the camps, there was a group of prophets prophesying. 20 So he sent some men to arrest David. But when they came to the camps, there was a group of prophets prophesying. Saul sent messengers a third time, and they also began prophesying.

21 Finally, Saul himself went to Ramah. Saul came to the big well by the threshing floor at Secu. He asked, “Where are Samuel and David?”

The people answered, “In the camps near Ramah.”

22 So Saul went out to the camps near Ramah. The Spirit of God came on Saul, and he also began prophesying. He prophesied all the way to the camps at Ramah. 23 Saul even took off his clothes. He lay there naked all day and through the night. So even Saul prophesied there in front of Samuel.

That is why people say, “Is Saul also one of the prophets?”

David and Jonathan Make an Agreement

1 David ran away from the camps at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked him, “What have I done wrong? What is my crime? Why is your father trying to kill me?”

2 Jonathan answered, “That can’t be true! My father isn’t trying to kill you. My father doesn’t do anything without first prophesying. This usually means “speaking for God.” But here, this also means that the Spirit of God took control of the people, causing them to sing and dance. Also in verse 23.
telling me. It doesn’t matter how important it is, my father always tells me. Why would my father refuse to tell me that he wants to kill you? No, it is not true!"

3But David answered, “Your father knows very well that I am your friend. Your father said to himself, ‘Jonathan must not know about it. If he knows, he will tell David.’ But as surely as you and the LORD are alive, I am very close to death.”

4Jonathan said to David, “I will do anything you want me to do.”

5Then David said, “Look, tomorrow is the New Moon celebration. I am supposed to eat with the king, but let me hide in the field until the evening. 6If your father notices I am gone, tell him, ‘David wanted to go home to Bethlehem. His family is having its own feast for this monthly sacrifice. David asked me to let him run down to Bethlehem and join his family.’

7If your father says, ‘Fine,’ then I am safe. But if your father becomes angry, you will know that he wants to hurt me. 8Jonathan, be kind to me. I am your servant. You have made an agreement with me before the LORD. If I am guilty, you may kill me yourself, but don’t take me to your father.”

9Jonathan answered, “No, never! If I learn that my father plans to hurt you, I will let you know.”

10David said, “Who will warn me if your father says bad things to you?”

11Then Jonathan said, “Come, let’s go out into the field.” So Jonathan and David went together into the field.

12Jonathan said to David, “I make this promise before the LORD, the God of Israel. I promise that I will learn how my father feels about you. I will learn if he feels good about you or not. Then, in three days, I will send a message to you in the field. 13If my father wants to hurt you, I will let you know. I will let you leave in safety. May the LORD punish me if I don’t do this. May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father. 14–15As long as I live, show me the same kindness the LORD does. And if I die, never stop showing this kindness to my family. Be faithful to us, even when the LORD destroys all your enemies from the earth.”

16So Jonathan made this agreement with David and his family, and he asked the LORD to hold them responsible for keeping it.

17Jonathan loved David as himself, and because of this love, he asked David to repeat this agreement for himself.

18Jonathan said to David, “Tomorrow is the New Moon celebration. Your seat will be empty, so my father will see that you are gone.”

19On the third day go to the same place you hid when this trouble began. Wait by that hill. 20On the third day I will go to that hill and shoot three arrows as if I am shooting at a target. 21Then I will tell the boy to go find the arrows. If everything is fine, I will tell the boy, ‘You went too far! The arrows are closer to me. Come back and get them.’ If I say that, you can come out of hiding. I promise, as surely as the LORD lives, you are safe. There is no danger. 22But if there is trouble, I will say to the boy, ‘The arrows are farther away. Go get them.’ If I say that, you must leave. The LORD is sending you away. 23Remember this agreement between you and me. The LORD is our witness forever.”

24Then David hid in the field.

Saul’s Attitude at the Celebration

The time for the New Moon celebration came, and the king sat down to eat. 25He sat next to the wall where he usually sat, and Jonathan sat across from him. Abner sat next to Saul, but David’s place was empty. 26That day Saul said nothing. He thought, “Maybe something happened to David so that he is not clean.”

27On the next day, the second day of the month, David’s place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, “Why didn’t Jesse’s son come to the New Moon celebration yesterday or today?”

28Jonathan answered, “David asked me to let him go to Bethlehem. 29He said, ‘Let

\[a\] 20:3 he will tell David This is from the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text here has “he will be upset.”

\[b\] 20:14–15 enemies Or “descendants.”

\[c\] 20:14–16 The Hebrew text here is unclear, and several different translations are possible.
me go. Our family is having a sacrifice in Bethlehem. My brother ordered me to be there. Now if I am your friend, please let me go and see my brothers.” That is why David has not come to the king’s table.”

30Saul was very angry with Jonathan and said to him, “You son of a twisted, rebellious woman! I know that you have chosen to support that son of Jesse. This will bring shame to you and to your mother. As long as Jesse’s son lives, you will never be king and have a kingdom. Now, bring David to me! He is a dead man.”

31Jonathan asked his father, “Why should David be killed? What did he do wrong?”

32But Saul threw his spear at Jonathan and tried to kill him. So Jonathan knew that his father wanted very much to kill David. Jonathan became angry and left the table. He was so upset and angry with his father that he refused to eat any food on the second day of the festival. He was angry because Saul humiliated him and because Saul wanted to kill David.

David and Jonathan Say Goodbye
35The next morning Jonathan went out to the field to meet David as they had agreed. Jonathan brought a little boy with him. He said to the boy, “Run. Go find the arrows I shoot.” The boy began to run, and Jonathan shot the arrows over his head.

36Then he shouted, “Hurry! Go get them. Don’t just stand there.” The boy picked up the arrows and brought them back to his master. The boy knew nothing about what went on. Only Jonathan and David knew. Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to the boy and told him to go back to town.

37When the boy left, David came out from his hiding place on the other side of the hill. David gave a formal greeting by bowing to the ground three times to show his respect for Jonathan. But then David and Jonathan kissed each other and cried together. It was a very sad goodbye, especially for David.

42Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace. We have taken an oath in the Lord’s name to be friends forever. We have asked the Lord to be a witness between us and our descendants forever.”

David Goes to See Ahimelech the Priest
211Then David left and Jonathan went back to the town. David went to the town named Nob to see Ahimelech the priest.

Ahimelech went out to meet David. He was afraid of David and asked, “Why are you alone? Why isn’t anyone with you?”

2David answered him, “The king gave me a special order. He told me, ‘Don’t let anyone know about this mission. No one must know what I told you to do.’ I told my men where to meet me. Now, what food do you have with you? Give me five loaves of bread or whatever you have to eat.”

4The priest said to David, “I don’t have any ordinary bread here, but I do have some of the holy bread. Your officers can eat it if they have not had sexual relations with any women.”

5David answered the priest, “We have not been with any women. My men keep their bodies holy every time we go out to fight, even on ordinary missions. And this is especially true today.”

6There was no bread except the holy bread, so the priest gave David this bread. This was the bread that the priests put on the holy table before the Lord. Each day they took this bread away and put fresh bread in its place.

7One of Saul’s officers was there that day. He was Doeg the Edomite, the leader of Saul’s officers.
of Saul’s shepherds. He had been kept there before the LORD.

David asked Ahimelech, “Do you have a spear or sword here? The king’s business is very important. I had to leave quickly, and I didn’t bring my sword or any other weapon.”

The priest answered, “The only sword here is the sword of Goliath the Philistine. It is the sword you took from him when you killed him in the Valley of Elah. That sword is behind the ephod, wrapped in a cloth. You may take it if you want to.”

David said, “Goliath’s sword—there’s not another one like it. Give it to me.”

David Runs Away to the Enemy at Gath

That day David ran away from Saul and went to King Achish of Gath. Achish’s officers said, “Isn’t this David, the king of the land of Israel? He is the one the Israelites sing about. They dance and sing this song about him:

“Saul has killed thousands of enemies, but David has killed tens of thousands.”

David paid close attention to what they said. He was afraid of King Achish of Gath, so he pretended to be crazy in front of Achish and his officers. While David was with them, he acted like a crazy man. He spat on the doors of the gate. He let spit fall down his beard.

Achish said to his officers, “Look at the man! He is crazy. Why did you bring him to me? I have enough crazy men. I don’t need you to bring this man to my house to act crazy in front of me. Don’t let this man come into my house again.”

David Goes to Different Places

David left Gath and ran away to the cave of Adullam. David’s brothers and relatives heard that David was at Adullam and went to see him there. Many people joined David. There were men who were in some kind of trouble, men who owed a lot of money, and men who were just not satisfied with life. All kinds of people joined David, and he became their leader. He had about 400 men with him.

David left Adullam and went to Mizpah in Moab. David said to the king of Moab, “Please let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God is going to do to me.” So David left his parents with the king of Moab. They stayed with the king of Moab as long as David was at the fort.

But the prophet Gad said to David, “Don’t stay in the fort. Go to the land of Judah.” So David left and went to Hereth Forest.

Saul Destroys Ahimelech’s Family

Saul heard the report about David and his men while sitting under the tree on the hill at Gibeah. Saul had his spear in his hand. All of his officers were standing around him.

Saul said to his officers who were standing around him, “Listen, men of Benjamin. Do you think that son of Jesse will give you fields and vineyards? He is not one of us, so don’t think he will give you anything or make you officers over 1000 or even 100 men! No, but all of you are plotting against me. None of you told me about my son Jonathan and the agreement he made with the son of Jesse. None of you cares enough about me to tell me that my own son Jonathan encouraged David to turn against me and attack me. And that is what David is doing now.”

Doeg the Edomite was standing there with Saul’s officers. Doeg said, “I saw Jesse’s son at Nob. David came to see Ahimelech son of Ahitub. Ahimelech prayed to the Lord for David and gave him some food. He even gave David the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

Then King Saul ordered some men to bring the priest to him. Saul told them to bring Ahimelech son of Ahitub and all his
relatives who were priests at Nob. So all of them came to the king. 12 Saul said to Ahimelech, “Listen now, son of Ahitub.”

Ahimelech answered, “Yes, sir.”

13 Saul said to him, “Why did you and Jesse’s son make secret plans against me? You gave David bread and a sword. You prayed to God for him. And right now, David is waiting to attack me.”

14 Ahimelech answered, “David is very faithful to you. Not one of your other officers is as faithful as David. He is your own son-in-law and the captain of your bodyguards. Your own family respects David. 15 That was not the first time I prayed to God for David. Not at all! Don’t blame me or any of my relatives. We are your servants. I know nothing about what is happening.”

16 But the king said, “Ahimelech, you and all your relatives must die.” 17 Then the king told the guards at his side, “Go and kill the priests of the LORD because they are on David’s side too. They knew he was running away, but they didn’t tell me.”

The king’s officers refused to hurt the priests of the LORD. 18 So the king gave the order to Doeg. Saul said, “Doeg, you go kill the priests.” So Doeg the Edomite went and killed the priests. That day he killed 85 men who were priests. 19 Nob was the city of the priests. Doeg killed all the people of Nob. He used his sword and killed men, women, children and small babies. He even killed their cattle, donkeys, and sheep.

20 But Abiathar son of Ahimelech escaped. He ran away and joined David. 21 Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the LORD’s priests. 22 Then David told Abiathar, “I saw Doeg the Edomite at Nob that day. I knew he would tell Saul! I am responsible for the death of your father’s family. 23 Stay with me. Don’t be afraid, because the man who tried to kill you is the same man who wants to kill me. I will protect you if you stay with me.”

David at Keilah

1 People told David, “Look, the Philistines are fighting against the city of Keilah. They are robbing grain from the threshing floors.”

2 David asked the LORD, “Should I go and fight these Philistines?”

The LORD answered David, “Yes, go attack the Philistines. Save Keilah.”

3 But David’s men said to him, “Look, our men are afraid here in Judah. Just think how afraid we will be if we go to Keilah, where the Philistine army is lined up and ready for battle.”

4 David again asked the LORD. And the LORD answered David, “Go down to Keilah. I will help you defeat the Philistines.” 5 So David and his men went to Keilah. David’s men fought the Philistines. They defeated them and took their cattle. In this way David saved the people of Keilah. 6 (When Abiathar ran away to David, Abiathar took an ephod with him."

7 People told Saul that David was now at Keilah. Saul said, “God has given David to me. David trapped himself when he went into a city surrounded by a wall with gates and bars to lock them.” 8 Saul called all his army together for battle. They prepared to go down to Keilah to attack David and his men.

9 David learned that Saul was making plans against him. David then said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod.”

10 David prayed, “LORD, God of Israel, I have heard that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town because of me. 11 Will Saul come to Keilah? Will the people of Keilah give me to Saul? LORD, God of Israel, I am your servant. Please tell me!”

The LORD answered, “Saul will come.”

12 Again David asked, “Will the people of Keilah give me and my men to Saul?”

The LORD answered, “They will.”

13 So David and his men left Keilah. There were about 600 men who went with David. They kept moving from place to place.

a 22:18 priests Literally, “men who wore the linen ephod.”

b 23:6 When Abiathar…him This means that Abiathar could go before God for David and ask for advice.
place. Saul learned that David had escaped from Keilah, so he did not go to that city.

**Saul Chases David**

David went into the desert of Ziph and stayed in the mountains and fortresses there. Saul looked for David the whole time, but the Lord didn’t let Saul catch him.

David was at Horesh in the desert of Ziph. He was afraid because Saul was coming to kill him. But Saul’s son Jonathan went to see David at Horesh and encouraged him to have a stronger faith in God. Jonathan told David, “Don’t be afraid. My father Saul won’t hurt you. You will become the king of Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father knows this.”

Jonathan and David both made an agreement before the Lord. Then Jonathan went home, and David stayed at Horesh.

**The People of Ziph Tell Saul About David**

Some people from Ziph went to Saul at Gibeah and told him, “David is hiding in our area. He is at the fortresses of Horesh on Hakilah Hill, south of Jeshimon. Now, King, come down any time you want. It is our duty to give David to you.”

Saul answered, “May the Lord bless you for helping me. Go and learn more about David. Keep track of where he goes and who goes to see him. I am told that David is smart and that he is trying to trick me. Find all the hiding places that David uses. Then come back to me and tell me everything. Then I’ll go with you. If David is in the area, I will find him, even if I must go to every family group in Judah.”

So those people went back to Ziph before Saul.

David and his men were in the desert of Maon, south of Jeshimon. Saul and his men went to look for David, but the people warned him. They told David that Saul was looking for him. So David then went down to “The Rock” in the desert of Maon.

Saul heard that David had gone there, so Saul went to that place to find him.

Saul was on one side of the mountain. David and his men were on the other side of the same mountain. David was moving as quickly as possible to get away from Saul. But Saul and his soldiers were going around the mountain to cut them off and trap David and his men.

Then a messenger arrived and told Saul, “Come quickly! The Philistines are attacking.”

So Saul stopped chasing David and went to fight the Philistines. That is why people call this place “Slippery Rock.” David left the desert of Maon and went to the fortresses near En Gedi.

**David Shames Saul**

After Saul had chased the Philistines away, people told him, “David is in the desert area near En Gedi.”

So Saul chose 3000 men from all over Israel and began searching for David and his men. They looked near Wild Goat Rocks. Saul came to some sheep pens beside the road. There was a cave near there, so Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were deep inside that same cave. David’s men told him, “This is the day the Lord told you about when he said, ‘I will give your enemy to you, and you can do whatever you want to him.’”

So David crawled closer and closer to Saul and cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. Saul didn’t notice what happened. Later, David felt bad about what he did. He said to his men, “I pray the Lord never lets me do anything like that to my master again. I must not do anything against Saul, because he is the Lord’s chosen king.”

David said these things to stop his men. He would not let his men hurt Saul.

Saul left the cave and went on his way. Later, David came out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” Saul looked back. David bowed with his face to the ground to show his respect.
David said to Saul, “Why do you listen when people say, ‘David plans to hurt you’? You can see that with your own eyes that is not true. The LORD put you within my grasp today in the cave, but I refused to kill you. I was merciful to you. I said, ‘I won’t hurt my master. Saul is the LORD’s chosen king.’ Look at this piece of cloth in my hand. I cut off the corner of your robe. I could have killed you, but I didn’t. Now, I want you to understand this. I want you to know that I am not planning anything against you. I did nothing wrong to you, but you are hunting me and trying to kill me. Let the LORD be the judge. I hope the LORD will punish you for the wrong you did to me, but I won’t fight you myself. There is an old saying: ‘Bad things come from bad people.’ I haven’t done anything bad, and I won’t hurt you. Who are you chasing? Did the king of Israel bring an army to chase a single flea or a dying dog? Let the LORD be the judge. Let him decide between you and me. He will support me and show that I am right. He will save me from you.”

When David finished speaking, Saul asked, “Is that your voice, David my son?” Then Saul lifted his voice and began to cry. He said, “You are right, and I am wrong. You were good to me, even though I have been bad to you. You yourself said it when you told me about the good things you did. The LORD put my life in your hands, but you did not kill me. This shows that you are not my enemy. A man doesn’t catch his enemy, and then just let him go. He doesn’t do good things for his enemy. May the LORD reward you for being good to me today. Now, I know that you will become the new king. You will rule the kingdom of Israel. Now make a promise to me with an oath using the LORD’s name. Promise that you will not kill my descendants, even after I die. Promise me that you will not erase my name from my father’s family.”

So David made a promise to Saul. He promised that he would not kill Saul’s family. Then Saul went back home. David and his men went back up to the fort.

David and Nabal the Fool

25 Samuel died. All the Israelites met together and mourned his death. They buried him at his home in Ramah.

Then David moved to the desert of Maon. There was a very rich man living in Maon. He had 3000 sheep and 1000 goats. That man was in Carmel taking care of some business. He went there to cut the wool from his sheep. This man’s name was Nabal. He was from Caleb’s family. Nabal’s wife was named Abigail. She was a wise and beautiful woman, but Nabal was a mean and cruel man.

David was in the desert when he heard that Nabal was cutting the wool from his sheep. David sent ten young men to talk to Nabal. He told them, “Go to Carmel. Find Nabal and tell him ‘Hello’ for me.” David gave them this message for Nabal: “May you and your family be well and all that you own be well. I heard that you are cutting wool from your sheep. Your shepherds were with us for a while, and we did nothing wrong to them. We never took anything from your shepherds while they were at Carmel. Ask your servants and they will tell you this is true. Please be kind to my young men. We come to you now, at this happy time. Please give these young men anything you can. Please do this for me, your friend David.”

David’s men went to Nabal. They gave his message to Nabal, but Nabal said, “Who is David? Who is this son of Jesse? There are many slaves who have run away from their masters these days. I have bread and water, and I have the meat I killed for my servants who cut the wool from my sheep. But I won’t give them to men I don’t even know.”

David’s men went back and told him everything that Nabal had said. David’s response was, “Put on your swords.” So
David and his men put on their swords. About 400 men went with David while 200 of them stayed with the supplies.

**Abigail Prevents Trouble**

14 One of Nabal’s servants spoke to Nabal’s wife Abigail. The servant said, “David sent messengers from the desert to meet our master, but Nabal was rude to them. These men were very good to us while we were out in the fields with the sheep. David’s men were with us the whole time, and they never did anything wrong to us. They did not take anything from us. His men protected us night and day. They were like a wall around us—they protected us while we were with them caring for the sheep. Nabal was foolish to say what he did. Terrible trouble is coming to our master and all his family. You need to think of something to do.”

18 Abigail quickly gathered up 200 loaves of bread, two full wine bags, five cooked sheep, about a bushel of cooked grain, about 2 quarts of raisins, and 200 cakes of pressed figs. She put them on donkeys. Then Abigail told her servants, “Go on. I’ll follow you.” But she did not tell her husband.

20 Abigail rode her donkey down to the other side of the mountain. She met David and his men coming from the other direction.

21 David was saying, “I protected Nabal’s property in the desert. I made sure not one of his sheep was missing. I did all that for nothing. I was good to him, but he was rude to me. I swear, I won’t let even one man in Nabal’s family live until tomorrow morning.”

23 Just then Abigail arrived. When she saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down with her face to the ground in front of him. Abigail fell at his feet and said, “Sir, please let me talk to you. Listen to what I say. Blame me for what happened. I didn’t see the men you sent. Sir, don’t pay any attention to that worthless man, Nabal. His name means ‘Foolish,’ and that is what he is. The LORD has kept you from killing innocent people. As surely as the LORD lives and you as well, may your enemies and anyone else who wants to harm you be as cursed as Nabal is. Now, I am bringing this gift to you. Please give these things to your men. Please forgive me for doing wrong. I know the LORD will make your family strong because you fight his battles. People will never find anything bad about you as long as you live. If someone chases you to kill you, the LORD your God will save your life. But he will throw away your enemies like a stone from a sling. The LORD promised to do many good things for you, and he will keep his promises. He will make you leader over Israel. Don’t do anything that would make you guilty of killing innocent people. Please don’t fall into that trap. Please remember me when the LORD blesses you.”

32 David answered Abigail, “Praise the LORD, the God of Israel. Praise God for sending you to meet me. God bless you for your good judgment. You kept me from killing innocent people today. As surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, if you hadn’t come quickly to meet me, not one man in Nabal’s family would have lived until tomorrow morning. But the Lord prevented me from hurting you.”

35 Then David accepted Abigail’s gifts. He told her, “Go home in peace. I have listened to your request, and I will do what you asked.”

**Nabal’s Death**

36 Abigail went back to Nabal, who was in the house. He had been eating like a king, and he was drunk and feeling good. So Abigail told Nabal nothing until the next morning. Abigail fell at his feet and said, “Sir, please let me talk to you. Listen to what I say. Blame me for what happened. I didn’t see the men you sent. Sir, don’t pay any attention to that worthless man, Nabal. His name means ‘Foolish,’ and that is what he is. The LORD has kept you from killing innocent people. As surely as the LORD lives and you as well, may your enemies and anyone else who wants to harm you be as cursed as Nabal is. Now, I am bringing this gift to you. Please give these things to your men. Please forgive me for doing wrong. I know the LORD will make your family strong because you fight his battles. People will never find anything bad about you as long as you live. If someone chases you to kill you, the LORD your God will save your life. But he will throw away your enemies like a stone from a sling. The LORD promised to do many good things for you, and he will keep his promises. He will make you leader over Israel. Don’t do anything that would make you guilty of killing innocent people. Please don’t fall into that trap. Please remember me when the LORD blesses you.”

35 Then David accepted Abigail’s gifts. He told her, “Go home in peace. I have listened to your request, and I will do what you asked.”
dead, he said, “Praise the LORD! He judged Nabal to be wrong for insulting me and kept me from doing something wrong. The LORD made Nabal pay for what he did.”

Then David sent a message to Abigail and asked her to be his wife. His servants went to Carmel with this message, “David sent us to get you. He wants you to be his wife.”

Abigail bowed her face to the ground. She said, “I am willing to be your slave woman, even if it is only to wash the feet of my master’s servants.”

Abigail quickly got on a donkey and brought five of her maids with her. They followed David’s messengers. So Abigail became David’s wife. David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Both Ahinoam and Abigail were David’s wives. David was also married to Saul’s daughter Michal, but Saul had taken her away from him and given her to a man named Palti, son of Laish. Palti was from the town named Gallim.

David and Abishai Enter Saul’s Camp

1 The people of Ziph went to see Saul at Gibeah and said to him, “David is hiding on Hakilah Hill, across from Jeshimon.”

2 Saul gathered 3000 of the best soldiers in Israel and went down to the desert of Ziph to search for David there. Saul set up his camp by the road at Hakilah Hill, across from Jeshimon.

David was out in the desert and saw that Saul had come out into the desert after him. So David sent out spies to know for certain that Saul had come after him again. Then David went to where Saul had set up his camp. David saw where Saul and Abner were sleeping. (Abner son of Ner was the commander of Saul’s army.) Saul was sleeping in the center of a circle of men that surrounded him.

6 David talked to Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah. (Abishai was Joab’s brother.) He asked them, “Who would like to go down into the camp with me after Saul?” Abishai answered, “I’ll go with you.”

7 When night came, David and Abishai went into Saul’s camp. Saul was asleep in the middle of the circle of men. His spear was stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the other soldiers were asleep around Saul. Abishai said to David, “Today God has given your enemy to you. Let me pin Saul to the ground with his spear. I’ll only do it once!”

9 But David said to Abishai, “Don’t kill Saul! Anyone who hurts the LORD’s chosen king must be punished. As surely as the LORD lives, the LORD himself will punish Saul. Maybe Saul will die naturally or maybe he will be killed in battle. But I pray that the LORD never lets me hurt the LORD’s chosen king. Now pick up the spear and water jug by Saul’s head and let’s go.”

12 So David took the spear and water jug that were near Saul’s head, and then David and Abishai left Saul’s camp. No one knew what had happened. No one saw it. No one even woke up. Saul and all of his soldiers slept because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.

David Shames Saul Again

13 David crossed over to the other side of the valley. He stood on top of the mountain across the valley from Saul’s camp. David and Saul’s camp were far apart. David shouted to the army and to Abner son of Ner, “Answer me, Abner!”

15 David said, “You are an important man, aren’t you? You are better than any other man in Israel. Is that right? So why didn’t you guard your master, the king? An ordinary man came into your camp to kill your master, the king. You made a big mistake. As surely as the LORD is alive, you and your men should die, because you didn’t protect your master, the LORD’s chosen king. Look for the king’s spear

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and the water jug that was near Saul's head. Where are they?"

17 Saul knew David's voice and said, "Is that your voice, David my son?"

David answered, "Yes, it is my voice, my lord the king. 18 Sir, why are you chasing me? What wrong have I done? What am I guilty of? 19 My lord the king, listen to me. If the LORD caused you to be angry with me, let him accept an offering. But if men caused you to be angry with me, I ask the LORD to curse them because they forced me to leave the land that the LORD gave me and told me to go serve other gods. 20 Now don't make me die far away from the Lord's presence. The king of Israel has come out looking for a flea. You are like a man hunting partridges in the mountains." 21 Then Saul said, "David, my son! I have sinned. Come back. Today you showed me that my life is important to you, so I won't try to hurt you. I have acted foolishly. I have made a big mistake."

22 David answered, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of your young men come here and get it. 23 The LORD pays every man for what he does—he rewards him if he does right, and he punishes him if he does wrong. The LORD gave you to me today, but I wouldn't harm the LORD's chosen king. 24 Today I showed you that your life is important to me. In the same way the LORD will show that my life is important to him. He will save me from every trouble."

25 Then Saul said to David, "God bless you, David my son. You will do great things and you will win."

David went on his way, and Saul went back home.

David Lives With the Philistines
27 But David thought to himself, "Saul will catch me some day. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up looking for me in Israel. That way I will escape from Saul."

2 So David and his 600 men left Israel and went to Achish son of Maoch. Achish was king of Gath. 3 David, his men, and their families lived in Gath with Achish. David had his two wives with him—Ahi-noam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel. Abigail was the widow of Nabal. 4 People told Saul that David had run away to Gath, so Saul stopped looking for him.

5 David said to Achish, "If you are pleased with me, give me a place in one of the country towns. I am only your servant. I should live there, not here with you in this royal city."

6 That day Achish gave David the town of Ziklag. And Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since. 7 David lived with the Philistines one year and four months.

David Fools King Achish
8 David and his men went to fight the Amalekites and Geshurites who lived in the area from Telem near Shur all the way to Egypt. David's men defeated them and took their wealth. 9 David defeated the people in that area. He took all their sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and clothes and brought them back to Achish. But David didn't let any of those people live.

10 David did this many times. Each time Achish asked David where he fought and took those things. David said, "I fought against the southern part of Judah," or "I fought against the southern part of Jerahmeel," or "I fought against the southern part of the Kenizzites." 11 David never brought a man or woman alive to Gath. He thought, "If we let anyone live, they might tell Achish what I really did."

David did this all the time he lived in the Philistine land. 12 Achish began to trust David and said to himself, "Now David's own people hate him. The Israelites hate..."
him very much. Now he will serve me forever.”

The Philistines Prepare for War

Later, the Philistines gathered their armies to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, “Do you understand that you and your men must go with me to fight against Israel?”

David answered, “Certainly, then you can see for yourself what I can do.”

Achish said, “Fine, I will make you my permanent bodyguard.”

Saul and the Woman at Endor

After Samuel died, all the Israelites mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his hometown.

Saul had removed the mediums and fortunetellers from Israel.

The Philistines prepared for war. They came to Shunem and made their camp at that place. Saul gathered all the Israelites together and made his camp at Gilboa.

Saul saw the Philistine army, and he was afraid. His heart pounded with fear. He prayed to the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him. God did not talk to Saul in dreams. God did not use the Urim to give him an answer, and God did not use prophets to speak to Saul.

Finally, Saul said to his officers, “Find me a woman who is a medium. Then I can go ask her what will happen.”

His officers answered, “There is a medium at Endor.”

That night, Saul put on different clothes so that no one would know who he was. Then Saul and two of his men went to see the woman. Saul said to her, “I want you to bring up a ghost who can tell me what will happen in the future. You must call for the ghost of the person I name.”

But the woman said to him, “You know that Saul forced all the mediums and fortunetellers to leave the land of Israel. You are trying to trap me and kill me.”

Saul used the Lord’s name to make a promise to the woman. He said, “As surely as the Lord lives, you won’t be punished for doing this.”

The woman asked, “Who do you want me to bring up for you?”

Saul answered, “Bring up Samuel.”

And it happened—the woman saw Samuel and screamed. She said to Saul, “You tricked me! You are Saul.”

The king said to the woman, “Don’t be afraid! What do you see?”

The woman said, “I see a spirit coming up out of the ground.”

Saul asked, “What does he look like?”

The woman answered, “He looks like an old man wearing a special robe.”

Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down. His face touched the ground.

Samuel said to Saul, “Why did you bother me? Why did you bring me up?”

Saul answered, “I am in trouble! The Philistines have come to fight me, and God has left me. God won’t answer me anymore. He won’t use prophets or dreams to answer me, so I called you. I want you to tell me what to do.”

Samuel said, “The Lord left you and is now your enemy, so why are you asking me for advice? The Lord used me to tell you what he would do, and now he is doing what he said he would do. He is tearing the kingdom out of your hands and giving it to your neighbor, David. The Lord was angry with the Amalekites and told you to destroy them. But you did not obey him. That’s why the Lord is doing this to you today. The Lord will let the Philistines defeat you and the army of Israel today. Tomorrow, you and your sons will be here with me.”

Saul quickly fell to the ground and lay stretched out there. Saul was afraid because of what Samuel said. Saul was also very weak because he had not eaten any food all that day and night.

The woman came over to Saul and saw how afraid he was. She said, “Look, I am your servant. I have obeyed you. I...”

A 28:7 Endor A town around the mountain from Shunem, where the Philistines were camped. Saul had to go around them to get to Endor.

b 28:13 ground Or “Sheol, the place of death.”
risked my life and did what you told me to do. 22Please, listen to me. You need to eat. Let me get you some food. Then you will have enough strength to go on your way.”

But Saul refused. He said, “I won’t eat.”

Saul’s officers joined the woman and begged him to eat. Finally, Saul listened to them. He got up from the ground and sat on the bed. 24The woman had a calf that she had been fattening. She quickly killed the calf. She took some flour and pressed it with her hands. Then she baked some bread without yeast. 25The woman put the food before Saul and his officers and they ate. Then they got up and left during the night.

David Can’t Come With Us

Meanwhile, the Philistines had gathered all of their army camps at Aphek. The Israelites were camped by the spring near Jezreel. 2The Philistine rulers were marching in divisions of 100 and 1000 men. David and his men were at the back with Achish.

3The Philistine captains asked, “What are these Hebrews doing here?”

Achish told the Philistine captains, “This is David. He was one of Saul’s officers, but he has been with me for a long time. I found nothing wrong in David since the time he left Saul and came to me.”

But the Philistine captains were angry with Achish. They said, “Send him back. Let him go back to the city you gave him, but he can’t go into battle with us. As long as he is here, we have an enemy in our own camp. He would make his king happy by killing our men. 5Isn’t David the one the Israelites sing about? They dance and sing this song:

‘Saul has killed thousands of enemies, but David has killed tens of thousands.’ ”

6So Achish called David and said, “As surely as the LORD lives, you are loyal to me. I would be pleased to have you serve in my army. I haven’t found anything wrong with you since the day you came to me. The Philistine rulers also think you are a good man. 7Go back in peace. Don’t do anything against the Philistine rulers.”

David asked, “What have I done wrong? Have you found anything wrong with me since the day I came to you? So why won’t you let me go to fight the enemies of my lord the king?”

Achish answered, “I believe that you are a good man. You are like an angel from God. But the Philistine captains still say, ‘David can’t go with us into battle.’ 10Early in the morning, you and your men should go back to the city I gave you. Don’t pay attention to the bad things the captains say about you. You are a good man, but you must leave as soon as there is enough light in the morning.”

So David and his men got up early in the morning and went back to the country of the Philistines, and the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

The Amalekites Attack Ziklag

As soon as David and his men arrived at Ziklag on the third day, they saw that the Amalekites had attacked Ziklag. The Amalekites invaded the Negev area, attacked Ziklag, and burned the city. 2They took all the women in Ziklag, both young and old, as prisoners. They didn’t kill anyone; they only took them as prisoners.

3When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found the city burning. Their wives, sons, and daughters were all gone. The Amalekites had taken them. 4David and the other men in his army cried loudly until they were too weak to cry anymore. 5The Amalekites had taken David’s two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, who had been the wife of Nabal from Carmel.

6All the men in the army were sad and angry because their sons and daughters were taken as prisoners. The men were
talking about killing David with stones. This upset David very much, but he found strength in the LORD his God. 7David said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod.” So Abiathar brought it.

8Then David prayed to the LORD. “Should I chase the people who took our families? Will I catch them?”

The Lord answered, “Chase them. You will catch them, and you will save your families.”

David Finds an Egyptian Slave

9–10David took the 600 men with him and went to Besor Ravine. About 200 of his men stayed there because they were too weak and tired to continue. But David and the other 400 men continued to chase the Amalekites.

11David’s men found an Egyptian in a field and took him to David. They gave the Egyptian some water to drink and some food to eat.

12The Egyptian had not had any food or water for three days and nights, so they gave him a piece of fig cake and two clusters of raisins. He felt better after eating.

13David asked the Egyptian, “Who is your master? Where do you come from?”

The Egyptian answered, “I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. Three days ago I got sick, and my master left me behind. 14We had attacked the Negev area where the Kerethites live. We also attacked Judah and the Negev area where Caleb’s people live. We burned Ziklag.”

15David asked the Egyptian, “Will you lead me to the people who took our families?”

The Egyptian answered, “If you make a special promise before God, I will help you find them. But you must promise that you will not kill me or give me back to my master.”

David Defeats the Amalekites

16The Egyptian led David to the Amalekites. They were lying around on the ground, eating and drinking. They were celebrating with the many things they had taken from the Philistines and from Judah.

17David attacked them and killed them. They fought from sunrise until the evening of the next day. None of the Amalekites escaped, except for 400 young men who jumped onto their camels and rode away.

18David got back everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives.

19Nothing was missing. They found all the children and old people, all their sons and daughters, and all their valuables. They got back everything the Amalekites had taken.

20He took all the sheep and cattle. His men led these animals to the front of the group and said, “This is David’s prize.”

All Men Will Share Equally

21David came to the 200 men who had stayed at Besor Ravine. These were the men who were too weak and tired to follow David. They came out to meet him and the soldiers who went with him. They greeted David and his army as they approached.

22There were some troublemakers in the group who went with David who started complaining, “These 200 men didn’t go with us, so why should we give them any of the things we took. These men get nothing but their own wives and children.”

23David answered, “No, my brothers. Don’t do that! Think about what the LORD gave us. He let us defeat the enemy that attacked us.

24No one will listen to what you say. The share will be the same for the man who stayed with the supplies and for the man who went into battle. Everyone will share alike.” 25David made this an order and rule for Israel. This rule continues even today.

26When David got to Ziklag, he sent some of the things he took from the Amalekites to his friends, the leaders of Judah. David said, “Here is a present for you that we took from the LORD’s enemies.”

27David sent some of the gifts to the leaders in Bethel, Ramoth in the Negev,
Jattir, 28 Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa, 29 Racal, the cities of the Jerahmeelites and the cities of the Kenites, 30 Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athach, 31 and Hebron, and to all the other places where David and his men had stayed.

The Death of Saul

Meanwhile, the Philistines fought against the Israelites, and the Israelites ran from them. There were many dead bodies that fell at Mount Gilboa. The Philistines fought hard against Saul and his sons. They killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki Shua.

The battle grew even more intense around Saul. The archers closed in on Saul and wounded him with many arrows. Saul told the boy who carried his armor, “Take your sword and kill me or else these foreigners will do it and torment me as well!” But Saul’s helper was afraid and refused to kill him. So Saul took out his own sword and fell on it.

When the helper saw that Saul was dead, he took out his own sword, fell on it, and died there with Saul. So Saul, his three sons, and the boy who carried his armor all died together that day.

The Philistines Rejoice at Saul’s Death

The Israelites who lived on the other side of the valley saw the Israelite army running away. They saw that Saul and his sons were dead, so they left their cities and ran away. Then the Philistines came and lived in their cities.

The next day, the Philistines went back to take things from the dead bodies. They found Saul and his three sons dead on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines cut off Saul’s head and took all his armor. They carried the news to the Philistines and to all the temples of their idols. They put Saul’s armor in the temple of Ashtoreth. The Philistines also hung Saul’s body on the wall of Beth Shan.

The people living in Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines did to Saul. So all the soldiers of Jabesh went to Beth Shan. They marched all night, went to the wall of Beth Shan, and took down the bodies of Saul and his sons. Then they carried them to Jabesh. There the people of Jabesh burned the bodies of Saul and his three sons. Later, they buried the bones of Saul and his three sons under the big tree in Jabesh. Then the people of Jabesh showed their sadness—they did not eat for seven days.

a 31:10 Beth Shan  Or possibly, “Beth Shean.” Also in verse 12.
David Learns About Saul’s Death

1 After David defeated the Amalekites, he went back to Ziklag. This was just after Saul had been killed. David had been there two days. Then, on the third day, a young soldier from Saul’s camp came to Ziklag. His clothes were torn, and he had dirt on his head. He came to David and bowed with his face to the ground.

David asked him, “Where have you come from?”

The man answered, “I just came from the Israelite camp.”

4 David asked him, “Please tell me, who won the battle?”

The man answered, “Our people ran away from the battle. Many of them were killed in the battle. Even Saul and his son Jonathan are dead.”

5 David said to the young soldier, “How do you know Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?”

6 The young soldier said, “I happened to be on Mount Gilboa. I saw Saul leaning on his spear. The Philistine chariots and horse soldiers were coming closer and closer to Saul. Saul looked back and saw me. He called to me and I answered him. Then Saul asked me who I was. I told him that I was an Amalekite. Then Saul said, ‘Please kill me. I am hurt badly. And I am about to die anyway.’ He was hurt so badly that I knew he wouldn’t live. So I stopped and killed him. Then I took the crown from his head and the bracelet from his arm and brought them here to you, my lord.”

11 Then David tore his clothes to show he was very sad. All the men with him did the same thing. They were very sad and cried. They did not eat until evening.

David Orders the Amalekite Killed

13 Then David talked with the young soldier who had told him about Saul’s death. David asked, “Where are you from?”

The young soldier answered, “I am the son of a foreigner. I am an Amalekite.”

14 David said to the young soldier, “Why were you not afraid to kill the LORD’s chosen king?”

15–16 Then David told the Amalekite, “You are responsible for your own death. You said you killed the LORD’s chosen king, so your own words prove you are guilty.” Then David called one of his young servants and told him to kill the Amalekite. So the young Israelite killed him.

David’s Song About Saul and Jonathan

17 David sang a sad song about Saul and his son Jonathan.

18 David told his men to teach the song to the people of Judah. This song is called “The Bow,” and it is written in the Book of Jashar.

“Israel, your beauty was ruined on your hills.

Oh, how those heroes fell!

20 Don’t tell the news in Gath. Don’t announce it in the streets of Ashkelon.

Those Philistine cities would be happy!

a 2:2 clothes … head This showed that the man was very sad.

b 1:14 chosen king Literally, “anointed one.”

c 1:18 Book of Jashar An ancient book about the wars of Israel.

d 1:20 Gath The Philistine capital city.

e 1:20 Ashkelon One of the five major Philistine cities.
Those foreigners would be glad.

21 “May no rain or dew fall on you, mountains of Gilboa. May there be no offerings coming from your fields. The shields of the heroes rusted there. Saul’s shield was not rubbed with oil.

22 Jonathan’s bow killed its share of enemies, and Saul’s sword killed its share! They have spilled the blood of men now dead. They cut into the fat of strong men.

23 “Saul and Jonathan—how dear they were to us! In life they loved being together, and even death did not separate them! They were faster than eagles and stronger than lions.

24 Daughters of Israel, cry for Saul! Saul gave you beautiful red dresses and covered them with gold jewelry!

25 “Strong men have fallen in the battle. Jonathan is dead on Gilboa’s hills.

26 Jonathan, my brother, I miss you! I enjoyed your friendship so much. Your love for me was wonderful, stronger than the love of women.

27 Heroes have fallen in battle. Their weapons of war are lost.”

David Is Anointed King of Judah

1 Later David asked the LORD for advice. David said, “Should I take control of any of the cities of Judah?”

The LORD said to David, “Yes.”

David asked, “Where should I go?”

The Lord answered, “To Hebron.”

2 So David and his two wives moved to Hebron. (His wives were Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, who had been the wife of Nabal from Carmel.)

David also brought his men and their families. All of them made their homes in Hebron and the towns nearby.

4 The men of Judah came to Hebron and anointed David to be the king of Judah. Then they told David, “The men of Jabesh Gilead buried Saul.”

5 David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead. These messengers told the men in Jabesh: “The LORD bless you, because you have shown kindness to your lord Saul by burying him.”

6 The LORD will be kind and true to you, and so will I. Now be strong and brave. Your lord, Saul, is dead, but the tribe of Judah has anointed me to be their king.”

Ish Bosheth Becomes King

8 Abner son of Ner was the captain of Saul’s army. Abner took Ish Bosheth, son of Saul to Mahanaim and made him king of Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and all Israel.

9 Ish Bosheth son of Saul was 40 years old when he began to rule over Israel. He ruled Israel two years, but the tribe of Judah followed David. 10 David ruled over the tribe of Judah from Hebron for seven years and six months.

The Deadly Contest

12 Abner son of Ner and the officers of Ish Bosheth son of Saul left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon. 13 Joab, Zeruiah’s son, and the officers of David also went to Gibeon. They met Abner and Ish Bosheth’s officers at the pool of Gibeon. Abner’s group sat on one side of the pool. Joab’s group sat on the other side.

14 Abner said to Joab, “Let’s have the young soldiers get up and have a contest here.”

Joab said, “Yes, let’s have a contest.”

15 So the young soldiers got up. The two
groups counted their men for the contest. They chose twelve men from the tribe of Benjamin to fight for Ish Bosheth son of Saul, and they chose twelve men from David’s officers. 

Each of the men grabbed his opponent’s head and stabbed him in the side with his sword, and then they fell down together. That is why this place in Gibeon is called “The Field of the Sharp Knives.” That contest turned into a terrible battle and David’s officers defeated Abner and the Israelites that day.

**Abner Kills Asahel**

Zeruiah had three sons, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was a fast runner, as fast as a wild deer.

Asahel ran straight toward Abner and began chasing him.

Abner looked back and asked, “Is that you, Asahel?”

Asahel said, “Yes, it’s me.”

Abner didn’t want to hurt Asahel, so he said to Asahel, “Stop chasing me—go after one of the young soldiers. You could easily take his armor for yourself.” But Asahel refused to stop chasing Abner.

Abner again said to Asahel, “Stop chasing me, or I will have to kill you. Then I will not be able to look your brother Joab in the face again.”

But Asahel refused to stop chasing Abner. So Abner used the back end of his spear and pushed it into Asahel’s stomach. The spear went deep into Asahel’s stomach and came out of his back. Asahel died right there.

**Joab and Abishai Chase Abner**

Asahel’s body lay on the ground. Everyone who came that way stopped to look at Asahel, but Joab and Abishai continued chasing Abner. The sun was just going down when they came to Ammah Hill. (Ammah Hill is in front of Giah on the way to the desert of Gibeon.) The men from the tribe of Benjamin gathered around Abner at the top of the hill.

Abner shouted to Joab and said, “Must we fight and kill each other forever? Surely you know that this will only end in sadness. Tell the people to stop chasing their own brothers.”

Then Joab said, “As surely as God is alive, if you had not said something, people would still be chasing their brothers in the morning.” So Joab blew a trumpet, and his people stopped chasing the Israelites. They did not try to fight the Israelites anymore.

Abner and his men marched all night through the Jordan Valley. They crossed the Jordan River and then marched all day until they came to Mahanaim.

Joab stopped chasing Abner and turned back. Joab had gathered his men and learned that 19 of David’s officers were missing, including Asahel. But David’s officers had killed 360 of Abner’s men from the tribe of Benjamin. David’s officers took Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father at Bethlehem.

Joab and his men marched all night. The sun came up just as they reached Hebron.

**War Between Israel and Judah**

There was war for a long time between Saul’s family and David’s family. David became stronger and stronger, but Saul’s family became weaker and weaker.

**David’s Six Sons Born at Hebron**

These are David’s sons who were born at Hebron:

The first son was Amnon. Amnon’s mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel.

The second son was Kileab. His mother was Abigail, who had been the wife of Nabal from Carmel.

The third son was Absalom. Absalom’s mother was Maacah daughter of King Talmai of Geshur.

The fourth son was Adonijah. Adonijah’s mother was Hagith.

The fifth son was Shephatiah. Shephatiah’s mother was Abital.

The sixth son was Ithream. Ithream’s mother was David’s wife Eglah.
These sons were all born at Hebron.

**Abner Decides to Join David**

6 As the families of Saul and David fought each other, Abner became more and more powerful in Saul’s army. 7 Saul had a slave woman named Rizpah daughter of Aiah. Ish Bosheth said to Abner, “Why did you have sexual relations with my father’s servant woman?”

8 This made Abner very angry. He said, “I have been loyal to Saul and his family. I did not give you to David. I am not a traitor working for Judah. 9 But now you are saying that I did this bad thing.”

10 The Lord promised with an oath that he would take the kingdom away from Saul’s family and give it to David. And I swear I will make sure that happens. God will make David king of Judah and Israel. He will rule from Dan to Beersheba.

11 Ish Bosheth was too afraid of Abner to say anything in response.

12 Abner sent messengers to David and said, “Who do you think should rule this country? Make an agreement with me, and I will help you become the ruler of all the people of Israel.”

13 David answered, “Good! I will make an agreement with you. But I ask you only one thing: I will not meet with you until you bring Saul’s daughter Michal to me.”

14 David sent messengers to Saul’s son Ish Bosheth. David said, “Give me my wife Michal. She was promised to me. I killed 100 Philistines to get her.”

15 Then Ish Bosheth told the men to go and take Michal from a man named Paltiel son of Laish.

16 Michal’s husband, Paltiel, followed them, crying all the way to Bahurim. Finally, Abner said to him, “Go back home.” So Paltiel went back home.

17 Abner sent this message to the leaders of Israel. He said, “For a long time you have wanted to make David your king. Now do it! The Lord was talking about

David when he said, ‘I will save my people the Israelites from the Philistines and all their other enemies. I will do this through my servant David.’”

19 Abner said these things to David in Hebron, and he said these things to the people of the tribe of Benjamin. The things Abner said sounded good to the tribe of Benjamin and to all the people of Israel.

20 Then Abner came up to David at Hebron. Abner brought 20 men with him. David gave a party for Abner and for all the men who came with him.

21 Abner said to David, “My lord and king, let me go bring all the Israelites to you. Then they will make an agreement with you, and you will rule over all Israel, as you wanted.”

So David let Abner leave in peace.

**Abner’s Death**

22 Joab and David’s officers came back from battle. They had many valuable things that they had taken from the enemy. David had just let Abner leave in peace. So Abner was not there in Hebron with David.

23 Joab and all his army arrived at Hebron. The army said to Joab, “Abner son of Ner came to King David, and David let Abner leave in peace.”

24 Joab came to the king and said, “What have you done? Abner came to you, but you sent him away without hurting him! Why?

25 You know Abner son of Ner. He came to trick you. He came to learn all about what you are doing.”

26 Joab left David and sent messengers to Abner at the well of Sirah. The messengers brought Abner back, but David did not know this.

27 When Abner arrived at Hebron, Joab met him in the gateway, pulled him aside to talk in private, and then stabbed him in the stomach. So he got his revenge against Abner. Joab killed Abner because Abner had killed Joab’s brother Asahel.

**David Cries for Abner**

28 Later David heard the news and said,
“My kingdom and I are innocent of the death of Abner son of Ner. The Lord knows this. Joab and his family are responsible for this, and they will be cursed. Many troubles will come to his family. His people will be sick with leprosy, crippled, killed in war, and not have enough food to eat!”

30 Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because Abner had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.

31–32 David said to Joab and to all the people with Joab, “Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth. Cry for Abner.” They buried Abner in Hebron. David went to the funeral. King David and all the people cried at Abner’s grave.

33 King David sang this sad song at Abner’s funeral:

“Did Abner die like some foolish criminal?
Abner, your hands were not tied.
Your feet were not put in chains.
No, Abner, evil men killed you!”

Then all the people cried again for Abner.

34 Recab and Baanah, sons of Rimmon from Beeroth, went to Ish Bosheth’s house at noon. Ish Bosheth was lying on his bed in his bedroom, and they stabbed and killed him. Then they cut off his head and took it with them. They traveled all night on the road through the Jordan Valley. When they arrived at Hebron, they gave Ish Bosheth’s head to David.

Recab and Baanah said to King David, “Here is the head of your enemy, Ish Bosheth son of Saul. He tried to kill you, but the Lord has punished Saul and his family for you today.”

9 But David told Recab and his brother Baanah, “As surely as the Lord lives, he is the one who has rescued me from all my troubles! Once before a man thought he would bring me good news. He told me, ‘Look! Saul is dead.’ He thought I would reward him for bringing me the news. But I grabbed this man and killed him at Ziklag. I will kill you too and remove this evil from our land because you evil men killed a good man sleeping on his own bed, in his own house.”

12 So David commanded his young helpers to kill Recab and Baanah. The young men cut off the hands and feet of Recab and Baanah and hanged them by the pool of Hebron. Then they took the head of Ish

Troubles Come to Saul’s Family

Saul’s son Ish Bosheth heard that Abner had died at Hebron. Ish Bosheth and all his people became very afraid. Two men went to see to Saul’s son. These two men were captains in the army. They were Recab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon from Beeroth. (They were Benjamites because the town Beeroth belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. But all the people in Beeroth ran away to Gittaim, and they are still living there today.)

4 Saul’s son Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth. He was five years old when the news came from Jezreel that Saul and Jonathan had been killed. The woman who cared for Mephibosheth picked him up and ran away. But while running away, she dropped the boy, and he became crippled in both feet.

5 Recab and Baanah, sons of Rimmon from Beeroth, went to Ish Bosheth’s house at noon. Ish Bosheth was resting because it was hot. Recab and Baanah came into the house as if they were going to get some wheat. Ish Bosheth was lying on his bed in his bedroom, and they stabbed and killed him. Then they cut off his head and took it with them. They traveled all night on the road through the Jordan Valley. When they arrived at Hebron, they gave Ish Bosheth’s head to David.

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4:12 young helpers Young men who carried a soldier’s weapons into battle but were not yet soldiers themselves.
Bosheth and buried it where Abner was buried at Hebron.

The Israelites Make David King

1 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron. They said to David, “Look, we are one family." 2 Even when Saul was our king, you were the one who led us into battle. And you were the one who brought Israel back home from war. The LORD himself said to you, ‘You will be the shepherd of my people, the Israelites. You will be the ruler over Israel.’”

3 So all the leaders of Israel came to meet with King David at Hebron. He made an agreement with them in Hebron in front of the LORD, and they anointed David to be the king of Israel.

4 David was 30 years old when he began to rule. He was king for 40 years. 5 In Hebron he ruled over Judah for 7 years and 6 months, and in Jerusalem he ruled over all Israel and Judah for 33 years.

David Captures Jerusalem

6 The king and his men went to fight against the Jebusites living in Jerusalem. The Jebusites said to David, “You cannot come into our city. Even our blind and crippled people can stop you.” (They said this because they thought that David would not be able to enter into their city. 7 But David did take the fort of Zion. This fort became the City of David.)

8 That day David said to his men, “Whenever you strike at the Jebusites, aim for the throat and kill them.” 9 David said this because he hates to have people left who are crippled and blind. That is why people now say, “The lame and blind are not allowed in the temple.”

9 David lived in the fort and called it “The City of David.” David built up the city from the Millo inward. 10 He became stronger and stronger because the LORD All-Powerful was with him.

11 King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David. He also sent cedar trees, carpenters, and stonemasons. They built a house for David. 12 Then David knew that the LORD had really made him king of Israel and had made him ruler over his kingdom for the good of his people, Israel.

13 David moved from Hebron to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, he got more slave women and wives. So David had more children who were born in Jerusalem. 14 David’s sons who were born in Jerusalem are Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15 Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, 16 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

David Fights Against the Philistines

17 When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had anointed David to be the king of Israel, all the Philistines went up to kill him. David heard about this and went down into the fort at Jerusalem.

18 The Philistines came and camped in Rephaim Valley.

19 David asked the LORD, saying, “Should I go up to fight against the Philistines? Will you help me defeat them?” The LORD answered, “Yes, I certainly will help you defeat the Philistines.”

20 Then David went to Baal Perazim and defeated the Philistines in that place. He said, “The LORD broke through my enemies like water breaking through a dam.” That is why David named that place “Baal Perazim.” 21 The Philistines left the statues of their gods behind at Baal Perazim. David and his men took them away.

22 Again the Philistines came up and camped in Rephaim Valley.

23 David prayed to the LORD again and got this answer: “Don’t go up the valley. Go around them to the other side of their army. Attack them from the other side...
the balsam trees. "When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, you must act quickly because that is the sign that the LORD has gone out in front of you to defeat the Philistines."

David did what the LORD commanded him to do, and he defeated the Philistines. He chased them from Geba to Gezer, killing them all along the way.

God’s Holy Box Is Moved to Jerusalem

David again gathered all the best soldiers in Israel. There were 30,000 men. Then David and all his men went to Baalah in Judah to take God’s Holy Box there. The Holy Box is like God’s throne—people go there to call on the name of the LORD All-Powerful who sits as king above the Cherub angels that are on that Box. David’s men brought the Holy Box out of Abinadab’s house on the hill. Then they put God’s Holy Box on a new wagon. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were driving the new wagon.

So they carried the Holy Box out of Abinadab’s house on the hill. The sons of Abinadab, Uzzah and Ahio, drove the new wagon. Ahio was walking in front of the Holy Box. David’s men brought the Holy Box out of Abinadab’s house on the hill. Then they put God’s Holy Box on a new wagon. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were driving the new wagon.

When David’s men came to the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen stumbled, and God’s Holy Box began to fall off the wagon. Uzzah caught the Holy Box. But the LORD was angry with Uzzah and killed him for that mistake. Uzzah showed he did not honor God when he touched the Holy Box, so he died there by God’s Holy Box.

David became afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, “How can I bring God’s Holy Box here now?” So David would not move the LORD’s Holy Box into the City of David. He put the Holy Box at the house of Obed Edom from Gath. The LORD’s Holy Box stayed in Obed Edom’s house for three months. The LORD blessed Obed Edom and all his family.

Later people told David, “The LORD has blessed the family of Obed Edom and everything he owns, because God’s Holy Box is there.” So David went and brought God’s Holy Box from Obed Edom’s house. David was very happy and excited. When the men who carried the LORD’s Holy Box had walked six steps, they stopped and David sacrificed a bull and a fat calf. David was dancing in front of the LORD. He was wearing a linen ephod.

David and all the Israelites were excited—they shouted and blew the trumpet as they brought the LORD’s Holy Box into the city. Saul’s daughter Michal was looking out the window. While the LORD’s Holy Box was being carried into the city, David was jumping and dancing before the LORD. Michal saw this, and she was upset at David.

David put up a tent for the Holy Box. The Israelites put the LORD’s Holy Box in its place under the tent. Then David offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD.

After David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD All-Powerful. He also gave a share of bread, a raisin cake, and some date bread to every man and woman of Israel. Then all the people went home.

Michal Scolds David

David went back to bless his house, but Saul’s daughter Michal came out to meet him. She said, “The king of Israel did not honor himself today! You took off your clothes in front of your servants’ girls. You Uzzah.”

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were like a fool who takes off his clothes without shame!”

21 Then David said to Michal, “The LORD chose me, not your father or anyone from his family. The LORD chose me to be leader of his people, the Israelites. So I will continue dancing and celebrating in front of the LORD. 22 I might do things that are even more embarrassing! Maybe you will not respect me, but the girls you are talking about are proud of me!”

23 Saul’s daughter Michal never had a child. She died without having any children.

David Wants to Build a Temple

7 After King David moved into his new house the LORD gave him some relief from all of his enemies around him. 2 King David said to Nathan the prophet, “Look, I am living in a fancy house made of cedar wood, but God’s Holy Box is still kept in a tent!”

3 Nathan said to King David, “Do whatever you want to do. The LORD will be with you.”

4 But that night, the LORD’s word came to Nathan:

5 Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD says: You are not the one to build a house for me to live in. 6 I did not live in a house at the time I took the Israelites out of Egypt. No, I traveled around in a tent. I used the tent for my home. 7 I never told any of the tribes of Israel to build me a fancy house made from cedar wood.’

8 You must say this to my servant David: ‘This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: I chose you while you were out in the pasture following the sheep. I took you from that job and made you the leader of my people, the Israelites. 9 I have been with you every place you went. I have defeated your enemies for you. I will make you one of the most famous people on earth, 10–11 And I chose a place for my people, the Israelites. I planted the Israelites. I gave them their own place to live so that they will not have to move from place to place anymore. In the past, I sent judges to lead my people, but evil people gave them many troubles. That will not happen now. I am giving you peace from all of your enemies. I promise that I will make your family a family of kings. 12 When your life is finished, you will die and be buried with your ancestors. But then I will make one of your own children become the king. 13 He will build a house for my name, and I will make his kingdom strong forever. 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. 5 When he sins, I will use other people to punish him. They will be my whips. 15 But I will never stop loving him. I will continue to be loyal to him. I took away my love and kindness from Saul. I pushed Saul away when I turned to you. 16 Your family of kings will continue—you can depend on that! For you, your kingdom will continue forever! Your throne will stand forever!’”

17 Nathan told David about that vision. He told David everything God had said.

David Prays to God

18 Then King David went in and sat in front of the LORD. David said, “Lord God, why am I so important to you? Why is my family important? Why have you made me so important? 19 I am nothing but a servant, but Lord God, you have also said these kind things about my future family. Lord God, you don’t always talk like this to people, do you? 20 How can I continue talking to you? Lord God,

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you know that I am only a servant. 
21 You will do all these wonderful things because you said you would do them and because you want to do them. And you decided to let me know about all these things. 
22 Lord God, this is why you are so great! There is no one like you. There is no god except you! We know that because of what we ourselves have heard about what you did.

23 “And there is no nation on earth like your people, Israel. They are a special people. They were slaves, but you took them out of Egypt and made them free. You made them your people. You did great and wonderful things for the Israelites and for your land. 
24 You made the people of Israel your very own people forever, and Lord, you became their God.

25 “Now, Lord God, you promised to do something for me, your servant, and for my family. Now please do what you promised—make my family a family of kings forever! 
26 Then your name will be honored forever. People will say, ‘The Lord God All-Powerful rules Israel! And may the family of your servant David continue to be strong in serving you.’

27 “You, Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, have shown things to me. You said, ‘I will make your family great.’ That is why I, your servant, decided to pray this prayer to you. 
28 Lord God, you are God, and I can trust what you say. And you said that these good things would happen to me, your servant. 
29 Now, please, bless my family. Let them stand before you and serve you forever. Lord God, you yourself said these things. You yourself blessed my family with a blessing that will continue forever.”

David Wins Many Wars

8 Later David defeated the Philistines and took control of a large area of land around Gath. 
2 He also defeated the Moabites. He forced them to lie on the ground in a long row. Using a rope to measure, those within two lengths of the rope were killed and those within every third length were allowed to live. So the Moabites became servants of David and paid tribute to him.

3 David went to an area near the Euphrates to set up a monument for himself. At that time he defeated the king of Zobah, Hadadezer son of Rehob. 
4 David took 1000 chariots, 7000 horse soldiers, and 20,000 foot soldiers from Hadadezer. He crippled all but 100 of the chariot horses.

5 Arameans from Damascus came to help King Hadadezer of Zobah, but David defeated those 22,000 Arameans. Then David put his soldiers in Damascus, Aram. The Arameans became David’s servants and brought tribute. The Lord gave victory to David wherever he went.

6 David took the gold shields that had belonged to Hadadezer’s servants and brought them to Jerusalem. 
7 David also took many things made of bronze from Tebah and Berothai. (Tebah and Berothai were cities that had belonged to Hadadezer.)

8 King Toi of Hamath heard that David had defeated Hadadezer’s whole army. 
9 Hadadezer had fought against Toi in the past, so Toi sent his son Joram to King David. Joram greeted him and blessed him because David had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him. Joram brought gifts of silver, gold, and bronze.
10 David took these things and dedicated them to the Lord, as he had done with all the things...

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other things he had taken from the nations he had defeated: 12 Aram, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek. He had also defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah. 13 David had defeated 18,000 Edomites\(^a\) in Salt Valley. He was famous when he came home. 14 He put teams of soldiers throughout Edom, and the whole nation became his servants. The Lord gave victory to him wherever he went.

**David’s Rule**

David ruled over all Israel, and he made good and fair decisions for all of his people. 16 Joab son of Zeruiah was the captain over the army. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the historian. 17 Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests. Seraiah was secretary. 18 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in charge of the Kerethites and Pelethites,\(^b\) and David’s sons were priests.\(^c\)

**David Is Kind to Saul’s Family**

David asked, “Is there anyone still left in Saul’s family? I want to show kindness to this person. I want to do it for Jonathan.”

There was a servant named Ziba from Saul’s family. David’s servants called Ziba to David. King David said to Ziba, “Are you Ziba?”

Ziba said, “Yes, I am your servant Ziba.”

The king said, “Is there anyone left in Saul’s family? I want to show God’s kindness to this person.”

Ziba said to King David, “Jonathan has a son still living. He is crippled in both feet.”

The king said to Ziba, “Where is this son?”

Ziba said to the king, “He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar.”

5 Then King David sent some of his officers to Lo Debar to bring Jonathan’s son from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. 6 Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth came to David and bowed with his face low to the floor.

David said, “Mephibosheth?”

Mephibosheth said, “Yes sir, it is I, your servant Mephibosheth.”

7 David said to Mephibosheth, “Don’t be afraid. I will be kind to you because of your father Jonathan. I will give back to you all the land of your grandfather Saul. And you will always be able to eat at my table.”

8 Mephibosheth bowed to David again and he said, “I am no better than a dead dog, but you are being very kind to me.”

9 Then King David called Saul’s servant Ziba and said, “I have given Saul’s family and everything he owns to your master’s grandson, Mephibosheth. 10 You will farm the land for Mephibosheth. Your sons and servants will do this for him. You will harvest the crops. Then your master’s grandson will have plenty of food to eat, but Mephibosheth will always be allowed to eat at my table.”

Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants. He said to King David, “I am your servant. I will do everything that my lord the king commands.”

So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table like one of the king’s sons. 12 Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. All the people in Ziba’s family became Mephibosheth’s servants. Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem. He was crippled in both feet, and every day he ate at the king’s table.

**Hanun Shames David’s Men**

Later King Nahash of the Ammonites died. His son Hanun became the new king after him. 2 David said, “Nahash was kind to me, so I will be kind to his son Hanun.” So David sent his officers to comfort Hanun about his father’s death.

David’s officers went to the land of the Ammonites. But the Ammonite leaders

\(^{a}\) 8:13 Edomites This is found in the ancient Greek and Syriac versions and a few Hebrew copies. The standard Hebrew text has “Arameans.”

\(^{b}\) 8:18 Kerethites and Pelethites These were David’s special bodyguards. An ancient Aramaic version has “the archers and stone throwers.” This would mean these men were specially trained in using bows and arrows and slings.

\(^{c}\) 8:18 priests Or “important leaders.”
said to Hanun, their lord, “Do you think that David is trying to honor your father by sending some men to comfort you? No, David sent these men to spy on your city. They plan to make war against you.”

4 So Hanun took David’s officers and shaved off one half of their beards. He cut off their clothes at the hips. Then he sent them away.

5 When the people told David, he sent messengers to meet his officers. He did this because these men were very ashamed. King David said, “Wait at Jericho until your beards grow again. Then come back home.”

**War Against the Ammonites**

6 The Ammonites saw that they had become David’s enemies, so they hired Arameans from Beth Rehob and Zobah. There were 20,000 Aramean foot soldiers. The Ammonites also hired the king of Maacah with 1000 men and 12,000 men from Tob.

7 David heard about this, so he sent Joab and the whole army of powerful men.

8 The Ammonites came out and got ready for the battle. They stood at the city gate. The Arameans from Zobah and Rehob and the men from Tob and Maacah did not stand together with the Ammonites in the field.

9 Joab saw that there were enemies in front of him and behind him. So he chose some of the best Israelite soldiers and lined them up for battle against the Arameans. 10 Then Joab gave the other men to his brother Abishai to lead against the Ammonites. 11 Joab said to Abishai, “If the Ammonites are too strong for me, you will help me. If the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will come and help you. 12 Be strong, and let us fight bravely for our people and for the cities of our God. The Lord will do what he decides is right.”

13 Then Joab and his men attacked the Arameans. The Arameans ran away from Joab and his men. 14 The Ammonites saw that the Arameans were running away, so they ran away from Abishai and went back to their city.

So Joab came back from the battle with the Ammonites and went back to Jerusalem.

**The Arameans Decide to Fight Again**

15 When the Arameans saw that the Israelites had defeated them, they came together into one big army. 16 Hadadezer sent messengers to bring the Arameans who lived on the other side of the Euphrates River. These Arameans came to Helam. Their leader was Shobach, the captain of Hadadezer’s army.

17 When David heard about this, he gathered all the Israelites together. They crossed over the Jordan River and went to Helam.

There the Arameans prepared for battle and attacked, but David defeated them, and they ran from the Israelites. David killed 700 chariot drivers and 40,000 horse soldiers as well as Shobach, the captain of the Aramean army.

19 The kings who served Hadadezer saw that the Israelites had defeated them, so they made peace with the Israelites and became their servants. The Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites again.

**David Meets Bathsheba**

11 In the spring, when kings go out to war, David sent Joab, his officers, and all the Israelites out to destroy the Ammonites. Joab’s army surrounded their capital city, Rabbah.

David stayed in Jerusalem. 2 One evening he got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of his house. From there he saw a woman bathing. She was very beautiful, 3 so David sent for his officers and asked them who she was. An officer answered, “That is Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam. She is the wife of Uriah the Hittite.”

4 David sent messengers to go and bring Bathsheba to him. She had just purified...
herself after her monthly time of bleeding. She went to David, he had sexual relations with her, and then she went back to her house. Later, Bathsheba became pregnant. She sent word to him saying, “I am pregnant.”

David Tries to Hide His Sin

David sent a message to Joab. “Send Uriah the Hittite to me.”

So Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were, and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, “Go home and relax.”

So Uriah left the king’s palace. The king also sent a gift to Uriah. But Uriah did not go home. He slept outside the door of the king’s palace, as the rest of the king’s servants did. The servants told David, “Uriah did not go home.”

Then David said to Uriah, “You came from a long trip. Why did you not go home?”

Uriah said to David, “The Holy Box and the soldiers of Israel and Judah are staying in tents. My lord Joab and my lord’s officers are camping out in the field. So it is not right for me to go home to eat and drink and sleep with my wife. As surely as you live, I will not do this.”

David said to Uriah, “Stay here today. Tomorrow I will send you back to the battle.”

Uriah stayed in Jerusalem until the next morning. Then David called Uriah to come and see him. Uriah ate and drank with David. David got him drunk, but Uriah still did not go home. That evening, Uriah again slept at the palace with the rest of the king’s servants.

David Plans Uriah’s Death

The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and made Uriah carry the letter. In the letter David wrote: “Put Uriah on the front lines where the fighting is hardest. Then leave him there alone, and let him be killed in battle.”

Joab watched the city and saw where the bravest Ammonites were. He chose Uriah to go to that place. The men of the city came out to fight against Joab. Some of David’s men were killed. Uriah the Hittite was one of them.

Then Joab sent a report to David about what happened in the battle. Joab told the messenger to tell King David what had happened in the battle. “The king might get upset and ask, ‘Why did Joab’s army go that close to the city to fight? Surely he knows that there are men on the city walls who can shoot arrows down at his men?’ Surely he remembers that at Thebez a woman killed Abimelech son of Jerub Besheth when she threw the top part of a grinding stone down from the wall. So why did he go that close to the wall?’ If King David says something like that, tell him, ‘Your officer, Uriah the Hittite, also died.’”

The messenger went in and told David everything Joab told him to say. The messenger told David, “The men of Ammon attacked us in the field. We fought them and chased them all the way to the city gate. Then the men on the city wall shot arrows at your officers. Some of your officers were killed, including Uriah the Hittite.”

David said to the messenger, “Give this message to Joab: ‘Don’t be too upset about this. A sword can kill one person as well as the next. Make a stronger attack against Rabbah and you will win.’ Encourage Joab with these words.”

David Marries Bathsheba

Bathsheba heard that her husband Uriah had died, so she mourned for him. After her time of sadness, David sent servants to bring her to his house. She became David’s wife and gave birth to a son for David. But the Lord did not like what David had done.

Nathan Speaks to David

The Lord sent Nathan to David. Nathan went to him and said,
“There were two men in a city. One man was rich, but the other man was poor. The rich man had lots of sheep and cattle. But the poor man had nothing except one little female lamb that he bought. The poor man fed the lamb, and the lamb grew up with this poor man and his children. She ate from the poor man’s food and drank from his cup. The lamb slept on the poor man’s chest. The lamb was like a daughter to the poor man.

4“Then a traveler stopped to visit the rich man. The rich man wanted to give food to the traveler, but he did not want to take any of his own sheep or cattle to feed the traveler. No, the rich man took the lamb from the poor man and cooked it for his visitor.”

5David became very angry with the rich man. He said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, the man who did this should die! He must pay four times the price of the lamb because he did this terrible thing and because he had no mercy.”

Nathan Tells David About His Sin

7Then Nathan said to David, “You are that rich man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I chose you to be the king of Israel. I saved you from Saul. I let you take his family and his wives, and I made you king of Israel and Judah. As if that had not been enough, I would have given you more and more. So why did you ignore my command? Why did you do what I say is wrong? You let the Ammonites kill Uriah the Hittite, and you took his wife. It is as if you yourself killed Uriah in war. So your family will never have peace! When you took Uriah’s wife, you showed that you did not respect me.’

8“Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Nathan said to David, “The Lord will forgive you, even for this sin. You will not die. But you did things that made the Lord’s enemies lose their respect for him, so your new baby son will die.”

David and Bathsheba’s Baby Dies

9Then Nathan went home. And the Lord caused the baby boy who was born to David and Uriah’s wife to become very sick.

10David prayed to God for the baby. David refused to eat or drink. He went into his house and stayed there and lay on the ground all night.

11The leaders of David’s family came and tried to pull David up from the ground, but he refused to get up. He refused to eat with these leaders. On the seventh day the baby died. David’s servants were afraid to tell him that the baby was dead. They said, “Look, we tried to talk to David while the baby was alive, but he refused to listen to us. If we tell David that the baby is dead, he might do something bad to himself.”

12David saw his servants whispering and understood that the baby was dead. So David asked his servants, “Is the baby dead?”

The servants answered, “Yes, he is dead.”

13Then David got up from the floor. He washed himself. He changed his clothes and got dressed. Then he went into the Lord’s house to worship. After that he went home and asked for something to eat. His servants gave him some food, and he ate.

14David’s servants asked him, “Why are you doing this? When the baby was alive, you cried and refused to eat. But when the baby died you got up and ate food.”

15David said, “While the baby was still relations with Bathsheba in secret, but I will punish you so that all the people of Israel can see it.”

16Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”

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20David’s servants asked him, “Why are you doing this? When the baby was alive, you cried and refused to eat. But when the baby died you got up and ate food.”

21David said, “While the baby was still

12:12 and everyone will know it Literally, “in the sight of the sun.”
12:12 so that all … can see it Literally, “before all Israel and before the sun.”
living, I cried and refused to eat because I thought, ‘Who knows? Maybe the LORD will feel sorry for me and let the baby live.’

23 But now the baby is dead, so why should I refuse to eat? Can I bring the baby back to life? No. Some day I will go to him, but he cannot come back to me.”

Solomon Is Born

24 Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife. He slept with her and had sexual relations with her. Bathsheba became pregnant again and had another son. David named the boy Solomon. The LORD loved Solomon 25 and sent word for Nathan the prophet to give Solomon the name Jedidiah. 9 So Nathan did this for the LORD.

David Captures Rabbah

26 Rabbah was the capital city of the Ammonites. Joab fought against Rabbah and captured it. 27 Joab sent messengers to David and said, “I have fought against Rabbah and have captured its water supply. 28 Now bring the rest of the army together and attack Rabbah. Capture this city before I do, or else it will be called by my name.”

29 So David gathered all the soldiers together and went to Rabbah. He fought against Rabbah and captured the city. 30 David took the crown off their king’s head. b The crown was gold and weighed about 75 pounds. c This crown had precious stones in it. They put the crown on David’s head. David took many valuable things out of the city.

31 David also brought out the people of the city of Rabbah and made them work with saws, iron picks, and axes. He also forced them to build things with bricks. He did the same thing to all the Ammonite cities. Then David and the army went back to Jerusalem.

Amnon and Tamar

13 David had a son named Absalom. Absalom had a very beautiful sister named Tamar. Another one of David’s sons, Amnon, d was in love with Tamar. 2 She was a virgin. Amnon wanted her very much, but he did not think it was possible for him to have her. He thought about her so much that he made himself sick.

3 Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah. (Shimeah was David’s brother.) Jonadab was a very clever man. 4 He said to Amnon, “You are the king’s son. So why do you always look so sad? Tell me what the trouble is!”

Amnon told Jonadab, “I love Tamar. But she is the sister of my half-brother Absalom.”

5 Jonadab said to Amnon, “Go to bed. Pretend you are sick. Then your father will come to see you. Tell him, ‘Please let my sister Tamar come in and give me food to eat. Let her make the food in front of me. Then I will see it and eat it from her hand.’”

6 So Amnon lay down in bed and pretended to be sick. King David came in to see Amnon. He said to King David, “Please let my sister Tamar come in and give me food to eat. Let her make the food in front of me. Then I will see it and eat it from her hand.”

7 So Amnon lay down in bed and pretended to be sick. King David came in to see Amnon. He said to King David, “Please let my sister Tamar come in. Let her make two cakes for me while I watch. Then I can eat from her hands.”

7 David sent messengers to Tamar’s house. They told her, “Go to your brother Amnon’s house and make some food for him.”

8 So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon. He was in bed. Tamar took some dough, pressed it together with her hands, and cooked the cakes. She did this while he watched. 9 Then Tamar took the cakes out of the pan and set them out for him. But he refused to eat. He said to his servants, “Get out of here. Leave me alone!” So all of his servants left the room.

Amnon Rapes Tamar

10 Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the

12:25 Jedidiah This name means “loved by the LORD.”

12:30 their king’s head Or “Milcom’s head.” Milcom was a false god that the Ammonites worshiped.

12:30 75 pounds Literally, “1 talent” (34.5 kg).
food into the bedroom and feed me by hand.”

So Tamar took the cakes she had made and went into her brother’s bedroom. She started to feed Amnon, but he grabbed her hand. He said to her, “Sister, come and sleep with me.”

Tamar said to Amnon, “No, brother! Don’t force me to do this. Don’t do this shameful thing! Terrible things like this should never be done in Israel! I would never get rid of my shame, and people would think that you are just a common criminal. Please, talk with the king. He will let you marry me.”

But Amnon refused to listen to Tamar. He was stronger than she was, so he forced her to have sexual relations with him.

Then Amnon began to hate Tamar. He hated her much more than he had loved her before. Amnon said to her, “Get up and get out of here!”

Tamar said to Amnon, “No! Don’t send me away like this. That would be even worse than what you did before!”

But Amnon refused to listen to Tamar.

He called his servant and said, “Get this girl out of this room, now! And lock the door after her.”

Tamar said to Amnon, “Have you been with your brother Amnon? Did he hurt you? Now, calm down sister. Amnon is your brother, so we will take care of this. Don’t let it upset you too much.” So Tamar did not say anything. She quietly went to live at Absalom’s house.

David heard the news and became very angry, but he did not want to say anything to upset Amnon, because he loved him since he was his firstborn son.

Absalom began to hate Amnon. Absalom did not say one word, good or bad, to Amnon, but he hated him because Amnon had raped his sister Tamar.

Absalom’s Revenge

Two years later, Absalom had some men come to Baal Hazor to cut the wool from his sheep. He invited all the king’s sons to come and watch. Absalom went to the king and said, “I have some men coming to cut the wool from my sheep. Please come with your servants and watch.”

King David said to Absalom, “No, son. We will not all go. It will be too much trouble for you.”

Absalom begged David to go. David did not go, but he did give his blessing.

Absalom said, “If you don’t want to go, please let my brother Amnon go with me.”

King David asked Absalom, “Why should he go with you?”

Absalom kept begging David. Finally, David let Amnon and all the king’s other sons go with Absalom.

Amnon Is Murdered

Then Absalom gave this command to his servants, “Watch Amnon. When he is drunk and feeling good from the wine, I will give you the command. You must attack Amnon and kill him. Don’t be afraid of being punished. After all, you will only be obeying my command. Now, be strong and brave.”

So Absalom’s young soldiers did what he said. They killed Amnon. But all of David’s other sons escaped. Each son got on his mule and escaped.

David Hears About Amnon’s Death

The king’s sons were still on their way into town. But King David got a message about what happened. But the message
was, “Absalom has killed all the king’s sons! Not one of the sons was left alive.”

30 King David tore his clothes and lay on the ground. All of David’s officers standing near him also tore their clothes.

31 But then Jonadab, the son of David’s brother Shimeah, said, “Don’t think that all the king’s sons were killed! Only Amnon is dead. Absalom has been planning this from the day that Amnon raped his sister Tamar. 32 My lord and king, don’t think that all of your sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead.”

33 Absalom ran away.

There was a guard standing on the city wall. He saw many people coming from the other side of the hill, and went to tell the king. 35 So Jonadab said to King David, “Look, I was right! The king’s sons are coming.”

36 The king’s sons came in just after Jonadab said that. They were crying loudly. David and all of his officers began crying. They all cried very hard. 37 David cried for his son every day.

Absalom Escapes to Geshur

Absalom ran away to Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. 38 After Absalom had run away to Geshur, he stayed there for three years. 39 King David was comforted after Amnon died, but he missed Absalom very much.

Joab Sends a Wise Woman to David

14 Joab son of Zeruiah knew that King David missed Absalom very much. 2 So Joab sent messengers to Tekoa to bring a wise woman from there. Joab said to this wise woman, “Please pretend to be very sad. Put on sackcloth. Don’t dress up. Act like a woman who has been crying many days for someone who died. 3 Go to the king and talk to him using these words that I tell you.” Then Joab told the wise woman what to say.

4 Then the woman from Tekoa talked to the king. She bowed with her face to the ground. Then she said, “King, please help me!”

5 King David said to her, “What’s your problem?”

The woman said, “I am a widow. My husband is dead. 6 I had two sons. They were out in the field fighting. There was no one to stop them. One son killed the other son. 7 Now the whole family is against me. They said to me, ‘Bring us the son who killed his brother and we will kill him, because he killed his brother.’ My son is like the last spark of a fire. If they kill my son, that fire will burn out and be finished. He is the only son left alive to get his father’s property. So my dead husband’s property will go to someone else and his name will be removed from the land.”

8 Then the king said to the woman, “Go home. I will take care of things for you.”

9 The woman of Tekoa said to the king, “Let the blame be on me, my lord and king. You and your kingdom are innocent.”

10 King David said, “If anyone is saying bad things to you, bring them to me. They will not bother you again.”

11 The woman said, “Please, use the name of the Lord your God and swear that you will stop these people. They want to punish my son for murdering his brother. Swear that you will not let them destroy my son.”

David said, “As the Lord lives, no one will hurt your son. Not even one hair from your son’s head will fall to the ground.”

12 The woman said, “My lord and king, please let me say something else to you.” The king said, “Speak.”

13 Then the woman said, “Why have you planned these things against the people of God? When you say these things, you show you are guilty because you have not brought back the son who you forced to leave home. 14 We will all die some day. We will be like water that is spilled on the ground. No one can gather this water back from the ground. You know God forgives people. God made plans for people who are forced to run away for safety—God
does not force them to run away from him! 15 My lord and king, I came to say these words to you, because the people made me afraid. I said to myself, 'I will talk to the king. Maybe the king will help me.

16 The king will listen to me and save me from the man who wants to kill me and my son. That man just wants to keep us from getting what God gave us.' 17 I know that the words of my lord the king will give me rest, because you are like an angel from God. You know what is good and what is bad. And the LORD your God is with you."

18 King David answered the woman, "You must answer the question I will ask you."

The woman said, "My lord and king, please ask your question."

19 The king said, "Did Joab tell you to say all these things?"

The woman answered, "As you live, my lord and king, you are right. Your officer Joab did tell me to say these things. 20 Joab did this so that you would see things differently. My lord, you are as wise as God’s angel. You know everything that happens on earth."

**Absalom Returns to Jerusalem**

21 The king said to Joab, "Look, I will do what I promised. Now please bring back the young man Absalom."

22 Joab bowed with his face on the ground. He blessed King David, and said, "Today I know that you are pleased with me. I know because you have done what I asked."

23 Then Joab got up and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. 24 But King David said, "Absalom must go back to his own house. He cannot come to see me." So Absalom went back to his own house, but he could not go to see the king.

25 People really bragged about how good-looking Absalom was. No man in Israel was as handsome as Absalom. Every part of his body was perfect—from his head to his feet. 26 At the end of every year, Absalom cut the hair from his head and weighed it. The hair weighed about five pounds. 27 Absalom had three sons and one daughter. Her name was Tamar, and she was a beautiful woman.

**Absalom Forces Joab to Come See Him**

28 Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two full years without being allowed to visit King David. 29 Absalom sent a message to Joab, asking for permission to see the king, but Joab refused to come see him. So Absalom sent a second message to Joab. Again, Joab refused to come see him.

30 Then Absalom said to his servants, "Look, Joab’s field is next to my field. He has barley growing in that field. Go burn the barley."

So Absalom’s servants went and started a fire in Joab’s field. 31 Joab got up and came to Absalom’s house. He said to him, "Why did your servants burn my field?"

32 Absalom said to Joab, "I sent a message to you. I asked you to come here. I wanted to send you to the king to ask him why he asked me to come home from Geshur. I cannot see him, so it would have been better for me to stay in Geshur. Now let me see the king. If I have sinned, he can kill me!"

**Absalom Visits King David**

33 Then Joab came to the king and told him what Absalom said. The king called for Absalom. Absalom came to the king and bowed low on the ground before the king. The king kissed him.

**Absalom Makes Many Friends**

1 After this, Absalom got a chariot and horses for himself. He had 50 men run in front of him while he drove the chariot. 2 Absalom would get up early and stand near the gate. 3 He would watch for anyone with problems who was going to King David for judgment. Then Absalom would talk to them and say, "What city are you from?" They would say they were from such and such tribe in Israel. 4 Then

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14:26 five pounds Literally, “200 shekels by the king’s weight.”

15:2 gate This was where people came to do all of their business. This was also where many court cases were held.
Absalom would say, “Look, you are right, but King David will not listen to you.”

Absalom would also say, “Oh, I wish someone would make me a judge in this country! Then I could help everyone who comes to me with a problem. I would help them get a fair solution to their problem.”

And if anyone came to Absalom and started to bow down to him, Absalom would treat him like a close friend—he would reach out and touch him and kiss him. Absalom did that to all the Israelites who came to King David for judgment. In this way Absalom won the hearts of all the people of Israel.

Absalom Plans to Take David’s Kingdom

After four years, Absalom said to King David, “Please let me go to Hebron to complete a special promise that I made to the Lord. I made that promise while I was still living in Geshur in Aram. I said, ‘If the Lord brings me back to Jerusalem, I will serve the Lord in a special way.’”

King David said, “Go in peace.” Absalom went to Hebron.

But he also sent spies to all the tribes of Israel. They told the people, “When you hear the trumpet, say, ‘Absalom is king in Hebron!’”

Absalom invited 200 men to go with him. They left Jerusalem with him, but they did not know what he was planning.

Ahithophel was one of David’s advisors. He was from the town of Giloh. While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he invited Ahithophel to join. Absalom’s plans were working very well and more and more people began to support him.

David Learns About Absalom’s Plans

A man came in to tell the news to David. The man said, “The people of Israel are beginning to follow Absalom.”

Then David said to all of his officers who were still in Jerusalem with him, “Come on, we cannot let him trap us here in Jerusalem. Hurry up, before he catches us. He will destroy us all, and Jerusalem will be destroyed in the battle.”

The king’s officers told him, “We will do whatever you tell us.”

David and His People Escape

King David left with everyone in his family, except ten of his slave women. He left them to take care of the house. The king left with everyone in his house following him on foot. They stopped at the last house. All the king’s officers passed by him. And all the Kerethites, all the Pelethites, and the Gittites (600 men from Gath) passed by the king.

The king said to Ittai from Gath, “Why are you also going with us? You are a foreigner; this is not your homeland. Go back and stay with the new king. You came to join me only yesterday. You don’t need to wander from place to place to wait with me. Take your brothers and go back. Go with my faithful, loving kindness.”

But Ittai answered the king, “As the Lord lives, and as long as you live, I will stay with you, in life or death!”

David said to Ittai, “Then come, let’s go cross Kidron Brook.”

So Ittai from Gath and all of his people and their children crossed over Kidron Brook. All the people were crying loudly. Then King David crossed over Kidron Brook, and all the people went out to the desert. Zadok and all the Levites with him were carrying the Box of God’s Agreement. They set down God’s Holy Box, and Abiathar said prayers until all the people had left Jerusalem.

King David said to Zadok, “Take God’s Holy Box back to Jerusalem. If the Lord is pleased with me, he will bring me back and let me see Jerusalem and his Temple. But if he says he is not pleased with me, let him do whatever he wants to me.”

The king said to Zadok the priest,
“You are a seer. Go back to the city in peace. Take your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. I will be waiting near the places where people cross the river into the desert. I will wait there until I hear from you.”

So Zadok and Abiathar took God’s Holy Box back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

David’s Prayer Against Ahithophel
30 David walked up the path to the Mount of Olives. He was crying, his head was covered, and he went without sandals on his feet. All the people with David also covered their heads and were crying as they walked with him.

31 Someone told David, “Ahithophel is one who joined in Absalom’s plot against you.” Then David prayed, “Lord, I ask you to make Ahithophel give only foolish advice.”

32 When David got to the top of the mountain, he bowed down to worship God. Then David noticed Hushai the Arkite. Hushai’s coat was torn, and there was dust on his head.

33 David said to Hushai, “If you go with me, you will be just one more person to care for. But if you go back to Jerusalem, you can disagree with Ahithophel and make his advice useless. Tell Absalom, ‘King, I am your servant. I served your father, but now I will serve you.’

34 The priests Zadok and Abiathar will be with you. You must tell them everything you hear in the king’s palace. Zadok’s son Ahimaaz and Abiathar’s son Jonathan will be with them. You can send them to tell me everything you hear.”

35 So David’s friend Hushai went back to the city, just as Absalom arrived in Jerusalem.

Ziba Meets David
16 David went a short way over the top of the Mount of Olives and met Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth. Ziba had two donkeys with saddles on them. The donkeys also carried 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 summer fruits, and a wineskin full of wine.

2 King David said to Ziba, “What are these things for?”

Ziba answered, “The donkeys are for the king’s family to ride on. The bread and the summer fruit are for the servants to eat. And the wine is refreshment for whoever begins to feel weak in the desert.”

3 Then the king asked, “And where is Mephibosheth?”

Ziba answered the king, “Mephibosheth is staying in Jerusalem. He said, ‘Today the Israelites will give my father’s kingdom back to me.’”

4 Then the king said to Ziba, “All right, I now give you everything that belonged to Mephibosheth.”

Ziba said, “I bow to you. I pray I will always be able to please you.”

Shimei Curses David
5 As David came to Bahurim, a man from Saul’s family, Shimei son of Gera, came out cursing David again and again.

6 Shimei began throwing stones at David and his officers. Both the people and the soldiers gathered around David to protect him—they were all around him.

7 Shimei cursed David. He said, “Get out, get out, you no-good murderer!

8 The Lord is punishing you because you killed people in Saul’s family. You stole Saul’s place as king. But now the same bad things are happening to you. The Lord has given the kingdom to your son Absalom, because you are a murderer.”

9 Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, “Why should this dying dog curse you, my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off Shimei’s head.”

10 But the king answered, “What can I do, sons of Zeruiah? Yes, Shimei is cursing me, but the Lord told him to curse me. And who can ask him why he did that?”

11 David also said to Abishai and all his
servants, “Look, my very own son is trying to kill me, so why shouldn’t this man from the tribe of Benjamin want to do the same? Leave him alone. Let him continue to curse me. The LORD told him to do this. 12 Maybe the LORD will see the wrong things that are happening to me and give me something good for every bad thing that Shimei says today.”

So David and his men went on their way down the road. Shimei kept following David. He walked on the other side of the road by the side of the hill. He kept cursing David on his way. Shimei also threw stones and dirt at David.

13 King David and all his people came to the Jordan River. They were tired, so they rested and refreshed themselves there.

Meanwhile, Absalom, Ahithophel, and all the Israelites came to Jerusalem.

16 David’s friend, Hushai the Arkite, came to Absalom and told him, “Long live the king! Long live the king!”

17 Absalom answered, “Why are you not loyal to your friend David? Why did you not leave Jerusalem with your friend?”

18 Hushai said, “I belong to the one that the LORD chooses. These people and the people of Israel chose you. I will stay with you.

19 In the past, I served your father. So now I will serve you, David’s son.”

Hushai Ruins Ahithophel’s Advice

6 Hushai came to Absalom. Absalom said to Hushai, “This is the plan Ahithophel gave. Should we follow it? If not, tell us.”

7 Hushai said to Absalom, “Ahithophel’s advice is not good this time.”

8 Hushai added, “You know that your father and his men are strong men. They are as dangerous as a wild bear when something has taken its cubs. Your father is a skilled fighter. He will not stay all night with the people. 9 He is probably already hiding in a cave or some other place. If your father attacks your men first, people will hear the news and think, ‘Absalom’s followers are losing!’

10 Then even your bravest men will be frightened, because all the Israelites know that your father is a powerful soldier and that his men are very brave.

11 This is what I suggest: You must gather all the Israelites together from Dan to Beersheba. Then there will be many people, like the sand by the sea. Then you yourself must go into the battle. 12 We will catch David wherever he is hiding and attack him with so many soldiers that they will be like the dew that covers the ground. We will kill David and all of his men—no one will be left alive. 13 But if David escapes into a city, all the Israelites can bring ropes to that city and pull its walls down into the sand by the sea.”

Ahithophel’s Advice About David

1 Ahithophel also said to Absalom, “Now, let me choose 12,000 men to chase David tonight. 2 I will catch him while he is tired and weak. I will frighten him, and all his people will run away. But I will kill only King David. 3 Then I will bring all the people back to you. If David is dead, all the people will come back in peace.”

4 This plan seemed good to Absalom and all the leaders of Israel. 5 But Absalom said, “Now call Hushai the Arkite. I also want to hear what he says.”

Absalom Asks Ahithophel for Advice

20 Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Please tell us what we should do.”

21 Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Your father left some of his slave women here to take care of the house. Go and have sexual relations with them. Then all the Israelites will hear how you humiliated your father, and they will be encouraged to give you more support.”

22 Then they put up a tent for Absalom up on the roof of the house. Absalom had sexual relations with his father’s wives so that all the Israelites could see what happened. 23 So in those days Ahithophel’s advice was very important. Both David and Absalom accepted his advice as though it were the word of God.

a 16:22 wives Or “concubines.” See “slave woman” in the Word List.
valley. Not even a small stone will be left in that city.”

14Absalom and all the Israelites said, “Hushai’s advice is better than Ahithophel’s.” Actually, Ahithophel’s advice was good, but they said this because the LORD had decided to make Ahithophel’s advice useless. He did this to punish Absalom.

Hushai Sends a Warning to David

15Hushai told the priests, Zadok and Abiathar, what was said. He told them what Ahithophel suggested to Absalom and the leaders of Israel. Hushai also told them what he himself had suggested. He said,

16“Send a message to David now! Tell him not to spend the night at the places where people cross into the desert. Tell him to go across the Jordan River at once. If he crosses the river, the king and all his people will not be caught.”

17The priests’ sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, did not want to be seen going into the town, so they waited at En Rogel. A servant girl went out to them and gave them the message. Then Jonathan and Ahimaaz carried the message to King David.

18But a boy saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz and ran to tell Absalom. Jonathan and Ahimaaz ran away quickly. They arrived at a man’s house in Bahurim. The man had a well in his courtyard. Jonathan and Ahimaaz went down into this well. The man’s wife spread a sheet over the mouth of the well and covered it with grain. The well looked like a pile of grain, so no one would know to look there.

19Absalom’s servants came to the woman at the house. They asked, “Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?”

The woman said to Absalom’s servants, “They have already crossed over the brook.”

Absalom’s servants then went to look for Jonathan and Ahimaaz, but they could not find them. So Absalom’s servants went back to Jerusalem.

21After Absalom’s servants left,

Jonathan and Ahimaaz climbed out of the well and went to King David. They said to David, “Hurry, go across the river. Ahithophel is planning to do something to you.”

22So David and his people crossed over the Jordan River. By sunrise, all of David’s people had crossed the Jordan River. No one was left behind.

Ahithophel Kills Himself

23When Ahithophel saw that the Israelites did not do what he suggested, he saddled his donkey and went back to his hometown. He made plans for his family and then hanged himself. They buried him in his father’s tomb.

Absalom Crosses the Jordan River

24David arrived at Mahanaim just as Absalom and the Israelites who were with him crossed over the Jordan River. 25–26Absalom and the Israelites made their camp in the land of Gilead. Absalom had made Amasa the new captain of the army. He took Joab’s place. Amasa was the son of Ithra the Ishmaelite. His mother was Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, the sister of Joab’s mother, Zeruiah.

Shobi, Makir, and Barzillai

27When David arrived at Mahanaim, Shobi, Makir, and Barzillai were there. Shobi son of Nahash was from the Ammonite town of Rabbah. Makir son of Ammiel was from Lo Debar. Barzillai was from Rogelim in Gilead. 28–29“These three men said, “The people are tired, hungry, and thirsty from the desert.” So they brought many things to David and those with him. They brought beds, bowls, and other kinds of dishes. They also brought wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, dried

b 17:25–26 He took Joab’s place Joab still supported David. Joab was one of the three captains in David’s army when David was running away from Absalom. See 2 Sam. 18:2.

17:25–26 Ishmaelite This is from the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has “Israelite,” but see 1 Chron. 2:17.

c 17:25–26 His mother … Zeruiah Literally, “Ithra had sexual relations with Abigail, the daughter of Nahash sister of Zeruiah.”

D 17:18 courtyard An open area outside the house. Many houses were built around courtyards so that people could work, cook, or eat outside.
seeds, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese made from cow’s milk.

**David Gets Ready for Battle**

18 David counted his men and chose captains over 1000 and captains over 100 to lead them. He separated the people into three groups and sent them out. Joab led a third of the men. Joab’s brother, Abishai son of Zeruiah, led another third. And Ittai from Gath led the last third.

**David’s Army Defeats Absalom’s Army**

6 David’s army went out into the field against Absalom’s Israelites. They fought in the forest of Ephraim. 7 David’s army defeated the Israelites. It was a great defeat because 20,000 men were killed that day.

10 Someone saw this happen and told Joab, “I saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree.”

11 Joab said to the man, “Why didn’t you kill him and let him fall to the ground? I would have given you a belt and ten pieces of silver!”

12 The man said to Joab, “I would not try to hurt the king’s son even if you gave me 1000 pieces of silver. We heard the king’s command to you, Abishai, and Ittai. The king said, ‘Be careful not to hurt young Absalom.’ If I had killed Absalom, the king himself would find out, and you would punish me.”

14 Joab said, “I will not waste my time here with you!” Absalom was still alive and hanging in the oak tree. Joab took three sticks in his hand and hit him in the heart.

15 Ten of Joab’s young helpers gathered around Absalom and killed him.

16 Joab blew the trumpet and called the people to stop chasing Israelites. Then Joab’s men took Absalom’s body and threw it into a large hole in the forest and covered it with stones.

18 While Absalom was alive he put up a memorial stone in King’s Valley. He said, “I have no son to keep my name alive.” So he named that monument after himself. It is called “Absalom’s Monument” even today.

**Joab Sends the News to David**

19 Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said to Joab, “May I run and take the news to King David? I’ll tell him the Lord has destroyed the enemy for him.”

20 Joab answered Ahimaaz, “No, you will not carry the message today. You can do it some other time, but not today because it is the king’s son who is dead.”

21 Then Joab said to a man from Ethiopia, “Go, tell the king what you have seen.”

*a 18:9 above the ground  Literally, “between heaven and earth.”
*b 18:13 you would punish me Or “you would have opposed me.”
So the Ethiopian bowed to Joab and ran to tell David.

22But Ahimaaz son of Zadok begged Joab again, “No matter what happens, please let me also run after the Ethiopian!”

Joab said, “Son, why do you want to carry the news? You will not get any reward for the news you bring.”

23Ahimaaz answered, “No matter what happens, I will run to David.”

Joab said to Ahimaaz, “All right, run to David!”

Then Ahimaaz ran through Jordan Valley and passed the Ethiopian.

David Hears the News

24David was sitting between the two gates of the city. The watchman went up to the roof over the gate walls and saw a man running alone. 25The watchman shouted to tell King David.

King David said, “If the man is alone, he is bringing news.”

The man came closer and closer to the city. 26But then the watchman saw another man running. He called to the gatekeeper, “Look! Another man is running alone.”

The king said, “He is also bringing news.”

27The watchman said, “I think the first man runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok.”

The king said, “Ahimaaz is a good man, he must be bringing good news.”

28Ahimaaz called to the king, “All is well!” Ahimaaz bowed with his face to the ground in front of the king and said, “Praise the LORD your God! The LORD has defeated the men who were against you, my lord and king.”

29The king asked, “Is young Absalom all right?”

Ahimaaz answered, “When Joab sent me, I saw some great excitement, but I don’t know what it was.”

30Then the king said, “Step over here and wait.” Ahimaaz went there and stood waiting.

31The Ethiopian arrived and said, “News for my lord and king. Today the LORD has punished all those who were against you!”

32The king asked the Ethiopian, “Is young Absalom all right?”

The Ethiopian answered, “May your enemies, or whoever tries to hurt you, suffer the same as this young man did.”

33So the king knew Absalom was dead and he became very upset. He went upstairs to the room over the gate, crying, “O my son Absalom! My son Absalom, I wish I had died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son!”

Joab Scolds David

19People told Joab what had happened, “Look, the king is crying and mourning for Absalom.” 2So the joy of victory turned to sadness for everyone. It was a very sad day because the people heard, “The king is mourning for his son.”

3The people came into the city quietly as if they were the ones who had been defeated in battle. 4The king had covered his face and was crying loudly, “O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

5Joab came into the king’s palace and said to the king, “You are humiliating every one of your officers! Look, they saved your life today and the lives of your sons and daughters and your wives and slave women. 6It seems that you love those who hate you, and you hate those who love you! Today you have made it clear to your officers and men that they mean nothing to you. It appears as if you would have been perfectly happy if Absalom had lived and the rest of us had been killed today! 7Now get up and go encourage your officers. I swear by the LORD, if you don’t go out and do that right now, not one man will be with you tonight. And that will be worse for you than all the trouble you have had since you were a child.”

8So the king went to the city gate. 9The news spread that the king was at the gate, so all the people came to see him, except
for the Israelites who had run away to their homes.

David Is King Again
9 The tribes of Israel began discussing what to do next. They said, “King David saved us from the Philistines and our other enemies. David left the country because he was running away from Absalom. 10 We anointed Absalom to be the king, but he was killed in battle. So we should bring David back to be the king again.”

11 King David sent a message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. David said, “Speak to the leaders of Judah and tell them, ‘Why are you the last tribe to bring King David back home? See, all the Israelites are talking about bringing the king back home. 12 You are my brothers, my family, so why are you the last tribe to bring the king back?’ 13 Also tell Amasa, ‘You are part of my family. I swear that I will make you captain of the army in Joab’s place.’”

14 David touched the hearts of the people of Judah, and they all agreed as one. The people of Judah sent a message to the king, saying, “You and all your officers come back!”

15 King David came to the Jordan River. The people of Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and take him across the Jordan River.

Shimei Asks David to Forgive Him
16 Shimei son of Gera, from the tribe of Benjamin, lived in Bahurim. Shimei rushed down to meet King David, with the rest of the people of Judah. 17 About 1000 people from the tribe of Benjamin came with Shimei. Ziba the servant from Saul’s family also came. Ziba brought his 15 sons and 20 servants with him. All these people hurried to the Jordan River to meet King David.

18 The people went across the Jordan River to help bring the king’s family back to Judah. They did whatever the king wanted. While the king was crossing the river, Shimei son of Gera came to meet him. He bowed down to the ground in front of the king. 19 Shimei said to the king, “My lord, don’t think about the wrong things I did. My lord and king, don’t remember the bad things I did when you left Jerusalem. 20 I know that I sinned. That is why today I am the first person from Joseph’s family to come down and meet you, my lord and king.”

21 Abishai son of Zeruiah said, “Let’s kill him for all the bad things he said about the LORD’s chosen king.”

22 David said, “What should I do with you, sons of Zeruiah? Are you trying to cause me trouble? No one will be put to death in Israel today! Today I know that I am king over Israel.”

23 Then the king said to Shimei, “You will not die.” The king made a promise to Shimei that he himself would not kill Shimei.

Mephibosheth Goes to See David
24 Saul’s grandson, Mephibosheth, came down to meet King David. Mephibosheth had not cared for his feet, trimmed his mustache, or washed his clothes since the day the king left Jerusalem. 25 When he met the king at Jerusalem, the king said, “Mephibosheth, why didn’t you go with me when I ran away from Jerusalem?”

26 Mephibosheth answered, “My lord and king, my servant tricked me. I am crippled so I said to my servant, Ziba, ‘Go saddle a donkey for me so that I can go with the king.’ 27 But my servant tricked me and said bad things about me. My lord and king, you are like an angel from God. Do whatever you think is right. 28 You could have killed all my grandfather’s family, but you did not do that. Instead, you included me among the people who eat at your own table. So I don’t have a right to complain to the king about anything.”

29 The king said to Mephibosheth,

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\(a\) 19:20 Joseph’s family This probably means the Israelites who followed Absalom. Many times the name Ephraim (a son of Joseph) is used for all the tribes in northern Israel.

\(b\) 19:21 chosen king Literally, “anointed one.”

\(c\) 19:23 David did not kill Shimei. But a few years later, David’s son Solomon ordered Shimei to be put to death. See 1 Kings 2:44–46.

\(d\) 19:24 grandson Literally, “son.”

\(e\) 19:28 grandfather’s Literally, “father’s.”
“Don’t say anything more about your problems. This is what I have decided: You and Ziba will divide the land.”

30 Mephibosheth said to the king, “My lord and king, it is enough that you have come home in peace. Let Ziba have the land.”

David Asks Barzillai to Come With Him

31 Barzillai of Gilead came down from Rogelim to cross the Jordan River with King David and send him on his way home.

32 Barzillai was a very old man, 80 years old. He had given the king food and other things when David was staying at Mahanaim. Barzillai could do this because he was a very rich man. 33 David said to Barzillai, “Come across the river with me. I will take care of you if you will live in Jerusalem with me.”

34 But Barzillai said to the king, “Do you know how old I am? Do you think I can go with you to Jerusalem? I am 80 years old! I am too old to tell what is bad or good. I cannot taste what I eat or drink or hear the voices of men and women singers. Why should you want to be bothered with me?

35 I don’t need any of the things that you want to give me. I will cross the Jordan River with you.

36 Then please let me go back so that I can die in my own town and be buried in the grave of my father and mother. But here is Kimham; take him back with you as a servant, my lord and king. Do whatever you want with him.”

37 The king answered, “Kimham will go back with me. I will be kind to him for you. I will do anything for you.”

David Goes Back Home

39 The king kissed Barzillai and blessed him. Barzillai went back home, and the king and all the people went across the river.

40 The king crossed the Jordan River to Gilgal. Kimham went with him. All the people of Judah and half the people of Israel led David across the river.

Israelites Argue With the People of Judah

41 All the Israelites came to the king and said to him, “Why did our brothers, the people of Judah, steal you away? Why did they bring you and your family back across the Jordan River with your men?”

42 All the people of Judah answered the Israelites, “We did it because the king is our close relative. Why are you angry with us about this? We have not eaten food at the king’s expense. The king did not give us any gifts.”

43 The Israelites answered, “We have ten shares in David, so we have more right to David than you do. Why did you ignore us? We were the first ones to talk about bringing our king back.”

But the people of Judah replied with words that were even louder and angrier than those of the Israelites.

Sheba Leads Israel Away From David

1 At that place there was a man named Sheba son of Bicri. Sheba was a worthless troublemaker from the tribe of Benjamin. He blew a trumpet to gather the people together and said, “We have no share in David. We have no part in the son of Jesse. Israel, let’s all go home.”

2 So all the Israelites left David and followed Sheba son of Bicri. But the people from Judah stayed with their king all the way from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

3 David went back to his house in Jerusalem. He had left ten of his slave women to take care of the house. He put these women in a special house. Then he put guards around the house. They stayed in this house until they died. David took care of the women and gave them food, but he did not have sexual relations with them. They lived like widows until they died.

4 The king told Amasa, “Tell the people...
of Judah to meet with me in three days. You must be here, too.”

So Amasa called the people of Judah together, but he took longer than the king had told him.

David Tells Abishai to Kill Sheba

David said to Abishai, “Sheba son of Bicri is more dangerous to us than Absalom was. So take my officers and chase Sheba. Hurry before he gets into cities with walls. If he gets into the well-protected cities, we will not be able to get him.”

So Joab took the Kerethites and Pelethites and the other soldiers with him and left Jerusalem to chase after Sheba son of Bicri.

Joab Kills Amasa

When Joab and the army came to Big Rock at Gibeon, Amasa came out to meet them. Joab was wearing his uniform with a belt that held a knife. As he walked toward Amasa, the knife on the belt came out. Joab asked Amasa, “How are you doing, brother?” Joab reached out with his right hand and grabbed Amasa by the beard to greet him with a kiss.

Amasa didn’t see the knife that was now in Joab’s other hand. Joab stabbed him in the belly, and Amasa’s intestines spilled out on the ground. There was no need for Joab to stab him again; he was already dead.

David’s Men Continue to Look for Sheba

Then Joab and his brother Abishai resumed the chase after Sheba son of Bicri. One of Joab’s young soldiers stood by Amasa’s body and said, “All of you who support Joab and David, let’s follow Joab.”

Amasa was there in the middle of road, lying in his own blood. The young soldier noticed that all the people kept stopping to look at the body, so he rolled the body off the road and into the field and covered it with a cloth. Once the body was out of the way, the people simply passed it by and joined up with Joab to go after Sheba son of Bicri.

Sheba Escapes to Abel Beth Maacah

Sheba son of Bicri passed through all the tribes of Israel on his way to Abel Beth Maacah. All the Berites joined together and followed Sheba.

When Joab and his men came to Abel Beth Maacah, they surrounded the town. They piled dirt up against the city wall and began breaking stones out of the wall to make it fall down.

But there was a very wise woman in that city who shouted out to them and said, “Listen to me! Tell Joab to come here. I want to talk with him.”

Joab went to talk with the woman. She asked him, “Are you Joab?”

Joab answered, “Yes, I am.” Then the woman said, “Listen to me.” Joab said, “I am listening.”

Then the woman said, “In the past people would say, ‘Ask for help in Abel and you will get what you need.’ I am one of many peaceful, loyal people in this town. You are trying to destroy an important city of Israel. Why do you want to destroy something that belongs to the Lord?”

Joab answered, “I don’t want to destroy anything. I don’t want to ruin your city. But there is a man in your city from the hill country of Ephraim. He is named Sheba son of Bicri. He rebelled against King David. Bring him to me, and I will leave the city alone.”

The woman said to Joab, “All right. His head will be thrown over the wall to you.”

Then the woman spoke very wisely to all the people of the city. They cut off the head of Sheba son of Bicri and threw it over the city wall to Joab.

So Joab blew the trumpet and the army left the city. The soldiers went home, and Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.

The People on David’s Staff

Joab was captain of the whole army of Israel. Benaiah son of Jehoiada led the
Kerethites and Pelethites. Adoniram led the men who were forced to do hard work. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the historian. Sheva was the secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. And Ira from Jair was David’s personal priest.

Saul’s Family Punished

While David was king, there was a famine that continued for three years. So David prayed to the Lord. And the Lord answered, “Saul and his family of murderers are the reason for the famine, because he killed the Gibeonites.”

(The Gibeonites were not Israelites. They were a group of Amorites. The Israelites had promised not to hurt them, but Saul tried to kill the Gibeonites. He did this because of his strong feelings for the people of Israel and Judah.)

King David called the Gibeonites together and talked to them. David said to the Gibeonites, “What can I do for you? What can I do to take away Israel’s sin, so that you can bless the Lord’s people?”

The Gibeonites said to David, “There isn’t enough gold and silver for Saul’s family to pay for what they did. But we don’t have the right to kill anyone else in Israel.”

David said, “Well, what can I do for you?”

The Gibeonites said to King David, “The person who plotted against us was Saul. He is the one who tried to destroy all our people living in the land of Israel. Give us seven of Saul’s sons. Saul was the Lord’s chosen king, so we will hang his sons in front of the Lord on Mount Gibeah of Saul.”

King David said, “All right, I will give them to you.” But the king protected Jonathan’s son, Mephibosheth. Jonathan was Saul’s son, and David had made a promise in the Lord’s name to Jonathan. So the king did not let them hurt Mephibosheth.

David gave them Armoni and Mephibosheth. These were the sons of Saul and Rizpah. Saul also had a daughter named Merab who was married to Adriel son of Barzillai, from Meholah. David took the five sons of Merab and Adriel. David gave these seven men to the Gibeonites who then brought them to Mount Gibeah and hanged them in front of the Lord. Those seven men died together in the spring, during the first days of the barley harvest.

David and Rizpah

Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took a mourning cloth and put it on the rock. That cloth stayed on the rock from the time the harvest began until the rains came. Rizpah watched the bodies day and night. She protected them from the wild birds during the day and the wild animals at night.

People told David what Saul’s slave woman Rizpah was doing. Then David took the bones of Saul and Jonathan from the men of Jabesh Gilead. (The men of Jabesh Gilead got these bones after Saul and Jonathan were killed at Gilboa. The Philistines had hanged the bodies of Saul and Jonathan on a wall in Beth Shan. But the men of Jabesh Gilead went there and stole the bodies from that public area.) David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from Jabesh Gilead and buried them with the bodies of the seven men who were hanged. They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the area of Benjamin, in one of the tunnels in the grave of Saul’s father Kish, as the king commanded. After that God again listened to the prayers of the people in that land.

War With the Philistines

The Philistines started another war with Israel. David and his men went out to

a 20:26 personal priest Or “chief servant” or “advisor.”

b 21:1 family of murderers Literally, “house of blood.”

c 21:2 The Israelites . . . them This happened in Joshua’s time when the Gibeonites tricked the Israelites. Read Josh. 9:3–15.

d 21:6 chosen king Literally, “anointed one.”

e 21:7 David had made . . . to Jonathan David and Jonathan promised each other they would not harm each other’s families. Read 1 Sam. 20:12–23, 42.

f 21:8 Mephibosheth This is another man named Mephibosheth, not Jonathan’s son.

g 21:10 rock This might be the Big Rock at Gibeon (read 2 Sam. 20:8), the rock that the bodies were lying on, or a rock that marked the place where her sons were buried.

h 21:12 Beth Shan Or possibly, “Beth Shean.”

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fight the Philistines, but David became very tired and weak. 16 Ishbi-Benob was one of the giants.\textsuperscript{a} His spear weighed over 7 pounds.\textsuperscript{b} He put on new armor and thought he would be able to kill David. 17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah killed this giant Philistine and saved David’s life.

Then David’s men made him promise that he would not go out to battle anymore. They said, “If you do, Israel might lose its brightest leader.”

18 Later, there was another battle with the Philistines at Gob. Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, another one of the giants.

19 Later, there was another battle at Gob against the Philistines. Elhanan the son of Jaare Oregim from Bethlehem killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath from Gath.\textsuperscript{c} His spear was as big as a post.\textsuperscript{d}

20 There was another battle at Gath. There was a very large man who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He had 24 fingers and toes in all. This man was also one of the giants.\textsuperscript{21} This man challenged Israel and made fun of them, but Jonathan killed this man. (This was Jonathan, the son of David’s brother Shimei.)

21 All four of these men were giants from Gath. They were killed by David and his men.

David’s Song of Praise to the Lord

22 \textsuperscript{1} David sang this song to the LORD when the LORD saved him from Saul and all his other enemies.

2 The LORD is my Rock, my fortress, my place of safety.

3 He is my God, the Rock I run to for protection.

He is my shield; by his power I am saved.\textsuperscript{f}

He is my hiding place, my place of safety, high in the hills.

He is my savior, the one who rescues me from the cruel enemy.

4 I called to the LORD for help, and he saved me from my enemies. He is worthy of my praise!

5 Waves of death were crashing around me.

A deadly flood was carrying me away.

6 The ropes of the grave wrapped around me.

Death set its trap right there in front of me.

7 In my trouble I called to the LORD.

Yes, I cried out to my God for help.

There in his temple he heard my voice.

He heard my cry for help.

8 The earth shook and shivered.

The foundations of heaven trembled.

They shook because he was angry!

9 Smoke came from his nose.

Burning flames came from his mouth.

Red-hot coals fell from him.

10 He tore open the sky and came down.

He stood on a thick, dark cloud.

11 He flew across the sky, riding on a Cherub angel,

gliding on the wings of the wind.

12 He wrapped himself in darkness that covered him like a tent.

He was hidden by dark clouds filled with water.

13 Out of the brightness before him, flashes of lightning came down.

14 The LORD thundered from the sky.

God Most High let his voice be heard.

15 He scattered the enemy with his arrows—

the lightning bolts that threw them into confusion.

16 The LORD shouted his command, and a powerful wind began to blow.\textsuperscript{g}

\textsuperscript{a} 21:16 one of the giants Or “a son of Rapha (Rephaim).” Also in verses 18, 20, 22.

\textsuperscript{b} 21:16 over 7 pounds Literally, “300 shekels of bronze” (3.45 kg).

\textsuperscript{c} 21:19 Lahmi … Gath See 1 Chron. 20:5.

\textsuperscript{d} 21:19 post Literally, “a weaver’s rod,” the large beam across a loom.

\textsuperscript{e} 22:1 Chapter 22 This song is also found in Ps. 18.

\textsuperscript{f} 22:3 by his power I am saved Literally, “He is the horn of my salvation.”

\textsuperscript{g} 22:16 and … blow Or “and a blast of breath came from his… wind.”
Then the bottom of the sea could be seen, and the earth’s foundations were uncovered.

17 The Lord reached down from above and grabbed me. He pulled me from the deep water.

18 He saved me from my powerful enemies, who hated me. They were too strong for me, so he saved me.

19 They attacked me in my time of trouble, but the Lord was there to support me.

20 He was pleased with me, so he rescued me. He took me to a safe place.

21 The Lord rewarded me for doing what is right. He was good to me because I am innocent.

22 The Lord did this because I have obeyed him. I have not turned against my God.

23 I always remembered his laws. I never stopped following his rules.

24 He knows I did nothing that was wrong. I have kept myself from sinning.

25 So the Lord rewarded me for doing what is right. He could see that I am innocent.

26 Lord, you are faithful to those who are faithful. You are good to those who are good.

27 You never do wrong to those who have done no wrong. But you outsmart the wicked, no matter how clever they are.

28 You help those who are humble, but as soon as you see the proud, you humiliate them.

29 Lord, you are my lamp. You, Lord, turn the darkness around me into light.

30 With your help I can defeat an army. If my God is with me, I can climb over enemy walls.

31 God’s way is perfect. The Lord’s promise always proves to be true. He protects those who trust in him.

32 There is no God except the Lord. There is no Rock except our God.

33 God is my strong fortress. He clears the path I need to take.

34 He makes my feet as steady as those of a deer. Even on steep mountains he keeps me from falling.

35 He trains me for war so that my arms can bend the most powerful bow.

36 Lord, you have given me your shield to protect me. It is your help that has made me great.

37 You cleared a path for my feet so that I could walk without stumbling.

38 I chased my enemies and defeated them. I did not stop until they were destroyed.

39 I destroyed my enemies. I struck them down. They did not get up again. They fell under my feet.

40 Lord, you made me strong in battle. You made my enemies fall before me.

41 You made my enemies turn and run away. I destroyed those who hated me.

42 They looked for help, but there was no one to save them. They cried out to the Lord, but he did not answer them.

43 I beat my enemies to pieces like dust on the ground. I smashed them and walked on them like mud in the streets.
44 You saved me from those who fought against me. You made me the ruler over nations. People I never knew now serve me.

45 Foreigners fall helpless before me! As soon as they heard about me, they were ready to obey.

46 They lose all their courage and come out of their hiding places shaking with fear.

47 The LORD lives! I praise my Rock! How great is my God, the Rock who saves me!

48 He is the God who punishes my enemies for me, the one who puts people under my rule.

49 He saves me from my enemies!

You help me defeat those who attack me. You save me from cruel people.

50 LORD, that is why I praise you among the nations. That is why I sing songs of praise to your name.

51 You help your king win battle after battle. You show your faithful love to your chosen one, to David and his descendants forever!

David’s Last Words

23 These are the last words of David: “This message is from David son of Jesse. This message is from the man God made great.

He is the king chosen by the God of Jacob, the sweet singer of Israel." The LORD’s Spirit spoke through me. His word was on my tongue.

3 The God of Israel spoke.

4 The Rock of Israel said to me, ‘Whoever rules people fairly, who rules with respect for God, is like the morning light at dawn, like a morning without clouds. He is like sunshine after a rain that makes tender grass grow from the ground.’

5 “God made my family strong and secure. He made an agreement with me forever. God made sure this agreement was good and secure in every way.

So surely he will give me every victory. He will give me everything I want!

6 “But evil people are like thorns. People don’t hold thorns. They throw them away.

7 If someone touches them, it hurts like a spear made of wood and iron.

Yes, evil people are like thorns. They will be thrown into the fire, and they will be completely burned.”

The Three Heroes

8 These are the names of David’s special soldiers: Josheb Basshebeth the Tahkemonite was captain of the king’s special forces.

He used his spear to kill 800 men at one time.

9 Next, there was Eleazar son of Dodai who was there with David when he challenged the Philistines who had gathered for battle. The Israelites ran away, but Eleazar stood and fought the Philistines until his hand became so tired that it cramped around his sword handle. The

David’s Last Words

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Lord won a great victory that day. The people of Israel came back, but only to take things from the dead.

Next there was Shammah son of Agee from Harar. The Philistines came together to fight. They fought in a field of lentils. The people ran away from the Philistines. But Shammah stood in the middle of the field and defended it. He defeated the Philistines. The Lord gave Israel a great victory that day.

Once during harvest time David was at the cave of Adullam, and three of the Thirty Heroes went down to meet him there. At the same time the Philistine army was camped in the Valley of Rephaim.

Another time David was in the fortress, and a group of Philistine soldiers was stationed in Bethlehem. David was thirsty for some water from his hometown, so he said, “Oh, if only I could have some water from that well by the gate in Bethlehem.” So the Three Heroes fought their way through the Philistine army and got some water from the well near the city gate in Bethlehem. They took it to David, but he refused to drink it. He poured it on the ground as an offering to the Lord. David said, “Lord, I cannot drink this water. It would be like drinking the blood of the men who risked their lives for me.” This is why David refused to drink the water. The Three Heroes did many brave things like that.

Other Brave Soldiers

Abishai was the brother of Joab son of Zeruiah. Abishai was the leader of the Thirty Heroes. He used his spear against 300 enemies and killed them. He became as famous as the Three. Abishai was as famous as the Three Heroes. He became their leader, even though he was not one of them.

Then there was Benaiyah son of Jehoiada, from Kabzeel. He was the son of a powerful man. Benaiyah did many brave things. He killed two of the best soldiers in Moab. One day when it was snowing, Benaiyah went down into a hole in the ground and killed a lion. Benaiyah also killed a big Egyptian soldier. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand, and Benaiyah only had a club. He grabbed the spear in the Egyptian’s hands and took it away from him. Then Benaiyah killed the Egyptian with his own spear. Benaiyah son of Jehoiada did many more brave things like that. He was as famous as the Three Heroes. Benaiyah was even more famous than the Thirty Heroes, but he did not become a member of the Three Heroes. David made Benaiyah the leader of his bodyguards.

The Thirty Heroes

The following men were among the Thirty Heroes:

- Asahel, the brother of Joab;
- Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem;
- Shammah the Harodite;
- Eili the Harodite;
- Helez the Paltite;
- Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa;
- Abiezer from Anathoth;
- Mebunnai the Hushathite;
- Zalmon the Ahohite;
- Maharai from Netophah;
- Heled son of Baanah from Netophah;
- Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah of Benjamin;
- Benaiyah the Pirathonite;
- Hiddai from the Brooks of Gaash;
- Abi Albon the Arbathite;
- Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maacathite;
- Elisha the Shaalbonite;
- the sons of Jashen;
- Jonathan the son of Shammah from Harar;
- Ahiam son of Sharar from Harar;
- Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite;
- Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maacathite;
- 23:17 Thirty Heroes Or “the king’s special forces.” These men were David’s very brave soldiers. Also in verses 23, 31.
- C 23:13 three ... Rephaim The Hebrew text here is hard to understand, but compare 1 Chron. 11:15.
- D 23:16 Three Heroes These were David’s three bravest soldiers. Also in verses 18, 22.
- E 23:20 powerful man That is, a man from the warrior class. He is ready to protect his people in war.
35 Hezro the Carmelite; Paarai the Arbite; Igal son of Nathan of Zobah; Bani the Gadite; Zelek the Ammonite; Naharai from Beeroth (Naharai carried the armor for Joab son of Zeruiah); Ira the Ithrite; Gareb the Ithrite; and Uriah the Hittite. There were 37 in all.

David Decides to Count His Army

24 The Lord was angry with Israel again. He caused David to turn against the Israelites. He told David, “Go count the people of Israel and Judah.”

2 King David said to Joab, the captain of the army, “Go through all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people. Then I will know how many people there are.”

3 But Joab said to the king, “May the Lord your God give you 100 times as many people, no matter how many there are! And may your eyes see this thing happen. But why do you want to do this?”

4 King David strongly commanded Joab and the other captains of the army to count the people. So they went out from the king to count the people of Israel.

5 After they crossed over the Jordan River, they made their camp in Aroer on the right side of the city. (The city is in the middle of the valley of Gad, on the way to Jazer.)

6 Then they went east to Gilead, all the way to Tahtim Hodshi. Then they went north to Dan Jaan and around to Sidon. They went to the fort of Tyre. They went to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites. Then they went south to Beersheba in the southern part of Judah.

7 It took them nine months and 20 days for them to go through the country. After nine months and 20 days they came back to Jerusalem.

9 Joab gave the list of the people to the king. There were 800,000 men in Israel who could use the sword. And there were 500,000 men in Judah.

The Lord Punishes David

10 David felt ashamed after he had counted the people and said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I did! Lord, I beg you, forgive me for my sin. I have been very foolish.”

11 When David got up in the morning, the Lord gave this message to Gad, David’s seer: “Go and tell David, ‘This is what the Lord says: There are three ways you can be punished. Choose the one you want.’”

13 So Gad went to David and said to him, “Choose one of these three: seven years of famine for you and your country, being chased by your enemies for three months, or three days of disease in your country. Think about it, and decide which one you want. I must give your answer to the one who sent me.”

14 David said to Gad, “This is a terrible situation to be in. But it would be better to be punished by the Lord than by anyone else, because he is very merciful.”

15 So the Lord sent a disease against Israel. It began in the morning and continued until the chosen time to stop. From Dan to Beersheba 70,000 people died.

16 The angel raised his arm over Jerusalem and was ready to destroy it, but the Lord felt very sorry about the bad things that had happened. He said to the angel who destroyed the people, “That’s enough! Put down your arm.” The Lord’s angel was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

David Buys Araunah’s Threshing Floor

17 When he saw the angel who killed the people, David spoke to the Lord. David said, “I sinned! I did wrong! And these

b 24:13 seven 1 Chron. 21:12 and the ancient Greek version have “three.”

24:16 Araunah Also spelled “Ornan.” Also in verses 18, 22, 24.

24:16 Jebusite A person who lived in Jerusalem before the Israelites took the city. “Jebus” was the old name for Jerusalem.
people only did what I told them—they only followed me like sheep. They did nothing wrong. Please let your punishment be against me and my father’s family.”

18 That day Gad came to David and said, “Go and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”

19 So David did what Gad told him to. David did what the LORD wanted and went to see Araunah.

20 Araunah looked and saw King David and his officers coming to him. Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground.

21 He said, “Why has my lord and king come to me?”

David answered, “I came to buy the threshing floor from you. Then I can build an altar to the LORD. Then the disease will stop.”

22 Araunah said to David, “My lord and king, you can take anything you want for a sacrifice. Here are some oxen for the burnt offering, and the threshing boards and the yokes for the wood. 23 O King, I give everything to you!” Araunah also said to the king, “May the LORD your God be pleased with you.”

24 But the king said to Araunah, “No! I must pay you for everything. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing.”

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for 50 shekels of silver.

25 Then David built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

The LORD answered his prayer for the country. He stopped the disease in Israel.
Adonijah Wants to Be King

1 King David was very old and could not keep warm. His servants covered him with blankets, but he was still cold. 2 So they said to him, “We will find a young woman to care for you. She will lie next to you and keep you warm.” 3 So the king’s servants began looking everywhere in the country of Israel for a beautiful young woman to keep the king warm. They found a young woman named Abishag, from the town of Shunem, and brought her to the king. 4 She was very beautiful. She cared for the king and served him, but King David did not have sexual relations with her.

5-6 Adonijah was the son of King David and his wife Haggith. He was born after Absalom. Adonijah was a very handsome man. King David never corrected his son Adonijah, and he never made him explain his actions. Adonijah became very proud and decided that he would be the next king. He wanted very much to be the king, so he got himself a chariot, horses, and 50 men to run ahead of him.

7 Adonijah talked with Joab son of Zeruiah and Abiathar the priest. They decided to help make him the new king, but several important men did not join Adonijah. They were Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and King David’s special guard.

8 One day, at Zoheleth Rock near En Rogel, Adonijah sacrificed some sheep, cattle, and fat calves as a fellowship offering. He invited his brothers (the other sons of King David) and all the officers from Judah.

9 But he did not invite his brother Solomon, Nathan the prophet, Benaiyah, or the men in the king’s special guard.

Nathan Advises Bathsheba

11 When Nathan heard about this, he went to Solomon’s mother Bathsheba and asked her, “Have you heard what Haggith’s son, Adonijah, is doing? He is making himself king. And our master, King David, knows nothing about it. 12 You and your son Solomon are in danger, but I will tell you what to do to save yourself. 13 Go to King David and tell him, ‘My lord and king, you promised me that my son Solomon would be the next king after you. So why is Adonijah becoming the new king?’ 14 Then while you are still talking with him, I will come in. After you leave I will tell the king what has happened. This will show that what you said is true.”

15 So Bathsheba went in to see the king in his bedroom. The king was very old. Abishag, the girl from Shunem, was caring for him there. 16 Bathsheba bowed down before the king. The king asked, “What can I do for you?”

17 Bathsheba answered, “Sir, you used the name of the Lord your God and made a promise to me. You said, ‘Your son Solomon will be the next king after me. He will sit on my throne.’ 18 Now, you don’t know this, but Adonijah is making himself king. 19 He is giving a big fellowship meal. He has killed many cattle and the best sheep, and he has invited all of your sons to the meal. He also invited Abiathar the priest and Joab, the commander of your army, but he did not invite your faithful son Solomon.

20 Now, my lord and king, all the Israelites are watching you. They are waiting for you to decide who will be the next king after you. 21 If you don’t decide, then after you...
are buried, these men will say that Solomon and I are criminals.”

22 While Bathsheba was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet came to see him. 22 The servants told the king, “Nathan the prophet is here.” Nathan went in to speak to the king. He bowed down before the king 22 and said, “My lord and king, did you announce that Adonijah will be the new king after you? Have you decided that he will rule the people now? 23 Today he went down into the valley to offer many cattle and the best sheep as fellowship offerings. He invited all your other sons, the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest. They are now eating and drinking with him. And they are saying, ‘Long live King Adonijah!’ 24 But he did not invite me, or Zadok the priest, or Benaiah son of Jehoiada, or your son Solomon. 25 My lord and king, did you do this without telling us? Please tell us, who will be the next king after you?”

28 Then King David said, “Tell Bathsheba to come in!” So she came in and stood before the king.

29 Then the king made a promise: “The Lord has saved me from every danger. As surely as he lives, I make this promise to you. 30 Today I will do what I promised you in the past. I made that promise by the power of the Lord, the God of Israel. I promised that your son Solomon would be the next king after me. I promised that he would take my place on my throne, and I will keep my promise!”

31 Then Bathsheba bowed down before the king and said, “Long live King David!”

Solomon Is Anointed King

32 Then King David said, “Tell Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada to come in here.” So the three men came in to meet with the king. 33 Then the king said to them, “Take my officers with you. Put my son Solomon on my mule and take him to Gihon Spring. 34 There Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet will anoint him to be the new king of Israel. Blow the trumpet and announce, ‘This is the new king, Solomon!’ 35 Then come back here with him. Solomon will sit on my throne and be the new king in my place. I have chosen him to be the ruler of Israel and Judah.”

36 Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, “Amen! It is as true as if the Lord God himself had said it, my lord and king. 37 My lord and king, the Lord has been with you, and now I pray that he will be with Solomon! And I pray that King Solomon’s kingdom will grow and be even more powerful than yours, my lord and king.”

38 So Zadok, Nathan, Benaijah, and the king’s officers obeyed King David. They put Solomon on David’s mule and went with him down to Gihon Spring. 39 Zadok the priest carried the oil from the Holy Tent and poured it on Solomon’s head to show that he was the new king. They blew the trumpet and all the people shouted, “Long live King Solomon!” 40 Then all the people followed Solomon back into the city. They were very happy and excited. They were playing flutes and making so much noise that the ground shook.

41 Meanwhile, Adonijah and his guests were just finishing their meal. They heard the sound of the trumpet, and Joab asked, “What is that noise? What is happening in the city?”

42 While Joab was still speaking, Jonathan, son of Abiathar the priest, arrived. Adonijah said, “Come here! You are a good man, so you must be bringing good news.”

43 But Jonathan answered, “No, it is not good news for you! King David has sent Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada to come in here.” So the three men came in to meet with the king.

44 King David sent Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and all the king’s officers with Solomon out to Gihon Spring. They put Solomon on the king’s mule. 45 Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon at Gihon Spring and then went back into the

a 1:33 Gihon Spring A spring of water just outside the city walls in the valley east of Jerusalem. It was the main source of water for the city of Jerusalem.

b 1:42 good man Or “important man.” This Hebrew word means a person from an important family.
city. The people followed them, and now everyone in the city is celebrating. That is the noise you hear. 46–47 Solomon is sitting on the king’s throne and the king’s officers are congratulating King David, saying, ‘King David, you are a great king!’ And now we pray that your God will make Solomon a great king too. We pray your God will make him even more famous than you. And we pray that his kingdom will be even greater than yours is! Even King David was there. From his bed, the king bowed before Solomon 48 and said, ‘Praise the LORD, the God of Israel. He has put one of my own sons on my throne, and he has let me live to see it.’”

49 All of Adonijah’s guests were afraid and left very quickly. 50 Adonijah was also afraid of Solomon, so he went to the altar and held onto the horns of the altar. 51 Then someone told Solomon, “Adonijah is afraid of you, King Solomon. He is at the Holy Tent holding onto the horns of the altar, and he refuses to leave. Adonijah says, ‘Tell King Solomon to promise that he will not kill me.’”

52 So Solomon answered, “If Adonijah shows that he is a good man, I promise that not a hair on his head will be hurt. But if he does anything wrong, he will die.” 53 Then King Solomon sent some men to get Adonijah and brought him in. He approached the king and bowed before him. Then Solomon said, “Go home.”

King David Dies

1 The time came for David to die, so he gave these commands to Solomon, 2 “I am about to die, like all men must. But you are growing stronger and becoming a man. 3 Now, carefully obey all the commands of the LORD your God. Carefully obey all his laws, commands, decisions, and agreements. Obey everything that is written in the Law of Moses. If you do this, you will be successful at whatever you do and wherever you go. 4 And if you obey the LORD, he will keep his promise about me. He said, ‘If your sons carefully live the way I tell them, sincerely, with all their heart, the king of Israel will always be a man from your family.’”

5 David also said, “You remember what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me. He killed two of the commanders of Israel’s army, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. Remember, it was during a time of peace when he spilled the blood that splattered onto his sword belt and army boots. I should have punished him then. 6 Use your wisdom, but don’t let him die peacefully of old age.

7 “Also, be kind to the children of Barzillai from Gilead. Be friends with them, and let them eat at your table, because they helped me when I ran away from your brother Absalom.

8 “And remember, Shimei son of Gera is still around. He is the Benjamite from Bahurim who cursed me when I ran away to Mahanaim. But when he came down to meet me at the Jordan River, I made a promise to him before the LORD that I would not kill him. 9 Now, don’t leave him unpunished. You are a wise man. You will know what you must do, but don’t let him die peacefully of old age.”

10 Then David died and was buried in the City of David. 11 David ruled Israel 40 years. He ruled seven years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem.

Solomon and Adonijah

12 Now Solomon was king. He sat on the throne of his father David and was in complete control of his kingdom.

13 One day Adonijah, the son of Haggith, went to Solomon’s mother, Bathsheba. She asked him, “Do you come in peace?”

Adonijah answered, “Yes, this is a peaceful visit. 14 I have something to ask you.”

Bathsheba said, “Then speak.”

15 Adonijah said, “You know that at one time the kingdom was mine. All the people of Israel wanted me to be their king. But things have changed, and now my brother is the king. The LORD chose him to be king. 16 But now I have one thing to ask you. Please don’t refuse me.”

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Bathsheba answered, “What do you want?”

17 Adonijah said, “I know that King Solomon will do whatever you ask. So please ask him to let me marry Abishag, the woman from Shunem.”

18 Then Bathsheba said, “Very well, I will speak to the king for you.”

19 So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to talk with him. When the king saw her, he stood up, bowed before her, and then sat back down. He told some servants to bring another throne for his mother, and she sat down at his right side.

20 Bathsheba said to him, “I have one small thing to ask you. Please don’t refuse me.”

The king answered, “Ask whatever you want, mother. I will not refuse you.”

21 So Bathsheba said, “Let your brother Adonijah marry Abishag, the woman from Shunem.”

22 King Solomon answered his mother, “Why are you asking me to give Abishag to Adonijah? Why don’t you just ask me to give him the whole kingdom! After all, he is my older brother, and both Abiathar the priest and Joab support him!”

23 Then Solomon said, “By the Lord, I swear I’ll make Adonijah pay for this with his life!

24 The Lord made me the king of Israel. He gave me the throne of my father David. The Lord kept his promise and gave the kingdom to me and my family. Now, as surely as the Lord lives, I swear Adonijah will die today!”

25 King Solomon gave the command to Benaiah, and Benaiah went out and killed Adonijah.

26 Then King Solomon said to Abiathar the priest, “I should kill you, but I will let you go back to your home in Anathoth. I will not kill you now because you helped carry the Holy Box of the Lord God while marching with my father David. And I know that you shared in the hard times with my father.”

27 Then Solomon told Abiathar that he could not continue to serve as a priest of the Lord. This happened as the Lord said it would when he told Eli the priest what would happen to him and his family.\(^d\)

28 Joab had supported Adonijah, but not Absalom. But when Joab heard what happened to Abiathar, he was frightened and ran to the tent of the Lord to hold onto the horns of the altar.\(^2\) Someone told King Solomon that Joab was at the altar in the Lord’s Tent. So Solomon ordered Benaiah to go and kill him.

30 Benaiah went into the Lord’s Tent and said to Joab, “The king says, ‘Come out!’ ”

But Joab answered, “No, I will die here.”

Benaiah went back to the king and told him what Joab had said.\(^3\) The king commanded Benaiah, “Do as he says! Kill him there and take him out to bury him. Then my family and I will be free of Joab’s guilt from killing innocent people.\(^2\) Joab killed two men who were much better than he was. He killed Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa son of Jether, the commander of the army of Judah. He did this without my father’s knowledge. But now the Lord will punish Joab for the men he killed.\(^3\) He and his family will always be guilty for their deaths. But the Lord will bring peace to David, his descendants, his family of kings, and his kingdom forever.”

34 So Benaiah son of Jehoiada killed Joab, and he was buried near his home in the desert.\(^3\) Solomon then made Benaiah son of Jehoiada the commander of the army in Joab’s place. Solomon also made Zadok the new high priest in Abiathar’s place.\(^3\) Next, the king sent for Shimei and said to him, “Build yourself a house here in Jerusalem to live in and don’t leave the city.\(^3\) If you leave the city and go any further than Kidron Brook, you will be killed, and it will be your own fault.”

38 Shimei answered, “Yes, my king. I will obey you.” So Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time.\(^3\) But three years later, two of Shimei’s slaves ran away. They went to King Achish of Gath, who was the son of Maacah. Shimei heard that his slaves

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\(^d\) 2:27 This family See 1 Sam. 2:27–36.
were in Gath, so he saddled his donkey and went to King Achish at Gath to find them. He found them there and brought them back home.

But someone told Solomon that Shimei had left Jerusalem and gone to Gath and back. So Solomon sent for him and said, ‘I made you promise in the Lord’s name not to leave Jerusalem. And I warned you that if you went anywhere, you would die. And you agreed to what I said. You said that you would obey me. So why didn’t you obey me? Why did you break your promise to the Lord? You know all the bad things you did to my father David. Now the Lord will punish you for it.

But the Lord will bless me and keep David’s throne before him forever.’

Then the king ordered Benaiah to kill Shimei, and he did. So Solomon had full control of his kingdom.

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

Solomon made a peace treaty with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, by marrying his daughter. Solomon brought her to the City of David. This was when Solomon was still building his palace, the Temple of the Lord, and the wall around Jerusalem.

The Temple to honor the Lord had not yet been finished, so people were still making animal sacrifices on altars at the high places. Solomon showed that he loved the Lord by obeying everything his father David told him to do, except that Solomon continued to go to the high places to offer sacrifices and to burn incense.

King Solomon went to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice because that was the most important high place. He offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. While Solomon was at Gibeon, the Lord came to him at night in a dream. God said, ‘Solomon, ask me what you want me to give you.’

Solomon answered, ‘You were very kind and loyal to your servant, my father David. He was faithful to you and lived a good, honest life. And you showed him the greatest kindness when you let his son take his place as king. Lord my God, you have made me the king in my father’s place, but I am like a small child. I don’t have the wisdom I need to do what I must do. I am your servant here among your chosen people. There are so many that they cannot be counted. So I ask you to give me the wisdom to rule and judge them well and to help me know the difference between right and wrong. Without such great wisdom, it would be impossible to rule this great nation.’

The Lord was happy that Solomon asked for wisdom. ‘So God said to him, ‘You did not ask for long life and riches for yourself. You did not ask for the death of your enemies. You asked for the wisdom to listen and make the right decisions. So I will give you what you asked for. I will make you wise and intelligent. I will make you wiser than anyone who ever lived or ever will live. And I will also give you what you did not ask for. You will have riches and honor all your life. There will be no other king in the world as great as you. And I will give you a long life if you follow me and obey my laws and commands as your father David did.’

Solomon woke up and knew that God had spoken to him in the dream. Then Solomon went to Jerusalem and stood before the Box of the Lord’s Agreement. He offered a burnt offering and fellowship offerings to the Lord and then gave a party for all of his officials.

Proof of Solomon’s Wisdom

One day two prostitutes came to Solomon and stood before the king. One of the women said, ‘Sir, this woman and I live in the same house. We were both pregnant and ready to give birth to our babies. I had my baby while she was there with me. Three days later she also gave birth to her baby. There was no one else in the house with us, just the two of us. One night while this woman was asleep with her baby, the baby died. That night while I was asleep, she took my son from..."
my bed and carried him to her bed. Then she put the dead baby in my bed. In the morning I woke up and was about to feed the baby when I saw he was dead. When I looked at him more closely, I saw that he was not my baby.”

But the other woman said, “No! The dead baby is yours, and the one still alive is mine!”

But the first woman said, “No, you are wrong! The dead baby is yours! The one that is still alive is mine.” So the two women argued in front of the king.

Then King Solomon said, “Each of you says that the living baby is your own and that the dead baby belongs to the other woman.” Then King Solomon sent his servant to get a sword. He told the servant, “Cut the living baby in two and give one half of the baby to each woman.”

The second woman said, “Yes, cut him in two. Then neither of us will have him.” But the first woman, the real mother, loved her son and said to the king, “Please, sir, don’t kill the baby! Give him to her.”

Then King Solomon said, “Stop, don’t kill the baby. Give him to this woman. She is the real mother.”

The people of Israel respected the king when they heard about this decision. They saw he had the wisdom of God to make the right decisions.

**Solomon’s Kingdom**

King Solomon ruled over all Israel.

These are the names of his leading officials:

- Azariah son of Zadok was the priest;
- Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha, had the job of writing notes about what happened in the courts;
- Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud wrote notes about the history of the people;
- Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the commander of the army;
- Zadok and Abiathar were priests;
- Azariah son of Nathan was in charge of the district governors;
- Zabud son of Nathan was a priest and an advisor to King Solomon;
- Ahishar was responsible for everything in the king’s palace;
- Adoniram son of Abda was in charge of the slaves.

Israel was divided into twelve districts. Solomon chose governors to rule over each district. These governors were ordered to gather food from their districts and give it to the king and his family. Each of the twelve governors was responsible for giving food to the king one month each year. These are the names of the twelve governors:

- Ben Hur was governor of the hill country of Ephraim.
- Ben Deker was governor of Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Bethhanan.
- Ben Hesed was governor of Arubboth, Socoh, and Hepher.
- Ben Abinadab was governor of Napoth Dor. He was married to Taphath, daughter of Solomon.
- Baana son of Ahilud was governor of Taanach and Megiddo and all of Beth Shean next to Zarethan. This was below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah across from Jokmeam.
- Ben Geber was governor of Ramoth Gilead. He was governor of all the towns and villages of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead. He was also governor of the district of Argob in Bashan. In this area there were 60 cities with big walls around them. These cities also had bronze bars on the gates.
- Ahinadab son of Iddo was governor of Mahanaim.
- Ahimaaz was governor of Naphtali. He was married to Basemath the daughter of Solomon.
- Baana son of Hushai was governor of Asher and Aloth.
- Jehoshaphat son of Paruah was governor of Issachar.
- Shimei son of Ela was governor of Benjamin.

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Geber son of Uri was governor of Gilead. There had been two kings in this area, King Sihon of the Amorites and King Og of Bashan, but Solomon appointed only one governor for that district.

In Judah and Israel there were as many people as sand on the seashore. The people were happy and had plenty to eat and drink.

Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines. His kingdom went as far as the border of Egypt. These countries sent gifts to Solomon, and they obeyed him all of his life.\(^a\)

This is the amount of food that Solomon needed each day for himself and for everyone who ate at his table: 150 bushels\(^b\) of fine flour, 300 bushels\(^c\) of flour, 10 cattle that were fed grain, 20 cattle that were raised in the fields, 100 sheep, wild animals such as deer, gazelles, roebucks,\(^d\) and game birds.

Solomon ruled over all the countries west of the Euphrates River, from Taphsah to Gaza. And Solomon had peace along all the borders of his kingdom.\(^e\) During Solomon’s life everyone in Judah and Israel, all the way from Dan to Beersheba, lived in peace and security. The people were at peace sitting under their own fig trees and grapevines.

Solomon had places to keep 4000\(^e\) horses for his chariots and he had 12,000 horse soldiers.\(^f\) And each month one of the twelve district governors gave King Solomon everything he needed for all the people who ate at the king’s table.\(^g\)

The district governors also gave the king enough straw and barley for the chariot horses and the riding horses. Everyone brought this grain to the necessary places.

God made Solomon very wise. Solomon could understand more than you can imagine. \(^30\) He was wiser than anyone in the East \(^f\) or in Egypt. \(^31\) He was wiser than anyone on earth, even Ethan the Ezrahite and the sons of Mahol—Heman, Calcol, and Darda. King Solomon became famous in all the surrounding countries.\(^g\) By the end of his life, he had written\(^g\) 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs.

Solomon also knew very much about nature. He taught about many different kinds of plants—everything from the great cedar trees of Lebanon to the little vines that grow out of the walls. He also taught about animals, birds, and snakes.\(^h\)

People from every nation came to listen to Solomon’s wisdom. Kings all over the world sent their people to listen to him.

Solomon and Hiram

Hiram was the king of Tyre. He had always been David’s friend. So when Hiram heard that Solomon had become the new king after David, he sent his servants to Solomon.\(^2\) This is what Solomon said to King Hiram:

“You remember that my father, King David, had to fight many wars all around him. So he was never able to build a temple to honor the LORD his God. King David was waiting until the LORD allowed him to defeat all his enemies.\(^4\) But now the LORD my God has given me peace along all the borders of my country. I have no enemies, and my people are in no danger.\(^5\) “The LORD made a promise to my father David. He said, ‘I will make your son king after you, and he will build a temple to honor me.’ Now, I plan to build that temple to honor the LORD my God.\(^6\) And so I ask you to help me. Send your

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\(^a\) 4:21 sent gifts … life This showed that these countries had made peace agreements with Solomon because of his great power.

\(^b\) 4:22–23 150 bushels Literally, “30 cors” (6600 l).

\(^c\) 4:22–23 300 bushels Literally, “60 cors” (13,200 l).

\(^d\) 4:22–23 deer, gazelles, roebucks Different kinds of wild deer.

\(^e\) 4:26 4000 This is found in some copies of the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has 40,000, but see 2 Chron. 9:25.

\(^f\) 4:30 East The area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf.

\(^g\) 4:32 written Literally, “spoken.”

\(^h\) 4:33 snakes Literally, “creeping things.” These can be anything: insects, lizards, snakes, or fish.
men to Lebanon to cut down cedar trees for me. My servants will work with yours. I will pay you any price that you decide as your servants’ wages, but I need your help. Our carpenters are not as good as the carpenters of Sidon.”

Then Hiram sent this message to Solomon:

“I heard what you asked for. I will give you all the cedar trees and the fir trees you want.

9 My servants will bring them down from Lebanon to the sea. Then I will tie them together and float them down the shore to the place you choose. There I will separate the logs, and you can take them from there. As payment for this, you will give food to all those who live in my palace.”

10 So Hiram gave Solomon all the cedar and fir logs that he wanted.

11 Solomon gave Hiram about 120,000 bushels of wheat and about 120,000 gallons of pure olive oil every year for his family.

12 The Lord made Solomon wise as he had promised. Hiram and Solomon made a treaty between themselves and were at peace with one another.

13 King Solomon forced 30,000 men of Israel to help in this work. He chose a man named Adoniram to be in charge of them. Solomon divided the men into three groups with 10,000 men in each group. Each group worked one month in Lebanon and then went home for two months. Solomon also forced 80,000 men to work in the hill country cutting stone. There were also 70,000 men to carry the stones. There were 3300 men to supervise the workers. King Solomon commanded them to cut large, expensive stones for the foundation of the Temple.

18 Then Solomon and Hiram’s builders and the men from Byblos carved the stones and prepared them and the logs for use in building the Temple.

Solomon Builds the Temple

6 So in the month of Ziv, the second month of the year, during Solomon’s fourth year as king, he began work on the Temple. This was 480 years after the Israelites left Egypt. The Temple was 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. The porch of the Temple was 20 cubits long and 10 cubits wide. The porch ran along the front of the main part of the Temple itself. Its length was equal to the width of the Temple. There were narrow windows in the Temple. These windows were smaller on the inside of the wall than on the outside. Then Solomon built a row of rooms around the main part of the Temple. This row of rooms was three stories tall with the rooms built one above the other. The rooms touched the Temple wall, but their beams were not built into that wall. The Temple wall became thinner at the top, so the rooms on the upper floors were larger than the ones below them. The rooms on the bottom floor were 5 cubits wide. The rooms on the middle floor were 6 cubits wide. The rooms above that were 7 cubits wide. The stones were completely finished before they were brought into the Temple area, so there was no noise of hammers, axes, or any other iron tools in the Temple.

8 The entrance to these rooms was on bottom floor at the south side of the Temple. Inside there were stairs that went up to the second floor and from there to the third floor.

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Solomon finished building the main part of the Temple and then covered it inside with cedar boards. Then he finished building the rooms around the Temple. Each story was 5 cubits tall. The cedar beams in these rooms rested on a ledge of the Temple wall.

The Lord said to Solomon, “If you obey all my laws and commands, I will do for you what I promised your father David. I will live among the children of Israel in this Temple that you are building, and I will never leave the people of Israel.”

When Solomon finished the stonework on the Temple, the stone walls inside the Temple were covered with cedar boards from floor to ceiling. Then the stone floor was covered with pine boards. They built an inner room 20 cubits long in the back part of the Temple. This room was called the Most Holy Place. They covered the walls in this room with cedar boards, from floor to ceiling. In front of the Most Holy Place was the main part of the Temple. This room was 40 cubits long. They covered the walls in this room with cedar boards—none of the stones in the walls could be seen. They carved pictures of flowers and gourds into the cedar.

Solomon finished the inner room in the back part of the Temple. This room was for the Box of the Lord’s Agreement. This room was 20 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 20 cubits high. Solomon covered this room with pure gold. He also covered the cedar altar with gold.

They put the Cherub angels beside one another in the Most Holy Place. Their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. The other two wings touched each side wall. The two Cherub angels were covered with gold.

The walls around the main room and the inner room were carved with pictures of Cherub angels, palm trees, and flowers. The floor of both rooms was covered with gold.

The workers made two doors from olive wood. They put these doors at the entrance of the Most Holy Place. The frame around the doors was made with five sides. They made the two doors from olive wood. The workers carved pictures of Cherub angels, palm trees, and flowers on the doors. Then they covered the doors with gold.

They also made doors for the entrance to the main room. They used olive wood to make a square doorframe. There were two doors made from pine. Each door had two parts that folded together. They carved pictures of Cherub angels, palm trees, and flowers on the doors. Then they covered them with gold.

Then they built a wall around the inner yard. Each wall was made from three rows of cut stones and one row of cedar timbers.

They started working on the Lord’s Temple in the month of Ziv, the second month of the year. This was during Solomon’s fourth year as king of Israel. The Temple was finished in the month of Bul, the eighth month of the year, in Solomon’s eleventh year as king. It took seven years to build the Temple. It was built exactly as planned.

a 6:17 40 cubits 68’ 1/4” (20.73 m).

Each one had two wings. Each wing was 5 cubits long. From the end of one wing to the end of the other wing was 10 cubits. And each Cherub angel was 10 cubits tall.

b 6:31 The frame ... sides This probably means there were three sections that formed an arch at the top of the door.
Solomon’s Palace

King Solomon also built a palace for himself. It took 13 years to build Solomon’s palace. He also built the building called the “Forest of Lebanon.” It was 100 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. It had four rows of cedar columns. On top of each column was a cedar capital. There were cedar beams going across the rows of columns. There were 15 beams for each section of columns, making a total of 45 beams. On top of these beams there were cedar boards for the ceiling. There were three rows of windows across from each other on the side walls. There were three doors at each end. All the door openings and frames were square.

Solomon also built the Porch of Columns. It was 50 cubits long and 30 cubits wide. Along the front of the porch, there was a covering supported by columns.

He also built a throne room where he judged people. He called this the Judgment Hall. The room was covered with cedar from floor to ceiling.

Behind the Judgment Hall was a courtyard. The palace where Solomon lived was built around that courtyard and looked like the Judgment Hall. He also built the same kind of palace for his wife, the daughter of the king of Egypt.

All these buildings were made with expensive blocks of stone. The stones were cut to the right size with a saw and then smoothed on front and back. These expensive stones went from the foundation all the way up to the top layer of the wall. Even the wall around the yard was made with expensive blocks of stone. The foundations were made with large, expensive stones. Some of the stones were 10 cubits long and the others were 8 cubits long. On top of these stones there were other expensive stones and cedar beams. There were walls around the palace yard and around the yard and porch of the LORD’s Temple. The walls were built with three rows of stone and one row of cedar timbers.

King Solomon sent for a man named Huram who lived in Tyre and brought him to Jerusalem. Huram’s mother was an Israelite from the tribe of Naphtali. His dead father was from Tyre. Huram made things from bronze. He was a very skilled and experienced builder. So King Solomon asked him to come, and Huram accepted. King Solomon put him in charge of all the bronze work, and Huram did all the work he was given to do.

Huram made two bronze columns for the porch. Each column was 18 cubits tall and 12 cubits around. The columns were hollow and their metal walls were 3 inches thick. He also made two bronze capitals that were 5 cubits tall. He put these capitals on top of the columns. He made two nets of chain to cover the capitals on top of the two columns. Then he made two rows of bronze pomegranates. He put the bronze pomegranates on the nets of each column to cover the capitals at the top of the columns.

The capitals on top of the columns were shaped like flowers. The capitals were on top of the columns, above the bowl-shaped net. There were 200 pomegranates in rows all around the capitals. Huram put these two bronze columns at the porch of the Temple. One column was put on the south side of the entrance and one was put on the north side of it. The column on the south was named Jakin. The column on the north was named Boaz. They put the flower-shaped capitals on top of the columns, and the work on the two columns was finished.

Then Huram melted bronze and poured it into a huge mold to make a tank, which was called “The Sea.” The tank was

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**Notes:**
- 7:13 Huram Or “Hiram.” Also in verses 15, 23, 27, 37, 38, 40–45.
- 7:15 18 cubits 30’ 7 5/16” (9.33 m).
- 7:15 12 cubits 20’ 4 7/8” (6.22 m).
- 7:15 3 inches Literally, “1 handbreadth” (7.4 cm). Also in verse 26.
- 7:15 The columns … 3 inches thick This is from the ancient Greek version.
- 7:16 5 cubits 8’ 6” (2.6 m). Also in verses 19, 23.
- 7:23 tank A very large container for water.
about 30 cubits around. It was 10 cubits across and 5 cubits deep. There was a rim around the outer edge of the tank. Under this rim there were two rows of bronze gourds all around the tank. The bronze gourds were made in one piece as part of the tank. The tank rested on the backs of 12 bronze bulls. All 12 of the bulls were looking out, away from the tank. Three were looking north, three east, three south, and three west. The sides of the tank were 3 inches thick. The rim around the tank was like the rim of a cup or like the petals on a flower. The tank held about 11,000 gallons of water.

Then Huram made ten bronze carts. Each cart was 4 cubits long, 4 cubits wide, and 3 cubits high. The carts were made with square panels set in frames. On the panels and frames were bronze bulls, lions, and Cherub angels. There were designs of flowers hammered into the bronze above and below the bulls and lions. Each cart had four bronze wheels with bronze axles. At the corners there were bronze supports for a large bowl. The supports had designs of flowers hammered into the bronze. There was a frame around the top with an opening for the bowl. The frame was 1 cubit tall, and the opening was 1 1/2 cubits in diameter. There were designs carved into the bronze on the frame. The frame was square, not round.

Huram made ten bowls. There was one bowl for each of the ten carts. Each bowl was 4 cubits across and could hold about 230 gallons. He put five carts on the south side of the Temple and five carts on the north side. He put the large tank in the southeast corner of the Temple. Huram also made pots, small shovels, and small bowls. He finished making all the things King Solomon wanted him to make. This is a list of the things that Huram made for the Temple of the LORD:

2 columns;
2 capitals shaped like bowls for the top of the columns;
2 nets to go around the capitals;
400 pomegranates for the two nets (two rows of pomegranates for each net to cover the two bowls for the capitals on top of the columns);
10 carts with a bowl on each cart; the large tank with 12 bulls under it; the pots, small shovels, small bowls, and all the dishes for the LORD’s Temple.

Huram made everything King Solomon wanted. They were all made from polished bronze. Solomon never weighed the bronze that was used to make these things. There was too much to weigh. So the total weight of all the bronze was never known. The king ordered these things to be made near the Jordan River between Succoth and Zarethan. They made them by melting the bronze and pouring it into molds in the ground.

Solomon also commanded that all
these things be made from gold for the Temple:
the golden altar;
the golden table that held the special bread offered to God;
the lampstands of pure gold (five on the south side and five on the north side in front of the Most Holy Place);
the gold flowers, lamps, and tongs;
the pure gold bowls, lamp snuffers, small bowls, pans, and dishes for carrying coals;
the gold hinges for the doors to the inner room (the Most Holy Place) and for the doors to the main room of the Temple.

So King Solomon finished all the work he wanted to do for the Lord’s Temple. Then he took everything his father David had saved for this special purpose and put them in the Temple. He put the silver and gold in the special storage rooms in the Lord’s Temple.

The Box of the Agreement in the Temple

Then King Solomon told all the elders of Israel, the heads of the tribes, and the leaders of the families of Israel to come together in Jerusalem. Solomon wanted them to join in moving the Box of the Lord’s Agreement from the City of David up to the Temple. So during the special festival in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month of the year, all the men of Israel came to the meeting with King Solomon.

When all the elders of Israel arrived, the priests and Levites carried the Holy Box of the Lord up to the Temple. They also carried the Meeting Tent and all the holy things that were in it up to the Temple. King Solomon and all Israel met together before the Box of the Agreement and sacrificed so many sheep and cattle that no one was able to count them all. The priests carried the Box of the Lord’s Agreement to its proper place inside the Most Holy Place in the Temple, under the wings of the Cherub angels. The wings of the Cherub angels spread out over the Holy Box, and they covered the Holy Box and its carrying poles. The poles are still there today. They are too long for the Most Holy Place, so anyone standing in the Holy Place can see the ends of the poles, although no one outside can see them. The only things inside the Holy Box are the two tablets that Moses put there at Mt. Horeb. This is where the Lord made his agreement with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

When the priests came out of the Holy Place, the cloud filled the Lord’s Temple. The priests could not continue their work because the Temple was filled with the Glory of the Lord. Then Solomon said,
“The Lord caused the sun to shine in the sky, but he chose to live in a dark cloud.”
Now, Lord, I have built a beautiful Temple for you, where you may live forever.”

Then King Solomon turned toward all the Israelites who were standing there and asked God to bless them. He prayed this long prayer to the Lord:
“The Lord, the God of Israel, is great. He has done what he promised my father David. He told my father, ‘I brought my people, Israel, out of Egypt, but I had not yet chosen a city from among the tribes of Israel for a temple to honor me. And I had not chosen a man to be leader over my people, Israel. But now I have chosen Jerusalem to be the city where I will be honored. And I have chosen David to rule over my people, Israel.’
My father David wanted very

b 8:10 cloud The special sign that showed God was with his people.
8:12 The Lord … dark cloud This is from the ancient Greek version, which places verses 12–13 after verse 53. In verse 12 the standard Hebrew text has only “The Lord said he would live in darkness.”
8:16 And I … honored This is from the ancient Greek version. It is found in the standard Hebrew text of 2 Chron. 6:5–6, but not here.
much to build a temple to honor
the LORD, the God of Israel. But
the LORD said to my father, ‘I know
that you want very much to build a
temple to honor me, and it is good
that you want to build it. But you
are not the one to build my temple.
Your son will build my temple.’

20 So the LORD has kept his
promises. I am the king now in
place of my father David. I rule the
people of Israel as the LORD prom-
ised. And I have built the Temple
for the LORD, the God of Israel. I
have made a place in the Temple
for the Holy Box. Inside that Holy
Box is the agreement that the LORD
made with our ancestors when he
brought them out of Egypt.”

21 Then Solomon stood in front of
whole assembly of Israel and faced the
LORD’s altar. Solomon spread his hands
and looked toward heaven
22 and said,

“LORD, God of Israel, there is
no other god like you in heaven
or on the earth. You keep the
agreement that you made with
your people. You are kind and loyal
to those who follow you with all
their heart. You made a promise
to your servant, my father David,
and you kept that promise. You
made that promise with your own
mouth, and with your own hands
you made it come true today.

26 Now, LORD, God of Israel, keep
the other promises you made to
your servant David, my father. You
said, ‘David, if your sons carefully
obey me as you did, you will always
have someone from your family
ruling the people of Israel.’

26 Again, God of Israel, I ask you to keep the
promise you made to your servant,
my father David.

27 But, God, will you really live
here with us on the earth? The
whole sky and the highest heaven
cannot contain you. Certainly this
Temple that I built cannot contain
you either. But please listen to
my prayer and my request. I am
your servant, and you are the LORD
my God. Hear this prayer that I
am praying to you today. In the
past you said, ‘I will be honored
there.’ So please watch over this
Temple, night and day. And please
listen to my prayer as I turn toward
this Temple and pray to you.

30 And please listen to our prayers in the
future when I and your people
Israel turn to this place and pray
to you. We know that you live in
heaven. We ask you to hear our
prayer there and forgive us.

31 Those who wrong others will
be brought to this altar. If they are
not guilty, they will make an oath
and promise that they are inno-
cent. Please listen from heaven
and judge them. If they are guilty,
please show us that they are guilty.
And if they are innocent, please
show us that they are not guilty.

32 Sometimes your people
Israel will sin against you, and their
enemies will defeat them. Then the
people will come back to you and
praise you. They will pray to you
in this Temple. Please listen in
heaven, please listen to the prayers
of your people Israel. Forgive them
for their sins and let them have
their land again. You gave this land
to their ancestors.

35 Sometimes they will sin
against you, and you will stop the
rain from falling on their land.
Then they will pray toward this
place and praise your name. You
make them suffer, and they will
be sorry for their sins. So please
listen in heaven to their prayer.
Then forgive us for our sins. Teach
the people to live right. Then, Lord,
please send rain to the land you
gave them.

37 The land might become very
dry and no food will grow on it.
Or maybe a great sickness will spread among the people. Maybe all the food that is growing will be destroyed by insects. Or your people might be attacked in some of their cities by their enemies. Or many of your people might get sick. 38When any of these things happen, and people feel compelled in their hearts to spread their hands in prayer toward this Temple, 39 please listen to their prayer. Listen while you are in your home in heaven and forgive them and help them. Only you know what people are really thinking, so only you can judge them fairly. 40 Do this so that your people will fear and respect you all the time that they live in this land that you gave to our ancestors. 41-42 People from other places will hear about your greatness and your power. They will come from far away to pray at this Temple. 43 From your home in heaven, please listen to their prayers. Please do everything the people from other places ask you. Then they will fear and respect you the same as your people in Israel. Then all people everywhere will know that I built this Temple to honor you.

44 Sometimes you will command your people to go and fight against their enemies. Then your people will turn toward the city that you have chosen and the Temple that I built in your honor, and they will pray to you, Lord. 45 Please listen to their prayers from your home in heaven, and help them. 46 Your people will sin against you. I know this because everyone sins. And you will be angry with your people. You will let their enemies defeat them. Their enemies will make them prisoners and carry them to some faraway land. 47 In that faraway land, your people will think about what happened. They will be sorry for their sins, and they will pray to you. They will say, ‘We have sinned and done wrong.’ 48 They will be in that faraway land of their enemies, but they will turn back to you. They will feel sorry for their sins with their whole heart and soul. They will look toward the city you gave their ancestors. They will turn toward the land you gave to our ancestors. They will turn toward the city you chose and toward the Temple I built, and they will pray to you. 49 Please listen to their prayers from your home in heaven, and do what is right. 50 Forgive your sinful people for all the things they have done against you. Make their enemies be kind to them. 51 Remember that they are your people and that you brought them out of Egypt. It was as if you saved them by pulling them out of a hot oven! 52 Please listen to my prayers and to the prayers of your people Israel. Listen to their prayers any time that they ask you for help. 53 You have chosen them from all the peoples of the earth to be your own special people. Lord God, you promised to do that for us. You used your servant Moses to make that promise when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt.”

When Solomon prayed this prayer to the Lord, he was on his knees in front of the Lord’s altar and his arms were raised toward heaven. When he finished praying, he stood up. 55 Then, in a loud voice, he asked God to bless all the people of Israel. Solomon said,

56 “Praise the Lord! He promised to give rest to his people, Israel. And he has given us rest! He used his servant Moses and made many good promises to the people of Israel. And he has kept every one of them! 57 I pray that the Lord our God will be with us, as he was with our ancestors. I pray
that he will never leave us. 58 I pray that we will turn to him and follow him. Then we will obey all the laws, decisions, and commands that he gave our ancestors. 59 I pray that the Lord our God will always remember this prayer and what I have asked. I pray that he will do these things for his servant, the king, and for his people, Israel. I pray that he will do this every day. 60 If he will do these things, all the people of the world will know that the Lord is the only true God. 61 You people must be loyal and true to the Lord our God. You must always follow and obey all of his laws and commands. You must continue to obey in the future as you do now.”

62 Then King Solomon and all the Israelites with him offered sacrifices to the Lord. 63 Solomon killed 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep as fellowship offerings to the Lord. In this way the king and the people showed that they had dedicated the Temple to the Lord.

64 King Solomon also dedicated the yard right in front of the Lord’s Temple. He offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat from the animals that were used as fellowship offerings. King Solomon made these offerings there in the yard. He did this because the bronze altar in front of the Lord was too small to hold them all.

65 So there at the Temple, King Solomon and all the people of Israel celebrated the festival. 66 People came from as far away as Hamath Pass in the north and the border of Egypt in the south. This huge crowd of people ate, drank, and enjoyed themselves together with the Lord for seven days. Then they stayed for another seven days. They celebrated for a total of 14 days. 67 The next day Solomon told the people to go home. All the people thanked the king, said goodbye, and went home. They were happy because of all the good things that the Lord had done for David his servant and for his people Israel.

God Comes to Solomon Again

9 So Solomon finished building the Lord’s Temple and his own palace. Solomon built everything that he wanted to build. 2 Then the Lord appeared to Solomon again, just as he did at Gibeon. 3 The Lord said to him,

“I heard your prayer and what you asked me to do. You built this Temple, and I have made it a holy place. So I will be honored there forever. I will watch over it and think of it always. 4 You must serve me with a pure and honest heart, just as your father David did. You must obey my laws and do everything that I commanded you. 5 If you do, I will make sure that your family will always rule Israel, just as I promised your father David when I told him that Israel would always be ruled by one of his descendants. 6–7 But if you or your children stop following me, and don’t obey the laws and commands that I have given you, and if you serve and worship other gods, I will force Israel to leave the land that I have given to them. Israel will be an example to other people. Other people will make jokes about Israel. I made the Temple holy. It is the place where people honor me. But I will tear it down. 8 This Temple will be destroyed. Everyone who sees it will be amazed. They will ask, ‘Why did the Lord do this terrible thing to this land and to this temple?’ 9 People will say, ‘This happened because they left the Lord their God. He brought their ancestors out of Egypt, but they decided to follow other gods. They worshiped and served those gods. That is why the Lord caused
It took 20 years for King Solomon to build the Lord’s Temple and the king’s palace. Hiram supplied Solomon with all the cedar, pine and gold that he wanted, so Solomon gave him 20 cities in Galilee. So Hiram traveled from Tyre to see the cities that Solomon had given him. But Hiram was not pleased when he saw them.

King Hiram said, “What are these towns that you have given me, my brother?” King Hiram named that land the Land of Cabul. And that area is still called Cabul today. Hiram had sent King Solomon about 9000 pounds of gold to use in building the Temple. King Solomon forced slaves to work for him to build the Temple and his palace. Then he used these slaves to build many other things. He built the Millo and the city wall around Jerusalem. Then he rebuilt the cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.

In the past the king of Egypt had fought against the city of Gezer and burned it. He killed the Canaanites who lived there. When Solomon married Pharaoh’s daughter, Pharaoh gave him that city as a wedding present. Solomon rebuilt Gezer and the city of Lower Beth Horon. He also built the cities of Baalath and Tamar in the Judean desert. He also built cities where he could store grain, and he built places for his chariots and his horses. King Solomon also built whatever he wanted in Jerusalem, Lebanon, and all the places he ruled.

There were people left in the land who were not Israelites. There were Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. The Israelites had not been able to destroy them, but Solomon forced them to work for him as slaves. They are still slaves today. Solomon did not force any Israelites to be his slaves. The Israelites were soldiers, government officials, officers, captains, and chariot commanders and drivers. There were 550 supervisors over Solomon’s projects. They supervised the men who did the work.

Pharaoh’s daughter moved from the City of David to the palace that Solomon had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

Three times each year Solomon offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar that he built for the Lord. King Solomon also burned incense before the Lord and supplied what was needed for the Temple.

King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber. This town is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. King Hiram had some skilled sailors who knew the sea well. He sent them to serve in Solomon’s navy and work with Solomon’s men.

Solomon’s ships went to Ophir and brought back about 16 tons of gold for him.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon, so she came to test him with hard questions. She traveled to Jerusalem with a very large group of servants. There were many camels carrying spices, jewels, and a lot of gold. She met Solomon and asked him all the questions that she could think of. Solomon answered all the questions. None of her questions was too hard for him to explain. The queen of Sheba saw that Solomon was very wise. She also saw the beautiful palace he had built. She saw the food at the king’s table. She saw his officials meeting together. She saw the servants in the palace and the good clothes they wore. She saw his parties and the sacrifices that he offered in the Lord’s Temple. She was so amazed, she could hardly breathe!

Then she said to King Solomon, “The stories I heard in my country about your great works and your wisdom are true. I did not believe it until I came and saw it with my own eyes. Now I see that it is even greater than what I heard. Your wealth and wisdom are much greater than people told

a 9:13 Cabul This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “worthless.”

b 9:14 9000 pounds Literally, “120 talents” (4140 kg).

c 9:28 16 tons Literally, “420 talents” (14,490 kg).
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me. 8Your wives and officers are very fortunate, because they serve you and hear your wisdom every day. 9Praise the LORD your God! He was pleased to make you king of Israel. Because of the LORD's unending love for Israel, he has made you king to rule with justice and fairness. 10

Then the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon 4 1/2 tons of gold, a huge amount of spices, and precious stones. She gave him more spices than anyone has ever brought into Israel.

Hiram’s ships brought gold from Ophir. They also brought jewels and a special kind of wood. 11Solomon used this special wood to build supports in the Temple and the palace as well as harps and lyres for the singers. That was the last time such a large shipment of that kind of wood was brought to Israel. There hasn’t been any seen around here since then.

King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she asked for. He gave her more than she brought to give him. Then the queen of Sheba and her servants left and went back to their own country.

Solomon’s Great Wealth

14Every year King Solomon received almost 25 tons of gold. 15In addition to the gold brought in by the traveling merchants and traders, all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon.

16King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold. He used about 15 pounds of gold for each shield. 17He also made 300 smaller shields of hammered gold. He used almost 4 pounds of gold for each shield. The king put them in the Forest-of-Lebanon House.

18King Solomon also built a large throne with ivory decorations. It was covered with pure gold. 19There were six steps leading up to the throne. The back of the throne was round at the top. There were armrests on both sides of the throne, and there were lions in the sides of the throne under the armrests. 20There were also two lions on each of the six steps, one at each end. There was nothing like it in any other kingdom.

21All of Solomon’s cups and glasses were made of gold, and all the dishes in the building called the Forest of Lebanon were made from pure gold. Nothing in the palace was made from silver. There was so much gold that in Solomon’s time people did not think silver was important.

22The king also had many cargo ships that he sent out to trade things with other countries. These were Hiram’s ships. Every three years the ships would come back with a new load of gold, silver, ivory, and apes and baboons.

23King Solomon became greater in riches and wisdom than any other king on earth. 24People everywhere wanted to see King Solomon and listen to the great wisdom that God had given him. 25Every year people came to see the king and brought gifts made from gold and silver, clothes, weapons, spices, horses, and mules.

26Solomon had a great number of chariots and horses. He had 1400 chariots and 12,000 horse soldiers. He built special cities for these chariots. So the chariots were kept in these cities. King Solomon also kept some of the chariots with him in Jerusalem. 27The king made Israel very rich. In the city of Jerusalem, silver was as common as rocks and cedar wood was as common as the many fig trees growing on the hills. 28Solomon brought horses from Egypt and Kue. His traders bought them in Kue and brought them to Israel. 29A chariot from Egypt cost about 15 pounds of silver, and a horse cost almost

\[ a \] 10:8 wives This is from the ancient Greek version. The Hebrew text has "men."

\[ b \] 10:10 4 1/2 tons Literally, "120 talents" (4140 kg).

\[ c \] 10:11 special . . . wood Literally, "almug." No one knows exactly what type of wood this was, but it might have been sandalwood.

\[ d \] 10:12 since then Literally, "to this day," that is, when the book of Kings was written.

\[ e \] 10:14 25 tons Literally, "566 talents" (22,977 kg). Also in verse 29.

\[ f \] 10:16 about 15 pounds Literally, "600 shekels" (6.9 kg). Also in verse 29.

\[ g \] 10:17 almost 4 pounds Literally, "3 minas" (1.7 kg).

\[ h \] 10:17 Forest-of-Lebanon House The largest of king Solo-
4 pounds of silver. Solomon sold horses and chariots to the kings of the Hittites and the Arameans.

**Solomon and His Many Wives**

1 King Solomon loved many foreign women, including the daughter of Pharaoh and women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and the Hittites. 2 In the past the LORD had said to the Israelites, “You must not marry people from other nations. If you do, they will cause you to follow their gods.” But Solomon fell in love with these women. 3 He had 700 wives who were the daughters of leaders from other nations. He also had 300 slave women who were like wives to him. His wives caused him to turn away from God. 4 When Solomon was old, his wives caused him to follow other gods, so he did not follow the LORD completely as his father David did. 5 Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of Sidon, and Milcom, the horrible god of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did what the LORD said was wrong. He did not follow the LORD completely as his father David did.

7 On the mountain next to Jerusalem, Solomon built a place for worshiping Chemosh, that horrible idol of the Moabites. On the same mountain, Solomon built a place for worshiping Molech, that horrible idol of the Ammonites. 8 Solomon did the same thing for all of his other foreign wives who burned incense and gave sacrifices to their gods.

9 So Solomon did not remain faithful to the LORD, the God of Israel, even though God had appeared to him twice. The LORD became angry with him. 10 He had told Solomon that he must not follow other gods, but Solomon did not obey the LORD’s command. 11 So the LORD said to Solomon, “You have chosen to break your agreement with me. You have not obeyed my commands. So I promise that I will tear your kingdom away from you while you are alive. I will wait until your son becomes king. Then I will take it from him. 12 Still, I will not tear away all the kingdom from your son. I will leave him one tribe to rule. I will do this for my servant David and for Jerusalem, the city I chose.”

**Solomon’s Enemies**

14 Then the LORD raised up Hadad the Edomite to become Solomon’s enemy. Hadad was from the royal family of Edom. 15 This is how it happened. In the past David fought against Edom. Joab was the commander of David’s army. Joab went to Edom to bury his dead soldiers. While there Joab killed all the Edomite men who were still alive. 16 Joab and the men of Israel stayed in Edom for six months until they killed all the men of Edom. 17 At the time Hadad was only a young boy. He and some of his father’s servants ran away to Egypt.

18 They left Midian and went to Paran. In Paran some other people joined them and the whole group went to Egypt. They went to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and asked for help. Pharaoh gave Hadad a house, some land, and food to eat.

19 Pharaoh liked Hadad so much that he gave Hadad a wife. She was Pharaoh’s sister-in-law. (Pharaoh’s wife was Queen Tahpenes.) 20 Hadad and the sister of Tahpenes had a son named Genubath. Queen Tahpenes let Genubath grow up in Pharaoh’s house with his children.

21 In Egypt Hadad heard that David had died and that Joab, the commander of the army, was dead. So Hadad said to Pharaoh, “Let me go home to my own country.”

22 But Pharaoh answered, “I have given you everything you need here. Why do you want to go back to your own country?” Hadad answered, “Please, just let me go home.”

23 God also raised up another man to become one of Solomon’s enemies. This man was Rezon, son of Eliada. Rezon ran away from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah. 24 After David defeated the army of Zobah, Rezon gathered some men and

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*d 10:29 almost 4 pounds Literally, “150 shekels” (1.725 kg).
became the leader of a small army. He went to Damascus and stayed there to rule from Damascus. Rezon became the king of Aram. He was an enemy of Israel throughout Solomon’s life and added to the trouble that Hadad created for Israel.

There was also another person who became an enemy of Solomon. He was Jeroboam son of Nebat. He was an Ephraimite from the town of Zeredah. His mother was a widow named Zeruah. He was one of Solomon’s servants, but he rebelled against the king.

This is the story about how Jeroboam turned against the king. Solomon was building the Millo and repairing the wall around the city of David, his father. Jeroboam was a free man. Solomon saw that this young man was a skilled worker, so he made him the supervisor over all the workers from the tribes that descended from Joseph. One day as Jeroboam was leaving Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh met him on the road. They were alone out in the country, and Ahijah was wearing a new coat.

Ahijah took his new coat and tore it into twelve pieces. Then he said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces of this coat for yourself because the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I will tear the kingdom away from Solomon, and I will give you ten of the tribes. I will let David’s family keep only one tribe to rule over. I will do this for my servant David, so he will always have someone to rule near me in Jerusalem, the city that I chose to be my own. But I will make you king of Israel. You will rule over everything you want. If you live right and obey all my commands as David did, I will be with you and make your family a family of kings, just as I did for David. And you will have Israel as your kingdom. I will punish David’s descendants because of what Solomon did, but not forever.’”

Solomon’s Death

Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam ran away to Egypt. He went to King Shishak of Egypt and stayed there until Solomon died.

Everything else Solomon did, from the beginning to the end, is written in the book, The History of Solomon. Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years. Then he died and was buried in the city of David, his father. Then Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, became the next king after him.

Civil War

Jeroboam son of Nebat was still in Egypt where he had run away from Solomon. When he heard about Solomon’s death, he returned to his city, Zeredah, in the hills of Ephraim. Rehoboam and all the Israelites went to Shechem to make him the king. The people said to Rehoboam, “Your father forced us to work very hard. Now, make it easier for us. Stop the heavy work that your father forced us to do and we will serve you.”

Rehoboam answered, “Come back to

\[ a \text{ 11:28 free man Or “a nobleman,” someone who could be called to war to protect his people.} \]

\[ b \text{ 11:37 Israel That is, the northern ten tribes.} \]

\[ c \text{ 11:43 died Literally, “slept with his ancestors.”} \]

\[ d \text{ 12:1–3 to his city Ephraim This is from the ancient Greek version.} \]
me in three days, and I will answer you.” So the people left.

6 There were some older men who had helped Solomon make decisions when he was alive. So King Rehoboam asked these men what he should do. He said, “How do you think I should answer the people?”

7 They answered, “If you are like a servant to them today, they will sincerely serve you. If you speak kindly to them, they will always work for you.”

8 But Rehoboam did not listen to the advice from the older men. He asked the young men who were his friends. 9 Rehoboam asked them, “The people said, ‘Give us easier work than your father gave us.’ How do you think I should answer them? What should I tell them?”

10 Then the young men who grew up with him answered, “Those people came to you and said, ‘Your father forced us to work very hard. Now make our work easier.’ So you should tell them, ‘My little finger is stronger than my father’s whole body. My father forced you to work hard, but I will make you work much harder! My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with whips that have sharp metal tips.’ ”

12 Three days later, Jeroboam and all the people came back as Rehoboam had said. 13 King Rehoboam did not listen to the advice from the older men, and he was rude to the people. 14 He did what his friends told him to do and said, “My father forced you to work hard, but I will make you work much harder! My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with whips that have sharp metal tips.”

16 The Israelites saw that the new king refused to listen to them, so they said to him, “We are not part of David’s family are we?”

We don’t get any of Jesse’s land, do we?

So, people of Israel, let’s go home and let David’s son rule his own people!”

So the Israelites went home. 17 But Rehoboam still ruled over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

18 A man named Adoniram was one of the men who directed the workers. King Rehoboam sent Adoniram to talk to the people, but the Israelites threw stones at him until he died. King Rehoboam ran to his chariot and escaped to Jerusalem. 19 So Israel rebelled against the family of David, and this is how things are even today.

20 When all the Israelites heard that Jeroboam had come back, they called him to a meeting and made him king over all Israel. The tribe of Judah was the only tribe that continued to follow the family of David.

21 Rehoboam went back to Jerusalem and gathered together an army of 180,000 men from the families of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. Rehoboam wanted to go fight against the Israelites and take back his kingdom. 22 But God spoke to a prophet named Shemaiah. He said, 23 “Talk to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to men of Judah and Benjamin. 24 Say to them, ‘The LORD says that you must not go to war against your brothers. Everyone, go home! I made all this happen.’ So all the men in Rehoboam’s army obeyed the LORD. They went home, just as the LORD had commanded.

25 Jeroboam rebuilt the city of Shechem, in the hill country of Ephraim, and lived there. Later he went to the city of Penuel and rebuilt it.

26–27 Jeroboam said to himself, “If the people keep going to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices at the LORD’s Temple, someday they will want to be ruled by their old masters. They will want to be ruled by King Rehoboam of Judah. And then they will kill me.”

So the king asked his advisors what to do. They gave him their

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advice, and King Jeroboam made two golden calves. He said to the people, “You don’t have to go to Jerusalem to worship anymore. Israel, these are the gods that brought you out of Egypt.”

29 King Jeroboam put one golden calf in Bethel and the other one in the city of Dan.

30 What a terrible sin this was, because the Israelites started going to the cities of Dan and Bethel to worship the calves.

31 Jeroboam also built temples at the high places and chose priests from among the different tribes of Israel. (He did not choose priests only from the tribe of Levi.)

32 Then King Jeroboam started a new festival that was like the festival in Judah, but it was on the 15th day of the eighth month. At this time the king offered sacrifices on the altar at Bethel. He and the priests he chose offered the sacrifices to the calves that he had set up at the high places he had made.

33 So King Jeroboam chose his own time for a festival for the Israelites, the 15th day of the eighth month. And during that time he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the altar he had built at Bethel.

God Speaks Against Bethel

13 The Lord commanded a man of God from Judah to go to the city of Bethel. King Jeroboam was standing at the altar offering incense when the man of God arrived. The Lord had commanded the man of God to speak against the altar. He said,

“Altar, the Lord says to you: ‘David’s family will have a son. His name will be Josiah. The priests of the high places are now burning incense on you, but Josiah will offer the priests on you and burn human bones on you, so you can never be used again!’”

3 The man of God gave proof to the people that this would happen. He said, “This is the proof that the Lord told me about. He said, ‘This altar will break apart, and the ashes on it will fall onto the ground.’”

4 When King Jeroboam heard the message from the man of God about the altar in Bethel, he took his hand off the altar and pointed at the man. He said, “Arrest that man!” But when the king said this, his arm became paralyzed. He could not move it. Then the altar broke into pieces, and all its ashes fell onto the ground. This proved that what the man of God had said came from the Lord. Then King Jeroboam said to the man of God, “Please pray to the Lord your God for me. Ask him to heal my arm.”

So the man of God prayed to the Lord, and the king’s arm was healed, as it was before. Then the king said to the man of God, “Please come home with me. Come and eat with me. I will give you a gift.”

8 But the man of God said to the king, “I will not go home with you, even if you give me half of your kingdom! I will not eat or drink anything in this place. The Lord commanded me not to eat or drink anything here. He also commanded me not to go back the same way I came.” So he took a different road home. He did not go back the same way he came to Bethel.

11 There was an old prophet living in Bethel. His sons came and told him what the man of God did in Bethel and what he said to King Jeroboam. The old prophet said, “Which way did he go when he left?” So the sons showed their father which road the man of God from Judah had taken.

13 The old prophet told his sons to saddle his donkey. They put the saddle on the donkey, and the prophet left.

14 The old prophet went after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked him, “Are you the man of God who just came from Judah?” The man of God answered, “Yes, I am.”

15 So the old prophet said, “Please come home and eat with me.”

16 But the man of God said, “I cannot go home with you. I cannot eat or drink anything in this place.” The Lord said to
me, ‘You must not eat or drink anything in that place, and you must go back on a different road.’”

18 The old prophet lied to him and said, “But I am a prophet like you. And an angel from the LORD came to me and told me to bring you home and give you something to eat and drink.”

19 So the man of God went to the old prophet’s house and ate and drank with him. 20 While they were sitting at the table, the LORD spoke to the old prophet, 21 and the old prophet spoke to the man of God from Judah. He said, “The LORD said that you did not obey him! You did not do what he commanded. 22 He told you not to eat or drink anything in this place, but you came back here and ate and drank. So your body will not be buried in your family grave.”

23 The man of God finished eating and drinking. Then the old prophet saddled the man’s donkey for him and the man left. 24 On the way home, a lion attacked and killed the man of God. His body was lying on the road while the lion stood next to it. The donkey stood nearby. 25 Some people came walking by and saw the body and the lion standing by it. They went into the city where the old prophet lived and told people what they had seen on the road.

26 The old prophet heard the story and said, “This is the man of God who did not obey the Lord’s command, so the Lord sent a lion to attack him. The lion has killed him, just as the Lord said would happen.”

27 Then the prophet told his sons to saddle his donkey, and they did so. 28 The old prophet went to find the body lying on the road. The donkey and the lion were still standing near it. The lion had not eaten the body or hurt the donkey.

29 The old prophet put the body on his donkey and carried it back to the city to cry for him and bury him. 30 The old prophet buried the man in his own family grave. The old prophet cried for him and said, “Oh, my brother, I am sorry for you.” 31 So the old prophet buried the body. Then he said to his sons, “When I die, bury me in this same grave. Put my bones next to his. 32 The Lord used him to speak against the altar at Bethel and against the high places in the other towns in Samaria. And what he said will certainly happen.”

33 King Jeroboam did not change. He continued doing evil. He continued to choose people from different tribes to serve as priests at the high places. Whoever wanted to be a priest was allowed to be one. 34 This is the sin that caused the ruin and destruction of his kingdom.

**Jeroboam’s Son Dies**

14 At that time Jeroboam’s son Abijah became very sick. 2 Jeroboam said to his wife, “Go to Shiloh and see the prophet Ahijah. He is the one who said that I would become king of Israel. Dress yourself so that people will not know that you are my wife. 3 Give the prophet ten loaves of bread, some cakes, and a jar of honey. Then ask him what will happen to our son, and he will tell you.”

4 So the king’s wife did what he said. She went to the home of Ahijah the prophet in Shiloh. Ahijah was very old and had become blind. 5 But the Lord said to him, “Jeroboam’s wife is coming to ask you about her son because he is sick. I will tell you what to say to her.”

When she came to Ahijah’s house, she pretended to be someone else. 8 But when Ahijah heard her coming to the door, he said, “Come in! I know who you are. You are Jeroboam’s wife. Why are you pretending to be someone else? I have some bad news for you. 9 Go back and tell Jeroboam that this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Jeroboam, I chose you from among all the Israelites. I made you the ruler of my people. 10 David’s family was ruling the kingdom of Israel, but I took the kingdom away from them and gave it to you. But you are not like my servant David. He always obeyed my commands and followed me with his whole heart. He did only what I accepted. 11 But you have sinned worse than anyone who
ruled before you. You stopped following me and made other gods for yourself. You made those statues to make me angry. 10 So Jeroboam, I will bring troubles to your family. I will kill all the men in your family. I will destroy your family completely, like fire burning up dung. 11 Anyone from your family who dies in the city will be eaten by dogs. And anyone from your family who dies in the fields will be eaten by birds. The LORD has spoken.’ 12 Then Ahijah said, “Now, go home. Your son will die as soon as you enter the city. 13 All Israel will cry for him. They will bury him, but he is the only one from Jeroboam’s family who will be buried. This is because he is the only one in Jeroboam’s family who pleased the LORD, the God of Israel. 14 Soon, the LORD will put a new king over Israel who will destroy Jeroboam’s family. 15 Then the LORD will punish Israel. The Israelites will be so full of fear that they will shake like tall grass in the water. He will pull Israel up from this good land that he gave their ancestors. He will scatter them to the other side of the Euphrates River. The LORD will do this because the people made him angry when they built sacred poles. 16 He will let the Israelites be defeated because Jeroboam sinned, and then he made the Israelites sin.”

Jeroboam’s wife went back to Tirzah. As soon as she stepped into the house, the boy died. 18 They buried him and all the people of Israel cried for him. This happened just as the LORD said it would through his servant, the prophet Ahijah. 19 The rest of what King Jeroboam did is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel. It includes the wars he fought and the way he ruled. 20 Jeroboam ruled as king for 22 years. Then he died and was buried with his ancestors. His son Nadab became the new king after him.

Rehoboam, King of Judah
21 Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, was 41 years old when he became king of Judah. Rehoboam ruled 17 years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD chose for his own. He chose this city from all the other tribes of Israel. Rehoboam’s mother was Naamah. She was an Ammonite.

22 The people of Judah did things that the LORD considered evil. They made him angry with all their sins—more than any of their ancestors had done. 23 They built high places, memorial stones, and sacred poles. 24 They built them on every high hill and under every green tree. 25 There were also men who served other gods by selling their bodies for sex. So the people of Judah were worse than the people who had lived in the land before them. And the LORD took the land away from those people to give it to the Israelites.

25 In the fifth year that Rehoboam was king, King Shishak of Egypt came to attack Jerusalem. 26 He took the treasures from the LORD’s Temple and from the king’s palace. He even took the gold shields that David had taken from the officers of King Hadadezer of Aram and put on the walls of Jerusalem. 27 King Rehoboam made more shields to put in their places, but they were made from bronze. He gave them to the guards on duty at the palace gates. 28 Every time the king went to the LORD’s Temple, the guards took out the shields and went with him. After they were finished, they put the shields back on the wall in the guardroom.

29 The rest of what King Rehoboam did is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah. 30 Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always fighting against each other.

31 Rehoboam died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. (His mother was Naamah. She was an Ammonite.) Rehoboam’s son Abijah became the next king after him.
Abijah, King of Judah

15Abijah became the new king of Judah during the 18th year that Jeroboam son of Nebat ruled Israel. Abijah ruled in Jerusalem for three years. His mother’s name was Maacah. She was Absalom’s daughter.

3He did all the same sins that his father before him had done. Abijah was not faithful to the LORD his God. In this way he was not like his grandfather, David. But for David’s sake, the LORD gave Abijah a kingdom in Jerusalem and allowed him to have a son. He also kept Jerusalem safe.

5David had always done what the LORD said was right. He had always obeyed his commands. The only time David did not obey the Lord was when he sinned against Uriah the Hittite.

6Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always fighting against each other. The rest of what Abijah did is written in the book, _The History of the Kings of Judah_.

There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam during the whole time that Abijah was king. When Abijah died, he was buried in the City of David. Abijah’s son Asa became the new king after him.

Asa, King of Judah

9During Jeroboam’s 20th year as king over Israel, Asa became king of Judah. He ruled in Jerusalem for 41 years. His grandmother’s name was Maacah, and she was the daughter of Absalom.

11Asa did what the LORD said is right, as his ancestor David did. During Asa’s time there were men who served other gods by selling their bodies for sex. Asa forced them to leave the country. He took away the idols that his ancestors had made. King Asa also took away the right of his mother Maacah to be queen mother. He did this because she had set up one of those awful Asherah poles. Asa cut down the pole and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

14Asa did not destroy the high places, even though he was faithful to the LORD all his life. Asa and his father had given some special gifts to God. Asa put these gifts of gold, silver, and other things in the LORD’s Temple.

16The whole time that King Asa was king of Judah, he fought a war against King Baasha of Israel. Once Baasha attacked Judah and then built up the city of Ramah to keep Asa from leaving Judah on any kind of military campaign. So Asa took gold and silver from the treasuries of the LORD’s Temple and the king’s palace. He gave it to his officials and sent them to King Ben-Hadad of Aram. Ben-Hadad was the son of Tabrimmon. Tabrimmon was the son of Hezion. Damascus was Ben-Hadad’s capital city. Asa sent this message: “My father and your father had a peace agreement. Now I want to make a peace agreement with you. I am sending you this gift of gold and silver. Please break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel and make him leave us alone.”

20King Ben-Hadad made the agreement with King Asa and sent his army to fight against the Israelite towns of Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maacah, the towns near Lake Galilee, and the area of Naphtali.

21When Baasha heard about these attacks, he stopped building up Ramah and went back to Tirzah.

22Then King Asa gave an order to all the men in Judah. Everyone had to help. They had to go to Ramah and carry out all the stone and wood that Baasha was using to build up the city. They carried the material to Geba in Benjamin and to Mizpah and used it to strengthen those two cities.

23All the other things about Asa—the great things he did and the cities he built—are written in the book, _The History of the Kings of Judah_. When Asa became old, his feet became infected.

24He died and was buried in the City of David, his ancestor. Then Asa’s son Jehoshaphat became the new king after him.

Nadab, King of Israel

25During Asa’s second year as king of Judah, Jeroboam’s son Nadab became king of Israel. Nadab ruled over Israel for two
years. He did what the LORD said was wrong. He sinned just as his father Jeroboam did when he caused the Israelites to sin.

27 Baasha was the son of Ahijah. They were from the tribe of Issachar. Baasha made a plan to kill King Nadab. Nadab and all Israel were fighting against the Philistine town of Gibbethon. And that is where Baasha killed Nadab. This happened during Asa’s third year as king of Judah. So Baasha became the next king of Israel.

Baasha, King of Israel

29 When Baasha became the new king, he killed everyone in Jeroboam’s family. He left no one in Jeroboam’s family alive. This happened just as the LORD said it would when he spoke through his servant Ahijah at Shiloh. This happened because King Jeroboam had committed many sins and had caused the Israelites to sin. This made the LORD, the God of Israel, very angry.

30 The other things that Nadab did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel. All during the time that Baasha ruled over Israel, he was fighting wars against King Asa of Judah.

31 Ahijah’s son Baasha became king of Israel during the third year that Asa ruled over Judah. Baasha ruled in Tirzah for 24 years, but he did what the LORD said was wrong. He did the same sins that Jeroboam had done that caused the Israelites to sin.

16 Then the LORD spoke against King Baasha through the prophet, Jehu son of Hanani. He said, “I made you an important prince over my people Israel. But you have done the same things Jeroboam did. You have caused my people Israel to sin. Their sins have made me angry. So Baasha, I will destroy you and your family, just as I did Jeroboam son of Nebat and his family. Dogs will eat the bodies of those in your family who die in the city. And wild birds will eat the bodies of those who die out in the fields.”

The rest of the story about Baasha and the great things he did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel. Baasha died and was buried in Tirzah. His son Elah became the new king after him.

That book also has the story of the time the LORD gave the message to Jehu the prophet about Baasha and his family. Baasha did many things the LORD said were wrong, just as Jeroboam and his family had done. This and the fact that Baasha had killed everyone in Jeroboam’s family made the Lord very angry.

Elah, King of Israel

8 Elah son of Baasha became king during the 26th year that Asa was the king of Judah. He ruled in Tirzah for two years.

9 Zimri was one of King Elah’s officers. Zimri commanded half of Elah’s chariots, but Zimri plotted against Elah. King Elah was in Tirzah, drinking and getting drunk at Arza’s home. Arza was the man in charge of the palace at Tirzah. Zimri went into the house and killed King Elah. Then Zimri became the new king of Israel after Elah. This was during the 27th year that Asa was king in Judah.

Zimri, King of Israel

11 After Zimri became the new king, he killed all of Baasha’s family and friends. He did not let any male in Baasha’s family live.

12 So Zimri destroyed Baasha’s family just as the LORD said he would when he spoke against Baasha through the prophet Jehu. This happened because of all the sins of Baasha and his son, Elah. They sinned and they caused the Israelites to sin. They worshiped worthless idols, and this made the LORD angry.

14 The rest of what Elah did is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel. Zimri became king of Israel during the 27th year that Asa was king of Judah. Zimri ruled in Tirzah only seven days. This is what happened: The army of Israel was at Gibbethon, which was under Philistine control. Omri was the commander of the army of Israel. The men in the camp heard that Zimri had made secret plans against the king and killed him. So in the
camp all the soldiers made Omri the new king. 17 Then Omri and all the soldiers of Israel left Gibbethon and went to Tirzah. They surrounded the city and attacked it.

18 When Zimri saw the city had been captured, he ran to the palace fortress, but the soldiers burned it down with him still in it. 19 So Zimri died because he sinned and did what the LORD said was wrong, just as Jeroboam did when he caused the Israelites to sin.

20 The story about Zimri’s secret plans and the other things that he did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

Omri, King of Israel

21 Then the Israelites were divided. Half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath and wanted to make him king. The other half of the people followed Omri. 22 But Omri’s followers were stronger than the followers of Tibni son of Ginath. Tibni died, and Omri became king. 23 Omri became king of Israel during Asa’s 31st year as the king of Judah. Omri ruled over Israel for 12 years. Six of those years he ruled from Tirzah. 24 Then Omri bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for about 150 pounds of silver. Omri built a city on that hill. He named the city Samaria after the name of its owner, Shemer.

25 Omri did what the LORD said was wrong. He was worse than all the kings who were before him. 26 He committed all the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had committed when he caused the Israelites to sin. They worshiped worthless idols, and this made the LORD, the God of Israel, very angry.

27 The rest of the story about Omri and the great things he did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel. 28 Omri died and was buried in Samaria. His son Ahab became the new king after him.

Ahab, King of Israel

29 Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel during the 38th year that Asa was king of Judah. Ahab ruled Israel from the town of Samaria for 22 years. 30 He did what the LORD said was wrong. Ahab was worse than all the kings who were before him. 31 It was not enough for Ahab to commit the same sins that Jeroboam, son of Nebat, had done. Ahab also married Jezebel, daughter of King Ethbaal of Sidon. Then Ahab began to serve and worship Baal. 32 He built a temple and an altar in Samaria for worshiping Baal. 33 He also set up a sacred pole. 34 During Ahab’s time, Hiel from Bethel rebuilt the town of Jericho. When Hiel started work on the city, his oldest son Abiram died. And when Hiel built the gates of the city, his youngest son Segub died. This happened just as the LORD said it would happen when he spoke through Joshua son of Nun.

Elijah and the Time Without Rain

1 Then Elijah was a prophet from the town of Tishbe in Gilead. He said to King Ahab, “I serve the LORD, the God of Israel. By his power, I promise that no dew or rain will fall for the next few years. The rain will fall only when I command it to fall.”

2 Then the LORD said to Elijah, 3 “Leave this place and go east. Hide near Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan River. 4 You can get your water from that stream, and I have commanded ravens to bring food to you there.” 5 So Elijah did what the LORD told him to do. He went to live near Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan River. 6 Ravens brought Elijah food every morning and every evening, and he drank water from the stream.

7 There was no rain, so after a while the stream became dry. 8 Then the LORD said to Elijah, 9 “Go to Zarephath in Sidon and

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stay there. There is a widow there that I commanded to take care of you.”

10 So Elijah went to Zarephath. He went to the town gate and saw a woman there gathering wood for a fire. She was a widow. Elijah said to her, “Would you bring me a small cup of water to drink?” As she was going to get the water, Elijah said, “Bring me a piece of bread too, please.”

11 The woman answered, “I promise you, before the Lord your God, that I have nothing but a handful of flour in a jar and a little bit of olive oil in a jug. I came here to gather a few pieces of wood for a fire to cook our last meal. My son and I will eat it and then die from hunger.”

12 Elijah said to the woman, “Don’t worry. Go home and cook your food as you said. But first make a small piece of bread from the flour that you have and bring it to me. Then cook some for yourself and your son.

13 The Lord, the God of Israel, says, ‘That jar of flour will never be empty and the jug will always have oil in it. This will continue until the day the Lord sends rain to the land.’

14 So the woman went home and did what Elijah told her to do. And Elijah, the woman, and her son had enough food for a long time.

15 Some time later the woman’s son became sick. He became worse and worse until he stopped breathing.

16 Then the woman said to Elijah, “You are a man of God. Can you help me? Or did you come here only to remind me of my sins and to make my son die?”

17 Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.” He took the boy from her and carried him upstairs. He laid him on the bed in the room where he was staying.

18 Then Elijah cried out to the Lord. He said, “Lord my God, this widow is letting me stay in her house. Will you do this bad thing to her? Will you cause her son to die?”

19 Then Elijah lay on top of the boy three times. He prayed, “Lord my God, let this boy live again!”

20 The Lord answered Elijah’s prayer. The boy began breathing again and was alive. 21 Elijah carried the boy downstairs, gave him to his mother, and said, “Look, your son is alive!”

22 The woman answered, “Now I know that you really are a man from God. I know that the Lord really speaks through you!”

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

18 During the third year that no rain fell, the Lord said to Elijah, “Go meet with King Ahab, and I will make it rain.”

2 So Elijah went to meet with Ahab. The famine was very bad in Samaria.

3 So King Ahab told Obadiah to come to him. Obadiah was the man in charge of the king’s palace. (Obadiah was a true follower of the Lord. One time when Jezebel was killing all the Lord’s prophets, Obadiah hid 100 prophets in two caves. He put 50 prophets in one cave and 50 prophets in another cave. Then he brought them food and water.) 5 King Ahab said to Obadiah, “Come with me. We will look at every spring and every stream in the land. We will see if we can find enough grass to keep our horses and mules alive. Then we will not have to kill our animals.”

6 They decided where each of them would go to look for water. Ahab went in one direction by himself, and Obadiah went in another direction by himself. 7 As Obadiah was walking along the road by himself, he looked up, and there was Elijah. Obadiah recognized him and bowed down to show his respect. He said, “Elijah? Is it really you, master?”

8 Elijah answered, “Yes, it is me. Now, go and tell your master, the king, that I am here.”

9 Obadiah said, “If I tell Ahab that I know where you are, he will kill me! I have done nothing wrong to you. Why do you want me to die? As surely as the Lord your God lives, the king has been looking for you everywhere. He has sent people to every country to find you. He even made the rulers of those countries swear that you were not there.”

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want me to go and tell him that you are here! If I go tell King Ahab that you are here, the Spirit of the Lord might carry you away. Then when King Ahab comes here and cannot find you, he will kill me! I have followed the Lord since I was a boy. Surely you have heard what I did when Jezebel was killing the Lord’s prophets. I hid 100 of the Lord’s prophets in caves. I put 50 prophets in one cave and 50 in another. I brought them food and water. Now you want me to go and tell the king that you are here. The king will kill me!”

15 Elijah answered, “I serve the Lord All-Powerful. As surely as he lives, I promise that I will stand before the king today.”

16 So Obadiah went to King Ahab and told him where Elijah was. King Ahab went to meet Elijah.

17 When Ahab saw Elijah he said, “Is that really you, the troublemaker of Israel?”

18 Elijah answered, “I have not made trouble for Israel. You and your father’s family caused all the problems when you stopped obeying the Lord’s commands and began following the false gods. Now tell all the people of Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel. Also bring the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the goddess Asherah, who get their support from Queen Jezebel.”

20 So Ahab called all the Israelites and those prophets to Mount Carmel. Elijah came to all the people and said, “You must decide what you are going to do. How long will you keep jumping from one side to the other? If the Lord is the true God, follow him. But if Baal is the true God, then follow him!”

The people said nothing. So Elijah said, “I am the only prophet of the Lord here, but there are 450 prophets of Baal. So bring us two bulls. Let the prophets of Baal have one bull. Let them kill it, cut it into pieces, and then put the meat on the wood. But don’t start the fire. I will do the same with the other bull, and I will not start the fire either. Prophets of Baal, pray to your god, and I will pray to the Lord. Whichever god answers the prayer and starts the fire is the true God.”

All the people agreed that this was a good idea.

25 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “There are many of you, so you go first. Choose a bull and prepare it, but don’t start your fire.”

26 So the prophets took the bull that was given to them and prepared it. They started praying to Baal and prayed until noon. They said, “Baal, please answer us!” But there was no sound. No one answered. Then they began jumping around on the altar they had built.

27 At noon Elijah began to make fun of them. He said, “If Baal really is a god, maybe you should pray louder! Maybe he is busy. Maybe he is thinking about something, or maybe he stepped out for a moment! He could be sleeping! Maybe you should pray louder and wake him up!”

28 So the prophets prayed louder. They cut themselves with swords and spears. (This was the way they worshiped.) They cut themselves until they were bleeding all over.

29 The afternoon passed but the fire still had not started. The prophets were out of control and continued to act this way until the time came for the evening sacrifice. But nothing happened—there was no answer from Baal. There was no sound. There was no one listening.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, “Now come here.” So they gathered around Elijah. The Lord’s altar had been torn down, so Elijah repaired it.

31 Elijah found twelve stones. There was one stone for each of the twelve tribes. These twelve tribes were named for the twelve sons of Jacob, the man who the Lord had named Israel. Elijah used these stones to repair the altar to honor the Lord. He dug a small ditch around the altar. It was wide enough and deep enough to hold about 4 gallons of water. Then Elijah put the wood on the altar. He cut the bull into pieces and laid the pieces on the wood.
Then he said, “Fill four jars with water. Pour the water on the pieces of meat and on the wood.” Then Elijah said, “Do it again.” Then he said, “Do it a third time.”

The water ran down off the altar and filled the ditch.

At about the time for the afternoon sacrifice, the prophet Elijah approached the altar and prayed, “Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I ask you now to prove that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant. Show these people that it was you who commanded me to do all these things. Lord, answer my prayer. Show these people that you, Lord, are God and that you are the one who is bringing them back to you.”

Then fire came down from the Lord and burned the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the ground around the altar. Then it dried up all the water in the ditch. All the people saw this happen and bowed down to the ground and began saying, “The Lord is God! The Lord is God!”

Then Elijah said, “Get the prophets of Baal! Don’t let any of them escape!” So the people captured all the prophets. Then Elijah led them down to Kishon Creek and killed them all.

The Rain Comes Again

Then Elijah said to King Ahab, “Now go eat and drink. A heavy rain is coming.”

So King Ahab went to eat. At the same time Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel. At the top of the mountain, Elijah bent down. He put his head between his knees. Then Elijah said to his servant, “Go up higher and look toward the sea.”

The servant went and looked. He came back and said, “I saw nothing.” Elijah told him to go look again. This happened seven times. The seventh time, the servant came back and said, “I saw a small cloud the size of a man’s fist that was coming in from the sea.”

Elijah told the servant, “Go tell King Ahab to get his chariot ready and go home now. If he does not leave now, the rain will stop him.”

After a short time the sky was covered with dark clouds. The wind began to blow, and a heavy rain began to fall. Ahab got in his chariot and started back to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came to Elijah. He used his belt to hold up the bottom of his robe away from his feet. Then he ran ahead of King Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Elijah at Mount Horeb (Sinai)

1 King Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah did and how Elijah had killed all the prophets of Baal with a sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah and said, “I swear that by this time tomorrow, you will be just as dead as those prophets. If I don’t succeed, may the gods do the same or worse to me.”

When Elijah heard this, he was afraid. So he ran away to save his life. He took his servant with him, and they went to Beer-sheba in Judah. Then Elijah left his servant in Beersheba and walked for a whole day into the desert. Then he sat down under a bush and asked to die. He said, “I have had enough, Lord! Take my life. I am no better than my ancestors.”

Then Elijah lay down under the bush and went to sleep. An angel came to him and touched him. The angel said, “Get up and eat!” Elijah looked around, and by his head there was a cake that had been baked over coals and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then went back to sleep.

Later the Lord’s angel came to him again, touched him, and said, “Get up and eat! If you don’t, you will not be strong enough to make the long trip.” So Elijah got up. He ate and drank and felt strong. Then Elijah walked for 40 days and nights to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God.

There Elijah went into a cave and spent the night. Then the Lord said to him, “Elijah, why are you here?”

Elijah answered, “Lord God All-Powerful, I have always served you the best I can, but the Israelites have broken their agreement with you. They destroyed your altars and killed your prophets. I am
the only prophet left alive, and now they are trying to kill me!”

11Then the LORD said to Elijah, “Go, stand in front of me on the mountain. I, the LORD, will pass by you.” Then a very strong wind blew. The wind caused the mountains to break apart. It broke large rocks in front of the LORD. But that wind was not the LORD. After that wind, there was an earthquake. But that earthquake was not the LORD. 12After the earthquake, there was a fire. But that fire was not the LORD. 13After the fire, there was a quiet, gentle voice.

When Elijah heard the voice, he used his coat to cover his face and went to the entrance to the cave and stood there. Then a voice said to him, “Elijah, why are you here?”

14Elijah said, “Lord God All-Powerful, I have always served you the best that I can, but the Israelites broke their agreement with you. They destroyed your altars and killed your prophets. I am the only prophet left alive, and now they are trying to kill me.”

15The LORD said, “Go back. Take the road that leads to the desert around Damascus. Go into Damascus and anoint Hazael as king over Aram. 16Then anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel. Next, anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah. He will be the prophet who takes your place. 17Jehu will kill anyone who escapes Hazael’s sword, and Elisha will kill anyone who escapes from Jehu’s sword. 18I still have 7000 people in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed that idol.”

Elisha Becomes a Prophet

19So Elijah left that place and went to find Elisha son of Shaphat. Elisha was plowing 12 acres of land and was working on the last acre when Elijah came. Elijah went to Elisha and put his coat on Elisha.

20Elisha immediately left his oxen and ran after Elijah. Elisha said, “Let me kiss my mother and father goodbye. Then I will follow you.”

Elijah answered, “You can do that. I will not stop you.”

21Elisha turned away from him and went back. He killed the oxen and used the yoke for firewood. He boiled the meat, gave it to the people, and they all ate together. Then Elisha went to follow Elijah and became his helper.

Ben-Hadad and Ahab Go to War

1King Ben-Hadad of Aram gathered his army together. There were 32 kings with him and many horses and chariots. They surrounded Samaria and attacked it. 2The king sent messengers to King Ahab of Israel who was inside the city. 3The message was, “Ben-Hadad says, ‘Your silver and your gold are mine, and so are the best of your wives and children.’”

4The king of Israel answered, “Yes, my lord and king, I am yours now, and everything I have belongs to you.”

5Then the messengers came back to Ahab. They said, “Ben-Hadad says, ‘I told you before that all of your silver and gold and your wives and children belong to me. So give them to me! Tomorrow I will send my men to search through your house and through the houses of your officials. Give my men all of your valuables, and they will bring them back to me.’”

7So King Ahab called a meeting of all the elders of his country and said, “Look, Ben-Hadad is looking for trouble. First he told me that I must give him my wives and children and my silver and gold. I agreed to give them to him.”

8But the elders and all the people said, “Don’t obey him or do what he says.”

9So Ahab sent a message to Ben-Hadad
that said, “I will do what you said at first, but I cannot obey your second command.”

King Ben-Hadad’s men carried the message to the king. 10Then they came back with another message from Ben-Hadad that said, “I will completely destroy Samaria. I promise that there will be nothing left of that city! There will not be enough of that city left for my men to find any souvenirs to take home. May the gods destroy me if I don’t do this!”

11King Ahab answered, “Tell Ben-Hadad that the man who puts on his armor should not boast as much as the man who lives long enough to take it off.”

12King Ben-Hadad was drinking in his tent with the other rulers when the messengers came back and gave him the message from King Ahab. King Ben-Hadad commanded his men to prepare to attack the city, so the men moved into their places for the battle.

13Then a prophet went to King Ahab and said, “King Ahab, the Lord says to you, ‘Do you see that great army? I will defeat that army for you today. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

14Ahab said, “Who will you use to defeat them?”

The prophet answered, “The Lord says, ‘The young men who carry the weapons for the government officials.’”

15Then the king asked, “Who should command the main army?”

The prophet answered, “You will.”

16So Ahab gathered the young helpers of the government officials. There were 232 of these young men. Then the king called together the army of Israel. The total number was 7000.

17King Ahab began his attack at noon, while King Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings were drinking and getting drunk in their tents. 18The young helpers went out first. King Ben-Hadad’s men told him that some soldiers had come out of Samaria. 19So Ben-Hadad said, “They might be coming to fight or they might be coming to ask for peace. Capture them alive.”

19The young men of King Ahab were the first to come out, but the rest of the army of Israel was following them. 20Each of the men of Israel killed the man who had come against him. So the men from Aram began to run away and the army of Israel chased them. King Ben-Hadad escaped on a horse with the chariots. 21King Ahab led the army and attacked all the horses and chariots. So King Ahab made the Arameans suffer a great defeat.

22Then the prophet went to King Ahab and said, “The king of Aram will come back to fight again next spring. So go back and strengthen your army and make careful plans to defend yourself against him.”

Ben-Hadad Attacks Again

23King Ben-Hadad’s officers said to him, “The gods of Israel are mountain gods. We fought in a mountain area, so the Israelites won. If we fight them on level ground, we will win. 24Also, don’t let the 32 kings command the armies. Put your commanders in charge of the armies. 25Let’s gather an army like the one that was destroyed. Gather as many men, horses, and chariots as before, and fight the Israelites on level ground. Then we will win.” Ben-Hadad followed their advice and did what they said.

26So in the spring, Ben-Hadad gathered the men of Aram and went to Aphek to fight against Israel.

27The Israelites also prepared for war and went to fight the army of Aram. They made their camp opposite the camp of Aram. The Aramean soldiers filled the land, but Israel’s army looked like two small flocks of goats.

28A man of God came to the king of Israel with this message: “The Lord said, ‘The people of Aram said that I, the Lord, am a god of the mountains and not a god of the valleys. So I will let you defeat this great army. Then all of you will know that I am the Lord, wherever you are!’”

29The armies were camped across from
each other for seven days. On the seventh day the battle began. The Israelites killed 100,000 Aramean soldiers in one day. The survivors ran away to the city of Aphek. The wall of the city fell on 27,000 of those soldiers. Ben-Hadad also ran away to the city and hid in a room.

His servants said to him, “We heard that the kings of Israel are merciful. Let’s dress in rough cloth with ropes on our heads. Then let’s go to the king of Israel. Maybe he will let us live.”

They dressed in rough cloth with ropes on their heads. They came to the king of Israel. They said, “Your servant, Ben-Hadad, says, ‘Please let me live.’”

Ahab said, “Is he still alive? He is my brother.”

Ben-Hadad’s men wanted King Ahab to say something to show that he would not kill King Ben-Hadad. When Ahab called Ben-Hadad his brother, the advisors quickly said, “Yes! Ben-Hadad is your brother.”

Ahab said, “Bring him to me.” So Ben-Hadad came to King Ahab. King Ahab asked him to get in the chariot with him.

Ben-Hadad said to him, “Ahab, I will give you the towns that my father took from your father. And you can put shops in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria.”

Ahab answered, “If you agree to this, I will let you go free.” So the two kings made a peace agreement. Then King Ahab let King Ben-Hadad go free.

A Prophet Speaks Against Ahab

One of the prophets told another prophet, “Hit me!” He said that because the Lord had commanded it. But the other prophet refused to hit him. So the first prophet said, “You did not obey the Lord’s command. So a lion will kill you when you leave this place.” When the second prophet left, a lion killed him.

The first prophet went to another man and said, “Hit me!”

This man hit him and hurt the prophet. So the prophet wrapped his face with a cloth. This way no one could see who he was. The prophet went and waited for the king by the road. The king came by and the prophet said to him, “I went to fight in the battle. One of our men brought an enemy soldier to me. The man said, ‘Guard this man. If he runs away, you will have to give your life in his place or you will have to pay a fine of 75 pounds of silver.’ While I was busy doing other things, the man ran away.”

The king of Israel answered, “You admitted that you are guilty, so you know the answer. You must do what the man said.”

Then the prophet quickly took the cloth from his face, and the king of Israel saw that he was one of the prophets.

Then the prophet said to the king, “The Lord says to you, ‘You set free the man I said should die. So you will take his place—you and your people will die!’”

Then the king went back home to Samaria. He was worried and upset.

Naboth’s Vineyard

There was a vineyard near King Ahab’s palace in Samaria. A man from Jezreel named Naboth owned it. One day Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard that is near my palace. I will give you a better vineyard in its place. Or, if you prefer, I will pay you for it.”

Naboth answered, “By the Lord, I will never give my land to you. This land belongs to my family.”

So Ahab went home angry and upset because Naboth told him, “I will not give you my family’s land.” Ahab went to bed, turned away from everyone, and refused to eat.

His wife Jezebel went to him and asked him, “Why are you upset? Why do you refuse to eat?”

Ahab answered, “I asked Naboth from Jezreel to give me his vineyard. I told him

| 20:31 rough cloth . . . heads | This showed that they were being humble and that they wanted to surrender. |
| 20:32 brother | People who signed peace agreements often called each other “brother.” It was as if they were one family. |
| 20:39 75 pounds | Literally, “1 talent” (34.5 kg). |
that I would pay him the full price. Or, if he preferred, I would give him another vineyard. But he refused to give it to me.”

7Jezebel answered, “But you are the king over Israel! Get out of bed and eat something, and you will feel better. I will get Naboth’s vineyard for you.”

8Then Jezebel wrote some letters. She signed Ahab’s name to them and used his seal to seal the letters. Then she sent them to the elders and important men who lived in the same town as Naboth. 9This is what the letter said:

“Announce that there will be a day of fasting when the people will eat nothing. Then call all the people of the town together for a meeting. At the meeting we will talk about Naboth. 10Find some men who will tell lies about Naboth. They should say that they heard Naboth speak against the king and against God. Then take Naboth out of the city and kill him with stones.”

11So the elders and important men of Jezreel obeyed the command. 12The leaders announced that there would be a day when all the people would eat nothing. On that day they called all the people together for a meeting. They put Naboth in a special place before the people. 13Then two men told the people that they heard Naboth speak against God and the king. So the people carried Naboth out of the city and killed him with stones. 14Then the leaders sent a message to Jezebel that said: “Naboth has been killed.”

15When Jezebel heard this, she said to Ahab, “Naboth is dead. Now you can go and take the vineyard that you wanted.”

16So Ahab went to the vineyard and took it for his own.

17Then the LORD spoke to Elijah, the prophet from Tishbe: 18“Go to King Ahab in Samaria. He will be at Naboth’s vineyard. He is there to take the vineyard as his own. 19Tell Ahab that I, the LORD, say to him, ‘Ahab! You killed the man Naboth and now you are taking his land. So I, the LORD, tell you this: Where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, they will lick up your blood as well.’”

20So Elijah went to Ahab. When Ahab saw him, he said, “Well, my enemy has found me again!”

Elijah answered, “Yes, I found you, because you have again sold yourself out to do what the LORD says is evil. 21So this is what he says to you: ‘I will make something bad happen to you. I will kill you and every male in your family. 22I will destroy your family just as I destroyed the families of King Jeroboam son of Nebat and King Baasha. I will do this to you because you have made me angry and you have caused the Israelites to sin.’ 23The LORD also says this about your wife Jezebel: ‘Dogs will eat the body of Jezebel by the wall of the city of Jezreel. 24As for the family of Ahab, whoever dies in the city will be eaten by dogs, and whoever dies in the fields will be eaten by birds.’”

25So Ahab sold himself out to do what the LORD says is evil. There is no one who did as much evil as Ahab and his wife Jezebel, who caused him to do these things. 26Ahab committed the terrible sin of worshiping those filthy idols, just as the Amorites did. And that is why the LORD took the land from them and gave it to the Israelites.

27When Ahab heard what Elijah said, he tore his clothes to show how sad he was. Then he put on sackcloth and refused to eat. He even slept in these clothes. He was very sad and upset.

28The LORD said to the prophet Elijah from Tishbe, 29“Look, Ahab has humbled himself before me. So I will not make that disaster happen during his lifetime. I will wait until his son is king. Then I will destroy his family.”

Micaiah Warns King Ahab

1For the next two years there was peace between Israel and Aram. 2Then during the third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit King Ahab of Israel.
Ahab asked his officials, “Remember when the king of Aram took Ramoth Gilead from us? That city is ours, so why have we done nothing to get it back?”

So Ahab asked King Jehoshaphat, “Will you join with us to go fight the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead?”

Jehoshaphat answered, “Yes, you and I will be as one—my men and my horses will be as yours. But first let’s ask the Lord for advice.”

So Ahab called a meeting of the prophets. There were about 400 prophets at that time. Ahab asked the prophets, “Should I go and attack the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead or not?”

The prophets answered Ahab, “Yes, because the Lord will let you defeat Ramoth Gilead.”

But Jehoshaphat said, “Doesn’t the Lord have another prophet here? Let’s ask him the same question.”

King Ahab answered, “Yes, there is another prophet. His name is Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him because he will not say anything good about me when he speaks for the Lord. He always says things that I don’t like.”

Jehoshaphat said, “The king should not say that!”

So King Ahab told one of his officers to go and find Micaiah.

At that time the two kings were sitting on their thrones, with their royal robes on, at the judgment place near the gates of Samaria. All the prophets were standing before them, prophesying. One of the prophets was named Zedekiah son of Kenaanah. Zedekiah made some iron horns and said to Ahab, “The Lord says, ‘You will use these iron horns to fight against the army of Aram. You will defeat them and destroy them.’”

All the other prophets agreed with Zedekiah and said, “Your army should march now to go fight against the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead. You will win the battle. The Lord will let you defeat them.”

While this was happening, the officer went to find Micaiah. When he found him, the officer told him, “All the other prophets have said that the king will succeed, so you should say the same thing.”

But Micaiah answered, “As surely as the Lord lives, I can say only what the Lord says.”

Micaiah went and stood before King Ahab. The king asked him, “Micaiah, should we go and attack the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead or not?”

Micaiah answered, “Yes, go and be successful! The Lord will let you take the city.”

But Ahab answered, “How many times do I have to tell you? Tell me the truth. What does the Lord say?”

So Micaiah answered, “I can see the army of Israel scattered all over the hills, like sheep with no one to lead them. This is what the Lord says: ‘These men have no leaders. Let them go home in peace.’”

Then Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “See, I told you! This prophet never says anything good about me. He always says something bad.”

But Micaiah said, “Listen to this message from the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne. All of heaven’s army was standing around him, some on his left side and some on his right side. The Lord said, ‘Which of you will go fool Ahab into attacking the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead so that he will be killed?’ The angels discussed many different plans.

Then a spirit went and stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will fool him!’ The Lord asked, ‘How will you do it?’ The spirit answered, ‘I will go to Ahab’s prophets and cause them to tell lies.’ So the Lord said, ‘Yes, that will fool Ahab. Go out and do that.’

So that is what has happened here. The Lord made your prophets lie to you. The Lord himself decided to bring this disaster to you.”

Then the prophet Zedekiah went to Micaiah and hit him on the face. Zedekiah

IRON HORMS These were a symbol of great strength.

A SPIRIT Or “the Spirit.”
said, “How is it that the Spirit of the LORD left me to speak through you?”

Micaiah answered, “Look, what I said will happen! And you will see it one day when you are in a secret room somewhere hiding.”

Then King Ahab ordered one of his officers to arrest Micaiah. Ahab said, “Arrest him and take him to Amon the governor of the city and prince Joash. Tell them to put Micaiah in prison. Give him nothing but bread and water to eat. Keep him there until I come home from the battle.”

Micaiah said, “Listen to me, everyone! Ahab, if you come back alive from the battle, the LORD has not spoken through me.”

The Battle at Ramoth Gilead

King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to fight the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead. Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Disguise yourself when you go into battle, but wear your own clothes. And I will disguise myself.” The king of Israel went into battle dressed like an ordinary soldier.

The king of Aram had 32 chariot commanders. He gave them this command, “Don’t go after anyone except the king of Israel, no matter how important they are.” When the commanders saw King Jehoshaphat, they thought he was the king of Israel, and so they went to kill him. Jehoshaphat started shouting. When the commanders saw that he was not King Ahab, they stopped chasing him.

Then a soldier in the distance pulled back as far as he could on his bow and shot an arrow into the air. The arrow happened to hit the king of Israel in a small hole where his armor was fastened together. King Ahab said to his chariot driver, “I’ve been hit! Turn the chariot around and take me off the battlefield!”

The armies continued to fight while King Ahab was propped up in his chariot. He was leaning against the sides of the chariot, looking out toward the Arameans. His blood ran down onto the floor of the chariot. Later in the evening, he died. At sunset all the Israelites cheered when they were told to go home. So they all went back to their hometowns.

And that is how King Ahab died. Some men carried his body to Samaria and buried him there. They took his chariot to the large pool in Samaria to clean it. The dogs licked up Ahab’s blood while the prostitutes washed the chariot. This happened just as the LORD said it would.

The rest of what King Ahab did during the time he ruled is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel. That book tells about all the cities he built and about all the ivory that he used to decorate his palace. Ahab died and was buried with his ancestors. His son Ahaziah became the next king after him.

Summary of Jehoshaphat’s Rule

Jehoshaphat son of Asa became the king of Judah in Ahab’s fourth year as king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became king, and he ruled in Jerusalem for 25 years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi. Like his father Asa, Jehoshaphat was good and did everything that the LORD wanted, but he did not destroy the high places. The people continued offering sacrifices and burning incense there.

Jehoshaphat made a peace agreement with the king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was very brave and fought many wars. The rest of what he did is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

Jehoshaphat forced all the men and women who sold their bodies for sex to leave the places of worship. They had served in these places of worship while his father Asa was king.

In those days Edom did not have a king; it was ruled by a governor who was chosen by the king of Judah.

King Jehoshaphat built some cargo ships. He wanted the ships to sail to Ophir for gold, but they never went there—they
were destroyed in their home port at Ezion Geber. Then King Ahaziah of Israel offered to put some of his own sailors with Jehoshaphat’s men on the ships, but Jehoshaphat refused to accept his help.

Jehoshaphat died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Then his son Jehoram became the next king.

Ahaziah, King of Israel

Ahaziah was the son of Ahab. He became king of Israel during the 17th year that King Jehoshaphat ruled Judah. Ahaziah ruled in Samaria for two years. He sinned against the LORD just as his parents, Ahab and Jezebel, did. He caused Israel to sin just as Jeroboam son of Nebat did. Ahaziah served the false god Baal and worshiped him, just as his father did before him. He did all the things that his father did to make the LORD, the God of Israel, angry.
A Message for Ahaziah

1 After King Ahab died, Moab broke away from Israel’s rule.

2 One day Ahaziah was on the roof of his house in Samaria. He fell down through the wooden bars on top of his house and was badly hurt. He called messengers and told them, “Go to the priests of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron, and ask them if I will get well from my injuries.”

3 But the Lord’s angel said to Elijah the Tishbite, “King Ahaziah has sent some messengers from Samaria. Go meet those men and ask them, ‘There is a God in Israel, so why are you men going to ask questions of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Since you did this, the Lord says, You will not get up from your bed. You will die!’ Then Elijah left.

5 When messengers came back to Ahaziah, he asked them, “Why did you come back so soon?”

6 The messengers said to Ahaziah, “A man came up to meet us and told us to go back to the king who sent us and tell him what the Lord says: ‘There is a God in Israel, so why did you send messengers to ask questions of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Since you did this, you will not get up from your bed. You will die!’ Then Elijah left.

7 Ahaziah said to the messengers, “What did the man look like who met you and told you this?”

8 They answered Ahaziah, “This man was wearing a hairy coat with a leather belt around his waist.”

Then Ahaziah said, “That was Elijah the Tishbite.”

Ahaziah Calls for Elijah

9 Ahaziah sent a captain and 50 men to Elijah. The captain went to Elijah, who was sitting on top of a hill. The captain said to Elijah, “Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down!’ ”

10 Elijah answered the captain of 50, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your 50 men!”

So fire came down from heaven and destroyed the captain and his 50 men.

11 Ahaziah sent another captain with 50 men to Elijah. He said to Elijah, “Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down quickly!’ ”

12 Elijah told the captain and his 50 men, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your 50 men!”

Then God’s fire came down from heaven and destroyed the captain and his 50 men.

13 Ahaziah sent a third captain with 50 men. The third captain came to Elijah. He fell down on his knees and begged Elijah, saying to him, “Man of God, I ask you, please let my life and the lives of your 50 servants be valuable to you. Fire came down from heaven and destroyed the first two captains and their 50 men. But now, have mercy and let us live!”

15 The Lord’s angel said to Elijah, “Go with the captain. Don’t be afraid of him.”

So Elijah went with the captain to see King Ahaziah.

16 Elijah told Ahaziah, “This is what the Lord says: ‘There is a God in Israel, so why did you send messengers to ask questions of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Since you did this, you will not get up from your bed. You will die!’ ”

Joram Takes Ahaziah’s Place

17 Ahaziah died, just as the Lord said through Elijah. Ahaziah did not have a son,
so Joram became the new king after Ahaziah. He began to rule during the second year that Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah.

18 The other things that Ahaziah did are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel.*

### The Lord Makes Plans to Take Elijah

2 It was near the time for the L ORD to take Elijah by a whirlwind up into heaven. Elijah and Elisha started to leave Gilgal.

2Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here, because the L ORD told me to go to Bethel.”

But Elisha said, “I promise, as the L ORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So the two men went down to Bethel.

3 The group of prophets a at Bethel came to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the L ORD will take your master away from you today?”

Elisha said, “Yes, I know. Don’t talk about it.”

4Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here, because the L ORD told me to go to Jericho.”

But Elisha said, “I promise, as the L ORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you!” So the two men went to Jericho.

5 The group of prophets at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the L ORD will take your master away from you today?”

Elisha answered, “Yes, I know. Don’t talk about it.”

6Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here, because the L ORD told me to go to the Jordan River.”

Elisha answered, “I promise, as the L ORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you!” So the two men went on.

7 There were 50 men from the group of prophets who followed them. Elijah and Elisha stopped at the Jordan River. The 50 men stood far away from Elijah and Elisha.

8Elijah took off his coat, folded it, and hit the water with it. The water separated to the right and to the left. Then Elijah and Elisha crossed the river on dry ground.

9 After they crossed the river, Elijah said to Elisha, “What do you want me to do for you before God takes me away from you?”

Elisha said, “I ask you for a double share of your spirit on me.”

10Elijah said, “You have asked a hard thing. If you see me when I am taken from you, it will happen. But if you don’t see me when I am taken from you, it will not happen.”

### The Lord Takes Elijah Into Heaven

11 Elijah and Elisha were walking and talking together. Suddenly, some horses and a chariot came and separated Elijah from Elisha. The horses and the chariot were like fire. Then Elijah was carried up into heaven in a whirlwind.

12 Elisha saw it, and shouted, “My father! My father! The chariot of Israel and his horses!”

Elisha never saw Elijah again. Elisha grabbed his own clothes and tore them in two to show his sadness.

13 Elijah’s coat had fallen to the ground, so Elisha picked it up. He went back and stood at the edge of the Jordan River.

14 He hit the water and said, “Where is the L ORD, the God of Elijah?” Just as Elisha hit the water, the water separated to the right and to the left! Then Elisha crossed the river.

### The Prophets Ask for Elijah

15 When the group of prophets at Jericho saw Elisha, they said, “Elijah’s spirit is now on Elisha!” They came to meet Elisha. They bowed very low to the ground before him. 16 They said, “Look, we have 50 good men. Please let them go and look for your master. Maybe the L ORD’s Spirit has taken Elijah up and dropped him on some mountain or in some valley.”

But Elisha answered, “No, don’t send men to look for Elijah!”

17 The group of prophets begged Elisha

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*a 2:3 group of prophets* Literally, “sons of the prophets.” These were prophets and people studying to become prophets. Also in verses 5, 7, 15, 17.

*b 2:12 chariot . . . horses* Or “the Chariot of Israel and his horse soldiers.” This may mean “God and his heavenly army.”
until he was embarrassed. Then Elisha said, “Send the men to look for Elijah.”

The group of prophets sent the 50 men to look for Elijah. They looked three days, but they could not find him. 18 So the men went to Jericho where Elisha was staying and told him. Elisha said to them, “I told you not to go.”

Elisha Makes the Water Good
19 The men of the city said to Elisha, “Sir, you can see this city is in a nice place, but the water is bad. That is why the land cannot grow crops.”

20 Elisha said, “Bring me a new bowl and put salt in it.”

They brought the bowl to Elisha. 21 Then he went out to the place where the water began flowing from the ground. Elisha threw the salt into the water and said, “The Lord said, ‘I am making this water pure! From now on this water will not cause any more death or keep the land from growing crops.’”

22 The water became pure and is still good today. It happened just as Elisha had said.

Some Boys Make Fun of Elisha
23 Elisha went from that city to Bethel. He was walking up the hill to the city, and some boys were coming down out of the city. They began making fun of him. They said, “Go away, you bald-headed man! Go away, you bald-headed man!”

24 Elisha looked back and saw them. He asked the Lord to cause bad things to happen to them. Then two bears came out of the forest and attacked the boys. There were 42 boys ripped apart by the bears.

25 Elisha left Bethel and went to Mount Carmel and from there he went back to Samaria.

Joram Becomes King of Israel
1 Joram son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria. He began to rule during Jehoshaphat’s 18th year as king of Judah. Joram ruled 12 years. 2 He did what the Lord said was wrong. But he was not like his father and mother, because he removed the pillar that his father had made for worshiping Baal. 3 But he continued to do the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who had caused the Israelites to sin. Joram did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam.

Moab Breaks Away From Israel
4 Mesha was the king of Moab. He owned many sheep. He gave the wool of 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams to the king of Israel. 5 But when Ahab died, the king of Moab broke away from the rule of the king of Israel.

6 Then King Joram went out of Samaria and gathered together all the men of Israel. 7 Joram sent messengers to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah. Joram said, “The king of Moab has broken away from my rule. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?”

Jehoshaphat said, “Yes, I will go with you. We will join together as one army. My people will be like your people, and my horses will be like your horses.”

The Three Kings Ask Elisha for Advice
8 Jehoshaphat asked Joram, “Which way should we go?”

Joram answered, “We should go through the desert of Edom.”

9 So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. They traveled around for seven days. There was not enough water for the army or for their animals. 10 Finally, the king of Israel said, “Oh, I think the Lord really brought us three kings together only to let the Moabites defeat us!”

11 But Jehoshaphat said, “Surely one of the Lord’s prophets is here. Let’s ask the prophet what the Lord says we should do.”

One of the servants of the king of Israel said, “Elisha son of Shaphat is here. Elisha was Elijah’s servant.”

12 Jehoshaphat said, “The Lord’s word is with Elisha.”

a 3:11 Elisha was Elijah’s servant Literally, “Elisha poured water over Elijah’s hands.”
So the king of Israel, Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom went down to see Elisha.  
13Elisha said to the king of Israel, “What do you want from me? Go to the prophets of your father and mother.”  
The king of Israel said to Elisha, “No, we have come to see you because the LORD called us three kings together to let the Moabites defeat us.”  
14Elisha said, “I respect King Jehoshaphat of Judah, and I serve the LORD All-Powerful. As surely as he lives, I came here only because of Jehoshaphat. I tell you the truth, if he were not here, I would not pay any attention to you. I would ignore you completely.  
15But now bring me someone who plays the harp.”  
When the person played the harp, the Lord’s power came on Elisha.  
16Then Elisha said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Dig holes in the valley.’  
17Yes, this is what the LORD says: ‘You will not see wind or rain, but that valley will be filled with water. Then you and your cattle and other animals will have water to drink.’  
18This is an easy thing for the LORD to do. He will also help you defeat the Moabites.  
19You will attack every strong city and every good city. You will cut down every good tree. You will stop up all the springs of water. You will ruin every good field with stones.”  
20In the morning, at the time for the morning sacrifice, water began flowing from the direction of Edom and filled the valley.  
21The Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. So they gathered together all the men old enough to wear armor and waited at the border.  
22The Moabites got up early that morning. The rising sun was shining on the water in the valley, and it looked like blood to the Moabites.  
23They said, “Look at the blood! The kings must have fought against each other. They must have destroyed each other. Let’s go take the valuable things from the dead bodies!”  
24The Moabites came to the Israelite camp, but the Israelites came out and attacked the Moabite army. The Moabites ran away from the Israelites. The Israelites followed them into Moab to fight them.  
25The Israelites destroyed the cities. They threw their stones at every good field in Moab. They stopped up all the springs of water and cut down all the good trees. The Israelites fought all the way to Kir Hareseth. The soldiers surrounded Kir Hareseth and attacked it too.  
26The king of Moab saw that the battle was too strong for him, so he took 700 men with swords to break through to the king of Edom. But they were not able to do it.  
27Then the king of Moab took his oldest son, who would become the next king after him. On the wall around the city, the king of Moab offered his son as a burnt offering. This upset the Israelites very much. So the Israelites left the king of Moab and went back to their own land.  

A Prophet’s Widow Asks Elisha for Help  
1A man from the group of prophets had a wife. This man died, and his wife cried out to Elisha, “My husband was like a servant to you. Now he is dead! You know he honored the LORD. But he owed money to a man. Now that man is coming to take my two boys and make them his slaves!”  
2Elisha answered, “How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?”  
The woman said, “I don’t have anything in the house except a jar of olive oil.”  
3Then Elisha said, “Go and borrow bowls from all your neighbors. They must be empty. Borrow plenty of bowls. Then pour the oil into all the bowls. Fill them, and put them in a separate place.”  
4So the woman left Elisha, went into her house, and shut the door. Only she and her sons were in the house. Her sons

a 3:15 power Literally, “hand.”

b 3:25 throw their stones These were probably the stones soldiers threw with slings in war.

c 4:1 group of prophets Literally, “sons of the prophets.” These were prophets and those studying to become prophets. Also in verses 38, 39, 44.
brought the bowls to her and she poured oil. 5 She filled many bowls. Finally, she said to her son, “Bring me another bowl.”

But all the bowls were full. One of the sons said to her, “There aren’t any more bowls.” Then the oil in the jar was finished!

7 When she told the man of God what had happened, Elisha said to her, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debt. You and your sons can live on the money that is left.”

A Woman in Shunem Gives Elisha a Room

8 One day Elisha went to Shunem, where an important woman lived. She asked Elisha to stop and eat at her house. So every time Elisha went through that place, he stopped there to eat.

9 The woman said to her husband, “Look, I can see that Elisha is a holy man of God. He passes by our house all the time.”

10 Please, let’s make a little room on the roof\(^4\) for him. Let’s put a bed in this room and a table, a chair, and a lampstand. Then when he comes to our house, he can have this room for himself.”

11 One day Elisha came to the woman’s house. He went to this room and rested there. 12 Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, “Call this Shunammite woman.”

The servant called the Shunammite woman, and she stood in front of Elisha. 13 Elisha told his servant, “Now say to her, ‘Look, you have done your best to take care of us. What can we do for you? Do you want us to speak to the king for you, or to the captain of the army?’ ”

She answered, “I am fine living here among my own people.”

14 Elisha said to Gehazi, “What can we do for her?”

He answered, “I know! She does not have a son, and her husband is old.”

15 Then Elisha said, “Call her.”

So Gehazi called the woman. She came and stood at his door. 16 Elisha said, “About this time next spring, you will be holding your own baby boy in your arms.”

\(4:10\) room on the roof In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used as an extra room.

The woman said, “No, sir! Man of God, don’t lie to me!”

The Woman in Shunem Has a Son

17 But the woman did become pregnant and gave birth to a son that next spring, just as Elisha had said.

18 The boy grew. One day the boy went out into the fields to see his father and the men cutting the grain. 19 The boy said to his father, “Oh, my head! My head hurts!”

The father said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother!”

20 The servant took the boy to his mother. The boy sat on his mother’s lap until noon. Then he died.

The Woman Goes to See Elisha

21 The woman laid the boy on the bed of Elisha, the man of God. Then she shut the door to that room and went outside. 22 She called to her husband and said, “Please send me one of the servants and a donkey. Then I will go quickly to get the man of God and come back.”

23 The woman’s husband said, “Why would you want to go to the man of God today? It isn’t the New Moon or Sabbath day.”

She said, “Goodbye!”\(b\)

24 Then she put a saddle on a donkey and said to her servant, “Let’s go, and hurry! Go slow only when I tell you.”

25 The woman went to Mount Carmel to get the man of God.

The man of God saw the Shunammite woman coming from far away and said to his servant Gehazi, “Look, there’s the Shunammite woman! \(26\) Please run now to meet her! Say to her, ‘Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is the child all right?’ ”

She answered, “Everything is all right.”\(c\)

27 But the Shunammite woman went up the hill to the man of God. She bowed down and touched Elisha’s feet. Gehazi came near to pull her away. But the man of God said to Gehazi, “Leave her alone!

\(b\) 4:23 Goodbye Or “Everything is all right.” Literally, “Peace.”

\(c\) 4:26 Everything is all right Or “Hello.” Literally, “Peace.”
She's very upset, and the LORD didn’t tell me about it. He hid this news from me.”

28Then she said, “Sir, I never asked for a son. I told you, ‘Don’t trick me!’”

29Then Elisha said to Gehazi, “Get ready to go. Take my walking stick and go! If you meet anyone along the way, don’t even stop to say hello to him. If anyone says hello to you, don’t answer. Put my walking stick on the child’s face.”

30But the child’s mother said, “I promise, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave without you!”

So Elisha got up and followed her.

31Gehazi arrived at the house before Elisha and the Shunammite woman. Gehazi laid the walking stick on the child’s face, but the child did not talk or show any sign that he heard anything. Then Gehazi came back to meet Elisha and said, “The child will not wake up!”

The Woman’s Son Comes Back to Life

32Elisha went into the house, and there was the child, lying dead on his bed.

33Elisha went into the room and shut the door. He and the child were alone in the room now. Then he prayed to the LORD.

34Elisha went to the bed and lay on the child. He put his eyes on the child’s eyes, his mouth on the child’s mouth, and his hands on the child’s hands. He lay there on top of the child until the child’s body became warm.

35Then Elisha turned away and walked around the room. He went back and lay on the child until the child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

36Elisha called Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite woman!”

Gehazi called her, and she came to Elisha. Elisha said, “Pick up your son.”

37Then the Shunammite woman went into the room and bowed down at Elisha’s feet. Then she picked up her son and went out.

Elisha and the Poisoned Soup

38Elisha went to Gilgal again. There was a famine in the land. The group of prophets was sitting in front of Elisha. Elisha said to his servant, “Put the large pot on the fire, and make some soup for the group of prophets.”

39One man went out into the field to gather herbs. He found a wild vine and picked the fruit from it. He put that fruit in his robe and brought it back. He cut up the wild fruit and put it into the pot. But the group of prophets did not know what kind of fruit it was.

40Then they poured some of the soup for the men to eat. But when they began to eat the soup, they shouted out, “Man of God! There’s poison in the pot!” The food tasted like poison, so they could not eat that food.

41But Elisha said, “Bring some flour.” He threw the flour into the pot. Then he said, “Pour the soup for the people so that they can eat.”

And there was nothing wrong with the soup.

Elisha Feeds the Group of Prophets

42A man from Baal Shalishah came and brought bread from the first harvest to the man of God. This man brought 20 loaves of barley bread and fresh grain in his sack.

43Then Elisha said, “Give this food to the people, so that they will eat.”

44Then Elisha’s servant put the food in front of the group of prophets. The group of prophets had enough to eat, and they even had food left over. This happened just as the LORD had said.

Naaman’s Problem

5Naaman was the captain of the army of the king of Aram. He was very important to his king because the LORD used him to lead Aram to victory. Naaman

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was a great and powerful man, but he was also sick with leprosy.

2 The Aramean army sent many groups of soldiers to fight in Israel. One time they took a little girl from the land of Israel. This girl became a servant of Naaman’s wife. 3 She said to his wife, “I wish that my master would meet the prophet who lives in Samaria. He could heal Naaman of his leprosy.”

4 Naaman went to the king and told him what the Israelite girl said.

5 Then the king of Aram said, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” So Naaman went to Israel. He took 750 pounds of silver, 6000 pieces of gold and ten changes of clothes as gifts. 6 Naaman took the letter from the king of Aram to the king of Israel. The letter said: “Now this letter is to show that I am sending my servant Naaman to you. Cure his leprosy.”

7 When the king of Israel had read the letter, he tore his clothes to show he was sad and upset. He said, “Am I God? I don’t have the power over life and death. So why did the king of Aram send a man sick with leprosy for me to heal? Think about it, and you will see that it is a trick. The king of Aram is trying to start a fight.”

8 Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes. So Elisha sent this message to the king: “Why did you tear your clothes? Let Naaman come to me. Then he will know there is a prophet in Israel.”

9 So Naaman came with his horses and chariots to Elisha’s house and stood outside the door. 10 Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman who said, “Go and wash in the Jordan River seven times, and you will be pure and clean.”

11 Naaman became angry and left. He said, “I thought Elisha would at least come out and stand in front of me and call on the name of the LORD his God. I thought he would wave his hand over my body and heal the leprosy. 12 Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, are better than all the water in Israel. Why can’t I wash in those rivers in Damascus and become clean?” He was very angry and turned to leave.

13 But Naaman’s servants went to him and talked to him. They said, “Father, b if the prophet told you to do some great thing, you would do it, isn’t that right? But he said, ‘Wash, and you will be pure and clean.’”

14 So Naaman did what the man of God said. He went down and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times, and he became pure and clean. His skin became soft like the skin of a baby.

15 Naaman and his whole group came back to the man of God. He stood before Elisha and said, “Look, I now know there is no God in all the earth except in Israel. Now please accept a gift from me.”

16 But Elisha said, “The LORD is the one I serve, and as surely as he lives, I will not accept any gift.”

Naaman tried hard to make Elisha take the gift, but he refused. 17 Then Naaman said, “If you will not accept this gift, at least do this for me. Let me have enough dirt from Israel to fill the baskets on two of my mules. c I ask this because I will never again offer any burnt offering or sacrifice to any other gods. I will offer sacrifices only to the LORD! 18 And I pray that the LORD will forgive me for this: When my master goes to the temple of Rimmon to worship that false god, he will want to lean on me for support. So I must bow down in the temple of Rimmon. I ask the LORD now to forgive me when that happens.”

19 Then Elisha said to Naaman, “Go in peace.” So Naaman left Elisha and went a short way.

20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, “Look, my master has let Naaman the Aramean go without accepting the gift that he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after Naaman and

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a 5:7 750 pounds Literally, “10 talents” (345 kg).

b 5:13 Father Slaves often called their masters “father,” and the masters often called their slaves “children.”

c 5:17 Let me have … my mules Naaman probably thought the ground in Israel was holy, so he wanted to take some with him to help him worship the Lord in his own country.

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get something from him.” So Gehazi ran to Naaman.

Naaman saw someone running after him. He stepped down from the chariot to meet Gehazi. Naaman said, “Is everything all right?”

Gehazi said, “Yes, everything is all right. My master has sent me. He said, ‘Look, two young men came to me from the group of prophets in the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them 75 pounds of silver and two changes of clothes.’”

Naaman said, “Please, take 150 pounds.” He persuaded Gehazi to take the silver. Naaman put 150 pounds of silver in two bags and took two changes of clothes. Then he gave these things to two of his servants. The servants carried these things for Gehazi.

Gehazi came in and stood before his master. Elisha said to Gehazi, “Where have you been Gehazi?” Gehazi answered, “I didn’t go anywhere.”

Elisha said to him, “That is not true! My heart was with you when the man turned from his chariot to meet you. This is not the time to take money, clothes, olives, grapes, sheep, cattle, or men and women servants. Now you and your children will catch Naaman’s disease. You will have leprosy forever!”

When Gehazi left Elisha, his skin was as white as snow! He was sick with leprosy.

Elisha and the Ax Head

The group of prophets said to Elisha, “We are staying in that place over there, but it is too small for us. Let’s go to the Jordan River and cut some wood. Each of us will get a log and we will build us a place to live there.”

Elisha answered, “Go and do it.”

One of them said, “Please go with us.” Elisha said, “Yes, I will go with you.” So Elisha went with the group of prophets. When they arrived at the Jordan River, they began to cut down some trees. But when one man was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head slipped from the handle and fell into the water. He shouted, “Oh, master! I borrowed that ax!”

The man of God said, “Where did it fall?”

The man showed Elisha the place where the ax head fell. Then Elisha cut a stick and threw the stick into the water. The stick made the iron ax head float. Elisha said, “So pick up the ax head.” Then the man reached out and took the ax head.

Aram Tries to Trap Israel

The king of Aram was making war against Israel. He had a council meeting with his army officers. He said, “Go to such and such a place and prepare to attack the Israelites when they come by.”

But the man of God sent a message to the king of Israel. Elisha said, “Be careful! Don’t go by that place, because the Aramean soldiers are hiding there!”

The king of Israel sent a message to his men at the place that the man of God warned him about. And the king of Israel saved quite a few men.

The king of Aram was very upset about this. He called his army officers and said to them, “Tell me who is spying for the king of Israel.”

One of the officers of the king of Aram said, “My lord and king, not one of us is a spy. Elisha, the prophet from Israel, can tell the king of Israel many secret things—even the words that you speak in your bedroom!”

The king of Aram said, “Find Elisha, and I will send men to catch him.”

The servants told the king of Aram, “Elisha is in Dothan.”

Then the king of Aram sent horses, chariots, and a large army to Dothan. They arrived at night and surrounded the city.

d 6:10 quite a few men Literally, “not one or two.”
15 Elisha’s servant got up early that morning. When he went outside, he saw an army with horses and chariots all around the city.

The servant said to Elisha, “Oh, my master, what can we do?”

16 Elisha said, “Don’t be afraid. The army that fights for us is larger than the army that fights for Aram.”

17 Then Elisha prayed and said, “Lord, I ask you, open my servant’s eyes so that he can see.”

The Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and the servant saw the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire. They were all around Elisha.

18 These horses and chariots of fire came down to Elisha. He prayed to the Lord and said, “I pray that you will cause these people to become blind.”

So God did what Elisha asked. He caused the Aramean army to become blind. 19 Elisha said to the Aramean army, “This is not the right way. This is not the right city. Follow me. I will lead you to the man you are looking for.” Then Elisha led them to Samaria.

20 When they arrived at Samaria, Elisha said, “Lord, open the eyes of these men so that they can see.”

Then the Lord opened their eyes, and the Aramean army saw they were in the city of Samaria! 21 The king of Israel saw the Aramean army and said to Elisha, “My father, should I kill them? Should I kill them?”

22 Elisha answered, “No, don’t kill them. They are not soldiers you captured in battle. Give them some bread and water. Let them eat and drink. Then let them go home to their leader.”

23 So the king prepared a big meal for the Aramean army. After they ate and drank, he sent them back home to their leader. The Arameans did not send any more soldiers into the land of Israel to make raids.

A Time of Terrible Hunger Hits Samaria

24 After this happened, King Ben-Hadad of Aram gathered all his army and went to surround and attack the city of Samaria.

25 The soldiers would not let people bring food into the city, so there was a time of terrible hunger in Samaria. It was so bad in Samaria that a donkey’s head was sold for 80 pieces of silver and one pint of dove’s dung sold for five pieces of silver.

26 The king of Israel was walking on the wall around the city. A woman shouted out to him. She said, “My lord and king, please help me!”

27 The king of Israel said, “If the Lord does not help you, how can I help you? I cannot give you grain from the threshing floor or wine from the winepress.”

28 Then he said to her, “What is your trouble?”

She answered, “This woman said to me, ‘Give me your son so that we can eat him today. Then we will eat my son tomorrow.’

29 So we boiled my son and ate him. Then the next day, I said to this woman, ‘Give me your son so that we can eat him.’ But she has hidden her son!”

30 When the king heard the woman’s words, he tore his clothes to show he was upset. As he passed by on the wall, the people saw the king was wearing the rough cloth under his clothes to show he was sad and upset.

31 The king said, “May God punish me if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat is still on his body at the end of this day!”

32 The king sent a messenger to Elisha. Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. Before the messenger arrived, Elisha said to the elders, “Look, that son of a murderer is sending men to cut off my head. When the messenger arrives, shut the door. Hold the door and don’t let him in. I hear the sound of his master’s feet coming behind him.”

33 While Elisha was still talking with the elders, the messenger came to him. This was the message: “This trouble has come...

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\( ^a \) 6:19 Samaria This was the capital city of Israel—the enemy of Aram.

\( ^b \) 6:25 one pint Literally, “1/4 cab” (about .3 l).

\( ^c \) 6:33 messenger Or possibly, “king.”
from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

7 Elisha said, “Listen to the message from the LORD! The LORD says, ‘About this time tomorrow, there will be plenty of food, and it will be cheap again. A person will be able to buy a basket** of fine flour or two baskets of barley for only one shekel** in the marketplace by the city gates of Samaria.’"

2Then the officer who was close to the king answered the man of God. The officer said, “Even if the LORD made windows in heaven, this could not happen.”

Elisha said, “You will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of that food.”

Lepers Find the Aramean Camp Empty

3There were four men sick with leprosy near the city gate. They said to each other, “Why are we sitting here waiting to die? 4There is no food in Samaria. If we go into the city, we will die there. If we stay here, we will also die. So let’s go to the Aramean camp. If they let us live, we will live. If they kill us, we will just die.”

5So that evening the four lepers went to the Aramean camp. When they came to the edge of the camp, no one was there! The LORD had caused the Aramean army to hear the sound of chariots, horses, and a large army. So the soldiers said to each other, “The king of Israel has hired the kings of the Hittites and Egyptians to come against us.”

7The Arameans ran away early that evening. They left everything behind. They left their tents, horses, and donkeys and ran for their lives.

The Lepers Tell the Good News

10So the lepers came and called to the gatekeepers of the city. They told the gatekeepers, “We went to the Aramean camp, but we did not hear anyone. No one was there, but the horses and donkeys were still tied up, and the tents were still standing.”

11Then the gatekeepers of the city shouted out and told the people in the king’s palace.

12It was night, but the king got up from bed and said to his officers, “I will tell you what the Aramean soldiers are doing to us. They know we are hungry. They left the camp to hide in the field. They are thinking, ‘When the Israelites come out of the city, we will capture them alive. And then we will enter the city.’”

13One of the king’s officers said, “Let some men take five of the horses that are still left in the city. The horses will soon die anyway, just as all the Israelites who are still left in the city. Let’s send these men to see what happened.”

14So the men took two chariots with horses. The king sent these men after the Aramean army. He told them, “Go and see what happened.”

15The men went after the Aramean army as far as the Jordan River. All along the road there were clothes and weapons. The messengers went back to Samaria and told the king.

16Then the people ran out to the Aramean camp and took valuable things from there. So it happened just as the LORD had said. A person could buy a

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*a 7:1 basket* Literally, “seah.” Also in verses 16, 18.
*b 7:1 shekel* 2/5 of an ounce (11.5 g). Also in verses 16, 18.
*c 7:2 who was close to the king* Literally, “on whose arm the king leaned.”
*d 7:13 The horses...city* The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.
basket of fine flour or two baskets of barley for only one shekel.

17 There was one officer who always stayed close by the king to help him. The king sent this officer to guard the gate, but the people knocked him down and trampled him, and he died. So everything happened just as the man of God had said when the king came to Elisha’s house. 18 Elisha had said, “A person will be able to buy a basket of fine flour or two baskets of barley for only one shekel in the marketplace by the city gates of Samaria.” 19 But that officer had answered the man of God, “Even if the LORD made windows in heaven, this could not happen!” And Elisha had told the officer, “You will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of that food.” 20 It happened to the officer just that way. The people knocked him down at the gate and trampled him, and he died.

The King and the Shunammite Woman 8

1 Elisha talked to the woman whose son he had brought back to life. He said, “You and your family should move to another country, because the LORD has decided that there will be a famine here. It will last for seven years.”

2 So the woman did what the man of God said. She went with her family to stay in the land of the Philistines for seven years. 3 After seven years she returned from the land of the Philistines.

She went to speak with the king to ask him to help her get back her house and land.

4 The king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God. The king said to Gehazi, “Please tell me all the great things Elisha has done.”

5 Gehazi was telling the king about Elisha bringing a dead person back to life. At that same time the woman whose son Elisha brought back to life went to the king. She wanted to ask him to help her get back her house and land. Gehazi said, “My lord and king, this is the woman, and this is the son who Elisha brought back to life.”

6 The king asked the woman what she wanted, and she told him.

Then the king chose an officer to help her. The king said, “Give to the woman all that belongs to her. And give her all the harvest of her land from the day she left the country until now.”

Ben-Hadad Sends Hazael to Elisha 7 Elisha went to Damascus. King Ben-Hadad of Aram was sick. Someone told Ben-Hadad, “The man of God has come here.”

8 Then the King Ben-Hadad said to Hazael, “Take a gift and go meet the man of God. Ask him to ask the LORD if I will get well from my sickness.”

9 So Hazael went to meet Elisha. Hazael brought a gift with him. He brought all kinds of good things from Damascus. It took 40 camels to carry everything. Hazael came to Elisha and said, “Your follower, King Ben-Hadad of Aram, sent me to you. He asks if he will get well from his sickness.”

10 Then Elisha said to Hazael, “Go and tell Ben-Hadad, ‘You will live.’ But really the LORD told me, ‘He will die.’ ”

Elisha Makes a Prophecy About Hazael 8 Elisha began to stare. He stared for an embarrassingly long time. Then the man of God began to cry. 12 Hazael said, “Sir, why are you crying?”

Elisha answered, “I am crying because I know the bad things you will do to the Israelites. You will burn their strong cities and kill their young men with swords. You will kill their babies and split open their pregnant women.”

13 Hazael said, “I am not a powerful man! How can I do these great things?”

Elisha answered, “The LORD showed me that you will be king over Aram.”

14 Then Hazael left Elisha and went

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to his king. a Ben-Hadad said to Hazael, “What did Elisha say to you?” He answered, “Elisha told me that you will live.”

Hazael Murders Ben-Hadad
15 But the next day Hazael took a thick cloth and dipped it in water. Then he held it on Ben-Hadad’s face until he died. Then Hazael became the new king.

Jehoram Begins His Rule
16 Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah. He began to rule in the fifth year that Joram son of Ahab was king of Israel. b 17 Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to rule. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem. But Jehoram lived as the kings of Israel and did what the Lord saw as evil. He lived as the people from Ahab’s family, because his wife was Ahab’s daughter. 18 But the Lord would not destroy Judah because of the promise to his servant David. He had promised David that someone from his family would always be king.

20 In Jehoram’s time Edom broke away from Judah’s rule. The people of Edom chose a king for themselves.

21 Then Jehoram and all his chariots went to Zair. The Edomite army surrounded them, but Jehoram and his officers attacked them and escaped. Jehoram’s soldiers all ran away and went home. 22 So the Edomites broke away from the rule of Judah. And they have been free from the rule of Judah until today.

At the same time Libnah also broke away from Judah’s rule.

23 All the things Jehoram did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

24 Jehoram died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Jehoram’s son Ahaziah became the new king.

Ahaziah Begins His Rule
25 Ahaziah son of Jehoram became the king of Judah in the 12th year that Joram son of Ahab was king of Israel. 26 Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to rule. He ruled one year in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Athaliah. She was the daughter of King Omri of Israel. 27 Ahaziah did what the Lord said was wrong. He did many bad things, just as the people from Ahab’s family had done. He lived like this because his wife was from Ahab’s family.

Joram Is Hurt in the War Against Hazael
28 Joram was from Ahab’s family. Ahaziah went with Joram to fight against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. The Arameans wounded Joram. 29 King Joram went back to Israel so that he could get well from those wounds. He went to the area of Jezreel. Ahaziah son of Jehoram was the king of Judah. Ahaziah went to Jezreel to see Joram.

Elisha Tells a Prophet to Anoint Jehu
9 Elisha the prophet called one of the men from the group of prophets c and said to him, “Get ready and take this small bottle of oil in your hand. Go to Ramoth Gilead. 2 When you arrive, find Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Then go in and make him get up from among his brothers. Take him to an inner room. 3 Take the small bottle of oil and pour the oil on Jehu’s head. Say, ‘This is what the Lord says: I have anointed you to be the new king over Israel.’ Then open the door and run away. Don’t wait!”

4 So this young man, the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. 5 When the young man arrived, he saw the captains of the army sitting. He said, “Captain, I have a message for you.” Jehu asked, “Which one of us is the message for?”

The young man said, “For you, sir.” 6 Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the young prophet poured the oil on Jehu’s head and said to him, “The Lord, the God of Israel, says, ‘I am anointing you

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a 8:14 king Literally, “master.”
b 8:16 The standard Hebrew text adds “while Jehoshaphat was still king of Judah.” That is, according to the Hebrew, father and son ruled Judah together for a time.
c 9:1 group of prophets Literally, “sons of the prophets.” These were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

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to be the new king over the LORD’s people, Israel. 7 You must destroy the family of Ahab your king. In this way I will punish Jezebel for the deaths of my servants, the prophets, and the deaths of all the LORD’s servants who were murdered. 8 So all Ahab’s family will die. I will not let any male child in Ahab’s family live. It doesn’t matter if that male child is a slave or a free person in Israel. 9 I will make Ahab’s family like the family of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the family of Baasha son of Ahijah. 10 The dogs will eat Jezebel in the area of Jezreel, and she will not be buried.’”

Then the young prophet opened the door and ran away.

### The Servants Announce Jehu as King

11 Jehu went back to his king’s officers. One of the officers said to Jehu, “Is everything all right? Why did this crazy man come to you?”

Jehu answered the servants, “You know the man and the crazy things he says.”

12 The officers said, “No, tell us the truth. What did he say?” Jehu told the officers what the young prophet said. Jehu said, “He said a few things and then he said, ‘This is what the LORD says: I have anointed you to be the new king over Israel.’”

13 Then each officer quickly took his robe off and put it on the steps in front of Jehu. Then they blew the trumpet and made the announcement, “Jehu is king!”

### Jehu Goes to Jezreel

14 So Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi, made plans against Joram. At that time Joram and the Israelites had been trying to defend Ramoth Gilead from King Hazael of Aram. 15 King Joram had fought against King Hazael of Aram. But the Arameans wounded King Joram, and he went to Jezreel to get well from those injuries.

So Jehu told the officers, “If you agree that I am the new king, don’t let anyone escape from the city to tell the news in Jezreel.”

16 Joram was resting in Jezreel, so Jehu got in his chariot and drove to Jezreel. King Ahaziah of Judah had also come to Jezreel to see Joram.

17 A guard was standing on the tower in Jezreel. He saw Jehu’s large group coming. He said, “I see a large group of people!”

Joram said, “Send someone on a horse to meet them. Tell this messenger to ask if they come in peace.”

18 So the messenger rode on a horse to meet Jehu. The messenger said, “King Joram says, ‘Do you come in peace?’”

Jehu said, “You have nothing to do with peace. Come and follow me.”

The guard told Joram, “The messenger went to the group, but he has not come back yet.”

19 Then Joram sent out a second messenger on a horse. This man came to Jehu’s group and said, “King Joram says, ‘Peace.’”

Jehu answered, “You have nothing to do with peace. Come and follow me.”

20 The guard told Joram, “The second messenger went to the group, but he has not come back yet. There is a man driving his chariot like a mad man. He is driving like Jehu son of Nimshi.”

21 Joram said, “Get me my chariot!” So the servant got Joram’s chariot. Both King Joram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah got their chariots and drove out to meet Jehu. They met him at the property of Naboth from Jezreel.

22 Joram saw Jehu and asked, “Do you come in peace, Jehu?”

Jehu answered, “There is no peace as long as your mother Jezebel does many acts of prostitution and witchcraft.”

23 Joram turned the horses to run away. He said to Ahaziah, “It is a trick, Ahaziah!”

24 But Jehu grabbed his bow and shot Joram in the middle of his back, through the heart. Joram fell dead in his chariot.

25 Jehu said to his chariot driver Bidkar, “Take Joram’s body up and throw it into the field of Naboth from Jezreel. Remember when you and I rode together with Joram’s father Ahab, the LORD said this

9:19 Peace A way of saying “hello.”
would happen to him. 26 The LORD said, ‘Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and his sons. And I, the LORD, am telling you that I will punish Ahab in this field.’ So take Joram’s body and throw it into the field, just as the LORD said.”

27 King Ahaziah of Judah saw this and ran away. He tried to escape through the garden house, but Jehu followed him. Jehu had said, “Shoot Ahaziah too!”

Ahaziah was wounded when he was in his chariot on the road to Gur near Ibleam. He got as far as Megiddo, but he died there.

28 Ahaziah’s servants carried his body in the chariot to Jerusalem. They buried him in his tomb with his ancestors in the City of David.

29 Ahaziah had become king over Judah during Joram’s eleventh year as king of Israel.

The Terrible Death of Jezebel

30 When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard the news. She put her makeup on and fixed her hair. Then she stood by the window and looked out. 31 Jehu entered the city. Jezebel said, “Hello, you Zimri. You killed your master just as he did.”

32 Jehu looked up at the window and said, “Who is on my side? Who?” Two or three eunuchs looked out at Jehu. 33 Jehu said, “Throw Jezebel down!” Then the eunuchs threw her down. Some of her blood splashed on the wall and on the horses that trampled her body. 34 Jehu went into the house and ate and drank. Then he said, “Now see about this cursed woman. Bury her, because she is a king’s daughter.”

35 The men went to bury Jezebel, but they could not find her body. They could only find her skull, her feet, and the palms of her hands. 36 When the men came back and told Jehu, he said, “The LORD told his servant Elijah the Tishbite to give this message: ‘Dogs will eat the body of Jezebel in the area of Jezreel. 37 Her body will be like dung on the field in the area of Jezreel. No one will be able to recognize her body!’”

Jehu Writes the Leaders of Samaria

1 Ahab had 70 sons in Samaria. Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria to the rulers and leaders of Jezreel. 2 He also sent the letters to the people who raised Ahab’s sons saying, 2–3 “As soon as you get this letter, choose the one who is the best and most worthy among your master’s sons. You have chariots and horses. And you are living in a strong city. You also have weapons. Put the son you choose on his father’s throne. Then fight for your master’s family.”

4 But the rulers and leaders of Jezreel were very afraid. They said, “The two kings could not stop Jehu. So we cannot stop him either!”

5 The palace manager, the official in charge of the city, the elders, and the people who raised the king’s children sent a message to Jehu. “We are your servants and we will do whatever you tell us. We will not make anyone king; you may do whatever you think is best.”

Leaders of Samaria Kill Ahab’s Children

6 Then Jehu wrote a second letter to these leaders. He said, “If you support me and obey me, cut off the heads of Ahab’s sons. Bring them to me at Jezreel about this time tomorrow.”

Ahab had 70 sons. They were with the leaders of the city who raised them. 7 When the leaders of the city received the letter, they took the king’s sons and killed all 70 of them. Then the leaders put the heads of the king’s sons in baskets and sent the baskets to Jehu at Jezreel. 8 The messenger came to Jehu and told him, “They have brought the heads of the king’s sons.”

Then Jehu said, “Lay the heads in two piles at the city gate until morning.”

9 In the morning Jehu went out and stood before the people. He said to them, “You are innocent. Look, I made plans

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against my master. I killed him. But who killed all these sons of Ahab? You killed them. 10 You should know that everything the LORD says will happen. The LORD used Elijah to say these things about Ahab’s family. Now the LORD has done what he said he would do.”

11 So Jehu killed all the people in Ahab’s family living in Jezreel. He killed all the important men, close friends, and priests. None of Ahab’s people were left alive.

Jehu Kills Ahaziah’s Relatives

12 Jehu left Jezreel and went to Samaria. On the way, he stopped at a place called Shepherd’s Camp. There he met with the relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah. Jehu asked, “Who are you?” They answered, “We are the relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah. We have come down to visit the king’s children and the queen mother’s children.”

13 Then Jehu said, “Take them alive!” Jehu’s men captured Ahaziah’s relatives alive. There were 42 of them. Jehu killed them at the well near Beth Eked. He did not leave anyone alive.

Jehu Meets Jehonadab

15 After Jehu left there, he met Jehonadab son of Recab. Jehonadab was on his way to meet Jehu. Jehu greeted Jehonadab and said to him, “Are you a faithful friend to me, as I am to you?”

Jehonadab answered, “Yes, I am a faithful friend to you.”

Jehu said, “If you are, give me your hand.”

Then Jehu reached out and pulled Jehonadab up into the chariot.

16 Jehu said, “Come with me. You can see how strong my feelings are for the LORD.”

So Jehonadab rode in Jehu’s chariot. Jehu came to Samaria and killed all Ahab’s family who were still alive in Samaria. He killed them all. He did what the LORD had told Elijah.

Jehu Calls the Worshipers of Baal

18 Then Jehu gathered all the people together and said to them, “Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu will serve Baal much. 19 Now call together all the priests and prophets of Baal. And call together everyone who worships Baal. Don’t let anyone miss this meeting. I have a great sacrifice to give to Baal. I will kill anyone who does not come to this meeting.”

But Jehu was tricking them. He wanted to destroy the worshipers of Baal. 20 Jehu said, “Prepare a holy meeting for Baal.” So the priests announced the meeting. 21 Then Jehu sent a message through all the land of Israel. All the worshipers of Baal came. Not one stayed home. The Baal worshipers came into the temple of Baal. The temple was filled with people.

22 Jehu said to the man who kept the robes, “Bring out the robes for all the worshipers of Baal.” So that man brought out the robes for the Baal worshipers.

23 Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Recab went into the temple of Baal. Jehu said to the worshipers of Baal, “Look around and be sure that there are no servants of the LORD with you. Be sure there are only people who worship Baal.” 24 The worshipers of Baal went into the temple of Baal to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. But outside, Jehu had 80 men waiting. He told them, “Don’t let anyone escape. If any man lets one person escape, that man must pay with his own life.”

25 Quickly after Jehu had finished offering the burnt offering, he said to the guards and to the captains, “Go in and kill the worshipers of Baal! Don’t let anyone come out of the temple alive!”

So the captains used thin swords and killed the worshipers of Baal. They threw the bodies of the worshipers of Baal out. Then the guards and the captains went to the inner room of the temple of Baal. They brought out the memorial stones that were in the temple of Baal and burned that temple. Then they smashed the memorial stones of Baal. They also

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Footnotes:

a 10:13 queen mother The mother of the king.
b 10:15 Are you a faithful friend … you Literally, “Is your heart true to me? My heart is true to your heart.”
c 10:25 inner room Literally, “the city of the temple of Baal.”
smashed the temple of Baal. They made the temple of Baal into a public toilet, which is still used today.

So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel, but he did not completely turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin. Jehu did not destroy the golden calves in Bethel and in Dan.

Jehu’s Rule Over Israel

The Lord said to Jehu, “You have done well. You have done what I say is good. You destroyed Ahab’s family the way I wanted you to, so your descendants will rule Israel for four generations.”

But Jehu was not careful to follow the law of the Lord with all his heart. Jehu did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam that caused Israel to sin.

Hazael Defeats Israel

At that time the Lord began to cut away sections of Israel and give them to other nations. King Hazael of Aram defeated the Israelites on every border of Israel. He won the land east of the Jordan River—all the land of Gilead, including the land that belonged to the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh. He won all the land from Aroer by the Arnon Valley to Gilead and Bashan.

The Death of Jehu

All the other great things that Jehu did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel. Jehu died and was buried with his ancestors. The people buried him in Samaria. His son Jehoahaz became the new king of Israel after him. Jehu ruled over Israel in Samaria for 28 years.

Athaliah Kills the King’s Sons in Judah

Athaliah was Ahaziah’s mother. She saw that her son was dead, so she got up and killed all the king’s family.

Jehosheba was King Joram’s daughter and Ahaziah’s sister. Joash was one of the king’s sons. While the other children were being killed, Jehosheba took Joash and hid him. She put him and his nurse in her bedroom, so Jehosheba and the nurse hid Joash from Athaliah. That way Joash was not killed.

Then Joash and Jehosheba hid in the Lord’s Temple. Joash hid there for six years. During that time Athaliah ruled over the land of Judah.

In the seventh year Jehoiada the high priest sent for the captains of the Carites and guards. He brought them together in the Lord’s Temple and made an agreement with them. There in the Temple of the Lord he forced them to make a promise. Then he showed the king’s son to them.

Jehoiada gave them a command. He said, “This is what you must do. One-third of you, from those who go on duty on the Sabbath day, must stand guard at the royal palace. Another third will be at the Sur Gate, and the other third will be at the gate behind the guard. This way you will stand guard over the palace on all sides. Your two divisions who go off duty on the Sabbath day will stand guard at the Lord’s Temple and protect King Joash. You must stay with him wherever he goes. The whole group must surround the king. Each guard must have his weapon in his hand, and you must kill anyone who comes too close to you.”

The captains obeyed everything that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Each captain took his men, both those who were going on duty on the Sabbath day and those who were going off duty. All these men went to Jehoiada the priest, and he gave spears and shields to the captains. These were the spears and shields David put in the Lord’s Temple. These guards stood with their weapons in their hands from the right corner of the Temple to the left corner. They stood around the altar and the Temple and around the king when he went to the Temple. These men brought out Joash. They put the crown on him and gave him a copy of the crown.
agreement. Then they anointed him and made him the new king. They clapped their hands and shouted, “Long live the king!”

13 Queen Athaliah heard the noise from the guards and the people, so she went to them at the LORD’s Temple. Athaliah saw the king by the column where new kings usually stood. She also saw the leaders and men playing the trumpets for him. She saw that all the people were very happy. She heard the trumpets, and she tore her clothes to show she was upset. Then Athaliah shouted, “Treason! Treason!”

14 Jehoiada the priest gave a command to the captains who were in charge of the soldiers. Jehoiada told them, “Take Athaliah outside of the Temple area. Kill any of her followers, but don’t kill them in the LORD’s Temple.”

15 So the soldiers grabbed Athaliah and killed her as soon as she went through the horse’s entrance to the palace.

16 Then Jehoiada made the agreement between the LORD and the king and the people. This agreement showed that the king and the people belonged to the LORD. Jehoiada also made the agreement between the king and the people.

17 Then all the people went to the temple of Baal. They destroyed the statue of Baal and his altars. They broke them into many pieces. They also killed Baal’s priest, Mattan, in front of the altars.

So Jehoiada the priest put men in charge of maintaining the LORD’s Temple. The priest led all the people. They went from the LORD’s Temple to the king’s palace. The king’s special guards and the captains went with the king, and all the other people followed them. They went to the entrance to the king’s palace. Then King Joash sat on the throne. All the people were happy, and the city was peaceful. And Queen Athaliah was killed with a sword near the king’s palace.

21 Joash was seven years old when he became king.

Joash Begins His Rule

12 Joash began to rule during Jehu’s seventh year as king of Israel. Joash ruled 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother was named Zibiah of Beersheba. For as long as he lived, Joash did what the LORD considered right. He did what Jehoiada the priest taught him. But he did not destroy the high places. The people still made sacrifices and burned incense at those places of worship.

Joash Orders the Temple Repaired

4–5 Joash said to the priests, “There is much money in the LORD’S Temple. People have given things to the Temple and have paid the Temple tax when they were counted. And they have given money simply because they wanted to. You priests should take that money and repair the Temple.

6 In the 23rd year that Joash was king, the priests still had not repaired the Temple, so King Joash called for Jehoiada the priest and the other priests. Joash said to them, “Why haven’t you repaired the Temple? Stop taking money from the people you serve. That money must be used to repair the Temple.”

8 The priests agreed to stop taking money from the people, but they also decided not to repair the Temple. So King Joash called for Jehoiada the priest and the other priests. Joash said to them, “Why haven’t you repaired the Temple? Stop taking money from the people you serve. That money must be used to repair the Temple.”

9 The priests agreed to stop taking money from the people, but they also decided not to repair the Temple. So Jehoiada the priest took a box and made a hole in the top of it. Then he put the box on the south side of the altar. This box was by the door where people came into the LORD’S Temple. Some of the priests were there to guard this doorway. They took the money that people brought for the Lord’s temple and put it into this box.

10 Whenever the king’s secretary and the high priest saw that the box was full, they counted all the money that had
been given for the Lord’s Temple and put it in bags. Then they paid the men who were in charge of the work on the Lord’s Temple. They paid the carpenters and other builders who worked on the Lord’s Temple. They used that money to pay the stoneworkers and stonecutters, and they used it to buy timber, cut stone, and everything else to repair the Lord’s Temple.

People gave money for the Lord’s Temple, but the priests could not use this money to make silver cups, snuffers, basins, trumpets, or any of the gold and silver dishes that were to be used inside the Lord’s temple. This money was used only to pay the workers who repaired the Lord’s Temple. Those who were in charge of paying the workers did not have to give a report of how they spent the money, because they could be trusted.

People gave money when they offered guilt offerings and sin offerings, but that money was not used for the Lord’s temple. It belonged to the priests.

Joash Saves Jerusalem From Hazael

Hazael was the king of Aram. He went to fight against the city of Gath and defeated it. Then he made plans to go fight against Jerusalem.

Joash a and his ancestors—Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah—had all been kings of Judah. They had given many things to the Lord that were kept in his Temple. Joash gathered all these things and all the gold that was stored in the Temple and in his palace. He sent all this treasure to King Hazael of Aram, who then commanded his army to leave Jerusalem.

The Death of Joash

All the great things that Joash did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

Joash’s officers made plans against him. They killed Joash at the house of Millo on the road that goes down to Silla.

Jehoahaz Begins His Rule

Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria. This was during the 23rd year that Joash son of Ahaziah was king in Judah. Jehoahaz ruled 17 years.

Jehoahaz did what the Lord considered wrong. Like Jeroboam son of Nebat, he committed sins that also caused the people of Israel to sin. And he never stopped doing those things. Then the Lord was angry with Israel. He let King Hazael of Aram and Hazael’s son Ben-Hadad gain control of Israel.

The Lord Has Mercy on Israel

Then Jehoahaz begged the Lord to help them. The Lord listened to him because he had seen the terrible troubles that the king of Aram had caused the Israelites.

So the Lord sent a man to save Israel. The Israelites were free from the Arameans. So the Israelites went to their own homes, as they did before.

But the Israelites still did not stop committing the sins of the family of Jeroboam that caused Israel to sin. The Israelites continued committing the sins of Jeroboam. They also kept the Asherah poles in Samaria.

The king of Aram defeated Jehoahaz’s army and destroyed most of the men in the army. He left only 50 horse soldiers, 10 chariots, and 10,000 foot soldiers. Jehoahaz’s soldiers were like chaff blown away by the wind at the time of threshing.

All the great things that Jehoahaz did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel. Jehoahaz died and was buried with his ancestors. The people buried Jehoahaz in Samaria. His son Jehoash became the new king after him.

Jehoash’s Rule Over Israel

Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king
over Israel in Samaria. This was during the 37th year that Joash was king of Judah. Jehoash ruled Israel for 16 years. He did what the LORD said was wrong. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin. Jehoash continued to commit those sins. All the great things that Jehoash did and his wars against King Amaziah of Judah are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel. Jehoash died and was buried with his ancestors. Jeroboam became the new king and sat on Jehoash’s throne. Jehoash was buried at Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Jehoash Visits Elisha

Elisha became sick, and later he died from this sickness. King Jehoash of Israel went to visit Elisha. Jehoash cried for him and said, “My father, my father! Is it time for the chariot of Israel and its horses?”

Elisha said to Jehoash, “Take a bow and some arrows.”

Jehoash took a bow and some arrows. Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, “Put your hand on the bow.” Jehoash put his hand on the bow. Then Elisha put his hands on the king’s hands. Elisha said, “Open the east window.” Jehoash opened the window. Then Elisha said, “Shoot.”

Jehoash shot. Then Elisha said, “This is the LORD’s arrow of victory over Aram! You will defeat the Arameans at Aphek until you destroy them.”

Elisha said, “Take the arrows.” Jehoash took the arrows. Then Elisha said to him, “Hit on the ground.”

Jehoash hit the ground three times. Then he stopped. The man of God was angry with Jehoash. Elisha said, “You should have hit five or six times! Then you would have defeated Aram until you destroyed it! But now, you will defeat Aram only three times.”

An Amazing Thing at Elisha’s Grave

Elisha died, and the people buried him. One time in the spring a group of Moabite soldiers came to fight against Israel. Some Israelites were burying a dead man when they saw that group of soldiers. The Israelites quickly threw the dead man into Elisha’s grave. As soon as the dead man touched the bones of Elisha, he came back to life and stood up on his feet.

Jehoash Wins Back Cities of Israel

During all the days that Jehoahaz ruled, King Hazael of Aram caused trouble to Israel. But the LORD was kind to the Israelites. He had mercy and showed his care for them because of his agreement with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He did not want them to be destroyed. He has never completely left them.

King Hazael of Aram died, and Ben-Hadad became the new king after him. Before he died, Hazael had taken some cities in war from Jehoahaz, Jehoash’s father. But now Jehoash took back these cities from Hazael’s son Ben-Hadad. Jehoash defeated Ben-Hadad three times and took back the cities of Israel.

Amaziah Begins His Rule in Judah

Amaziah son of King Joash of Judah became king in the second year that Jehoahaz son of Jehoahaz was king of Israel. Amaziah was 25 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jehoaddin from Jerusalem.

Amaziah did everything that Joash his father had done. He did not destroy the high places. The people still sacrificed and burned incense at those places of worship.

At the time that Amaziah had strong control of the kingdom, he killed the officers who had killed his father. But he did not kill the children of the murderers because of the rules written in the book, The Law of Moses. The LORD gave this command in there: “Parents must not be put to death for something their children
And children must not be put to death for something their parents did. People should be put to death only for what they themselves did."  

7 Amaziah killed 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. In war, Amaziah took Sela and called it "Joktheel." It is still called "Joktheel" today.

**Amaziah Wants War Against Jehoash**

8 Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, son of King Jehu of Israel. Amaziah's message said, "Come on, let's meet together face to face and fight."

9 King Jehoash of Israel sent an answer to King Amaziah of Judah. Jehoash said, "The thornbush in Lebanon sent a message to the cedar tree in Lebanon. It said, 'Give your daughter for my son to marry.' But a wild animal from Lebanon passed by and trampled down the thornbush.  

10 True, you have defeated Edom. But you have become proud because of your victory over Edom. But stay at home and brag! Don't make trouble for yourself. If you do this, you will fall, and Judah will fall with you!"

11 But Amaziah would not listen to Jehoash's warning. So King Jehoash of Israel went to fight against King Amaziah of Judah at Beth Shemesh in Judah.  

12 Israel defeated Judah. Every man of Judah ran home.

13 At Beth Shemesh, King Jehoash of Israel captured King Amaziah of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Ahaziah. Jehoash took Amaziah to Jerusalem. Jehoash broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate, about 600 feet.

14 Then Jehoash took all the gold and silver and all the dishes in the Lord's Temple and in the treasuries of the king's palace. Jehoash also took people to be his prisoners. Then he went back to Samaria.

15 All the great things that Jehoash did, including how he fought against King Amaziah of Judah, are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. Jehoash died and was buried with his ancestors. He was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. Jehoash's son Jeroboam became the new king after him.

**The Death of Amaziah**

17 King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah lived 15 years after the death of King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz of Israel. All the great things that Amaziah did are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*.  

18 The people made a plan against Amaziah in Jerusalem, so he ran away to Lachish. But the people sent men after Amaziah to Lachish, and they killed him there.  

19 The people brought Amaziah's body back on horses. He was buried at Jerusalem with his ancestors in the City of David.

**Azariah Begins His Rule Over Judah**

21 Then all the people of Judah made Azariah the new king. Azariah was 16 years old. So King Amaziah died and was buried with his ancestors. Then Azariah rebuilt Elath and got it back for Judah.

**Jeroboam II Begins His Rule Over Israel**

23 King Jeroboam son of Jehoash of Israel began to rule in Samaria during the 15th year that Amaziah son of Joash was king of Judah. Jeroboam ruled 41 years. Jeroboam did what the Lord said was wrong. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.  

25 Jeroboam took back Israel's land, which ran from the Lebo Hamath to the Arabah Sea. This happened as the Lord of Israel had told his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hepher.  

26 The Lord saw that all the Israelites, both slaves and free men, had many troubles. No one was left who could help Israel.  

27 The Lord did not say that he would take away the name of Israel from the world. So he used Jeroboam son of Jehoash to save the Israelites.

28 All the great things that Jeroboam did, including how he fought against King Amaziah of Judah, are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. Jeroboam died and was buried with his ancestors. He was buried in Samaria, and his son Pekah became the new king after him.
did are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. This includes the story about Jeroboam winning back Damascus and Hamath for Israel. (These cities had belonged to Judah.) Jeroboam died and was buried with his ancestors, the kings of Israel. Jeroboam’s son Zechariah became the new king after him.

**Azariah’s Rule Over Judah**

15 King Azariah son of Amaziah of Judah became king in the 27th year that Jeroboam was king of Israel. Azariah was 16 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother was named Jecoliah of Jerusalem. Azariah did what the LORD said was right, just as his father Amaziah had done. But he did not destroy the high places. People still made sacrifices and burned incense in these places of worship.

The LORD caused King Azariah to become sick with leprosy. He was a leper until the day he died. Azariah lived in a separate house. His son Jotham was in charge of the king’s palace, and he judged the people.

All the great things that Azariah did are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah*. Azariah died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Azariah’s son Jotham became the new king after him.

**Zechariah’s Short Rule Over Israel**

8 Zechariah son of Jeroboam ruled over Samaria in Israel for six months. This was during the 38th year that Azariah was king of Judah. Zechariah did what the LORD said was wrong. He did the same things his ancestors did. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.

Shallum son of Jabesh made plans against Zechariah. Shallum killed Zechariah in Ibleam. Shallum became the new king. All the other things that Zechariah did are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. In this way the LORD’s word came true. He had told Jehu that four generations of his descendants would be kings of Israel.

**Shallum’s Short Rule Over Israel**

13 Shallum son of Jabesh became king of Israel during the 39th year that Uzziah was king of Judah. Shallum ruled for one month in Samaria.

14 Menahem son of Gadi came up from Tirzah to Samaria and killed Shallum son of Jabesh. Then Menahem became the new king after him.

All the things Shallum did, including his plans against Zechariah, are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

**Menahem’s Rule Over Israel**

16 Menahem defeated Tiphsah and the area around it. The people refused to open the city gate for him. So Menahem defeated them and ripped open all the pregnant women in that city.

17 Menahem son of Gadi became king over Israel during the 39th year that Azariah was king of Judah. Menahem ruled ten years in Samaria. Menahem did what the LORD said was wrong. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.

19 King Pul of Assyria came to fight against Israel. Menahem gave Pul 75,000 pounds of silver so that Pul would support him and help him gain complete control of the kingdom. Menahem raised the money by making all the rich and powerful men pay taxes. He taxed each man 20 ounces of silver and gave the money to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria left and did not stay there in Israel.

21 All the great things that Menahem did are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel*. Menahem died and was buried with his ancestors. His son Pekahiah became the new king after him.

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*15:10* in Ibleam This is found in some copies of the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has “in public.”

*15:19* 75,000 pounds Literally, “1000 talents” (34,500 kg).

*15:20* 20 ounces Literally, “50 shekels” (575 g).
Pekiahiah’s Rule Over Israel

23 Pekiahiah son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria during the 50th year that Azariah was king of Judah. Pekiahiah ruled two years. 24 He did what the LORD said was wrong. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin.

25 The commander of Pekiahiah’s army was Pekah son of Remaliah. Pekah killed Pekiahiah in Samaria at the king’s palace. Pekah had 50 men from Gilead with him when he killed Pekiahiah. Then Pekah became the new king after him.

26 All the great things Pekiahiah did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

Pekah’s Rule Over Israel

27 Pekah son of Remaliah began to rule over Israel in Samaria during the 52nd year that Azariah was king of Judah. Pekah ruled 20 years. 28 Pekah did what the LORD said was wrong. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.

29 King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria came to fight against Israel while Pekah was king of Israel. Tiglath Pileser captured Ijon, Abel Bethmaacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, Galilee, and all the area of Naphtali. He took the people from these places as prisoners to Assyria.

30 Hoshea son of Elah made plans against Pekah son of Remaliah and killed him. Then Hoshea became the new king. This was during the 20th year that Jotham son of Uzziah was king of Judah.

31 All the great things that Pekah did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

Jotham’s Rule Over Judah

32 Jotham son of Uzziah became king of Judah. This was during the second year that Pekah son of Remaliah was king of Israel. 33 Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother was named Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.

Ahaz Becomes King Over Judah

16 1 Ahaz son of Jotham became king of Judah during the 17th year that Pekah son of Remaliah was king of Israel. 2 Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. Unlike his ancestor David, Ahaz did not do what the LORD said was right. 3 He did the same bad things the kings of Israel had done. He even burned his son as a sacrifice. 4 He copied the terrible sins of the nations that the LORD had forced to leave the country when the Israelites came. 5 King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel came to fight against Jerusalem. Rezin and Pekah surrounded Ahaz, but could not defeat him.

6 At that time King Rezin of Aram took back Elath for Aram. Rezin took all the people of Judah who were living in Elath. The Arameans settled in Elath, and they still live there today.

7 Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria with this message: “I am your servant. I am like a son to you. Come and save me from the king of Aram and the king of Israel. They have come to fight me.” 8 Ahaz also took the silver and gold that was in the Temple of the LORD and the LORD said was right, just as his father Uzziah had done. 9 But he did not destroy the high places. The people still made sacrifices and burned incense at those places of worship. Jotham built the upper gate of the LORD’s Temple. 10 All the great things that Jotham did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

11 At that time the LORD sent King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah to fight against Judah.

12 Jotham died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David, his ancestor. Jotham’s son Ahaz became the new king after him.
in the treasuries of the king’s palace. Then Ahaz sent a gift to the king of Assyria. 9 The king of Assyria listened to Ahaz and went to fight against Damascus. The king captured that city and took the people from Damascus as prisoners to Kir. He also killed Rezin.

10 King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria. Ahaz saw the altar at Damascus. He sent a model and pattern of this altar to Uriah the priest. 11 Then Uriah the priest built an altar just like the model King Ahaz had sent him from Damascus. Uriah the priest built the altar this way before King Ahaz came back from Damascus.

12 When the king arrived from Damascus, he saw the altar. He offered sacrifices on the altar. 13 Ahaz burned his burnt offerings and grain offerings on it. He poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his fellowship offerings on this altar.

14 Ahaz took the bronze altar that was before the Lord from the front of the Temple. This bronze altar was between Ahaz’s altar and the Temple of the Lord. Ahaz put the bronze altar on the north side of his own altar. 15 He commanded Uriah the priest, “Use the large altar to burn the morning burnt offerings, the evening grain offerings, and the drink offerings from all the people of this country. Sprinkle all the blood from the burnt offering and other sacrifices on the large altar. But I will use the bronze altar to get answers from God.” 16 Uriah the priest did everything that King Ahaz commanded him to do.

17 There were carts with bronze panels and basins for the priests to wash their hands. King Ahaz removed the panels and basins and cut up the carts. He also took the large tank\(^d\) off the bronze bulls that stood under it. He put the large tank on a stone pavement. 18 Workers had built a covered place inside the Temple area for the Sabbath meetings. But Ahaz removed the covered place and the outside entrance for the king. He removed all these from the LORD’s Temple. Ahaz did this because of the king of Assyria.

19 All the great things that Ahaz did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah. 20 Ahaz died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Ahaz’s son Hezekiah became the new king after him.

Hoshea Begins His Rule Over Israel

17 1 Hoshea son of Elah began to rule in Samaria over Israel. This was during the 12th year that Ahaz was king of Judah. Hoshea ruled nine years. 2 He did what the Lord said was wrong, but he was not as bad as the kings of Israel who had ruled before him.

3 King Shalmaneser of Assyria came to fight against Hoshea and defeated him. So Hoshea paid tribute to Shalmaneser.

4 Later, Hoshea sent messengers to the king of Egypt to ask for help. That king’s name was So. That year Hoshea did not pay tribute to the king of Assyria as he did every other year. The king of Assyria learned that Hoshea had made plans against him. So he arrested Hoshea and put him in jail.

5 The king of Assyria attacked many places in Israel. Then he came to Samaria and fought against it for three years. 6 The king of Assyria took Samaria during the ninth year that Hoshea was king of Israel. He captured many Israelites and took them as prisoners to Assyria. He made them live in Halah by the Habor River at Gozan and in other cities of the Medes.

7 These things happened because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God. And it was the Lord who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt! He saved them from the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. But the Israelites began worshiping other gods. 8 They began doing the same things that other people did. And the Lord had forced those people to leave their land when the Israelites came. The Israelites also chose to be ruled by kings. 9 The Israelites secretly did things against

\(^d\) 16:17 tank A very large container for water.
the Lord their God, and those things were wrong!

The Israelites built high places in all their cities—from the smallest town to the largest city. 10They put up memorial stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree. 11They burned incense there in all those places for worship.a They did these things like the nations that the Lord forced out of the land before them. The Israelites did evil things that made the Lord angry. 12They served idols, and the Lord had said to them, “You must not do this.”

13The Lord used every prophet and every seer to warn Israel and Judah. He said, “Turn away from the evil things you do. Obey my commands and laws. Follow all the law that I gave to your ancestors. I used my servants the prophets to give this law to you.”

14But the people would not listen. They were very stubborn like their ancestors. Their ancestors did not believe the Lord their God. 15They refused to follow his laws and the agreement he made with their ancestors. They would not listen to his warnings. They worshiped idols that were worth nothing and they themselves became worth nothing. The Lord had warned them not to do the evil things that the people in the nations around them did. But they lived the same way those people lived.

16The people stopped following the commands of the Lord their God. They made two gold statues of calves. They made Asherah poles. They worshiped all the stars of heaven and served Baal. 17They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They used magic and witchcraft to try to learn the future. They sold themselves to do what the Lord said was evil. They did this to make him angry. 18So the Lord became very angry with Israel and removed them from his sight. There were no Israelites left, except the tribe of Judah.

17:11 places for worship Or “high places,” places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

The People of Judah Are Also Guilty

19But even the people of Judah did not obey the commands of the Lord their God. They lived just as the Israelites had.

20The Lord rejected all the Israelites. He brought them many troubles. He let people destroy them. Finally, he threw them away and removed them from his sight. 21He tore them from the family of David, and they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam pulled the Israelites away from following the Lord. He caused them to commit a great sin. 22So the Israelites sinned in all the ways Jeroboam did. And they did not stop committing these sins until the Lord took Israel away from his sight. And he said this would happen. He sent his prophets to tell the people this would happen. So the Israelites were taken out of their country into Assyria. And they have been there to this day.

Foreigners Settle in Israel

24The king of Assyria took the Israelites out of Samaria and brought in other people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim. They took over Samaria and lived in the cities around it. 25When these people began to live in Samaria, they did not honor the Lord, so the Lord sent lions to attack them. The lions killed some of them. 26Some people said to the king of Assyria, “The people who you took away and put in the cities of Samaria don’t know the law of the god of that country. So that god sent lions to attack them. The lions killed some of them.”

27So the king of Assyria gave this command: “You took some priests from Samaria. Send one of them who I captured back to Samaria. Let that priest go and live there. Then he can teach the people how they should honor the Lord.”

28So one of the priests who the Assyrians had carried away from Samaria came to live in Bethel. He taught the people how they should honor the Lord.

29But all those people made gods of
their own. They put them in the temples at the high places that the people of Samaria had made. They did this wherever they lived. 30 The people of Babylon made the false god Succoth Benoth. The people of Cuthah made the false god Nergal. The people of Hamath made the false god Ashima. 31 The people of Avva made the false gods Nibhaz and Tartak. The people from Sepharvaim also burned their children in the fire to honor their false gods, Adrammelech and Anammelech.

32 But they also worshiped the Lord. They chose priests for the high places from among the people. These priests made sacrifices for the people in the temples at those places of worship. 33 They respected the Lord but also served their own gods, just as they did in their own countries.

34 Even today, they live the same way they did in the past. They don’t honor the Lord. They don’t obey the rules and commands of the Israelites. They don’t obey the law or the commands that the Lord gave to the children of Jacob. 35 The Lord made an agreement with the Israelites. He commanded them, “You must not honor other gods. You must not worship them or serve them or offer sacrifices to them. 36 But you must follow the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt. He used his great power to save you. You must worship him and make sacrifices to him. 37 You must obey the rules, laws, teachings, and commands that he wrote for you. You must obey these things all the time. You must not respect other gods. 38 You must not forget the agreement that I made with you. You must not respect other gods. 39 No, you must respect only the Lord your God. Then he will save you from all your enemies.”

40 But the Israelites did not listen. They kept on doing the same things they did before. 41 So now those other nations respected the Lord, but they also served their own idols. Their children and grandchildren did the same thing their ancestors did. They still do these things to this day.

Hezekiah Begins His Rule Over Judah

18 Hezekiah son of Ahaz was king of Judah. Hezekiah began to rule during the third year that Hoshea son of Elah was king of Israel. 2 Hezekiah was 25 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Abi, 3 the daughter of Zechariah.

3 Hezekiah did what the Lord said was right, just as David his ancestor had done.

4 Hezekiah destroyed the high places. He broke the memorial stones and cut down the Asherah poles. At that time the Israelites burned incense to the bronze snake made by Moses. This bronze snake was called “Nehushtan.” 5 Hezekiah broke this bronze snake into pieces.

5 Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like Hezekiah among all the kings of Judah before him or after him. 6 He was very faithful to the Lord and did not stop following him. He obeyed the commands that the Lord had given to Moses. 7 The Lord was with Hezekiah, so he was successful in everything he did.

Hezekiah broke away from the king of Assyria and stopped serving him. 8 Hezekiah defeated the Philistines all the way to Gaza and the area around it. He defeated all the Philistine cities—from the smallest town to the largest city.

The Assyrians Capture Samaria

9 King Shalmaneser of Assyria went to fight against Samaria. His army surrounded the city. This happened during the fourth year that Hezekiah was king of Judah. (This was also the seventh year that Hoshea son of Elah was king of Israel.) 10 At the end of the third year, Shalmaneser captured Samaria. He took Samaria during the sixth year that Hezekiah was king of Judah. (This was also the ninth year that Hoshea was king of Israel.) 11 The king of Assyria took the Israelites as prisoners to Assyria. He made them live in Halah, on the Habor (the river of Gozan), and in the cities of the Medes.

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This happened because the Israelites did not obey the Lord their God. They broke his agreement and did not obey everything that Moses, the Lord’s servant, had commanded. The Israelites would not listen to the Lord’s agreement, or do what it taught them to do.

Assyria Gets Ready to Take Judah

During Hezekiah’s 14th year as king, King Sennacherib of Assyria went to fight against all the strong cities of Judah. Sennacherib defeated them all. Then King Hezekiah of Judah sent a message to the king of Assyria at Lachish. Hezekiah said, “I have done wrong. Leave me alone, and I will pay whatever you want.” Then the king of Assyria told King Hezekiah of Judah to pay over 11 tons of silver and over 1 ton of gold. Hezekiah gave all the silver that was in the Lord’s Temple and in the king’s treasuries. That is when Hezekiah cut off the gold that he had put on the doors and doorposts of the Lord’s Temple and gave it to the king of Assyria.

King of Assyria Sends Men to Jerusalem

The king of Assyria sent his three most important officers with a large army to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. They left Lachish and went to Jerusalem. They stood near the aqueduct by the Upper Pool, on the street that leads up to Lachish. These men called for the king, but Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah son of Asaph went out to meet them. Eliakim was the palace manager, Joah was the record keeper, and Shebna was the royal secretary.

The commander said to them, “Tell Hezekiah this is what the great king, the king of Assyria says: ‘What are you trusting in to help you? If you say, “I trust in power and great battle plans,” then that is useless. Now I ask you, who do you trust so much that you are willing to rebel against me? Are you depending on Egypt to help you? Egypt is like a broken walking stick. If you lean on it for support, it will only hurt you and make a hole in your hand. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, cannot be trusted by anyone who depends on him for help. Maybe you will say, “We trust the Lord our God to help us.” But I know that Hezekiah destroyed the altars and high places where people worshiped the Lord. Hezekiah told the people of Judah and Jerusalem, “You must worship only at this one altar here in Jerusalem.”

If you still want to fight my master, the king of Assyria, I will make this agreement with you. I promise that I will give you 2000 horses if you can find enough men to ride them into battle. But even then you couldn’t beat one of my master’s lowest ranking officers. So why do you still depend on Egypt’s chariots and horse soldiers?

Now, do you think I came to this country to destroy it without the Lord’s help? No, the Lord said to me, “Go up against this country and destroy it!”

Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to the commander, “Please speak to us in Aramaic. We understand that language. Don’t speak to us in the language of Judah because the people on the wall will understand you.”

But the commander said, “My master sent me to speak to everyone, not just to you and your master. I must also speak to those people sitting there on the wall. When we surround your city, they will suffer too. Like you, they will become so hungry they will eat their own waste and drink their own urine!”

Then the commander, shouting loudly in Hebrew, gave this warning to them all:

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a 18:14 11 tons Literally, “300 talents” (10,350 kg).
b 18:14 1 ton Literally, “30 talents” (1035 kg).
c 18:17 Upper Pool The Pool of Siloam at the southern tip of the City of David (Jerusalem), just above the older pool now called Birket el Hamrah.
d 18:28 Hebrew Literally, “Judean,” the language of Judah
Hear this message from the great king, the king of Assyria!

29 This is what the king says: Don’t let Hezekiah fool you! He cannot save you from my power. 30 Don’t listen to him when he tells you to trust in the Lord. Don’t believe him when he says, “The Lord will save us. He will not let the king of Assyria defeat the city.”

31 Don’t listen to Hezekiah! This is what the king of Assyria says: Come out here and show me that you want peace. Then you will all be free to have grapes from your own vines, figs from your own trees, and water from your own well. 32 After some time, I will come and take you to a land like your own. In that new land, you will have plenty of grain for making bread and vineyards for producing wine. I am offering you a choice to live instead of dying.

Don’t believe Hezekiah when he tells you, “The Lord will save us.” He is wrong. 33 Did any of the gods of other nations save their land from the king of Assyria? 34 When I destroyed the cities of Hamath and Arpad, where were their gods? What about the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? Were any gods able to save Samaria from my power? 35 None of the gods of these other places were able to save their land from me! So why do you think the Lord can save Jerusalem from me?

36 But the people were silent. They did not say a word to the commander, because King Hezekiah had commanded them, “Don’t say anything to him.”

37 Then the palace manager (Eliakim son of Hilkiah), the royal secretary (Shebna), and the record keeper (Joah son of Asaph) went to Hezekiah. Their clothes were torn to show they were upset. They told Hezekiah everything the Assyrian commander had said.

Hezekiah Talks With Isaiah the Prophet

19 When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes to show he was upset. Then he put on sackcloth and went to the Lord’s Temple.

2 Hezekiah sent Eliakim the palace manager, Shebna the royal secretary, and the elders of the priests to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. They wore the special clothes that showed they were sad and upset. 3 They said to Isaiah, “King Hezekiah has commanded that today will be a special day for sorrow and sadness. It will be a very sad day, like the time a child should be born, but is not strong enough to come from its mother’s womb. 4 The commander’s master, the king of Assyria, has sent him to say bad things about the living God. Maybe the Lord your God will hear all those things and answer them. Maybe the Lord your God will show how wrong the enemy is! So pray for the people who are still left alive.”

5 King Hezekiah’s officers went to Isaiah. 6 Isaiah said to them, “Give this message to your master, Hezekiah: The Lord says, ‘Don’t be afraid of what you heard from the commanders. Don’t believe what those “boys” from the king of Assyria said to make fun of me. 7 Look, I will send a spirit against the king of Assyria. He will get a report warning him about a danger, so he will return to his own country. And I will cut him down with a sword in his own country.’”

The Assyrian Army Leaves Jerusalem

8 The commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. He found him at Libnah, fighting against that city. 9 Then the king of Assyria heard a report that said, “Tirhakah, the king of Ethiopia, has come to fight against you.”

So the king of Assyria sent messengers to the king of Ethiopia. This is probably Taharqa, the Pharaoh of Egypt about 690–664 B.C.
to Hezekiah again. 10 He told them, “Tell King Hezekiah of Judah these things: ‘Don’t be fooled by the god you trust when he says Jerusalem will not be defeated by the king of Assyria. 11 You have heard what the kings of Assyria did to all the other countries. We completely destroyed them! Will you be saved? No! 12 Did the gods of those nations save their people? No, my ancestors destroyed them all. They destroyed Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden living in Tel Assar. 13 Where is the king of Hamath? The king of Arpad? The king of the city of Sepharvaim? The kings of Hena and Ivah?’ ”

Hezekiah Prays to the Lord
14 Hezekiah received the letters from the messengers and read them. Then he went up to the Lord’s Temple and laid the letters out in front of the Lord. 15 Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, “Lord, God of Israel, you sit as King above the Cherub angels. You alone are the God who rules all the kingdoms on earth. You made heaven and earth. 16 Lord, please listen to me. Lord, open your eyes and look at this message. Hear the words that Sennacherib sent to insult the living God. 17 It is true, Lord. The kings of Assyria did destroy all those nations. 18 They did throw the gods of those nations into the fire. But they were not real gods. They were only wood and stone—statues that people made. That is why the kings of Assyria could destroy them. 19 But you are the Lord our God, so please save us from the king of Assyria. Then all the other nations will know that you, Lord, are the only God.”

God Answers Hezekiah
20 Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah. Isaiah said, “The Lord, the God of Israel, says this: You prayed to me about the message that came from King Sennacherib of Assyria. I have heard you. 21 “This is the Lord’s message against Sennacherib: ‘The virgin daughter Zion does not think you are important. She makes fun of you. Daughter Jerusalem shakes her head at you and laughs behind your back. 22 But who did you insult and make fun of? Who did you speak against? You were against the Holy One of Israel. You acted like you were better than he was! 23 You sent your messengers to insult the Lord. You said, “I came with my many chariots to the high mountains deep inside Lebanon. I cut down the tallest cedar trees and the best fir trees of Lebanon. I went to its highest mountains, its thickest forests. 24 I dug wells, and drank water from new places. I dried up the rivers of Egypt and walked on the land there.” 25 That is what you said, but haven’t you heard what I said? I planned it long ago; from ancient times I planned it. And now I have made it happen. I let you tear down the strong cities and change them into piles of rocks. 26 The people in the cities had no power. They were afraid and confused. They were about to be cut down like grass and plants in the field. They were like grass growing on the rooftops, dying before it grows tall. 27 I know all about your battles; I know when you rested, when you went out to war, and when you came home. I also know when you got upset at me.

a 19:21 The virgin daughter Zion The city of Jerusalem. See “Zion” in the Word List.
28 Yes, you were upset at me.
   I heard your proud insults.
   So I will put my hook in your nose
   and my bit in your mouth.
   Then I will turn you around
   and lead you back the way you
   came.’”

The Lord’s Message for Hezekiah

29 Then the Lord said, “I will give you a
   sign to show that these words are true.
   You were not able to plant seeds this year,
   so next year you will eat grain that grows
   wild from the previous year’s crop. But
   in the third year, you will eat grain from
   seeds that you planted. You will harvest
   your crops and have plenty to eat. You will
   plant grapevines and eat their fruit. You
   will plant vineyards and eat the grapes
   from them. 30 The people from the family
   of Judah who have escaped and are left
   alive will be like plants that send their
   roots deep into the ground and produce
   fruit above the ground. 31 That is because
   a few people will come out of Jerusalem
   alive. There will be survivors coming from
   Mount Zion. The strong love\textsuperscript{a} of the LORD
   All-Powerful will do this.

32 “So the LORD says this about the king
   of Assyria:
   ‘He will not come into this city
   or shoot an arrow at this city.
   He will not bring his shields up against
   this city
   or build up a hill of dirt to attack its
   walls.
   33 He will go back the way he came,
   and he will not come into this city.
   The LORD says this.
   34 I will protect this city and save it.
   I will do this for myself and for my
   servant David.’”

The Assyrian Army Is Destroyed

35 That night the angel of the LORD went
   out and killed 185,000 people in the Assyrian
   camp. When the others got up in the
   morning, they saw all the dead bodies.

36 So King Sennacherib of Assyria
   left and went back to Nineveh where he
   stayed. 37 One day Sennacherib was in the
   temple of his god Nisroch, worshiping
   him. His sons Adrammelech and Sharezer
   killed him with a sword and ran away to
   Ararat. So his son Esarhaddon became the
   new king of Assyria.

Hezekiah’s Illness

20 1 At that time Hezekiah became
   sick and almost died. The prophet
   Isaiah son of Amoz went to see him and
   told him, “The LORD says, ‘You will die
   soon, so you should tell your family what
   they should do when you die. You will not
   get well.’”

2 Hezekiah turned his face to the wall
   that faced the Temple, and began praying
   to the LORD. 3 “LORD, remember that
   I have sincerely served you with all my
   heart. I have done what you say is good.”
   Then Hezekiah cried very hard.

4 Before Isaiah had left the middle
   courtyard, he received this message from
   the LORD, 5 “Go back and speak to Hezekiah,
   the leader of my people. Tell him,
   ‘This is what the LORD, the God of your
   ancestor David, says: I heard your prayer
   and I saw your tears, so I will heal you. On
   the third day you will go up to the Temple
   of the LORD. 6 I will add 15 years to your
   life. I will save you and this city from the
   king of Assyria. I will protect this city. I
   will do this for myself and because of the
   promise I made to my servant David.’”

7 Then Isaiah said, “Crush figs together
   and put them on your sore; you will get
   well.”

So they took the mixture of figs and
   put it on Hezekiah’s sore place, and he got
   well.

8 Hezekiah asked Isaiah, “What will be
   the sign that the LORD will heal me, and
   that I will go up to the Temple of the LORD
   on the third day?”

9 Isaiah said, “Which do you want?
   Should the shadow go forward ten steps
   or go back ten steps?\textsuperscript{b} This is the sign for

\textsuperscript{a} 19:31 strong love The Hebrew word can mean strong feel-
   ings such as zeal, jealousy, or love.

\textsuperscript{b} 20:9 the shadow … steps This may mean the steps of a
you from the LORD to show that the LORD will do what he said he would do.”  
10 Hezekiah answered, “It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten steps. No, make the shadow go back ten steps.”  
11 Then Isaiah prayed, and the LORD made the shadow move back ten steps. It went back up the steps that it had already been on.

**Messengers From Babylon**

12 At that time Merodach Baladan son of Baladan was king of Babylon. He sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah when he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 13 Hezekiah listened to the messengers and then showed them all the valuable things he owned. He showed them the silver, the gold, the spices, the expensive perfume, and the building where he stored the weapons. He showed them everything in his treasuries, in his palace, and in his kingdom.

14 Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and asked him, “What did these men say? Where did they come from?”  
Hezekiah said, “These men came from a faraway country, from Babylon.”  
15 Isaiah said, “What did they see in your palace?”  
Hezekiah answered, “They saw everything I own. I showed them all my wealth.”  
16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Listen to this message from the LORD. 17 The time is coming when everything in your palace and everything your ancestors have saved until today will be carried away to Babylon. Nothing will be left! The LORD said this. 5 Manasseh rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed. He also built altars for Baal and made an Asherah pole, just as King Ahab of Israel had done. Manasseh worshiped and served the stars of heaven. 4 He built altars to honor false gods in the LORD’s Temple. (This is the place the LORD was talking about when he said, “I will put my name in Jerusalem.”) 5 Manasseh built altars for the stars of heaven in the two courtyards of the LORD’s Temple. 6 He sacrificed his own son and burned him on the altar. 6 He used different ways of trying to know the future. He visited mediums and wizards.

Manasseh did more and more things that the LORD saw as evil, which made the LORD angry. 7 Manasseh made a carved statue of Asherah. He put this statue in the Temple. The LORD had said to David and to David’s son Solomon about this Temple: “I have chosen Jerusalem from all the cities in Israel. I will put my name in the Temple in Jerusalem forever. 8 I will not cause the Israelites to leave the land that I gave to their ancestors. I will let the people stay in their land if they obey everything I commanded them and all the teachings that my servant Moses gave them.” 9 But the people did not listen to God. Manasseh did more evil things than did, including his work on the pool and the aqueduct to bring water into the city, are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Judah.* 21 Hezekiah died and was buried with his ancestors. And his son Manasseh became the new king after him.

**Manasseh Begins His Evil Rule Over Judah**

21 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to rule. He ruled 55 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hephzibah.

22 Manasseh did what the LORD said was wrong. He did the terrible things the other nations did. (And the LORD forced those nations to leave their country when the Israelites came.) 3 Manasseh rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed. He also built altars for Baal and made an Asherah pole, just as King Ahab of Israel had done. Manasseh worshiped and served the stars of heaven. 4 He built altars to honor false gods in the LORD’s Temple. (This is the place the LORD was talking about when he said, “I will put my name in Jerusalem.”) 5 Manasseh built altars for the stars of heaven in the two courtyards of the LORD’s Temple. 6 He sacrificed his own son and burned him on the altar. 6 He used different ways of trying to know the future. He visited mediums and wizards.

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*b 21:6 sacrificed . . . on the altar* Literally, “made his son pass through the fire.”

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all the nations that lived in Canaan before Israel came. And the Lord destroyed those nations when the Israelites came to take their land.

10 The Lord used his servants the prophets to say this: “King Manasseh of Judah has done these hated things and has done more evil than the Amorites before him. He also has caused Judah to sin because of his idols. 11 So the Lord, the God of Israel, says, ‘Look! I will bring so much trouble against Jerusalem and Judah that anyone who hears about it will be shocked. 12 I will stretch the measuring line of Samaria and the plumb line of Ahab’s family over Jerusalem. A man wipes a dish, and then he turns it upside down. I will do that to Jerusalem. 13 There will still be a few of my people left, but I will leave them. I will give them to their enemies. Their enemies will take them as prisoners—they will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. 15 This is because my people did what I said was wrong. They have made me angry with them since the day their ancestors came up out of Egypt. 16 And Manasseh killed many innocent people. He filled Jerusalem from one end to another with blood. And all these sins are in addition to the sins that caused Judah to sin. Manasseh caused Judah to do what the Lord said was wrong.’”

17 All the things that Manasseh did, including the sins that he committed, are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

Amon’s Short Rule

19 Amon was 22 years old when he began to rule. He ruled two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz from Jotbah.

20 Amon did what the Lord said was wrong, just as his father Manasseh had done. 21 Amon lived just as his father had lived. He worshiped and served the same idols his father had worshiped. 22 Amon left the Lord, the God of his ancestors, and did not live the way the Lord wanted.

23 Amon’s servants made plans against him and killed him in his palace. 24 The common people killed all the officers who made plans against King Amon. Then the people made Amon’s son Josiah the new king after him.

25 The other things that Amon did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah. 26 Amon was buried in his grave at the Garden of Uzza. His son Josiah became the new king.

Josiah Begins His Rule Over Judah

22 Josiah was eight years old when he began to rule. He ruled 31 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. 2 Josiah did what the Lord said was right. He followed God like his ancestor David. Josiah obeyed God’s teachings—he did exactly what God wanted.

Josiah Orders the Temple Repaired

3 During the 18th year that Josiah was king, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the Lord’s Temple. Josiah said, “Go up to Hilkiah the high priest. Tell him that he must get the money that people brought to the Lord’s Temple. The gatekeepers collected that money from the people. 5 The priests must use that money to pay the workers to repair the Lord’s Temple. They must give that money to the men who supervise the work on the Lord’s Temple. The gatekeepers collected that money from the people. 6 Use that money for the carpenters, stonemasons, and stonecutters. Also use that money to buy the timber and cut stones that are needed to repair the Temple.”

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the money that you give to the workers. They can be trusted.”

Book of the Law Found in the Temple
8Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, “Look, I found the Book of the Law in the LORD’s Temple!” Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and Shaphan read it.

9He went to King Josiah and told him what happened. Shaphan said, “Your servants have gathered all the money that was in the Temple. They gave it to the men who supervise the work on the LORD’s Temple.” 10Then he told the king, “And Hilkiah the priest also gave this book to me.” Then Shaphan read the book to the king.

11When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes to show he was sad and upset. 12Then he gave a command to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king’s servant. 13King Josiah said, “Go and ask the LORD what we should do. Ask about the words of this book that was found. The LORD is angry with us, because our ancestors did not listen to the words of this book. They did not obey all the commands that were written for us.”

Josiah and Huldah the Prophetess
14So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the woman prophet. Huldah was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas. He took care of the priests’ clothes. Huldah was living in the second quarter in Jerusalem. They went and talked with Huldah.

15Then Huldah said to them, “The LORD, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me: 16‘The LORD says this: I am bringing trouble on this place and on the people who live here. These are the troubles that are mentioned in the book that the king of Judah read. 17The people of Judah have left me and have burned incense to other gods. They made me very angry. They made many idols. That is why I will show my anger against this place. My anger will be like a fire that cannot be stopped!’ 18–19’King Josiah of Judah sent you to ask advice from the LORD. Tell Josiah that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘You heard the words I spoke against this place and those who live here. And when you heard those things, your heart was soft, and you showed your sorrow before the LORD. I said that terrible things would happen to this place. So you tore your clothes to show your sadness, and you began to cry. That is why I heard you.’ This is what the LORD says. 20‘I will bring you to be with your ancestors. You will die and go to your grave in peace. So your eyes will not see all the trouble that I am bringing on this place.’”

Then Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah gave that message to the king.

The People Hear the Law
231King Josiah told all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem to come and meet with him. 2Then the king went up to the LORD’s Temple. All the people of Judah and the people who lived in Jerusalem went with him. The priests, the prophets, and all the people—from the least important to the most important—went with him. Then he read the Book of the Agreement. This was the Book of the Law that was found in the Lord’s Temple. Josiah read the book so that all the people could hear it.

3The king stood by the column and made an agreement with the LORD. He promised to follow the LORD and to obey his commands, the laws, and his rules. He promised to do this with all his heart and soul. He promised to obey the agreement written in this book. All the people stood to show that they promised to follow the agreement.

4Then the king commanded Hilkiah the
high priest, the other priests, and the gatekeepers to bring out of the LORD’s Temple all the dishes and things that were made to honor Baal, Asherah, and the stars of heaven. Then Josiah burned those things outside Jerusalem in the fields in Kidron Valley. Then they carried the ashes to Bethel.

5The kings of Judah had chosen some ordinary men to serve as priests. These false priests were burning incense at the high places in every city of Judah and all the towns around Jerusalem. They burned incense to honor Baal, the sun, the moon, the constellations, and all the stars in the sky. But Josiah stopped those false priests.

6Josiah removed the Asherah pole from the LORD’s Temple. He took the Asherah pole outside the city to the Kidron Valley and burned it there. Then he beat the burned pieces into dust and scattered the dust over the graves of the common people.

7Then King Josiah broke down the houses of the male prostitutes who were in the LORD’s Temple. Women also used these houses and made little tent covers to honor the false goddess Asherah.

8–9At that time the priests did not bring the sacrifices to Jerusalem and offer them on the LORD’s altar in the Temple. The priests lived in cities all over Judah. They burned incense and offered sacrifices at the high places in those cities. The high places were everywhere, from Geba to Beersheba. And the priests ate their unleavened bread in those towns with the ordinary people—not at the special place for priests in the Temple in Jerusalem. But King Josiah ruined the high places and brought the priests to Jerusalem. Josiah also destroyed the high places that were on the left side of the city gate, by the Gate of Joshua. (Joshua was the ruler of the city.)

10Topheth was a place in the Valley of Hinnom’s Son where people killed their children and burned them on an altar to honor the false god Molech. Josiah ruined that place so that no one could use it again. 11In the past the kings of Judah had put some horses and a chariot near the entrance to the LORD’s Temple. This was near the room of an important official named Nathan Melech. The horses and chariot were to honor the sun god. Josiah removed the horses and burned the chariot.

12In the past the kings of Judah had built altars on the roof of Ahab’s building. King Manasseh had also built altars in the two courtyards of the LORD’s Temple. Josiah destroyed all the altars and threw the broken pieces into the Kidron Valley.

13In the past King Solomon built some high places on Destroyer Hill near Jerusalem. The high places were on the south side of that hill. King Solomon built one of these places of worship to honor Ash-toreth, that horrible thing the people of Sidon worship. He also built one to honor Chemosh, that horrible thing the Moabites worship. And King Solomon built one high place to honor Milcom, that horrible thing the Ammonites worship. But King Josiah ruined all these places of worship. 14He broke all the memorial stones and Asherah poles. Then he scattered dead men’s bones over that place.

15Josiah also broke down the altar and high place at Bethel. Jeroboam son of Nebat had made this altar. Jeroboam caused Israel to sin. Josiah broke down both that altar and the high place. He broke the stones of the altar to pieces. Then he beat it into dust and he burned the Asherah pole. Josiah looked around and saw graves on the mountain. He sent men, and they took the bones from the graves. Then he burned the bones on the altar. In this way Josiah ruined the altar. This happened according to the message from the

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*a 23:6 scattered ... common people This was a strong way of showing that the Asherah pole could never be used again.

*b 23:10 people ... Molech Literally, “people made their son or daughter pass through fire to Molech.”

c 23:17 horses ... sun god The people thought the sun was a god who drove his chariot (the sun) across the sky each day.

d 23:14 scattered ... place This was the way he defiled (ruined) those places so that they could not be used for places of worship.

e 23:15 Jeroboam ... sin See 1 Kings 12:26–30. © 2014 Bible League International
The man of God announced these things when Jeroboam stood beside the altar at the feast.

Then Josiah looked around and saw the grave of the man of God.\(^b\)

Josiah said, “What is that monument I see?”

The people of the city told him, “It is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah. This man of God told about the things you have done to the altar at Bethel. He said them a long time ago.”

Josiah said, “Leave the man of God alone. Don’t move his bones.” So they left his bones and the bones of the man of God from Samaria.

Josiah also destroyed all the temples at the high places in the cities of Samaria. The kings of Israel had built those temples, which had made the Lord very angry. Josiah destroyed them, just as he had destroyed the place of worship at Bethel.

Josiah killed all the priests of the high places that were in Samaria. He killed the priests on those altars and burned men’s bones on the altars so that they could never be used again. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

**The People of Judah Celebrate Passover**

Then King Josiah gave a command to all the people. He said, “Celebrate the Passover for the Lord your God. Do this just as it is written in the Book of the Agreement.”

The people had not celebrated a Passover like this since the days when the judges ruled Israel. None of the kings of Israel or the kings of Judah ever had such a big celebration for Passover. They celebrated this Passover for the Lord in Jerusalem during Josiah’s 18th year as king.

Josiah destroyed the mediums, wizards, the house gods, the idols, and all the horrible things people worshiped in Judah and Jerusalem. He did this to obey the law written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the Lord’s Temple.

There had never been a king like Josiah before. Josiah turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength.\(^c\) No king had followed all the Law of Moses like Josiah. And there has never been another king like Josiah since that time.

But the Lord did not stop being angry with the people of Judah. He was still angry with them for everything that Manasseh had done.\(^a\) The Lord said, “I forced the Israelites to leave their land. I will do the same to Judah. I will take Judah out of my sight. I will not accept Jerusalem. Yes, I chose that city. I was talking about Jerusalem when I said, ‘My name will be there.’ But I will destroy the Temple that is in that place.”

All the other things that Josiah did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

**The Death of Josiah**

While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Neco, the king of Egypt, went to fight against the king of Assyria at the Euphrates River. Josiah went out to meet Neco at Megiddo. Pharaoh saw Josiah and killed him. Josiah’s officers put his body in a chariot and carried him from Megiddo to Jerusalem. They buried Josiah in his own grave.

Then the common people took Josiah’s son Jehoahaz and anointed him. They made Jehoahaz the new king.

**Jehoahaz Becomes King of Judah**

Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king. He ruled three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal, daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah.

Jehoahaz did what the Lord said was wrong. He did all the same things that his ancestors had done.

Pharaoh Neco put Jehoahaz in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Jehoahaz could not rule in Jerusalem.

\(^a\) 23:16 announced See 1 Kings 13:1–3.

\(^b\) 23:16 The man of God… the grave of the man of God This is from the ancient Greek version.

\(^c\) 23:25 with all his heart… strength See Deut. 6:4, 5.
Pharaoh Neco forced Judah to pay 7500 pounds\(^a\) of silver and 75 pounds\(^b\) of gold.

34Pharaoh Neco made Josiah’s son Eliakim the new king. Eliakim took the place of Josiah his father. Pharaoh Neco changed Eliakim’s name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh Neco took Jehoahaz away to Egypt where he died. 35Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh. But Jehoiakim made the common people pay taxes and used that money to give to Pharaoh Neco. So everyone paid their share of silver and gold, and King Jehoiakim gave the money to Pharaoh Neco.

36Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah from Rumah.

37Jehoiakim did what the Lord said was wrong. He did all the same things his ancestors had done.

King Nebuchadnezzar Comes to Judah

24In the time of Jehoiakim, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to the country of Judah. Jehoiakim served Nebuchadnezzar for three years. Then Jehoiakim turned against Nebuchadnezzar and broke away from his rule. 2The Lord sent groups of Babylonians, Arameans, Moabites, and Ammonites to fight against Jehoiakim. He sent them to destroy Judah. This happened just as the Lord had said. He used his servants the prophets to say those things.

3The Lord commanded this to happen to Judah. In this way he would remove them from his sight. He did this because of all the sins that Manasseh committed. 4He did this because Manasseh killed many innocent people and filled Jerusalem with their blood. The Lord would not forgive these sins.

5The other things that Jehoiakim did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah. 6Jehoiakim died and was buried with his ancestors. His son Jehoiachin became the new king after him.

7The king of Babylon captured all the land between the Brook of Egypt and the Euphrates River. This land was previously controlled by Egypt. So the king of Egypt did not leave Egypt anymore.

Nebuchadnezzar Captures Jerusalem

8Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to rule. He ruled three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Nехusha daughter of Elnathan from Jerusalem. 9Jehoiachin did what the Lord said was wrong. He did all the same things that his father had done.

10At that time the officers of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and surrounded it. 11Then King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to the city. 12King Jehoiachin of Judah went out to meet the king of Babylon. His mother, his officers, leaders, and officials also went with him. Then the king of Babylon captured Jehoiachin. This was during the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s rule.

13Nebuchadnezzar took from Jerusalem all the treasures in the Lord’s Temple and all the treasures in the king’s palace. He cut up all the golden dishes that King Solomon of Israel had put in the Lord’s Temple. This happened just as the Lord had said.

14Nebuchadnezzar captured all the people of Jerusalem, including the leaders and other wealthy people. He took 10,000 people and made them prisoners. He took all the skilled workers and craftsmen. No one was left, except the poorest of the common people. 15Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylon as a prisoner. He also took the king’s mother, his wives, officers, and the leading men of the land. He took them from Jerusalem to Babylon as prisoners. 16There were 7000 soldiers. Nebuchadnezzar took all the soldiers and 1000 of the skilled workers and craftsmen. All these men were trained soldiers, ready for war. The king of Babylon took them to Babylon as prisoners.
King Zedekiah

17 The king of Babylon made Mattaniah the new king. Mattaniah was Jehoiachin’s uncle. He changed his name to Zedekiah.

18 Zedekiah was 21 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 11 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. 19 Zedekiah did what the Lord said was wrong. He did all the same things that Jehoiakim did.

Nebuchadnezzar Ends Zedekiah’s Rule

Zedekiah rebelled and refused to obey the king of Babylon.

25 So King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and all his army came to fight against Jerusalem. This happened on the 10th day of the tenth month of Zedekiah’s ninth year as king. Nebuchadnezzar put his army around Jerusalem to stop people from going in and out of the city. Then he built a wall of dirt around the city. 2 His army stayed around Jerusalem until Zedekiah’s eleventh year as king of Judah. 3 The famine was getting worse and worse in the city. By the 9th day of the fourth month, there was no more food for the common people in the city.

4 Nebuchadnezzar’s army finally broke through the city wall. That night King Zedekiah and all his soldiers ran away. They used the secret gate that went through the double walls. It was by the king’s garden. The enemy soldiers were all around the city, but Zedekiah and his men escaped on the road to the desert. 5 The Babylonian army chased King Zedekiah and caught him near Jericho. All of Zedekiah’s soldiers left him and ran away.

6 The Babylonians took King Zedekiah to the king of Babylon at Riblah. The Babylonians decided to punish Zedekiah. 7 They killed Zedekiah’s sons in front of him. Then they put out Zedekiah’s eyes. They put chains on him and took him to Babylon.

Jerusalem Is Destroyed

8 Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem on the 7th day of the fifth month of his nineteenth year as king of Babylon. The captain of Nebuchadnezzar’s best soldiers was Nebuzaradan. 9 Nebuzaradan burned the Lord’s Temple, the king’s palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem. He destroyed even the largest houses.

10 Then the Babylonian army that was with Nebuzaradan pulled down the walls around Jerusalem. 11 Nebuzaradan captured all the people who were still left in the city. He took all the people as prisoners, even those who had tried to surrender. 12 He let only the poorest of the common people stay there. He let them stay so that they could take care of the grapes and other crops.

13 The Babylonian soldiers broke into pieces all the bronze things in the Lord’s Temple. They broke the bronze columns, the bronze carts, and the large bronze tank that were in the Lord’s Temple. Then they took all of that bronze to Babylon. 14 The Babylonians also took the pots, the shovels, the tools for trimming the lamps, the spoons, and all the bronze dishes that were used in the Temple. 15 Nebuzaradan took all the firepans and bowls. He took all the things made of gold for the gold. And he took everything made of silver for the silver. 16-17 So Nebuzaradan took the large bronze tank and the 2 bronze columns. (Each column was about 31 feet tall. The capitals on the columns were over 5 feet tall. They were made from bronze and had a design like a net and pomegranates. Both columns had the same kind of design.) He also took the carts that Solomon made for the Lord’s Temple. The bronze from these things was too heavy to be weighed.

The People of Judah Taken as Prisoners

18 From the Temple, Nebuzaradan took Seraiah the high priest, Zephaniah the...
second priest, and the three men who guarded the entrance.

19 From the city Nebuzaradan took one official who was in charge of the army and five of the king’s advisors who were still in the city. He took one secretary of the commander of the army who was in charge of counting the common people and choosing some of them to be soldiers and 60 people who just happened to be in the city.

20-21 Then Nebuzaradan took all these people to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the area of Hamath. The king of Babylon killed them there at Riblah. And the people of Judah were led away as prisoners from their land.

Gedaliah, Governor of Judah

22 King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon left some people in the land of Judah. There was a man named Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan. Nebuchadnezzar made Gedaliah governor over the people in Judah.

23 The army captains were Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth from Netophah, and Jaazaniah son of the Maacathite. These army captains and their men heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, so they went to Mizpah to meet with him. 24 Gedaliah made promises to these officers and their men. He said to them, “Don’t be afraid of the Babylonian officers. Stay here and serve the king of Babylon. Then everything will be all right with you.”

25 Ishmael son of Nethaniah son of Elishama was from the king’s family. In the seventh month, Ishmael and ten of his men attacked Gedaliah and killed all the men of Judah and Babylonians who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah. 26 Then the army officers and all the people ran away to Egypt. Everyone, from the least important to the most important, ran away because they were afraid of the Babylonians.

27 Later, Evil Merodach became the king of Babylon. He let King Jehoiachin of Judah out of prison. This happened in the 37th year after Jehoiachin was captured. This was on the 27th day of the twelfth month from the time that Evil Merodach began to rule. 28 Evil Merodach was kind to Jehoiachin. He gave him a more important place to sit than the other kings who were with him in Babylon. 29 Evil Merodach let Jehoiachin stop wearing prison clothes. And every day for the rest of his life, he ate at the same table with the king. 30 And each day, for as long as Jehoiachin lived, the king gave him enough money to pay for whatever he needed.
1 Chronicles

Family History From Adam to Noah

1–3 The first generations of people were Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah.¹

4 The sons of Noah were Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Japheth’s Descendants

5 The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

6 The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath,² and Togarmah.

7 The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

Ham’s Descendants

8 The sons of Ham were Cush,³ Mizraim,⁴ Put, and Canaan.

9 The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca.

The sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

10 Nimrod, a descendant of Cush, grew up to become the strongest and bravest soldier in the world.

11 Mizraim was the father of the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, Pathrus, Casluh, and Caphtor. (The Philistines came from Casluh.)

12 Canaan was the father of Sidon. Sidon was his first child. Canaan was also the father of the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and the people from Hamath.

Shem’s Descendants

17 Shem’s sons were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. Aram’s sons were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech.⁵

18 Arphaxad was the father of Shelah. Shelah was the father of Eber.

19 Eber had two sons. One son was named Peleg,⁶ because the people on the earth were divided into different languages during his lifetime. Peleg’s brother was named Joktan. (Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these men were Joktan’s sons.)

24 Shem’s descendants were Arphaxad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, and Abram. (Abram is also called Abraham.)

Abraham’s Family

28 Abraham’s sons were Isaac and Ishmael. These are their descendants: Ishmael’s first son was Nebaioth. His other sons were Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These were Ishmael’s sons.

32 Abraham also had sons by Keturah, his slave woman. They were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshan’s sons were Sheba and Dedan.

ⁱ 1:1–3 This list of names gives the name of a man, followed by his descendants.

² 1:6 Riphath Or “Diphath.”

³ 1:8 Cush That is, Ethiopia.

⁴ 1:8 Mizraim That is, Egypt.

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Midian’s sons were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. These men were the descendants of Keturah.

**Isaac’s Descendants**

34 Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac’s sons were Esau and Israel.
35 Esau’s sons were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.
36 Eliphaz’s sons were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gaatam, and Kenaz. Also Eliphaz and Timna had a son named Amalek.
37 Reuel’s sons were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

**The Edomites**

38 Seir’s sons were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.
39 Lotan’s sons were Hori and Homam. Lotan had a sister named Timna.
40 Shobal’s sons were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.
41 Zibeon’s sons were Aiah and Anah.
42 Anah’s son was Dishon.
43 Dishon’s sons were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Koran.
44 Ezer’s sons were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.
45 Dishan’s sons were Uz and Aran.

**The Kings of Edom**

43 There were kings in Edom long before there were kings in Israel. These are the names of the kings of Edom: Bela was the son of Beor. The name of Bela’s city was Dinhhabah.
44 When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah became the new king. Jobab came from Bozrah.
45 When Jobab died, Husham became the new king. Husham was from the country of the Temanites.
46 When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became the new king. Hadad defeated Midian in the country of Moab. Hadad’s city was named Avith.
47 When Hadad died, Samlah became the new king. Samlah was from Masrekah.
48 When Samlah died, Shaul became the new king. Shaul was from Rehoboth by the Euphrates River.
49 When Shaul died, Baal Hanan son of Acbor became the new king.
50 When Baal Hanan died, Hadad became the new king. Hadad’s city was named Pau. Hadad’s wife was named Mehetabel. Mehetabel was Matred’s daughter. Matred was Mezahab’s daughter. Then Hadad died.

The leaders of Edom were Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram. This is a list of the leaders of Edom.

**Israel’s Sons**

1 Israel’s sons were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

**Judah’s Sons**

3 Judah’s sons were Er, Onan, and Shelah. Bathshua from Canaan was their mother. The LORD killed Er, the first son, because he saw that he was evil. Judah’s daughter-in-law Tamar gave birth to Perez and Zerah. So Judah had five sons.
5 Perez’s sons were Hezron and Hamul.
6 Zerah had five sons. They were Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Darda.
7 Zimri’s son was Carmi. Carmi’s son was Achar. Achar was the man who brought many troubles to Israel. Achar kept the things he took in battle, but he was supposed to give them all to God.
8 Ethan’s son was Azariah.

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Hezron’s sons were Jerahmeel, Ram, and Caleb.\(^a\)

### Ram’s Descendants

10 Ram was Amminadab’s father, and Amminadab was Nahshon’s father. Nahshon was the leader of the people of Judah.\(^b\) Nahshon was Salmon’s father. Salmon was Boaz’s father. Boaz was Obed’s father. Obed was Jesse’s father. Jesse was Eliab’s father. Eliab was Jesse’s first son. Jesse’s second son was Abinadab. His third son was Shimea. Jesse’s fifth son was Raddai. Ozem was Jesse’s sixth son, and David was his seventh son.\(^c\) Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. Zeruiah’s three sons were Abishai, Joab, and Asahel. Abigail was Amasa’s mother. Amasa’s father was Jether. Jether was from the Ishmaelites.

### Caleb’s Descendants

18 Caleb was Hezron’s son. Caleb had children with his wife Azubah. Azubah was the daughter of Jerioth.\(^c\) Azubah’s sons were Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon. When Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath. Caleb and Ephrath had a son. They named him Hur.\(^d\) Hur was Uri’s father. Uri was Bezalel’s father.

21 Later when Hezron was 60 years old, he married Makir’s daughter. Makir was the father of Gilead. Hezron had sexual relations with Makir’s daughter, and she gave birth to Segub. Segub was Jair’s father. Jair had 23 cities in the country of Gilead. But Gershur and Aram took Jair’s villages. Among them were Kenath and the small towns around it. There were 60 small towns in all. All these towns belonged to the sons of Makir, the father of Gilead.

24 After Hezron died in the town of Caleb Ephrathah, his wife Abijah had his son, who was named Ashhur. Ashhur was the father of Tekoa.

### Jerahmeel’s Descendants

25 Jerahmeel was Hezron’s first son. Jerahmeel’s sons were Ram, Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. Ram was Jerahmeel’s first son. Jerahmeel had another wife named Atarah. Onam’s mother was Atarah.

27 Jerahmeel’s first son, Ram, had sons. They were Maaz, Jamin, and Eker.

28 Onam’s sons were Shammai and Jada. Shammai’s sons were Nadab and Abishur.

29 Abishur’s wife was named Abihail. They had two sons. Their names were Ahban and Molid.

30 Nadab’s sons were Seled and Appaim. Seled died without having children.

31 Appaim’s son was Ishi. Ishi’s son was Sheshan. Sheshan’s son was Ahlai.

32 Jada was Shammai’s brother. Jada’s sons were Jether and Jonathan. Jether died without having children.

33 Jonathan’s sons were Peleth and Zaza. This was the list of Jerahmeel’s children.

34 Sheshan did not have sons. He only had daughters. Sheshan had a servant from Egypt named Jarha. Sheshan let his daughter marry Jarha. They had a son. His name was Attai.

36 Attai was Nathan’s father. Nathan was Zabad’s father. Zabad was Ephlal’s father. Ephlal was Obed’s father.

38 Obed was Jehu’s father. Jehu was Azariah’s father. Azariah was Helez’s father. Helez was Eleasah’s father. Eleasah was Sismai’s father. Sismai was Shallum’s father.

41 Shallum was Jekamiah’s father, and Jekamiah was Elishama’s father.

### Other Descendants of Caleb

42 Caleb was Jerahmeel’s brother. Caleb had some sons. His first son

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\(^a\) 2:9 Caleb Literally, "Kelubai."

\(^b\) 2:10 Nahshon . . . Judah Nahshon was leader of the tribe of Judah at the time the Israelites came out of Egypt. See Num. 1:7; 2:3; 7:12.

\(^c\) 2:18 Or "Caleb had children with Azubah his wife and with Jerioth."
was Mesha. Mesha was Ziph’s father. There was also Caleb’s son Mareshah. Mareshah was the father of Hebron.

43 Hebron’s sons were Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. 44Shema was Raham’s father. Raham was Jorkeam’s father. Rekem was Shammai’s father. 45Shammai’s son was Maon. Maon was Beth Zur’s father.

46 Caleb’s slave woman was named Ephah. Ephah was the mother of Haran, Moza, and Gazez. Haran was Gazez’s father.

47 Jahdai’s sons were Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph.

48 Maacah was another slave woman of Caleb. Maacah was the mother of Sheber and Tirhanah. 49Maacah was also the mother of Shaaph and Sheva. Shaaph was Madmannah’s father. Sheva was the father of Macbenah and Gibea. Caleb’s daughter was Acsah.

50 This is a list of Caleb’s descendants: Hur was Caleb’s first son. He was born to Ephrathah. Hur’s sons were Shobal, the founder of Kiriath Jearim, 51Salma, the founder of Bethlehem, and Hareph, the founder of Beth Gader.

52 Shobal was the founder of Kiriath Jearim. This is a list of Shobal’s descendants: Haroeh, half the people in Manahti, 53and the tribes from Kiriath Jearim. These are the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites, and Mishraites. The Zorathites and the Eshtalites came from the Mishraites.

54 This is a list of Salma’s descendants: the people from Bethlehem, Netophah, Atroth Beth Joab, half the people from Manahith, the Zorites, 55and the families of scribes who lived at Jabez, Tirath, Shimeath, and Sucah. These scribes were the Kenites who came from Hammath. Hammath was the founder of Beth Recab.

David’s Sons

1Some of David’s sons were born in the town of Hebron. This is a list of David’s sons:

David’s first son was Amnon. Amnon’s mother was Ahinoam. She was from the town of Jezreel.

The second son was Daniel. His mother was Abigail from Carmel in Judah.

2 The third son was Absalom. His mother was Maacah, daughter of Talmai. Talmai was the king of Geshur.

The fourth son was Adonijah. His mother was Haggith.

3 The fifth son was Shephatiah. His mother was Abital.

The sixth son was Ittirat. His mother was Eglah, David’s wife.

4These six sons were born to David in Hebron.

David ruled as king in Hebron for seven years and six months. He ruled as king in Jerusalem 33 years. 5These are the children born to David in Jerusalem:

There were four sons from Bathsheba, the daughter of Ammiel. They were Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon. 6–8There were nine other sons. They were Ibhar, Elishua, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

9They were all David’s sons. Their sister was named Tamar. David also had other sons by his slave women.

Kings of Judah After David’s Time

10 Solomon’s son was Rehoboam. Rehoboam’s son was Abijah. Abijah’s son was Asa. Asa’s son was Jehoshaphat. 11Jehoshaphat’s son was Jehoram. Jehoram’s son was Ahaziah. Ahaziah’s son was Joash. 12Joash’s son was Amaziah. Amaziah’s son was Azariah. Azariah’s son was Jotham.
This is a list of Josiah's sons: The first son was Johanan. The second son was Jehoiakim. The third son was Zedekiah. The fourth son was Shallum.

Jehoiakim's sons were Jehoiachin, his son, and Zedekiah, his son. a

David's Family After Babylonian Captivity

17 This is a list of Jehoiachin's children after Jehoiachin became a prisoner in Babylon: His children were Shealtiel, b Malkiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

Pedaiah's sons were Zerubbabel and Shimei. Zerubbabel's sons were Meshullam and Hananiah. Shelomith was their sister. Zerubbabel had five other sons also. Their names were Hashubah, Ohel, Berekiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab Hesed.

Hananiah's son was Pelatiah. His son was Jeshaiash, b His son was Rephaiah. His son was Arnan. His son was Obadiah. His son was Shecaniah. c

This is a list of Shecaniah's descendants: Shemaiah. Shemaiah had six sons: Shemaiah, Hattush, Igai, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat.

22 This is a list of Shecaniah's descendants: Shemaiah. Shemaiah had six sons: Shemaiah, Hattush, Igai, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat.

Neariah had three sons. They were Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam.

Elioenai had seven sons. They were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani.

Other Family Groups of Judah

1 This is a list of Judah's sons: They were Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal.

2 Shobal's son was Reaiah. Reaiah was Jahath's father. Jahath was the father of Ahumai and Lahad. The Zorathites are descendants of Ahumai and Lahad.

3 Etam's sons were Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash. And they had a sister named Hazzelponi.

4 Penuel was Gedor's father, and Ezer was Hushah's father.

These were Hur's sons. Hur was Eprathah's first son, and Eprathah was the founder d of Bethlehem.

5 Tekoa's father was Ashhur. Ashhur had two wives. Their names were Helah and Naarah. Naarah had Ahuzzam, Heper, Temeni, and Haashaastari. These were the sons Naarah had with Ashhur. The sons of Helah were Zereth, Zohar, Ethnan, and Koz. Koz was the father of Anub and Hazzobebah. Koz also was the father of the tribes of Aharhel. Aharhel was Harum's son.

9 Jabez was a very good man, who was better than his brothers. His mother said, “I have named him Jabez e because I was in much pain when I had him.” 10 Jabez prayed to the God of Israel and said, “I pray that you would bless me and give me more land! Be near me and don't let anyone hurt me! Then I will not have any pain.” God gave Jabez what he asked for.

11 Kelub was Shuhah's brother. Kelub was Mehir's father. Mehir was Eshton's father. Eshton was the father of Beth Rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah. Tehinnah was the father of Ir Nahash. f These men were from Recah.

13 The sons of Kenaz were Othniel and Seraiah. Othniel's sons were Hathath and Meonothai. Meonothai was Ophrah's father. And Seraiah was Joab's father.

a 3:16 This can be interpreted in two ways: “This Zedekiah was the son of Jehoiakim and the brother of Jehoiachin” or “This Zedekiah is the son of Jehoiachin and the grandson of Jehoiakim.”

b 2:27 Jeshaiash Or “Isaiah.”

c 3:21 The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.

d 4:4 founder Literally, “father.” The person who started the city. Also in verse 14.

e 4:9 Jabez This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “pain.”

f 4:12 Tehinnah . . . Ir Nahash Or “Tehinnah was the founder of the city of Nahash.” Ir means “city.”
Joab was the founder of the Ge Harashim. The people used that name because they were skilled workers.

Caleb was Jephunneh's son. Caleb’s sons were Iru, Elah, and Naam. Elah’s son was Kenaz.

Jehallelel’s sons were Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel.

Ezrah’s sons were Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. Mered was the father of Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah. Ishbah was the father of Eshtemoa. Mered had a wife from Egypt. She had Jered, Heber, and Jekuthiel. Jered was Gedor’s father. Heber was Soco’s father. And Jekuthiel was Zanoah’s father. These were the sons of Bithiah. Bithiah was Pharaoh’s daughter. She was Mered’s wife from Egypt.

Mered’s wife was Naham’s sister. Mered’s wife was from Judah. The sons of Mered’s wife were the father of Keilah and Eshtemoa. Keilah was from the Garmites. And Eshtemoa was from the Maacathites.

Shimon’s sons were Amnon, Rinnah, Ben Hanan, and Tilon. Ishi’s sons were Zoheth and Ben Zoheth.

Shelah was Judah’s son. Shelah’s sons were Er, Laadah, Jokim, the men from Cozeba, Joash, and Saraph. Er was the father of Lecah. Laadah was the father of Mareshah and the tribes of linen workers at Beth Ashbea. Joash and Saraph married Moabite women. Then they went back to Bethlehem. The writings about this family are very old.

Simeon’s Children

24 Simeon’s sons were Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul. 25 Shaul’s son was Shallum. Shallum’s son was Mibsam. Mibsam’s son was Mishma.

Mishma’s son was Hammuel. Hammuel’s son was Zaccur. Zaccur’s son was Shimei. Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, but Shimei’s brothers did not have many children. Shimei’s brothers did not have large families. Their families were not as large as the other tribes in Judah.

Shimei’s descendants lived in Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susim, Beth Biri, and Shaaraim. They lived in these towns until David became king. The five villages near these towns were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Token, and Ashan. There were also other villages as far away as Baalath. This is where they lived. And they also wrote the history about their family.

34–38 This is the list of men who were leaders of their tribes: They were Meshobab, Jamlehch, Josiah (Amaziah’s son), Joel, Jehu son of Joshiah, Joshiah son of Seraiah, Seraiah son of Asiel, Elothai, Jaakobah, Jeshoahia, Asiaah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benai, and Ziza (Shiphi’s son). Shphi was Allon’s son, and Allon was Jediah’s son. Jediah was Shmih’s son, and Shimih was Shemaiah’s son. These men’s families grew to be very large. They went to the area outside the town of Gedor to the east side of the valley. They went to that place to look for fields for their sheep and cattle. They found good fields with plenty of grass. They found plenty of good land there. The land was peaceful and quiet. Ham’s descendants lived there in the past. This happened during the time that Hezekiah was king of Judah. These men came to
Gedor and fought against the Hamites. They destroyed the tents of the Hamites. They also fought against the Meunites who lived there. These men destroyed all the Meunites. There are no Meunites in this place even today. So these men began to live there. They lived there because the land had grass for their sheep.

Five hundred people from the tribe of Simeon went to the hill country of Seir. Ishi’s sons led these men. The sons were Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzzziel. The Simeonite men fought against the people living in that place. There were only a few Amalekites still living, and these Simeonites killed them. Since that time until now, the Simeonites have lived in Seir.

Reuben’s Descendants

Reuben was Israel’s first son. Reuben should have received the special privileges of the oldest son. But he had sexual relations with his father’s wife. So those privileges were given to Joseph’s sons. In the family history, Reuben’s name is not listed as the first son. Judah became stronger than his brothers, so the leaders came from his family. But Joseph’s family got the other privileges that belong to the oldest son.

Reuben’s sons were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

These are the names of Joel’s descendants: Shemaiah was Joel’s son. Gog was Shemaiah’s son. Shimei was Gog’s son. Micah was Shimei’s son. Reaiah was Micah’s son. Baal was Reaiah’s son. Beerah was Baal’s son. King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria forced Beerah to leave his home. So Beerah became the king’s prisoner. Beerah was a leader of the tribe of Reuben.

Joel’s brothers and all his tribes are listed just as they are written in the family histories: Jeiel was the first son, then Zechariah, and Bela. Bela was Azaz’s son. Azaz was Shema’s son. Shema was Joel’s son.

They lived in the area of Aroer all the way to Nebo and Baal Meon. Bela’s people lived to the east as far as the edge of the desert, near the Euphrates River. They lived there because they had many cattle in the land of Gilead. When Saul was king, Bela’s people fought a war against the Hagrites. They defeated the Hagrites. Bela’s people lived in the tents that had belonged to the Hagrites. They lived in those tents and traveled throughout the area east of Gilead.

Gad’s Descendants

The people of Gad lived across the river from Reuben, in the area of Bashan. They spread all the way to the town of Salecah. Joel was the first leader in Bashan. Shapham was the second leader. Then Janai became the leader. The seven brothers in their families were Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber.

They were the descendants of Abihail. Abihail was Huri’s son. Huri was Jaroah’s son. Jaroah was Gilead’s son. Gilead was Michael’s son. Michael was Jeshishai’s son. Jeshishai was Jahdo’s son. Jahdo was Buz’s son. Ahi was Abdiel’s son. Abdiel was Gunite son. Ahi was the leader of their family.

The people in the tribe of Gad lived in the area of Gilead. They lived in the area of Bashan, in the small towns around Bashan, and in all the pastures in the area of Sharon all the way to the borders.

During the time of Jotham and Jeroboam, all these people’s names were written in the family history of Gad. Jotham was the king of Judah and Jeroboam was the king of Israel.

Some Soldiers Skilled in War

From half the tribe of Manasseh and from...
the tribes of Reuben and Gad there were 44,760 brave men ready for war. They were skilled in war. They carried shields and swords. And they were also good with bows and arrows. 19 They started a war against the Hagrites and the people of Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab. 20 The men from the tribes of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad prayed to God during the war. They asked God to help them because they trusted him, so God helped them. He allowed them to defeat the Hagrites and those who were with the Hagrites. 21 They took the animals that belonged to the Hagrites. They took 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2000 donkeys, and 100,000 people. 22 Many Hagrites were killed because God helped the people of Reuben win the war. Then the tribes of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad settled in the land of the Hagrites. They lived there until the time when the Israelites were taken into captivity.

23 Half the tribe of Manasseh lived in the area of Bashan all the way to Baal Hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. They became a very large group of people.

24 These were the family leaders from half the tribe of Manasseh: Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were all strong, brave, and famous men, and they were leaders in their families. 25 But they sinned against the God their ancestors had worshiped. They began worshiping the false gods of the people God had destroyed, the people who had lived in the land before them.

26 The God of Israel made King Pul of Assyria want to go to war. He was also called Tiglath Pileser. He fought against the tribes of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad. He forced them to leave their homes and made them prisoners. Pul took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and near the Gozan River. Those tribes from Israel have lived in those places since that time until today.

Levi’s Descendants

6 1 Levi’s sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.
2 Kohath’s sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.
3 Amram’s children were Aaron, Moses, and Miriam.
4 Aaron’s sons were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.
5 Eleazar was Phinehas’ father. Phinehas was Abishua’s father. 6 Abishua was Bukki’s father. Bukki was Uzzi’s father. 7 Uzzi was Zerahiah’s father. Zerahiah was Merioth’s father. 8 Merioth was Amariah’s father. Amariah was Azariah’s father. 9 Azariah was Johanan’s father. Johanan was Azariah’s father. 10 Azariah is the one who served as priest in the Temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem.) 11 Azariah was Amariah’s father. Amariah was Azariah’s father. 12 Azariah was Johanan’s father. Johanan was Azariah’s father. 13 Azariah was the one who served as priest in the Temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem.) 15 Jehozadak was forced to leave his home when the Lord sent the people of Judah and Jerusalem away. Through Nebuchadnezzar, the Lord caused them all to be made prisoners in another country.

Other Descendants of Levi

16 Levi’s sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.
17 The names of Gershon’s sons were Libni and Shimei.
18 Kohath’s sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.
19 Merari’s sons were Mahli and Mushii. This is a list of the families in the tribe of Levi. They are listed with their fathers’ names first.
20 These were Gershon’s descendants: Libni was Gershon’s son. Jahath was Libni’s son. Zimmah was Jahath’s son. 21 Johanan was Zimmah’s son. Iddo was Johanan’s son. Zerah was Iddo’s
son. Jeatherai was Zerah’s son.
22 These were Kohath’s descendants:
    Amminadab was Kohath’s son.
    Korah was Amminadab’s son. Assir
    was Korah’s son. 23Elkanah was
    Assir’s son. Ebiasaph was Elkanah’s
    son. Assir was Ebiasaph’s son.
24 Tahath was Assir’s son. Uriel was
    Tahath’s son. Uzziah was Uriel’s son.
    Shaul was Uzziah’s son.
25 Elkanah’s sons were Amasai and
    Ahimoth. 26 Zophai was Elkanah’s
    son. Nahath was Zophai’s son.
    Eliab was Nahath’s son. Jeroham
    was Eliab’s son. Elkanah was
    Jeroham’s son. Samuel was
    Elkanah’s son. 28Samuel’s sons were
    his oldest son Joel, and Abijah.
29 These are Merari’s sons: Mahli was
    Merari’s son, Libni was Mahli’s son,
    Shimei was Libni’s son, and Uzzah
    was Shimei’s son. 30Shimea was
    Uzzah’s son. Haggiah was Shimea’s
    son. Asaiah was Haggiah’s son.

The Temple Musicians
31 These are the men David chose to take
    care of the music at the tent of the LORD’s
    house after God’s Holy Box was put there.
32 These men served by singing at the Holy
    Tent. The Holy Tent is also called the
    Meeting Tent. These men served until
    Solomon built the LORD’s Temple in Jeru-
    salem. They served by following the rules
given to them for their work.
33 These are the names of the men and
    their sons who served with music:
    The descendants from the Kohath
    family were Heman the singer who
        was Joel’s son; Joel was Samuel’s
        son; 34Samuel was Elkanah’s
        son; Elkanah was Jeroham’s son;
        Jeroham was Eliel’s son; Eliel was
        Toah’s son; 35Toah was Zuph’s
        son; Zuph was Elkanah’s son;
        Elkanah was Mahath’s son; Mahath
        was Amasai’s son; 36 Amasai was
        Elkanah’s son; Elkanah was Joel’s
        son; Joel was Azariah’s son; Azariah
        was Zephaniah’s son; 37Zephaniah
    was Tahath’s son; Tahath was
    Assir’s son; Assir was Ebiasaph’s
    son; Ebiasaph was Korah’s son;
    38Korah was Izhar’s son; Izhar was
    Kohath’s son; Kohath was Levi’s
    son; Levi was Israel’s son.
39 Heman’s relative was Asaph. Asaph
    served by Heman’s right side.
    Asaph was Berekiah’s son. Berekiah
    was Shimeiah’s son. 40 Shimea
    was Michael’s son. Michael was
    Baaseiah’s son. Baaseiah was
    Malkijah’s son. 41 Malkijah was
    Ethni’s son. Ethni was Zerah’s
    son. Zerah was Adaiah’s son.
    42 Adaiah was Ethan’s son. Ethan
    was Zimmah’s son. Zimmah was
    Shimei’s son. 43 Shimei was Jahath’s
    son. Jahath was Gershon’s son.
    Gershon was Levi’s son.
44 Merari’s descendants were the relatives
    of Heman and Asaph. They were
    the singing group on Heman’s left
    side. Ethan was Kishi’s son. Kishi
    was Abdi’s son. Abdi was Malluch’s
    son. 45 Malluch was Hashabiah’s
    son. Hashabiah was Amaziah’s
    son. Amaziah was Hilkiah’s son.
    46 Hilkiah was Amzi’s son. Amzi
    was Bani’s son. Bani was Shemer’s
    son. 47 Shemer was Mahli’s son.
    Mahli was Mushi’s son. Mushi was
    Merari’s son. Merari was Levi’s son.
48 Heman and Asaph’s brothers were
    from the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Levi
    was also called Levites. The Levites
    were chosen to do the work in the Holy Tent.
    The Holy Tent was God’s house. 49 But
    only Aaron’s descendants were permitted
    to burn incense on the altar of burnt offer-
    ing and on the altar of incense. Aaron’s
    descendants did all the work in the Most
    Holy Place in God’s house. They also did
    the ceremonies to make the Israelites pure.
    They followed all the rules and laws that
    Moses, God’s servant, commanded.

Aaron’s Descendants
50 These were Aaron’s sons: Eleazar was
    Aaron’s son. Phinehas was Eleazar’s
son. Abishua was Phinehas’ son.

51Bukki was Abishua’s son. Uzzi was Bukki’s son. Zerahiah was Uzzi’s son. 52Meraioth was Zerahiah’s son. Amariah was Meraioth’s son. Ahitub was Amariah’s son. 53Zadok was Ahitub’s son. Ahimaaz was Zadok’s son.

**Homes for the Levite Families**

54These are the places where Aaron’s descendants lived. They lived in their camps in the land that was given to them. The Kohath families got the first share of the land that was given to the Levites. 55They were given the town of Hebron and the fields around it. This was in the area of Judah. 56But the fields farther from town and the villages near the town of Hebron were given to Caleb son of Jephunneh.

57The descendants of Aaron were given the city of Hebron. Hebron was a city of safety. They were also given the cities of Libnah, Jattir, Eshtemoa, Hilen, Debir, Ashan, Juttah, and Beth Shemesh. They got all the cities and the fields around them.

60From the tribe of Benjamin they got the cities of Gibeon, Geba, Alemeth, and Anathoth. They got all the cities and the fields around them.

Thirteen cities were given to the Kohath families.

61The rest of Kohath’s descendants got ten towns from half the tribe of Manasseh.

62The tribes that were the descendants of Gershon got 13 cities. They got the cities from the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the part of Manasseh living in the area of Bashan.

63The tribes that were the descendants of Merari got 12 cities. They got the cities from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun. They got them by throwing lots.

64So the Israelites gave those towns and fields to the Levites. All those cities came from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. They decided which Levite family got which city by throwing lots.

66The tribe of Ephraim gave some of the Kohath families some towns. Those towns were chosen by throwing lots. They were given the city of Shechem. Shechem is a city of safety. They were also given the towns of Gezer, Jokmeam, Beth Horon, Ajalon, and Gath Rimmon. They also got fields with those towns. Those towns were in the hill country of Ephraim. And from half the tribe of Manasseh, the Israelites gave the towns of Aner and Bileam to the Kohath families. The Kohath families also got fields with those towns.

**Other Levite Families Get Homes**

71The Gershon families got the towns of Golan in the area of Bashan and Ashtaroth from half the tribe of Manasseh. They also got the fields near those towns.

72–73The Gershon families also got the towns of Kedesh, Daberath, Ramoth, and Gannim from the tribe of Issachar. They also got the fields near those towns.

74–75The Gershon families also got the towns of Mashal, Abdon, Hukok, and Anathoth from the tribe of Asher. They also got the fields near those towns.

76The Gershon families also got the towns of Kedesh in Galilee, Hammon, and Kiriahtaim from the tribe of Naphtali. They also got the fields near those towns.

77The rest of the Levites, from the Merari families, got the towns of Jokneam, Kartah, Rimmono, and Tabor from the tribe of Zebulun. They also got the fields near those towns.

78–79The Merari families also got the towns of Bezer in the desert, Jahzah, Kedemoth, and Mephaath from the tribe of Reuben. The tribe of Reuben lived on the east side of the Jordan River, east of the city of Jericho. These Merari families also got the fields near those towns.

80–81And the Merari families got the towns of Ramoth in Gilead, Mahanaim, Heshbon, and Jazer from the tribe of Gad. They also got the fields near those towns.

\(6:57\) city of safety A special city where an Israelite could run to in order to escape the angry relatives of a person who was accidentally killed by that Israelite. See Num. 35:6–34 and Josh. 20:1–9. Also in verse 67.
Issachar’s Descendants

1 Issachar had four sons. Their names were Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.
2 Tola’s sons were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsham, and Samuel. They were all leaders of their families. Those men and their descendants were strong soldiers. Their families grew. By the time David was king, there were 22,600 men ready for war.
3 Uzzi’s son was Izrahiah. Izrahiah’s sons were Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Isshiah. All five of them were leaders of their families. Their family history shows they had 36,000 soldiers ready for war. They had a large family because they had many wives and children.
4 The family history shows there were 87,000 strong soldiers in all the tribes of Issachar.

Benjamin’s Descendants

6 Benjamin had three sons. Their names were Bela, Beker, and Jediael.
7 Bela had five sons. Their names were Ezbon, Uzzi, Uziel, Jerimoth, and Iri. They were leaders of their families. Their family history shows they had 22,034 soldiers.
8 Beker’s sons were Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Eloenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. They all were Beker’s children.
9 Their family history shows who the family leaders were. And it also shows they had 20,200 soldiers.
10 Jediael’s son was Bilhan. Bilhan’s sons were Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Kenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar. All of Jediael’s sons were leaders of their families. They had 17,200 soldiers ready for war.
12 The Shuppites and Huppites were the descendants of Ir. Hushim was the son of Aher.

Naphtali’s Descendants

13 Naphtali’s sons were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum. And these are the descendants of Bilhah.

Manasseh’s Descendants

14 These are Manasseh’s descendants: Manasseh’s Aramean slave woman had a son named Asriel. She also bore Makir, the father of Gilead. Makir married a woman from the Huppites and Shuppites. Makir’s sister was named Maacah. The name of the second was Zelophehad, who had only daughters. Makir’s wife Maacah had a son. She named this son Peresh. His brother was named Shershi. The sons of Sheresh were Ulam and Rakem.
17 Ulam’s son was Bedan. These were the descendants of Gilead. Gilead was Makir’s son. Makir was Manasseh’s son.
19 Shemida’s sons were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

Ephraim’s Descendants

20 These were the names of Ephraim’s descendants. Ephraim’s son was Shuthelah. Shuthelah’s son was Bered. Bered’s son was Tahath.
21 Tahath’s son was Eleadah. Eleadah’s son was Tahath. Tahath’s son was Zabad. Zabad’s son was Shuthelah.
22 Some men who grew up in the city of Gath killed Ezer and Elead. This happened because Ezer and Elead went there to steal cattle and sheep from those men in Gath. Ephraim was the father of Ezer and Elead. He cried for many days because Ezer and Elead were dead. Ephraim’s family came to comfort him.

7:13 Bilhah Jacob’s slave woman and the mother of Dan and Naphtali. See Gen. 30:4–8.
7:18 Hammoleketh Or “the woman who ruled” or “queen.”
Ephraim had sexual relations with his wife. She became pregnant and had a son. Ephraim named this new son Beriah because something bad had happened to his family. Ephraim’s daughter was Sheerah. Sheerah built Lower Beth Horon and Upper Beth Horon and Lower Uzzen Sheerah and Upper Uzzen Sheerah.

25 Rephah was Ephraim’s son. Resheph was Rephah’s son. Talah was Resheph’s son. Tahan was Talah’s son. Ladan was Tahan’s son. Ammihud was Ladan’s son. Elishama was Ammihud’s son.

26 Nun was Elishama’s son. Joshua was Nun’s son.

27 These are the cities and lands where Ephraim’s descendants lived: Bethel and the villages near it, Naaran to the east, Gezer and the villages near it on the west, and Shechem and the villages near it all the way to Ayyah and the villages near it.

28 Along the borders of Manasseh’s land were the towns of Beth Shan, Taanach, Megiddo, and Dor, and the small towns near them. The descendants of Joseph lived in these towns. Joseph was the son of Israel.

Asher’s Descendants

30 Asher’s sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. Their sister was named Serah.

31 Beriah’s sons were Heber and Malkiel. Malkiel was Birzaith’s father.

32 Heber was the father of Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham, and of their sister Shua.

33 Japhlet’s sons were Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These were Japhlet’s children.

34 Shomer’s sons were Ahi, Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram.

35 Shomer’s brother was Helem. Helem’s sons were Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal.

36 Zophah’s sons were Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, and Ithran.

37 Jether’s sons were Jephunneh, Pispa, and Ara.

38 Ulla’s sons were Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia.

40 All these men were descendants of Asher. They were leaders of their families. They were the best men. They were soldiers and great leaders. Their family history shows 26,000 soldiers ready for war.

The Family History of King Saul

8 1 Benjamin was Bela’s father. Bela was Benjamin’s first son. Ashbel was Benjamin’s second son. Aharah was Benjamin’s third son. Nohah was Benjamin’s fourth son. And Rapha was Benjamin’s fifth son.

3–5 Bela’s sons were Addar, Gera, Abihud, Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, Gera, Shephuphan, and Huram.

6–7 These were the descendants of Ehud. They were leaders of their families in Geba. They were forced to leave their homes and move to Manahath. Ehud’s descendants were Naaman, Abijah, and Gera. Gera forced them to leave their homes. He was the father of Uzza and Ahihud.

8 Shaharaim divorced his wives Hushim and Baara in Moab. After he did this he had some children with another wife.

9–10 Shaharaim had Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, Jeuz, Sakia, and Mirmah with his wife Hodesh. They were leaders of their families.

11 Shaharaim and Hushim had two sons named Abitub and Elpaal.

12–13 Elpaal’s sons were Eber, Misham, Shemed, Beriah, and Shema. Shemed built the towns of Ono and Lod and the small towns around Lod. Beriah and Shema were the leaders of the families living in Aijalon. They forced the people who lived in Gath to leave.

14 Beriah’s sons were Shashak and...
Jeremiah, Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, Michael, Ishpah, and Joha.

Elpaal’s sons were Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, Ishmerai, Izliah, and Jobab.

Shimei’s sons were Jakim, Zicri, Zabdi, Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath.

Shashak’s sons were Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, Abdon, Zicri, Hanan, Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah, Iphdeiah, and Penuel.

Jeroham’s sons were Shamsherai, Shehartai, Athaliah, Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zicri.

All these men were leaders of their families. They were listed in their family histories as leaders. They lived in Jerusalem.

Jeiel was Gibeon’s father. He and his wife, Maacah, lived in the town of Gibeon. His oldest son was Abdon. Other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, Gedor, Ahio, Zeker, and Mikloth.

Mikloth was the father of Shimeah. These sons also lived near their relatives in Jerusalem.

Ner was Kish’s father. Kish was Saul’s father, and Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malki Shua, Abinadab, and Esh Baal.

Jonathan’s son was Merib Baal. Merib Baal was Micah’s father.

Micah’s sons were Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz.

Ahaz was Jehoaddah’s father. Jehoaddah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri. Zimri was Moza’s father. Moza was Binea’s father. Raphah was Binea’s son. Eleasah was Raphah’s son. And Azel was Eleasah’s son.

Azel had six sons. Their names were Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All these sons were Azel’s children.

Azel’s brother was Eshek. Eshek had some sons. These were Eshek’s sons: Ulam was Azel’s oldest son. Jeush was Eshek’s second son.

Eliphelet was Eshek’s third son. Ulam’s sons were strong soldiers who were very good with bows and arrows. They had many sons and grandsons. In all, there were 150 sons and grandsons.

All these men were descendants of Benjamin.

The names of all the Israelites were listed in their family histories. Those family histories were put in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

The People in Jerusalem

The people of Judah were made prisoners and forced to go to Babylon. They were taken there because they were not faithful to God. The first people to come back and live in their own lands and towns were some Israelites, priests, Levites, and servants who work in the Temple.

These are the people from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh who lived in Jerusalem:

Uthai was Ammihud’s son. Ammihud was Omri’s son. Omri was Imri’s son. Imri was Bani’s son. Bani was a descendant of Perez. Perez was Judah’s son.

The Shilonites who lived in Jerusalem were Asaiah the oldest son and his sons.

The Zerahites who lived in Jerusalem were Jeuel and their relatives. There were 690 of them in all.

These are the people from the tribe of Benjamin who lived in Jerusalem: Sallu was Meshullam’s son. Meshullam was Hodaviah’s son. Hodaviah was Hassenuah’s son. Ibneiah was Jeroham’s son. Elah was Uzzi’s son. Uzzi was Micri’s son. And Meshullam was Shephatiah’s son. Shephatiah was Reuel’s son. Reuel was Ibnijah’s son.

The family history of Benjamin shows there were 956 of them living in Jerusalem. All these men were leaders in their families.

These are the priests who lived in...
Jerusalem: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jakin, and Azariah. Azariah was Hilkiah’s son. Hilkiah was Meshullam’s son. Meshullam was Zadok’s son. Zadok was Meraioth’s son. Meraioth was Ahitub’s son. Ahitub was the important official responsible for God’s Temple. Also there was Jeroham’s son, Adaiah. Jeroham was Pashhur’s son. Pashhur was Malkijah’s son. And there was Adiel’s son, Maasai. Adiel was Jahzerah’s son. Jahzerah was Meshullam’s son. Meshullam was Meshillemith’s son. Meshillemith was Immer’s son.

13 There were 1760 priests. They were leaders of their families. They were responsible for the work of serving in God’s Temple.

14 These are the people from the tribe of Levi who lived in Jerusalem: Hasshub’s son, Shemaiah. Hasshub was Azrikam’s son. Azrikam was Hashabiah’s son. Hashabiah was a descendant of Merari. Also living in Jerusalem were Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah. Mattaniah was Mica’s son. Mica was Zicri’s son. Zicri was Asaph’s son. Obadiah was Shemaiah’s son. Shemaiah was Galal’s son. Galal was Jeduthun’s son. Berekiah was Asa’s son. Asa was Elkanah’s son. Berekiah lived in the small towns near the people of Netophah.

17 These are the gatekeepers who lived in Jerusalem: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their relatives. Shallum was their leader. Now these men stand next to the King’s Gate on the east side. They were the gatekeepers from the tribe of Levi. Shallum was Kore’s son. Kore was Ebia’saph’s son. Ebiasaph was Korah’s son. Shallum and his brothers were gatekeepers. They were from the family of Korah. They had the job of guarding the entrance to the Holy Tent. They did this just as their ancestors had done before them. Their ancestors had the job of guarding the entrance to the area where the LORD lived among the people. In the past, Phinehas was in charge of the gatekeepers. Phinehas was Eleazar’s son. The LORD was with Phinehas. Zechariah son of Meshelemiah was the gatekeeper at the entrance to the Holy Tent.

22 In all there were 212 men who were chosen to guard the gates of the Holy Tent. Their names were written in their family histories in their small towns. David and Samuel the seer chose these men because they could be trusted. The gatekeepers and their descendants had the responsibility of guarding the gates of the LORD’s house, the Holy Tent. There were gates on the four sides: east, west, north, and south. The gatekeepers’ relatives who lived in the small towns had to come and help them at certain times. They came and helped the gatekeepers for seven days each time.

26 There were four gatekeepers who were the leaders of all the gatekeepers. They were Levites. They had the job of caring for the rooms and treasures in God’s Temple. They stayed up all night guarding God’s Temple, and they had the job of opening God’s Temple every morning. Some of the gatekeepers had the job of caring for the dishes used in the Temple services. They counted them when they were brought in. They also counted these dishes when they were taken out. Other gatekeepers were chosen to care for the furniture and the special dishes. They also took care of the flour, wine, oil, incense, and special oil. But it was the priests who had the job of mixing the special oil.

31 There was a Levite named Mattithiah who had the job of baking the bread used for the offerings. Mattithiah was Shallum’s oldest son. Shallum was from the Korah family. Some of the gatekeepers who

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This page is from the 2014 Bible League International edition. The text is a transcription of 1 Chronicles 9 with references to genealogical lists and responsibilities of Levitical priests and gatekeepers.
were in the Korah family had the job of preparing the bread put on the table every Sabbath.

33 The Levites who were singers and leaders of their families stayed in the rooms at the Temple. They did not have to do other work because they were responsible for the work in the Temple day and night.

34 All these Levites were leaders of their families. They were listed as leaders in their family histories. They lived in Jerusalem.

The Family History of King Saul
35 Jeiel was Gibeon’s father. Jeiel lived in the town of Gibeon. His wife was named Maacah. 36 Jeiel’s oldest son was Abdon. Other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, 37 Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth. 38 Mikloth was Shimeam’s father. Jeiel’s family lived near their relatives in Jerusalem.

39 Ner was Kish’s father. Kish was Saul’s father. And Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malki Shua, Abinadab, and Esh Baal.

40 Jonathan’s son was Merib Baal. Merib Baal was Micah’s father.

41 Micah’s sons were Pithon, Melech, Tahrea, and Ahaz. 42 Ahaz was the father of Jadah. 43 Jadah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri. Zimri was Moza’s father. 44 Moza was the father of Binea. Rephaiah was Binea’s son. Eleasah was Rephaiah’s son. And Azel was Eleasah’s son.

44 Azel had six sons. Their names were Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. They were Azel’s children.

The Death of King Saul
10 The Philistines fought against the Israelites. The Israelites ran away from the Philistines. Many Israelites were killed on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines continued chasing Saul and his sons. They caught them and killed them. The Philistines killed Saul’s sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki Shua. 3 The fighting was heavy around Saul. The archers shot Saul with their arrows and wounded him.

4 Then Saul said to the helper who carried his armor, “Pull out your sword and use it to kill me. Then these foreigners will not hurt me and make fun of me when they come.”

But the helper was afraid. He refused to kill Saul. So Saul used his own sword to kill himself by falling on it. 5 When the helper saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his own sword and died. So Saul and three of his sons died. All of Saul’s family died together.

7 When all the Israelites living in the valley saw that their own army had run away and that Saul and his sons were dead, they left their towns and ran away. Then the Philistines came into the towns and lived in them.

8 The next day, the Philistines came to take valuable things from the dead bodies. They found Saul’s body and the bodies of his sons on Mount Gilboa. 9 The Philistines took things from Saul’s body. They took Saul’s head and armor. They sent messengers through all their country to tell the news to their false gods and to their people. 10 The Philistines put Saul’s armor in the temple of their false gods. They hung Saul’s head in the temple of Dagon.

11 All the people living in the town of Jabesh Gilead heard everything that the Philistines had done to Saul. 12 All the brave men from Jabesh Gilead went to get the bodies of Saul and his sons. They brought them back to Jabesh Gilead. They buried the bones of Saul and his sons under the large tree in Jabesh. Then they showed their sadness and fasted for seven days.

13 Saul died because he was not faithful to the Lord. He did not obey the Lord’s word. Saul also went to a medium and b 10:4 foreigners Literally, “uncircumcised.” This means people who did not share in the agreement God made with Israel. See “circumcision” in the Word List.
asked her for advice instead of asking the LORD. That is why the Lord killed Saul and gave the kingdom to Jesse’s son David.

David Becomes King Over Israel

1 All the Israelites came to David at the town of Hebron. They said to David, “We are your own flesh and blood. In the past you led us in war. You led us even though Saul was the king. The LORD said to you ‘David, you will be the shepherd of my people, the Israelites. You will become the leader over my people.’

2 All the leaders of Israel came to King David at the town of Hebron. David made an agreement with them in Hebron before the LORD. The leaders anointed David. That made him king over Israel. The LORD had promised through Samuel that this would happen.

David Captures Jerusalem

3 David and all the Israelites went to the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was called Jebus at that time. The people living in that city were named Jebusites. They said to David, “You cannot get inside our city.” But David did defeat them. He took over the fortress of Zion, and it became the City of David.

4 David said, “The one who leads the attack on the Jebusites will become the commander over all my army.” So Joab led the attack. He was Zeruiah’s son. Joab became the commander of the army.

5 Then David made his home in the fortress. That is why it is named the City of David.

6 David built the city around the fort. He built it from the Millo to the wall around the city. Joab repaired the other parts of the city. David continued to grow greater, and the LORD All-Powerful was with him.

The Three Heroes

10 This is a list of the leaders over David’s special soldiers. These heroes became very powerful with David in his kingdom. They and all the Israelites supported David and made him king, just as the LORD had promised.

11 This is a list of David’s special soldiers: Jashobeam the Hacmonite was the leader of the king’s special forces. Jashobeam used his spear to kill 300 men at one time.

12 Next there was Eleazar son of Dodai from Ahoah. Eleazar was one of the Three Heroes. Eleazar was with David at Pasdammim. The Philistines had come to that place to fight a war. There was a field full of barley there. The Israelites ran away from the Philistines. But the Three Heroes stood there in that field and defended it. They defeated the Philistines. The LORD gave the Israelites a great victory.

13 Once David was at the cave of Adullam, and three of the Thirty Heroes went down to meet him by a rock near the cave. At the same time the Philistine army was camped in the Valley of Rephaim.

14 Another time David was in the fortress, and a group of Philistine soldiers was stationed in Bethlehem. David was thirsty for some water from his hometown, so he said, “Oh, if only I could have some water from that well by the gate in Bethlehem.” So the Three Heroes fought their way through the Philistine army and got some water from the well near the city gate in Bethlehem. They took it to David, but he refused to drink it. He poured it on the ground as an offering to the LORD.

15 David said, “God, I cannot drink this water. It would be like drinking the blood of the men who risked their lives to get this water for me.” That is why David refused to drink the water. The Three Heroes did many brave things like that.

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Other Brave Soldiers

20 Joab’s brother, Abishai, was the leader of the Three Heroes. Abishai used his spear against 300 enemies and killed them. He was as famous as the Three Heroes. Abishai was even more famous than the Three Heroes. He became their leader, even though he was not one of the Three Heroes.

21 Then there was Benaiah son of Jehoiada, from Kabzeel. He was the son of a powerful man. Benaiah did many brave things. He killed two of the best soldiers in Moab. One day when it was snowing, Benaiah went down into a hole in the ground and killed a lion. And Benaiah killed a big Egyptian soldier. That man was about 7 1/2 feet tall. The Egyptian had a spear that was very large and heavy. It was as big as the pole on a weaver’s loom. Benaiah had only a club. He grabbed the spear in the Egyptian’s hands and took it away from him. Then Benaiah killed the Egyptian with his own spear.

22 Benaiah was even more famous than the Thirty Heroes, but he was not one of the Three Heroes. David made Benaiah the leader of his bodyguards.

The Thirty Heroes

26 The following men were among the king’s special forces:

Asahel, Joab’s brother;
Elhanan son of Dodai from Bethlehem;
Shammoth the Harodite;
Helez the Pelonite;
Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa;
Abiezer from Anathoth;
Sibbecai the Hushathite;
Ilai from Ahoah;
Maharai from Netophah;
Heled son of Baanah from Netophah;
Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah in Benjamin;
Benaiah the Pirathonite;
Hurai from the Brooks of Gaash;
Abiel the Arbathite;
Azmaveth the Baharumite;
Eliahba the Shaalbonite;
The sons of Hashem the Gizonite;
Jonathan son of Shagee the Hararite;
Ahiam son of Sacar the Hararite;
Eliphal son of Ur;
Hepher the Mekerathite;
Ahijah the Pelonite;
Hezro the Carmelite;
Naarai son of Ezbai;
Joel, Nathan’s brother;
Mibhar son of Hagri;
Zelek the Ammonite;
Naharai the officer from Beeroth, who carried the armor for Joab son of Zeruiah;
Ira the Ithrite;
Gareb the Ithrite;
Uriah the Hittite;
Zabad son of Ahlai;
Adina who was the son of Shiza from the tribe of Reuben and was the leader of the tribe and one of the Thirty Heroes;
Hanan son of Maacah;
Joshaphat the Mithnite;
Uzzia the Ashterathite;
Shama and Jeiel sons of Hotham from Aror;
Jediael son of Shimri and his brother Joha the Tizite;
Elieel the Mahavite;
Jeribai and Joshaiah the sons of Elnaam;
Ithmah the Moabite;
Eliel; Obed; and Jassiels the Mezobaite.

The Brave Men Who Joined David

12 This is a list of the men who came to David while he was at Ziklag. This was when David was hiding from Saul son of Kish. These men helped David in battle. They could shoot arrows from their bows with either their right or left hand. They could also throw stones from their slings with either their right or left hand.
were Saul’s relatives from the tribe of Benjamin. They were

3 Ahiezer, their leader, and Joash (sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite); Jeziel and Pelet (sons of Azmaveth); Beracah and Jehu from the town of Anathoth; 4 Ishmaiah the Gibeonite (a hero and leader of the Thirty Heroes); Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, and Jozabad from the Gederathites; 5 Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, and Shemariah; Shephatiah from Haruph; 6 Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, all from the tribe of Korah; 7 and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham from the town of Gedor.

The Gadites

8 Part of the tribe of Gad joined David at his fortress in the desert. They were brave soldiers trained for war and skilled with the shield and spear. They looked as fierce as lions, and they could run as fast as gazelles through the mountains.

9 Ezer was the leader of the army from the tribe of Gad. Obadiah was the second in command. Eliab was the third in command. 10 Mishmannah was the fourth in command. Jeremiah was the fifth in command. 11 Attai was the sixth in command. Eliel was the seventh in command. 12 Johanan was the eighth in command. Elzabad was the ninth in command. 13 Jeremiah was the tenth in command. Macbannai was the eleventh in command.

14 These men were leaders of the Gadite army. The weakest from that group was worth 100 men, and the strongest was worth 1000 men. 15 They were the soldiers who crossed the Jordan River in the first month of the year, when it was flooded over its banks. They chased away the people in the valley who were on both sides of the river.

Other Soldiers Join David

16 Other men from the tribes of Benjamin and Judah also came to David at the fortress. 17 David went out to meet them and said, “If you have come in peace to help me, I welcome you. Join me. But if you have come to spy on me when I have done nothing wrong, may the God of our ancestors see what you did and punish you.”

18 Amasai was the leader of the Thirty Heroes. Then the Spirit came on Amasai, and he said,

We are yours, David!
We are with you, son of Jesse.
Peace, peace to you.
Peace to those who help you,
because your God helps you.”
So David welcomed these men into his group and put them in charge of the troops.

19 Some of the men from the tribe of Manasseh also joined David. They joined him when he went with the Philistines to fight Saul. But David and his men did not really help the Philistines. The Philistine leaders talked about David helping them, but then they decided to send him away. They said, “If David goes back to his master Saul, our heads will be cut off!” 20 These were the men from Manasseh who joined David when he went to the town of Ziklag: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai. All of them were generals from the tribe of Manasseh. 21 They helped David fight against bad men who were going around the country and stealing things from people. All these men of Manasseh were brave soldiers. They became leaders in David’s army.

22 More and more men came every day to help David. So he had a large and powerful army.

Other Men Join David at Hebron

23 These are the numbers of the men who came to David at the town of Hebron. These men were ready for war. They came to give Saul’s kingdom to David. That is...
what the LORD said would happen. This is their number:

24 From the tribe of Judah there were 6800 men ready for war. They carried shields and spears.

25 From the tribe of Simeon there were 7100 men. They were brave soldiers ready for war.

26 From the tribe of Levi there were 4600 men. Jehoiada was in that group. He was a leader from Aaron’s family. There were 3700 men with Jehoiada.

27 Zadok was also in that group. He was a brave young soldier. He came with 22 officers from his family.

28 From the tribe of Benjamin there were 3000 men. Most of them stayed faithful to Saul’s family until that time.

29 From the tribe of Ephraim there were 20,800 men. They were brave soldiers. They were famous men in their own families.

30 From half the tribe of Manasseh there were 18,000 men. Uzzah and Ahio were driving the wagon.

31 From the family of Issachar there were 200 wise leaders. These men understood the right thing for Israel to do at the right time. Their relatives were with them and under their command.

32 From the tribe of Zebulun there were 50,000 trained soldiers. They were trained to use all kinds of weapons and were very loyal to David.

33 From the tribe of Naphtali there were 1000 officers. They had 37,000 men with them. These men carried shields and spears.

34 From the tribe of Dan there were 28,600 men ready for war.

35 From the tribe of Asher there were 40,000 trained soldiers ready for war.

36 From the east side of the Jordan River, there were 120,000 men from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. They had all kinds of weapons.

38 All these men were brave fighters. They came to the town of Hebron for one reason—to make David king of all Israel. All the other Israelites also agreed that David should be king. 39 The men spent three days at Hebron with David. They ate and drank, because their relatives had prepared food for them. Also, their neighbors from the areas where the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali live brought food on donkeys, camels, mules, and cattle. They brought much flour, fig cakes, raisins, wine, oil, cattle, and sheep. The people in Israel were very happy.

Bringing Back the Box of the Agreement

13 David talked with all the officers of his army. Then he called the Israelites together and said, “If you think it is a good idea, and if it is what the LORD our God wants, let us send a message to our brothers in all the areas of Israel. Let’s also send the message to the priests and Levites who live with our brothers in their towns and the fields near those towns. Let the message tell them to come and join us. Let’s bring our God’s Holy Box back to us in Jerusalem. We did not pay attention to it while Saul was king.” So all the Israelites agreed with David. They all thought it was the right thing to do.

5 So David gathered all the Israelites from the Shihor River in Egypt to the town of Lebo Hamath. They came together to bring the Box of the Agreement back from the town of Kiriath Jearim. David and all the Israelites with him went to Baalah of Judah. (Baalah is another name for Kiriath Jearim.) They went there to bring out the Holy Box of God the LORD, who sits above the Cherub angels. It is the Box that is called by his name.

7 The people moved God’s Holy Box from Abinadab’s house and put it on a new wagon. Uzzah and Ahio were driving the wagon.

8 David and all the Israelites were celebrating before God. They were praising
God and singing songs. They were playing harps, lyres, drums, cymbals, and trumpets.

9 They came to Kidon’s threshing floor. The oxen pulling the wagon stumbled, and the Holy Box almost fell. Uzzah reached out with his hand to catch it. 10 The Lord became very angry with Uzzah and killed him because he touched the Holy Box. So Uzzah died there before God. 11 And David was angry because the Lord had shown his anger in killing Uzzah. So that place has been called “Perez Uzzah” ever since then.

12 That day David began to fear what God might do to him. So he said, “Should I really be the one in charge of God’s Holy Box?” 13 So he did not take the Holy Box with him to the City of David. He left it at Obed Edom’s house. Obed Edom was from the city of Gath. 14 God’s Holy Box stayed with Obed Edom’s family in his house for three months. The Lord blessed Obed Edom’s family and everything Obed Edom owned.

David’s Kingdom Grows

14 1 Hiram was king of the city of Tyre. He sent messengers to David. He also sent logs from cedar trees, stonecutters, and carpenters to David. Hiram sent them to build a house for David. 2 Then David understood that the Lord had really made him king of Israel. And he had made his kingdom large and powerful for the benefit of Israel, his people.

3 David married more women in the city of Jerusalem and had more sons and daughters. 4 These are the names of David’s children born in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 5 Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, 6 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 7 Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

David Defeats the Philistines

8 The Philistines heard that David had been chosen to be the king of Israel, so all the Philistines went to look for him. When David heard about it, he went out to fight them. 9 The Philistines attacked the people living in the Valley of Rephaim and stole their things. 10 David asked God, “Should I go and fight the Philistines? Will you let me defeat them?”

The Lord answered David, “Go. I will let you defeat the Philistines.”

11 Then David and his men went up to the town of Baal Perazim. There David and his men defeated the Philistines. David said, “Waters break out from a broken dam. In the same way God has broken through my enemies! God has done this through me.” That is why that place is named Baal Perazim. 12 The Philistines had left their idols at Baal Perazim. David ordered his men to burn the idols.

Another Victory Over the Philistines

13 The Philistines attacked the people living in the Valley of Rephaim again. 14 David prayed to God again, and God answered his prayer. God said, “David, don’t follow the Philistines up the hill when you attack. Instead, go around them and hide on the other side of the balsam trees. 15 When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, go out to battle because that is the sign that God has gone out in front of you to defeat the Philistines.” 16 David did what God told him to do. So David and his men defeated the Philistine army. They killed Philistine soldiers all the way from the town of Gibeon to the town of Gezer. 17 So David became famous in all the countries. The Lord made all nations afraid of him.

The Box of the Agreement in Jerusalem

15 1 David built houses for himself in the City of David. Then he built a place to put God’s Holy Box. He set up a tent for it. 2 Then he said, “Only the Levites are permitted to carry God’s Holy Box. The Lord chose them to carry it and to serve him forever.”

3 David told all the Israelites to meet together at Jerusalem to see the Lord’s

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Holy Box carried to the place he had made for it.  He called together these descendants of Aaron and the Levites:

5 There were 120 people from the tribe of Kohath. Uriel was their leader.
6 There were 220 people from the tribe of Merari. Asaiah was their leader.
7 There were 130 people from the tribe of Gershon. Joel was their leader.
8 There were 200 people from the tribe of Elizaphan. Shemaiah was their leader.
9 There were 80 people from the tribe of Hebron. Eliel was their leader.
10 There were 112 people from the tribe of Uzziel. Amminadab was their leader.

David Talks to the Priests and Levites

11 Then David asked the priests, Zadok and Abiathar, to come to him. David also asked these Levites to come to him: Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. 12 David said to them, “You are the leaders from the tribe of Levi. You and the other Levites must make yourselves holy. Then bring the Holy Box of the Lord, the God of Israel, to the place I have made for it. 13 The first time we tried to bring it, we failed to ask the Lord about the right way to move it. And he punished us because you Levites did not carry it.”

14 Then the priests and Levites made themselves holy so that they could carry the Holy Box of the Lord, the God of Israel, to the place I have made for it. 15 The Levites used the special poles to carry God’s Holy Box on their shoulders, the way Moses commanded. They carried the Holy Box just as the Lord had said.

The Singers

16 David told the Levite leaders to get their brothers, the singers. The singers were to take their lyres, harps, and cymbals and sing happy songs.

17 Then the Levites got Heman and his brothers, Asaph and Ethan. Heman was Joel’s son. Asaph was Berekiah’s son. Ethan was Kushaiah’s son. These men were from the Merari tribe. 18 There was also a second group of Levites. They were Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed Edom, and Jeiel. These men were the Levite guards.

19 The singers Heman, Asaph, and Ethan played bronze cymbals. 20 Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah played the alamoth  b harps. 21 Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed Edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah played the sheminith harps. This was their job forever. 22 The Levite leader Kenaniah was in charge of the singing. Kenaniah had this job because he was very skilled at singing.

23 Berekiah and Elkanah were two of the guards for the Holy Box. 24 The priests Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer had the job of blowing trumpets as they walked in front of God’s Holy Box. Obed Edom and Jehiah were the other guards for the Holy Box.

25 David, the elders of Israel, and the generals c went to get the Box of the Lord’s Agreement. They brought it out from Obed Edom’s house. Everyone was very happy! 26 God had helped the Levites who carried the Box of the Lord’s Agreement. So they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams to him. 27 All the Levites who carried the Holy Box wore robes made from fine linen. Kenaniah, the man in charge of the singing, and all the singers had robes made from fine linen. David also wore a robe made from fine linen. He also wore an ephod made of fine linen.

28 So all the Israelites joined in bringing up the Box of the Lord’s Agreement. They shouted, they blew rams’ horns and trumpets, and they played cymbals, lyres, and harps.

a 15:12 holy Here, this means “prepared to serve the Lord.” Also in verse 14.

b 15:20, 21 alamoth, sheminith The meaning of these words is uncertain, but they may refer to types of instruments, special ways of tuning an instrument, or two different groups that played harps in the Temple orchestra.

c 15:25 generals Literally, “leaders over 1000 men.”
When the Box of the Lord’s Agreement arrived at the City of David, Saul’s daughter Michal looked through a window. When she saw King David dancing and playing, she lost her respect for him.

The Levites brought God’s Holy Box and put it inside the tent David had set up for it. Then they offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to God. After David had finished giving the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he used the Lord’s name to bless the people. Then he gave a loaf of bread, some dates, and raisins to every Israelite man and woman.

Then David chose some of the Levites to serve before the Lord’s Holy Box. They had the job of celebrating and giving thanks and praise to the Lord, the God of Israel. Asaph was the leader of the first group. His group played the cymbals. Zechariah was the leader of the second group. The other Levites were Uzziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed Edom, and Jeiel. These men played the lyres and harps. Benaiah and Jahaziel were the priests who always blew the trumpets before the Box of God's Agreement. This was when David first gave Asaph and his brothers the job of singing praises to the Lord.

David’s Song of Thanks

Give thanks to the Lord and call out to him!
Tell the nations what he has done!
Sing to him; sing praises to him.
Tell about the amazing things he has done.
Be proud of his holy name.
You followers of the Lord, be happy!
Depend on the Lord for strength.
Always go to him for help.
Remember the amazing things he has done.
Remember his miracles and his fair decisions.
The people of Israel are his servants.
The descendants of Jacob are his chosen people.
The Lord is our God.
He rules the whole world.
Remember his agreement forever,
the promise he gave that will never end.
Remember the agreement he made with Abraham
Remember his promise to Isaac.
He gave it as a law for Jacob,
as an agreement with Israel that will last forever.
He said, “I will give you the land of Canaan.
It will be your very own.”

At the time God said this, there were only a few of his people,
and they were strangers there.
They traveled around from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another.
But the Lord did not let anyone mistreat them.
He warned kings not to harm them.
He said, “Don’t hurt my chosen people.
Don’t hurt my prophets.”
Let the whole world sing to the Lord!
Tell the good news every day about how he saves us.
Tell all the nations how wonderful he is!
Tell people everywhere about the amazing things he does.
The Lord is great and worthy of praise.
He is more awesome than any of the “gods.”
All the “gods” in other nations are nothing but statues,
but the Lord made the heavens!
He lives in the presence of glory and honor.
His Temple is a place of power and joy.
Praise the Lord, all people of every nation;
praise the Lord’s glory and power!
Give the Lord praise worthy of his glory.
Come into his presence with your
offerings. Worship the LORD in all his holy beauty.
30 Everyone on earth should tremble before him!
But the world stands firm and cannot be moved.
31 Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be happy!
Let people everywhere say, “The LORD rules!”
32 Let the sea and everything in it shout for joy!
Let the fields and everything in them be happy!
33 The trees of the forest will sing for joy when they see the LORD, because he is coming to rule the world.
34 Give thanks to the LORD because he is good.
His faithful love will last forever.
35 Say to him, “Save us, God our Savior.
Bring us back together, and save us from the other nations.
Then we will give thanks to your holy name and joyfully praise you.”
36 Praise the LORD, the God of Israel!
He always was and will always be worthy of praise!
All the people praised the LORD and said “Amen!”
37 Then David left Asaph and his brothers there in front of the Box of the LORD’s Agreement. David left them there to serve in front of it every day. He also left Obed Edom and 68 other Levites to serve with Asaph and his brothers. Obed Edom and Hosah were guards. Obed Edom was Jeduthun’s son.
38 David left Zadok the priest and the other priests who served with him in front of the LORD’S Tent at the high place in Gibeon. Every morning and evening Zadok and the other priests offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offerings. They did this to follow the rules written in the law of the LORD, which he had given Israel. Heman, Jeduthun, and all the other Levites were chosen by name to praise the LORD, singing, “His faithful love will last forever.” Heman and Jeduthun were with them. They had the job of blowing the trumpets and playing cymbals. They also had the job of playing other musical instruments when songs were sung to God. Jeduthun’s sons guarded the gates.
43 After the celebration, all the people left and went home. David also went home to bless his family.

God’s Promise to David
17 1 After David had moved into his palace, he said to Nathan the prophet, “Look, I am living in this nice palace made of cedar, but the Box of the LORD’S Agreement sits in a tent.”
2 Nathan answered David, “You may do what you want to do. God is with you.”
3 But that night the word of God came to Nathan. God said, “Go and tell this to my servant David: The LORD says, ‘David, you are not the one to build a house for me to live in. 5–6 Since the time I brought Israel out of Egypt until now, I have not lived in a house. I have moved around in a tent. I chose people to be special leaders for the Israelites. They were like shepherds for my people. While I was going around in Israel to different places, I never said to any of them: Why haven’t you built a house of cedar wood for me?’
7 “Now, tell this to my servant David: The LORD All-Powerful says, ‘I took you from the fields and from taking care of the sheep. I made you king of my people Israel. 8 I have been with you everywhere you went. I went ahead of you and I killed your enemies. Now I will make you one of the most famous men on earth. I am giving this...”
place to my people Israel. They will plant their trees, and they will sit in peace under those trees. They will not be bothered anymore. Evil people will not hurt them as they did at first. 10 Those bad things happened, but I chose leaders to care for my people Israel. And I will also defeat all your enemies.

11 ‘I tell you that the LORD will build a house for you. a When you die, and you join your ancestors, then I will let your own son be the new king. The new king will be one of your sons, and I will make his kingdom strong. 12 Your son will build a house for me. I will make your son’s family rule forever. 13 I will be his father, and he will be my son. Saul was the king before you, and I took away my support from Saul. But I will never stop loving your son. 14 I will put him in charge of my house and kingdom forever. His rule will continue forever!’ "

15 Nathan told David about the vision and everything God had said.

David’s Prayer

16 Then King David went to the Holy Tent and sat before the LORD. David said, “LORD God, you have done so much for me and my family. And I don’t understand why. 17 Besides all these things, God, you let me know what will happen to my family in the future. LORD God, you have treated me like a very important man. 18 What more can I say? You have done so much for me. And I am only your servant. You know that. 19 LORD, you have done this wonderful thing for me and because you wanted to. 20 There is no one like you, LORD. There is no God except you. We have never heard of any god doing wonderful things like those! 21 Is there any other nation like Israel? No, Israel is the only nation on earth that you have done these wonderful things for. You took us out of Egypt and you made us free. You made yourself famous. You went in front of your people, and forced other people to leave their land for us. 22 You took Israel to be your people forever, and you, LORD, became their God!

23 ‘LORD, you made this promise to me and my family. Now, keep your promise forever. Do what you said you would. 24 Keep your promise so that people will honor your name forever. Then people will say, ‘The LORD All-Powerful is Israel’s God!’ I am your servant. Please let my family be strong and continue to serve you.

25 ‘My God, you spoke to me, your servant. You made it clear that you would make my family a family of kings. That is why I am being so bold—that is why I am asking you to do these things. 26 LORD, you are God, and you yourself promised to do these good things for me. 27 You have been kind enough to bless my family. You were kind enough to promise that my family will serve you forever. LORD, you yourself blessed my family, so my family really will be blessed forever.’

David Wins Over Different Nations

18 Later, David attacked the Philistines and defeated them. He took the town of Gath and the other small towns around it from the Philistines.

2 Then David defeated the country of Moab. The Moabites became David’s servants and brought tribute to him.

3 David also fought against Hadadezer’s army. Hadadezer was the king of Zobah. David fought against that army all the way to the town of Hamath. David did this when he went to set up a monument for

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a 17:10 build a house for you This does not mean a real house. It means the Lord would make men from David’s family kings for many years.
himself at the Euphrates River.\textsuperscript{a} David took 1000 chariots, 7000 chariot drivers, and 20,000 soldiers from Hadadezer. David also crippled most of Hadadezer’s horses that were used for pulling chariots. But David saved enough horses to pull 100 chariots.

5 The Arameans from the city of Damascus came to help King Hadadezer of Zobah. But David defeated and killed 22,000 Aramean soldiers.\textsuperscript{b} Then David put fortresses in the city of Damascus in Aram. The Arameans became David’s servants and brought tribute to him. So the LORD gave victory to David everywhere he went.

6 David took the gold shields from Hadadezer’s army leaders and brought them to Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{c} David also took much bronze from the towns of Tebah and Cun. These towns belonged to Hadadezer. Later, Solomon used this bronze to make the bronze tank,\textsuperscript{d} the bronze columns, and other things made from bronze for the Temple.

7 Tou was king of the city of Hamath. Hadadezer was the king of Zobah. Tou heard that David had defeated all of Hadadezer’s army.\textsuperscript{e} So Tou sent his son Hadoram to King David to ask for peace and to bless him. He did this because David had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him. Hadadezer had been at war with Tou before. Hadoram gave David all kinds of things made of gold, silver, and bronze.\textsuperscript{f} King David made these things holy and gave them to the LORD. David did the same thing with all the silver and gold he had gotten from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, and Amalekites.

19 Nahash was king of the Ammonites. When Nahash died, his son became the new king.\textsuperscript{g} Then David said, “Nahash was kind to me, so I will be kind to Hanun, Nahash’s son.” So David sent messengers to comfort Hanun about the death of his father. David’s messengers went to the country of Ammon to comfort Hanun.

3 But the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun, “Don’t be fooled. David didn’t really send these men to comfort you or to honor your dead father! No, David sent his servants to spy on you and your land. He really wants to destroy your country!”\textsuperscript{h} So Hanun arrested David’s servants and cut off their beards.\textsuperscript{i} Hanun also cut their clothes off at the hip and sent them away.

5 David’s men were too embarrassed to go home. Some people went to David and told him what happened to his men. So King David sent this message to his men: “Stay in the town of Jericho until your beards grow again. Then you can come back home.”

6 The Ammonites saw they had caused themselves to become hated enemies of David. Then Hanun and the Ammonites used 75,000 pounds\textsuperscript{e} of silver to buy chariots and chariot drivers from David.

18:3 David did this … the Euphrates River Or “David did this because Hadadezer tried to spread his kingdom all the way to the Euphrates River.”

\textsuperscript{a} 18:3 David did this … the Euphrates River
\textsuperscript{b} 18:8 tank A very large container for water.
\textsuperscript{c} 18:17 Kerethites and Pelethites These were the king’s bodyguards.
\textsuperscript{d} 19:4 cut off their beards This was an insult to an Israelite man, who was forbidden to cut the corners of his beard. See Lev. 19:27.
\textsuperscript{e} 19:6 75,000 pounds Literally, “1000 talents” (34,500 kg).
They also got chariots and chariot drivers from the towns of Maacah and Zobah in Aram. The Ammonites bought 32,000 chariots. They also paid the king of Maacah and his army to come and help them. The king of Maacah and his people came and set up a camp near the town of Medeba. The Ammonites themselves came out of their towns and got ready for battle.

David heard that the Ammonites were getting ready for war. So he sent Joab and the whole army of Israel to fight the Ammonites. The Ammonites came out and got ready for battle. They were near the city gate. The kings who had come to help stayed out in the fields by themselves.

Joab saw that there were two army groups ready to fight against him. One group was in front of him and the other group was behind him. So Joab chose some of the best soldiers of Israel and sent them out to fight against the Aramean army. He put the rest of the Israelite army under his brother Abishai’s command. These soldiers went out to fight against the Ammonite army. Joab said to Abishai, “If the Arameans are too strong for me, you must help me. But if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will help you. Let’s be brave and strong while we fight for our people and for the cities of our God! May the LORD do what he thinks is right.”

Joab and the army with him attacked the Aramean army. The Arameans ran away from Joab and his army. When the Ammonite army saw that the Aramean army was running away, they also ran away. They ran away from Abishai and his army. The Ammonites went back to their city, and Joab went back to Jerusalem.

Joab Destroys the Ammonites

In the spring, Joab led the army of Israel out to battle. That was the time of year when kings went out to battle, but David stayed in Jerusalem. The army of Israel went to the country of Ammon and destroyed it. Then they went to the city of Rabbah. The armycamped around the city—they stayed there to keep people from going in or out of the city. Joab and the army of Israel fought against the city of Rabbah until they destroyed it.

David took the crown from their king’s head. That gold crown weighed about 75 pounds and there were valuable stones in it. The crown was put on David’s head. Then David had a great many valuable things brought out of the city of Rabbah.

Philistine Giants Are Killed

Later, the Israelites went to war with the Philistines at the town of Gezer. At that time Sibbecai from Hushah killed Sippai, who was one of the sons of the giants.

David heard the news that the Arameans were gathering for battle, so he gathered all the Israelites. David led them across the Jordan River, and they came face to face with the Arameans. David got his army ready for battle and they attacked the Arameans. The Arameans ran away from the Israelites. David and his army killed 7000 Aramean chariot drivers and 40,000 Aramean soldiers. David and his army also killed Shophach, the commander of the Aramean army.

When Hadadezer’s officers saw that Israel had defeated them, they made peace with David. They became his servants. So the Arameans refused to help the Ammonites again.

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The Aramean leaders saw that Israel had defeated them. So they sent messengers to get help from the Arameans living east of the Euphrates River. Shopfach was the commander of Hadadezer’s army from Aram. Shopfach also led the other Aramean soldiers.

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David took the crown from their king’s head. That gold crown weighed about 75 pounds and there were valuable stones in it. The crown was put on David’s head. Then David had a great many valuable things brought out of the city of Rabbah. He brought out the people in Rabbah and forced them to work with saws, iron picks, and axes. He did the same thing to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then David and all the army went back to Jerusalem.

Philistine Giants Are Killed

Later, the Israelites went to war with the Philistines at the town of Gezer. At that time Sibbecai from Hushah killed Sippai, who was one of the sons of the giants. So
those Philistines became like slaves to the Israelites.

5 Another time when the Israelites fought against the Philistines, Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi. Lahmi was Goliath’s brother. Goliath was from the town of Gath. Lahmi’s spear was very big and heavy. It was like the large pole on a loom.

6 Later, the Israelites fought another war with the Philistines at the town of Gath. In this town there was a very large man. He had 24 fingers and toes. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He also was a son of the giants. 

7 So when that man made fun of Israel, Jonathan killed him. Jonathan was Shimea’s son. Shimea was David’s brother.

8 These Philistine men were sons of the giants from the town of Gath. David and his servants killed those giants.

David Sins by Counting Israel

21 Satan was against the Israelites. He encouraged David to count the Israelites. So David said to Joab and the leaders of the people, “Go and count all the Israelites. Count everyone in the country—from the town of Beersheba all the way to the town of Dan. Then tell me, so I will know how many people there are.”

3 But Joab answered, “May the Lord make his nation 100 times as large! Sir, all the Israelites are your servants. Why do you want to do this thing, my lord and king? You will make all the Israelites guilty of sin!”

4 But King David was stubborn. Joab had to do what the king said. So Joab left and went through all the country of Israel counting the people. Then he came back to Jerusalem and told David how many people there were. In Israel there were 1,100,000 men who could use a sword. And there were 470,000 men in Judah who could use a sword. Joab did not count the tribes of Levi and Benjamin because he did not like King David’s order.

7 David had done a bad thing in God’s sight, so God punished Israel.

God Punishes Israel

8 Then David said to God, “I have done something very foolish. I have committed a terrible sin by counting the Israelites. Now, I beg you to take the sin away from me, your servant.”

9–10 Gad was David’s seer. The Lord said to Gad, “Go and tell David: ‘This is what the Lord says: I am going to give you three choices. You must choose one of them. Then I will punish you the way you choose.’”

11–12 Then Gad went to David. He said to David, “The Lord says, ‘David, choose which punishment you want: three years without enough food, or three months of running away from your enemies while they use their swords to chase you, or three days of punishment from the Lord. Terrible sicknesses will spread through the country, and the Lord’s angel will go through Israel destroying the people.’ David, God sent me. Now, you must decide which answer I will give to him.”

13 David said to Gad, “I am in trouble! I don’t want some man to decide my punishment. The Lord is very merciful, so let him decide how to punish me.”

14 So the Lord sent terrible sicknesses to Israel, and 70,000 people died. God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But when the angel started to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord saw it and felt sorry for all the suffering. So he said to the angel who was destroying the people, “Stop! That is enough!” This happened when the angel of the Lord was standing at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

16 David looked up and saw the Lord’s angel in the sky. The angel was holding his sword over the city of Jerusalem. Then David and the elders bowed with their faces touching the ground. They were wearing the special clothes to show their sadness. David said to God, “I am the

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21:1 Satan Or “An adversary,” someone who was against the king.

21:15 Jebusite A person who lived in Jerusalem before the Israelites took the city. “Jebus” was the old name for Jerusalem.
one who sinned. I gave the order for the people to be counted! I was wrong. The Israelites did not do anything wrong. Lord my God, punish me and my family, but stop the terrible sicknesses that are killing your people.”

18 Then the angel of the Lord spoke to Gad. He said, “Tell David to build an altar to worship the Lord. David must build that altar near the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” 19 Gad told David this, and David went to Araunah’s threshing floor.

20 Araunah was threshing the wheat. He turned around and saw the angel. His four sons ran away to hide. 21 David walked up the hill to Araunah. Araunah saw him and left the threshing floor. He walked to David and bowed with his face to the ground in front of him.

22 David said to Araunah, “Sell me your threshing floor. I will pay you the full price. Then I can use the area to build an altar to worship the Lord. Then the terrible sicknesses will be stopped.”

23 Araunah said to David, “Take this threshing floor. You are my lord and king, so do whatever you want. Look, I will also give you cattle for the burnt offering. You can have the wooden threshing tools to burn for the fire on the altar. And I will give the wheat for the grain offering. I will give all this to you.”

24 But King David answered Araunah, “No, I will pay you the full price. I will not take anything that is yours and give it to the Lord. I will not give offerings that cost me nothing.”

25 So David gave Araunah about 15 pounds of gold for the place. 26 David built an altar for worshiping the Lord there. David offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He prayed to the Lord. The Lord answered David by sending fire down from heaven. The fire came down on the altar of burnt offering. 27 Then the Lord commanded the angel to put his sword back into its sheath.

28 David saw that the Lord had answered him on the threshing floor of Araunah, so David offered sacrifices there. 29 (The Lord’s Holy Tent and the altar of burnt offerings were at the high place in the town of Gibeon. Moses had made the Holy Tent while the Israelites were in the desert. 30 David could not go to the Holy Tent to speak with God because he was afraid. He was afraid of the angel of the Lord and his sword.)

2 David said, “The Temple of the Lord God and the altar for burning offerings for the Israelites will be built here.”

David Makes Plans for the Temple

2 David gave an order for all foreigners living in Israel to be gathered together. He chose stonemasons from that group of foreigners. Their job was to cut stones ready to be used for building God’s Temple. 3 David got iron for making nails and hinges for the gate doors. He also got more bronze than could be weighed and more cedar logs than could be counted. The people from the cities of Sidon and Tyre brought many cedar logs to David.

5 David said, “We should build a very great Temple for the Lord, but my son Solomon is young and does not yet have enough experience to know how to do it well. It should be so great and beautiful that it will be famous among all the nations. So I will prepare what is needed to build it.” So before David died he prepared everything needed to build a great Temple.

6 Then David called for his son Solomon and told him to build the Temple for the Lord, the God of Israel. 7 David said to Solomon, “My son, I wanted to build a temple for the name of the Lord my God. 8 But the Lord said to me, ‘David, you have fought many wars and you have killed many people. So you cannot build a temple for my name. 9 But you have a son who is a man of peace. I will give your son a time of peace. His enemies around him will not bother him. His name is Solomon.’

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*d 21:25 15 pounds Literally, “600 shekels” (6.9 kg).

**b 22:9 Solomon This name is like the Hebrew word mean-
And I will give Israel peace and quiet during the time that he is king. Solomon will build a temple for my name. He will be my son, and I will be his Father. I will make his kingdom strong, and someone from his family will rule Israel forever!”

David also said, “Now, son, may the LORD be with you. May you be successful and build the Temple for the LORD your God, as he said you would. He will make you the king of Israel. May the LORD give you wisdom and understanding so that you can lead the people and obey the law of the LORD your God. And you will have success, if you are careful to obey the rules and laws that the LORD gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and brave. Don’t be afraid.

“Solomon, I have worked hard making plans for building the LORD’s Temple. I have given 3750 tons\(^a\) of gold and about 37,500 tons\(^b\) of silver. I have given so much bronze and iron that it cannot be weighed. And I have given wood and stone. Solomon, you can add to them. You have many stonecutters and carpenters. You have men skilled in every kind of work. They are skilled in working with gold, silver, bronze, and iron. You have more skilled workers than can be counted. Now begin the work. And may the LORD be with you.”

Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon. David said to these leaders, “The LORD your God is with you. He has given you a time of peace. He helped me defeat the people living around us. The LORD and his people are now in control of this land. Now give your heart and soul to the LORD your God, and do what he says. Build the holy place of the LORD God. Then bring the Box of the LORD’s Agreement and all the other holy things into the Temple built for the LORD’s name.”

The Levites Work in the Temple

David became an old man, so he made his son Solomon the new king of Israel. David gathered all the leaders of Israel and also the priests and Levites. David counted the Levites who were 30 years old and older. All together there were 38,000 Levites. David said, “24,000 will supervise the work of building the LORD’s Temple. 6000 will be court officers and judges. 4000 will be gatekeepers, and 4000 will be musicians. I made special musical instruments for them. They will use them to praise the LORD.”

David separated the Levites into three groups. They were the tribes of Levi’s three sons, Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.

The Gershon Family Group

From the tribe of Gershom there were Ladan and Shimei. Ladan had three sons. His oldest son was Jehiel. His other sons were Zethan and Joel. Shimei’s sons were Shelomoth, Haziel, and Haran. These three sons were leaders in Ladan’s families. Shimei had four sons. They were Jahath, Ziza, Jeush, and Beriah. Jahath was the oldest son and Ziza was the second son. But Jeush and Beriah did not have many children. So Jeush and Beriah were counted like one family.

The Kohath Family Group

Kohath had four sons. They were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. Amram’s sons were Aaron and Moses. Aaron was chosen for a special work. He and his descendants were chosen to always be the ones to do this special work—to prepare the holy things for the Temple service. They were the ones to burn the incense before the LORD, to serve him as priests and give blessings to the people in his name forever.

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\(^a\) 22:14 3750 tons Literally, “100,000 talents” (3450 metric tons).
\(^b\) 22:14 37,500 tons Literally, “1,000,000 talents” (34,500 metric tons).
Moses was the man of God, and his sons were part of the tribe of Levi. Moses’ sons were Gershom and Eliezer. Gershom’s oldest son was Shubael. Eliezer’s oldest son was Rehabiah. Eliezer had no other sons. But Rehabiah had very many sons. Izhar’s oldest son was Shelomith.

Hebron’s oldest son was Jeriah. Hebron’s second son was Amariah. Jahaziel was the third son, and Jekameam was the fourth son.

Uzziel’s oldest son was Micah, and Ishshiah was his second son.

**The Merari Family Group**

Merari’s sons were Mahli and Mushi. Mahli’s sons were Eleazar and Kish. Eleazar died without having sons. He only had daughters. Eleazar’s daughters married their own relatives. Their relatives were Kish’s sons. Mushi’s sons were Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth. There were three sons in all.

**The Levites’ Work**

These were Levi’s descendants. They were listed by their families. They were the leaders of families. Each person’s name was listed. The people who were listed were 20 years old or older. They served in the Lord’s Temple.

David had said, “The Lord, the God of Israel, has given peace to his people. And he has come to live in Jerusalem forever. So the Levites don’t need to carry the Holy Tent or any of the things used in its services anymore.”

David’s last instructions for the Israelites were to count the descendants from the tribe of Levi. They counted the Levite men who were 20 years old and older.

The Levites had the job of helping Aaron’s descendants in the service of the Lord’s Temple. They also cared for the Temple courtyard and the side rooms in the Temple. And they made sure all the holy things were kept pure. It was their job to serve in God’s Temple.

**The Groups of the Priests**

These were the groups of Aaron’s sons: Aaron’s sons were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. But Nadab and Abihu died before their father did. Nadab and Abihu had no sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar served as the priests. David separated the tribes of Eleazar and Ithamar into two different groups. He did this so that these groups could do the duties of work they were given to do. David did this with the help of Zadok and Ahimelech. Zadok was a descendant of Eleazar, and Ahimelech was a descendant of Ithamar.

There were more leaders from Eleazar’s family than from Ithamar’s. There were 16 leaders from Eleazar’s family and there were eight leaders from Ithamar’s family.

Men were chosen from each family. They were chosen by throwing lots. Some of the men were chosen to be in charge of the Holy Place. And other men were chosen to serve as priests. All these men were from the families of Eleazar and Ithamar.

Shemaiah was the secretary. He was Nethanel’s son. Shemaiah was from the **24:6 secretary** A man who wrote down and copied books and letters.
tribe of Levi. Shemaiah wrote the names of those descendants. He wrote their names in front of King David and these leaders: Zadok the priest, Ahimelech, and the leaders from the families of the priests and of the Levites. Ahimelech was Abiathar’s son. Each time they threw the lots a man was chosen, and Shemaiah wrote down that man’s name. So they divided the work among groups of men from the families of Eleazar and Ithamar.

7 The first was Jehoiarib’s group.  
   The second was Jedaiah’s group.  
8 The third was Harim’s group.  
   The fourth was Seorim’s group.  
9 The fifth was Malkijah’s group.  
   The sixth was Mijamin’s group.  
10 The seventh was Hakkoz’s group.  
   The eighth was Abijah’s group.  
11 The ninth was Jeshua’s group.  
   The tenth was Shecaniah’s group.  
12 The eleventh was Eliezer’s group.  
   The twelfth was Zabdi’s group.  
13 The thirteenth was Huppah’s group.  
   The fourteenth was Jeshebeab’s group.  
14 The fifteenth was Bilgah’s group.  
   The sixteenth was Jesurun’s group.  
15 The seventeenth was Zadok’s group.  
   The eighteenth was Hananiah’s group.  
16 The nineteenth was Meshullam’s group.  
   The twentieth was Harim’s group.  
17 The twenty-first was Hashabiah’s group.  
   The twenty-second was Hashabiah’s group.  
18 The twenty-third was Bani’s group.  
   The twenty-fourth was Becheciah’s group.

19 These were the groups chosen to serve in the Lord’s Temple. They obeyed Aaron’s rules for serving in the Temple. The Lord, the God of Israel, had given them to Aaron.

The Other Levites

20 These are the names of the rest of Levi’s descendants:  
   Shubael was a descendant of Amram.  
   Jehdeiah was a descendant of Shubael.  
21 Isshiah was the oldest son of Rehabiah.  
22 From the Izhar family group there was Shelomoth.

23 Jeriah was the oldest son of Shelomoth.  
   Amariah was Shelomoth’s second son.  
   Jahaziel was his third son,  
   and Jekameam was his fourth son.  
24 Uzziel’s son was Micah.  
   Micah’s son was Shamir.  
25 Isshiah was Micah’s brother.  
   Isshiah’s son was Zechariah.  
26 a Merari’s descendants were Mahli,  
   Mushri, and Jaaziah his son.  
27 Jaaziah son of Merari had sons named  
   Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri.  
28 Mahli’s son was Eleazar, but Eleazar did not have sons.  
29 Kish’s son was Jerahmeel.  
30 Mushri’s sons were Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth.

   These are the leaders of the Levite families. They are listed by their families. They were chosen for special jobs by throwing lots, like their relatives, the priests. The priests were Aaron’s descendants. They threw lots in front of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the leaders of the priests’ and Levite families. The older families and the younger families were treated the same when their jobs were chosen.

The Music Groups

25 David and the leaders of the army separated the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun for special service. Their special service was to prophesy God’s message with harps, lyres, and cymbals. Here is a list of the men who served this way:

2 From Asaph’s family: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asarelah. King David chose Asaph to prophesy. And Asaph led his sons.  
3 From Jeduthun’s family: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshahiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah. There were six of them. Jeduthun led his sons. Jeduthun used harps to prophesy and give thanks and praise to the Lord.  
4 Heman’s sons who served were Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel,  

\[ q 24:26,27 \] The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.
Shubael, and Jerimoth; Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti Ezer; Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth.  

All these men were Heman’s sons. Heman was David’s seer. God promised to make Heman strong. So Heman had many sons. God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.  

Heman led all his sons in singing in the LORD’s temple. His sons used cymbals, lyres, and harps. That was their way of serving in God’s temple. King David chose these men. These men and their relatives from the tribe of Levi were trained to sing. There were 288 men who learned to sing praises to the Lord. They threw lots to choose the different kinds of work each person was to do. Everyone was treated the same. Young and old were treated the same. And the teacher was treated the same as the student.  

The first one chosen was Asaph (Joseph). Second, there were 12 men chosen from Gedaliah’s sons and relatives. Third, there were 12 men chosen from Zaccur’s sons and relatives. Fourth, there were 12 men chosen from Izri’s sons and relatives. Fifth, there were 12 men chosen from Nethaniah’s sons and relatives. Sixth, there were 12 men chosen from Bukkiah’s sons and relatives. Seventh, there were 12 men chosen from Asarelah’s sons and relatives. Eighth, there were 12 men chosen from Jeseaiah’s sons and relatives. Ninth, there were 12 men chosen from Mattaniah’s sons and relatives. Tenth, there were 12 men chosen from Shimei’s sons and relatives. Eleventh, there were 12 men chosen from Azarel’s sons and relatives. Twelfth, there were 12 men chosen from Hashabiah’s sons and relatives. Thirteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Shubael’s sons and relatives. Fourteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Mattithiah’s sons and relatives. Fifteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Jeremoth’s sons and relatives. Sixteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Hananiah’s sons and relatives. Seventeenth, there were 12 men chosen from Joshbekashah’s sons and relatives. Eighteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Hanani’s sons and relatives. Nineteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Mallothi’s sons and relatives. Twentieth, there were 12 men chosen from Eliathah’s sons and relatives. Twenty-first, there were 12 men chosen from Hothir’s sons and relatives. Twenty-second, there were 12 men chosen from Giddalti’s sons and relatives. Twenty-third, there were 12 men chosen from Mahazioth’s sons and relatives. Twenty-fourth, there were 12 men chosen from Romamti Ezer’s sons and relatives.

The Gatekeepers

These are the groups of the gatekeepers from the Korah family: There was Meshelemiah, son of Kore. Kore was from the family of Asaph. Meshelemiah had sons. Zechariah was the oldest son. Jediel was the second son. Zebadiah was the third son. Jathniel was the fourth son. Elam was the fifth son. Jehohanan was the sixth son. And Eliehoenai was the seventh son. Obed Edom had sons. His oldest son was Shemaiah. Jehozabad was his second son. Josiah was his third son. Sacar was his fourth son. Nethanel was his fifth son. Ammiel was his sixth son, Issachar his seventh son, and Peullethai his eighth son. God really blessed Obed Edom. a

\[ \text{a 25:6 temple} \] Here, this means the Holy Tent where people went to worship the Lord.  

\[ \text{b 26:5 Obed Edom} \] God blessed Obed Edom when the Box of...
6 Obed Edom’s son was Shemaiah. Shemaiah also had sons. His sons were leaders in their father’s family because they were brave soldiers.

7 Shemaiah’s sons were Othni, Rephael, Obed, Elzabad, Elihu, and Semakiah. Elzabad’s relatives were skilled workers. 8 All these men were Obed Edom’s descendants. These men and their sons and relatives were powerful men. They were good guards. Obed Edom had 62 descendants.

9 Meshelemiah had sons and relatives who were powerful men. In all there were 18 sons and relatives.

10 These are the gatekeepers from the Merari family: Hosah, son of Merari, chose his son Shimri to be the leader, even though he was not the oldest son. 11 Hilkiah was Hosah’s second son, Tebaliah his third, and Zechariah his fourth son. In all Hosah had 13 sons and relatives who were gatekeepers.

12 These were the leaders of the groups of the gatekeepers. The gatekeepers had a special way to serve in the LORD’s Temple, just as their relatives did. 13 Each family was given a gate to guard. Lots were thrown to choose a gate for a family. Young and old were treated the same.

14 Meshelemiah was chosen to guard the East Gate. Then lots were thrown for Meshelemiah’s son Zechariah. Zechariah was a wise counselor. Zechariah was chosen for the North Gate. 15 Obed Edom was chosen for the South Gate. And Obed Edom’s sons were chosen to guard the house where the valuable things were kept. 16 Shuppim and Hosah were chosen for the West Gate and the Shalleketh Gate on the upper road.

Guards stood side by side. 17 Six Levites stood guard every day at the East Gate. Four Levites stood guard every day at the North Gate. Four Levites stood guard at the South Gate. And two Levites guarded the house where the valuable things were kept. 18 There were four guards at the western court and two guards on the road to the court.

19 These were the groups of the gatekeepers from the families of Korah and Merari.

The Treasurers and Other Officials

20 Ahijah was from the tribe of Levi. Ahijah was responsible for taking care of the valuable things in God’s Temple. Ahijah also was responsible for the places where the holy things were kept.

21 Ladan was from Gershon’s family. Jehieli was one of the leaders of the tribe of Ladan. 22 Jehieli’s sons were Zetham and Zetham’s brother Joel. They were responsible for the valuable things in the LORD’s Temple.

23 Other leaders were chosen from the tribes of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

24 Shubael was the leader responsible for the valuable things kept in the Temple. Shubael was Gershom’s son. Gershom was Moses’ son.

25 These were Shubael’s relatives: His relatives from Eliezer were Rehobiah, Eliezer’s son; Jeshaiiah, Rehobiah’s son; Joram, Jeshaiiah’s son; Zicri, Joram’s son; and Shelomith, Zicri’s son. 26 Shelomith and his relatives were responsible for everything that David had collected for the Temple.

The officers of the army also gave things for the Temple. 27 They gave some of the things taken in wars. They gave these things to be used for the LORD’s Temple. 28 Shelomith and his relatives took care of all the things that people gave to be used for the Temple. This included the things given by Samuel the seer, Saul son of Kish, Abner son of Ner, and Joab son of Zeruiah.

29 Kenaniah was from the Izhar family. Kenaniah and his sons had work outside the Temple. They worked as the Agreement stayed at his house. See 1 Chron. 21.

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26:18 court The meaning of this word is uncertain.
court officers and judges in different places in Israel. 30 Hashabiah was from the Hebron family. Hashabiah and his relatives were responsible for all the LORD’s work and for the king’s business in Israel west of the Jordan River. There were 1700 powerful men in Hashabiah’s group.

31 The family history of the Hebron family shows that Jeriah was their leader. When David had been king for 40 years, he ordered his people to search through the family histories for strong and skilled men. Some of them were found among the Hebron family living in the town of Jazer in Gilead. 32 Jeriah had 2700 relatives who were powerful men and leaders of families. King David gave these 2700 relatives the responsibility of leading the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh in taking care of God’s work and the king’s business.

Army Groups

27 This is the list of the Israelites who served the king in the army. Each group was on duty one month each year. There were rulers of families, captains, generals, and the court officers who served the king. Each army group had 24,000 men.

2 Jashobeam son of Zabdiel was in charge of the first group for the first month. There were 24,000 men in Jashobeam’s group. 3 Jashobeam, one of Perez’s descendants, was leader of all the army officers for the first month.

4 Dodai, from the Ahoahites, was in charge of the army group for the second month. Mikloth was a leader in that group. There were 24,000 men in Dodai’s group.

5 The third commander, for the third month, was Benaiyah son of Jehoiada the leading priest. There were 24,000 men in Benaiyah’s group. 6 He was the same Benaiyah who was a brave soldier from the Thirty Heroes. He led these men. His son Ammizabad was in charge of Banaiah’s group.

7 The fourth commander, for the fourth month, was Asahel the brother of Joab. Later, Asahel’s son Zebediah took his place as commander. There were 24,000 men in Asahel’s group.

8 The fifth commander, for the fifth month, was Shamhuth from Zerah’s family. There were 24,000 men in Shamhuth’s group.

9 The sixth commander, for the sixth month, was Ira son of Ikkesh from the town of Tekoa. There were 24,000 men in Ira’s group.

10 The seventh commander, for the seventh month, was Helez from the Pelonites and a descendant of Ephraim. There were 24,000 men in Helez’s group.

11 The eighth commander, for the eighth month, was Sibbecai from Hushah and from Zerah’s family. There were 24,000 men in Sibbecai’s group.

12 The ninth commander, for the ninth month, was Abiezer from the town of Anathoth and the tribe of Benjamin. There were 24,000 men in Abiezer’s group.

13 The tenth commander, for the tenth month, was Maharai from Netophah and from Zerah’s family. There were 24,000 men in Maharai’s group.

14 The eleventh commander, for the eleventh month, was Benaiyah from Pirathon and the tribe of Ephraim. There were 24,000 men in Benaiyah’s group.

15 The twelfth commander, for the twelfth month, was Heldai from Netophah and from Othniel’s family. There were 24,000 men in Heldai’s group.

Leaders of the Tribes of Israel

16 These were the leaders of the tribes of Israel:
Eliezer son of Zicri, leader of the tribe of Reuben;
Shephatiah son of Maacah, leader of the tribe of Simeon;
Hashabiah son of Kemuel, leader of the tribe of Levi;
Zadok, leader of the people of Aaron;
Elihu, one of David’s brothers, leader of the tribe of Judah;
Omri son of Michael, leader of the tribe of Issachar;
Ishmaiah son of Obadiah, leader of the tribe of Zebulun;
Jeremoth son of Azriel, leader of the tribe of Naphtali;
Horesha son of Azaziah, leader of the tribe of Ephraim;
Joel son of Pedaiah, leader of West Manasseh;
Iddo son of Zechariah, leader of East Manasseh;
Jaasiel son of Abner, leader of the tribe of Benjamin;
Azarel son of Jeroham, leader of the tribe of Dan.

These were the leaders of the tribes of Israel.

David Counts the Israelites
David decided to count the men in Israel. There were very many people because the Lord had promised to make the Israelites as many as the stars in the sky. So David counted only the men who were 20 years old and older. But Joab son of Zeruiah began to count the people, but he did not finish. God became angry with the Israelites. That is why the number of the people was not put in the book, The History of King David.

The King’s Administrators
This is the list of men who were responsible for the king’s property:
Azmaveth son of Adiel was in charge of the king’s storerooms.
Jonathan son of Uzziah was in charge of the storerooms in the small towns, villages, fields, and towers.
Ezri son of Kelub was in charge of the field workers.
Shimei from Ramah was in charge of the vineyards.
Zabdi from Shepham was in charge of the storage and care of the wine that came from the vineyards.
Baal Hanan from Geder was in charge of the olive trees and sycamore trees in the western hill country.
Joash was in charge of storing the olive oil.
Shitrai from Sharon was in charge of the cattle around Sharon.
Shaphat son of Adlai was in charge of the cattle in the valleys.
Obil the Ishmaelite was in charge of the camels.
Jehdeiah the Meronothite was in charge of the donkeys.
Jaziz the Hagrite was in charge of the sheep.

All these men were the leaders who took care of King David’s property.
Jonathan was a wise counselor and a scribe. He was David’s uncle. Jehiel son of Hacmoni took care of the king’s sons.
Ahithophel was the king’s counselor. Hushai was the king’s friend. Hushai was from the Arkites.
Jehoiada and Abiathar later took Ahithophel’s place as the king’s counselor. Jehoiada was Benaiah’s son. Joab was the commander of the king’s army.

David’s Plans for the Temple
David gathered all the leaders of the Israelites and commanded them to come to Jerusalem. David called all the leaders of the tribes, the commanders of the army groups serving the king, the captains, the generals, the officials taking care of the property and animals that belonged to the king and his sons, the king’s important officials, the powerful heroes, and all the brave soldiers.
King David stood up and said, “Listen to me, my brothers and my people. In my heart I wanted to build a place to keep the

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Box of the LORD's Agreement. I wanted to build a place that would be God's footstool. And I made the plans for building that house for God. But God said to me, ‘No David, you must not build a house for my name. You must not do that because you are a soldier, and you have killed many men.’

4“The LORD, the God of Israel, chose the tribe of Judah to lead the twelve tribes of Israel. Then from that tribe he chose my father’s family. And from that family he chose me to be the king of Israel forever. Yes, God wanted to make me king of Israel.

5The LORD has given me many sons. And from all those sons, he chose Solomon to be the new king of Israel. But really, Israel is the LORD’s kingdom. He said to me, ‘David, your son Solomon will build my Temple and the area around it, because I have chosen Solomon to be my son, and I will be his father.’

7Solomon is obeying my laws and commands now. If he continues to obey my laws, I will make Solomon’s kingdom strong forever.”

8David said, “Now, in front of all Israel, the LORD’s people, and before God, I tell you these things: Be careful to obey all the commands of the LORD your God. Then you can keep this good land and pass it on to your descendants forever.

9“And you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father. Serve God with a pure heart. Be happy to serve him, because the LORD knows what is in everyone’s heart. He knows what you are thinking. If you go to him for help, you will get an answer. But if you turn away from him, he will leave you forever.

10Solomon, you must understand that the LORD has chosen you to build his holy place—the Temple. Be strong and finish the job.”

Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for building the Temple. They included plans for the porch around the Temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper rooms, its inside rooms, and the room for the mercy-cover. 12David had made plans for all parts of the Temple. He gave them to Solomon. David gave him all the plans for the courtyard around the LORD’s Temple and for all the rooms around it. He gave him the plans for the Temple storerooms and for the storerooms where they kept the holy things used in the Temple. 13David told Solomon about the groups of the priests and Levites. He told Solomon about all the work of serving in the LORD’s Temple and about all the things to be used in the Temple service. 14David told Solomon how much gold and silver should be used to make all the things to be used in the Temple. 15There were plans for gold lamps and lampstands, and there were plans for silver lamps and lampstands. David told Solomon how much gold or silver to use for each lampstand and its lamps. The different lampstands were to be used where needed.

16David told him how much gold should be used for each table for the holy bread and how much silver should be used for the silver tables.

17He told Solomon how much pure gold should be used to make the forks, sprinkling bowls, and pitchers. He told him how much gold should be used to make each gold dish and how much silver should be used to make each silver dish.

18He told him how much pure gold should be used for the altar of incense. David also gave Solomon the plans for God’s chariot—the mercy-cover with the Cherub angels spreading their wings over the Box of the LORD’s Agreement. The Cherub angels were made of gold.

19David said, “All these plans were written with the LORD guiding me. He helped me understand everything in the plans.”

20David also said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and brave and finish this work. Don’t be afraid, because the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will help you until all the work is finished. He will not leave you. You will build the LORD’s Temple.

21The groups of the priests and Levites are ready for all the work on God’s
Every skilled worker is ready to help you with all the work. The officials and all the people will obey every command you give.”

Gifts for Building the Temple

King David said to all the Israelites who were gathered together, “God chose my son Solomon. Solomon is young and does not know all that he needs to do this work. But the work is very important. This house is not for people; this house is for the Lord God. I have done my best to provide what is needed for the building of my God’s Temple. I have given gold for the things made of gold. I have given silver for the things made of silver. I have given bronze for the things made of bronze. I have given iron for the things made of iron. I have given wood for the things made of wood. I have also given onyx stones for the settings, a mosaic tiles, b all kinds of valuable stones in many different colors, and white marble stones. c I am making a special gift of gold and silver things for my God’s Temple. I am doing this because I really want the Temple of my God to be built. I am giving all these things to build this holy Temple. d I have given 110 tons e of pure gold from Ophir. I have given 263 tons f of pure silver. The silver is for covering the walls of the buildings in the Temple. g I have given gold and silver for all the things made of gold and silver. I have given gold and silver so that skilled men can make all different kinds of things for the Temple. Now, how many of you Israelites are ready to give yourselves to the Lord today?”

The family leaders, the leaders of the tribes of Israel, the generals, the captains, and the officials responsible for the king’s work, were all ready and gave their valuable things. h These are the things they gave for God’s house: 190 tons i of gold; 375 tons j of silver; 675 tons k of bronze; and 3750 tons l of iron. m People who had valuable stones gave them to the Lord’s Temple. Jehiel took care of the valuable stones. He was from the Gershon family. n The people were very happy because their leaders were willing to give so much. The leaders had given freely to the Lord from good hearts. King David was also very happy.

David’s Beautiful Prayer

Then David praised the Lord in front of all the people who were gathered together. David said, “Lord, the God of Israel, our Father, may you be praised forever and ever!

Greatness, power, glory, victory, and honor belong to you, because everything in heaven and on earth belongs to you!

The kingdom belongs to you, Lord! You are the head, the Ruler over everything.

Riches and honor come from you. You rule everything.

You have the power and strength in your hand!

And in your hand is the power to make anyone great and powerful!

Now, our God, we thank you, and we praise your glorious name!

All these things didn’t come from me and my people.

All these things come from you.

We are only giving back to you things that came from you.

We are only strangers traveling through this world like our ancestors.

Our time on earth is like a passing shadow,

and we cannot stop it.

Lord our God, we gathered all these things to build your Temple.

We build it to honor your name.
But all these things have come from you. Everything belongs to you.

17 My God, I know that you test people, and that you are happy when people do what is right.
I gladly give you all these things with a pure, honest heart.
I see your people gathered here, and I see that they are happy about giving these things to you.

18 LORD, you are the God of our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
Please help your people plan the right things.
Help them be loyal and true to you.
19 And help my son Solomon be true to you.
Help him always obey your commands, laws, and rules.
Help Solomon do these things.
And help him build this Temple that I have planned.”

20 Then David said to all the group of people gathered together, “Now give praise to the LORD your God.” So all the people gave praise to the LORD God, the God their ancestors worshiped. They bowed to the ground to give honor to the LORD and to the king.

Solomon Becomes King
21 The next day the people offered sacrifices and burnt offerings to the LORD—1000 bulls, 1000 rams, 1000 lambs, and the drink offerings that go with them. They offered these and many other sacrifices to the LORD for all the Israelites.

22 That day the people were very happy as they ate and drank there together with the LORD.
And they made David’s son Solomon king the second time. They anointed Solomon to be king, and they anointed Zadok to be priest. They did this in the place where the LORD was.

23 Then Solomon sat on the LORD’s throne as king. Solomon took his father’s place. He was very successful. All the Israelites obeyed him. All the leaders, soldiers, and all of King David’s sons accepted Solomon as king and obeyed him. The LORD made Solomon very great. All the Israelites knew that the Lord was making him great. He gave Solomon the honor that a king should have. No king in Israel before Solomon had such honor.

David’s Death
26–27 David son of Jesse was king over all Israel for 40 years. He was king in the city of Hebron for seven years. Then he was king in the city of Jerusalem for 33 years.

28 David died when he was old. He had lived a good, long life and had many riches and honors. His son Solomon became the new king after him.

29 The things that King David did, from beginning to end, are in the books written by Samuel the seer, Nathan the prophet, and Gad the seer. Those writings tell all about what David did as king of Israel. They tell about David’s power and what happened to him and to Israel and to all the kingdoms around them.

29:22 And they made … time Solomon was chosen to be king the first time when his half-brother Adonijah tried to make himself king. See 1 Kings 1:5–39.
Solomon Asks for Wisdom

1 Solomon, the son of David, became a very strong king, because the LORD his God was with him and made him very great.

2–3 The people of Israel and the captains, generals, judges, leaders, and heads of the families were all gathered together. Solomon spoke to them, and then they all went to the high place at Gibeon. They went there because God’s Meeting Tent was there. The LORD’s servant Moses made this tent when he and the Israelites were in the desert. 4 David had carried God’s Box of the Agreement from Kiriath Jearim to Jerusalem where he had set up another tent for it. 5 But the bronze altar that Bezalel son of Uri, who was the son of Hur, had made was in front of the Holy Tent at Gibeon. So Solomon and the people went there to ask the LORD for advice. 6 Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the LORD at the Meeting Tent and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

7 That night God came to Solomon and said, “Ask me for whatever you want me to give you.”

8 Solomon said to God, “You were very kind to my father David when you allowed me to rule on his throne after him. 9 Now, LORD God, continue to keep your promise to my father David. You made me king over so many people that they are like the dust of the earth. 10 Now give me wisdom and knowledge so that I can lead these people in the right way. No one could rule this great nation without your help.”

11 God said to Solomon, “You have the right attitude. You did not ask for long life and riches for yourself. You did not ask for the death of your enemies. You asked for wisdom and knowledge so that you can make the right decisions. 12 So I will give you wisdom and knowledge, but I will also give you wealth, riches, and honor. No king who lived before you has ever had so much wealth and honor, and no king in the future will have as much wealth and honor.”

13 Solomon left the Meeting Tent that was at the high place in Gibeon and went back to Jerusalem to rule as the king of Israel.

Solomon Strengthens His Army

14 Solomon started gathering horses and chariots for his army. He had 1400 chariots and 12,000 horse soldiers. He kept them in the chariot cities and in Jerusalem where he lived. 15 In Jerusalem Solomon gathered so much gold and silver that it was as common as rocks. He gathered so much cedar wood that it was as common as sycamore trees in the western hill country. 16 Solomon imported horses from Egypt and Kue. His merchants bought the horses in Kue for a set price. 17 They also bought chariots from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver each and horses for 150 shekels of silver each. They then sold the horses and chariots to the kings of the Hittites and Arameans.

Plans for the Temple and Palace

1 Solomon planned to build a Temple to give honor to the LORD’s name. He also planned to build a palace for himself. 2 He got 70,000 laborers and 80,000 stone-masons to cut stones in the mountains.

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He chose 3600 foremen to supervise the workers.

Then Solomon sent this message to King Hiram of Tyre:

“Help me as you helped my father David. You sent him cedar logs so that he could build a palace for himself to live in. I will build a Temple to honor the name of the Lord my God. At the Temple we will burn incense in front of him, and we will always put the holy bread on the special table. We will offer burnt offerings every morning and evening, on the Sabbath days, during New Moon celebrations, and on the other special meeting days that the Lord our God has commanded us to celebrate. This is a rule for the people of Israel to obey forever.

I will build a great temple because our God is greater than all the other gods. No one can really build a house to put our God in. The whole sky and the highest heaven cannot contain our God, so I cannot build a temple to put him in. I can only build a place to burn incense to honor him.

Now I would like you to send me a man who is skilled in working with gold, silver, bronze, and iron. He must know how to work with purple, red, and blue cloth. He will work here in Judah and Jerusalem with the craftsmen my father chose.

Also send me wood from cedar trees, pine trees, and algum trees\(^d\) from the country of Lebanon. I know your servants are experienced at cutting down trees from Lebanon. My servants will help your servants. I will need lots of wood because the Temple I am building will be very large and beautiful. This is what I will pay for your servants to cut down the trees for wood. I will give them 125,000 bushels\(^b\) of wheat for food, 125,000 bushels of barley, 115,000 gallons\(^c\) of wine, and 115,000 gallons of oil.”

Then Hiram answered Solomon and sent this message to him:

“Solomon, the Lord loves his people. That is why he chose you to be their king.” Hiram also said, “Praise the Lord, the God of Israel! He made heaven and earth. He gave a wise son to King David. Solomon, you have wisdom and understanding. You are building a Temple for the Lord. You are also building a palace for yourself.

I will send you a skilled craftsman named Huram Abi. His mother was from the tribe of Dan, and his father was from the city of Tyre. Huram Abi has skill in working with gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood. He also has skill in working with purple, blue, and red cloth and expensive linen. Huram Abi can design and build anything you tell him. He will work with your craftsmen and with the craftsmen of your father King David.

Now, sir, you offered to give us wheat, barley, oil, and wine. Give them to my servants, and we will cut as much wood as you need from Lebanon. We will tie the logs together and float them by sea to the town of Joppa. Then you can carry the wood to Jerusalem.”

So Solomon counted all the foreigners living in Israel. (This was after the time when his father David counted the people.) They found 153,600 strangers in the country. Solomon chose 70,000 men to carry the stones, 80,000 men to cut the stone in the mountains, and 3600 men to supervise the workers.

\(^a\) 2:8 algum trees Or “Almug,” as in 1 Kings. No one knows exactly what type of wood this was, but it might have been sandalwood.

\(^b\) 2:10 125,000 bushels Literally, “20,000 cors” (4,400,000 l).

\(^c\) 2:10 115,000 gallons Literally, “20,000 baths” (440,000 l).

\(^d\) 2:13 Or “I will send one of the craftsmen of my father Hiram.”

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Solomon Builds the Temple

3 Solomon began building the Lord’s Temple at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared to David, Solomon’s father. This was the place David had prepared for the Temple. It had been the threshing floor of Araunah\(^a\) the Jebusite.\(^b\) Solomon started to build on the second day of the second month of his fourth year as king of Israel.

3 These are the measurements he used for building the foundation of God’s Temple, using the old cubit.\(^c\) The foundation was 60 cubits\(^d\) long and 20 cubits\(^e\) wide.\(^f\) The porch in front of the Temple was 20 cubits long and 20 cubits high.\(^g\) He covered the inside of the porch with pure gold.\(^h\) He put panels made of cypress wood on the walls of the larger room. Then he put pure gold over the cypress panels and then put pictures of palm trees and chains on the gold.\(^i\) He put valuable stones in the Temple for beauty. The gold he used was gold from Parvaim.\(^j\) He covered the inside of the Temple with the gold. He put the gold on the ceiling beams, doorposts, walls, and doors. He carved Cherub angels on the walls.

8 Then he made the Most Holy Place. This room was 20 cubits long and 20 cubits wide. It was as wide as the Temple was. He put pure gold on the walls of the Most Holy Place. The gold weighed about 22 1/2 tons.\(^k\) The gold nails weighed 1 1/4 pounds.\(^l\) He covered the upper rooms with gold.\(^m\) He made two Cherub angels to put in the Most Holy Place. The workers covered the Cherub angels with gold.\(^n\) Each wing of the Cherub angels was 5 cubits\(^o\) long. The total length of the wings was 20 cubits. One wing of the first Cherub angel touched the wall on one side of the room. The other wing touched one wing of the second Cherub angel.\(^p\) And the other wing of the second Cherub angel touched the wall on the other side of the room.\(^q\) So the wings of the two Cherub angels together reached across the room—a total of 20 cubits. The Cherub angels stood facing the Holy Place.\(^r\)

14 He made the curtain\(^s\) from blue, purple, and red materials and expensive linen. There were Cherub angels on the curtain.

15 He put two columns in front of the Temple. The columns were 35 cubits\(^t\) tall. The top part of the two columns was 5 cubits long.\(^u\) He made chains in a necklace and put them on the tops of the columns. He made 100 pomegranates\(^v\) and put them on the chains.\(^w\) Then he put the columns up in front of the Temple. One column stood on the right side. The other column stood on the left side. He named the column on the right side “Jakin.”\(^x\) And he named the column on the left side “Boaz.”\(^y\)

Furniture for the Temple

4 He made a bronze altar that was 20 cubits\(^z\) long, 20 cubits wide, and 10 cubits\(^{ab}\) tall.\(^ac\) Then he made a large tank\(^ad\) from melted bronze. It was round and it measured 10 cubits across from edge to edge. It was 5 cubits\(^ae\) tall and about 30 cubits\(^af\) around.\(^ag\) There were images of bulls under the lip of the large bronze

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\(^a\) 3:1 Araunah In Hebrew, “Ornan.”
\(^b\) 3:1 Jebusite A person who lived in Jerusalem before the Israelites took the city. “Jebus” was the old name for Jerusalem.
\(^c\) 3:3 the old cubit This was the Egyptian cubit, measuring about 20 3/8” (51.83 cm).
\(^d\) 3:6 60 cubits 102 3/8” (31.1 m).
\(^e\) 3:3 20 cubits 34 1/8” (10.37 m). Also in verses 4, 8, 11, 13.
\(^f\) 3:4 20 cubits high 34 1/8” (10.37 m). Some of the Hebrew texts have “120 cubits high.”
\(^g\) 3:6 Parvaim This was a place where there was much gold. It was probably in the country of Ophir.
\(^h\) 3:8 22 1/2 tons Literally, “600 talents” (20,700 kg).
\(^i\) 3:9 1 1/4 pounds Literally, “50 shekels” (575 g).
\(^j\) 3:11 5 cubits 8’ 6” (2.6 m). Also in verse 15.
\(^k\) 3:13 facing the Holy Place Or “facing each other.” The Holy Place is the room in the Temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.
\(^l\) 3:14 curtain This curtain was a large piece of cloth that hung between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place so that no one could see the Lord’s Box of the Agreement and Cherub angels that were in there.
\(^m\) 3:15 35 cubits 50’ 6 1/16” (15.14 m).
\(^n\) 3:16 pomegranates Small bells shaped like pomegranates, a red fruit with many tiny seeds covered with a soft, juicy part of the fruit. Also in 4:13.
\(^o\) 3:17 Jakin In Hebrew, Jakin seems to mean “he establishes.”
\(^p\) 3:17 Boaz In Hebrew, Boaz seems to mean “he establishes.”
\(^q\) 4:1 10 cubas 34 1/8” (10.37 m).
\(^r\) 4:1 10 cubas 34 1/8” (10.37 m).
\(^s\) 4:2 large tank Literally, “sea.”
\(^t\) 4:2 5 cubas 8’ 6” (2.6 m).
\(^u\) 4:2 30 cubits 51’ 3/16” (15.55 m).
tank. They were in two rows that went 10 cubits around the tank. The bulls were molded in place when the tank was shaped. The large bronze tank was on top of twelve large statues of bulls. Three bulls looked toward the north. Three bulls looked toward the west. Three bulls looked toward the south. Three bulls looked toward the east. The large bronze tank was on top of these bulls. All the bulls stood with their rear ends to each other and to the center. The large bronze tank was 3 inches thick. The edge of the large tank was like the edge of a cup. The edge looked like a lily blossom. The tank could hold about 17,400 gallons.

He made ten basins. He put five basins on the right side of the large bronze tank and five basins on the left side. These ten basins were to be used to wash the things offered for the burnt offerings. But the large bronze tank was to be used by the priests for washing before they offered sacrifices.

He made ten lampstands of gold. He followed the plans made for these lampstands. He put the lampstands in the Temple. There were five lampstands on the right side and five lampstands on the left side. He made ten tables and put them in the Temple. Five tables were on the right side and five tables on the left side in the Temple. And he used gold to make 100 basins.

He also made the priests’ courtyard, the large courtyard, and the doors that open to them. He used bronze to cover these doors. Then he put the large bronze tank on the right side of the Temple on the southeast side.

Huram also made the pots, shovels, and basins. So he finished his work for King Solomon on God’s Temple:

12–16 2 columns;
2 capitals shaped like bowls for the top of the columns;
2 nets to go around the capitals;
400 pomegranates for the two nets (two rows of pomegranates for each
net to cover the two bowls for the capitals on top of the columns);
10 carts with a bowl on each cart;
the large tank with 12 bulls under it;
the pots, small shovels, small bowls, and all the dishes for the LORD’s Temple.

All the things that Huram made for King Solomon were made of polished bronze. King Solomon first poured these things in clay molds. The molds were made in the Jordan Valley between the towns of Succoth and Zeredah. Solomon made so many of them that no one tried to weigh the bronze used.

Solomon also made the dishes and things for God’s Temple. He made the golden altar and the tables where they put the bread of the Presence. He made the lamps and lampstands of pure gold. These were put inside the Holy Place in front of the Most Holy Place. He used pure gold to make the flowers, lamps, and tongs. He used pure gold to make the doors for the Temple, the inside doors for the Most Holy Place and the doors for the main hall.

When all the work was completed on the LORD’s Temple, Solomon brought in everything his father David had set aside for the Temple. Solomon put all the furniture and all the things made of silver and gold into the storage rooms in God’s Temple.

The Holy Box Carried Into the Temple

Solomon commanded the elders of Israel, the leaders of the tribes, and the heads of families to meet together in Jerusalem. He did this so that they could bring the Box of the LORD’s Agreement up to the Temple from the City of David, that is, Zion. All the men of Israel met together before King Solomon during the special festival in the seventh month of the year.

When all the elders of Israel arrived,
the Levites\textsuperscript{a} lifted the Box of the Agreement\textsuperscript{b} and carried it up to the Temple. The priests and the Levites\textsuperscript{b} also brought the Meeting Tent and all the holy things that were in it to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Then King Solomon and all the Israelites met in front of the Box of the Agreement to offer sheep and bulls as sacrifices. There were so many offerings that no one could count them. Then the priests carried the Box of the LORD’s Agreement to the place that was prepared for it in the Most Holy Place inside the Temple. They put the Box of the Agreement under the wings of the Cherub angels.\textsuperscript{8} The Cherub angels stood with their wings spread over the Box of the Agreement and the poles that were used to carry it.\textsuperscript{9} The poles are still there today. They were too long for the Most Holy Place, so their ends could be seen by anyone standing in the Holy Place, although no one outside could see them.\textsuperscript{10} The only things inside the Holy Box are the two tablets that Moses put there at Mt. Horeb. This is where the LORD made his agreement with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

All the priests who were there did the ceremony to make themselves holy. Then, as they came out of the Holy Place, they stood together, but not in their special groups.\textsuperscript{12} The Levite singers stood at the east side of the altar. All the singing groups of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun were there. And their sons and relatives were there. The Levite singers were dressed in white linen. They had cymbals, lyres, and harps. There were 120 priests there with the Levite singers. The 120 priests blew trumpets.\textsuperscript{17} Those who blew the trumpets and those who sang were like one person. They made one sound when they praised and thanked the LORD. They made a loud noise with the trumpets, cymbals, and instruments of music. They praised the LORD, singing,

“The LORD is good. His faithful love will last forever.”

Then the LORD’s Temple was filled with a cloud. \textsuperscript{“The priests could not continue to serve because of the cloud, because the Glory of the LORD filled the Temple.”} Then Solomon said, “The LORD chose to live in a dark cloud. But, LORD, I have built a beautiful house for you to live in forever.”

Solomon’s Speech

King Solomon turned around and blessed all the Israelites gathered in front of him. He said,

“Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who has done what he promised my father David. The LORD said, \textsuperscript{1} ‘I led Israel out of Egypt long ago. And in all that time, I have not chosen a city from any tribe of Israel for a place to build a house for my name. I have not chosen a man to lead my people, the people of Israel. But now I have chosen Jerusalem as a place for my name, and I have chosen David to lead my people Israel.’

“My father David wanted to build a temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. But the LORD said to my father, ‘David, it is good that you want to build a temple for my name, but you cannot build the Temple. Your son will build the Temple for my name.’

Now, the LORD has done what he said he would do. I am the new king in my father’s place. David was my father. Now I am Israel’s king. That is what the LORD promised, and I have built the Temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. I have put the Box of the Agreement in the Temple. The LORD’s Agreement with Israel is in that box.”

Solomon’s Prayer

Solomon had made a bronze platform and placed it in the middle of the outer
courtyard. The platform was 5 cubits long, 5 cubits wide, and 3 cubits tall. Solomon stood on the platform and faced the LORD’s altar. In front of all the Israelites who were gathered together, Solomon kneeled, spread his hands out toward heaven, and said,

“LORD, God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven or on earth. You keep the agreement that you made with your people. You are kind and loyal to those who follow you with all their heart. You made a promise to your servant, my father David, and you kept that promise. You made that promise with your own mouth, and with your own hands you made it come true today. Now, LORD, God of Israel, keep the other promises you made to your servant David, my father. You said, ‘David, if your sons carefully obey me as you did, you will always have someone from your family ruling the people of Israel.’ Again, LORD, God of Israel, I ask you to keep the promise you made to your servant David, my father. You said, ‘David, if your sons carefully obey me as you did, you will always have someone from your family ruling the people of Israel.’

But, God, will you really live here with us on the earth? The whole sky and the highest heaven cannot contain you. Certainly this house that I built cannot contain you either. But please listen to my prayer and my request. I am your servant, and you are the LORD my God. Hear this prayer that I am praying to you today. I am your servant, and you are the LORD my God. Hear this prayer that I am praying to you today. In the past you said, ‘I will be honored there.’ So please watch over this Temple, night and day. And listen to my prayer as I turn toward this Temple and pray to you. And please listen to our prayers in the future when I and your people Israel turn to this place and pray to you. We know that you live in heaven. We ask you to hear our prayer there and forgive us.

Whoever does wrong to someone will be brought to this altar. If they are not guilty, they will make an oath and promise that they are innocent. Please listen from heaven and judge them. If they are guilty, please show us that they are guilty. And if they are innocent, please show us that they are not guilty.

Sometimes your people Israel will sin against you, and their enemies will defeat them. Then the people will come back to you and praise you. They will pray to you in this Temple. In heaven, please listen to the prayers of your people Israel. Forgive them for their sins and let them have their land again. You gave this land to their ancestors.

Sometimes they will sin against you, and you will stop the rain from falling on their land. Then they will pray toward this place and praise your name. You will make them suffer, and they will be sorry for their sins. So please listen in heaven to their prayer. Then forgive us for our sins. Teach the people to live right. Then, please send rain to the land you gave them.

The land might become very dry so that no food will grow on it. Or maybe a great sickness will spread among the people. Maybe all the food that is growing will be destroyed by insects. Or your people might be attacked in some of their cities by their enemies. Or many of your people might get sick. When any of these things happen, people feel the need to spread their hands in prayer toward this Temple. Please listen to their prayer while you are in your home in heaven and forgive them and help them. Only

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*a 6:12–13 5 cubits 8’ 6” (2.6 m).
*b 6:12–13 3 cubits 5’ 3 3/16” (1.55 m).
you know what people are really thinking, so only you can judge them fairly. Do this so that your people will fear and respect you all the time that they live in this land you gave to our ancestors.

32 “People from other places will hear about your greatness and your power. They will come from far away to pray at this Temple. From your home in heaven, please listen to their prayers. Please do everything those from other places ask you. Then they will fear and respect you the same as your people in Israel. Then all people everywhere will know that I built this Temple to honor you.

34 Sometimes you will command your people to go and fight against their enemies. Then your people will turn toward this city that you have chosen and the Temple that I built in your honor, and they will pray to you. Listen to their prayers from your home in heaven, and help them.

36 Your people will sin against you. I know this because everyone sins. And you will be angry with your people. You will let their enemies defeat them. Their enemies will make them prisoners and carry them to some faraway land. In that faraway land, your people will think about what happened. They will be sorry for their sins, and they will pray to you. They will say, ‘We have sinned and done wrong.’

38 They will be in that faraway land of their enemies, but they will turn back to you. They will feel sorry for their sins with their whole heart and soul. They will turn toward the land you gave their ancestors. They will look toward the city you chose and toward the Temple I built, and they will pray to you. Please listen from your home in heaven. Accept their prayers when they beg for help, and help them. Forgive your people who have sinned against you.

39 Now, my God, I ask you, open your eyes and your ears. Listen and pay attention to the prayers we are praying in this place.

41 “Now, LORD God, get up and come to your special place, the Box of the Agreement that shows your strength. LORD God, may your priests be dressed with salvation, and may your true followers be happy about these good things.

42 LORD God, accept your anointed king. Remember your loyal servant David.”

The Temple Dedicated to the Lord

1 When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from the sky and burned up the burnt offering and the sacrifices. The Glory of the LORD filled the Temple.

2 The priests could not enter the LORD’s Temple because the Glory of the LORD filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire come down from heaven and the Glory of the LORD on the Temple, they bowed down on the pavement with their faces low to the ground. They worshiped and thanked the LORD, singing, “The LORD is good. His faithful love will last forever.”

4 Then King Solomon and all the Israelites offered sacrifices to the LORD. King Solomon offered 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep. So the king and the people showed that they had dedicated the Temple to God. The priests stood ready to do their work. The Levites stood with the instruments they would use to play music to the LORD. King David had made these instruments to use when they gave thanks to the LORD and sang, “His faithful love will last forever.” The priests blew their trumpets as they stood across from the Levites. And all the Israelites were standing.

7 King Solomon also dedicated the middle of the courtyard, the part that is in front of the Temple of the LORD. There
he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat from the animals that were used as fellowship offerings. He did this because the bronze altar he had built was too small to hold all these offerings.

8 So there at the Temple, King Solomon and all the people of Israel celebrated the festival. 9 People came from as far away as Hamath Pass in the north and the border of Egypt in the south. This huge crowd of people enjoyed themselves for seven days. 10 On the eighth day, they had a holy meeting because they had celebrated for seven days. They made the altar holy and it was to be used only for worshiping the Lord. And they celebrated the festival for seven days. 11 On the 23rd day of the seventh month, Solomon told the people to go home. All the people thanked the king, said goodbye, and went home. They were happy because of all the good things that the Lord had done for David his servant and for his people Israel.

The Lord Comes to Solomon

12 Then the Lord appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, “Solomon, I have heard your prayer, and I have chosen this place for myself to be a house for sacrifices. 13 When I close the sky so that there is no rain, or command the locusts to destroy the land, or send sicknesses to my people 14 and if my people who are called by my name become humble and pray, and look for me, and turn away from their evil ways, then I will hear them from heaven. I will forgive their sin and heal their land. 15 Now, my eyes are open, and my ears will pay attention to the prayers prayed in this place. 16 I have chosen this Temple, and I have made it a holy place. So I will be honored there forever. I will watch over it and think of it always. 17 You must serve me with a pure and honest heart, just as your father David did. You must obey my laws and do everything that I commanded you. If you obey all I have commanded, and if you obey my laws and rules, 18 then I will make you a strong king and your kingdom will be great. That is the agreement I made with David your father when I told him that Israel would always be ruled by one of his descendants.

19 “But if you don’t obey my laws and commands that I gave you, and if you worship other gods and serve them, 20 then I will take the Israelites out from my land that I gave them. And I will leave this Temple that I have made holy for my name. I will make this Temple something that all the nations will speak evil about. 21 Everyone who sees it will be amazed. They will ask, ‘Why did the Lord do this terrible thing to this land and to this temple?’ 22 People will say, ‘This happened because they left the Lord, the God of their ancestors. He brought them out of Egypt, but they decided to follow other gods. They began to worship and to serve those gods. That is why he caused all these bad things to happen to them.’”

The Cities Solomon Built

8 It took 20 years for King Solomon to build the Lord’s Temple and the king’s palace. 2 Then Solomon rebuilt the towns that Hiram gave him and then moved Israelites into those towns to live there. 3 After this Solomon went to Hamath of Zobah and captured it. 4 He also built the town of Tadmor in the desert. He built all the towns in Hamath to store things in. 5 He rebuilt the towns of Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon. He made them into strong forts with strong

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7:8 festival This was probably Passover.
walls, gates, and bars in the gates. He also rebuilt the town of Baalath and all the other towns where he stored things. He built all the cities where the chariots were kept and where the horse riders lived. Solomon built all he wanted in Jerusalem, Lebanon, and in all the country where he was king.

7-8 There were many people left in the land who were not Israelites. There were Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. The Israelites had not been able to destroy them, but Solomon forced them to work for him as slaves. They are still slaves today. Solomon did not force any of the Israelites to be his slaves. They were soldiers, government officials, officers, captains, and chariot commanders and drivers. There were 250 supervisors over Solomon’s projects. They supervised the men.

9 Solomon brought Pharaoh’s daughter up from the City of David to the house he built for her. He said, “My wife must not live in King David’s palace because the places where the Lord’s Holy Box has been are holy places.”

10 Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the Lord on the Lord’s altar. He built that altar in front of the Temple porch. Solomon offered sacrifices every day the way Moses commanded. Sacrifices were to be offered on Sabbath days, during New Moon celebrations, and at the three yearly festivals. The three yearly festivals were the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Harvest, and the Festival of Shelters. Solomon followed his father David’s instructions. He chose the groups of priests for their service and the Levites for their duties. The Levites were to lead the praise and help the priests from day to day to do what needed to be done in the Temple service. And he chose the gatekeepers by their groups to serve at each gate. This is the way David, the man of God, instructed. The Israelites did not change any of the instructions, even in the way they should keep the valuable things.

15 The Israelites did not change or disobey any of Solomon’s instructions to the priests and Levites. They did not change any of the instructions, even in the way they should keep the valuable things.

16 So Solomon completed his work on the Lord’s Temple. Work began the day they laid the foundation and continued without stopping until the day the Temple was finished.

17 King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber. This town is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. Hiram sent ships to Solomon. Hiram’s own men sailed the ships. They were skilled at sailing on the sea. His men went with Solomon’s servants to Ophir and brought back 17 tons of gold to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

9 The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon, so she came to test him with hard questions. She had a very large group with her. She had camels that carried spices, much gold, and valuable stones. She traveled to Jerusalem with a very large group of servants. There were many camels carrying spices, jewels, and a lot of gold. She met Solomon and asked him all the questions that she could think of. Solomon answered all the questions. None of her questions was too hard for him to explain. The queen of Sheba saw that Solomon was very wise. She also saw the beautiful palace he had built. She saw the food at the king’s table. She saw his officials meeting together. She saw the servants in the palace and the good clothes they wore. She saw his parties and the sacrifices that he offered in the Lord’s Temple. She was so amazed, she could hardly breathe!

5 Then she said to King Solomon, “The stories I heard in my country about your great works and your wisdom are true. I did not believe it until I came and saw it with my own eyes. Now I see that it is even greater than what I heard. Your wealth and wisdom is much greater than people told

8:18 Ophir A place where there was much gold. Today no one knows where Ophir really was. Also in 9:10.
8:18 17 tons Literally, “450 talents” (15,525 kg).
me. Your wives and officers are very fortunate! They can serve you and hear your wisdom every day. Praise the LORD your God! He was pleased to make you king of Israel. The LORD God loves Israel, so he made you the king. You follow the law and treat people fairly.”

Then the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon 4 1/2 tons of gold, a huge amount of spices, and precious stones. She gave Solomon more spices than anyone has ever brought into Israel.

Hiram’s servants brought gold from Ophir. They also brought in jewels and a special kind of wood.

King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold. He used about 15 pounds of gold for each shield. He also made 300 smaller shields of hammered gold. He used about 7 1/2 pounds of gold for each shield. The king put them in the Forest-of-Lebanon House.

Solomon’s Great Wealth

Every year Solomon got almost 25 tons of gold. In addition to the gold brought in by the traveling merchants and traders, the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon.

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Solomon also built a large throne with ivory decorations. It was covered with pure gold. There were six steps leading up to the throne. The back of the throne was round at the top. There were armrests on both sides of the throne, and there were lions in the sides of the throne under the armrests.

There were also two lions on each of the six steps, one at each end. There was nothing like it in any other kingdom.

All of Solomon’s cups and glasses were made of gold. And all the dishes in the building called the “Forest of Lebanon” were made from pure gold. Nothing in the palace was made from silver. There was so much gold that in Solomon’s time people did not think silver was important!

The king also had cargo ships that went to Tarshish to trade things with other countries. Hiram’s men were on these ships. Every three years the ships would come back with a new load of gold, silver, ivory, and apes and baboons.

King Solomon became greater in riches and wisdom than any other king on earth. People everywhere wanted to see King Solomon. They wanted to hear the great wisdom that God had given him.

Every year people came to see the king, and everyone brought a gift. They brought things made from gold and silver, clothes, weapons, spices, horses, and mules.

Solomon had 4000 stalls to keep horses and chariots. He had 12,000 horse soldiers. Solomon built special cities for these chariots. So the chariots were kept in these cities. King Solomon also kept some of the chariots with him in Jerusalem.

Solomon was the king over all the kings from the Euphrates River all the way to the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt. King Solomon had so much silver that it was as common as rocks in Jerusalem. And he had so much cedar wood that it was as common as sycamore trees in the hill country.

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The
people brought horses to Solomon from Egypt and from all the other countries.

Solomon’s Death
29 Everything else Solomon did, from the beginning to the end, is written in the writings of Nathan the Prophet, in The Prophecy of Ahijah from Shiloh, and in The Visions of Iddo the Seer. Iddo was a seer who wrote about Jeroboam son of Nebat. 30 Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years. 31 Then he died and was buried in the city of David, his father. Then Solomon’s son Rehoboam became the next king.

Rehoboam Acts Foolishly
10 1–3 Jeroboam son of Nebat was still in Egypt where he had run away from Solomon. When he heard about Solomon’s death, he returned to his city, Zeredah, in the hills of Ephraim.

Rehoboam and all the Israelites went to Shechem to make Rehoboam the king. The people said to Rehoboam, 4 “Your father forced us to work very hard. Now, make it easier for us. Stop the heavy work that your father forced us to do and we will serve you.”

5 Rehoboam answered, “Come back to me in three days, and I will answer you.” So the people left.

6 There were some older men who had helped Solomon make decisions when he was alive. So King Rehoboam asked these men what he should do. He said, “How do you think I should answer the people?”

7 They answered, “If you do what is good for the people, you will please them. If you speak kindly to them, they will always work for you.”

8 But Rehoboam did not listen to the advice from the older men. He asked the young men who were his friends. 9 Rehoboam said, “The people said, ‘Give us easier work than your father gave us.’ How do you think I should answer them? What should I tell them?”

10 Then the young men who grew up with him answered, “Those people came to you and said, ‘Your father forced us to work very hard. Now make our work easier.’ So you should tell them, ‘My little finger is stronger than my father’s whole body. 11 My father forced you to work hard, but I will make you work much harder! My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with whips that have sharp metal tips.’”

12 Three days later, Jeroboam and all the people came back to Rehoboam, just as he had told them to do. 13 King Rehoboam did not listen to the advice from the older men, and he was rude to the people. 14 He did what his friends told him to do and said, “My father forced you to work hard, but I will make you work much harder! My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with whips that have sharp metal tips.” So the king did not do what the people wanted. The Lord caused this to happen. He did this in order to keep the promise he made to Jeroboam son of Nebat when he sent Ahijah, the prophet from Shiloh, to speak to him.

16 The Israelites saw that the new king refused to listen to them, so they said to him,

“We are not part of David’s family are we?
We don’t get any of Jesse’s land, do we?
So, people of Israel, let’s go home
and let David’s son rule his own people!”

So the Israelites went home. 17 But Rehoboam still ruled over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

18 A man named Adoniram was one of the men who directed the workers. King Rehoboam sent Adoniram to talk to the people, but the Israelites threw stones at him until he died. King Rehoboam ran to his chariot and escaped to Jerusalem.

19 So Israel rebelled against the family of David, and that is how things are even today.

20 Rehoboam went back to Jerusalem and gathered together an army of 180,000 men from the families of...
Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. Rehoboam wanted to go fight against the Israelites and take back his kingdom. But the Lord spoke to a man of God named Shemaiah. He said, “Talk to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to men of Judah and Benjamin. Say to them, ‘The Lord says that you must not go to war against your brothers. Everyone, go home! I made all this happen.’” So all the men in Rehoboam’s army obeyed the Lord and went home. They did not attack Jeroboam.

Rehoboam Strengthens Judah
5 Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built strong cities in Judah to defend against attacks. 6 He repaired the cities of Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth Zur, Socco, Adullam, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These cities in Judah and Benjamin were made strong. When Rehoboam made these cities strong, he put commanders in them. He also put supplies of food, oil, and wine in them. Also, he put shields and spears in every city and made the cities very strong. He kept the peoples and cities of Judah and Benjamin under his control.

13 The priests and the Levites from all over Israel agreed with Rehoboam and joined him. The Levites left their grasslands and their own fields and came to Jerusalem and Judah. The Levites did this because Jeroboam and his sons refused to let them serve as priests to the Lord.

15 Jeroboam chose his own priests to serve in the high places, where he set up the goat and calf idols he had made. When the Levites left Israel, the people in all the tribes of Israel who were faithful to the Lord, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord, the God of their fathers. These people made the kingdom of Judah strong, and they supported Solomon’s son Rehoboam for three years. They did this because during that time they lived the way David and Solomon had lived.

Rehoboam’s Family
18 Rehoboam married Mahalath. Her father was Jerimoth. Her mother was Abihail. Jerimoth was David’s son. Abihail was Eliab’s daughter, and Eliab was Jesse’s son.

19 Mahalath gave Rehoboam these sons: Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. Then Rehoboam married Maacah. Maacah was Absalom’s granddaughter. And Maacah gave Rehoboam these children: Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith.

21 Rehoboam loved Maacah more than he loved all his other wives and slave women. Rehoboam had 18 wives and 60 slave women. He was the father of 28 sons and 60 daughters.

22 Rehoboam chose Abijah to be the leader among his own brothers. He did this because he planned to make Abijah king.

Shishak King of Egypt Attacks Jerusalem
12 Rehoboam became a strong king and made his kingdom strong. Then Rehoboam and the whole tribe of Judah refused to obey the law of the Lord.

2 During the fifth year that Rehoboam was king, Shishak king of Egypt came to attack Jerusalem. This happened because Rehoboam and the people of Judah rebelled against the Lord. Shishak had 1200 chariots, 60,000 horse riders, and an army that no one could count. In Shishak’s large army there were Libyan soldiers, Sukkite soldiers, and Ethiopian soldiers. Shishak defeated the strong cities of Judah. Then Shishak brought his army to Jerusalem.

5 Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah. The leaders of Judah had gathered together in Jerusalem because they all were afraid of Shishak. Shemaiah said to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah, “This is what the Lord says: ‘Rehoboam, you and the

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people of Judah have left me and refused to obey my law. So now I will leave you to face Shishak without my help.’

6 Then the leaders of Judah and King Rehoboam were sorry and humbled themselves. They said, “The LORD is right.”

7 The LORD saw that the king and the leaders of Judah had humbled themselves. Then the message from the Lord came to Shemaiah. The LORD said, “The king and the leaders humbled themselves. So I will not destroy them, but I will save them soon. I will not use Shishak to pour out my anger on Jerusalem. 8 But the people of Jerusalem will become Shishak’s servants. This will happen so that they may learn that serving me is different from serving the kings of other nations.”

9 Shishak took the treasures from the LORD’s Temple and from the king’s palace. He also took the gold shields that Solomon had made. 10 King Rehoboam made more shields to put in their places, but they were made from bronze. He gave them to the guards on duty at the palace gates. 11 Every time the king went to the LORD’s Temple, the guards took out the shields and went with him. After they were finished, they put the shields back on the wall in the guardroom.

12 Rehoboam humbled himself, and the LORD stopped being angry with him. So he did not completely destroy Rehoboam. There was some good in Judah.

13 King Rehoboam made himself a strong king in Jerusalem. He was 41 years old when he became king of Judah. Rehoboam ruled 17 years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD chose for his own. He chose this city from all the other cities of Israel. Rehoboam’s mother was Naamah. She was an Ammonite. 14 Rehoboam did evil because he didn’t decide in his heart to obey the LORD.

15 All the things Rehoboam did when he was king, from the beginning to the end of his rule, are written in the writings of Shemaiah the prophet and in the writings of Iddo the seer. Those men wrote family histories. And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the time both kings ruled. 16 Rehoboam rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. Then Rehoboam’s son Abijah became the next king after him.

Abijah, King of Judah

1 Abijah became the new king of Judah. This was during the 18th year that Jeroboam son of Nebat ruled Israel. 2 Abijah ruled in Jerusalem for three years. His mother’s name was Maacah. She was the daughter of Uriel, from the town of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3 Abijah’s army had 400,000 brave soldiers. Abijah led that army into battle. Jeroboam’s army had 800,000 brave soldiers. Jeroboam got ready to have a war with Abijah.

4 Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim in the hill country of Ephraim and said, “Jeroboam and all Israel, listen to me! 5 You should know that the LORD, the God of Israel, gave David and his sons the right to be king over Israel forever. God gave this right to David with an agreement of salt. 6 But Jeroboam turned against his master. Jeroboam son of Nebat was one of the servants of David’s son Solomon. 7 Then worthless, evil men became friends with Jeroboam. Then Jeroboam and the bad men turned against Rehoboam, Solomon’s son. Rehoboam was young and did not have experience. So he could not stop Jeroboam and his bad friends.

8 Now, you people have decided to defeat the LORD’s kingdom—the kingdom that is ruled by David’s sons. You have so many people with you and you have the golden calves—the ‘gods’ that Jeroboam made for you. 9 You threw out the LORD’s priests, the descendants of Aaron. And you threw out the Levites. Then you chose your own priests, as every other nation on earth does. And now, anyone who will bring a young bull and seven rams can become a priest to serve these ‘no-gods.’

13:5 agreement of salt When people ate salt together, it meant their agreement of friendship would never be broken. Abijah was saying here that God had made an agreement with David that would never be broken.
10"But as for us, the LORD is our God. We people of Judah have not refused to obey God. We have not left him. The priests who serve the LORD are Aaron’s sons, and the Levites help the priests in their work. They offer burnt offerings and burn incense of spices to the LORD every morning and every evening. They put the bread in rows on the special table in the Temple. And they take care of the lamps on the golden lampstand so that it shines bright each and every evening. We very carefully serve the LORD our God, but you people have abandoned him.

11God himself is with us. He is our ruler, and his priests are with us. God’s priests blow his trumpets to wake you up and make you excited about coming to him. Men of Israel, don’t fight against the LORD, God of your ancestors, because you will not succeed!"

12But Jeroboam sent a group of soldiers to sneak behind Abijah’s army. Jeroboam’s army was in front of Abijah’s army. The hidden soldiers from Jeroboam’s army were behind Abijah’s army. When the soldiers in Abijah’s army from Judah looked around, they saw Jeroboam’s army attacking both in front and in back. The men of Judah shouted out to the LORD and the priests blew the trumpets.

13Then the men in Abijah’s army shouted. When the men of Judah shouted, God defeated Jeroboam’s army. Jeroboam’s whole army from Israel was defeated by Abijah’s army from Judah. The men of Israel ran away from the men of Judah. God let the army from Judah defeat the army from Israel.

14When Abijah died, they buried him in the City of David. Abijah’s son Asa became the new king after him. There was peace in the country for ten years in Asa’s time.

Asa, King of Judah
2Asa did what the LORD his God said was good and right. 3He took away the altars of the foreigners and the high places. He also smashed the memorial stones and cut down the Asherah poles. 4He commanded the people of Judah to follow the LORD, the God their ancestors had worshiped, and to obey his laws and commands. 5He also removed all the high places and incense altars from all the towns in Judah.

6Asa built strong cities in Judah while there was peace in Judah. He had no war in these years because the LORD gave him peace.

7Asa said to the people of Judah, “Let’s build these towns and make walls around them. Let’s make towers, gates, and bars in the gates. Let’s do this while we still live in this country. This country is ours because we have followed the LORD our God. He has given us peace all around us.” So they built and had success.

8Asa had an army of 300,000 men from the tribe of Judah and 280,000 men from the tribe of Benjamin. The men from Judah carried large shields and spears. The men from Benjamin carried small shields and shot arrows from bows. All of them were strong and brave soldiers.

9Then Zerah from Ethiopia came out against Asa’s army. He had 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots in his army. His army

a 13:14 When the soldiers ... in back The standard Hebrew text has “The battle was in front and in the back.”

b 14:9 Ethiopia Or “Cush.”
Asa called out to the Lord his God and said, “Lord, only you can help weak people against those who are strong! Help us, Lord our God! We depend on you. We fight against this large army in your name. Lord, you are our God! Don’t let anyone defeat you!”

Then the Lord used Asa’s army from Judah to defeat the Ethiopian army. And the army ran away. Asa’s army chased the Ethiopian army all the way to the town of Gerar. So many Ethiopians were killed that they could not get together as an army to fight again. They were crushed by the Lord and his army. Asa and his army carried many valuable things away from the enemy. Asa and his army defeated all the towns near Gerar. The people living in those towns were afraid of the Lord. Those towns had very many valuable things. Asa’s army took those valuable things away from those towns. His army also attacked the camps where the shepherds lived and took many sheep and camels. Then they went back to Jerusalem.

Asa’s Changes

The Spirit of God came on Azariah, who was Obed’s son. Azariah went to meet Asa and said, “Listen to me, Asa and all you people of Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you look for him, you will find him. But if you leave him, he will leave you. For a long time Israel was without the true God. And they were without a teaching priest, and without the law. But when the Israelites had trouble, they turned again to the Lord, the God of Israel. They looked for him and found him. In those times of trouble, no one could travel safely. There was great trouble in all the nations. One nation would destroy another nation and one city would destroy another city. This was happening because God gave them all kinds of trouble. But Asa, you and the people of Judah and Benjamin, be strong. Don’t be weak and don’t give up, because you will get a reward for your good work!”

Asa felt encouraged when he heard these words and the message from Obed the prophet. Then he removed the hated idols from the whole area of Judah and Benjamin. He also removed the hated idols from the towns he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. And he repaired the Lord’s altar that was in front of the porch of the Lord’s Temple.

Then Asa gathered all the people from Judah and Benjamin and the people from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who had moved from the country of Israel to live in the country of Judah. A great many of these people came to Judah because they saw that the Lord, Asa’s God, was with him.

Asa and these people gathered together in Jerusalem on the third month in the 15th year of Asa’s rule. At that time they sacrificed 700 bulls and 7000 sheep and goats to the Lord. Asa’s army had taken the animals and other valuable things from their enemies. Then they made an agreement to serve the Lord God with all their heart and with all their soul. He is the God their ancestors served. Anyone who refused to serve the Lord God was to be killed. It did not matter if that person was important or not or if that person was a man or woman. Then Asa and the people made an oath to the Lord. They shouted it out loudly and blew their trumpets and rams’ horns.

All the people of Judah were happy about the oath, because they had promised with all their heart. They followed God with all their heart. They looked for God and found him, so the Lord gave them peace in all the country.

King Asa also removed Maacah, his mother, from being queen mother. He did this because she had set up one of those awful poles to honor the goddess Asherah. Asa cut down that Asherah pole, smashed it into small pieces, and burned the pieces in the Kidron Valley.

Asa did not destroy
the high places, even though he was faithful to God all his life.

18 Asa and his father had given some special gifts to God. Asa put these gifts of gold, silver, and other things into the Temple. 19 There was no more war until the 35th year of Asa’s rule. a

Asa’s Last Years

16 In Asa’s 36th year as king, b Baasha attacked Judah and then built up the city of Ramah to keep Asa from leaving Judah on any kind of military campaign. 2 So Asa took gold and silver from the treasuries of the Lord’s Temple and the king’s palace. He gave it to his officials and sent them to King Ben-Hadad of Aram. Ben-Hadad was the son of Tabrimmon. Tabrimmon was the son of Hezion. Damascus was Ben-Hadad’s capital city.

3 Asa sent this message: “My father and your father had a peace agreement. Now I want to make a peace agreement with you. I am sending you this gift of gold and silver. Please break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel and make him leave us alone.”

4 King Ben-Hadad made that agreement with King Asa and sent his army to fight against the Israelite towns of Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim, and the storage cities in the area of Naphtali. 5 When Baasha heard about these attacks, he stopped building up Ramah and went back to Tirzah. He stopped all the work he was doing. 6 Then King Asa gave an order for all the men in Judah, with no exceptions. They had to go to Ramah and carry out all the stone and wood that Baasha was using to build up the city. They carried the material to Geba in Benjamin and to Mizpah and used it to strengthen those two cities.

7 At that time Hanani the seer came to King Asa of Judah and said to him, “Asa, you depended on the king of Aram to help you and not the Lord your God. That’s why the king’s army has escaped from you. 8 Did you forget what happened with the Ethiopians and the Libyans who also had a powerful army with many chariots and horse soldiers? That time you depended on the Lord to help you, and he let you defeat them. 9 The eyes of the Lord go around looking in all the earth for people who are faithful to him so that he can make them strong. Asa, you did a foolish thing. So from now on you will have wars.”

10 Asa was angry with Hanani because of what he said. He was so mad that he put Hanani in prison. He was also very rough and cruel to some of the people then.

11 Everything Asa did, from the beginning to the end, is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 12 Asa’s feet became infected in his 39th year as king. c Even though the infection was very serious, Asa did not go to the Lord for help. He went to the doctors instead. 13 Asa died in the 41st year as king d and rested with his ancestors.

14 The people buried Asa in his own tomb that he made for himself in the City of David. They laid him in a bed that was filled with spices and different kinds of mixed perfumes, and they burned a large fire for him. e

Jehoshaphat, King of Judah

17 Asa’s son Jehoshaphat became the new king after him. Jehoshaphat made Judah strong so that they could fight against Israel. 2 He put groups of soldiers in all the towns of Judah that were made into fortresses. He built fortresses in Judah and in the towns of Ephraim that his father Asa had captured.

3 The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because in his young life he did the good things his ancestor David did. Jehoshaphat did not follow the Baal idols. 4 He looked for the God his ancestors followed. He followed God’s commands and did not live the same way the Israelites lived.

5 The Lord made Jehoshaphat a strong king over Judah. All the people of Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat. So he had much wealth and honor. 6 His heart found

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a 15:19 35th year of Asa’s rule  About the year 880 B.C.
b 16:1 36th year as king  About the year 879 B.C.
c 16:12 39th year as king  About the year 875 B.C.
d 16:13 41st year as king  About the year 873 B.C.
e 16:14  This probably means the people burned spices in honor of Asa, but it could also mean they burned his body.
pleasure in the ways of the Lord. He removed the high places and the Asherah poles from the country of Judah.

7 During the third year of Jehoshaphat’s rule, he sent his leaders to teach in the towns of Judah. These leaders were Ben Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah. 8 Jehoshaphat also sent Levites with these leaders. These Levites were Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, and Tobijah. He also sent the priests Elishama and Jehoram. 9 These leaders, Levites, and priests taught the people in Judah. They had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them. They went through all the towns of Judah and taught the people.

10 The nations near Judah were afraid of the Lord, so they did not start a war against Jehoshaphat. 11 Some of the Philistines brought gifts to Jehoshaphat. They also brought silver to him because they knew he was a very powerful king. Some Arabian people brought flocks to Jehoshaphat. They brought 7700 rams and 7700 goats to him.

12 Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful. He built fortresses and storage towns in the country of Judah. 13 He kept many supplies in the storage towns. And Jehoshaphat kept trained soldiers in Jerusalem. 14 These soldiers were listed in their tribes. This is the list of these soldiers in Jerusalem:

From the tribe of Judah, these were the generals:
Adnah was the general of 300,000 soldiers. 15 Jehohanan was the general of 280,000 soldiers. 16 Amasiah was the general of 200,000 soldiers. Amasiah was Zicri’s son. Amasiah was happy to give himself to serve the Lord.

17 From the tribe of Benjamin these were the generals:
Eliada had 200,000 soldiers who used bows, arrows, and shields. Eliada was a very brave soldier.

18 Jehozabad had 180,000 men ready for war.

19 All these soldiers served King Jehoshaphat. The king also had other men in the fortresses in all the country of Judah.

Micaiah Warns King Ahab

18 Jehoshaphat became very rich and famous. He made an agreement with King Ahab through marriage. 2 A few years later, Jehoshaphat visited Ahab in the town of Samaria. Ahab sacrificed many sheep and cattle for Jehoshaphat and the people with him. Ahab encouraged Jehoshaphat to join in an attack on the city of Ramoth Gilead. 3 Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Will you go with me to attack Ramoth Gilead?” Ahab was the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah. Jehoshaphat answered, “Yes, you and I will be as one—my men will be as yours in battle. 4 But first let’s ask the Lord for advice.”

5 So Ahab called a meeting of the prophets. There were about 400 prophets at that time. Ahab asked the prophets, “Should we go and attack Ramoth Gilead or not?”

The prophets answered Ahab, “Yes, because God will let you defeat Ramoth Gilead.”

6 But Jehoshaphat said, “Doesn’t the Lord have another prophet here? Let’s ask him what God says.”

7 King Ahab answered, “Yes, there is another prophet. His name is Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him. He never says anything good about me when he speaks for the Lord. He always says things that I don’t like.”

Jehoshaphat said, “The king shouldn’t say things like that!”

8 So King Ahab told one of his officers to go and find Micaiah.

9 At that time the two kings were sitting on their thrones, with their royal robes on, at the judgment place near the gates of Samaria. All the prophets were
standing before them, prophesying. 10One of the prophets was named Zedekiah son of Kenaanah. Zedekiah made some iron horns and said to Ahab, “The LORD says, ‘You will use these iron horns to fight against the army of Aram. You will defeat them and destroy them.’” All the other prophets agreed with Zedekiah and said, “Your army should march now to go fight against the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead. You will win the battle. The LORD will let you defeat them.”

11While this was happening, the officer went to find Micaiah. When he found him, the officer told him, “All the other prophets have said that the king will succeed, so you should say the same thing.”

12But Micaiah answered, “As surely as the LORD lives, I can say only what my God says.”

13Micaiah went and stood before King Ahab. The king asked him, “Micaiah, should we go and attack the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead or not?”

Micaiah answered, “Yes, go and be successful! You will take the city.”

15But Ahab answered, “How many times do I have to tell you? Tell me the truth. What does the LORD say?”

16So Micaiah answered, “I can see the army of Israel scattered all over the hills, like sheep with no one to lead them. This is what the LORD says: ‘These men have no leaders. Let them go home in peace.’”

17Then Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “See, I told you! This prophet never says anything good about me. He always says something bad.”

18Micaiah said, “Hear the message from the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne. All of heaven’s army was standing around him, some on his left side and some on his right side. 19The LORD said, ‘Which of you will go fool Ahab into attacking the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead so that he will be killed?’ The angels discussed many different plans. 20Then a spirit went and stood before the LORD. He said, ‘I will fool him!’ The LORD asked, ‘How will you do it?’ 21He answered, ‘I will go out and become a spirit of lies in the mouths of Ahab’s prophets—they will all speak lies.’ So the Lord said, ‘Yes, that will fool Ahab. Go out and do that!’

22“So that is what has happened here. The LORD made your prophets lie to you. The LORD himself decided to bring this disaster to you.”

23Then the prophet Zedekiah went to Micaiah and hit him on the face. Zedekiah said, “How is it that the Spirit of the LORD left me to speak through you?”

24Micaiah answered, “Look, what I said will happen! And when you see it, you will go into the deepest part of your house to hide!”

25Then King Ahab ordered one of his officers to arrest Micaiah. Ahab said, “Arrest him and take him to Amon the governor of the city and prince Joash. 26Tell them to put Micaiah in prison. Give him nothing but bread and water to eat. Keep him there until I come home from the battle.”

27Micaiah said, “Listen to me, everyone! Ahab, if you come back alive from the battle, the LORD has not spoken through me.”

The Battle at Ramoth Gilead

28King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to fight the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead. 29Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Disguise yourself when you go into battle, but wear your own clothes. And I will disguise myself.” The king of Israel went into battle dressed like an ordinary soldier.

30The king of Aram had 32 chariot commanders. He gave them this command, “Don’t go after anyone except the king of Israel, no matter how important they are!”

31During the battle, the commanders saw King Jehoshaphat and thought he was the king of Israel. So they went to kill him. Jehoshaphat started shouting, and the LORD helped him. God made the chariot commanders turn away from Jehoshaphat.
When the commanders saw that he was not King Ahab, they stopped chasing him. Then a soldier pulled back on his bow and shot an arrow into the air. By chance it hit the king of Israel between two pieces of his armor. King Ahab said to his chariot driver, “I’ve been hit! Turn the chariot around and take me off the battlefield!”

The armies continued fighting all that day. King Ahab leaned against the side of his chariot to hold himself up, facing the Arameans. He watched until evening. Then, just as the sun was setting, he died.

King Jehoshaphat of Judah came back safely to his house in Jerusalem. The prophet Jehu, son of Hanani, went out to meet the king. Jehu said to him, “Why did you help those who are wicked? Why do you love those who hate the Lord? That’s the reason the Lord is angry with you now. Fortunately, you did some good things in your life. You did remove the Asherah poles from this country, and you did decide to ask God for his advice.”

Jehoshaphat Chooses Judges

Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, but he would go out among the people throughout Judah, from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim. He helped the people turn back to the Lord, the God their ancestors worshiped. Jehoshaphat went from town to town and appointed judges in each of the fortresses of Judah. He told the judges, “Be careful in what you are doing, because you are not judging for people, but for the Lord. He will be with you when you make decisions. You must fear the Lord. Protect justice and do what is right because the Lord our God is fair. He does not treat some people as if they are more important than others, and he does not accept bribes to change his judgments.”

In Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat chose some of the Levites, priests, and heads of the families of Israel to be judges. These men lived in Jerusalem and used the law of the Lord to settle problems among the people.

Jehoshaphat commanded them, “You must serve faithfully with all your heart. You must fear the Lord. People from cities around the country will bring their problems to you. You will listen to cases where people have broken a law or a command or maybe killed someone. In all these cases you must warn the people not to sin against the Lord so that he will not get angry and punish you and your people. Amariah is the high priest, so he will make the final decision about the people’s responsibilities to the Lord. Zebadiah son of Ishmael is the leader of the tribe of Judah, so he will make the final decision about the people’s responsibilities to the king. The Levites will serve as scribes for you. Be brave and do what is right! May the Lord be with those of you who are good judges.”

Jehoshaphat Faces War

Later, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and some Meunites came to start a war with Jehoshaphat. Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, “There is a large army coming against you from Edom. They are coming from the other side of the Dead Sea. They are already in Hazazon Tamar!” (Hazazon Tamar is also called En Gedi.) Jehoshaphat became afraid, and he decided to ask the Lord what to do. He announced a time of fasting for everyone in Judah. The people of Judah came together to ask the Lord for help. They came from out of all the towns of Judah to ask for the Lord’s help. Jehoshaphat was in the new courtyard of the Lord’s Temple. He stood up in the meeting of the people from Judah and Jerusalem and said,

“Lord God of our ancestors, you are the God in heaven. You rule over all the kingdoms in all the nations. You have power and strength. No one can stand against you. You are our God! You forced the people living in this land to
leave. You did this in front of your people Israel. You gave this land to the descendants of Abraham forever. Abraham was your friend. His descendants lived in this land, and built a Temple for your name. They said, 'If trouble comes to us—the sword, punishment, sicknesses, or famine—we will stand in front of this Temple and in front of you. Your name is on this Temple. We will shout to you when we are in trouble. Then you will hear and save us.'

But now, here are men from Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir. You would not let the Israelites enter their lands when they came out of Egypt. So the Israelites turned away and didn’t destroy them. But see the kind of reward those people give us for not destroying them. They have come to force us out of your land that you gave to us. Our God, punish those people. We don’t have the strength to stop this large army that is coming against us. We don’t know what to do! We are looking to you for help."

All the men of Judah stood before the Lord with their wives, babies, and children. Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Jahaziel son of Zechariah. (Zechariah was the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah.) Jahaziel was a Levite from the family of Asaph. In the middle of the meeting, Jahaziel said, “Listen to me King Jehoshaphat and everyone living in Judah and Jerusalem! The Lord says this to you: ‘Don’t be afraid or worry about this large army, because the battle is not your battle. It is God’s battle! Tomorrow, they will come up through the Ziz Pass. You must go down to them. You will find them at the end of the valley on the other side of the desert of Jeruel. You will not have to fight this battle. Just stand there and watch the Lord save you. Judah and Jerusalem, don’t be afraid. Don’t worry, because the Lord is with you. So go out to stand against those people tomorrow.’”

Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground. And all the people of Judah and Jerusalem bowed down before the Lord and worshiped him. The Levites from the Kohath family groups and the Korah family stood up to praise the Lord, the God of Israel. They sang very loudly.

Early the next morning, Jehoshaphat’s army went out into the desert of Tekoa. As they marched out, Jehoshaphat stood there saying, “Listen to me, men of Judah and Jerusalem. Have faith in the Lord your God, and you will stand strong! Have faith in his prophets, and you will succeed!”

Jehoshaphat encouraged the men and gave them instructions. Then he had the Temple singers stand up in their special clothes to praise the Lord. They marched in front of the army and sang, “Give thanks to the Lord! His faithful love will last forever.”

As they began to sing and to praise God, the Lord set an ambush for the army from Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir who had come to attack Judah. The enemy was defeated! The Ammonites and the Moabites started to fight the men from Mount Seir. After they killed them, the Ammonites and Moabites turned on themselves and killed each other.

The men from Judah arrived at the lookout point in the desert. They looked for the enemy’s large army, but all they saw were dead bodies lying on the ground. There were no survivors.

On the fourth day Jehoshaphat and his army met in the Valley of Beracah. They praised the Lord. That word means “blessing” or “praise.”

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\[20:10\] You would not let … Egypt See Deut. 2:4–9, 19.
\[20:12\] We are … help Literally, “But our eyes are on you!”

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is why people still call that place, “The Valley of Beracah.”

27 All the men from Judah and Jerusalem were very happy as they marched back to Jerusalem with Jehoshaphat in the front. The Lord made them very happy when he defeated their enemy. 28 They entered Jerusalem with lyres, harps, and trumpets and went to the Temple of the Lord.

29 People in all the surrounding kingdoms became afraid of God when they heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel. 30 That is why there was peace for Jehoshaphat’s kingdom—his God brought him rest from the enemies that were all around him.

Summary of Jehoshaphat’s Rule

31 Jehoshaphat ruled over the country of Judah. He was 35 years old when he became king, and he ruled 25 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi. 32-33 Like his father Asa, Jehoshaphat was good and did everything that the Lord wanted, except he did not destroy the high places. Also, the people did not turn back to the God their ancestors worshiped.

34 Everything else Jehoshaphat did, from beginning to end, is written in The Official Records of Jehu Son of Hanani. It was copied and included in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

35 Later on, King Jehoshaphat of Judah made an agreement with King Ahaziah of Israel. Ahaziah was very evil. 36 Jehoshaphat joined with Ahaziah to make ships to go to the town of Tarshish. They built some ships at Ezion Geber. 37 There was a man from the town of Mareshah named Eliezer son of Dodavahu. He spoke against Jehoshaphat and said, “Jehoshaphat, since you have joined with Ahaziah, the Lord will destroy what you have built.” The ships were wrecked, so Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah were not able to send them to Tarshish.

Then Jehoshaphat died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Then his son, Jehoram became the next king. 2 Jehoram’s brothers were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael, and Shephatiah. They were the sons of King Jehoshaphat of Judah. 3 Jehoshaphat gave his sons many gifts of silver, gold, and precious things. He also gave them strong fortresses in Judah. But Jehoshaphat gave the kingdom to Jehoram because he was his oldest son.

Jehoram, King of Judah

4 Jehoram took over his father’s kingdom and made himself strong. Then he used a sword to kill all his brothers. He also killed some of the leaders of Israel. 5 Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to rule. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem. 6 He lived the same way the kings of Israel lived. He lived the same way Ahab’s family lived. This was because Jehoram married Ahab’s daughter. And Jehoram did evil in the Lord’s sight. 7 But the Lord would not destroy David’s family because of the agreement he made with David. He had promised to keep a lamp burning for David and his children forever. 8

8 In Jehoram’s time, Edom broke away from under Judah’s authority. The people of Edom chose their own king. 9 So Jehoram went to Edom with all his commanders and chariots. The Edomite army surrounded Jehoram and his chariot commanders. But Jehoram fought his way out at night. 10 Since that time and until now the country of Edom has been rebellious against Judah. The people from the town of Libnah also turned against Jehoram. This happened because Jehoram left the Lord God. He is the God Jehoram’s ancestors followed. 11 Jehoram also built high places on the hills in Judah. He caused the people of Jerusalem to start worshiping other gods. He led the people of Judah away from their God.

12 Jehoram received this message from Elijah the prophet:

“This is what the Lord, the God your father David followed,

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says, ‘Jehoram, you have not lived the way your father Jehoshaphat lived. You have not lived the way King Asa of Judah lived. But you have lived the way the kings of Israel lived. You have caused the people of Judah and Jerusalem to stop doing what God wants. That is what Ahab and his family did. They were unfaithful to God. You have killed your brothers, and they were better than you. So now, the LORD will soon punish your people with terrible suffering. He will punish your children, your wives, and all your property. You will have a painful sickness in your intestines that will get worse and worse. Your intestines will finally come out.’”

The LORD caused the Philistines and the Arabs living near the Ethiopians to be angry with Jehoram. They attacked Judah and carried away all the riches in the king’s palace. They also took Jehoram’s sons and wives. Only Jehoram’s youngest son, Ahaziah, was left.

After this happened, the LORD made Jehoram sick with a disease in his intestines that could not be cured. His intestines fell out two years later because of his sickness. He died in very bad pain. The people buried Jehoram in the City of David, but not in the graves where the kings are buried.

Ahaziah, King of Judah

The people of Jerusalem chose Ahaziah to be the new king in Jehoram’s place. Ahaziah was Jehoram’s youngest son. The people who came with the Arabs to attack Jehoram’s camp killed all of Jehoram’s older sons. So Ahaziah began to rule in Judah. He was 22 years old when he began to rule. He ruled one year in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Athaliah. Her father’s name was Omri.

Ahaziah also lived the way Ahab’s family lived because his mother encouraged him to do wrong things. Ahaziah did evil in the LORD’s sight. That is what Ahab’s family did. Ahab’s family gave advice to Ahaziah after Ahaziah’s father died. They gave Ahaziah bad advice that led to his death. Ahaziah followed the advice of Ahab’s family and joined King Joram to fight against King Hazael from Aram. They fought near the town of Ramoth in Gilead. Joram, who was the son of King Ahab of Israel, was wounded in the battle. He went back to the town of Jezreel to heal from the wounds he suffered at Ramoth. King Ahaziah went there later to visit him.

God caused Ahaziah’s death when he went to visit Joram. Ahaziah arrived and went out with Joram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi. The LORD chose Jehu to destroy Ahab’s family. Jehu was punishing Ahab’s family. He found the leaders of Judah and Ahaziah’s relatives who served Ahaziah. He killed the leaders of Judah and Ahaziah’s relatives. Then Jehu looked for Ahaziah. Jehu’s men caught him when he tried to hide in the town of Samaria. They brought him to Jehu. They killed Ahaziah and buried him. They said, “Ahaziah is the descendant of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat followed the LORD with all his heart.” Ahaziah’s family had no power to hold the kingdom of Judah together.

Queen Athaliah

Athaliah was Ahaziah’s mother. When she saw that her son was dead, she killed all the king’s children in Judah. But Jehosheba took Ahaziah’s son Joash and hid him. Jehosheba put Joash and his nurse in the inside bedroom. Jehosheba was King Jehoram’s daughter. She was also Jehoiada’s wife. Jehoiada was a priest, and Jehosheba was Ahaziah’s sister. Athaliah did not kill Joash, because Jehosheba hid him. Joash was hidden with the priests

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\(^a\) 21:17 Ahaziah Literally, “Jehoahaz”
\(^b\) 22:2 He was ... rule The standard Hebrew text has “42 years old.” 2 Kings 8:26 says Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to rule.
\(^c\) 22:6 Ahaziah Literally, “Azariah.”
in God’s Temple for six years. During that time Athaliah ruled over the land as queen.

**Priest Jehoiada and King Joash**

After six years, Jehoiada showed his strength and made an agreement with the captains. These captains were Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zicri. They went around in Judah and gathered the Levites from all the towns of Judah. They also gathered the leaders of the families of Israel. Then they went to Jerusalem. All the people meeting together made an agreement with the king in God’s Temple.

Jehoiada said to the people, “The king’s son will rule. That is what the LORD promised about David’s descendants. Now, this is what you must do: One-third of you priests and Levites who go on duty on the Sabbath will guard the doors. And one-third of you will be at the king’s palace, and one-third of you will be at the Foundation Gate. But all the other people will stay in the yards of the LORD’s Temple. Only the priests and Levites who serve in the LORD’s Temple are permitted to enter it. They are the only ones who have been made holy. Don’t let anyone else enter. All the others must do only the work the LORD has given them. The Levites must stay near the king. Every man must have his sword with him. If anyone tries to enter the Temple, kill that person. You must stay with the king everywhere he goes.”

The Levites and all the people of Judah obeyed all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Jehoiada the priest did not excuse anyone from the groups of the priests. So each captain and all his men came in on the Sabbath with those who went out on the Sabbath. Jehoiada the priest gave the spears and the large and small shields that belonged to King David to the officers. The weapons were kept in God’s Temple. Then Jehoiada told the men where to stand. Every man had his weapon in his hand. The men stood all the way from the right side of the Temple to the left side of the Temple. They stood near the altar and the Temple, and near the king. They brought out the king’s son and put the crown on him. They gave him a copy of the agreement. Then they made Joash king. Jehoiada and his sons anointed Joash and said, “Long live the king!”

Athaliah heard the noise of the people running to the Temple and praising the king. She came into the LORD’s Temple to the people. She looked and saw the king standing by his column at the front entrance. The officers and the men who blew trumpets were near the king. The people of the land were happy and blowing trumpets. The singers were playing on instruments of music. They led the people in singing praises. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and said, “Treason! Treason!”

Jehoiada the priest brought out the army captains. He said to them, “Take Athaliah outside among the army. Use your swords to kill anyone who follows her.” Then the priest warned the soldiers, “Don’t kill Athaliah in the LORD’s Temple.” Then those men grabbed Athaliah when she came to the entrance of the Horse Gate at the king’s palace. Then they killed her there.

Then Jehoiada made an agreement with all the people and the king. They all agreed that they all would be the LORD’s people. All the people went into the temple of the idol Baal and tore it down. They also broke the altars and idols that were in Baal’s temple. They killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars of Baal.

Then Jehoiada chose the priests to be responsible for the LORD’s Temple. The priests were Levites, and David had given them the job of being responsible for the LORD’s Temple. They were to offer the burnt offerings to the LORD the way the

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Law of Moses commanded. They offered the sacrifices with much joy and singing the way David commanded. 9 Jehoiada put guards at the gates of the LORD’s Temple to prevent any unclean person from entering the Temple.

20 Jehoiada took the army captains, the leaders, the rulers of the people, and all the people of the land with him. Then Jehoiada took the king out of the LORD’s Temple. They went through the Upper Gate to the king’s palace and put the king on the throne. 21 All the people of Judah were very happy, and the city of Jerusalem had peace because Athaliah was killed with a sword.

Joash Rebuilds the Temple

24 1 Joash was seven years old when he became king. He ruled 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Zibiah. Zibiah was from the town of Beersheba.

2 Joash did right in front of the LORD as long as Jehoiada the priest was living.

3 Jehoiada chose two wives for Joash. Joash had sons and daughters.

4 Then later on, Joash decided to rebuild the LORD’s Temple. 5 Joash called the priests and the Levites together. He said to them, “Go out to the towns of Judah and gather the money all the Israelites pay every year. Use that money to rebuild your God’s Temple. Hurry and do this.” But the Levites didn’t hurry.

6 So King Joash called Jehoiada the leading priest. The king said, “Jehoiada, why haven’t you made the Levites bring in the tax money from Judah and Jerusalem? Moses, the LORD’s servant, and the Israelites used that tax money for the Tent of the Agreement.”

7 In the past, Athaliah’s sons broke into God’s Temple and used the holy things in the LORD’s Temple for their worship of the Baal gods. Athaliah was a very wicked woman.

8 King Joash gave a command for a box to be made and put outside the gate at the LORD’s Temple. 9 Then the Levites made an announcement in Judah and Jerusalem. They told the people to bring in the tax money for the LORD. That tax money is what Moses the servant of God had required the Israelites to give while they were in the desert. 10 All the leaders and the people were happy. They brought their money and put it in the box. They continued giving until the box was full. 11 Then the Levites would take the box to the king’s officials. They saw that the box was full of money. The king’s secretary and the leading priest’s officer came and took the money out of the box. Then they took the box back to its place again. They did this often and gathered much money. 12 Then King Joash and Jehoiada gave the money to the people who worked on the LORD’s Temple. And the people who worked on the LORD’s Temple hired skilled wood-carvers and carpenters to rebuild the LORD’s Temple. They also hired workers who knew how to work with iron and bronze to rebuild the LORD’s Temple.

13 The men who supervised the work were very faithful. The work to rebuild the Temple was successful. They built God’s Temple the way it was before and they made it stronger. 14 When the workers finished, they brought the money that was left to King Joash and Jehoiada. They used that money to make things for the LORD’s Temple. These things were used for the service in the Temple and for offering burnt offerings. They also made bowls and other things from gold and silver. The priests offered burnt offerings in the LORD’s Temple every day while Jehoiada was alive.

15 Jehoiada became old. He had a very long life, and he died when he was 130 years old. 16 The people buried Jehoiada in the City of David where the kings are buried. The people buried Jehoiada there because in his life he did much good in Israel for God and for God’s Temple.

17 After Jehoiada died, the leaders of Judah came and bowed to King Joash. The king listened to the leaders. 18 They all stopped worshiping at the Temple of the LORD, the God their ancestors worshiped.
Instead, they started worshiping Asherah poles and other idols. Because they sinned in this way, God was angry with the people of Judah and Jerusalem. God sent prophets to the people to bring them back to the Lord. The prophets warned them, but they refused to listen.

20 The Spirit of God filled Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, and he stood in front of the people and said, “This is what God says: ‘Why do you people refuse to obey the Lord’s commands? You will not be successful. You have left the Lord. So he has also left you!’ ”

21 But the people made plans against Zechariah. The king commanded the people to kill Zechariah, so they threw rocks at him until he was dead. The people did this in the courtyard of the Lord’s Temple. 22 Joash the king didn’t remember Jehoiada’s kindness to him. Jehoiada was Zechariah’s father. But Joash killed Zechariah, Jehoiada’s son. Before Zechariah died, he said, “May the Lord see what you are doing and punish you!”

23 At the end of the year, the Aramean army came against Joash. They attacked Judah and Jerusalem and killed all the leaders of the people. They sent all the valuable things to the king of Damascus. 24 The Aramean army came with only a small group of men, but the Lord let them defeat the much larger army of Judah. This was a punishment for Joash because the people of Judah had left the Lord, the God their ancestors worshiped. 25 When the Arameans left Joash, he was badly wounded. His own servants made plans against him. They did this because Joash killed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest. The servants killed Joash on his own bed. After he died, the people buried him in the City of David, but not in the place where the kings are buried.

26 These are the servants who made plans against Joash: Zabad and Jehozabad. Zabad’s mother was Shimeath, a woman from Ammon. And Jehozabad’s mother was Shimrith from Moab. 27 The story about Joash’s sons, the great prophecies against him, and how he rebuilt God’s Temple are written in the book, Commentary on the Kings. Joash’s son Amaziah became the new king after him.

Amaziah, King of Judah

1 Amaziah was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled for 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jehoaddin. Jehoaddin was from Jerusalem. 2 Amaziah did what the Lord wanted him to do, but not with all his heart. 3 He became a strong king and killed the officials who had killed his father the king. 4 But Amaziah obeyed the law written in the Book of Moses and did not kill the official’s children. The Lord commanded, “Parents must not be put to death for something their children did, and children must not be put to death for something their parents did. People should be put to death only for what they themselves did.”

5 Amaziah gathered the people of Judah together. He grouped them by families and he put generals and captains in charge of these groups. The leaders were in charge of all the soldiers from Judah and Benjamin. All the men who were chosen to be soldiers were 20 years old and older. In all there were 300,000 skilled soldiers ready to fight with spears and shields. 6 Amaziah also hired 100,000 soldiers from Israel. He paid 3 3/4 tons of silver to hire these soldiers. 7 But a man of God came to Amaziah and said, “King, don’t let the army of Israel go with you. The Lord is not with Israel or the people of Ephraim.

8 Maybe you will make yourself strong and ready for war, but God can help you win or help you lose.” 9 Amaziah said to the man of God, “But what about the money I already paid to the Israelite army?” The man of God answered, “The Lord has plenty. He can give you much more than that.”

10 So Amaziah sent the Israelite army back home to Ephraim. These men were very angry with the king and the people of Judah. They went back home very angry.

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Then Amaziah became very brave and led his army to the Salt Valley in the country of Edom. There his army killed 10,000 men from Seir. They also captured 10,000 men from Seir and took them to the top of a cliff. Then the army of Judah threw them from the top of the cliff while they were still alive and their bodies were broken on the rocks below.

Meanwhile, the Israelite army was attacking towns in Judah. They attacked the towns from Beth Horon all the way to Samaria. They killed 3000 people and took many valuable things. They were angry because Amaziah didn’t let them join him in the war.

Amaziah came home after he defeated the Edomites. He brought the idols that the people of Seir worshiped. He started to worship those idols. He bowed down in front of them and burned incense to them. The LORD was very angry with Amaziah, so he sent a prophet to him. The prophet said, “Amaziah, why have you worshiped the gods those people worship? Those gods could not even save their own people from you!”

When the prophet spoke, Amaziah said to the prophet, “We never made you an advisor to the king. Be quiet! If you don’t be quiet, you will be killed.” The prophet became quiet, but then said, “God has decided to destroy you because you did this and didn’t listen to my advice.”

King Amaziah of Judah talked with his advisors. Then he sent a message to King Jehoash of Israel. Amaziah said to Jehoash, “Let’s meet face to face.” Jehoash was Jehoahaz’s son, Jehoahaz was Jehu’s son.

Then Jehoash sent his answer to Amaziah. Jehoash was the king of Israel and Amaziah was the king of Judah. Jehoash told this story: “A little thornbush of Lebanon sent a message to a big cedar tree of Lebanon. The little thornbush said, ‘Let your daughter marry my son.’ But a wild animal came and walked over the thornbush and destroyed it. You say to yourself, ‘I have defeated Edom!’ You are proud and you brag. But you should stay at home. There is no need for you to get into trouble. If you fight me, you and Judah will be destroyed.”

But Amaziah refused to listen. God made this happen. God planned to let Israel defeat Judah, because the people of Judah followed the gods the people of Edom followed. So King Jehoash of Israel met King Amaziah of Judah face to face at the town of Beth Shemesh in Judah. Israel defeated Judah. Every man of Judah ran away to his home. Jehoash captured Amaziah at Beth Shemesh and took him to Jerusalem. Amaziah was the son of Joash, and Joash was the son of Jehoahaz. Jehoash tore down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate, a section about 600 feet long. He took the gold and silver and all the other things in God’s Temple that Obed Edom was responsible for. Jehoash also took the treasures from the king’s palace and some people as hostages. Then he went back to Samaria.

Amaziah lived 15 years after Jehoash died. Amaziah’s father was King Joash of Judah. Everything else Amaziah did, from beginning to end, is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel. When Amaziah stopped obeying the LORD, the people in Jerusalem made plans against Amaziah. He ran away to the town of Lachish. But the people sent men to Lachish and they killed Amaziah there. Then they carried his body on horses and buried him with his ancestors in the City of Judah.

Uzziah, King of Judah

Then the people of Judah chose Uzziah to be the new king in place of Amaziah. Amaziah was Uzziah’s father. Uzziah was 16 years old when he became king. Uzziah rebuilt the town of Elath and gave it back to Judah. He did this after Amaziah died and was buried with his ancestors.

Uzziah was 16 years old when he

\[25:11\] Seir Or “Edom,” a country east of Judah.  

\[25:23\] 600 feet Literally, “400 cubits” (207.33 m).
became king. He ruled 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jecoliah. Jecoliah was from Jerusalem. 4Uzziah did what the Lord wanted him to do. He obeyed God the same as his father Amaziah had done. 5Uzziah followed God in the time of Zechariah’s life. Zechariah taught Uzziah how to respect and obey God. When Uzziah was obeying the Lord, God gave him success.

6Uzziah fought a war against the Philistines. He tore down the walls around the towns of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. Uzziah built towns near the town of Ashdod and in other places among the Philistines. 7God helped Uzziah fight the Philistines, the Arabs living in the town of Gur Baal, and the Meunites. 8The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah. His name became famous all the way to the border of Egypt. He was famous because he was very powerful.

9Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the place where the wall turned. He made them strong. 10He built towers in the desert. He also dug many wells. He had many cattle in the hill country and in the flat lands. He had farmers in the mountains and in the lands where growth was good. He also had men who took care of vineyards. He loved farming.

11Uzziah had an army of trained soldiers. They were put in groups by Jeiel the secretary and Maaseiah the officer. Hananiah was their leader. Jeiel and Maaseiah counted the soldiers and put them into groups. Hananiah was one of the king’s officers. 12There were 2600 leaders over the soldiers. 13These family leaders were in charge of an army of 307,500 men who fought with great power. These soldiers helped the king against the enemy. 14Uzziah gave the army shields, spears, helmets, armor, bows, and stones for the slings. 15In Jerusalem, Uzziah made machines that were invented by clever men. These machines were put on the towers and corner walls. They shot arrows and large rocks. Uzziah became famous. People knew his name in faraway places. He had much help and became a powerful king.

16But when Uzziah became strong, his pride caused him to be destroyed. He was not faithful to the Lord his God. He went into the Lord’s Temple to burn incense on the altar for burning incense. 17Azariah the priest and 80 brave priests who served the Lord followed Uzziah into the Temple. 18They told Uzziah he was wrong. They said to him, “Uzziah, it is not your job to burn incense to the Lord. It is not right. That is for the priests, Aaron’s descendants, to do. They are the only ones who have been prepared for the holy work of burning incense. You have not been faithful, so you must go out of the Most Holy Place. The Lord God will not honor you for this.”

19But Uzziah was angry. He had a bowl in his hand for burning incense. While Uzziah was very angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead. This happened in front of the priests in the Lord’s Temple by the altar for burning incense. 20Azariah the leading priest and all the priests looked at Uzziah. They could see the leprosy on his forehead. The priests quickly forced him out from the Temple. Uzziah himself hurried out because the Lord had punished him. 21So Uzziah the king was a leper. He could not enter the Lord’s Temple. His son Jotham controlled the king’s palace and became governor for the people.

22Everything else Uzziah did, from beginning to end, is written by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. 23Uzziah died and was buried near his ancestors in the field near the king’s burial places. This was because the people said, “Uzziah has leprosy.” And Uzziah’s son Jotham became the new king in his place.

Jotham, King of Judah

27Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jerusha. Jerusha was Zadok’s daughter. 2Jotham did what the Lord wanted him to do. He
obeyed God just as his father Uzziah had done. But Jotham did not enter the LORD’s Temple to burn incense as his father had. But the people continued doing wrong.

3 Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the LORD’s Temple. He did much building on the wall at the place named Ophel. 4 He also built towns in the hill country of Judah. He built fortresses and towers in the forests. 5 Jotham also fought against the king of the Ammonites and his army and defeated them. So each year for three years the Ammonites gave Jotham 3 3/4 tons of silver, 62,000 bushels of wheat, and 62,000 bushels of barley.

6 Jotham became powerful because he faithfully obeyed the LORD his God.

7 Everything else Jotham did and all his wars are written in the book, *The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah.* 8 Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. 9 Then Jotham died and was buried with his ancestors. The people buried him in the City of David. Jotham’s son Ahaz became king in his place.

**Ahaz, King of Judah**

1 Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. He did not live right, as David his ancestor had done. Ahaz did not do what the LORD wanted him to do. 2 He followed the bad example of the kings of Israel. He used molds to make idols to worship the Baal gods. 3 He burned incense in the Valley of Ben Hinnom and sacrificed his own sons by burning them in the fire. He did the same terrible sins that the peoples living in that land did. The LORD had forced them out when the Israelites entered that land. 4 Ahaz offered sacrifices and burned incense in the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

5–6 Because Ahaz did these things, the LORD his God let the king of Aram defeat him. The king and his army defeated Ahaz and took many people of Judah as prisoners to the city of Damascus. Ahaz also suffered a terrible defeat by the king of Israel, Pekah son of Remaliah. Pekah and his army killed 120,000 of the bravest soldiers in Judah in one day. All this happened because the people of Judah had turned away from the LORD, the God their ancestors worshiped. 7 Zicri was a brave soldier from Ephraim. He killed the king’s son Maaseiah. He also killed Azrikam, the officer in charge of the king’s palace, and Elkanah, who was second in command to the king.

8 The Israelite army captured 200,000 of their own relatives living in Judah. They took women, children, and many valuable things from Judah and carried them back to Samaria. 9 But one of the LORD’s prophets named Oded was there. Oded met the Israelite army that came back to Samaria. He said to the Israelite army, “The LORD, the God your ancestors worshiped, let you defeat the people of Judah because he was angry with them. But now he is angry with you, because he has seen how cruel you were in killing them. 10 And now you plan to keep the people of Judah and Jerusalem as slaves. But you are as guilty as they are for sinning against the LORD your God. 11 Now listen to me. Send back all those you captured, your own brothers and sisters, because the LORD’s terrible anger is against you.”

12 Then some of the leaders in Ephraim saw the Israelite soldiers coming home from war. They met the Israelite soldiers and warned them. The leaders were Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berekiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai. 13 They said to the Israelite soldiers, “Don’t bring the prisoners from Judah here. If you do that, it will add to our sin against the LORD. It will make our sin and guilt before him even worse than it is now, and he is already very angry with Israel!”

14 So the soldiers gave the prisoners and valuable things to the leaders and to
the people. The leaders (Azariah, Ber-
ekiah, Jehizkiah, and Amasa) stood up and helped the prisoners. These four men got the clothes that the Israelite army took and gave them to the people who were naked. The leaders also gave them sandals. They gave the prisoners from Judah some-
thing to eat and drink. They rubbed oil on them to soften and heal their wounds. Then the leaders from Ephraim put the weak prisoners on donkeys and took them back home to their families in Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then the four leaders went back home to Samaria.

16–17 At that same time the people from Edom came again and defeated the people of Judah. The Edomites captured people and took them away as prisoners. So King Ahaz asked the king of Assyria to help him. The Philistines also attacked the towns in the hills and in south Judah. The Philistines captured the towns of Beth Shemesh, Ajialon, Gederoth, Soco, Timnah, and Gimzo. They also captured the villages near these towns. Then the Phil-
listines lived in them. The Lord gave troubles to Judah because King Ahaz of Judah encouraged the people of Judah to sin. He was very unfaithful to the Lord. King Tигlath Pileser of Assyria came and gave Ahaz trouble instead of helping him. Ahaz took some valuable things from the Lord's Temple and from the king's palace and from the prince's house. Ahaz gave them to the king of Assyria, but that didn’t help him.

22 In Ahaz's troubles, he sinned worse and became more unfaithful to the Lord. He offered sacrifices to the gods the people of Damascus worshiped. The people of Damascus had defeated Ahaz. So he thought to himself, “The gods the people of Aram worship helped them. So if I offer sacrifices to them, maybe they will help me also.” Ahaz worshiped these gods. In this way he sinned, and he made the people of Israel sin.

23 Hezekiah became king when he was 25 years old. He ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Abijah. Abijah was Zechariah’s daughter. Hezekiah did what the Lord wanted him to do. He did what was right just as David his ancestor had done.

24 Hezekiah repaired the doors of the Lord’s Temple and made them strong. He opened the Temple again. He did this in the first month of the first year after he became king. Hezekiah called the priests and Levites together in one assem-
bly. He had a meeting with them in the courtyard on the east side of the Temple. Hezekiah said to them, “Listen to me, Levites! Make yourselves ready for holy ser-
vice. Make the Temple of the Lord God ready for holy service. He is the God your ancestors obeyed. Take away the things from the Temple that don't belong in there. These things make the Temple unclean. Our ancestors were not faithful and did what the Lord says is evil. They stopped following him. They no longer paid any attention to the Lord's house and turned their backs on him. They shut the doors of the porch of the Temple and let the fire go out in the lamps. They stopped burning incense and offering burnt offerings in the Holy Place to the God of Israel. So the Lord gave troubles to Judah because King Ahaz of Judah encouraged the people of Judah to sin. He was very unfaithful to the Lord. In every town in Judah Ahaz made high places for burn-
ing incense to worship other gods. Ahaz made the Lord, the God his ancestors obeyed, very angry.

26 Everything else Ahaz did, from the beginning to the end, is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel. Ahaz died and was buried with his ancestors. The people buried him in the city of Jerusalem. But they didn’t bury him in the same burial place where the kings of Israel were buried. Ahaz’s son Hezekiah became the new king in his place.
Lord became very angry with the people of Judah and Jerusalem. He punished them so badly that it shocks and scares people to hear about it. But then they just laugh and shout their own insults against Judah. You know this is true. You have seen it happen. That is why our ancestors were killed in battle. Our sons, daughters, and wives were made prisoners. So now I, Hezekiah, have decided to make an agreement with the Lord, the God of Israel. Then he will not be angry with us anymore. So my sons, don’t be lazy or waste any more time. The Lord chose you to serve him in the Temple and to burn incense.”

12–14 This is a list of the Levites who started to work:

From the Kohath family there were Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah.
From the Merari family there were Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel.
From the Gershon family there were Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joab.
From Elizaphan’s descendants there were Shimri and Jeiel.
From Asaph’s descendants there were Zechariah and Mattaniah.
From Heman’s descendants there were Jehiel and Shimei.
From Jeduthun’s descendants there were Shemaiah and Uzziel.

15 Then these Levites gathered their brothers together and made themselves ready for holy service in the Temple. They obeyed the king’s command that came from the Lord. They went into the Lord’s Temple to clean it. The priests went into the inside part of the Lord’s Temple to clean it. They took out all the unclean things they found there. They brought the unclean things out to the courtyard of the Lord’s Temple. Then the Levites took these things out to the Kidron Valley. On the first day of the first month, the Levites began to make the Temple ready for holy service. By the eighth day, they had finished cleaning all the area up to the porch of the Lord’s Temple. For eight more days they cleaned the Lord’s Temple itself to make it ready for holy use. They finished on the 16th day of the first month.

18 Then they went to King Hezekiah and said to him, “King Hezekiah, we cleaned all the Lord’s Temple and the altar for burning offerings and all the things in the Temple. We cleaned the table for the rows of bread with all the things used for that table. During the time that Ahaz was king, he rebelled against God. He threw away many of the things that were in the Temple. But we repaired all those things and made them ready for their special use. They are now in front of the Lord’s altar.”

20 King Hezekiah gathered the city officials and went up to the Temple of the Lord early the next morning. They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven young male goats. These animals were for a sin offering for the kingdom of Judah, for the Holy Place to make it clean, and for the people of Judah. King Hezekiah commanded the priests who were descendants of Aaron to offer these animals on the Lord’s altar. So the priests killed the bulls and kept the blood. Then they sprinkled the bulls’ blood on the altar. Then they killed the rams and sprinkled the rams’ blood on the altar. Then they killed the lambs and sprinkled the lambs’ blood on the altar. Then they brought the male goats in front of the king, and the people gathered together. The goats were the sin offering. The priests put their hands on the goats and killed the goats. They made a sin offering with the goats’ blood on the altar. They did this so that God would forgive the sins of the Israelites. The king said that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all the Israelites.

25 King Hezekiah put the Levites in the Lord’s Temple with cymbals, harps, and lyres as David, Gad, the king’s seer, and the prophet Nathan had commanded. This command came from the Lord through...
his prophets. 26 So the Levites stood ready with David’s instruments of music, and the priests stood ready with their trumpets. 27 Then Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice the burnt offering on the altar. When the burnt offering began, singing to the Lord also began. The trumpets were blown, and the instruments of David king of Israel were played. 28 All the assembly bowed down, the musicians sang, and the trumpet players blew their trumpets until the burnt offering was finished.

29 After the sacrifices were finished, King Hezekiah and all the people with him bowed down and worshiped. 30 King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to give praise to the Lord. They sang songs that David and Asaph the seer had written. They praised God and became happy. They all bowed and worshiped God. 31 Hezekiah said, “Now you people of Judah have given yourselves to the Lord. Come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the Lord’s Temple.” Then the people brought sacrifices and thank offerings. Anyone who wanted to, also brought burnt offerings. 32 This is how many burnt offerings the assembly brought to the Temple: 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs. All these animals were sacrificed as burnt offerings to the Lord. 33 There were also 600 bulls and 3000 sheep and goats that were sacrificed as holy offerings. 34 But there were not enough priests to skin and cut up all the animals for the burnt offerings. So their relatives, the Levites, helped them until the work was finished and until other priests could make themselves ready for holy service. The Levites had been more serious than the priests about making themselves ready to serve. 35 There were many burnt offerings, and the fat of fellowship offerings, and drink offerings. So the service in the Lord’s Temple began again. 36 Hezekiah and the people were very happy about the things God prepared for his people. And they were happy he did it so quickly!

Hezekiah Celebrates the Passover

30 King Hezekiah sent messages to all the people of Israel and Judah. He wrote letters to the people of Ephraim and Manasseh also. He invited all these people to come to the Lord’s Temple in Jerusalem so that they all could celebrate the Passover for the Lord, the God of Israel. 2 King Hezekiah agreed with all his officials and all the assembly in Jerusalem to have the Passover in the second month. 3 They could not celebrate the Passover Festival at the regular time, because not enough priests had made themselves ready for holy service and the people had not gathered in Jerusalem. 4 The agreement satisfied King Hezekiah and all the assembly. 5 So they sent the announcement throughout Israel, from the town of Beer-sheba all the way to the town of Dan. They told the people to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover for the Lord, the God of Israel. Not many people had been celebrating it as it was described in the law. 6 So the messengers took the king’s letters all through Israel and Judah. This is what the letters said:

“Children of Israel, turn back to the Lord, the God who Abraham, Isaac, and Israel obeyed. Then God will come back to you who are still alive and have escaped from the kings of Assyria. 7 Don’t be like your fathers or your brothers. The Lord was their God, but they turned against him. So he made people hate them and speak evil about them. You can see with your own eyes that this is true. 8 Don’t be stubborn as your ancestors were. But obey the Lord with a willing heart. Come to the Temple that he has made to be holy forever. Serve the Lord your God. Then his fearful anger will turn away from you. 9 If you come back and obey the Lord, your relatives and your children will find mercy from the

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people who captured them. And your relatives and your children will come back to this land. The Lord your God is kind and merciful. He will not turn away from you if you come back to him.”

10 The messengers went to every town in the area of Ephraim and Manasseh. They went all the way to the area of Zebulun, but the people laughed at the messengers and made fun of them. 11 But, some men from the areas of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem. 12 Also, in Judah God’s power united the people so that they would obey the king and his officials concerning the word of the Lord.

13 Many people came together in Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the second month. It was a very large crowd. 14 The people took away the altars in Jerusalem that were for false gods and all the incense altars that were for false gods. They threw them into the Kidron Valley. 15 Then they killed the Passover lamb on the 14th day of the second month. The priests and the Levites felt ashamed. They made themselves ready for holy service. The priests and the Levites brought burnt offerings into the Lord’s Temple. 16 They took their regular places in the Temple as described in the Law of Moses, the man of God. The Levites gave the blood to the priests. Then the priests sprinkled the blood on the altar. 17 There were many people in the group who had not made themselves ready for holy service, so they were not permitted to kill the Passover lambs. That is why the Levites were responsible for killing the Passover lambs for everyone who was not clean. The Levites made each lamb holy for the Lord.

18–19 Many people from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun had not prepared themselves in the right way for the Passover Festival. They did not celebrate the Passover the right way, as the Law of Moses says. But Hezekiah prayed for the people. So he said this prayer, “Lord God, you are good. These people sincerely wanted to worship you in the right way, but they did not make themselves clean as the law says. Please forgive these people. You are the Lord, the God our ancestors worshiped. Forgive them, even if some did not make themselves clean as the rules of the Most Holy Place say.” 20 The Lord listened to King Hezekiah’s prayer and forgave the people. 21 The people of Israel in Jerusalem celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread with great joy for seven days. And the Levites and priests praised the Lord every day with all their strength. 22 King Hezekiah encouraged all the Levites who understood very well how to do the service of the Lord. The people celebrated the festival for seven days and offered fellowship offerings. They gave thanks and praise to the Lord, the God of their ancestors.

23 All the people agreed to stay seven more days. They were joyful as they celebrated the Passover for seven more days. 24 King Hezekiah of Judah gave 1000 bulls and 7000 sheep to the assembly to kill and eat. The leaders gave 1000 bulls and 10,000 sheep to the assembly. Many priests prepared themselves for holy service. 25 All the assembly of Judah, the priests, the Levites, all the assembly who came from Israel, and the travelers who came from Israel and moved to Judah—all these people were very happy. 26 So there was much joy in Jerusalem. There had not been a celebration like this since the time of Solomon son of King David of Israel. 27 The priests and the Levites stood up and asked God to bless the people, and he heard them. Their prayer came up to heaven, the holy place where he lives.

King Hezekiah Makes Improvements

31 When the Passover celebration was finished, the Israelites who were in Jerusalem for Passover went out to the towns of Judah. Then they smashed the stone idols that were in the towns. a 30:21 with all their strength Or “with mighty instruments of the Lord.”
These stone idols were used to worship false gods. They also cut down the Asherah poles. And they destroyed the high places and the altars all through the areas of Judah and Benjamin. They did the same things in the area of Ephraim and Manasseh. They did these things until they destroyed all the things used for worshiping the false gods. Then all the Israelites went back home to their own towns.

The priests and Levites had been divided into groups, and each group had its own special job to do. So King Hezekiah told these groups to begin doing their jobs again. So the priests and Levites again had the job of offering the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings. And they had the job of serving in the Temple and singing and praising God by the doors to the Lord’s house.

Hezekiah gave some of his own animals to be offered as the burnt offerings. These animals were used for the daily burnt offerings that were given each morning and each evening. They were offered on the Sabbath days, during New Moon celebrations, and on the other special meeting days, as the law of the Lord commands.

The people were supposed to give a part of their crops and things to the priests and Levites. So Hezekiah commanded the people living in Jerusalem to give them their share. In that way the priests and Levites could spend all of their time doing what the law of the Lord told them to do. People all around the country heard about this command. So the Israelites gave the first part of their harvest of grain, grapes, oil, honey, and all the things they grew in their fields. They brought one-tenth of all these many things. The men of Israel and Judah living in the towns of Judah also brought one-tenth of their cattle and sheep. They also brought one-tenth of the things that were put in a special place that was only for the Lord their God. They brought all these things and put them in piles.

The people began to bring these things in the third month and they finished bringing the collection in the seventh month. When Hezekiah and the leaders came, they saw the piles of things that were collected. They praised the Lord and his people, the Israelites.

Then Hezekiah asked the priests and the Levites about the piles of things. Azariah the high priest from Zadok’s family said to Hezekiah, “From the time that the people started bringing the offerings into the Lord’s house, we have had plenty to eat. We have eaten until we are full and there is still plenty left over! The Lord has really blessed his people. That is why we have so much left over.”

Then Hezekiah commanded the priests to make storerooms ready in the Lord’s Temple. So this was done. Then the priests brought the offerings, tithes, and other things that were to be given only to God. All these things collected were put in the storerooms in the Temple. Conaniah the Levite was in charge of everything that was collected. Shimei was second in charge of these things. Shimei was Conaniah’s brother. Conaniah and his brother Shimei were supervisors of these men: Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath, and Benaiah. King Hezekiah and Azariah the official in charge of God’s Temple chose these men.

Kore was in charge of the offerings that the people freely gave to God. He was responsible for giving out the collections that were given to the Lord. And he was responsible for giving out the gifts that had been made holy. Kore was the gatekeeper at the East Gate. His father’s name was Imnah the Levite. Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah helped Kore. These men served faithfully in the towns where the priests were living. They gave the collection of things to their relatives in each group of priests. They gave the same things to the

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\(31:2\) Lord’s house Or “Lord’s Camp,” that is, the courtyard of the Temple in Jerusalem.

\(31:12\) tithes One-tenth of a person’s crops or animals.
more important people and to the less important.

These men also gave the collection of things to the males three years old and older who had their names in the Levite family histories. All these males were to enter the Lord’s Temple for daily service to do the things they were responsible to do. Each group of Levites had their own responsibility. The priests were given their part of the collection. This was done by families, in the way they were listed in the family histories. The Levites who were 20 years old and older were given their part of the collection, according to their groups and responsibilities. The Levites’ babies, wives, sons, and daughters also got part of the collection. This was for all the Levites who were listed in the family histories. This was because the Levites were faithful to always keep themselves holy and ready for service.

Some of Aaron’s descendants, the priests, lived in the towns or on farms near the towns where the Levites were living. Men were chosen by name in each of these towns to give part of the collection to these descendants of Aaron. All the males and those named in the family histories of the Levites got part of the collection.

So King Hezekiah did those good things in all Judah. He did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. He had success in every work he began—the service of God’s Temple and in obeying the law and commands, and in following his God. Hezekiah did all these things with all his heart.

The King of Assyria Attacks Judah

After Hezekiah had faithfully done everything the Lord commanded, King Sennacherib of Assyria came to attack the country of Judah. Sennacherib and his army camped outside the fortresses. He did this so that he could make plans to defeat these towns. Sennacherib wanted to win them for himself. Hezekiah knew that Sennacherib came to Jerusalem to attack it. Then Hezekiah talked to his officials and army officers. They all agreed to stop the waters of the water springs outside the city. The officials and army officers helped Hezekiah. Many people came together and stopped all the springs and the stream that flowed through the middle of the country. They said, “The king of Assyria will not find much water when he comes here!” Hezekiah made Jerusalem stronger. This is how he did it: He rebuilt all the parts of the wall that were broken down. He also built towers on the wall. He also built another wall outside the first wall. He rebuilt the strong places on the east side of the old part of Jerusalem. He made many weapons and shields. Hezekiah chose officers of war to be in charge of the people. He met with these officers at the open place near the city gate. He talked to the officers and encouraged them. He said, “Be strong and brave. Don’t be afraid or worry about the king of Assyria or the large army with him. There is a greater power with us than the king of Assyria has with him! The king of Assyria only has men. But we have the Lord our God with us! Our God will help us. He will fight our battles!” So King Hezekiah of Judah encouraged the people and made them feel stronger.

King Sennacherib of Assyria and all his army were camped near the town of Lachish so that they could defeat it. Then Sennacherib sent his officers to King Hezekiah of Judah and to all the people in Jerusalem. His officers had a message for Hezekiah and all the people in Jerusalem.

They said, “King Sennacherib of Assyria says this: ‘What do you trust in that makes you stay under attack in Jerusalem? Hezekiah is fooling you. You are being tricked into staying in Jerusalem so that you will die from hunger and thirst. Hezekiah says to you, “The Lord our God will save us from the king of Assyria.” But Hezekiah himself took away the high places and altars that belonged to that god. He
told you people of Judah and Jerusalem that you must worship and burn incense on only one altar. Of course, you know what my ancestors and I have done to all the peoples in other countries. The gods of the other countries could not save their people. Those gods could not stop me from destroying their people. My ancestors destroyed those countries. There is no god that can stop me from destroying his people. So you think your god can save you from me? Don’t let Hezekiah fool you or trick you. Don’t believe him because no god of any nation or kingdom has ever been able to keep his people safe from me or my ancestors. Don’t think your god can stop me from destroying you.’ ”

The officers of the king of Assyria said worse things against the LORD God and against Hezekiah, God’s servant. The king of Assyria also wrote letters that insulted the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what the king of Assyria said in those letters: “The gods of the other nations could not stop me from destroying their people. In the same way Hezekiah’s god will not be able to stop me from destroying his people.” Then the Assyrian officers shouted loudly to the people of Jerusalem who were on the city wall. They spoke in the language of Judah so that the people on the wall could understand and be frightened enough that the Assyrians could capture the city of Jerusalem. They spoke in the language of Judah so that the people on the wall could understand and be frightened enough that the Assyrians could capture the city of Jerusalem. Then they insulted the God of Jerusalem just as they had insulted all the gods of the people from other nations—even though those gods are only things people made with their hands.

Hezekiah the king and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed about this problem. They prayed very loudly to heaven. Then the LORD sent an angel to the king of Assyria’s camp. That angel killed all the soldiers, leaders, and officers in the Assyrian army. So the king of Assyria went back home to his own country, and his people were ashamed of him. He went into the temple of his god and some of his own sons killed him there with a sword. So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the people in Jerusalem from King Sennacherib of Assyria and from all other people. He cared for Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem. Many people brought gifts for the LORD to Jerusalem. They brought valuable things to King Hezekiah of Judah. From that time on, all the nations respected Hezekiah.

It was in those days that Hezekiah became very sick and near death. He prayed to the LORD, and he spoke to Hezekiah and gave him a sign. But Hezekiah’s heart was proud, so he did not give God thanks for his kindness. This is why God was angry with Hezekiah and with the people of Judah and Jerusalem. But Hezekiah and the people living in Jerusalem changed their hearts and lives. They became humble and stopped being proud. So the LORD’s anger didn’t come on them while Hezekiah was alive.

Hezekiah had many riches and much honor. He made places to keep silver, gold, valuable jewels, spices, shields, and all kinds of things. Hezekiah had storage buildings for the grain, new wine, and oil that people sent to him. He had stalls for all the cattle and stalls for the sheep. Hezekiah also built many towns, and he got many flocks of sheep and cattle. God gave him much wealth. It was Hezekiah who stopped up the upper source of the waters of the Gihon Spring in Jerusalem and made the waters flow straight down on the west side of the City of David. And he was successful in everything he did.

One time the leaders of Babylon sent messengers to Hezekiah. The messengers asked about a strange sign that had happened in the nations. When they came, God left Hezekiah alone to test him and
to know everything that was in Hezekiah’s heart.\textsuperscript{a}

\textsuperscript{32}Everything else Hezekiah did as king and the ways he served God faithfully are written in the book, \textit{The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah Son of Amoz} and in the book, \textit{The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel}. \textsuperscript{33}Hezekiah died and was buried with his ancestors. The people buried him on the hill where the graves of David’s ancestors are. All the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem gave honor to Hezekiah when he died. Hezekiah’s son Manasseh became the new king in his place.

\textbf{Manasseh, King of Judah}

\textsuperscript{33}1Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king of Judah. He was king for 55 years in Jerusalem. \textsuperscript{2}Manasseh did what the LORD said was wrong. He followed the terrible and sinful ways of the nations that the LORD had forced out of the land before the Israelites. \textsuperscript{3}Manasseh rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had broken down. Manasseh built altars for the Baal gods and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to the constellations\textsuperscript{b} and worshiped those groups of stars. \textsuperscript{4}Manasseh built altars for false gods in the LORD’s Temple. The LORD said about the Temple, “My name will be in Jerusalem forever.” \textsuperscript{5}He built altars for all the groups of stars in the two yards of the LORD’s Temple. \textsuperscript{6}He also burned his own children for a sacrifice in the Valley of Ben Hinnom.\textsuperscript{c} He also used magic by doing soothsaying, divination, and sorcery.\textsuperscript{d} He talked with mediums and wizards. He did many things that the LORD said were evil and made him angry.

\textsuperscript{7}Manasseh also made a statue of an idol and put it in God’s Temple—the very same Temple that God had talked about to David and his son Solomon. God had said, “I will put my name in this house and in Jerusalem—the city that I chose from all the cities in all the tribes—and my name will be there forever! \textsuperscript{8}I will not continue to keep the Israelites off the land that I chose to give to their ancestors. But they must obey everything I commanded them. The Israelites must obey all the laws, rules, and commands that I gave Moses to give to them.”

\textsuperscript{9}Manasseh encouraged the people of Judah and the people living in Jerusalem to do wrong. They were worse than the nations that were in the land before the Israelites—and the LORD destroyed those people.

\textsuperscript{10}The LORD spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they refused to listen. \textsuperscript{11}So the LORD brought commanders from the king of Assyria’s army to attack Judah. These commanders captured Manasseh and made him their prisoner. They put hooks in him and brass chains on his hands and took him to the country of Babylon.

\textsuperscript{12}When these troubles came to him, Manasseh begged for help from the LORD his God. He humbled himself before the God of his ancestors. \textsuperscript{13}Manasseh prayed to God and begged him for help. God heard his begging and felt sorry for him, so he let Manasseh return to Jerusalem and to his throne. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was the true God.

\textsuperscript{14}After that happened, Manasseh built an outer wall for the City of David. This wall went to the west of Gihon Spring in Kidron Valley, to the entrance of the Fish Gate, and around the hill of Ophel.\textsuperscript{e} He made the wall very tall. Then he put officers in all the fortresses in Judah. \textsuperscript{15}Manasseh took away the strange idol gods, and he took the idol out of the LORD’s Temple. He took away all the altars he had built on the Temple hill, and in Jerusalem. Manasseh threw all the altars out of the city of Jerusalem. \textsuperscript{16}Then he set up the LORD’s altar and offered fellowship offer-

\textsuperscript{a} \textit{32:31 in Hezekiah’s heart} See 2 Kings 20:12–19.
\textsuperscript{b} \textit{33:3 constellations} Groups of stars. These are probably the twelve “signs of the Zodiac.” Some people thought the stars, not God, controlled their life.
\textsuperscript{c} \textit{33:6 Valley of Ben Hinnom} Later, called “Gehenna.” This valley was west and south of Jerusalem. Many babies and young children were sacrificed to false gods in this valley.
\textsuperscript{d} \textit{33:6 soothsaying, divination, and sorcery} Different ways people try to do magic or tell what will happen in the future.
\textsuperscript{e} \textit{33:14 Ophel} The upper part of the City of David, just south of the Temple area.
ings and thank offerings on it. He gave a command for all the people of Judah to serve the Lord, the God of Israel. The people continued to offer sacrifices at the high places, but their sacrifices were only to the Lord their God.

Everything else Manasseh did, his prayer to his God and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, are all written in the book, The Official Records of the Kings of Israel. Manasseh’s prayer and how God listened and felt sorry for him are written in The Book of the Seers. Also all his sins, the wrongs he did before he humbled himself, and the places where he built high places and set up the Asherah poles are written in The Book of the Seers. So Manasseh died and was buried with his ancestors. The people buried Manasseh in his own palace. Manasseh’s son Amon became the new king in his place.

Amon, King of Judah

Amon was 22 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king for two years in Jerusalem. Amon did evil before the Lord, just as his father Manasseh had done. Amon offered sacrifices for all the carved idols and statues that Manasseh his father made. Amon worshiped those idols. Amon did not humble himself in front of the Lord like Manasseh his father humbled himself. But Amon sinned more and more. His servants made plans against him. They killed Amon in his own house. But the people of Judah killed all the servants who planned against King Amon. Then the people chose Amon’s son Josiah to be the new king.

Josiah, King of Judah

Josiah was eight years old when he became king. He was king for 31 years in Jerusalem. He lived in a way that pleased the Lord, always doing what was right, as his ancestor David had done. Josiah never changed this way of life. When Josiah was in his eighth year as king, he began to follow the God worshiped by David his ancestor. He was still young when he began to obey God. When he was in his twelfth year as king he began to destroy the high places, the Asherah poles, and idols that were carved and idols that were made from molds from Judah and Jerusalem. As Josiah watched, the people broke down the altars for the Baal gods. Then he cut down the incense altars that stood high above the people. He broke the idols that were carved and the idols that were made from molds. He beat the idols into powder and sprinkled the powder on the graves of the people who had offered sacrifices to the Baal gods. Josiah even burned the bones of the priests who had served the Baal gods on their own altars. This is how he destroyed idols and idol worship from Judah and Jerusalem. Josiah did the same for the towns in the areas of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and all the way to Naphthali. He did the same for the ruins near all these towns. Josiah broke down the altars and the Asherah poles. He beat the idols into powder. He cut down all the incense altars used for Baal worship in all the country of Israel. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

When Josiah was in his 18th year as king of Judah, he sent Shaphan, Maaseiah, and Joah to rebuild and repair the Temple of the Lord his God. Shaphan was the son of Azaliah. Maaseiah was the city leader. Joah, who was the son of Joahaz, wrote about what happened.

So Josiah commanded the Temple to be repaired so that he could make Judah and the Temple clean. These men came to Hilkiah the high priest. They gave him the money that people gave for God’s Temple. The Levite doorkeepers had collected this money from the people of Manasseh, Ephraim, and from all the Israelites who were left. They also collected this money from all Judah, Benjamin, and all the people living in Jerusalem. Then the Levites paid the men who supervised the work on the Lord’s Temple. And the supervisors
paid the workers who repaired the LORD’s Temple. They gave the money to carpenters and builders to buy large rocks that were already cut, and to buy wood. The wood was used to rebuild the buildings and to make beams for the buildings. In the past, the kings of Judah did not take care of the Temple buildings. The buildings had become old and ruined. The men worked faithfully. Their supervisors were Jahath and Obadiah, Jahath and Obadiah were Levites, and they were descendants of Merari. Other supervisors were Zechariah and Meshullam. They were descendants of Kohath. The Levites who were skilled in playing instruments of music also supervised the laborers and all the other workers. Some Levites worked as secretaries, officials, and doorkeepers.

The Book of the Law Found

The Levites brought out the money that was in the LORD’s Temple. At that time Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD that was given through Moses. Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, “I found the Book of the Law in the LORD’s house.” Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. Shaphan brought the book to King Josiah. Shaphan reported to the king, “Your servants are doing everything you told them to do. They got the money that was in the LORD’s Temple and are paying the supervisors and the workers.” Then Shaphan said to King Josiah, “Hilkiah the priest gave a book to me.” Then Shaphan read from the book in front of the king. When King Josiah heard the words of the law being read, he tore his clothes. Then the king gave a command to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the servant. The king said, “Go, ask the LORD for me and for the people who are left in Israel and in Judah. Ask about the words in the book that was found. The LORD is very angry with us because our ancestors did not obey the LORD’s word. They did not do everything this book says to do.”

Hilkiah and the king’s servants went to the newer part of Jerusalem to see Huldah the prophetess. She was the wife of Shallum, the son of Tokhath, whose father was Hasrah. Shallum had the job of taking care of the king’s clothes. Hilkiah and the king’s servants told Huldah what had happened. Huldah said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Tell King Josiah that the LORD says, ‘I will bring trouble to this place and to the people living here. I will bring all the terrible things that are written in the book that was read in front of the king of Judah. I will do this because the people left me and burned incense to other gods. They made me angry because of all the bad things they have done. So I will pour out my anger on this place. Like a hot burning fire, my anger will not be put out!’

Then King Josiah called for all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to come and meet with him. The king went up to the LORD’s Temple. All the people from Judah, the people living in Jerusalem, the priests, the Levites, and all the people, both important and not important, were upset. Josiah was upset because his people had not obeyed the LORD’s laws. Also in verse 27.

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*a 34:15 the LORD’s house Another name for the Temple in Jerusalem.
*b 34:19 tore his clothes A way of showing that a person was upset. Josiah was upset because his people had not obeyed the LORD’s laws. Also in verse 27.
*c 34:22 the king’s servants Literally, “those . . . of the king.”
*d 34:28 take you to be with your ancestors This means that Josiah would die.
with Josiah. He read to them all the words in the Book of the Agreement. That book was found in the LORD’s Temple. Then the king stood up in his place. He made an agreement with the LORD. He agreed to follow the LORD and to obey his commands, laws, and rules. He agreed to obey with all his heart and soul the words of the agreement written in this book. Then Josiah made all the people in Jerusalem and Benjamin promise to accept the agreement. The people of Jerusalem obeyed the agreement of God, the God their ancestors obeyed. The Israelites had idols from many different countries, but Josiah destroyed all the terrible idols. He made all the people in Israel serve the LORD their God. And as long as Josiah was alive, the people continued to serve the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

Josiah Celebrates Passover

Josiah celebrated the Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem. The Passover lamb was killed on the 14th day of the first month. Josiah chose the priests to do their duties. He encouraged the priests while they were serving in the LORD’s Temple. He spoke to the Levites who taught the Israelites and who were made holy for service to the LORD. He said to the Levites, “Put the Holy Box in the Temple that Solomon built. Solomon was David’s son. David was king of Israel. Don’t carry the Holy Box from place to place on your shoulders again. Now serve the LORD your God and his people, the Israelites. Make yourselves ready for service in the Temple by your tribes. Do the jobs that King David and his son King Solomon gave you to do. Stand in the Holy Place with a group of Levites. Do this for each different tribe of the people so that you can help them. Kill the Passover lambs and make yourselves holy to the Lord. Get ready to help your fellow Israelites. Do everything the LORD commanded us in the laws he gave to Moses.”

Josiah gave the Israelites 30,000 sheep and goats to kill for the Passover sacrifices. He also gave 3000 cattle to the people. All these animals were from King Josiah’s own animals. Josiah’s officials also freely gave animals and things to the people, to the priests, and Levites to use for the Passover. Hilkiah the high priest, Zechariah, and Jehiel were the officials in charge of the Temple. They gave the priests 2600 lambs and goats and 300 bulls for Passover sacrifices. Also Conaniah with Shemariah and Nethanel, his brothers, and Hashabiah, Jeiel and Jozabad gave 500 sheep and goats and 500 bulls for Passover sacrifices to the Levites. These men were leaders of the Levites.

When everything was ready for the Passover service to begin, the priests and Levites went to their places. This is what the king commanded. The Passover lambs were killed. Then the Levites skinned the animals and gave the blood to the priests. The priests sprinkled the blood on the altar. Then they gave the animals to be used for burnt offerings to the different tribes. This was done so that the burnt offerings could be offered to the LORD the way the Law of Moses taught. And they did the same with the bulls. The Levites roasted the Passover sacrifices over the fire in the way they were commanded. And they boiled the holy offerings in pots, kettles, and pans. Then they quickly gave the meat to the people. After this was finished, the Levites got meat for themselves and for the priests who were descendants of Aaron. These priests were kept very busy, working until it got dark. They worked hard burning the burnt offerings and the fat of the sacrifices. The Levite singers from Asaph’s family got in the places that King David had chosen for them to stand. They were Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king’s prophet. The gatekeepers at each gate did not have to leave their places because their brother Levites made everything ready for them for the Passover.

So everything was done that day for the worship of the LORD as King Josiah commanded. The Passover was celebrated
and the burnt offerings were offered on the LORD’s altar. 17 The Israelites who were there celebrated Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. 18 Passover hadn’t been celebrated like this since the time of Samuel the prophet! None of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated a Passover like this. King Josiah, the priests, the Levites, and the people of Judah and Israel who were there with all the people in Jerusalem celebrated the Passover in a very special way. 19 They celebrated this Passover in Josiah’s 18th year as king.

The Death of Josiah
20 Josiah did all these good things for the Temple. Later, King Neco of Egypt led an army to fight against the town of Carchemish on the Euphrates River. King Josiah went out to fight against Neco. 21 But Neco sent messengers to Josiah. They said, “King Josiah, this war is not your problem. I didn’t come to fight against you. I came to fight my enemies. God told me to hurry. He is on my side, so don’t bother me. If you fight against me, God will destroy you!” 22 But Josiah did not go away. He put on different clothes to hide who he was and went to fight the battle. Josiah refused to listen to the warning Neco had received from God and went to fight on the plain of Megiddo. 23 Then King Josiah was shot by arrows while he was in the battle. He told his servants, “Take me away, I am wounded badly!” 24 So the servants took Josiah out of his chariot and put him in another chariot he had brought with him to the battle. Then they took Josiah to Jerusalem. He died there and was buried in the tombs where his ancestors were buried. All the people of Judah and Jerusalem were very sad because Josiah was dead. 25 Jeremiah wrote and sang some funeral songs for Josiah. These songs are written in the book, Funeral Songs.

Jehoahaz, King of Judah
36 The people of Judah chose Jehoahaz to be the new king in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz was Josiah’s son. 2 He was 23 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for three months. 3 Then King Neco from Egypt made Jehoahaz a prisoner. Neco made the people of Judah pay 3 3/4 tons of silver and 75 pounds of gold for a fine. 4 Neco chose Jehoahaz’s brother Eliakim to be the new king of Judah and Jerusalem. Neco gave Eliakim a new name. He named him Jehoiakim. But Neco took Jehoahaz to Egypt.

Jehoiakim, King of Judah
5 Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became the new king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for eleven years. Jehoiakim did not obey God. He did what the LORD his God considered evil. 6 King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon attacked Judah. He made Jehoiakim a prisoner and put bronze chains on him. Then Nebuchadnezzar took King Jehoiakim to Babylon. 7 Nebuchadnezzar took some of the things from the LORD’s Temple. He carried them to Babylon and put them in his own house. 8 Everything else Jehoiakim did, the terrible sins he did, and everything he was guilty of doing, are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah. Jehoiakim’s son Jehoiachin became the new king in his place.

Jehoiachin, King of Judah
9 Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in
Jerusalem for three months and ten days. He did not obey God. He did what the LORD considered evil. 10 In the spring, King Nebuchadnezzar sent some servants to get Jehoiachin. They brought Jehoiachin and some valuable treasures from the LORD’s Temple to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar chose Zedekiah to be the new king of Judah and Jerusalem. Zedekiah was one of Jehoiachin’s relatives.

Zedekiah, King of Judah
11 Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for eleven years. 12 Zedekiah did what the LORD his God considered evil. Jeremiah the prophet told him messages from the LORD. But Zedekiah did not humble himself and obey what Jeremiah said.

Jerusalem Is Destroyed
13 Zedekiah turned against King Nebuchadnezzar. In the past Nebuchadnezzar forced Zedekiah to make a promise to be faithful to him. Zedekiah used God’s name and promised to be faithful to Nebuchadnezzar. But Zedekiah was stubborn and would not change his life. He refused to obey the LORD, the God of Israel. 14 Also, all the leaders of the priests and the leaders of the people of Judah sinned worse and became more unfaithful to the Lord. They followed the evil example of the other nations. They ruined the Temple that the LORD had made holy in Jerusalem. 15 The LORD, the God of their ancestors, sent prophets again and again to warn his people. He did this because he felt sorry for them and for his Temple. They remained the evil example of the other nations. They ruined the Temple that the LORD had made holy in Jerusalem. 16 The LORD, the God of heaven, made me king over the whole earth. He gave me the responsibility of building a Temple for him in Jerusalem. Now, all of you who are his people are free to go to Jerusalem. And may the LORD your God be with you.

The king of Babylon killed the young men even when they were in the Temple. He didn’t have mercy on the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The king of Babylon killed young and old people. He killed men and women. He killed sick and healthy people. God permitted Nebuchadnezzar to punish the people of Judah and Jerusalem. 18 Nebuchadnezzar carried all the things in God’s Temple away to Babylon. He took all the valuable things from the LORD’s Temple, from the king, and from the king’s officials. They took or destroyed every valuable thing in Jerusalem. 20 Nebuchadnezzar took the people who were still alive back to Babylon and forced them to be slaves. They stayed in Babylon as slaves until the Persian kingdom defeated the kingdom of Babylon. 21 The land of Judah became an empty desert and stayed that way for 70 years. All this time the land rested to make up for the Sabbath rests that the people had not kept. This is just what the LORD said would happen in the warning he gave through the prophet Jeremiah.

22 During the first year that Cyrus was king of Persia, the LORD caused Cyrus to make a special announcement. He did this so that what the LORD promised through Jeremiah the prophet would really happen. Cyrus sent messengers to every place in his kingdom. They carried this message:

23 This is what King Cyrus of Persia says:

The LORD, the God of heaven, made me king over the whole earth. He gave me the responsibility of building a Temple for him in Jerusalem. Now, all of you who are his people are free to go to Jerusalem. And may the LORD your God be with you.

was finally destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon.  

36:21 Sabbath rests The Law said that every seventh year the land was not to be farmed. See Lev. 25:1–7.  


36:22 the first year … Cyrus This was about 539–538 B.C.
Ezra

Cyrus Helps the Prisoners Return

1 During the first year that Cyrus was king of Persia, the Lord caused him to make an announcement. It was written down, and Cyrus ordered that it be read throughout his kingdom. This was done so that what the Lord had told Jeremiah years before would now happen. This was the announcement:

2 From King Cyrus of Persia:
   The Lord, the God of heaven, gave all the kingdoms on earth to me. And he chose me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in the country of Judah. If any of God’s people are living among you, I pray God will bless them. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah.

3 If any of God’s people are living among you, I pray God will bless them. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah.

4 And so in any place where there might be survivors of Israel, the men in that place must support these survivors. Give them silver, gold, animals, and other things. Give them gifts for God’s Temple in Jerusalem.

5 So the family leaders from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin prepared to go up to Jerusalem. They were going to Jerusalem to build the Lord’s Temple. Also everyone who God had encouraged prepared to go to Jerusalem. All their neighbors gave them many gifts. They gave them silver, gold, animals, and other expensive things. Their neighbors freely gave them all those things. Also, King Cyrus brought out the things that belonged in the Lord’s Temple that Nebuchadnezzar had taken away from Jerusalem. He had put them in his temple where he kept his false gods.

6 King Cyrus of Persia told Mithredath, the man who keeps his money, to bring those things out. So Mithredath brought them out to Sheshbazzar, the leader of Judah.

7 This is what Mithredath brought out of the Lord’s Temple: 30 gold dishes, 1000 silver dishes, 29 knives and pans, 30 gold bowls, 410 silver bowls similar to the gold bowls, and 1000 other dishes.

8 All together, there were 5400 things made from gold and silver. Sheshbazzar brought them all with him when the prisoners left Babylon and went back to Jerusalem.

The List of the Prisoners Who Returned

2 These are the people of the province who returned from captivity. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had taken these people as prisoners to Babylon. They now returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to their own town. These are the people who returned with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah. This is the list of names and numbers of men from Israel who returned:

3 the descendants of Parosh 2172
4 the descendants of Shephatiah 372
5 the descendants of Arah 775
6 the descendants of Pahath Moab of the family of Jeshua and Joab 2812
7 the descendants of Elam 1254
8 the descendants of Zattu 945
9 the descendants of Zacci 760
10 the descendants of Bani 642
11 the descendants of Bébai 623
12 the descendants of Azgad 1222
13 the descendants of Adonikam 666

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the descendants of Bigvai 2056
the descendants of Adin 454
the descendants of Ater through the family of Hezekiah 98
the descendants of Bezai 323
the descendants of Jahor 112
the descendants of Hashum 223
the descendants of Gibbar 95
from the town of Bethlehem 123
from the town of Netophah 56
from the town of Anathoth 128
from the town of Azmaveth 42
from the towns of Kiriath Jearim, Ke phirah, and Beeroth 743
from the towns of Ramah and Geba 621
from the town of Micmash 122
from the towns of Bethel and Ai 223
from the town of Nebo 52
from the town of Magbish 156
from the other town named Elam 1254
from the town of Harim 320
from the towns of Lod, Hadid, and Ono 725
from the town of Jericho 345
from the town of Sennaah 3630
These are the priests:
the descendants of Jedaiah through the family of Jeshua 973
the descendants of Immer 1052
the descendants of Pashhur 1247
the descendants of Harim 1017
These are the people from the tribe of Levi:
the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel through the family of Hodaviah 74
These are the singers:
the descendants of Asaph 128
These are the descendants of the Temple gatekeepers:
the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai 139
These are the descendants of the special Temple servants:
Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth, Keros, Siaha, Padon, Lebanon, Hagabah, Akkub, Hagab, Shalmai, Hanan, Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah,
These are the descendants of Solomon’s servants:
Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda, Jaalah, Darkon, Giddel, Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth Hazzebaim, and Ami,
the Temple servants and descendants of Solomon’s servants 392
Some people came to Jerusalem from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon, and Immer. But these people could not prove that their families were from the family of Israel:
the descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda 652
From the family of priests there were descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai. (If a man married a daughter of Barzillai from Gilead, he was counted as a descendant of Barzillai.)
These people searched for their family histories, but they could not find them. Their names were not included in the list of priests. They could not prove that their ancestors were priests, so they could not serve as priests. The governor ordered them not to eat any of the holy food until there was a priest who could use the Urim and Thummim to ask God what to do.
All together, there were 42,360 people in the group who came back. This is not counting their 7337 men and women slaves. They also had 200 men and women singers with them. They had 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6720 donkeys.
When the group arrived at the place in Jerusalem where the LORD’s Temple had been, the family leaders gave their gifts for building this house of God again. They wanted to build it in this same place.
They gave as much as they were able. These are the things they gave for building the Temple: 1100 pounds\(^a\) of gold, about 4 tons\(^b\) of silver, and 100 coats that priests wear.

So the priests, Levites, and some of the other people moved to Jerusalem and the area around it. This group included the Temple singers, gatekeepers, and the Temple servants. The other Israelites settled in their own hometowns.

**Rebuilding the Temple**

Then those who had come back from captivity gave money to the stonemasons and carpenters. They also gave food, wine, and olive oil. They used these things to pay the people of Tyre and Sidon to bring cedar logs from Lebanon. They wanted to bring the logs in ships to the seacoast town of Joppa as they did for the first Temple. King Cyrus of Persia gave permission for them to do this.

So in the second month\(^d\) of the second year after they came to the Temple in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak began the work. Their brothers, the priests, Levites, and everyone who came back to Jerusalem from captivity began working with them. They chose Levites who were 20 years old and older to be the leaders in the building of the Lord’s Temple. These were the men who supervised the work of building the Lord’s Temple: Jeshua and his sons, Kadmiel and his sons (the descendants of Judah), the sons of Henadad and their brothers, the Levites. The builders finished laying the foundation for the Lord’s Temple. When the foundation was finished, the priests put on their special clothing. Then they got their trumpets, and the sons of Asaph got their cymbals. They all took their places to praise the Lord. This was done the way King David of Israel had ordered in the past. They sang songs of praise and thanksgiving, taking turns in singing each part. These songs were sung in two parts. One group (the Levites) sang the first part and the other group (the people) responded with the second part. Here, these are probably Ps. 111–118 and Ps. 136.

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\(^a\) 2:69 1100 pounds Literally, “61,000 drachmas” (about 526 kg).

\(^b\) 2:69 about 4 tons Literally, “5000 minas” (3450 kg).

\(^c\) 3:1 seventh month That is, September–October, 538 B.C.

\(^d\) 3:8 second month That is, April–May, 536 B.C.

\(^e\) 3:11 taking turns … part These songs were sung in two parts. One group (the Levites) sang the first part and the other group (the people) responded with the second part. Here, these are probably Ps. 111–118 and Ps. 136.
for joy. The sound could be heard far away. All of them made so much noise that no one could tell the difference between the shouts of joy and the crying.

Enemies Against Rebuilding the Temple

1–2 Many people living in the area were against the people of Judah and Benjamin. These enemies heard that the people who had come from captivity were building a temple for the LORD, the God of Israel. So they came to Zerubbabel and to the family leaders and said, “Let us help you build. We are the same as you, we ask your God for help. We have offered sacrifices to your God since the time King Esarhaddon of Assyria brought us here.”

But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the other family leaders of Israel answered, “No, you people cannot help us build a temple for our God. Only we can build the Temple for the LORD. He is the God of Israel. This is what King Cyrus of Persia commanded us to do.”

So the enemies began to discourage them and tried to frighten them in order to stop them from building the Temple. These enemies hired government officials to work against the people of Judah. The officials constantly did things to stop the Jews’ plans to build the Temple. This continued the whole time that Cyrus was the king until Darius became the king of Persia.

These enemies even wrote letters to the king of Persia trying to stop the Jews. They wrote a letter the year that Xerxes became the king of Persia.

Enemies Against Rebuilding Jerusalem

Later, when Artaxerxes became the new king of Persia, some of these men wrote another letter complaining about the Jews. The men who wrote the letter were Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the other people in their group. The letter was written in Aramaic and translated.

Then Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary wrote a letter against the people of Jerusalem. They wrote the letter to Artaxerxes the king. This is what they wrote:

From Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary, and from the judges and important officials over the men from Tripolis, Persia, Erech, and Babylon, and from the Elamites from Susa, and from the other people who the great and powerful Sheshonk moved to the city of Samaria and other places in the country west of the Euphrates River.

This is the copy of the letter sent to King Artaxerxes:

From your servants living in the area west of the Euphrates River.

King Artaxerxes, we wish to inform you that the Jews you sent from there are now in Jerusalem. They are trying to rebuild that terrible city. The people there have always rebelled against other kings. Now they have almost finished repairing the foundations and building the walls.

Also, King Artaxerxes, you should know that if Jerusalem and its walls are rebuilt, the people of Jerusalem will stop paying their taxes. They will stop sending money to honor you. They also will stop paying customs fees, and the king will lose all that money.

We have a responsibility to the king. We don’t want to see this happen, so we are sending this letter to inform the king.

King Artaxerxes, we suggest that you search the writings of the kings who ruled before you. You will see in the writings that "modern" Aramaic alphabet rather than the older alphabet that was still being used in Judah.

Here, the original language changes from Hebrew to Aramaic.

Building the walls This was a way of protecting a city. These men wanted the king to think that the Jews were preparing to rebel against the king.
Jerusalem always rebelled against other kings. It has caused much trouble for other kings and nations. Many rebellions have started in this city since ancient times. That is why Jerusalem was destroyed.

16 King Artaxerxes, we wish to inform you that if this city and its walls are rebuilt, you will lose control of the area west of the Euphrates River.

17 Then King Artaxerxes sent this answer:

To Rehum the commanding officer, Shimshai the secretary, and all the people with them living in Samaria and other places west of the Euphrates River.

Greetings:

18 The letter you sent us has been translated and read to me. I gave an order for the writings of the kings before me to be searched. The writings were read, and we found out that Jerusalem has a long history of rebellion against kings. Jerusalem has been a place where rebellion and revolt has happened often. Jerusalem has had powerful kings ruling over it and over the whole area west of the Euphrates River. Their kings received taxes, customs, fees, and tribute.

21 Now, you must give an order for these men to stop work. That order must be given to keep Jerusalem from being rebuilt until I say so. Be careful not to overlook this matter. We should not let the building of Jerusalem continue. If that work continues, I will not get any more money from Jerusalem.

25 So a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes sent was read to Rehum, Shimshai the secretary, and the people with them. They went very quickly to the Jews in Jerusalem and forced them to stop building.

The Work on the Temple Stopped

24 So the work stopped on God’s Temple in Jerusalem. The work did not continue until the second year that Darius was king of Persia.

5 At that time the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo began to prophesy in the name of God. They encouraged the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. So Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak again started working on the Temple in Jerusalem. All of God’s prophets were with them and were supporting the work. At that time Tattenai was the governor of the area west of the Euphrates River. Tattenai, Shethar Bozenai, and the men with them went to Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the others who were building. Tattenai and the people with him asked Zerubbabel, “Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and repair it like new?” They also asked Zerubbabel, “What are the names of the men who are working on this building?”

But God was watching over the Jewish leaders. The builders didn’t have to stop working until a report could be sent to King Darius. They continued working until the king sent his answer back.

6 Tattenai the governor of the area west of the Euphrates River, Shethar Bozenai, and the important people with them sent a letter to King Darius. This is a copy of that letter:

To King Darius.

Greetings:

8 King Darius, you should know that we went to the province of Judah. We went to the Temple of the great God. The people in Judah are building that Temple with large stones. They are putting big wooden timbers in the walls. The

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work is being done with much care and the people of Judah are working very hard. They are building very fast; it will soon be done.

9 We asked their leaders some questions about the work they are doing. We asked them, “Who gave you permission to rebuild this temple and repair it like new?”

10 We also asked for their names. We wanted to write down the names of their leaders so that you would know who they are.

11 This is the answer they gave us: “We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth. We are rebuilding the Temple that a great king of Israel built and finished many years ago. But our ancestors made the God of heaven angry, so God gave our ancestors to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed this Temple, and he forced the people to go to Babylon as prisoners. But, in the first year that Cyrus was king of Babylon, King Cyrus gave a special order for God’s Temple to be rebuilt. And Cyrus brought out from his false god’s temple in Babylon the gold and silver things that were taken from God’s Temple in the past. Nebuchadnezzar took them from the Temple in Jerusalem and brought them to his false god’s temple in Babylon. Then King Cyrus gave those gold and silver things to Sheshbazzar.” Cyrus chose Sheshbazzar to be governor.

15 Then Cyrus said to Sheshbazzar, “Take these gold and silver things and put them back in the Temple in Jerusalem. Rebuild God’s Temple in the same place it was in the past.”

16 So Sheshbazzar came and built the foundations of God’s Temple in Jerusalem. From that day until now, the work has continued, but it is not yet finished.

17 Now, if it pleases the king, please search the official records of the king. See if it is true that King Cyrus gave an order to rebuild God’s Temple in Jerusalem. And then, sir, please send us a letter to let us know what you have decided to do about this.

The Order of Darius

1 So King Darius gave an order to search the writings of the kings before him. The writings were kept in Babylon in the same place the money was kept. A scroll was found in the fortress of Ecbatana. (Ecbatana is in the province of Media.) This is what was written on that scroll:

Official Note: During the first year that Cyrus was king, he gave an order about the Temple of God in Jerusalem. The order said:

Let the Temple of God be rebuilt. It will be a place to offer sacrifices. Let its foundations be built. The Temple must be 60 cubits high and 60 cubits wide. Its wall will be in layers that have three rows of large stones and one row of wooden timbers. The cost of building the Temple must be paid for from the king’s treasury. Also, the gold and silver things from God’s Temple must be put back in their places. Nebuchadnezzar took them from the Temple in Jerusalem and brought them to Babylon. They must be put back in God’s Temple.

6 So King Darius sent this message to his officials:

To Tattenai, governor of the area west of the Euphrates River, to Shethar Bozenai, and to all the officials living in that province. I order you to stay away from Jerusalem. Don’t bother the workers. Don’t try to stop the work on this Temple.

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6:3 60 cubits 102’ 3/8” (31.1 m).
6:4 large stones Or “marble stones.”
of God. Let the Jewish governor and the Jewish leaders rebuild it. Let them rebuild God’s Temple in the same place it was in the past.

8Now I give this order. You must do this for the Jewish leaders building God’s Temple: The cost of the building must be fully paid from the king’s treasury. The money will come from the taxes collected from the provinces in the area west of the Euphrates River. Do these things quickly, so the work will not stop. 9Give them anything they need. If they need young bulls, rams, or male lambs for sacrifices to the God of heaven, give these things to them. If the priests of Jerusalem ask for wheat, salt, wine, and oil, give these things to them every day without fail. 10Give them to the Jewish priests so that they may offer sacrifices that please the God of heaven. Give these things so that the priests may pray for me and my sons.

11Also, I give this order: If anyone changes this order, a wooden beam must be pulled from their house and pushed through their body. Then their house must be destroyed until it is only a pile of rocks.

12God put his name there in Jerusalem. May God defeat any king or other person who tries to change this order. If anyone tries to destroy this Temple in Jerusalem, may God destroy that person.

I, Darius, have ordered it. This order must be obeyed quickly and completely.

The Temple Completed and Dedicated
13So Tattenai the governor of the area west of the Euphrates River, Shethar Bozenai, and the men with them obeyed King Darius’ order. They obeyed the order quickly and completely. 14So the Jewish leaders continued to build. Encouraged by the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah son of Iddo, they had great success. They finished building the Temple as the God of Israel had commanded and as Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, the kings of Persia, had ordered. 15The Temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar. That was in the sixth year of the rule of King Darius.

16Then the Israelites celebrated the dedication of God’s Temple with much happiness. The priests, the Levites, and all the other people who came back from captivity joined in the celebration.

17This is the way they dedicated God’s Temple: They offered 100 bulls, 200 rams, and 400 male lambs. And they offered twelve male goats for all Israel for a sin offering. That is one goat for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. 18Then they chose the priests in their groups and the Levites in their groups to serve in God’s Temple in Jerusalem. They did these things as it is written in the Book of Moses.

The Passover
19 On the fourteenth day of the first month, the Jews who came back from captivity celebrated the Passover. 20The priests and Levites made themselves pure. They all made themselves clean and ready to celebrate the Passover. The Levites killed the Passover lamb for all the Jews who came back from captivity. They did that for their brothers the priests, and for themselves. 21So all the Israelites who came back from captivity ate the Passover meal. Other people washed themselves and made themselves pure from the unclean things of the people living in that country. These pure people also shared in the Passover meal. They did this so that they could go to the Lord, the God of Israel, for help. 22They celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread with much joy for seven days. The Lord made them very
happy because he had changed the attitude of the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria had helped them do the work on God’s Temple.

**Ezra Comes to Jerusalem**

7 After these things, during the rule of King Artaxerxes of Persia, Ezra came to Jerusalem from Babylon. Ezra was the son of Seraiah. Seraiah was the son of Azariah. Azariah was the son of Hilkiah.

2 Hilkiah was the son of Shallum. Shallum was the son of Zadok. Zadok was the son of Ahitub. Ahitub was the son of Amariah. Amariah was the son of Azariah. Azariah was the son of Meraioth. Meraioth was the son of Zerahiah. Zerahiah was the son of Uzzi. Uzzi was the son of Bukki. Bukki was the son of Abishua. Abishua was the son of Phinehas. Phinehas was the son of Eleazar. Eleazar was the son of Aaron the high priest.

6 Ezra came to Jerusalem from Babylon. He was a teacher and knew the Law of Moses very well. The Law of Moses was given by the Lord, the God of Israel. King Artaxerxes gave Ezra everything he asked for because the Lord was with Ezra. Among the people who came with Ezra were Israelites, priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and Temple servants. They arrived in Jerusalem during the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year that Artaxerxes was king. Ezra left Babylon on the first day of the first month and arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month. With God’s blessing his trip went well. Ezra had always given his time and attention to studying and obeying the law of the Lord. He also loved to teach its rules and commandments to others in Israel.

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**King Artaxerxes’ Letter to Ezra**

11 Ezra was a priest and teacher. He knew much about the commands and laws the Lord gave Israel. This is a copy of the letter King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the teacher:

12 From King Artaxerxes,

To Ezra the priest, a teacher of the law of the God of heaven:

Greetings!

13 I give this order: Any of the Israelites living in my kingdom, including priests and Levites, who want to go with you to Jerusalem, may go.

14 I and my seven advisors send you to Judah and Jerusalem. Go and see how your people are doing in obeying the law of your God. You have that law with you.

15 I and my advisors are giving gold and silver to the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. You must take this gold and silver with you.

16 You must also go through all the provinces of Babylonia. Collect the gifts from your people, from the priests, and from the Levites. The gifts are for the Temple of their God in Jerusalem.

17 Use this money to buy bulls, rams, and male lambs. Buy the grain offerings and drink offerings that go with these sacrifices. Then sacrifice them on the altar in the Temple of your God in Jerusalem.

18 Then you and the other Jews may spend the silver and gold left over any way you want to. Use it in a way that is pleasing to your God. Take all these things to the God of Jerusalem. They are for the worship in the Temple of your God. And you may get any other things that you need for the Temple of your God. Use the money in the king’s treasury to buy anything you need.

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_a_ 6:22 king of Assyria This probably means King Darius of Persia.

_ b_ 7:1 After these things There is a time period of 58 years between Ezra 6 and Ezra 7. The story of Esther takes place at this time.

_c_ 7:6 teacher Literally, “scribe.” This was a person who made copies of books. These men studied those books and became teachers.

_d_ 7:8 fifth month That is, July–August, 458 B.C.
Now I, King Artaxerxes, give this order: I order all the men who keep the king’s money in the area west of the Euphrates River to give Ezra anything he wants. Ezra is a priest and a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven. Do this quickly and completely. Give this much to Ezra: 3 3/4 tons of silver, 600 bushels of wheat, 600 gallons of wine, 600 gallons of olive oil, and as much salt as Ezra wants.

Anything that the God of heaven has ordered for Ezra to get, you must give to Ezra quickly and completely. Do this for the Temple of the God of heaven. We don’t want God to be angry with my kingdom or my sons.

I want you men to know that it is against the law to make the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, Temple servants, and other workers in God’s Temple pay taxes. They don’t have to pay taxes, money to honor the king, or any customs fees.

Ezra, I give you the authority to use the wisdom you have from your God and choose civil and religious judges. These men will be judges for all the people living in the area west of the Euphrates River. They will judge all the people who know the laws of your God and they will teach those who don’t know those laws. Anyone who does not obey the law of your God, or the law of the king, must be punished. Depending on the crime, they must be punished with death, or sent away to another country, or their property taken away, or put into prison.

Blessed is the Lord, the God of our ancestors. He put the idea into the king’s heart to honor the LORD’s Temple in Jerusalem. God showed his faithful love to me in front of the king, his advisors, and the king’s important officials. The LORD my God was with me, and that gave me courage. I gathered together the leaders of Israel to go with me to Jerusalem.

List of Leaders Returning With Ezra

These are the names of the family leaders and the other people who came with me to Jerusalem from Babylon. We came to Jerusalem during the rule of King Artaxerxes. Here is the list of names:

1 from the descendants of Phinehas: Gershom; from the descendants of Ithamar: Daniel; from the descendants of David: Hattush;
2 from the descendants of Shecaniah: the descendants of Parosh, Zechariah, and 150 other men;
3 from the descendants of Zattu: Shecaniah son of Jahaziel, and 300 other men;
4 from the descendants of Pahath Moab: Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah, and 200 other men;
5 from the descendants of Zattu: Shecaniah son of Jahaziel, and 300 other men;
6 from the descendants of Jahaziel, and 300 other men;
7 from the descendants of Elam: Jeshuaiah son of Athaliah, and 70 other men;
8 from the descendants of Shephatiah: Zebadiah son of Michael, and 80 other men;
9 from the descendants of Shephatiah: Zebadiah son of Michael, and 80 other men;
10 from the descendants of Bani: Shelomith son of Josiphiah, and 160 other men;
11 from the descendants of Bebai: Zechariah son of Bebai, and 28 other men;
12 from the descendants of Azgad: Johanan son of Hakkatan, and 110 other men;
13 from the last of the descendants of Adonikam: Eliphelet, Jeuel, Shemaiah, and 60 other men;
14 from the descendants of Bigvai: Uthai, Zaccur, and 70 other men.

The Return to Jerusalem
15 I called all these people to meet together at the river that flows toward Ahava. We camped at that place for three days. I learned there were priests in the group, but there were no Levites. 16 So I called these leaders: Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, and I called Joiarib and Elnathan. (These men were teachers.) 17 I sent the men to Iddo, leader in the town of Casiphia. I told them what to say to Iddo and his relatives, who are the Temple workers in Casiphia. I told the men to ask Iddo and his relatives to send us workers to serve in God’s Temple. 18 Because God was with us, they sent Sherebiah, a skilled man from the descendants of Mahli (Mahli was a son of Levi, one of Israel’s sons.) They also sent his sons and brothers, 18 men in all. 19 They also sent Hashabiah and Jeshaiah from the descendants of Merari, along with their brothers and nephews. In all there were 20 men. 20 Besides these, there were 220 Temple workers whose ancestors had been chosen by David and his officials to help the Levites. The names of all these men were written on the list.

21 There near the Ahava River, I announced that we all should fast. We should fast to make ourselves humble before our God. We wanted to ask God for a safe trip for ourselves, our children, and for everything we owned. 22 I was embarrassed to ask King Artaxerxes for soldiers and horsemen to protect us as we traveled. There were enemies on the road. The reason I was embarrassed to ask for protection was because of what we had told the king. We had said to King Artaxerxes, “Our God is with everyone who trusts him, but he is very angry with everyone who turns away from him.” 23 So we fasted and prayed to our God about our trip. He answered our prayers.

24 Then I chose twelve of the priests who were leaders. I chose Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brothers. 25 I weighed the silver, gold, and the other things that were given for God’s Temple. I gave them to the twelve priests I had chosen. King Artaxerxes, his advisors, his important officials, and all the Isra- elites in Babylon gave those things for God’s Temple. 26 I weighed all these things. There were 25 tons\(^a\) of silver. There were also 7500 pounds\(^b\) of silver dishes and things. There were 3 3/4 tons of gold. 27 And I gave them 20 gold bowls. The bowls weighed about 19 pounds.\(^c\) And I gave them two beautiful dishes made from polished bronze that were as valuable as gold. 28 Then I said to the twelve priests: “You and these things are holy to the Lord. People gave this silver and gold to the Lord, the God of your ancestors. 29 So guard these things carefully. You are responsible for them until you give them to the Temple leaders in Jerusalem. You will give them to the leading Levites and the family leaders of Israel. They will weigh them and put them in the rooms of the Lord’s Temple in Jerusalem.”

30 So the priests and Levites accepted the silver, gold, and special things that Ezra had weighed and given to them. They were told to take them to God’s Temple in Jerusalem.

31 On the twelfth day of the first month,\(^d\) we left the Ahava River and started toward Jerusalem. God was with us, and he protected us from enemies and robbers along the way. 32 Then we arrived in Jerusalem. We rested there for three days. 33 On the fourth day, we went to the Temple and weighed the silver, gold, and special things. We gave them to Meremoth son of Uriah the priest. Eleazar son of Phinehas was with Meremoth. The Levites, Jozabad son of Jeshua, and Noadiah son of Binnui were with them also. 34 We counted and weighed everything and we wrote down the total weight.

\(^a\) 8:26 25 tons Literally, “650 talents” (22,425 kg). \(^b\) 8:26 7500 pounds Literally, “100 talents” (3450 kg). \(^c\) 8:27 19 pounds Literally, “1000 darics” (about 8.63 kg). \(^d\) 8:31 first month That is, March–April, 458 b.c.
back from captivity offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel. They offered twelve bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, 77 male lambs, and twelve male goats for a sin offering. All this was a burnt offering to the LORD.

Then the people gave the letter from King Artaxerxes to the royal satraps and to the governors of the area west of the Euphrates River. Then the leaders gave their support to the Israelites and to the Temple.

**Marriages to Non-Jewish People**

1 After we finished all these things, the leaders of the Israelites came to me and said, “Ezra, the Israelites have not kept themselves separate from the other people living around us. And the priests and the Levites have not kept themselves separate. The Israelites are being influenced by evil things done by the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. 2 The Israelites have married the people living around us. The Israelites are supposed to be special, but now they are mixed with the other people living among them. The leaders and important officials of the Israelites have set a bad example in this thing.”

3 When I heard about this, I tore my robe and my coat to show I was upset. I pulled hair from my head and beard. I sat down, shocked and upset.

4 Then everyone who respected God’s Law shook with fear. They were afraid because the Israelites who came back from captivity were not faithful to God. I was shocked and upset. I sat there until the evening sacrifice, and the people gathered around me.

5 Then, when it was time for the evening sacrifice, I got up. I had made myself look shameful while I was sitting there. My robe and coat were torn, and I fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God. 6 Then I prayed this prayer: “My God, I am too ashamed and embarrassed to look at you. I am ashamed because our sins are higher than our heads. Our guilt has reached all the way up to the heavens. 7 We have been guilty of many sins from the days of our ancestors until now. We sinned so our kings and priests were punished. Foreign kings attacked us and took our people away. They took away our wealth and made us ashamed. It is the same even today.

8 “But now, finally, you have been kind to us. You have let a few of us escape captivity and come to live in this holy place. LORD, you gave us new life and relief from our slavery. 9 Yes, we were slaves, but you would not let us be slaves forever. You were kind to us. You made the kings of Persia be kind to us. Your Temple was ruined, but you gave us new life so that we can rebuild your Temple and repair it like new. God, you helped us build a wall to protect Judah and Jerusalem.

10 “Now, God, what can we say to you? We have stopped obeying you again. 11 You used your servants the prophets to give these commands to us. You said, ‘The land you are going to live in and own is a ruined land. It has been ruined by evil things the people living there have done. They have done very bad things in every place in this land. They have made this land dirty with their sins. 12 So Israelites, don’t let your children marry their children. Don’t join them. Don’t want the things they have. Obey my commands so that you will be strong and enjoy the good things of the land. And then you can keep this land and give it to your children.’

13 “What has happened to us is our own fault. We have done evil things, and we have much guilt. But you, our God, have punished us much less than we should have been. We have done many terrible sins, and we should have been punished worse. And you have even let some of our people escape captivity. 14 So we know that we must not break your commands. We must not marry those people. They do very bad things. God, if we continue to marry these bad people, we know you will destroy us. Then there would be no one from the Israelites left alive.

15 “LORD, God of Israel, you are good,
and you still have let some of us live. Yes, we are guilty, and because of our guilt, not one of us should be allowed to stand in front of you.”

The People Confess Their Sin

Ezra was praying and confessing. He was crying and bowing down in front of God’s Temple. While Ezra was doing that, a large group of the Israelites—men, women, and children—gathered around him. They were crying. Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam, spoke to Ezra and said, “We have not been faithful to our God. We have married the people living around us. But, even though we have done this, there is still hope for Israel. Now let us make an agreement before our God to send away all these women and their children. We will do that to follow the advice of Ezra and the people who respect the laws of our God. We will obey God’s law. Get up, Ezra. This is your responsibility, but we will support you. So be brave and do it.”

So Ezra got up. He made the leading priests, the Levites, and all the Israelites promise to do what he said. Then Ezra went away from the front of God’s house. He went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. While Ezra was there, he didn’t eat food or drink water. He did that because he was still very sad. He was very sad about the Israelites who came back to Jerusalem. Then he sent a message to every place in Judah and Jerusalem. The message told all the Jewish people who had come back from captivity to meet together in Jerusalem.

Then the whole group who met together answered Ezra. They shouted, “Ezra, you are right! We must do what you say. But there are many people here. And it is the rainy time of year, so we cannot stay outside. This problem cannot be solved in a day or two because we have sinned in a very bad way. Let our leaders decide for the whole group meeting here. Then let every man in our towns who married a foreign woman come here to Jerusalem at a planned time. Let them come here with the elders and judges of their towns. Then God will stop being angry with us.”

Only a few men were against this plan. They were Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah. Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite also were against the plan.

So the Israelites who came back to Jerusalem accepted the plan. Ezra the priest chose men who were family leaders. He chose one man from each tribe. Each man was chosen by name. On the first day of the tenth month, the men who were chosen sat down to study each of the cases. And by the first day of the first month, they finished discussing all the men who had married foreign women.

List of Men Who Married Foreign Women

These are the names of the descendants of the priests who married foreign women: From the descendants of Jeshua son of Jozadak and Jeshua’s brothers, these men: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. All of them promised to divorce their wives. And then each

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\( ^a \) 10:9 ninth month That is, November–December.

\( ^b \) 10:16 tenth month That is, December–January.

\( ^c \) 10:17 first month That is, March–April.

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one of them offered a ram from the flock for a guilt offering. They did that because of their guilt.

20 From the descendants of Immer, these men: Hanani and Zebadiah.

21 From the descendants of Harim, these men: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah.

22 From the descendants of Pashhur, these men: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

23 Among the Levites, these are the men who married foreign women:
   Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (also called Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24 Among the singers, this is the man who married a foreign woman: Eliashib.
   Among the gatekeepers, these are the men who married foreign women:
   Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

25 Among the other Israelites, these men married foreign women:
   From the descendants of Parosh, these men: Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malkijah, and Benaiah.

26 From the descendants of Elam, these men: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Elijah.

27 From the descendants of Zattu, these men: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza.

28 From the descendants of Bebai, these men: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai.

29 From the descendants of Bani, these men: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Jeremoth.

30 From the descendants of Pahath Moab, these men: Adna, Kelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh.

31 From the descendants of Harim, these men: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.

32 From the descendants of Hashum, these men: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.

33 From the descendants of Bani, these men: Maadai, Amram, Uel, Benaiah, Bedeiah, Keluhi, Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu.

34 From the descendants of Binnui, these men: Shimei, Shelemiah, Nathan, Adahiah, Macnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.

35 From the descendants of Nebo, these men: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, and Benaiah.

36 All these men married foreign women, and some of them had children with these wives.
Nehemiah

Nehemiah’s Prayer

1 These are the words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: I, Nehemiah, was in the capital city of Susa in the month of Kislev. This was in the 20th year that Artaxerxes was king. While I was in Susa, one of my brothers named Hanani and some other men came from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had escaped captivity and still lived in Judah. I also asked them about the city of Jerusalem.

2 They answered, “Nehemiah, the Jews who escaped captivity and are in the land of Judah are in much trouble. They are having many problems and are full of shame because the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”

3 When I heard this about the people of Jerusalem and about the wall, I sat down and cried. I was very sad. I fasted and prayed to the God of heaven for several days. Then I prayed this prayer:

“Lord, God of heaven, you are the great and powerful God. You are the God who keeps his agreement of love with people who love you and obey your commands.

4 Please open your eyes and ears and listen to the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night. I am praying for your servants, the Israelites. I confess the sins we Israelites have done against you. I am confessing that I have sinned against you and that the other people in my father’s family have sinned against you.

5 We Israelites have been very bad to you. We have not obeyed the commands, rules, and laws you gave your servant Moses.

6 “Please remember the teaching you gave your servant Moses. You said to him, ‘If you Israelites are not faithful, I will force you to be scattered among the other nations. But if you Israelites come back to me and obey my commands, this is what I will do: Even if your people have been forced to leave their homes and go to the ends of the earth, I will gather them from there. And I will bring them back to the place I have chosen to put my name.’

7 “The Israelites are your servants and your people. You used your great power and rescued them. So, Lord, please listen to my prayer. And listen to the prayers of all your other servants who are happy to honor you. Help me today as I ask the king for help. Make him pleased with me so that he will be kind and give me what I ask for.”

At that time, I was the king’s wine servant.

The King Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem

1 In the month of Nisan in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes, some wine was brought to the king. I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had never before been sad when I was with him, but now I was sad. So the king asked me, “Are you sick? Why do you look sad? I think your heart is full of sadness.”

a 1:1 Kislev … 20th year This was about December, 444 B.C.

b 1:11 wine servant This important official was always close to the king and tasted the food and wine to make sure they were safe for the king to eat and drink.

c 2:1 20th year That is, 443 B.C.
Then I was very afraid. But even though I was afraid, I said to the king, “May the king live forever! I am sad because the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and the gates of that city have been destroyed by fire.”

Then the king said to me, “What do you want me to do?”

Before I answered, I prayed to the God of heaven. Then I answered the king, “If it would please the king, and if I have been good to you, please send me to Jerusalem, the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried. I want to go there and rebuild that city.”

The king and the queen who was sitting next to him asked me, “How long will your trip take? When will you get back here?”

The king was happy to send me, so I gave him a certain time. I also said to the king, “If it would please the king, I want to go there and rebuild that city.”

The king gave me the letters and everything I asked for. The king did that because my God was kind to me.

So I went to the governors of the area west of the Euphrates River and gave them the letters from the king. The king had also sent army officers and soldiers on horses with me. Sanballat from Horon and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard that we were building again. They made fun of us in a very ugly way. They said, “What are you doing? Are you turning against the king?”

But this is what I said to them: “The God of heaven will help us succeed. We are God’s servants and we will rebuild this city. You cannot help us in this work because none of your family lived here in Jerusalem. You don’t own any of this land, and you have no right to be in this place.”

Nehemiah Inspects the Walls of Jerusalem

11–12 I went to Jerusalem and stayed there three days. Then at night I started out with a few men. I had not said anything to anyone about what my God had put on my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no horses with me except the horse I was riding. While it was dark I went out through the Valley Gate. I rode toward the Dragon Well and the Gate of the Ash Piles. I was inspecting the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down and the gates in the wall that had been burned with fire. Then I rode on toward the Fountain Gate and the King’s Pool. As I got close, I could see there was not enough room for my horse to get through. So I went up the valley in the dark, inspecting the wall. Finally, I turned back and went back in through the Valley Gate. The officials and important Israelites didn’t know where I had gone. They didn’t know what I was doing. I had not yet said anything to the Jews, the priests, the king’s family, the officials, or any of the other people who would be doing the work.

17 Then I said to them, “You can see the trouble we have here: Jerusalem is a pile of ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let’s rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Then we will not be ashamed anymore.”

18 I also told them that my God had been kind to me. I told them what the king had said to me. Then they answered, “Let’s start to work, now!” So we began this good work.

Builders of the Wall

The name of the high priest was Eliashib. He and his brothers, the priests, went to work and built the Sheep
Gate. They prayed to make that gate holy to God. They set its doors in place in the wall. The priests worked on the wall of Jerusalem as far as the Tower of the Hundred and the Tower of Hananel. They prayed to make all this work holy to God.

The men from Jericho built the wall next to the priests. And Zaccur son of a man named Imri built the wall next to the men of Jericho.

The sons of a man named Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They set the beams in place. They put doors on the building. Then they put the locks and bolts on the doors.

Meremoth son of Uriah repaired the next section of the wall. (Uriah was the son of Hakkoz.)

Meshullam son of Berekiah repaired the next section of the wall. (Berekiah was the son of Meshezabel.) Zadok son of Baana repaired the next section of the wall.

The men from Tekoa repaired the next section of the wall, but the leaders from Tekoa refused to work for Nehemiah their governor.

Joiada and Meshullam fixed the Old Gate. Joiada is the son of Paseah and Meshullam is the son of Besodeiah. They set the beams in place. They put the doors on the hinges. Then they put the locks and bolts on the doors.

The men from Gibeon and Mizpah fixed the next section of the wall. Melatiah from Gibeon and Jadon from Meronoth did the work. Gibeon and Meronoth are places that are controlled by the governors of the area west of the Euphrates River.

Uzziel son of Harhaiah repaired the next section of the wall. Uzziel was a goldsmith. Hananiah was one of the perfume makers. These men built and repaired Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

Rephaiaah son of Hur repaired the next section of the wall. Rephaiaah was the governor of half of Jerusalem.

Jedaiah son of Harumaph repaired the next section of the wall. Jedaiah repaired the wall next to his own house. Hattush son of Hashabneiah repaired the next section. Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-Moab repaired the next section. They also repaired Oven Tower.

Shallum son of Halloshesh repaired the next section of the wall. His daughters helped him. Shallum was the governor of the other half of Jerusalem.

The Valley Gate was repaired by Hanun and the people who live in the town of Zanoah. They built the Valley Gate. They put the doors on their hinges. Then they put the locks and bolts on the doors. They also repaired 500 yards of the wall. They worked on the wall all the way to the Gate of Ash Piles.

Malkijah son of Recab repaired the Gate of Ash Piles. Malkijah was the governor of the district of Beth Hakkerem. He repaired the gate. He put the doors on the hinges. Then he put the locks and bolts on the doors.

Shallun son of Col-Hozeh repaired the Fountain Gate. Shallun was the governor of the district of Mizpah. He repaired the gate and put a roof over it. He put the doors on the hinges. Then he put the locks and bolts on the doors. He also repaired the wall of the Pool of Siloam that is next to the King’s Garden. He repaired the wall all the way to the steps that go down from the City of David.

Nehemiah son of Azbuk repaired the next section. This Nehemiah was the governor of half the district of Beth Zur. He made repairs up to a place that is across from the tombs of David. And he worked as far as the man-made pool and the House of Heroes.

The men from the tribe of Levi repaired the next section. This Nehemiah was the governor of half the district of Beth Zur. He made repairs up to a place that is across from the tombs of David. And he worked as far as the man-made pool and the House of Heroes.

Their brothers repaired the next section. They worked under Binnui son of Hazzi, ruler of half the district of Keilah. He made repairs for his own district.
Henadad. Binnui was the governor of the other half of the district of Keilah.

19 Ezer son of Jeshua repaired the next section. Ezer was governor of Mizpah. He repaired the section of wall from the room for weapons to the corner of the wall. 20 Baruch son of Zabbai repaired the next section. Baruch worked very hard and repaired the section of wall from the corner to the entrance to the house of Eliashib the high priest. 21 Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired the next section of wall from the room for weapons to the corner of the wall.

22 The next section of walls was repaired by the priests who lived in that area. 23 Benjamin and Hasshub repaired the wall in front of their own house. And Azariah son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, repaired the wall next to his house. 24 Binnui son of Henadad repaired the section of wall from Azariah’s house to the bend in the wall and then to the corner.

25 Palal son of Uzai worked across from the bend in the wall near the tower. This is the tower at the king’s upper house. That is near the courtyard of the king’s guard. Pedaiah son of Parosh worked next to Palal.

26 The Temple servants lived on Ophel Hill. They repaired the next section all the way to the east side of the Water Gate and the tower near it.

27 The men from Tekoa repaired the rest of that section from the big tower all the way to the Ophel wall.

28 The priests repaired the section over the Horse Gate. Each priest repaired the wall in front of his own house. 29 Zadok son of Immer repaired the section in front of his house. Shemaiah son of Shecaniah repaired the next section. Shemaiah was the guard of the East Gate.

30 Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun son of Zalaph repaired the rest of that section of wall. (Hanun was Zalaph’s sixth son.) Meshullam son of Berekiah repaired the section in front of his house. 31 Malkijah repaired the next section of wall all the way to the houses of the Temple servants and the merchants. That is across from the Inspection Gate. Malkijah repaired the section all the way to the room over the corner of the wall. Malkijah was a goldsmith. 32 The goldsmiths and the merchants repaired the section of wall from that corner to the Sheep Gate.

Sanballat and Tobiah

1 When Sanballat heard that we were building the wall of Jerusalem, he was very angry and upset. He started making fun of the Jews. 2 Sanballat talked with his friends and the army at Samaria and said, “What are these weak Jews doing? Do they think we will leave them alone? Do they think they will offer sacrifices? Maybe they think they can finish building in only one day. They cannot bring stones back to life from these piles of trash and dirt. These are just piles of ashes and dirt!”

3 Tobiah the Ammonite was with Sanballat. Tobiah said, “What do these Jews think they are building? If even a small fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!”

4 Nehemiah prayed and said, “Our God, listen to our prayer. These men hate us. Sanballat and Tobiah are insulting us. Make bad things happen to them. Make them ashamed, like people taken away as prisoners. 5 Don’t take away their guilt or forgive the sins they have done in your sight. They have insulted and discouraged the builders.”

6 We built the wall of Jerusalem all the way around the city. But it was only half as tall as it should be. We did this much because the people worked with all their heart.

7 But Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the men from Ashdod were very angry. They heard that the people continued working on the walls of Jerusalem. They heard the people were repairing the holes in the wall. 8 So all these men got together and made plans against Jerusalem. They planned to stir up
trouble against Jerusalem. They planned to come and fight against the city. 9 But we prayed to our God. And we put guards on the walls to watch day and night so that we could be ready to meet them. 10 And so at that time the people of Judah said, “The workers are becoming tired. There is too much dirt and trash in the way. We cannot continue to build the wall. 11 And our enemies are saying, ‘Before the Jews know it or see us, we will be right there among them. We will kill them and that will stop the work.’” 12 Then the Jews living among our enemies came and said this to us ten times, “Our enemies are all around us. They are everywhere we turn.” 13 So I put some of the people behind the lowest places along the wall, and I put them by the holes in the wall. I put families together, with their swords, spears, and bows. 14 After looking over everything, I stood up and spoke to the important families, the officials, and the rest of the people. I said, “Don’t be afraid of our enemies. Remember the Lord, who is great and powerful! You must fight for your brothers, your sons, and your daughters! You must fight for your wives and your homes!” 15 Then our enemies heard that we knew about their plans. They knew that God ruined their plans. So we all went back to work on the wall. Everyone went back to their own place and did their part. 16 At that time I also said this to the people, “We will all meet together there, and our God will fight for us!” 17 So we continued to work on the wall of Jerusalem, and half the men held spears. We worked from the first light of the morning until the stars came out at night. 18 At that time I also said this to the people, “Every builder and his helper must stay inside Jerusalem at night. Then they can be guards at night and workers during the day.” 19 So none of us took off our clothes—not me, not my brothers, not my men, and not the guards. Each of us had our weapon ready at all times, even when we went to get water. 20 Nehemiah Helps the Poor 1 Many of the poor people began to complain against their fellow Jews. 2 Some of them were saying, “We have many children. We must get some grain if we are going to eat and stay alive.” 3 Other people were saying, “This is a time of famine. We have to use our fields, vineyards, and homes to pay for grain.” 4 And still other people were saying, “We have to pay the king’s tax on our fields and vineyards. But we cannot afford to pay, so we are borrowing money to pay the tax. 5 We are as good as the others. Our sons are as good as their sons. But we will have to sell our sons and daughters as slaves. Some of us have already had to sell our daughters as slaves. There is nothing we can do. We have already lost our fields and vineyards. Other people own them now.” 6 When I heard their complaints, I was very angry. 7 I calmed myself down, and then I went to the rich families and the officials. I told them, “You are forcing your own people to pay interest on the money you loan them. You must stop doing that!” 8 Then I called for all the people to meet together and said to them, “Our fellow Jews were sold as slaves to people in other countries. We did our best to buy them back and make them free. And now, you are selling them like slaves again!” 9 The rich people and officials kept quiet. They could not find anything to say. 10 So
I continued speaking. I said, “What you people are doing is not right! You know that you should fear and respect our God. You should not do the shameful things other people do! 10 My men, my brothers, and I are also lending money and grain to the people. But let’s stop forcing them to pay interest on these loans. 11 You must give their fields, vineyards, olive fields, and houses back to them, right now! And you must give back the interest you charged them. You charged them one percent for the money, grain, new wine, and oil that you loaned them.”

12 Then the rich people and the officials said, “We will give it back and not demand anything more from them. Nehemiah, we will do as you say.”

Then I called the priests. I made the rich people and the officials promise to God that they would do what they said. 13 Then I shook out the folds of my clothes. I said, “God will do the same thing to everyone who does not keep their promise. God will shake them out of their houses and they will lose everything they worked for. They will lose everything!”

I finished saying these things and all the people agreed. They all said, “Amen” and praised the Lord. So the people did as they had promised.

14 And also, during the whole time that I was appointed to be governor in the land of Judah, neither my brothers nor I ate the food that was allowed for the governor. I never forced the people to pay taxes to buy my food. I was governor from the 20th year until the 32nd year that Artaxerxes was king. 15 But the governors who ruled before me made life hard for the people. The governors forced everyone to pay 1 pound of silver. They also made the people give them food and wine. The leaders under these governors also ruled over the people and made life even harder. But I respected and feared God, so I didn’t do things like that. 16 I worked hard at building the wall of Jerusalem. All my men gathered there to work on the wall. We didn’t take any land from anyone.

17 Also, I regularly fed 150 Jews who were always welcome at my table, and I fed those who came to us from the nations around us. 18 Every day I prepared this much food for the people who ate at my table: one ox, six good sheep, and different kinds of birds. Every ten days all kinds of wine were brought to my table. But I never demanded that they give me the food that was allowed for the governor. I knew that the work the people were doing was very hard. 19 My God, remember all the good I have done for these people.

More Problems

6 Then Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and our other enemies heard that I had built the wall. We repaired all the holes in the wall, but we had not yet put the doors in the gates. 2 So Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: “Come, Nehemiah, let’s meet together. We can meet in the town of Kephirim on the plain of Ono.” But they were planning to hurt me.

3 So I sent messengers to them with this answer: “I am doing important work, so I cannot come down. I don’t want the work to stop just so I can come down and meet with you.”

4 Sanballat and Geshem sent the same message to me four times, and I sent the same answer back to them each time. 5 Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his helper to me with the same message. And he had a letter in his hand that was not sealed. 6 This is what the letter said:

“There is a rumor going around. People are talking about it everywhere. And, by the way, Geshem says it is true. People are saying that you and the Jews are planning to turn against the king. This is why you are building the wall of Jerusalem. People are also saying that you will be the new king of the Jews. And the rumor is that you

a 5:14 the 20th year ... king This was from 444–432 B.C.
b 5:15 1 pound Literally, “40 shekels” (460 g).
have chosen prophets to announce this about you in Jerusalem: ‘There is a king in Judah!’

“Now I warn you, Nehemiah, King Artaxerxes will hear about this. So come, let’s meet and talk about this together.”

8So I sent this answer back to Sanballat: “Nothing you are saying is happening. You are just making all that up in your own head.”

9Our enemies were only trying to make us afraid. They are thinking to themselves, “The Jews will be afraid and too weak to keep on working. Then the wall will not be finished.”

But I prayed, “God, make me strong.”

10One day I went to the house of a man named Shemaiah son of Delaiah. Delaiah was the son of Mehetabel. Shemaiah had to stay in his house. He said, “Nehemiah, let’s meet in God’s Temple. Let’s go inside the Holy Place\(^a\) and lock the doors. Men are coming to kill you. Tonight they are coming to kill you.”

11But I said to Shemaiah, “Should a man like me run away? You know that an ordinary man like me cannot go into the Holy Place without being put to death. I will not go!”

12I knew that God had not sent Shemaiah. I knew that he had prophesied against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had paid him to do that.\(^{13}\) They hired Shemaiah to scare me and make me sin, by going into that part of the Temple.\(^b\) They were planning those bad things against me so that they could shame me.

13My God, please remember Tobiah and Sanballat and the bad things they have done. Also remember the woman prophet Noadiah and the other prophets who have been trying to scare me.

The Wall Is Finished

15So the wall of Jerusalem was completed on the 25th day of the month of Elul.\(^b\) It had taken 52 days to finish building the wall. 16Then all our enemies heard that we had completed the wall, and all the nations around us saw that it was finished. So they lost their courage, because they understood that this work had been done with the help of our God.

17Also in those days after the wall had been completed, the rich people of Judah were sending many letters to Tobiah, and he was answering their letters. 18They sent those letters because many people in Judah had promised to be loyal to him. The reason for this is that Tobiah was son-in-law to Shecaniah son of Arah. And Tobiah’s son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam. Meshullam is the son of Berekiah.\(^{19}\) And in the past, those people had made a special promise to Tobiah. So they kept telling me how good Tobiah was. And they kept telling Tobiah what I was doing. Tobiah kept sending me letters to make me afraid.

The List of Captives Who Returned

1Now the city was large and there was plenty of room. But there were few people in it, and the houses had not yet been rebuilt. 2So my God put it in my heart to have all the people meet together. I called together all the important people, the officials, and the common people. I did this so
that I could make a list of all the families. I found the family lists of the people who had been the first to return from captivity. This is what I found written there:

6 These are the people of the province who came back from captivity. In the past, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took them as prisoners to Babylon. These people came back to Jerusalem and Judah. They all went to their own towns. 7 They returned with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah. This is the list of names and numbers of men from Israel who came back:

8 the descendants of Parosh 2172
9 the descendants of Shephatiah 372
10 the descendants of Arah 652
11 the descendants of Pahath Moab of the family line of Jeshua and Joab 2818
12 the descendants of Elam 1254
13 the descendants of Zattu 845
14 the descendants of Zaccai 760
15 the descendants of Binnui 648
16 the descendants of Bebai 628
17 the descendants of Azgad 2322
18 the descendants of Adonikam 667
19 the descendants of Bigvai 2067
20 the descendants of Adin 655
21 the descendants of Ater through the family of Hezekiah 98
22 the descendants of Hashum 328
23 the descendants of Bezai 324
24 the descendants of Hariph 112
25 the descendants of Gibeon 95
26 from the towns of Bethlehem and Netophah 188
27 from the town of Anathoth 128
28 from the town of Beth Azmaveth 42
29 from the towns of Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth 743
30 from the towns of Ramah and Geba 621
31 from the town of Micmash 122
32 from the towns of Bethel and Ai 123
33 from the other town of Nebo 52
34 from the other town of Elam 1254
35 from the town of Harim 320
36 from the town of Jericho 345
37 from the towns of Lod, Hadid, and Ono 721
38 from the town of Senaah 3930
39 These are the priests:
   the descendants of Jediael through the family of Jeshua 973
   the descendants of Immer 1052
40 the descendants of Pashhur 1247
41 the descendants of Harim 1017
42 These are the people from the tribe of Levi:
   the descendants of Jediael through Kadmiel through the family of Hodeiah 74
43 These are the priests:
   the descendants of Asaph 148
44 These are the gatekeepers:
   the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai 138
45 These are the singers:
   the descendants of Shaphatiah 194
46 These are the special Temple servants:

50 These are the descendants of the servants of Solomon:
   the descendants of Ziza, Hasupha, Tabobaith, Sotai, Sophereth, Perida, Jaala, Darkon, Giddel, Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth Hazzebaim, and Amon, the Temple servants and the descendants of Solomon’s servants 392
51 Some people came to Jerusalem from these towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon, and Immer. But these people could not prove that their families really came from the Israelites:
   the descendants of Delaiah, 7:3 7:43 Hodeiah Or “Hodaviah.”
Tobiah, and Nekoda

63 From the family of priests there were the descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai. (If a man married a daughter of Barzillai from Gilead, he was counted as a descendant of Barzillai.)

64 These people searched for their family histories, but they could not find them. They could not prove that their ancestors were priests, so they could not serve as priests. Their names were not included in the list of priests. 65 The governor ordered them not to eat any of the most holy food until a priest could use the Urim and Thummim to ask God what to do.

66–67 All together, there were 42,360 people in the group who came back. This is not counting their 7337 men and women slaves. They also had 245 men and women singers with them. 68–69 They had 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6720 donkeys.

70 Some of the family leaders gave money to support the work. The governor gave 19 pounds of gold to the treasury. He also gave 50 bowls and 530 pieces of clothing for the priests. 71 The family leaders gave 375 pounds of gold to the treasury to support the work. They also gave 2750 pounds of silver. 72 All together the other people gave 375 pounds of gold, 2500 pounds of silver, and 67 pieces of clothing for the priests.

73 So the priests, the people from the tribe of Levi, the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Temple servants settled down in their own towns. By the seventh month of the year, all the Israelites had settled down in their own towns.

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Ezra Reads the Law

8 1 So all the Israelites met together in the seventh month of the year. They were united and in complete agreement. They all met together in the open place in front of the Water Gate. All the people asked Ezra the teacher to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had given to the Israelites. 2 So Ezra the priest brought the law before those who had met together. This was on the first day of the month. 3 It was the seventh month of the year. Men, women, and anyone old enough to listen and understand were at the meeting. 4 Ezra read in a loud voice from the Book of the Law from early morning until noon. He was facing the open place that was in front of the Water Gate. He read to all the men and women, and to everyone old enough to listen and understand. All the people listened carefully and paid attention to the Book of the Law.

4 Ezra stood on a high wooden stage. It had been built just for this special time. On his right side stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah. And on his left side stood Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

5 So Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them on the high stage. As he opened the Book of the Law, all the people stood up. 6 Ezra praised the LORD, the great God, and all the people held up their hands and said, “Amen! Amen!” Then all the people bowed down and put their faces low to the ground and they worshiped the LORD.

7 These men from the tribe of Levi taught the people about the law as they were all standing there. The Levites were Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiyah.

8 They read the Book of the Law of God. They made it easy to understand, and explained what it meant. They did this so

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8:2 first day of the month This was a special day of worship. The people met together and shared a fellowship meal.
that the people could understand what was being read.

9 Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher, and the Levites who were teaching the people spoke. They said, “Today is a special day to the LORD your God. Don’t be sad and cry.” They said that because all the people had begun to cry as they were listening to the messages of God in the law.

10 Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy the good food and sweet drinks. Give some food and drinks to those who didn’t prepare any food. Today is a special day to our Lord. Don’t be sad, because the joy of the LORD will make you strong.”

11 The Levites helped the people to calm down. They said, “Be quiet, calm down, this is a special day. Don’t be sad.”

12 Then all the people went to eat the special meal. They shared their food and drinks. They celebrated that special day. They were happy that they could hear the reading of God’s law and were now able to understand it.

13 Then on the second day of the month, the leaders of all the families went to meet with Ezra, the priests, and the Levites. They all gathered around Ezra the teacher to study the words of the law.

14–15 They studied and found these commands in the law. The LORD gave this command to the people through Moses: In the seventh month of the year, the Israelites must go to Jerusalem to celebrate a special festival. They must live in temporary shelters. And the people are supposed to go through all of their towns and Jerusalem and say this: “Go out into the hill country and get branches from different kinds of olive trees. Get branches from myrtle trees, palm trees, and shade trees. Use the branches to make temporary shelters. Do what the law says.”

16 So the people went out and got tree branches. Then they built temporary shelters for themselves. They built shelters on their own roofs and in their own yards. And they built shelters in the Temple yard, in the open place near the Water Gate, and near Ephraim Gate. 17 The whole group that had come back from captivity built shelters. They lived in the shelters they had built. Since the days of Joshua son of Nun up until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated the Festival of Shelters like this. Everyone was very happy!

18 Ezra read to them from the Book of the Law every day of the festival from the first day of the festival to the last day. The Israelites celebrated the festival for seven days. Then on the eighth day, the people met together for a special meeting, as the law says.

The People of Israel Confess Their Sins

9 Then on the 24th day of that same month, the Israelites gathered together for a day of fasting. They wore sackcloth and put ashes on their heads to show they were sad and upset. 2 Those people who were true Israelites separated themselves from foreigners. The Israelites stood and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors. 3 They stood there for about three hours, and the people read the Book of the Law of the LORD their God. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and bowed down to worship the LORD their God.

4 Then these Levites stood on the stairs: Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Kenani. They called out to the LORD their God with loud voices.

5 Then these Levites spoke again: Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah. They said, “Stand up and praise the LORD your God! God has always lived and will live forever.

“People should praise your glorious name.
May your name be lifted above all blessing and praise.

6 You are God.
LORD, only you are God.
You made the sky and the highest heavens and everything in them.
You made the earth and everything on it.
You made the seas and everything in them.
You give life to everything.
All the heavenly angels bow down and worship you.

7 You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram.
You led him from Ur in Babylonia.
You changed his name to Abraham.

8 You saw he was true and loyal to you, and you made an agreement with him.
You promised to give him the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Girgashites.
But you promised to give that land to Abraham’s descendants.
And you kept your promise because you are good.

9 You saw our ancestors suffering in Egypt and heard them call for help by the Red Sea.

10 You showed the miracles to Pharaoh.
You did amazing things to his officials and his people.
You knew that the Egyptians thought they were better than our ancestors.
But you proved how great you are, and they remember that even today.

11 You split the Red Sea in front of them, and they walked through on dry land.
The Egyptian soldiers were chasing them, but you threw that enemy into the sea.
And they sank like a rock into the sea.

12 With the tall cloud, you led them by day, and at night you used the column of fire.
That is the way you lit their path and showed them where to go.

13 Then you came down to Mount Sinai.
You spoke to them from heaven.
You gave them good laws.
You gave them true teachings.
You gave them laws and commands that were very good.

14 You told them about your special day of rest—the Sabbath.
Through your servant Moses, you gave them commands, laws, and teachings.

15 They were hungry, so you gave them food from heaven.
They were thirsty, so you gave them water from a rock.
You told them, ‘Come, take this land.’
You used your power, and took the land for them.

16 But our ancestors became proud and stubborn.
They refused to obey your commands.
They refused to listen.
They forgot the amazing things you did with them.
They became stubborn.
The y decided to return to Egypt and become slaves again.

“But you are a forgiving God!
You are kind and full of mercy.
You are patient and full of love.
So you didn’t leave them!

18 You didn’t leave them even when they made golden calves and said, ‘These are the gods that led us out of Egypt.’

19 You are very kind, so you didn’t leave them in the desert.
You didn’t take the tall cloud away from them by day.
You continued to lead them.
You didn’t take the column of fire away from them at night.
You continued to light their path and to show them which way to go.

20 You gave them your good Spirit to
make them wise.
You gave them manna for food.
You gave them water for their thirst.

21 You took care of them for 40 years.
They had all they needed in the desert.
Their clothes didn’t wear out,
and their feet didn’t swell and hurt.

22 You gave them kingdoms and nations,
and you gave them faraway places
where few people live.
They got the land of King Sihon of Heshbon.
They got the land of King Og of Bashan.

23 You made their descendants
as many as the stars in the sky.
You brought them to the land
you promised to give their ancestors.
They went in and took that land.

24 Their children took the land.
They defeated the Canaanites living there.
You let them defeat those people.
You let them do whatever they wanted
to those nations, people, and kings.

25 They defeated powerful cities.
They took the fertile land.
They got houses filled with good things.
They got wells that were already dug.
They got vineyards, olive trees, and plenty of fruit trees.
They ate until they were full and fat.
They enjoyed all the wonderful things you gave them.

26 And then they turned against you.
They threw away your teachings.
Those prophets warned the people.
They tried to bring them back to you.
But our ancestors said terrible things against you.

27 So you let their enemies have them.
The enemy caused them much trouble.
When trouble came, our ancestors
called to you for help.
And in heaven, you heard them.
You are very kind,
so you sent people to save them.
And they rescued them from their enemies.

28 Then as soon as our ancestors were rested,
they started doing terrible things again!
So you let the enemy defeat them
and punish them.
They called to you for help,
and in heaven you heard them and helped them.
You are so kind.
That happened so many times.

29 You warned them.
You told them to come back,
but they were too proud.
They refused to listen to your commands.
If people obey your laws, they will live.
But our ancestors broke your laws.
They were stubborn.
They turned their backs on you.
They refused to listen.

30 “You were very patient with our ancestors.
You let them mistreat you for many years.
You warned them with your Spirit.
You sent the prophets to warn them.
But our ancestors didn’t listen.
So you gave them to people in other countries.

31 “But you are so kind!
You didn’t completely destroy them.
You didn’t leave them.
You are such a kind and merciful God!

32 Our God, you are the great God,
the awesome, powerful soldier!
You are kind and loyal.
You keep your agreement.
We have had many troubles,
and our troubles are important to you.
Bad things happened to all our people, and to our kings and leaders, and to our priests and prophets. Those terrible things have happened from the days of the king of Assyria until today!

But God, you were right about everything that happened to us. You were right, and we were wrong.

Our kings, leaders, priests, and fathers did not obey your law. They didn’t listen to your commands. They ignored your warnings.

Our ancestors didn’t serve you even when they were living in their own kingdom. They didn’t stop doing evil. They enjoyed all the wonderful things you gave them. They enjoyed the rich land and had plenty of room, but they didn’t stop their evil ways.

And now, we are slaves. We are slaves in this land, the land you gave our ancestors so they could enjoy its fruit and all the good things that grow here.

The harvest is big in this land. But we sinned, so that harvest goes to the kings you put over us. They control us and our cattle. They do anything they want. We are in a lot of trouble.

“Because of all these things, we are making an agreement that cannot be changed. We are putting this agreement in writing. Our leaders, Levites, and priests are signing their names to this agreement and sealing it with a seal.”

These are the names on the sealed agreement:

Nehemiah the governor, son of Hacaliah. Zedekiah, Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, Pashhur, Amariah, Malkijah, Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah. These were the priests who put their names on the sealed agreement.

And these are the Levites who put their names on the sealed agreement:

Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui from the family of Henadad, Kadmiel, and their brothers: Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah, Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, Hodiah, Bani, and Beninu.

And these are the names of the leaders who put their names on the sealed agreement:


So all these people now make this special promise to God. And they all ask for bad things to happen if they don’t keep their promise. All these people promise to follow the law of God. That law of God was given to us through Moses his servant. These people promise with an oath to carefully obey all the commands, rules, and teachings of our Lord God. Now, these are the people who are making this promise: The rest of the people—the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, Temple servants, and all the Israelites who separated themselves from the people living around them. They have separated themselves to obey God’s law. Their wives, sons, and daughters who are able to listen and understand also did this. All these people joined their brothers and the important people to accept for themselves the promise to obey God’s law. And they accepted
the curse that asks for bad things to happen to them if they don’t obey God’s law.

30 “We promise not to let our daughters marry the people living around us. And we promise not to let our sons marry their daughters.

31 “We promise not to work on the Sabbath day. If the people living around us bring grain or other things to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy them on that special day or on any other festival. Every seventh year, we will not plant or work the land. And every seventh year, we will cancel every debt that other people owe to us.

32 “We will accept the responsibility for obeying the commands to take care of God’s Temple. We will give 1/3 shekel of silver each year to support the Temple service to honor our God. 33 This money will pay for the special bread that the priests put on the table in the Temple. It will pay for the daily grain offerings and burnt offerings. It will pay for the offerings on the Sabbaths, New Moon celebrations, and other special meeting days. It will pay for the holy offerings and for the sin offerings that make the Israelites pure. It will pay for any work needed on the Temple of our God.

34 “We, the priests, the Levites, and the people have thrown lots to decide when each of our families is to bring a gift of wood to the Temple of our God at certain times each year. The wood is to burn on the altar of the LORD our God. We must do that just as it is written in the law.

35 “We also accept the responsibility of bringing the first part of our harvest, whether from the grain in our fields or the fruit from our trees. We will bring them to the LORD’s Temple each year.

36 “Just as it is also written in the law, this is what we will do: We will bring our firstborn sons and our firstborn cattle, sheep, and goats. We will bring these to the Temple of our God, to the priests who are serving there.

37 “And we will also bring the first part of our harvest to priests to put in the storerooms of our God’s Temple. We will bring the first of our ground meal, the first of our grain offerings, the first fruit from our trees, and the first of our new wine and oil. And we will bring a tenth of our crops to the Levites, because they are the ones who collect these things in all the towns where we work. 38 A priest from the family of Aaron must be with the Levites when they receive the crops. Then the Levites must bring the crops to the Temple of our God and put them in the storerooms of the Temple treasury. 39 The Israelites and the Levites must bring their gifts to the storerooms. They are to bring their gifts of grain, new wine, and oil. All the things for the Temple are kept in the storerooms, and that is where the priests who are on duty stay. The singers and gatekeepers also stay there.

“We all promise that we will take care of the Temple of our God.”

New People Move Into Jerusalem

11 Now the leaders of the Israelites moved into the city of Jerusalem. The rest of the people used lots to decide who else should move there with the leaders. They chose a tenth of the people to live in Jerusalem, the holy city. The rest of the people stayed in their own towns.

2 The people who stayed asked God to bless those who were willing to move to Jerusalem.

3 Some of the Israelites, priests, Levites, servants, and descendants of Solomon’s servants lived in the various towns throughout Judah. These all lived on property they owned in these towns. But the area leaders lived in Jerusalem. 4 And other people from the families of Judah and Benjamin lived in Jerusalem.

These are the descendants of Judah who moved into Jerusalem:

Athaiah son of Uzziah (the son of Zechariah, who was the son of Amariah, who was the son of

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a 10:31 seventh year See Ex. 23:10, 11.
b 10:32 1/3 shekel This was probably a coin at this time, but 1 shekel is 2/5 of an ounce (11.5 g).
Shephatiah, who was the son of Mahaleel, who was a descendant of Perez, and Maaseiah son of Baruch (the son of Col-Hozeh, who was the son of Hazaiah, who was the son of Adaiah, who was the son of Joiarib, who was the son of Zechariah, who was a descendant of Shelah). The number of Perez’s descendants living in Jerusalem was 468. All of them were brave men.

These are the descendants of Benjamin who moved into Jerusalem:

Sallu son of Meshullam (the son of Joed, who was the son of Pedaiah, who was the son of Kolaiyah, who was the son of Maaseiah, who was the son of Ithiel, who was the son of Jeshaiah), and those who followed Jeshaiah were Gabbai and Sallai. All together there were 928 men. Joel son of Zicri was in charge of them. And Judah son of Hassenuah was in charge of the Second District of the city of Jerusalem.

These are the priests who moved into Jerusalem:

Jedaiah son of Joiarib, Jakin, and Seraiah son of Hilkiah (the son of Meshullam, who was the son of Zadok, who was the son of Merarioth, who was the son of Ahitub), who was the supervisor in the Temple of God, and 822 men of their brothers that did the work for the Temple, and Adaiah son of Jeroham (the son of Pelaliah, who was the son of Amzi, who was the son of Zechariah, who was the son of Pashhur, who was the son of Malkijah), and 242 men who were Adaiah’s brothers (leaders of their families), Amashsai son of Azarel (the son of Ahzai, who was the son of Meshillemoth, who was the son of Immer), and 128 of Amashsai’s brothers. (These men were brave soldiers. The officer over them was Zabdiel son of Haggedolim.)

These are the Levites who moved into Jerusalem:

Shemaiah son of Hasshub (the son of Azrikam, who was the son of Hashabiah, who was the son of Bunni), Shabbethai and Jozabad (two of the leaders of the Levites in charge of the outside work of God’s Temple), Mattaniah (the son of Mica, who was the son of Zabdi, who was the son of Asaph), the director who led the people in singing songs of praise and prayer, Bakbukiah (the second in charge over his brothers), and Abda son of Shammua (the son of Galal, who was the son of Jeduthun). So there were 284 Levites who moved into Jerusalem, the holy city.

These are the gatekeepers who moved into Jerusalem:

Akkub, Talmon, and 172 of their brothers. They watched and guarded the gates of the city.

The other Israelites, and the other priests and Levites, lived in all the towns of Judah. Everyone lived on the land that their ancestors had owned. The Temple servants lived on the hill of Ophel. Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of the Temple servants.

The officer over the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi. Uzzi was the son of Bani (the son of Hashabiah, who was the son of Mattaniah, who was the son of Mica). Uzzi was a descendant of Asaph. Asaph’s descendants were the singers who were responsible for the service in God’s Temple. The singers obeyed orders from the king, which told them what to do from day to day. Pethahiah son of Meshezabel told
the people what the king wanted done. (Meshezabel was one of the descendants of Zerah. Zerah was Judah's son.)

28 The people of Judah lived in these towns: In Kiriath Arba and the small towns around it, in Dibon and the small towns around it, in Jekabzeel and the small towns around it, and in Ziklag, in Meconah and the small towns around it, and in En Rimmon, in Zoram, in Jarmuth, and in Zanoah and Adullam and the small towns around them, in Lachish and the fields around it, and in Azekah and the small towns around it. So the people of Judah were living all the way from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

29 The descendants of the family of Benjamin from Geba lived in Micmash, Aija, Bethel, and the small towns around it, in Anathoth, Nob, and Ananiah, in Hazor, Ramah, and Gittaim, in Hadid, Zeboim, and Neballat, in Lod and Ono, and in the Valley of the Craftsman. Some of the groups from the family of Levi moved to the land of Benjamin.

Priests and Levites

12 These are the priests and Levites who came back to the land of Judah. They came back with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua. This is a list of their names:

- Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,
- Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,
- Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,
- Iddo, Ginnethon, Abijah,
- Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,
- Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,
- Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, and Jedaiah.

These men were the leaders of the priests and their relatives in the days of Jeshua.

8 The Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and also Mattaniah. These men, with Mattaniah's relatives, were in charge of the songs of praise to God. Bakbukiah and Unni were the relatives of those Levites. These two men stood across from them in the services.

9 Jeshua was the father of Joiakim. Joiakim was the father of Eliashib. Eliashib was the father of Joiada. Joiada was the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan was the father of Jaddua.

10 In the days of Joiakim, these men were the leaders of the families of priests:
- The leader of Seraiah’s family was Meraiah.
- The leader of Jeremiah’s family was Hananiah.
- The leader of Ezra’s family was Meshullam.
- The leader of Amariah’s family was Jehohanan.
- The leader of Malluch’s family was Jonathan.
- The leader of Shecaniah’s family was Joseph.
- The leader of Harim’s family was Adna.
- The leader of Meremoth’s family was Helkai.
- The leader of Iddo’s family was Zechariah.
- The leader of Ginnethon’s family was Meshullam.
- The leader of Abijah’s family was Zicri.
- The leader of Miniamin and Maadiah’s families was Piltai.
- The leader of Bilgah’s family was Shammua.
- The leader of Shemaiah’s family was Jehonathan.
- The leader of Joiarib’s family was Mattenai.
- The leader of Jedai’s family was Uzzi.
- The leader of Sallu’s family was Kallai.
- The leader of Amok’s family was Eber.
- The leader of Hilkiah’s family was Hashabiah.
- The leader of Jedai’s family was Nethanel.

22 The names of the leaders of the families of the Levites and the priests in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were written down during the rule of Darius the Persian king. The family leaders among the descendants of the Levites and up to the time of Johanan son of Eliashib were written in the history
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book. 24 And these were the leaders of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, and their brothers. Their brothers stood across from them to sing praise and honor to God. One group answered the other group. That is what was commanded by David the man of God.

25 The gatekeepers who guarded the storerooms next to the gates were Mattaniah, Bakkukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub. 26 They served in the days of Joiakim. Joiakim was the son of Jeshua, who was the son of Jozadak. And the gatekeepers also served in the days of Nehemiah the governor and in the days of Ezra the priest and teacher.

Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem

27 The people dedicated the wall of Jerusalem. They brought all the Levites to Jerusalem. The Levites came from the towns they lived in. They came to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem. They came to sing songs of praise and thanks to God. They played their cymbals, harps, and lyres.

28–29 And all the singers also came to Jerusalem. They came from the towns all around Jerusalem. They came from the town of Netophah, from Beth Gilgal, Geba, and Azmaveth. The singers had built small towns for themselves in the area around Jerusalem.

30 So the priests and Levites made themselves pure in a ceremony. Then they also made the people, the gates, and the wall of Jerusalem pure in a ceremony.

31 I told the leaders of Judah to go up and stand on top of the wall. I also chose two large singing groups to give thanks to God. One group was to start going up on top of the wall on the right side, toward the Ash Pile Gate.

32 Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah followed the singers.

33 Also following them were Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34 Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah. 35 And some of the priests with trumpets also followed them up to the wall. Zechariah also followed them. (Zechariah was the son of Jonathan, who was the son of Shemaiah, who was the son of Mattaniah, who was the son of Micaiah, who was the son of Zaccur, who was the son of Asaph.) 36 There were also Asaph’s brothers, who were Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani. They had the musical instruments that David, the man of God, had made. Ezra the teacher led the group of people who were there to dedicate the wall. 37 They went to the Fountain Gate and walked up the stairs all the way to the City of David. They were on top of the city wall.

38 The second group of singers started out in the other direction, to the left. I followed them as they went up to the top of the wall. Half of the people also followed them. They went past the Tower of Ovens to the Broad Wall. 39 Then they went over these gates: the Gate of Ephraim, the Old Gate, and the Fish Gate. And they went over the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred. They went as far as the Sheep Gate and stopped at the Guard Gate.

40 Then the two singing groups went to their places in God’s Temple. And I stood in my place. And half the officials stood in their places in the Temple. 41 Then these priests stood in their places: Eliakim, Maaseiah, Mijamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah. These priests had their trumpets with them. 42 Then these priests stood in their places in the Temple: Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malkijah, Elam, and Ezer.

Then two singing groups began singing with Jezrahiah leading them. 43 So on that special day, the priests offered many sacrifices. Everyone was very happy because God had made them happy. Even the women and children were excited and happy. People far away could hear the happy sounds coming from Jerusalem.

44 Men were chosen to be in charge of the storerooms on that day. People brought the first part of the harvest and a tenth of their crops. So the men in charge put these things in the storerooms. The
Jewish people were very happy about the priests and Levites on duty. So they brought many things to be put in the storerooms. They did their work for their God. They did the ceremonies that made people pure, and the singers and gatekeepers did their part. They did everything that David and Solomon had commanded.

So in the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah, all the Israelites gave every day to support the singers and gatekeepers. The people also set aside the money for the other Levites. And the Levites set aside the money for the descendants of Aaron.

Nehemiah’s Last Commands

On that day the Book of Moses was read out loud, so that all the people could hear. They found this law written there: No Ammonite and no Moabite would be permitted to join in the meetings with God. That law was written because those people didn’t give the Israelites food and water. And they had paid Balaam to say a curse against the Israelites. But our God changed that curse and made it a blessing for us. So when the Israelites heard that law, they obeyed it. They separated themselves from the people who were descendants of foreigners.

But, before that happened, Eliashib had given a room in the Temple to Tobiah. Eliashib was the priest in charge of the storerooms in our God’s Temple. And he was a close friend of Tobiah. That room had been used for storing the grain offerings, incense, and the Temple dishes and things. They also kept the tenth of grain, new wine, and oil for the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers in that room. And they also kept the gifts for the priests in that room. But Eliashib gave that room to Tobiah.

I was not in Jerusalem while all of this was happening. I had gone back to the king of Babylon. I went back to Babylon in the 32nd year that Artaxerxes was king of Babylon. Later, I asked the king for permission to go back to Jerusalem. So I came back to Jerusalem. There I heard about the sad thing that Eliashib had done. He had given Tobiah a room in the Temple of God! I was very angry about what Eliashib had done, so I threw all of Tobiah’s things out of the room. I gave commands for the rooms to be made pure and clean. Then I put the Temple dishes and things, the grain offerings, and the incense back into the rooms.

I also heard that the people had not given the Levites their share. So the Levites and singers had gone back to work in their own fields. So I told the officials that they were wrong. I asked them, “Why didn’t you take care of God’s Temple?” Then I called all Levites together and told them to go back to their places and duties in the Temple. Then everyone in Judah brought their tenth of grain, new wine, and oil to the Temple. These things were put into the storerooms.

I put these men in charge of the storerooms: Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the teacher, and a Levite named Pedaiah. And I made Hanan son of Zaccur, son of Mattaniah, their helper. I knew I could trust these men. They were responsible for giving the supplies to their relatives.

My God, please remember me for these things I have done. Don’t forget all I have faithfully done for the Temple of my God and for its services.

In those days in Judah, I saw people working on the Sabbath day. I saw people pressing grapes to make wine. I saw people bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys. I saw people carrying grapes, figs, and all kinds of things in the city. They were bringing all these things into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, so I warned them about this. I told them they must not sell food on the Sabbath day.

There were some men from the city of Tyre living in Jerusalem. They were
bringing fish and all kinds of things into Jerusalem and selling them on the Sabbath day. And the Jews were buying them. 17I told the important people of Judah that they were wrong. I said, “You are doing a very bad thing. You are ruining the Sabbath day. You know that your ancestors did the same things. That is why our God brought all the troubles and disaster to us and to this city. Now you people are making it so that more of these bad things will happen to Israel. They are doing this because you are breaking the Sabbath by treating it just as if it were any other day.”

19So this is what I did: Every Friday evening, just before dark, I commanded the gatekeepers to shut and lock the gates to Jerusalem. They were not to be opened until the Sabbath day was over. I put some of my own men at the gates. They were commanded to make sure that no load was brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day.

20One or two times, traders and merchants had to stay the night outside Jerusalem. 21But I warned them, “Don’t stay the night in front of the wall. If you do that again, I will arrest you.” So from that time on they didn’t come on the Sabbath day to sell their things.

22Then I commanded the Levites to make themselves pure. After they did that, they were to go and guard the gates. This was done to make sure the Sabbath day was kept a holy day.

My God, please remember me for doing this. Be kind to me and show me your great love!

23In those days I also noticed that some Jewish men had married women from the countries of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. 24And half of the children from those marriages didn’t know how to speak the Jewish language. They spoke the language of Ashdod, Ammon, or Moab. 25So I told the men that they were wrong. I said bad things to them. I hit some of them, and I pulled out their hair. I forced them to make a promise in God’s name. I said to them, “You must not marry the daughters of these foreigners. Don’t let their daughters marry your sons, and don’t let your daughters marry the sons of these foreigners. 26You know that marriages like this caused Solomon to sin. In all the many nations, there was not a king as great as Solomon. God loved him and made him king over the whole nation of Israel. But even Solomon was made to sin because of foreign women. 27And now, we hear that you also are doing this terrible sin. You are not being true to our God. You are marrying foreign women.”

28Joia da was the son of Eliashib the high priest. One of Joia da’s sons was a son-in-law of Sanballat from Horon. I forced him to leave this place. I forced him to run away.

29My God, punish these people. They made the priesthood unclean. They treated it as if it was not important. They did not obey the agreement that you made with the priests and Levites. 30So I made the priests and Levites clean and pure. I took away all the foreigners and the strange things they taught. And I gave the Levites and priests their own duties and responsibilities. 31And I made sure that people will bring gifts of wood and the first part of their harvest at the right times. My God, remember me for doing these good things.
Queen Vashti Disobeys the King

1 This is what happened during the time when Xerxes was king. Xerxes ruled over the 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia. 2 King Xerxes ruled from his throne in the capital city of Susa.

3 In the third year of Xerxes’ rule, he gave a party for his officers and leaders. The army leaders and important leaders from all of Persia and Media were there. 4 The party continued for 180 days. All during this time, King Xerxes was showing the great wealth of his kingdom and the majestic beauty and wealth of his palace. 5 And when the 180 days were over, King Xerxes gave another party that continued for seven days. It was held in the inside garden of the palace. All the people who were in the capital city of Susa were invited, from the most important to the least important. 6 The inside garden had white and blue linen hangings around the room. They were held in place with cords of white linen and purple material on silver rings and marble pillars. There were couches made of gold and silver. They were sitting on mosaic pavement made of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and other expensive stones. 7 Wine was served in golden cups, and every cup was different. There was plenty of the king’s wine, because the king was very generous. 8 The king had given a command to his servants. He told them that each guest must be given as much wine as he wanted, and the wine server obeyed the king.

9 Queen Vashti also gave a party for the women in the king’s palace.

10–11 On the seventh day of the party, King Xerxes was in high spirits from drinking wine. He gave a command to the seven eunuchs who served him. The eunuchs were Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas. He commanded them to bring Queen Vashti to him wearing her royal crown. She was to come so that she could show her beauty to the leaders and important people. She was very beautiful.

12 But when the eunuchs told Queen Vashti about the king’s command, she refused to come. Then the king was very angry. 13–14 It was the custom for the king to ask the advice of the experts about the law and punishments. So King Xerxes spoke with the wise men who understood the laws. They were very close to the king. Their names were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan. They were the seven most important officials of Persia and Media. They had special privileges to see the king. They were the highest officials in the kingdom. 15 The king asked them, “What does the law say must be done to Queen Vashti? She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes that the eunuchs had taken to her.”

16 Then Memucan answered the king with the other officials listening, “Queen Vashti has done wrong. She has done wrong against the king and also against all the leaders and people of all the provinces of King Xerxes. 17 I say this, because all the other women will hear about what Queen Vashti did. Then they will stop obeying their husbands. They will say to their husbands, ‘King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to be brought to him, but she refused to come.’

18 “Today the wives of the Persian and Median leaders have heard what the queen
did, and these women will be influenced by what she did. They will do the same thing to the king’s important leaders. And there will be plenty of disrespect and anger.

19 “So if it pleases the king, here is a suggestion: Let the king give a royal command and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media. The laws of Persia and Media cannot be changed. The royal command should be that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Let the king also give her royal position to someone else who is better than she is. 20 Then when the king’s command is announced in all parts of his large kingdom, all the women will respect their husbands. From the most important to the least important, all the women will respect their husbands.”

21 The king and his important officials were happy with this advice, so King Xerxes did as Memucan suggested. 22 King Xerxes sent letters to all parts of the kingdom. He sent them to each province, written in its own language. He sent them to each nation in its own language. These letters announced in each person’s language that every man was to be the ruler over his own family.

Esther Made Queen

1 Later, King Xerxes stopped being angry. Then he remembered Vashti and what she had done. He remembered his commands about her. 2 Then the king’s personal servants had a suggestion. They said, “Search for beautiful young virgins for the king. 3 Let the king choose leaders in every province of his kingdom. Then let the leaders bring every beautiful young virgin to the capital city of Susa. These young women will be put with the group of the king’s women. They will be under the care of Hegai, the king’s eunuch, who is in charge of the women. Then give beauty treatments to all of them. 4 Then let the one who is pleasing to the king become the new queen in Vashti’s place.” The king liked this suggestion, so he accepted it.

5 Now there was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin named Mordecai. Mordecai was the son of Jair, and Jair was the son of Shimei, and Shimei was the son of Kish. Mordecai was in the capital city, Susa. 6 Mordecai had been carried into captivity from Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He was with the group that was taken into captivity with King Jehoiachin of Judah. 7 Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah. She didn’t have a father or a mother, so Mordecai took care of her. Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter when her father and mother died. Hadassah was also called Esther. She had a very pretty face and a good figure.

8 When the king’s command had been heard, many young women were brought to the capital city of Susa. They were put under the care of Hegai. Esther was one of these women. She was taken to the king’s palace and put into Hegai’s care. Hegai was in charge of the king’s women. 9 He liked Esther. She became his favorite, so he quickly gave Esther beauty treatments and special food. He chose seven slave women from the king’s palace and gave them to Esther. Then he moved Esther and her seven women servants into the best place where the king’s women lived.

10 Esther didn’t tell anyone she was a Jew. She didn’t tell anyone about her family background, because Mordecai had told her not to. 11 Every day Mordecai walked back and forth near the area where the king’s women lived. He did this because he wanted to find out how Esther was, and what was happening to her.

12 Before a young woman could take her turn to go in before King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments—six months with oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes and cosmetics. 13 When her time came to go in to the king, she could choose to wear or take whatever she wanted from the women’s living area. 14 In the evening the young woman would go to the king’s...
palace. And in the morning she would return to another area where the king’s women lived. Then she would be placed under the care of a man named Shaashgaz. He was the king’s eunuch in charge of the slave women. She would not go back to the king again unless he was pleased with her. Then he would call her by name to come back to him.

15 The time came for Esther to go to the king. She was the one Mordecai had adopted, the daughter of his uncle Abihail. All she wanted to take with her was what Hegai, the king’s officer in charge of the women, suggested. Everyone who saw Esther liked her.

16 So Esther was taken to King Xerxes in the palace. This happened in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his rule.

17 The king loved Esther more than any of the other young women, and she became his favorite. He approved of her more than any of the others. So King Xerxes put a crown on Esther’s head and made her the new queen in place of Vashti.

18 And the king gave a big party for Esther. It was for all his important people and leaders. He announced a festival in all the provinces and sent out gifts to people, because he was a generous king.

Mordecai Learns About an Evil Plan
19 Mordecai was sitting next to the king’s gate at the time the young women were gathered together the second time.

20 Esther had still kept it a secret that she was a Jew. She had not told anyone about her family background. This is what Mordecai had told her to do. She still obeyed Mordecai just as she had done when he was taking care of her.

21 During the time Mordecai was sitting next to the king’s gate, this happened: Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king’s officers who guarded the doorway, became angry with the king. They began to make plans to kill King Xerxes. But Mordecai had learned about these plans and told Queen Esther. Then she told the king. She also told him that Mordecai was the one who had learned about the evil plan. 22 Then the report was checked out. It was learned that Mordecai’s report was true. The two guards who had planned to kill the king were hanged on a post. All these things were written down in a book of the king’s histories in front of the king.

Haman’s Plan to Destroy the Jews
3 After these things happened, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite. The king promoted Haman and gave him a place of honor more important than any of the other leaders. 2 All the king’s leaders at the king’s gate would bow down and give honor to Haman. This is what the king commanded them to do. But Mordecai refused to bow down or give honor to Haman. 3 Then the king’s leaders at the gate asked Mordecai, “Why don’t you obey the king’s command to bow down to Haman?”

4 Day after day, the king’s leaders spoke to Mordecai, but he refused to obey the command to bow down to Haman. So they told Haman about it. They wanted to see what Haman would do about Mordecai. Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew. 5 When Haman saw that Mordecai refused to bow down to him or give him honor, he was very angry. 6 Haman had learned that Mordecai was a Jew. But he was not satisfied to kill only Mordecai. He also wanted to find a way to destroy all of Mordecai’s people, the Jews, in all of Xerxes’ kingdom.

7 In the twelfth year of King Xerxes’ rule, in the first month, the month of Nisan, Haman threw lots to choose a special day and month. And the twelfth month, the month of Adar was chosen. (At that time the lot was called “pur.”) 8 Then Haman came to King Xerxes and said, “King Xerxes, there is a certain group of people scattered among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom. They keep themselves separate from other people. Their customs are different from those of all other people. And they don’t obey
the king’s laws. It is not right for the king to allow them to continue to live in your kingdom.

9“[If] it pleases the king, I have a suggestion: Give a command to destroy these people. And I will put 750,000 pounds[^9] of silver into the king’s treasury. This money could be used to pay the men who do these things.”

10So the king took the official ring off his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite. Haman was the enemy of the Jews. 11Then the king said to Haman, “Keep the money. Do what you want with them.”

12Then on the 13th day of the first month, the king’s secretaries were called. They wrote out all of Haman’s commands in the language of each province. And they wrote them in the language of each group of people. They wrote to the king’s satraps, the governors of the different provinces, and the leaders of the different groups of people. They wrote with the authority of King Xerxes himself, and sealed the command with the king’s own ring.

13Messengers carried the letters to all the king’s provinces. The letters were the king’s command to ruin, kill, and completely destroy all the Jews. This meant young people and old people, women, and little children too. The command was to kill all the Jews on a single day. The day was to be the 13th day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. And the command was to take everything that belonged to the Jews.

14A copy of the letters with the command was to be given as a law. It was to be a law in every province and announced to the people of every nation living in the kingdom. Then everyone would be ready for that day. 15At the king’s command the messengers hurried off. The command was given in the capital city of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was in confusion.

[^9]: 3:9 750,000 pounds  Literally, “10,000 talents” (340,000 kg).

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**Mordecai Persuades Esther to Help**

4When Mordecai heard about all that had been done, he tore his clothes. Then he put on sackcloth, put ashes on his head, and went out into the city crying loudly. 2But Mordecai went only as far as the king’s gate. No one was allowed to enter the gate dressed in sackcloth. 3In every province where the king’s command had come, there was much crying and sadness among the Jews. They were fasting and crying loudly. Many Jews were lying on the ground dressed in sackcloth with ashes on their heads.

4Esther’s slave women and eunuchs came to her and told her about Mordecai. This made Queen Esther very sad and upset. She sent clothes for Mordecai to put on instead of the sackcloth, but he would not accept them. 5Then Esther called Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs who had been chosen to serve her. She commanded him to find out what was bothering Mordecai, and why. 6So Hathach went out to where Mordecai was in the open place of the city in front of the king’s gate. 7Then Mordecai told Hathach everything that had happened to him. Mordecai told him about the exact amount of money Haman had promised to put into the king’s treasury for killing Jews. 8Mordecai also gave Hathach a copy of the king’s command to kill the Jews. The command had been sent out all over the city of Susa. He wanted Hathach to show it to Esther and tell her everything. And he told him to encourage Esther to go to the king and beg him for mercy for Mordecai and her people.

9Hathach went back and told Esther everything Mordecai had said.

10Then Esther told Hathach to say this to Mordecai: 11“Mordecai, all the king’s leaders and all the people of the king’s provinces know this: The king has one law for any man or woman who goes to the king without being called. That person must be put to death unless the king holds out his gold scepter to them. If the king does this, that person’s life will be saved.
And I have not been called to go see the king for 30 days.”

Then Esther’s message was given to Mordecai. When he got her message, Mordecai sent his answer back: “Esther, don’t think that just because you live in the king’s palace you will be the only Jew to escape. If you keep quiet now, help and freedom for the Jews will come from another place. But you and your father’s family will all die. And who knows, maybe you have been chosen to be the queen for such a time as this.”

Then Esther sent this answer to Mordecai: “Mordecai, go and get all the Jews in Susa together, and fast for me. Don’t eat or drink for three days and nights. I and my women servants will fast too. After we fast, I will go to the king. I know it is against the law to go to the king if he didn’t call me, but I will do it anyway. If I die, I die.”

So Mordecai went away and did everything Esther told him to do.

Esther Speaks to the King

On the third day, Esther put on her special robes. Then she stood in the inside area of the king’s palace, in front of the king’s hall. The king was sitting on his throne in the hall, facing the place where people enter the throne room.

When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was very pleased. He held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther went in to the room and went near the king. Then she touched the end of the king’s gold scepter.

Then the king asked, “What is bothering you Queen Esther? What do you want to ask me? I will give you anything you ask for, even half my kingdom.”

Esther said, “I have prepared a party for you and Haman. Will you and Haman please come to the party today?”

Then the king said, “Bring Haman quickly so that we may do what Esther asks.”

So the king and Haman went to the party Esther had prepared for them.

While they were drinking wine, the king asked her again, “Now Esther, what do you want to ask for? Ask for anything, I will give it to you. So what is it you want? I will give you anything you want, up to half my kingdom.”

Esther answered, “This is what I want to ask for: If the king is pleased with me and thinks it good to give me what I ask for, let the king and Haman come tomorrow. I will prepare another party for them. Then I will tell what I really want.”

Haman’s Anger at Mordecai

Haman left the king’s palace that day very happy and in a good mood. But when he saw Mordecai at the king’s gate, he became very angry. Haman was very mad at him because Mordecai didn’t show any respect when Haman walked by. Mordecai was not afraid of Haman, and this made Haman mad. But Haman controlled his anger and went home. Then Haman called together his friends and his wife, Zeresh.

Haman started bragging about how rich he was. He was bragging to his friends about his many sons, and about all the ways the king had honored him. And he was bragging about how the king had promoted him higher than all the other leaders. “And that’s not all,” Haman added. “I’m the only one Queen Esther invited to be with the king at the party she gave. And the Queen also has invited me to be with the king again tomorrow. But all this means nothing to me. I cannot be happy as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate.”

Then Haman’s wife Zeresh and all his friends had a suggestion. They said, “Tell someone to build a post to hang him on. Make it 75 feet tall. In the morning ask the king to hang Mordecai on it. Then go to the party with the king and you can be happy.”

Haman liked this suggestion, so he ordered someone to build the hanging post.

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Mordecai Is Honored

That same night, the king could not sleep. So he told a servant to bring the history book and read it to him. (The Book of History of the Kings lists everything that happens during a king’s rule.) The servant read the book to the king. He read about the evil plan to kill King Xerxes. That was when Mordecai had learned about Bigthan and Teresh. These two men were the king’s officers who guarded the doorway. They had planned to kill the king, but Mordecai learned about the plan and told someone about it.

Then the king asked, “What honor and good things have been given to Mordecai for this?”

The servants answered the king, “Nothing has been done for Mordecai.”

Haman had just entered the outer area of the king’s palace. He had come to ask the king to hang Mordecai on the hanging post Haman had commanded to be built. The king said, “Who just came into the courtyard?”

The king’s servants said, “Haman is standing in the courtyard.”

So the king said, “Bring him in.”

When Haman came in, the king asked him a question. He said, “Haman, what should be done for a man the king wants to honor?”

Haman thought to himself, “Who is there that the king would want to honor more than me? I’m sure that the king is talking about honoring me.”

So Haman answered the king, “Do this for the man the king loves to honor: Have the servants bring a special robe the king himself has worn and a horse the king himself has ridden. Have the servants put the king’s special mark on the horse’s head. Then put one of the king’s most important leaders in charge of the robe and the horse, and let the leader put the robe on the man the king wants to honor. Then let him lead him on the horse through the city streets. As he leads him, let him announce, ‘This is done for the man the king wants to honor!’”

“Go quickly,” the king commanded Haman. “Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew. He is sitting near the king’s gate. Do everything that you suggested.”

So Haman got the robe and the horse. Then he put the robe on Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city streets. Haman announced ahead of Mordecai, “This is done for the man the king wants to honor!”

After that Mordecai went back to the king’s gate, but Haman hurried home with his head covered because he was embarrassed and ashamed. Then Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. His wife and the men who gave him advice said, “If Mordecai is a Jew, you cannot win. You have already started to fall. Surely you will be ruined!”

While they were still talking to Haman, the king’s eunuchs came to Haman’s house. They made Haman hurry to the party that Esther had prepared.

Haman Is Hanged

So the king and Haman went to eat with Queen Esther. Then as they were drinking wine on the second day of the party, the king again asked Esther a question, “Queen Esther, what is it you want to ask for? Ask anything and it will be given to you. What do you want? I will give you anything, even half my kingdom.”

Then Queen Esther answered, “King, if you like me and it pleases you, please let me live. And I ask you to let my people live too. This is what I ask for. I ask this because my people and I have been sold to be destroyed—to be killed and wiped out completely. If we had just been sold as slaves, I would have kept quiet, because that would not be enough of a problem to bother the king.”

Then King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, “Who did this to you? Where is the man who dared to do such a thing to your people?”

Esther said, “The man against us, our enemy, is this wicked Haman.”
Then Haman was filled with terror before the king and queen. The king was very angry. He got up, left his wine, and went out into the garden. But Haman stayed inside to beg Queen Esther to save his life. He begged for his life because he knew that the king had already decided to kill him. Just as the king was coming back in from the garden to the party room, he saw Haman falling on the couch where Esther was lying. The king said with anger in his voice, “Will you attack the queen even while I am in the house?”

As soon as the king had said this, servants came in and killed Haman. One of the eunuchs who served the king was named Harbona. He said, “A hanging post 75 feet tall has been built near Haman’s house. Haman had it made so that he could hang Mordecai on it. Mordecai is the man who helped you when he told about the evil plans to kill you.”

The king said, “Hang Haman on that post!”

So they hanged Haman on the hanging post he had built for Mordecai. Then the king stopped being angry.

The King’s Order to Help the Jews

That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther everything that belonged to Haman, the enemy of the Jews. Esther told the king that Mordecai was her cousin. Then Mordecai came to see the king. The king had gotten his ring back from Haman. The king took the ring off his finger and gave it to Mordecai. Then Esther put Mordecai in charge of everything that belonged to Haman.

Then Esther spoke to the king again. She fell at the king’s feet and began crying. She begged the king to cancel the evil plan of Haman the Agagite. Haman the Agagite thought of a plan to destroy the Jews in all the king’s provinces, and he sent out commands for this to happen. I am begging the king because I could not bear to see these terrible things happen to my people. I could not bear to see my family killed.”

King Xerxes answered Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, “Because Haman was against the Jews, I have given his property to Esther. And my soldiers have hanged him on the hanging post. Now write another command by the authority of the king. Write it to help the Jews in a way that seems best to you. Then seal the order with the king’s special ring. No official letter written by the authority of the king and sealed with the king’s ring can be canceled.”

Very quickly the king’s secretaries were called. This was done on the 23rd day of the third month, the month of Sivan. They wrote out all of Mordecai’s commands to the Jews, and to the satraps, the governors, and officials of the 127 provinces. These provinces reached from India to Ethiopia. The commands were written in the language of each province and translated into the language of each group of people. The commands were written to the Jews in their own language and alphabet. Mordecai wrote commands by the authority of King Xerxes. Then he sealed the letters with the king’s ring and sent them by messengers on horses. The messengers rode fast horses, which were raised especially for the king.

The king’s commands in the letters said this: The Jews in every city have the right to gather together to protect themselves. They have the right to ruin, kill, and completely destroy any army from any group who might attack them and their women and children. And the Jews have the right to take and destroy the property of their enemies.

7:8 killed Haman Literally, “covered Haman’s face.”
7:9 75 feet Literally, “50 cubits” (22 m).
The day set for the Jews to do this was the 13th day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. They were permitted to do this in all King Xerxes’ provinces. A copy of the letter with the king’s command was to be sent out. It became a law in every province. They announced it to all the people of every nation living in the kingdom. They did this so that the Jews would be ready for that special day. They would be allowed to pay their enemies back.

The messengers hurried out, riding on the king’s horses. The king commanded them to hurry. And the command was also put in the capital city of Susa.

Mordecai left the king. He was wearing special clothes from the king. His clothes were blue and white, and he had on a large gold crown. He also had a purple robe made of the best linen. There was a special celebration in Susa. The people were very happy.

Wherever the king’s command went in every province and every city, there was joy and gladness among the Jews. They were having parties and celebrating. Many of the common people from other groups became Jews. They did this because they were very afraid of the Jews.

**Victory for the Jews**

On the 13th day of the twelfth month (Adar), the people were supposed to obey the king’s command. This was the day the enemies of the Jews hoped to defeat them, but now things had changed. The Jews were stronger than their enemies who hated them. The Jews met together in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes so that they would be strong enough to attack the people who wanted to destroy them. No one was strong enough to stand against them. They were afraid of the Jews. And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the king’s administrators helped the Jews. All the leaders helped them because they were afraid of Mordecai. Mordecai had become a very important man in the king’s palace. Everyone in the provinces knew his name and knew how important he was. And Mordecai became more and more powerful.

The Jews defeated all their enemies. They used swords to kill and destroy them. They did what they wanted to the people who hated them. They killed and destroyed 500 men in the capital city of Susa. They also killed these men: Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, Poratha, Adalia, Aridath, Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha. These men were the ten sons of Haman. Haman son of Hammedatha was the enemy of the Jews. The Jews killed all the men, but they didn’t take anything that belonged to them.

That day the king heard how many men had been killed in the capital city of Susa. So the king said to Queen Esther, “The Jews have killed 500 men in Susa, including Haman’s ten sons. Now, what do you want done in the other provinces of the king? Tell me, and I will have it done. Ask, and I will do it.”

Esther said, “If it pleases the king, please let the Jews in Susa do the same thing again tomorrow. Also, hang the bodies of Haman’s ten sons on posts.”

So the king gave the command that it should be done. So the law was given in Susa, and they hanged Haman’s ten sons.

The Jews in Susa met together on the 14th day of the month of Adar. They killed 300 men in Susa, but they didn’t take the things that belonged to them.

At the same time, the Jews living in the other provinces also met together. They met together so that they would be strong enough to protect themselves. And so they got rid of their enemies. They killed 75,000 of their enemies. But the Jews didn’t take anything that belonged to them. This happened on the 13th day of the month Adar. On the 14th day the Jews rested and made that day a happy day of feasting.

**The Festival of Purim**

The Jews in Susa had met together on the
13th and 14th days of the month of Adar. And then on the 15th day they rested. So they made the 15th day a happy day of feasting. 19 So those who live in the country and small villages celebrate Purim on the 14th day of Adar. They keep the 14th day as a happy day of feasting. On this day they have parties and give presents to each other.

20 Mordecai wrote everything down that had happened, and then he sent letters to all the Jews in all of King Xerxes’ provinces. He sent letters far and near. 21 He did this to tell the Jews to celebrate Purim every year on the 14th and 15th days of the month of Adar. 22 They were to celebrate those days because on those days the Jews got rid of their enemies. And they were also to celebrate that month as the month when their sadness was turned into joy. It was a month when their crying was changed into a day of celebration. Mordecai wrote letters to all the Jews and told them to celebrate those days as a happy day of feasting. They should have parties, give gifts to each other, and give presents to the poor.

23 So the Jews agreed to do what Mordecai had written to them. And they agreed to continue the celebration they had begun.

24 Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite was the enemy of all the Jews. He had made an evil plan against the Jews to destroy them. And Haman had thrown the lot to choose a day to ruin and to destroy the Jews. At that time the lot was called a “pur.” 25 Haman did this, but Esther went to talk to the king. So he sent out new commands. These commands not only ruined Haman’s plans, but these commands caused those bad things to happen to Haman and his family! So Haman and his sons were hanged on the posts.

26–27 At this time lots were called “purim.” So this festival is called “Purim.” Mordecai wrote a letter and told the Jews to celebrate this festival. And so the Jews started the custom of celebrating these two days every year. 28 They do this to help them remember what they had seen happen to them. The Jews and all the people who join them celebrate these two days every year at the right time in just the right way. Every generation and every family remembers these two days. They celebrate this festival in each and every province and in each and every town. And the Jews will never stop celebrating the days of Purim. Their descendants will always remember this festival.

29 So Queen Esther daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote an official letter about Purim. They wrote with full authority of the king to prove that the second letter was true. 30 So Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of King Xerxes’ kingdom. He told the people that the festival should bring peace and make people trust each other. 31 He wrote these letters to tell the people to start celebrating Purim. And he told them when to celebrate this new festival. Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had sent out the command for the Jews to establish this two-day festival for themselves and their descendants. They will remember this festival just as they remember the other festivals when they fast and cry about the bad things that had happened. 32 Esther’s letter made the rules for Purim official, and these things were written down in a book.

Mordecai Honored

10 King Xerxes made people pay taxes. All the people in the kingdom, even the faraway cities on the seacoast, had to pay taxes. 2 And all the great things Xerxes did are written in the Book of History of the Kings of Media and Persia. Also written in those history books are all the things Mordecai did. The king made Mordecai a great man. 3 Mordecai the Jew was second in importance to King Xerxes. He was the most important man among the Jews. His fellow Jews respected him very much, because he worked hard for the good of his people and brought peace to all the Jews.
There was a man named Job who lived in the country of Uz. He was a good, honest man. He respected God and refused to do evil. Job had seven sons and three daughters. He owned 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 1000 oxen, and 500 female donkeys. He had many servants. He was the richest man in the east.

Job’s sons took turns having dinner parties in their homes, and they invited their sisters.

The day after each of these parties, Job got up early in the morning, sent for his children, and offered a burnt offering for each of them. He thought, “Maybe my children were careless and sinned against God at their party.” Job always did this so that his children would be forgiven of their sins.

Then the day came for the angels to meet with the Lord. Even Satan was there with them.

The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you been?”

Satan answered the Lord, “I have been roaming around the earth, going from place to place.”

Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you noticed my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him. He is a good, faithful man. He respects God and refuses to do evil.”

Satan answered the Lord, “But Job has a good reason to respect you. You always protect him, his family, and everything he has. You have blessed him and made him successful in everything he does. He is so wealthy that his herds and flocks are all over the country. But if you were to destroy everything he has, I promise you that he would curse you to your face.”

The Lord said to Satan, “All right, do whatever you want with anything that he has, but don’t hurt Job himself.”

Then Satan left the meeting.

Job, the Good Man

One day Job’s sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house. A messenger came to Job and said, “We were plowing the fields with the oxen and the donkeys were eating grass nearby, when some Sabeans attacked us and took your animals! They killed the other servants. I am the only one who escaped to come and tell you the news!”

That messenger was still speaking when another one came in and said, “A bolt of lightning struck your sheep and servants and burned them up. I am the only one who escaped to come and tell you the news!”

That messenger was still speaking when another one came in and said, “The Chaldeans sent out three raiding parties that attacked us and took the camels! They killed the other servants. I am the only one who escaped to come and tell you the news!”

That messenger was still speaking when another one came in and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house. A strong wind suddenly came in from across the desert and blew the house down. It fell on your sons and daughters, and they are all dead. I am the only one who escaped to come and tell you the news!”

Sabeans a

A group of people from the Arabian Desert, probably south of Uz.

A bolt of lightning c

Or “God’s fire fell from the sky.”

Chaldeans d

Tribes of people who moved from place to place in the area between the Euphrates and Jordan rivers.

a 1:6 angels Literally, “sons of God.”

b 1:15

c 1:16

d 1:17
When Job heard this, he got up, tore his clothes, and shaved his head to show his sadness. Then he fell to the ground to bow down before God and said, “When I was born into this world, I was naked and had nothing. When I die and leave this world, I will be naked and have nothing. The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. Praise the name of the LORD!”

Even after all this, Job did not sin. He did not accuse God of doing anything wrong.

Satan Bothers Job Again

Then another day came for the angels to meet with the LORD. Satan joined them for this meeting with the LORD. The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you been?”

Satan answered the LORD, “I have been roaming around the earth, going from place to place.”

Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you noticed my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him. He is a good, faithful man. He respects God and refuses to do evil. He is still faithful, even though you asked me to let you destroy, without reason, everything he has.”

Satan answered, “Skin for skin! A man will give everything he has to protect himself. I swear, if you attack his flesh and bones, he will curse you to your face!”

So the LORD said to Satan, “All right, Job is in your hands, but you are not allowed to kill him.”

So Satan left the meeting with the LORD and gave Job painful sores all over his body, from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. Job sat on the pile of ashes where he was mourning and used a piece of broken pottery to scrape his sores. His wife said to him, “Are you still holding on to your faith? Why don’t you just curse God and die!”

Job answered, “You sound like one of those fools on the street corner! How can we accept all the good things that God gives us and not accept the problems?” So even after all that happened to Job, he did not sin. He did not accuse God of doing anything wrong.

Job’s Three Friends Come to See Him

Job’s three friends heard about all the bad things that happened to him, so Eliphaz came from Teman, Bildad from Shuah, and Zophar from Naamah. They met together and went to comfort Job and show him their sympathy. But his friends didn’t even recognize him when they first saw him in the distance! They began to cry loudly. They tore their clothes and threw dirt in the air over their heads to show how sad they were. Then they sat on the ground with Job for seven days and seven nights. They didn’t say a word, because they saw he was in so much pain.

Job Curses the Day He Was Born

Then Job opened his mouth and cursed the day he was born. He said, “I wish the day I was born would be lost forever. I wish the night they said, ‘It’s a boy!’ had never happened. I wish that day had remained dark. I wish God above had forgotten that day and not let any light shine on it. I wish that bitter day had remained as dark as death, covered with the darkest clouds. I wish the darkness had carried away that night, that it was left off the calendar and not included in any of the months. I wish that night had produced nothing and no happy shouts had been heard. Some magicians think they can wake Leviathan.”

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\[a\] 2:1 angels Literally, “sons of God.”

\[b\] 2:4 Skin for skin This means a person will do anything to avoid pain.

\[c\] 3:8 Leviathan Here, this is probably a giant sea monster. Some people thought magicians were able to make it “swallow the sun,” that is, cause an eclipse.
So let them say their curses and curse the day I was born.

9 Let that day’s morning star be dark.

Let that night wait for a morning that never comes.

I wish it had never seen the first rays of sunlight.

10 I wish it had stopped me from being born

and kept me from seeing all these troubles.

11 Why didn’t I die when I was born?

Why didn’t I die as I came from my mother’s womb?

12 Why did my mother hold me on her knees?

Why did her breasts feed me?

13 If I had died when I was born,

I would be at peace now.

I wish I were asleep and at rest

14 with the kings and their advisors who built palaces that are now in ruins.

15 I wish I were buried with rulers who filled their graves with gold and silver.

16 Why wasn’t I a child who died at birth

and was put in the ground?

I wish I had been buried like a baby who never saw the light of day.

17 There the wicked stop causing trouble,

and the weary find rest.

18 Even prisoners find relief there;

they no longer hear their guards shouting at them.

19 Everyone—from the greatest to the least important—will be there,

and even the slave is free from his master.

20 “Why must a suffering person continue to live?

Why let anyone live such a bitter life?

21 Such people want to die, but death does not come.

They search for death more than for hidden treasure.

22 They would be happy to find their grave.

They would rejoice to find their tomb.

23 But God keeps their future a secret and builds a wall around them to protect them.

24 When it is time to eat, all I can do is sigh with sadness, not joy.

My groans pour out like water.

25 I was afraid something terrible would happen,

and what I feared most has happened.

26 I cannot calm down or relax.

I am too upset to rest!”

Eliphaz Speaks

4 1Eliphaz from Teman answered:

2 “I must say something.

Would it upset you if I speak?

3 Job, you have taught many people.

You encouraged those who were ready to quit.

4 Your words helped those who were ready to fall.

You gave strength to those who could not stand by themselves.

5 But now trouble comes to you,

and you are discouraged.

Trouble hits you,

and you are upset.

6 You worship God.

You trust him.

You are a good man,

so let that be your hope.

7 Can you think of any innocent person who was ever destroyed?

Do you know of any place where good people are punished?

8 Yes, I have seen people whose lives were cut short,

but they were evil troublemakers.

9 They lost the breath God gave them.

They were cut off from his breath of life.

10 They were like roaring lions,

like growling lions with broken teeth—

11 like a lioness that cannot find prey.

They died, and their cubs starved to death.
12 “I happened to hear a message. My ears caught a whisper of it.
13 Like a bad dream in the night, it ruined my sleep.
14 It frightened me, and I trembled down to my bones.
15 A spirit passed by my face. The hair on my body stood up!
16 The spirit stood still, but I could not see what it was. A shape stood before my eyes, and there was silence. Then I heard a quiet voice:
17 ‘A person cannot be more right than God. People cannot be more pure than their Maker.
18 Look, God cannot even trust his heavenly servants. He sees faults even in his angels.
19 So surely people are worse! They live in houses of clay built on dust. They can be crushed as easily as a moth!
20 From dawn to sunset people are destroyed. They die—gone forever—and no one even notices.
21 The ropes of their tent are pulled up, and they die before gaining wisdom.’

1 “Job, call out if you want, and see if anyone answers! But to which of the angels will you turn?
2 A fool’s anger will kill him. His jealousy will destroy him.
3 I saw a fool who thought he was safe, but suddenly he died.  
4 There was no one to help his children. No one defended them in court.
5 Hungry people ate all his crops, even the grain growing among the thorns, and greedy people took all he had.
6 Bad times don’t come up from the dirt. Trouble does not grow from the ground.
7 But people are born to have trouble, as surely as sparks rise from a fire.
8 If I were you, I would turn to God and tell him about my problems.
9 People cannot understand the wonderful things God does. His miracles are too many to count.
10 He sends rain all over the earth and waters the fields.
11 He raises up the humble and makes sad people happy.
12 He spoils the plans of even the smartest people so that they will not succeed.
13 He catches those who think they are wise in their own clever traps and brings to an end their evil plans.
14 Daylight will be like darkness for them. Even at noon they will have to feel their way as in the dark.
15 God saves the poor from the hurtful words of the wicked. He saves them from those who are powerful.
16 So the poor have hope; God shuts the mouths of those who would cause them harm.

17 “You are fortunate when God corrects you. So don’t complain when God All-Powerful punishes you.
18 God might injure you, but he will bandage those wounds. He might hurt you, but his hands also heal.
19 He will save you again and again. No evil will harm you.
20 God will save you from death when there is famine. He will protect you from the sword when there is war.
21 People might say bad things about you with their sharp tongues. But God will protect you. You will not be afraid when bad
things happen!

You will laugh at destruction and famine.
You will not be afraid of wild animals!

It is as if you have a peace treaty with the wild animals and the rocks in the field.

You will live in peace because your tent is safe.
You will count your property and find nothing missing.

You will have many children.
They will be as many as the blades of grass on the earth.

You will be like the wheat that grows until harvest time.
Yes, you will live to a ripe old age.

“We have studied this and know it is true.
So listen to us, and learn for yourself.”

Job Answers Eliphaz

Then Job answered:

“I wish my suffering could be weighed and all my trouble be put on the scales.
They would be heavier than all the sand of the sea!
That is why my words are so crazy.

God All-Powerful has shot me with his arrows.
My spirit feels their poison!
God’s terrible weapons are lined up against me.

Even a wild donkey does not complain when it has grass to eat.
And a cow is quiet when it has food.

Food without salt does not taste good, and the white of an egg has no taste.
I refuse to touch that kind of food; it makes me sick!

“I wish I could have what I ask for.
I wish God would give me what I want.
I wish he would crush me—
just go ahead and kill me!

Then I would be comforted by this one thing:
Even through all this pain, I never refused to obey the commands of the Holy One.

“With my strength gone, I have no hope to go on living.
With nothing to look forward to, why should I be patient?

I am not strong like a rock.
My body is not made from bronze.

I don’t have the power to help myself, because all hope of success has been taken away from me.

“Friends should be loyal to you in times of trouble, even if you turn away from God All-Powerful.

But I cannot depend on you, my brothers.
You are like a stream that has no water when the weather is dry but is flooded when the rains come.

In the winter, it is choked with ice and melting snow.

But when the weather is hot and dry, the water stops flowing, and the stream disappears.

It twists and turns along the way and then disappears into the desert.

Traders from Tema search for it.
Travelers from Sheba hope to find it.
They are sure they can find water, but they will be disappointed.

Now, you are like those streams. You see my troubles and are afraid.

But have I ever asked you to help me? Did I ask you to offer a bribe for me from your wealth?

No, and I never said, ‘Save me from my enemies!’ or ‘Save me from those who are cruel!’

“So now, teach me, and I will be quiet.

Or “People who fail to be loyal to their friends have also failed to respect God All-Powerful.”
Show me what I have done wrong.

25 Honest words are powerful, but your arguments prove nothing.

26 Do you plan to criticize me?
   Will you speak more tiring words?

27 Are you the kind of people who would gamble for orphans and sell out your own friends?

28 Now, look me in the face, and see that I am telling the truth!

29 You need to start over and stop being so unfair!
   Think again, because I am innocent.

30 I am not lying.
   I know right from wrong.

7 “People have a hard struggle on earth.
   Their life is like that of a hired worker.
2 They are like a slave looking for cool shade
   or a hired worker waiting for payday.
3 Month after frustrating month has gone by.
   I have suffered night after night.
4 When I lie down, I think,
   ‘How long before it’s time to get up?’
   The night drags on.
   I toss and turn until the sun comes up.
5 My skin is covered with worms and scabs.
   It is cracked and covered with sores.
6 “My days pass by faster than a weaver’s shuttle,\(^a\)
   and my life will end without hope.
7 God, remember, my life is like a breath.
   I will not get a second chance to enjoy it.
8 Those who see me now will never see me again.
   You watch me for a while, but then I am gone.
9 Just as clouds that come and go,
   people are put in the grave, never to rise again.
10 They don’t come back to their old homes.
   The people there would not know them.

11 “So I will not be quiet!
   I will let my suffering spirit speak!
   I will let my bitter soul complain!

12 Am I one of your enemies?
   Is that why you put a guard over me?\(^b\)
13 My bed should bring me comfort.
   My couch should give me rest and relief.

14 But when I lie down, you scare me with dreams;
   you frighten me with visions.
15 So I would rather be choked to death than to live like this.
16 I hate my life—I give up.
   I don’t want to live forever.
   Leave me alone!
   My life means nothing.

17 God, why are people so important to you?
   Why do you even notice them?
18 Why do you visit them every morning and test them at every moment?
19 You never look away from me or leave me alone for a second.
20 You are always watching us!
   If I sinned, would that hurt you?
   Why have you made me your target?
   Have I become a problem for you?
21 Why don’t you just pardon me for doing wrong?
   Why don’t you just forgive me for my sins?
   Soon I will die and be in my grave.
   You will search for me, but I will be gone.”

Bildad Speaks to Job

8 “Then Bildad from Shuah answered:
2 “How long will you talk like that?
   Your words are nothing but hot air!

\(a\) 7:6 weaver's shuttle  The tool a person who makes cloth uses to pass the thread between the other threads.

\(b\) 7:12 Literally, “Am I Yam or Tannin that you should appoint a guard to watch me?” In ancient Canaanite stories, Yam was the god of the sea, and Tannin was a sea monster.
God is always fair.
God All-Powerful does what is right.

If your children sinned against God, he punished them.
They paid for their sins.

But now, look to God and pray to the All-Powerful.

If you are pure and good, he will quickly come to help you.
He will give your family back to you.

Then you will have a lot more than you had in the beginning!

“Ask those who are now old.
Find out what their ancestors learned.

It seems as though we were born yesterday.
We are too young to know anything.
Our days on earth are very short, like a shadow.

Maybe the old people can tell you something.
Maybe they will teach you what they learned.

“Can papyrus grow tall on a dry land?
Can reeds grow without water?

No, they will dry up before harvest.
They will be too small to cut and use.

People who forget God are like that.
those who oppose him have no hope.

They have put their trust in something weak.
It is like a spider’s web.

When they lean against it, it will break.
When they reach out for it, it will not hold them up.

Such people are like a vine that gets plenty of water and sunshine,
and its branches spread throughout the garden.

Its roots spread among the rocks,
searching for good soil.

But if you move it, it will die,
and no one can tell it was ever there.

Everything might have been going well, but another vine will take its place.

God does not support evil people,
and he does not abandon the innocent.

So perhaps you might laugh again.
Maybe shouts of joy will come from your lips.

Maybe your enemies will be humiliated and the homes of the wicked destroyed.”

Job Answers Bildad

Then Job answered:

Of course, I know that this is true.
But how can a human being win an argument with God?

Anyone who chose to argue with him could not answer one question in a thousand!

God is so wise and powerful that no one could oppose him and survive.

When God is angry, he moves mountains before they know what happened.

He can shake the earth, and it will tremble down to its foundations.

With one command he can stop the sun from rising.
He can lock up the stars and keep them from shining.

He alone made the skies, and he walks on the ocean waves.

“God made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades.a
He made the planets that cross the southern sky.b

He does things too marvelous for people to understand.
He does too many miracles to count!

When he passes by, I cannot see him.
He goes right past me, and I don’t

a 9:9 Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades Names of well-known constellations (groups of stars) in the night sky.

b 9:9 planets . . . sky Literally, “Rooms of the South” or “Rooms of Teman.” This might be the planets or the twelve constellations of the Zodiac. North of the equator, these seem to move across the southern sky.
notice.

12 If he takes something away, no one can stop him. No one can say to him, ‘What are you doing?’
13 God will not hold back his anger. Even Rahab’s helpers are afraid of him.
14 So I cannot argue with God. I would not know what to say to him.
15 I am innocent, but I cannot give him an answer. All I can do is beg my Judge for mercy.
16 Even if I called and he answered, I cannot believe he would listen to me.
17 He would just send storms to crush me. He would give me more wounds for no reason.
18 He would not let me catch my breath again. He would just give me more trouble.
19 I cannot defeat God. He is too powerful! I cannot take him to court for justice. Who could force him to come?
20 I am innocent, but anything I say makes me seem guilty. I am innocent, but if I speak, my mouth proves me wrong.
21 I am innocent, but I don’t know what to think. I hate my own life.
22 So I say, ‘Does it make any difference? God destroys the innocent as well as the guilty.’
23 Is it God who laughs when a disaster kills innocent people?
24 Is it God who keeps the leaders from seeing when an evil person takes control? If it is not God, then who is it?
25 “My days are passing faster than a runner. They are flying by without any joy.
26 They go by as quickly as papyrus boats, as fast as an eagle swooping down on its prey.
27 “I could say, ‘I will not complain. I will forget my pain and put a smile on my face.’
28 But the suffering still frightens me. I know that God will not see me as innocent.
29 I will be found guilty, so why should I even think about it?
30 Even if I scrubbed my hands with soap and washed myself whiter than snow,
31 God would still push me into the slime pit, and even my clothes would hate to touch me.
32 God is not a human like me, so I cannot argue with him. I cannot take him to court.
33 I wish there were someone who could listen to both sides, someone to judge both of us in a fair way.
34 I wish someone could take away the threat of God’s punishment. Then he would not frighten me anymore.
35 Then I could say what I want without being afraid of him. But I cannot do that now.

10 I hate my own life, so I will complain freely. I am very bitter, so now I will speak.
2 I will say to God, ‘Don’t just say I am guilty! Tell me what you have against me.
3 Do you enjoy hurting me? Do you enjoy ignoring me while smiling at what evil people say?
4 Do you have human eyes? Do you see things the way people do?
5 Is your life as short as ours? Is your life as short as a man’s life?
6 You look for my wrong

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and search for my sin.
7 You know I am innocent,
   but no one can save me from your power!
8 Your hands made me and shaped my body.
   But now they are closing around me and squeezing me to death!
9 Remember, you molded me like clay.
   Will you turn me into clay again?
10 You poured me out like milk.
    You spun me around and squeezed me like someone making cheese.
11 You put me together with bones and muscles,
    and then you clothed me with skin and flesh.
12 You gave me life and were very kind to me.
    You cared for me and watched over my spirit.
13 But this is what you hid in your heart.
    Now I know what you were planning for me.
14 If I sinned, you would be watching me so that you could punish me for doing wrong.
15 If I sin, I am guilty and should be cursed.
    But even when I am innocent, I cannot lift up my head.
    I am so ashamed because of all the troubles I have.
16 If I have any success and feel proud,
    you hunt me down like a lion and show your power over me.
17 You bring witness after witness to prove that I am wrong.
    Again and again you show your anger as you send army after army against me.
18 So why did you let me be born?
    I wish I had died before anyone saw me.
19 I wish I had never lived.
    I wish they had carried me from my mother’s womb straight to the grave.
20 My life is almost finished.
    So leave me alone!

Let me enjoy the little time I have left.
21 I am going soon to the land of no return,
    the place of death and darkness—
22 that land of darkest night, of shadows and confusion,
    where even the light is darkness.’ ”

**Zophar Speaks to Job**

11 ’Then Zophar from Naamah answered Job and said,
2 “This flood of words should be answered!
   Does all this talking make Job right?
3 Do you think we don’t have an answer for you?
   Do you think no one will warn you when you laugh at God?
4 You say to God,
   ‘My arguments are right, and you can see I am pure.’
5 I wish God would answer you and tell you that you are wrong.
6 He could tell you the secret of wisdom.
   He would tell you that every story has two sides.
   You can be sure of this:
   God is not punishing you as much as he should.

7 “Do you think you really understand God?
   Do you completely understand God All-Powerful?
8 That knowledge is higher than the heavens
   and deeper than the place of death.
   What can you do?
   How can you learn it all?
9 It is greater than the earth and bigger than the seas.
10 “If God decides to arrest you and take you to court,
    no one could stop him.
11 God knows who is worthless.
   When he sees evil, he remembers it.
12 A wild donkey cannot give birth to a man,
and a stupid person will never become wise.

13 Prepare your heart to serve only God.
   Lift your arms and pray to him.

14 Put away the sin that you still hold on to.
   Don’t keep evil in your tent.

15 If you will do that, you could look to God without shame.
   You can stand strong and not be afraid.

16 Then you can forget your troubles, like water that has already passed by.

17 Your life will be brighter than the sunshine at noon.
   Life’s darkest hours will shine like the morning sun.

18 You will feel safe because there is hope.
   God will protect you and give you rest.

19 You will lie down without fear of anyone.
   Many people will come to you for help.

20 Evil people might look for help, but they will not escape their troubles.
   Their hope leads only to death.”

Job Answers His Friends

1 Then Job answered them:
2 “I’m sure you think you are the only wise people left. You think that when you die, wisdom will be gone with you.

3 But my mind is as good as yours. You aren’t any smarter than I am. You haven’t said anything that people don’t already know.

4 “My friends laugh at me now. They say, ‘He prayed to God and got his answer.’ I am a good, innocent man, but still they laugh at me.

5 Those who have no troubles make fun of those who do.
   They hit a man when he is down.

6 But robbers’ tents are not bothered.

Those who make God angry live in peace,
   even though God has them in his power.

7 “But ask the animals, and they will teach you.
   Or ask the birds of the air, and they will tell you.

8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you.
   Or let the fish in the sea tell you their wisdom.

9 Everyone knows that the Lord made these things.

10 Every animal that lives and everyone who breathes—they are all under God’s power.

11 But just as the tongue tastes food, the ears test the words they hear.

12 People say, ‘Wisdom is to be found in those who are old.
   Long life brings understanding.’

13 But wisdom and power belong to God.
   Good advice and understanding are his.

14 Anything God tears down cannot be rebuilt.
   Anyone he puts in prison cannot be set free.

15 If he holds back the rain, the earth will dry up.
   If he lets the rain loose, it will flood the land.

16 God is strong and always wins.
   He controls those who fool others and those who are fooled.

17 He strips advisors of their wisdom and makes leaders act like fools.

18 He strips kings of their authority and makes them slaves.

19 He strips priests of their power and removes those who feel so secure in their position.

20 He makes trusted advisors be silent.
   He takes away the wisdom of the older leaders.

21 He brings disgrace to important people.
   He takes power away from rulers.

22 He exposes even the darkest secrets.
He sends light into places that are as dark as death.

23 God makes nations great, and then he destroys them.
He makes nations grow large, and then he scatters their people.

24 He makes their leaders foolish.
He makes them wander around in the desert.

25 They are like someone feeling their way in the dark.
They are like drunks who don’t know where they are going.

13 “I have seen all this before. I have already heard everything you say.
I understand all these things.

2 I know as much as you do.
I am as smart as you are.

3 But I don’t want to argue with you.
I want to speak to God All-Powerful.
I want to argue with God about my troubles.

4 But you men try to cover up your ignorance with lies.
You are like worthless doctors who cannot heal anyone.

5 I wish you would just be quiet.
That would be the wisest thing you could do.

6 “Now, listen to my argument.
Listen to what I have to say.

7 Will you speak lies for God?
Do you really believe your lies are what God wants you to say?

8 Are you trying to defend God against me?
You are not being fair.
You are choosing God’s side simply because he is God.

9 If God checked you very closely, would he see that you are right?
Do you really think you can fool God the same as you fool people?
You know that God would criticize you if you chose someone’s side simply because they were important.

10 God’s majesty frightens you.
You are afraid of him.

11 The wise sayings you quote are worthless.
Your arguments are as weak as clay.

12 “Be quiet and let me talk!
I accept whatever happens to me.

14 I will put myself in danger and take my life in my own hands.

15 I will continue to trust God even if he kills me.
But I will defend myself to his face.

16 And if he lets me live, it will be because I had the confidence to speak.
No guilty person would dare meet God face to face.

17 Listen carefully to what I say.
Let me explain.

18 I am ready now to defend myself.
I will carefully present my arguments.
I know I will be shown to be right.

19 If anyone can prove I am wrong,
I will shut up and wait to die.

20 “God, just give me two things, and then I will not hide from you:

21 Stop punishing me, and don’t frighten me with your terrors.

22 Then call to me, and I will answer you.
Or let me speak, and you answer me.

23 How many sins have I committed?
What wrongs have I done?
Show me where I went wrong or how I sinned.

24 God, why do you avoid me and treat me like your enemy?

25 Are you trying to scare me?
I am only a leaf blowing in the wind.
You are attacking a piece of straw!

26 You have a list of terrible charges against me.
Are you making me suffer for the sins I did when I was young?

27 You have put chains on my feet.


a 13:15 I will ... kills me Or “If he decides to kill me, I have no hope.”
You watch every step I take.
You see every move I make.
So I am becoming weaker and weaker,
like a piece of wood rotting away,
like a piece of cloth eaten by moths.

14 “We are all human beings, a
Our life is short and full of trouble.
Our life is like a flower that grows quickly and then dies away.
Our life is like a shadow that is here for a short time and then is gone.
God, do you need to keep an eye on something so small?
Why bother to bring charges against me?

No one can make something clean from something so dirty.
The length of our life has been decided.
You alone know how long that is.
You have set the limits for us and nothing can change them.
So stop watching us; leave us alone,
and let us enjoy this hard life until we have put in our time.

There is always hope for a tree.
If it is cut down, it can grow again.
It will keep sending out new branches.
Its roots might grow old in the ground and its stump die in the dirt,
but with water, it will grow again.
It will grow branches like a new plant.
But when a man dies,
he becomes weak and sick, and then he is gone!
Like a lake that goes dry or a river that loses its source,
so people lose their lives, never to live again.
The skies will all pass away before they rise from death.
The skies will all disappear before anyone wakes up from that sleep!

I wish you would hide me in my grave.
I wish you would hide me there,
until your anger is gone.
Then you could pick a time to remember me.
If a man dies, will he live again?
If so, I would gladly suffer through this time waiting for my release.
God, you would call me,
and I would answer you.
Then I, the one you made, would be important to you.
You would still watch every step I take, but you would not remember my sins.
It would be as if you had sealed my sins in a bag.
It would be as if you had covered my guilt with plaster.

“Mountains fall and crumble away.
Large rocks break loose and fall.
Water flowing over stones wears them down.
Floods wash away the soil on the ground.
In the same way, God, you destroy the hope people have.
You defeat them completely and then they are gone.
You change the way they look and send them away forever to the place of death.
If their sons are honored, they will never know it.
If their sons do wrong, they will never see it.
They only feel the pain in their bodies, and they alone cry for themselves.”

Then Eliphaz from Teman answered Job:
If you were really wise, you would not answer with your worthless personal opinions!
A wise man would not be so full of hot air.
Do you think a wise man would use

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empty words
and meaningless speeches to win
his arguments?
4 If you had your way,
no one would respect God and pray
to him.
5 What you say clearly shows your sin.
Job, you are trying to hide your sin by using clever words.
6 I don’t need to prove to you that you are wrong.
The words from your own mouth show that you are wrong.
Your own lips speak against you.

7 “Do you think you were the first
person ever to be born?
Were you born before the hills?
8 Did you listen to God’s secret plans?
Do you think you are the only wise person?
9 We know as much as you do!
We understand as well as you.
10 The old, gray-haired men agree with us.
People older than your father are on our side.
11 God tries to comfort you, but that is not enough for you.
We have spoken his message to you in a gentle way.
12 Why will you not understand?
Why can you not see the truth?
13 You are expressing your anger against God when you say these things.

14 “People cannot really be pure.
They cannot be more right than God!
15 God does not even trust his angels. He does not even think the sky is pure.
16 People are even worse.
They are disgusting and dirty.
They drink up evil like water.

17 “Listen to me, and I will explain it to you.

Let me tell you what I have seen.
18 I will tell you what wise men would say,
things they heard from their fathers and then freely passed on.
They didn’t hide any secrets from me.
19 These are important people in our country!
Everyone knows who they are.
20 And they said that an evil man suffers all his life.
A cruel man suffers all his numbered years.
21 Every noise scares him.
His enemy will attack him when he thinks he is safe.
22 An evil man has no hope of escaping the darkness.
There is a sword somewhere waiting to kill him.
23 He wanders from place to place, looking for food.
But he knows a dark day is coming, which he brought on himself.
24 He lives in fear, with worry and suffering threatening him like a king ready to attack.
25 That is because that evil man shook his fist at God, refusing to obey.
He dared to attack God All-Powerful,
26 like a soldier with a thick, strong shield who runs at his enemy to strike him in the neck.
27 He might be rich and fat,
but his town will be ruined; his home will be destroyed; his house will be empty.
29 He will not be rich for long.
His wealth will not last.
His crops will not grow large.
30 He will not escape the darkness.
He will be like a tree whose leaves die from disease and are blown away by the wind.
31 That evil man should not fool himself by trusting in worthless things, because he will keep nothing.
32 He will die before his time, like a tree whose top branches have

\(\text{a 15:14 They Literally, “a man born of woman.”}\)
\(\text{b 15:15 angels Literally, “holy ones.”}\)
33 He will be like a vine that loses its grapes before they ripen. He will be like an olive tree that loses its buds.
34 That is because people without God have nothing. Those who take bribes will have their homes destroyed by fire.
35 They are always thinking of ways to do evil and cause trouble. They are always planning how they might cheat others."

Job Answers Eliphaz

16 Then Job answered:
2 “I have heard all these things before. You men give me trouble, not comfort.
3 Your long speeches never end! Why do you continue arguing?
4 I also could say the same things you say, if you had my troubles. I could say wise things against you and shake my head at you.
5 But I would say things to encourage you and give you hope.

6 “Nothing I say makes my pain go away. But keeping quiet does not help either.
7 God, you surely took away my strength. You destroyed my whole family.
8 You have made me thin and weak, and people think that means I am guilty.

9 “God attacks me; he is angry with me and tears my body apart. He grinds his teeth against me. My enemy looks at me with hate.
10 People have crowded around me. They make fun of me and slap my face.
11 God has given me to evil people. He let the wicked hurt me.

12 I was enjoying a quiet, peaceful life, but then God crushed me. Yes, he took me by the neck and broke me into pieces. He has made me his target.
13 With his archers all around me, he shoots arrows into my kidneys. He shows no mercy and spills my gall on the ground.
14 Again and again he attacks me. He runs at me like a soldier in battle.
15 “I am very sad, so I wear this sackcloth. I sit here in dust and ashes, feeling defeated.
16 My face is red from crying. There are dark rings around my eyes.
17 I was never cruel to anyone, and my prayers are pure.

18 “Earth, don’t hide the wrong things that were done to me. Don’t let my begging for fairness be stopped.
19 Even now there is someone in heaven who will speak for me. There is someone above who will testify for me.
20 My friend speaks for me, while my eyes pour out tears to God.
21 He speaks to God for me, like someone presenting an argument for a friend.

22 “In only a few years I will go to that place of no return.

17 ‘My spirit is broken; I am ready to give up. My life is almost gone; the grave is waiting for me.
2 People stand around me and laugh at me. I watch them as they tease and insult me.

q 16:13 gall The bitter contents of the gall bladder, which is near the liver. Here, it means something bitter and painful.
b 16:18 Earth … done to me Literally, “Earth, don’t cover my blood,” See Gen. 4:10–11.
c 16:21 someone Literally, “son of man.”
“God, give me some support. No one else will! You have closed my friends’ minds, and they don’t understand. Please don’t let them win.

You know what people say: ‘A man neglects his own children to help his friends.’ But my friends have turned against me.

God has made my name a bad word to everyone. People spit in my face.

My eyes are almost blind from my grief. My whole body is as thin as a shadow.

Good people wonder how this could happen. The innocent are upset with anyone who is against God.

But those who do right will continue to do what is right. Those who are not guilty grow stronger and stronger.

“But come on, all of you, and try to prove me wrong. I don’t find any of you to be wise. My life is passing away, and my plans are destroyed. My hope is gone.

Everything is confused—night is day, and evening comes when it should be dawn.

“I might hope for the grave to be my new home. I might hope to make my bed in the dark grave. I might say to the grave, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worms, ‘my mother’ or ‘my sister.’

But you can’t really call that hope, can you? Does anyone see any hope for me? Will hope go down with me to the place of death?

Will we go down into the dirt together?”

Bildad Answers Job

1 Then Bildad from Shuah answered: 2 “When will you stop talking? Be sensible; let us say something.

3 Why do you think we are stupid, like dumb cows? Your anger is hurting no one but you. Do you think this world was made for you alone? Do you think God should move mountains just to satisfy you?

4 “Yes, the light of those who are evil will go out. Their fire will stop burning.

5 The light in their houses will become dark. The lamps next to them will go out.

6 Their steps, once strong and fast, become weak. Their own evil plans make them fall. Their own feet lead them into a net. They fall into its hidden pit and are caught.

7 A trap catches them by the heel, and it holds them tight.

8 A rope is hidden on the ground to trip them. A trap is waiting in their path.

9 On every side terrors frighten them. Fear follows every step they take.

10 Disaster is hungry for them. Ruin stands close by, waiting for them to fall.

11 Diseases will eat away their skin. Death itself will eat their arms and legs.

12 They will be taken away from the safety of their tents and be led away to meet death, the king of terrors.

13 Nothing will be left in their tents, which will be sprinkled with burning sulfur.

a 17:5 You know … friends Literally, “He promises a share to his friends and his children’s eyes go blind.”

b 18:13 Death itself Literally, “Death’s firstborn,” a name for a deadly disease, or the worms that eat a dead body.
16 Their roots below will dry up, and their branches above will die.
17 People on earth will not remember them.
   Their names will be forgotten.
18 They will be forced from light into darkness.
   They will be chased out of this world.
19 They will leave behind no children, no descendants.
   None of their people will be left alive.
20 People in the west will be shocked at what happened to them.
   People in the east will be numb with fear.
21 This is what will happen to the homes of those who are evil.
   This is the place of those who don’t know God!”

Job Answers

19 "Then Job answered:
2 “How long will you hurt me and crush me with your words?
3 You have insulted me ten times now.
   You have attacked me without shame!
4 Even if I have sinned, it is my problem, not yours!
5 You want me to look bad to make yourselves look good.
   You say my troubles are proof that I did wrong.
6 I want you to know it was God who did this.
   He set this trap for me.
7 I shout, ‘He hurt me!’ but get no answer.
   No one hears my cry for fairness.
8 God has blocked my way to keep me from getting through.
   He has hidden my path in darkness.
9 He took away my honor.
   He took the crown from my head.
10 He hits me on every side until I am worn out.
   He takes away my hope.
   It is like a tree pulled up by the roots.
11 His anger burns against me.
   He treats me like an enemy.
12 He sends his army to attack me.
   They build attack towers around me.
   They camp around my tent.
13 “God has made my brothers hate me.
   Those who knew me have become strangers.
14 My relatives have left me.
   My friends have forgotten me.
15 My servant girls and visitors in my home
   look at me as if I am a stranger and a foreigner.
16 I call for my servant, but he does not answer.
   Even if I beg for help, he will not answer.
17 My wife hates the smell of my breath.
   My own brothers hate me.
18 Even little children make fun of me.
   When I get up, they say bad things about me.
19 All my close friends hate me.
   Even my loved ones have turned against me.
20 “I am so thin, my skin hangs loose on my bones.
   I have little life left in me.
21 “Pity me, my friends, pity me, because God is against me.
   Don’t you get tired of hurting me?
22 Why do you persecute me as God does?
23 “I wish someone would write down everything I say.
   I wish my words were written on a scroll.
24 I wish they were carved with an iron tool into lead
   or scratched on a rock so that they would last forever.
25 I know that there is someone to defend me and that he lives!
   And in the end, he will stand here
on earth and defend me.

26 After I leave my body and my skin has been destroyed,
I know I will still see God.

27 I will see him with my own eyes.
I myself, not someone else, will see God.
And I cannot tell you how excited that makes me feel!a

28 “Maybe you will say, ‘How can we push Job a little harder
and make him realize that he is the source of his problems?’

29 But you need to worry about your own punishment.
God might use the sword against you!
Then you will know there is a time for judgment.”

Zophar Answers Job

1 Then Zophar from Naamah answered:

2 “You upset me, so I must answer you.
I must tell you what I am thinking.

3 You insulted me with your answers!
But I am wise and know how to answer you.

4-5 “You know that the joy of the wicked
does not last long.
That has been true a long time, ever since Adam wasb put on earth.
Those who don’t know God are happy for only a short time.

6 Maybe an evil man’s pride will reach up
to the sky,
and his head will touch the clouds.

7 But he will be gone forever like his
own body waste.
People who knew him will say,
‘Where is he?’

8 Like a dream, he will fly away, never to
be found.
He will be chased away like a bad dream.c

9 Those who knew him before will not
see him again.
His family will never again get to
see him.

10 His children will have to give back
what he took from the poor.
His own hands will give up his
wealth.

11 When he was young, his bones were
strong,
but, like the rest of his body, they
will soon lie in the dirt.

12 “Evil tastes sweet in his mouth.
He keeps it under his tongue to
enjoy it fully.

13 He hates to let it go
and holds it in his mouth.

14 But that evil will turn sour in his
stomach.
It will be like a snake’s bitter poison
inside him.

15 The evil man will spit out the riches he
has swallowed.
God will make him vomit them up.

16 What he drank will be like a snake’s
poison;
it will kill him like the bite of a
deadly snake.

17 He will never again enjoy so much
wealth—
rivers flowing with honey and
cream.d

18 He will be forced to give back his
profits.
He will not be allowed to enjoy
what he worked for,
because he hurt the poor and left them
with nothing.
He took houses he did not build.

19 “The evil man is never satisfied.
But the things he wants cannot save
him.

21 After filling himself, there is nothing left.

a 19:25–27 Or “And in the end, he will stand here on earth and
defend me.”
seventh after his skin has been destroyed. But I want
to see God while I am still in my body. I want him to see
me with my own eyes, not through someone else’s eyes. And I cannot
tell you how much I want this to happen!”
b 20:4–5 Adam was Or “people were.”
c 20:8 bad dream Or “vision of the night.”
d 20:17 rivers … cream A figure meaning a plentiful supply
of rich food. The word translated “cream” could mean butter,
curds, or yogurt.
His success will not continue.
22 Even while he has plenty, he will be pressed down with trouble.
His problems will come down on him!
23 If he does get all he wants,
God will throw his burning anger against him.
God will attack him and rain down punishment on him.
24 Maybe he will run away from an iron sword,
but then a bronze arrow\(^d\) will strike him down.
25 It will go through his body and stick out of his back.
Its shining point will pierce his liver, and he will be shocked with terror.
26 All his treasures will be lost in darkness.
He will be destroyed by a fire, a fire that no human started.
It will destroy everything left in his house.
27 Heaven will prove that he is guilty.
The earth will be a witness against him.
28 His house and everything in it will be carried away in the flood of God’s anger.
29 That is what God will do to those who are evil.
That is what he plans to give them.”

Job Answers
21 "Then Job answered:
1 “Listen to what I say.
Let this be your way of comforting me.
2 Be patient while I speak.
Then after I have finished speaking, you may make fun of me.
3 “My complaint is not against people.
There is a good reason why I am not patient.
5 Look at me and be shocked.
Put your hand over your mouth, and stare at me in shock!

\(^d\) 20:24 bronze arrow Literally, “bronze bow.” Or “powerful bow,” possibly a bow made of sinew, wood and horn.

6 When I think about what happened to me,
I feel afraid and my body shakes!
7 Why do evil people live long lives?
Why do they grow old and successful?
8 They watch their children grow up and live to see their grandchildren.
9 Their homes are safe and free from fear.
God does not punish them.
10 Their bulls never fail to mate.
Their cows have healthy calves.
11 They send their children out to play like lambs.
Their children dance around.
12 They sing and dance to the sound of harps and flutes.
13 Evil people enjoy success during their lives and then go to the grave without suffering.
14 They say to God, ‘Leave us alone! We don’t care what you want us to do!’
15 And they say, ‘Who is God All-Powerful?
We don’t need to serve him!
It will not help to pray to him!’
16 “Of course, evil people don’t make their own success.
I would never follow their advice.
17 But how often does God blow out their light?
How often does trouble come to them?
How often does God get angry with them and punish them?
18 Does God blow them away, as the wind blows straw or as strong winds blow the grain husks?
19 But you say, ‘God is saving their punishment for their children.’
No! Let God punish the evil people themselves so that they will know what they have done!
20 Let them see their own punishment.
Let them feel the anger of God All-Powerful.

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When their life is finished and they are dead, they will not care about the family they leave behind.

“No one can teach God anything he doesn’t already know. God judges even those in high places.

One person dies after living a full and successful life, a life completely safe and comfortable, with a body that was well fed and bones that were still strong.

But another person dies after a hard life that has made them bitter, never having enjoyed anything good.

In the end, both of these people will lie together in the dirt. The worms will cover them both.

“But I know what you are thinking, and I know you want to hurt me.

You might say, ‘Show me a good man’s house. Now, show me where evil people live.’

“Surely you have talked with travelers. Surely you will accept their stories.

Evil people are spared when disaster comes. They survive when God shows his anger.

No one criticizes them to their faces for how they lived. No one punishes them for the evil they have done.

When they are carried to the grave, they will have someone to watch over the place they are buried.

So even the soil in the valley will be pleasant for them, and thousands of people will join their funeral procession.

“So your empty words are no comfort to me. There is no truth at all in your answers!”

Eliphaz Answers Job

Then Eliphaz from Teman answered:

“Does God need our help? Even the wisest of us is not really useful to him.

Does your living right benefit him? Does God All-Powerful gain anything if you follow him?

Why does God blame and punish you? Is it because you worship him?

No, it is because you sin so much. You never stop sinning.

Maybe to guarantee loans you took things from people for no reason. Maybe you took a poor man’s clothes to make sure he paid you back.

Maybe you failed to give water or food to people who were tired or hungry.

You have a lot of farmland, and people respect you.

But maybe you sent widows away without giving them anything. And maybe you took advantage of orphans.

That is why traps are all around you, and sudden trouble makes you afraid.

That is why it is so dark you cannot see, and why a flood of water covers you.

“God lives in the highest part of heaven and looks down on the highest stars.

But you might say, ‘What does God know? Can he see through the dark clouds to judge us?’

Thick clouds hide us from his eyes, so he cannot see us as he walks around the edge of the sky.’

“Job, you are walking on the old path.

See Deut. 24:12–13 for rules about making loans to the poor.
that evil people walked on long ago.

16 They were destroyed before it was their
time to die.
They were washed away by the
flood.

17 They told God, ‘Leave us alone!’
and said, ‘God All-Powerful cannot
do anything to us!’

18 And it was God who filled their houses
with good things.
No, I would never follow the advice
of evil people.

19 Those who do what is right are happy
to see them destroyed.
The innocent laugh at them and say,
20 ‘Surely our enemies are destroyed!
Their wealth burned up in the fire!’

21 “Now, Job, give yourself to God and
make peace with him.
Do this, and you will get many good
things.

22 Accept his teaching.
Pay attention to what he says.
23 If you return to God All-Powerful, you
will be restored.
But remove the evil from your
house.

24 Think of your gold as nothing but dirt.
Think of your finest gold as rocks
from a stream.
25 And let God All-Powerful be your gold.
Let him be your pile of silver.
26 Then you will enjoy God All-Powerful,
and you will look up to him.

27 When you pray, he will hear you.
And you will be able to do all that
you promised him.

28 If you decide to do something, it will
be successful.
And your future will be very bright!

29 When people are brought down and
you ask God to help them,
he will rescue those who have been
humbled.
30 Even those who are guilty will be
forgiven.
They will be saved because you did
what was right.”

Job Answers

23 Then Job answered:

2 “I am still complaining today.
I groan because God is still making
me suffer.

3 I wish I knew where to find him.
I wish I knew how to go to where
he lives.

4 I would present my case to him.
I would make my arguments to
show that I am innocent.

5 He could give his response, and I
would understand.
I would listen closely to what he
says.

6 Would God use his power against me?
No, he would listen to me!

7 Since I am an honest man, he would
let me tell my story.
Then my Judge would set me free!

8 “If I go to the east, God is not there.
If I go to the west, I still don’t see
him.

9 When he is working in the north, I
do n’t see him.
When he turns to the south, I still
do n’t see him.

10 But God knows me.
He is testing me and will see that I
am as pure as gold.

11 I have always lived the way God wants.
I have never stopped following him.

12 I always obey his commands.
I love the words from his mouth
more than I love my food.

13 “But God never changes,
and who can stand against him?
He does anything he wants.

14 He will do to me what he planned,
and he has many other plans for me.

15 That is why I am terrified to stand
before him.
Just thinking about it makes me
afraid.

16 The fear of God has made me lose my
courage.
God All-Powerful makes me afraid.

17 What has happened to me is like a
dark cloud over my face.
But the darkness will not keep me quiet.

24 “Why doesn’t God All-Powerful set times for judgment?
And why can’t his followers know when those times will be?

2 “People move property markers to get more of their neighbor’s land.
People steal flocks and lead them to other grasslands.
3 They steal a donkey that belongs to an orphan.
They take a widow’s cow until she pays what she owes them.

9 a They take a nursing baby from its mother.
They take a poor person’s child to guarantee a loan.
4 They force the poor to move out of their way
and to get off the road.

5 “The poor are like wild donkeys that go out to the desert to find food.
From morning to night they work to gather food for their children.
6 They have to work in the fields, harvesting grain.
They work for the rich, gathering grapes in their vineyards.
7 They must sleep all night without clothes.
They have no covers to protect them from the cold.
8 They are soaked with rain in the mountains.
They stay close to the large rocks for shelter.

10 They have no clothes, so they work naked.
They carry piles of grain for others, but they go hungry.
11 They press out olive oil and walk on grapes in the winepress, but they have nothing to drink.

12 In the city you can hear the sad sounds of dying people.
Those who are hurt cry out for help, but God does not listen.

13 “Some people rebel against the light.
They don’t know what God wants.
They don’t live the way he wants.
14 A murderer gets up at dawn and kills poor, helpless people.
And at night he becomes a thief.
15 A man who commits adultery waits for the night to come.
He thinks, ‘No one will see me,’ but still, he covers his face.
16 When it is dark, evil people go out and break into houses.
But during the day they lock themselves in their homes to avoid the light.
17 The darkest night is their morning.
They are friends with the terrors of darkness.

18 “You say, ‘Evil people are taken away like things carried away in a flood.
The land they own is cursed, so no one goes to work in their vineyards.
19 As hot, dry weather melts away the winter snows,
so the grave takes away those who have sinned.
20 Their own mothers will forget them.
Only the worms will want them.
No one will remember them.
They will be broken like a rotten stick!
21 These evil people hurt women who have no children to protect them,
and they refuse to help widows.
22 By his power God removes the powerful.
Even if they have a high position, they cannot be sure of their lives.
23 They might feel safe and secure, but God is watching how they live.
24 They might be successful for a while,
but then they will be gone.
Like everyone else, they will be cut
down like grain.’

25 “I swear these things are true!
Who can prove that I lied?
Who can show that I am wrong?”

Bildad Answers Job
25 'Then Bildad from Shuah answered:
2 “God is the ruler.
He makes people fear and respect
him.
He keeps peace in his kingdom
above.
3 No one can count his stars.a
His sun rises on all people.
4 How can anyone claim to be right
before God?
No human beingb can really be
pure.
5 In God’s eyes even the moon is not
pure and bright;
even the stars are not pure.
6 People are much less pure.
They are like maggots, as worthless
as worms!”

Job Answers Bildad
26 'Then Job answered:
2 “Bildad, what a great help you
are to this tired, weary man!
You have really supported me!
3 You have given such wonderful advice
to this foolish man!
You have provided so much useful
information!c
4 Who helped you say these things?
Whose spirit inspired you to speak?
5 “The ghosts and their neighbors
in the underworldd shake with fear.
6 But God can see clearly into that place
death.e is not hidden from God.
7 God stretched the northern sky over
empty space.
He hung the earth on nothing.
8 He fills the thick clouds with water.
But he does not let its heavy weight
break the clouds open.
9 He covers the face of the full moon.
He spreads his clouds over it and
hides it.
10 He drew the horizon on the ocean,
like a circle where light and
darkness meet.
11 The foundations that hold up the sky
shake with fear when God threatens
them.
12 With his own power God calmed the
sea.
With his wisdom he destroyed
Rahab.
13 His breath made the skies clear.
His hand destroyed the snake that
tried to get away.f
14 These are only a few of the amazing
things God has done.
We hear only a small whisper of
God’s thundering power.”

27 'Job continued his answer:
2 “God All-Powerful has been
unfair to me;
he has made my life bitter.
But I swear by his life,
3 as long as I have life in me,
as long as breath from God is in my
nostrils,
4 I will not be a hypocrite.
I will not lie.
5 You will never hear me say you men are
right!
Until the day I die I will not be
untrue to myself.
6 I will hold on to my innocence and
never let go!
My conscience will always be clear!
7 May my enemies be punished like
those who are evil.

a 25:3 his stars Or “his troops.” This means God’s heavenly
army. It could be all the angels or all the stars in the sky.
b 25:14 No human being Literally, “No one born from woman.”
c 26:2–3 Job is being sarcastic here—showing by the way he
speaks that he does not really mean it.
d 26:5 The ghosts … underworld Literally, “The ghosts
under the water.” This refers to Sheol, the place of death.
e 26:6 Death Or “Abaddon,” a Hebrew name meaning “death”
or “destruction.” See Rev. 9:11.
f 26:13 snake … get away Or “the escaping monster.” This
might be another name for Rahab. See Isa. 27:1.
May those who stood against me end up like all who have done wrong.

8 What hope do people without God have when it is time to die, when God takes their life away?

9 When they have troubles and cry out for help, God will not listen to them!

10 It will be too late for them to enjoy talking with God All-Powerful. They should have prayed to God all the time.

11 “I will teach you about God’s power. I will not hide anything about God All-Powerful.

12 But you have seen it all with your own eyes. So why do you say such useless things?

13 a “Here is what God has planned for those who are evil. This is what cruel people will get from God All-Powerful.

14 They may have many children, but all of them will be killed in war. Or their children will not have enough to eat.

15 All those who are left will die, and the widows will not even cry for them.

16 Evil people collect silver as easily as dirt. They may have so many clothes that they are piled up like clay.

17 But their piles of clothes will be worn by those who have lived right. All that silver will be given to those who have done no wrong.

18 Evil people might build houses, but they will not last long. They will be like a spider’s web or a guard’s tent.

19 They might be rich when they go to bed, but when they open their eyes, all their riches will be gone.

20 Terrible fears will come over them like a flood, like a storm in the night that blows everything away.

21 The east wind will carry them away, and they will be gone. The storm will sweep them out of their homes.

22 They may try to run away from the power of the storm, but it will come down on them without mercy.

23 It will make a sound like clapping hands as they run away. It will whistle at them as they run from their homes.”

The Value of Wisdom

28 14 There are mines where people get silver and places where people melt gold to make it pure.

2 Iron is dug out of the ground, and copper is melted out of the rocks.

3 Miners carry lights deep into caves to search for these rocks in the deepest darkness.

4 Far from where people live, they dig deep into the ground, down where no one else has been before. There they work all alone, hanging from ropes.

5 Food grows on the ground above. But underground it is different, as if everything were melted by fire.

6 In the rocks there are sapphires and grains of pure gold.

7 Wild birds know nothing about the way to these places. No falcon b has ever seen it.

8 Wild animals have never been there. Lions have not traveled that way.

9 Miners dig the hardest rocks. They dig away at the mountains and make them bare.

10 They cut tunnels through the rocks...

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and see all the treasures they hold. They even find places where rivers begin. They bring to light what once was hidden.

12 "But where can anyone find wisdom? Where can we get understanding?
13 People don’t know where wisdom is. It cannot be found by anyone on earth.
14 The deep ocean says, ‘It’s not here with me.’
    The sea says, ‘It’s not here with me.’
15 You cannot buy wisdom with even the purest gold. There’s not enough silver in the world to pay for it.
16 You cannot buy it with gold from Ophir or with precious onyx or sapphires.
17 Wisdom is worth more than gold or crystal. It cannot be bought with expensive jewels set in gold.
18 It is far more valuable than coral and jasper, more precious than rubies.
19 The topaz from Ethiopia cannot match its value, which is greater than the purest gold.

20 "So where does wisdom come from? Where can we find understanding?
21 Wisdom is hidden from every living thing on earth. Even birds in the sky cannot see it.
22 Death and destruction\(^d\) say, ‘We have never seen wisdom; we have only heard rumors about it.’

23 "Only God knows the way to wisdom. Only he knows where wisdom is.
24 He can see to the very ends of the earth. He sees everything under the sky.
25 God gave the wind its power. He decided how big to make the oceans.

26 He decided where to send the rain and where the thunderstorms should go.
27 He looked at wisdom and discussed it. He examined it and saw how much it is worth.
28 Then he said to humans, ‘To fear and respect the Lord is wisdom. To turn away from evil is understanding.’"

Job Continues His Speech

29 ‘Job continued to speak:
2 ‘I wish my life could be the same as it was a few months ago, when God watched over me and cared for me.
3 God’s light shined above me, so I could walk through the darkness.
4 I wish for the days when I was successful, when I enjoyed God’s friendship and blessing in my home.
5 God All-Powerful was still with me then, and my children were all around me.
6 Life was so good that I washed my feet in cream and had plenty of the finest oils.\(^b\)

7 ‘Those were the days when I went to the city gate and sat in the public meeting of the elders.
8 When the young men saw me coming, they stepped out of my way. And the old men stood up to show they respected me.
9 The leaders of the people stopped talking and put their hands over their mouths.
10 Even the most important leaders were

\(^d\) 28:22 Death and destruction Or “Abaddon,” a Hebrew name meaning “death” or “destruction.” See Rev. 9:11.

\(^b\) 29:6 had plenty of the finest oils Literally, “Around the anointed rock near me were streams of oil.” This probably means Job had so much olive oil that there were streams of oil running down the altar from the part Job gave as a gift to God.
quiet,
as if their tongues were stuck to the
roof of their mouths.
11 All who heard me said good things
about me.
Those who saw what I did praised
me,
because I helped the poor when they
cried out.
I helped the orphans who had no
one to care for them.
13 People who were dying asked God to
bless me.
My help brought joy to widows in
need.
14 Right living was my clothing.
Fairness was my robe and turban.
15 I was like eyes for the blind,
like feet for the crippled.
16 I was like a father to the poor.
I helped people I didn’t even know
win their case in court.
17 I stopped evil people from abusing
their power
and saved innocent people from
them.\(^a\)

18 “I always thought I would live a long
life,
growing old with my family around
me.
19 I was like a healthy plant with roots
that have plenty of water
and branches that are wet with dew.
20 I thought each new day would bring
more honor
and be full of new possibilities.\(^b\)

21 “In the past people listened to me.
They waited quietly for my advice.
22 When I finished speaking, they had
nothing more to say.
My words fell gently on their ears.
23 They waited for my words as they
would for rain.

They drank them in like rain in the
springtime.
24 I smiled at them, and they could hardly
believe it.
My smile made them feel better.
25 I was their leader and made decisions
about their future.
I was like a king among his troops,
comforting those who were sad.
16 “But now men younger than I
make fun of me—
men whose fathers were too
worthless to put with my sheep
dogs.
2 Their fathers are still too weak to be of
any use to me.
All their strength is gone.
3 They are starving with nothing to eat,
so they chew on the dry, ruined
land.
4 They pull up salt plants in the desert
and eat the roots from the broom
tree.
5 They are forced away from other
people,
who shout at them as if they were
thieves.
6 They must live in the dry riverbeds,
hillside caves, and holes in the
ground.
7 They howl in the bushes
and huddle together under
thornbushes.
8 They are a bunch of worthless people
without names,
who were forced to leave their
country.

9 “Now their sons sing songs to make fun
of me.
My name has become a bad word
to them.
10 They hate me and stay far away from
me,
except when they come to spit in
my face!
11 God has taken the string from my bow
and made me weak,
so they feel free to do whatever they
want to me.

\(^a\) 29:17 Literally, “I shattered the teeth of the crooked and
snatched the victims from their teeth.”
\(^b\) 29:20 Literally, “My glory is new with me and my bow in my
hand renewed.” The words “glory” and “bow” might both refer
to a rainbow—the promise of good weather after a storm. Or
this might be understood as, “My soul feels new every day, my
hand always strong enough to shoot a new bow.”
They attack me on my right side. They knock my feet out from under me. They build ramps to attack and destroy me like a city.

They guard the road so that I cannot escape. They succeed in destroying me, without help from anyone. They break a hole in the wall and come rushing through it, and the crashing rocks fall on me. I am shaking with fear. They chased my honor away like dust in the wind. My safety disappears like a cloud.

“Now my life is almost gone, and soon I will die. Days of suffering have grabbed me. All my bones ache at night. Pain never stops chewing on me. God grabbed the collar of my coat and twisted my clothes out of shape. He threw me into the mud, and I became like dust and ashes.

“God, I cry out to you for help, but you don’t answer. I stand up and pray, but you don’t pay attention to me. You have become cruel to me; you use your power to hurt me. You let the strong wind blow me away. You throw me around in the storm. I know you will lead me to my death, to that place where all the living must go.

Surely no one would attack a man who is already ruined, when he is hurt and crying for help. God, you know that I cried for those who were in trouble. You know that I mourned for the poor. But when I hoped for good, trouble came instead. When I looked for light, darkness came.

I constantly feel upset. And my suffering has only just begun. I am always sad and depressed, without any relief. I stand up in the public meeting and cry for help, making sad sounds like the wild dogs, like the ostriches in the desert. My skin is burned and peeling away. My body is hot with fever. My harp is tuned to play songs of sorrow. My flute makes sad sounds like someone crying.

“I made an agreement with my eyes not to look at a young woman in a way that would make me want her.

What does God above have for us? How does God All-Powerful repay people from his home high in heaven?

He sends trouble to the wicked and disaster to those who do wrong. God is the one who knows what I do and sees every step I take.

“I have not lied to anyone. I never tried to cheat people. If God would use accurate scales, he would know that I am innocent. If I ever stepped off the right path, if my eyes led my heart to do evil, or if my hands are dirty with sin, then let others eat what I planted. Let my crops be pulled up by the roots.

“If I have desired another woman or waited at my neighbor’s door to sin with his wife, then let my wife serve someone else,

\[a\] 31:1–2 Or possibly, “I made an agreement with my eyes not to look with desire at the Virgin or the sacred things that belong to God All-Powerful.” Here, “the Virgin” refers to a goddess worshiped by the Canaanites.

\[b\] 31:6 accurate scales Literally, “scales of righteousness.” As a wordplay, this could mean either “accurate scales” or “scales that show a person is good.”
and let other men sleep with her.

11 To do such a thing would be shameful, a sin that must be punished.

12 Such sin is like a fire that burns until it destroys everything.

It would completely ruin my life’s work.

13 “If I refused to be fair to my slaves when they had a complaint against me,
then what will I do when I must face God?

What will I say when he asks me to explain what I did?

15 The one who made me in my mother’s womb also made them.

God shaped us all inside our mothers.

16 “I have never refused to help the poor.

I always gave widows what they needed.

17 I have never been selfish with my food.

I shared what I had with orphans.

18 All my life I have been like a father to orphans

and have taken care of widows.

19 Whenever I found people suffering because they didn’t have clothes or saw a poor man with no coat,

20 I always gave them something to wear.

I used the wool from my own sheep to make them warm.

And they thanked me with all their heart.

21 I never threatened an orphan,
even when I knew I had support in court.a

22 If I ever did that, may my arm be pulled from its socket and fall from my shoulder!

23 But I didn’t do any of these bad things.

I fear God’s punishment too much. His majesty scares me.b

24 “I have never trusted in riches.

I never said even to pure gold, ‘You are my hope.’

25 I have been wealthy, but that didn’t make me proud.

I earned a lot of money, but that is not what made me happy.

26 I have never worshiped the bright sun or the beautiful moon.

27 I was never foolish enough to worship the sun and the moon.

28 This is also a sin that must be punished.

If I had worshiped them, I would have been unfaithful to God All-Powerful.

29 “I have never been happy when my enemies were destroyed.

I have never laughed at my enemies when bad things happened to them.

30 I have never let my mouth sin by cursing my enemies and wishing for them to die.

31 The people in my house know that I have never let anyone go hungry.

32 I always invited strangers into my home so that they would not have to sleep in the streets.

33 I have not tried to hide my sins as some people do.

I have never hidden my guilt.

34 I was never so afraid of what people might say or of making enemies that I kept my sins secret and avoided going out.

35 “How I wish someone would listen to me!

I will sign my name to all I have said. Now let God All-Powerful answer me.

Let him make a list of what he thinks I did wrong.

36 I would wear it around my neck.

I would put it on my head like a crown.

37 Then I could explain everything I have done.

I could come to God with my head held high like a prince.

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a 31:21 Or “I never shook my fist at an orphan who was at the gate asking for help.”

b 31:23 His majesty … me Or “I could not stand before his majesty.”
38 “I did not use my land in a wrong way. I never caused it to suffer.
I always paid the workers for the food I got from the land.
I never let any of them starve.
40 If I ever did any of these bad things, let thorns and weeds grow in my fields instead of wheat and barley!”
Job’s words are finished.

Elihu Adds to the Argument

32 Then Job’s three friends gave up trying to answer him, because he was so sure that he was innocent. 2 But there was a young man there named Elihu son of Barakel. He was a descendant of a man named Buz. Elihu was from the family of Ram. He became very angry because Job kept saying he was innocent—that he was right and God was wrong. 3 Elihu was also angry with Job’s three friends because they could not answer him, and yet they still considered him guilty of doing wrong. 4 Elihu was the youngest one there, so he had waited until everyone finished talking. 5 But when he saw that Job’s three friends had nothing more to say, his anger forced him to speak. 6 So here’s what Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said:

“I am only a young man, and you are all older.
That is why I was afraid to tell you what I think.
7 I thought to myself, ‘Older people should speak first.
They have lived many years, so they have learned many things.’
8 But it is the spirit in people, the breath from God All-Powerful, that makes them understand.
9 Old men are not the only wise people.
They are not the only ones who understand what is right.

10 “So please listen to me, and I will tell you what I think.
11 I waited patiently while you men talked.
I listened to the answers you gave as you searched for the right words.
12 I listened carefully to what you said.
Not one of you proved Job wrong.
Not one of you answered his arguments.
13 You men cannot say that you have found wisdom.
The answer to Job’s arguments must come from God, not people.
14 Job was arguing with you, not me, so I will not use your arguments to answer him.

15 “Job, these men lost the argument.
They don’t have anything more to say.
They don’t have any more answers.
16 I waited for them to answer you.
But now they are quiet.
They stand there with nothing more to say.
17 So now I will give you my answer.
Yes, I will tell you what I think.
18 I have so much to say
that I cannot hold it in.
19 I feel like a jar of wine that has never been opened.
I am like a new wineskin ready to burst.
20 I must speak so that I will feel better.
I must answer your arguments.
21 I will treat you the same as I would treat anyone else.
I will not praise you to win your favor.
22 I cannot treat one person better than another.
If I did, God my Maker would punish me!

33 1 “Now, Job, listen to me.
Listen carefully to what I say.
2 I am ready to speak.
3 My heart is honest, so my words are sincere.
I will speak the truth about what I know.
4 God’s Spirit made me.
My life comes from God All-Powerful.
5 Listen to me and answer if you can.
   Get your arguments ready to face me.
6 You and I are the same before God.
   He used clay to make us both.
7 Don’t be afraid of me.
   I will not be hard on you.

8 “But, Job, I heard what you said.
   These were your very words:
9 ‘I am pure and innocent;
I did nothing wrong; I am not guilty!’
10 But God found an excuse to attack me.
   He treats me like an enemy.
11 He put chains on my feet
   and watches everything I do.’

12 “But you are wrong about this, and I
   will prove it to you.
   God knows more than any of us.\textsuperscript{a}
13 You are arguing with God!
   Why do you think he should explain
   everything to you?
14 But maybe God does explain what he
   does but speaks in ways that people don’t
   understand.
15 He may speak in a dream, or in a vision
   at night,
   when people are in a deep sleep
   lying in their beds.
16 He may whisper something in their ear,
   and they are frightened when they
   hear his warnings.
17 God warns people to stop them from
   doing wrong
   and to keep them from becoming proud.
18 He does this to save them from death.\textsuperscript{b}
   He wants to keep them from being
   destroyed.
19 “Or those who are sick in bed might be
   suffering punishment from God.
   The pain that makes their bones
   ache might be a warning from

\textsuperscript{a} 33:12 God … any of us  Or “God is much greater than anyone.”
\textsuperscript{b} 33:18 death  Literally, “the Pit,” the place where people go when they die. Also in verse 22.

20 They feel so bad they cannot eat.
   Even the best food makes them sick.
21 Their bodies might waste away until
   they become thin
   and all their bones stick out.
22 They might be close to death,
   their lives about to end.
23 But maybe one of God’s thousands of
   angels is watching over them,
   to speak for them and tell about the
   good things they have done.
24 Maybe the angel will be kind and say to
   God,
   ‘Save this one from the place of death!
   I have found a way to pay for his life.’
25 Then that person’s body will become
   young and strong again.
   He will be as he was when he was
   young.
26 He will pray and God will answer.
   He will worship God and shout
   with joy.
   He will again stand as right before
   God.
27 He will tell everyone, ‘I sinned.
   I changed good into bad,
   but God didn’t give me the
   punishment I deserved!
28 God saved me from going down to the
   place of death.
   Now I can enjoy life again.’
29 “God does all these things for people
   again and again.
30 He wants them to be saved from death
   so that they can enjoy life.
31 “Job, pay attention and listen to me.
   Be quiet and let me talk.
32 But if you have an answer, go ahead
   and speak.
   Tell me your argument.
   I would be happy to know that you
   are innocent!
33 But if you have nothing to say, then
   listen to me.
Be quiet, and I will teach you wisdom.”

1 Then Elihu continued his speech:
2 “Listen to what I say, you wise men.
Pay attention, you who know so much.
3 Your tongue tastes the food it touches,
and your ear tests the words it hears.
4 So let us test these arguments and decide for ourselves what is right.
Together we will learn what is good.
5 Job says, ‘I am innocent,
and God is not being fair to me.
6 I am right, but I am judged to be a liar.
I have done no wrong, but I am badly hurt.’

7 “Would anyone but Job say such things?
He has more thirst for insulting God than for water.
8 He is a friend of evil people.
He likes to spend time with the wicked.
9 I know this because he says,
‘You will gain nothing if you try to please God.’

10 “You men can understand, so listen to me.
God would never do what is evil!
God All-Powerful would never do wrong.
11 He pays us back for what we have done.
He gives us what we deserve.
12 The truth is that God does no wrong.
God All-Powerful is always fair.
13 No one chose God to be in charge of the earth.
No one gave him responsibility for the whole world.
14 If God decided to take away his spirit
and the breath of life he gave us,
then everything on earth would die.
We would all become dust again.
15 “If you men are wise,
you will listen to what I say.

17 Can someone be a ruler if he hates justice?
Job, God is not only powerful, but he is fair.
Do you think you can judge him guilty?
18 God is the one who says to kings, ‘You are worthless!’
He says to leaders, ‘You are evil!’
19 He does not respect leaders more than other people.
And he does not respect the rich more than the poor.
God made everyone.
20 Any of us can die suddenly, in the middle of the night.
Anyone can get sick and pass away.
Even powerful people die for no reason we can see.

21 “God watches what people do.
He sees every step they take.
22 There is no place dark enough for evil people to hide from God.
23 God does not need to set a time for people to come before him and be judged.
24 He does not have to ask questions when people do wrong,
even if they are powerful leaders.
He simply destroys them and chooses others to take their place.
25 When he learns what people have done,
he defeats them, and overnight they are gone.
26 He will punish them for the evil they have done,
and he will do it where everyone can see.
27 He will do this because they rebelled against him
and ignored what he wanted.
28 They hurt the poor and made them cry to God for help.
And he hears their cry!
29 But if God decides not to help them,
no one can judge him guilty.
If he hides himself, no one can find him.
He is the ruler over every person and nation.

He keeps the wicked from ruling so that they will not bring harm to the people.

“A person should say to God, ‘I am guilty; I will not sin anymore.

Show me the sins I am not able to see. If I have done wrong, I will not do it again.’

Job, you want God to reward you, but you refuse to change.

It is your decision, not mine.

Tell me what you think.

A wise person would listen to me.

A wise person would say,

‘Job talks like an ignorant person. What he says doesn’t make sense!’

I think Job should be punished even more, because he answers us like someone who is evil!

He adds rebellion to his other sins. He sits there insulting us and arguing with God!”

‘Elihu continued talking and said,

“Job, it is not fair for you to say, ‘I am more right than God,’ because you also ask him, ‘What’s the use of trying to please you? What good will it do me if I don’t sin?’

Job, I want to answer you and your friends here with you.

Look up at the sky.

Look at the clouds, which are so much higher than you.

If you sin, it does not hurt God.

Even if your sins are too many to count, that does nothing to God.

And if you are good, that does not help God.

He gets nothing from you.

Job, the good and bad things you do affect only other people like yourself.

If people are being hurt, they cry out and beg for protection from those who hurt them.

But they forget to say, ‘Where is God, the one who made me? He is the one who gives us songs to sing in the night.

He is the one who makes us smarter than any animal on earth and wiser than any bird.’

Or if evil people ask God for help, he will not answer them, because they are too proud.

God will not listen to their worthless begging.

God All-Powerful will not pay attention to them.

So, Job, God will not listen to you when you say that you don’t see him.

You say you are waiting for your chance to meet with him and prove that you are innocent.

Job thinks that God does not punish evil and that he pays no attention to sin.

So he continues his worthless talking. Everything he has said shows he does not know what he is talking about.”

‘Elihu continued talking and said,

“Be patient with me a little longer.

God has a few more words that he wants me to say.

I will share my knowledge with everyone.

I will prove that my Maker is right.

Job, I am telling the truth.

I know what I am talking about.

God is very powerful, but he does not hate people.

He is very powerful, but he is also very wise.

He will not let evil people live.

He brings justice to the poor.
7 He watches over those who live right. He lets them rule in high places.
8 So if people are punished, if they are tied with chains and ropes, they did something wrong.
9 And God will tell them what they did, that they sinned and were proud.
10 He will force them to listen to his warning.
   He will command them to stop sinning.
11 If they serve and obey him, he will make them successful and they will live a happy life.
12 But if they refuse to obey him, they will be destroyed.
   They will die like fools.

13 “People who don’t care about God are always bitter.
   Even when he punishes them, they refuse to pray to him for help.
14 They will die while they are still young, like the male prostitutes.
15 God saves those who suffer by using their suffering.
   He uses their troubles to speak in a way that makes them listen.
16 “In fact, God wants to help you out of your troubles.
   He wants to take away your burdens that are crushing you.
   He wants to load your table with plenty of food.
17 But you are full of this talk about guilt, judgment, and justice!
18 Job, don’t let your anger fill you with doubt about God.
   And don’t let the price of forgiveness turn you away.
19 Do you think your wealth will keep you out of trouble?
   Will your great strength be of any help to you now?
20 Don’t be like those who wish darkness would come and hide them.
   They try to disappear into the night."d

21 Job, don’t let your suffering cause you to choose evil.
   Be careful not to do wrong.

22 “Look, God’s power makes him great!
   He is the greatest teacher of all.
23 No one can tell him what to do.
   No one can say, ‘God, you have done wrong.’
24 Remember to praise him for what he has done,
   as many others have done in song.
25 Everyone can see what he has done,
   even people in faraway countries.
26 Yes, God is great, but we cannot understand his greatness.
   We don’t know how long he has lived.

27 “God takes up water from the earth and changes it into mist and rain.
28 So the clouds pour out the water, and the rain falls on many people.
29 No one can understand how he spreads the clouds out or how the thunder rumbles from his home in the sky.
30 Look, he spreads lightning all over the sky and covers the deepest part of the ocean.
31 He uses them to control the nations and to give them plenty of food.
32 He grabs the lightning with his hands, and commands it to strike where he wants.
33 The thunder warns that a storm is coming.
   So even the cattle know it is near.

37 “The thunder and lightning frighten me;
   my heart pounds in my chest.
2 Listen to God’s thundering voice!
   Listen to the sound coming from his mouth.
3 He sends his lightning to flash across the whole sky.
   It lights up the earth from one end to the other.

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*d 36:19–20 The Hebrew text here is hard to understand."
4 After the flashes of lightning you can hear his roaring voice. He thunders with his wonderful voice! And while his voice thunders, the lightning flashes continue.

5 God’s thundering voice is amazing! He does great things that we cannot understand.

6 He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth.’ And he says to the rain, ‘Pour down on the earth.’

7 God does this to stop everyone’s work and to show the people he made what he can do.

8 The animals run into their dens and stay there.

9 Whirlwinds come from the south. The cold winds come from the north.

10 God’s breath makes ice and freezes even large bodies of water.

11 He fills the clouds with water and scatters his lightning through them.

12 He orders the clouds to be blown all around the earth. The clouds do whatever he commands.

13 He causes the clouds to punish people with floods or to water his earth and show his love.

14 “Job, stop for a minute and listen. Think about the wonderful things God does.

15 Do you know how God controls the clouds? Do you know how he makes his lightning flash?

16 Do you know how the clouds hang in the sky? This is just one of the amazing works of the one who knows everything.

17 All you know is that you sweat, your clothes stick to you, and all is still and quiet when the heat wave comes from the south.

18 Can you help God spread out the sky and make it shine like polished brass?

19 “Job, tell us what we should say to God! We cannot think of what to say because of our ignorance. a

20 I would not tell God that I wanted to talk to him. That would be like asking to be destroyed.

21 A person cannot look at the sun. It is too bright as it shines in the sky after the wind blows the clouds away.

22 In the same way God’s golden glory shines from the Holy Mountain. b He is surrounded by the brightest light.

23 We have seen that God All-Powerful really is all powerful! But he is just and never treats anyone unfairly. c

24 That is why people fear and respect him. He shows no respect for those who think they are wise.”

God Speaks to Job

Then the Lord spoke to Job from a whirlwind and said,

2 “Who is this ignorant person saying these foolish things? d

3 Prepare yourself for an attack! Get ready to answer the questions I will ask you.

4 “Where were you when I made the earth? If you are so smart, answer me.

5 And who decided how big the earth should be?

a 37:19 We cannot . . . ignorance Literally, “We cannot arrange our thoughts, because of the darkness.”

b 37:22 Holy Mountain Or “the north” or “Zaphon.”

c 37:23 But he . . . unfairly Or “He does not answer us when we try to sue him for justice.”

d 38:2 Or “Who is this person darkening advice with ignorant words.”
Who measured it with a measuring line?
6 What is the earth resting on?
   Who put the first stone in its place
7 when the morning stars sang together
   and the angels\textsuperscript{d} shouted with joy?

8 “Who closed the flood gates
   as the sea gushed from the womb?
9 Who covered it with clouds
   and wrapped it in darkness?
10 I set the limits for the sea
   and put it behind locked gates.
11 I said to the sea, ‘You can come this far,
   but no farther.
   This is where your proud waves will stop.’

12 “Did you ever in your life command
   the morning to begin
   or the day to dawn?
13 Did you ever tell the morning light to
   grab the earth
   and shake those who are evil out of
   their hiding places?
14 The morning light makes the hills
   and valleys easy to see.
   When the daylight comes to the earth,
   the shapes of these places stand out
   like the folds of a coat.
   They take shape like soft clay
   that is pressed with a stamp.
15 Evil people don’t like the daylight.
   When it shines bright, it keeps
   them from doing the bad things
   they do.

16 “Have you ever gone to the deepest
   parts of the sea?
   Have you ever walked on the ocean
   bottom?
17 Has anyone shown you the gates to the
   world of the dead?
   Have you ever seen those gates that
   lead to the dark place of death?
18 Do you really understand how big the
   earth is?
   Tell me, if you know all this.

19 “Where does light come from?
   Where does darkness come from?
20 Can you take them back to where they
   belong?
   Do you know how to get there?
21 Surely you know these things, since
   you are so old and wise.
   You were alive when I made them,
   weren’t you?\textsuperscript{b}

22 “Have you ever gone into the
   storerooms
   where I keep the snow and the hail?
23 I save them there for times of trouble,
   for the times of war and battle.
24 Have you ever gone to the place where
   the sun comes up,
   where it makes the east wind blow
   all over the earth?\textsuperscript{c}
25 Who dug ditches in the sky for the
   heavy rain?
   Who made a path for the
   thunderstorm?
26 Who makes it rain even in desert
   places
   where no one lives?
27 The rain gives that dry empty land all
   the water it needs,
   and grass begins to grow.
28 Does the rain have a father?
   Who produces the drops of dew?
29 Does ice have a mother?
   Who gives birth to the frost?
30 That’s when the water freezes as hard
   as a rock.
   Even the deep sea freezes over!

31 “Can you tie up the Pleiades\textsuperscript{d}?
   Can you unfasten the belt of
   Orion\textsuperscript{e}?
32 Can you bring out the other
   constellations\textsuperscript{f} at the right

\textsuperscript{b} 38:19–21 This is sarcasm—saying something in a way that
   everyone understands it is not really true.
\textsuperscript{c} 38:24 Or “Where is the place that the fog disperses and the
   place where the east wind scatters it all over the earth?”
\textsuperscript{d} 38:31 Pleiades A famous group of stars. It is often called,
   “The Seven Sisters.”
\textsuperscript{e} 38:32 Orion A famous group of stars. It looks like a hunter
   or powerful soldier.
\textsuperscript{f} 38:32 constellations Groups of stars in the night sky. Here,
   this probably means the twelve constellations of the Zodiac.
   They seem to pass through the sky so that a new constellation
   is in a certain part of the sky each month.
times?
Can you lead out the Bear\(^d\) with its cubs?

33 Do you know the laws that control the sky?
Can you put each star in its place above the earth?\(^b\)

34 “Can you shout at the clouds and command them to cover you with rain?

35 Can you give a command to the lightning?
Will it come to you and say, ‘Here we are; what do you want, sir?’
Will it go wherever you want it to go?

36 “Who makes people wise?
Who puts wisdom deep inside them?

37 Who is wise enough to count the clouds and tip them over to pour out their rain?

38 The rain makes the dust become mud, and the clumps of dirt stick together.

39 “Do you find food for the lions?
Do you feed their hungry babies?

40 No, they hide in their caves or wait in the grass, ready to attack their prey.

41 Who feeds the ravens when their babies cry out to God and wander around without food?

42:32 Bear A famous group of stars. It looks like a bear. It is often called, “the Big Dipper.” Near it is a smaller constellation that looks like a small bear. It is often called, “the Little Dipper.”

38:33 Can you … earth Or “Can you put it in charge over the earth?”

3 These animals lie down, they feel their birth pains, and their babies are born.

4 Their babies grow strong out in the wild. Then they leave their mothers and never come back.

5 “Who let the wild donkeys go free?
Who untied their ropes and let them loose?

6 I let the wild donkey have the desert for a home.
I gave the salt lands to them for a place to live.

7 They are happy to be away from the noise of the city.
They never have to listen to their drivers shouting at them.

8 They live in the mountains.
That is their pasture.
That is where they look for food to eat.

9 “Will a wild bull agree to serve you?
Will he stay in your barn at night?

10 Will he let you put ropes on him to plow your fields?

11 A wild bull is very strong, but can you trust him to do your work?

12 Can you trust him to gather your grain and bring it to your threshing place?

13 “An ostrich gets excited and flaps its wings, but it cannot fly.
Its wings and feathers are not like the wings of a stork.

14 An ostrich lays her eggs on the ground and lets the sand keep them warm.

15 The ostrich forgets that someone might step on her eggs or that a wild animal might break them.

16 An ostrich leaves her little babies. She treats them as if they were not her own.
If her babies die, she does not care that all her work was for nothing.

17 That’s because I did not give wisdom
to the ostrich.
She is foolish, and I made her that way.

18 But when the ostrich gets up to run,
she laughs at the horse and its rider,
because she can run faster than any horse.

19 “Did you give the horse its strength?
Did you put the mane\(^a\) on its neck?
20 Did you make it able to jump like a locust
or snort\(^b\) so loudly that it scares people?
21 A horse is happy to be so strong.
It scratches the ground with its foot
and runs into battle.
22 It laughs at fear; nothing makes it afraid!
It does not run away from battle.
23 The soldier’s quiver shakes on the horse’s side.
The spear and weapons its rider carries shine in the sun.
24 The horse gets very excited and races over the ground.\(^c\)
When it hears the trumpet blow, it cannot stand still.
25 When the trumpet sounds, it snorts, ‘Hurray!’
It can smell the battle from far away
and hear the shouts of commanders
with all the other sounds of battle.

26 “Did you teach the hawk how to spread
its wings and fly south\(^d\)?
27 Are you the one who told the eagle\(^e\) to
fly high into the sky?
Did you tell it to build its nest high
in the mountains?
28 It lives high on a peak at the top of a cliff.
That is its fortress.

29 From there it looks far into the distance,
searching for its food.
30 The eagles gather around dead bodies,
and their young eat the blood.”

Then the Lord said to Job,

“You wanted to argue with God All-Powerful.
You wanted to correct me and prove
that I was wrong.
So give me your answer!”

3Then Job answered the Lord:

“I am not worthy to speak!
What can I say to you?
I cannot answer you!
I will put my hand over my mouth.

5 I spoke once, but I will not speak again.
I spoke twice, but I will not say anything more.”

6Then the Lord spoke to Job again from the storm:

“Brace yourself\(^f\)
and get ready to answer the questions I will ask you.

8 “Are you trying to show that I am unfair?
Are you trying to look innocent by saying that I am guilty?

9 Are your arms as strong as mine?
Do you have a voice like mine that is as loud as thunder?

10 If so, you can be proud
and wear glory and honor like clothes.

11 If you are as powerful as God, then show your anger!
Punish those who are proud and humble them.

12 Yes, just look at the proud and make them humble.
Crush those evil people where they stand.

13 Bury them all in the dirt.
Wrap their bodies up and put them in their graves.

14 If you can do any of these things, then

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\(a\) 39:19 mane The hair on a horse’s neck.
\(b\) 39:20 snort The sound a horse makes by blowing air very hard through the nose.
\(c\) 39:24 races over the ground Literally, “swallows up the ground.”
\(d\) 39:26 south Or “to Teman.”
\(e\) 39:27 eagle Or “vulture.”

\(f\) 40:7 Brace yourself Literally, “Gird yourself like a man.” This means “get ready for battle.”
even I will praise you. And I will admit that you can save yourself by your own power.

15 “Look at the behemoth.\textsuperscript{a}
I made the behemoth, and I made you. He eats grass like a cow. But he has great strength in his body. The muscles in his stomach are powerful.

16 His tail stands strong like a cedar tree. His leg muscles are very strong.

17 His bones are as strong as bronze. His legs are like iron bars.

18 The behemoth is the most amazing animal I made, but I can defeat him.

19 He eats the grass that grows on the hills where the wild animals play.

20 He lies under the lotus plants. He hides among the reeds of the swamp.

21 The lotus plants hide him in their shade. He lives under the willow trees that grow near the river.

22 If the river floods, the behemoth will not run away. He is not afraid if the Jordan River splashes on his face.

23 No one can blind his eyes and capture him. No one can catch him in a trap.

24 “Can you catch Leviathan\textsuperscript{b} with a fishhook?
Can you tie his tongue with a rope?

25 Can you put a rope through his nose or a hook through his jaw?

26 Will he beg you to let him go free? Will he speak to you with gentle words?

27 Will he make an agreement with you and promise to serve you forever?

28 Will you play with Leviathan as you would play with a bird?

29 Will you put a rope on him so that your girls can play with him?

30 Will fishermen try to buy him from you? Will they cut him into pieces and sell him to the merchants?

31 Can you throw spears into his skin or head?

32 “If you ever lay a hand on Leviathan, you will never do it again! Just think about the battle that would be!

33 Do you think you can defeat him? Well, forget it! There is no hope. Just looking at him will scare you!

34 No one is brave enough to wake him up and make him angry.

35 “Well, no one can challenge me either!\textsuperscript{c}

36 I owe nothing to anyone. Everything under heaven belongs to me.\textsuperscript{d}

37 “I will tell you about Leviathan’s legs, his strength, and his graceful shape.

38 No one can pierce his skin. It is like armor!\textsuperscript{e}

39 No one can force him to open his jaws. The teeth in his mouth scare people.

40 His back has rows of shields tightly sealed together. They are so close to each other that no air can pass between them. The shields are joined to each other. They hold together so tightly that they cannot be pulled apart.

41 When Leviathan sneezes, it is like lightning flashing out. His eyes shine like the light of dawn. Burning torches come from his mouth. Sparks of fire shoot out.

42 Smoke pours from his nose like burning weeds under a boiling pot.

43 His breath sets coals on fire,

\textsuperscript{a} 40:15 behemoth This might be a hippopotamus, a rhinoceros, or possibly an elephant.

\textsuperscript{b} 41:1 Leviathan This animal might be a crocodile or a giant sea monster.

\textsuperscript{c} 41:10 Well, no one \textsuperscript{\ldots} either Or “No one can stand and fight him.”

\textsuperscript{d} 41:11 Or “No one has come near to Leviathan and survived—no one under heaven!”

\textsuperscript{e} 41:13 It is like armor Or “No one can approach him with a bridle.”
and flames shoot from his mouth.  
His neck is very powerful.  
People are afraid and run away from him.  
There is no soft spot in his skin.  
It is as hard as iron.  
His heart is like a rock; he has no fear.  
It is as hard as a millstone.  
When he gets up, even the strongest people are afraid.  
They run away when he swings his tail.  
Swords, spears, and darts only bounce off when they hit him.  
These weapons don’t hurt him at all!  
He breaks iron as easily as straw.  
He breaks bronze like rotten wood.  
Arrows don’t make him run away.  
Rocks thrown at him seem as light as chaff.  
When a wood club hits him, it feels to him like a piece of straw.  
He laughs when anyone throws a spear at him.  
The skin on his belly is like sharp pieces of broken pottery.  
He leaves tracks in the mud like a threshing board.  
He stirs up the water like a boiling pot.  
He makes it bubble like a pot of boiling oil.  
When he swims, he leaves a sparkling path behind him.  
He stirs up the water and makes it white with foam.  
No animal on earth is like him.  
He is an animal made without fear.  
He looks down on the proudest of creatures.  
He is king over all the wild animals.”

Job Answers the Lord

1 Then Job answered the Lord:  
“I know you can do everything.  
You make plans, and nothing can change or stop them.  
You asked, ‘Who is this ignorant person saying these foolish things?’b  
I talked about things I did not understand.  
I talked about things too amazing for me to know.  
“You said to me, ‘Listen, and I will speak.  
I will ask you questions, and you will answer me.’  
In the past I heard about you, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.  
And I am ashamed of myself.c  
I am so sorry.  
As I sit in the dust and ashes,d  
I promise to change my heart and my life.”

The Lord Gives Job’s Wealth Back

7 After the Lord finished talking to Job, he spoke to Eliphaz from Teman. He said, “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you did not tell the truth about me, as my servant Job did. So now, Eliphaz, get seven bulls and seven rams. Take them to my servant Job. Kill them and offer them as a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will answer his prayer. Then I will not give you the punishment you deserve. You should be punished, because you were very foolish. You did not say what is right about me, as my servant Job did.”

9 So Eliphaz from Teman, Bildad from Shuah, and Zophar from Naamah obeyed the Lord. Then the Lord answered Job’s prayer.  
Job prayed for his friends, and the Lord made Job successful again. The Lord gave him twice as much as he had before.  
Then all his brothers and sisters and all the people who knew him before came to his house. They all ate a big meal with him. They comforted him and were sorry that the Lord had brought him so much trouble.  

b 42:3 Who ... things Or “Who is this person darkening advice with ignorant words.”

c 42:6 I am ashamed of myself Or “I take back what I said.”

d 42:6 dust and ashes People sat in dust and ashes to show that they were very sad about something.
much trouble. Each person gave Job a piece of silver and a gold ring.

12 The LORD blessed Job with even more than he had in the beginning. Job got 14,000 sheep, 6000 camels, 2000 oxen, and 1000 female donkeys. 13 He also got seven sons and three daughters. 14 He named the first daughter Jemimah and the second daughter Keziah. He named the third daughter Keren Happuch. 15 Job’s daughters were among the most beautiful women in all the country. And, like their brothers, they each got a share of their father’s property. 

16 So Job lived for 140 years more. He lived to see his children, his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, and his great-great-grandchildren. 17 Job lived to be a very old man who had lived a good, long life.

42:15 And ... property Usually a person’s property was divided only among the sons, but here, even Job’s daughters got part of his property.
Great blessings belong to those who don’t listen to evil advice, who don’t live like sinners, and who don’t join those who make fun of God.

Instead, they love the Lord’s teachings and think about them day and night. So they grow strong, like a tree planted by a stream—a tree that produces fruit when it should and has leaves that never fall. Everything they do is successful.

But the wicked are not like that. They are like chaff that the wind blows away. When the time for judgment comes, the wicked will be found guilty. Sinners have no place among those who do what is right.

The Lord shows his people how to live, but the wicked have lost their way.

Why are the nations so angry? Why are the people making such foolish plans? Their kings and leaders join together to fight against the Lord and his chosen king.

They say, “Let’s rebel against them. Let’s break free from them!”

But the one who rules in heaven laughs at them. The Lord makes fun of them.

He speaks to them in anger, and it fills them with fear. He says, “I have chosen this man to be king, and he will rule on Zion, my holy mountain.”

Let me tell you about the Lord’s agreement: He said to me, “Today I have become your father, and you are my son. If you ask, I will give you the nations. Everyone on earth will be yours. You will rule over them with great power. You will scatter your enemies like broken pieces of pottery!”

So, kings and rulers, be smart and learn this lesson. Serve the Lord with fear and trembling.

Show that you are loyal to his son, or the Lord will be angry and destroy you. He is almost angry enough to do that now, but those who go to him for protection will be blessed.

A song of David written during the time he was running from his son Absalom.

I have so many enemies. So many people have turned against me.

They say to themselves, “God will not rescue him!”

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3 But you, LORD, protect me. 
You bring me honor; 
you give me hope.

4 I will pray to the LORD, 
and he will answer me from his holy 
mountain. 

Selah

5 I can lie down to rest and know that I 
will wake up, 
because the LORD covers and 
protects me.
6 So I will not be afraid of my enemies, 
even if thousands of them surround 
me.

7 LORD, get up! 
My God, come rescue me! 
If you hit my enemies on the cheek, 
you will break all their teeth.

8 LORD, the victory is yours! 
You are so good to your people. 

Selah

To the director: With stringed instruments. A 
song of David.

1 God, you showed that I was 
innocent.
You gave me relief from all my 
troubles.
So listen to me now when I call to you 
for help.
Be kind to me and hear my prayer.

2 Men, how long will you try to 
dishonor me? 
Do you enjoy wasting your time 
searching for new lies against 
me? 

Selah

3 You can be sure that anyone who 
serves the LORD faithfully is 
special to him.

The LORD listens when I pray to 
him.

4 Tremble with fear, and stop sinning. 
Think about this when you go to 
bed, and calm down. 

Selah

5 Give the right sacrifices to the LORD, 
and put your trust in him!

6 Many people say, “I wish I could enjoy 
the good life. 
LORD, give us some of those 
blessings.”

7 But you have made me happier than 
they will ever be with all their 
wine and grain.
8 When I go to bed, I sleep in peace, 
because, LORD, you keep me safe.

To the director: With flutes. A song of David.

1 LORD, listen to me 
and understand what I am trying 
to say.
2 My God and King, 
listen to my prayer.
3 Every morning, LORD, I lay my gifts 
before you 
and look to you for help.
And every morning you hear my 
prayers.

4 God, you don’t want evil people near 
you. 
They cannot stay in your presence.
5 Fools cannot come near you. 
You hate those who do evil.
6 You destroy those who tell lies.
LORD, you hate those who make 
secret plans to hurt others.

7 But by your great mercy, I can enter 
your house. 
I can worship in your holy Temple

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Psalm 7

with fear and respect for you.

Lord, show me your right way of living,
and make it easy for me to follow.
People are looking for my weaknesses,
so show me how you want me to live.

My enemies never tell the truth.
They only want to destroy people.
Their words come from mouths that are like open graves.
They use their lying tongues to deceive others.a

Punish them, God!
Let them be caught in their own traps.
They have turned against you,
so punish them for their many crimes.

But let those who trust in you be happy forever.
Protect and strengthen those who love your name.

Lord, when you bless good people,
you surround them with your love,
like a large shield that protects them.

To the director: With stringed instruments,
on the sheminith. A song of David.

1 Lord, don’t punish me.
Don’t correct me when you are so angry.
2 Lord, be kind to me.
I am sick and weak.
Heal me, Lord!
My bones are shaking.
3 I am trembling all over.
Lord, how long until you heal me? b
4 Lord, come back and make me strong again.
Save me because you are so loyal and kind.
5 If I am dead, I cannot sing about you.
Those in the grave don’t praise you.
6 Lord, I am so weak.
I cried to you all night.

My pillow is soaked;
my bed is dripping wet from my tears.

My enemies have caused me such sorrow
that my eyes are worn out from crying.

Go away, you wicked people,
because the Lord has heard my cries.
8 The Lord has heard my request for mercy.
The Lord has accepted my prayer.
10 All my enemies will be filled with fear and shame.
They will be sorry when disgrace suddenly comes upon them.

A song c of David that he sang to the Lord about Cush from the tribe of Benjamin.

1 Lord my God, I come to you for protection.
Save me from those who are chasing me.
2 If you don’t help me, I will be torn apart like an animal caught by a lion.
I will be carried away with no one to save me.

3 Lord my God, I have done nothing wrong.
4 I have done nothing to hurt a friend d
or to help his enemies.
5 If that is not the truth, then punish me.
Let an enemy chase me, catch me,
and kill me.
Let him grind me into the dirt and put me in my grave.

6 Lord, get up e and show your anger!
My enemy is angry, so stand and fight against him.
Get me the justice that you demand.

Psalm 7 song Hebrew, “shiggayon,” which may mean a special kind of song, perhaps one that is sad or full of emotion.

friend Or “ally.”

Lord, get up The people said this when they lifted the Box of the Agreement and took it into battle, showing that God was with them. See Num. 10:35–36.

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7 Gather the nations around you, and take your place as judge.

8 LORD, judge the people.
   LORD, judge me.
   Prove that I am right and that I am innocent.

9 Stop those who do evil.
   Support those who do good.
   God, you are fair.
   You know what people are thinking.

10 God helps people who want to do right, so he will protect me.

11 God is a good judge.
   He always condemns evil.

12-13 If the wicked will not change, then God is ready to punish them. He has prepared his deadly weapons.
   His sword is sharp.
   His bow is strung, drawn back, and ready to shoot its flaming arrow.

14 The minds of the wicked are full of evil; they are pregnant with wicked plans, which give birth to lies.

15 They dig a pit to trap others, but they are the ones who will fall into it.

16 The trouble they cause will come back on them.
   They plan harm for others, but they are the ones who will be hurt.

17 I praise the LORD because he is good.
   I praise the name of the LORD Most High.

   To the director: With the gittith. A song of David.

8 LORD our Lord, your name is the most wonderful in all the earth!
   It brings you praise everywhere in heaven.

2 From the mouths of children and babies come songs of praise to you.
   They sing of your power to silence your enemies who were seeking revenge.

3 I look at the heavens you made with your hands.
   I see the moon and the stars you created.

4 And I wonder, “Why are people so important to you?
   Why do you even think about them?
   Why do you care so much about humans?
   Why do you even notice them?”

5 But you made them almost like gods and crowned them with glory and honor.

6 You put them in charge of everything you made.
   You put everything under their control.

7 People rule over the sheep and cattle and all the wild animals.

8 They rule over the birds in the sky and the fish that swim in the sea.

9 LORD our Lord, your name is the most wonderful name in all the earth!

b To the director: Use the Alamoth of Ben. A song of David.

9 1 I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart.
   I will tell about the wonderful things you have done.

2 You make me happy, so I will rejoice in you.
   God Most High, I praise your name.

3 My enemies turned to run from you, but they fell and were destroyed.

4 You listened to me from your throne like a good judge, and you decided that I was right.

a 8:4 people … humans Literally, “man … son of man” or “Enosh … son of Adam.” These are Hebrew ways of saying humans—descendants of Adam and Enosh.

b Psalm 9 In many Hebrew copies and in the ancient Greek version, Psalms 9 and 10 are combined as one psalm.

c Psalm 9 Alamoth of Ben This might be the name of a tune, “On the Death of the Son,” a music style, or one of the orchestral groups in the Temple. See 1 Chron. 15:20.
5 You told the nations how wrong they were.  
You destroyed those evil people.  
You erased their names from our memory forever and ever.

6 The enemy is finished!  
You destroyed their cities.  
There is nothing left to remind us of them.

7 The Lord set up his throne to bring justice, 
and he will rule forever.

8 He judges everyone on earth fairly.  
He judges all nations honestly.

9 Many people are suffering—crushed by the weight of their troubles.  
But the Lord is a refuge for them,  
a safe place they can run to.

10 Lord, those who know your name come to you for protection.  
And when they come,  
you do not leave them without help.

11 Sing praises to the Lord, who sits as King in Zion.  
Tell the nations about the great things he has done.

12 He punishes murderers and remembers those who are in need.  
When suffering people cry for help,  
he does not ignore them.

13 I said this prayer: “Lord, be kind to me.  
See how my enemies are hurting me.  
Save me from the ‘gates of death.’”

14 Then, at the gates of Jerusalem, I can sing praises to you.  
I will be so happy because you saved me.”

15 Those other nations have fallen into the pit they dug to catch others.  
They have been caught in their own trap.

16 The Lord showed that he judges fairly.  
The wicked were caught by what they did to hurt others.  

Higgayon Selah

17 The wicked will go to the place of death,  
as will all the nations that forget God.

18 It may seem that those who are poor and needy have been forgotten,  
but God will not forget them.  
He will not leave them without hope.

19 Lord, get up and judge the nations.  
Don’t let anyone think they can win against you.

20 Teach them a lesson, Lord.  
Let them know they are only human.  

Selah

1 Lord, why do you stay so far away?  
Why do you hide from people in times of trouble?

2 The wicked are proud and make evil plans to hurt the poor,  
who are caught in their traps and made to suffer.

3 Those greedy people brag about the things they want to get.  
They curse the Lord and show that they hate him.

4 The wicked are too proud to ask God for help.  
He does not fit into their plans.

5 They succeed in everything they do.  
They don’t understand how you can judge them.  
They make fun of all their enemies.

6 They say to themselves, “Nothing bad will ever happen to us.”

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Psalm 11

We will have our fun and never be punished.”

7 They are always cursing, lying, and planning evil things to do.

8 They hide just outside the villages, waiting to kill innocent people, always looking for any helpless person they can hurt.

9 They are like lions hiding in the bushes to catch weak and helpless animals. They lay their traps for the poor, who are caught in their nets.

10 Again and again they hurt people who are already weak and suffering.

11 They say to themselves, “God has forgotten about us. He is not watching. He will never see what we are doing.”

12 Lord, get up and do something. Punish those who are wicked, God. Don’t forget those who are poor and helpless.

13 The wicked turn against God because they think he will not punish them.

14 But, Lord, you do see the pain and suffering they cause. You see it, so punish them.

15 Break the arms of those who are wicked and evil. Punish them for the evil they have done, and stop them from doing any more.

16 Lord, you are King forever and ever, so I know you will remove the wicked nations from your land.

17 Lord, you have heard what the poor want. Listen to their prayers, and do what they ask.

18 Protect the orphans and those who have been hurt.

Don’t let powerful people drive us from our land!

To the director: A song of David.

1 I trust in the Lord, so why did you tell me to run and hide? Why did you say, “Fly like a bird to your mountain?”

2 Like hunters, the wicked hide in the dark. They get their bows ready and aim their arrows. They shoot at good, honest people.

3 What would good people do if the wicked destroyed all that is good? a

4 The Lord is in his holy temple. The Lord sits on his throne in heaven. He sees everything that happens. He watches people closely.

5 The Lord examines those who are good and those who are wicked; he hates those who enjoy hurting others.

6 He will make hot coals and burning sulfur fall like rain on the wicked. They will get nothing but a hot, burning wind.

7 The Lord always does what is right, and he loves seeing people do right. Those who live good lives will be with him. b

To the director: With the sheminith. A song of David.

12 Save me, Lord! We can no longer trust anyone! All the good, loyal people are gone.

2 People lie to their neighbors. They say whatever they think people want to hear.

3 The Lord should cut off their lying lips and cut out their bragging tongues.

4 Those people think they can win any

a 11:3 Or “What if the foundations of society were really destroyed?”

b 11:7 Those … him Literally, “They will see his face.”

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Psalm 15

1 Then I will sing to the LORD
because he was so good to me.

To the director: A song of David.

14 Only fools think there is no God.
People like that are evil and do
terrible things.
They never do what is right.

2 The LORD looks down from heaven
to see if there is anyone who is wise,
anyone who looks to him for help.

3 But everyone has gone the wrong way.
Everyone has turned bad.
No one does anything good.
No, not one person!

4 Those who are evil treat my people like
bread to be eaten.
And they never ask for the LORD’s help.
Don’t they know what they are doing?

5 They will have plenty to fear,
because God is with those who do
what is right.

6 You wicked people want to spoil the
hopes of the poor,
but the LORD will protect them.

7 I wish the one who lives on Mount Zion
would bring victory to Israel!
When the LORD makes his people
successful again,
the people of Jacob will be happy;
the people of Israel will be glad.

A song of David.

15 LORD, who can live in your Holy Tent?
Who can live on your holy mountain?

2 Only those who live pure lives, do what
is right,
and speak the truth from their hearts.

3 Such people don’t say bad things about

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others.
They don’t do things to hurt their neighbors.
They don’t tell shameful things about those close to them.

They hate those who fail to please God and honor those who respect the Lord.
If they make a promise to their neighbor, they do what they promised.

If they loan money to someone, they do not charge them interest.
And they refuse to testify against an innocent person, even if someone offers them money to do it.

Whoever lives like this will always stand strong.

A miktam of David.

16 1 Protect me, God, because I depend on you.
2 Some of you have said to the Lord, “You are my Lord.
Every good thing I have comes from you.”
3 But you have also said about the gods of this land, “They are my powerful gods.
They are the ones who make me happy.”

But those who worship other gods will have many troubles.
I will not share in the gifts of blood they offer to their idols.
I will not even say their names.

5 Lord, you give me all that I need.
You support me.
You give me my share.
My share is wonderful.
My inheritance is very beautiful.

7 I praise the LORD because he taught me well.
Even at night he put his instructions deep inside my mind.

8 I always remember that the LORD is with me.
He is here, close by my side, so nothing can defeat me.

9 So my heart and soul will be very happy.
Even my body will live in safety,
because you will not leave me in the place of death.
You will not let your faithful one rot in the grave.

11 You will teach me the right way to live.
Just being with you will bring complete happiness.
Being at your right side will make me happy forever.

A prayer of David.

17 1 Lord, hear my prayer for justice.
I am calling loudly to you.
I am being honest in what I say, so please listen to my prayer.

2 You will make the right decision, because you can see the truth.

3 You were with me all night and looked deep into my heart.
You questioned me and found that I did not say or do anything wrong.

4 Unlike most people, I have obeyed your commands, so I have never been like those who are cruel and evil.

5 I have followed your way.
My feet never left your path.

6 Every time I call to you, God, you answer me.
So listen to me now, and hear what I say.

7 Show your amazing kindness and rescue those who depend on you.
Use your great power

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Psalm 18

1 And protect them from their enemies.
2 Protect me like the pupil of your eye.
3 Hide me in the shadow of your wings.
4 Save me from the wicked people who are trying to destroy me.
5 Here I come to you, waiting to throw me to the ground.
6 Like hungry lions, they want to kill and eat.
7 Like young lions, they hide, ready to attack.
8 LORD, get up and face the enemy.
9 Use your sword and save me from these wicked people.
10 Use your power, LORD, and remove them from this life.
11 But as for the people you treasure, fill them with food.
12 Give them plenty for their children and their grandchildren.
13 I have done only what is right, so I will see your face.
14 And seeing you, I will be fully satisfied.
15 To the director: A song of David, the LORD’s servant. He sang this song to the LORD when the LORD saved him from Saul and all his other enemies.
16 I love you, LORD!
17 You are my strength.
18 To the director: A song of David, the LORD’s servant. He sang this song to the LORD when the LORD saved him from Saul and all his other enemies.

He is my God, the Rock I run to for protection.
He is my shield; by his power I am saved.
He is my hiding place high in the hills.

He is worthy of my praise!
Death had its ropes wrapped around me.
A deadly flood was carrying me away.
The ropes of the grave wrapped around me.
Death set its trap right there in front of me.
In my trouble I called to the LORD.
Yes, I cried out to my God for help.
There in his temple he heard my voice.
He heard my cry for help.
The earth shook and shivered.
The foundations of the mountains trembled.
They shook because he was angry.
Smoke came from his nose.
Burning flames came from his mouth.
Red-hot coals fell from him.
He tore open the sky and came down!
He stood on a thick, dark cloud.
He flew across the sky, riding on a Cherub angel racing on the wings of the wind.
He wrapped himself in darkness that covered him like a tent.
He was hidden by dark clouds heavy with water.
Out of the brightness before him, hail broke through the clouds with flashes of lightning.
The LORD thundered from the sky;
God Most High let his voice be heard.
He scattered his enemies with his arrows—

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a 17:8 pupil The center of the eye, which everyone wants to protect.
b 17:13 LORD, get up The people said this when they lifted the Box of the Agreement and took it into battle, showing that God was with them. See Num. 10:35–36.
c 17:15 you Literally, “your likeness.”
d Psalm 18 This song is also found in 2 Sam. 22.
the lightning bolts that threw them into confusion.

15 LORD, you shouted your command, and a powerful wind began to blow.⁠¹
Then the bottom of the sea could be seen, and the earth’s foundations were uncovered.

16 He reached down from above and grabbed me.
He pulled me from the deep water.
17 He saved me from my powerful enemies, who hated me.
They were too strong for me, so he saved me.
18 They attacked me in my time of trouble, but the LORD was there to support me.
19 He was pleased with me, so he rescued me.
He took me to a safe place.
20 The LORD rewarded me for doing what is right.
He was good to me because I am innocent.
21 The LORD did this because I have obeyed him.
I have not turned against my God.
22 I always remembered his laws.
I never rejected his rules.
23 He knows I did nothing that was wrong.
I have kept myself from sinning.
24 So the LORD rewarded me for doing what is right.
He could see that I am innocent.

25 Lord, you are faithful to those who are faithful.
You are good to those who are good.
26 You never do wrong to those who have done no wrong.
But you outsmart the wicked, no matter how clever they are.
27 You help those who are humble,
but you humiliate the proud.
28 LORD, you provide the flame for my lamp.
You, God, turn the darkness around me into light.
29 With your help I can defeat an army.
If my God is with me, I can climb over enemy walls.

30 God’s way is perfect.
The LORD’s promise always proves to be true.
He protects those who trust in him.
31 There is no God except the LORD.
There is no Rock except our God.
32 God is the one who gives me strength.
He clears the path I need to take.
33 He makes my feet as steady as those of a deer.
Even on steep mountains he keeps me from falling.
34 He trains me for war so that my arms can bend the most powerful bow.

35 Lord, you have given me your shield to protect me.
You support me with your right hand.
It is your help that has made me great.
36 You cleared a path for my feet so that I could walk without stumbling.

37 I chased my enemies and caught them.
I did not stop until they were destroyed.
38 I struck them down, and they could not get up again.
They fell under my feet.
39 God, you made me strong in battle.
You made my enemies fall before me.
40 You made my enemies turn and run away.
I destroyed those who hated me.
41 They cried out for help, but there was no one to save them.
They cried out to the LORD,
but he did not answer them.
42 I beat them to pieces like dust blown by the wind.
I smashed them like mud in the streets.

43 You saved me from those who fought against me.
You made me the ruler over nations.
People I never knew now serve me.
44 As soon as they heard about me, they were ready to obey.
Those foreigners fall helpless before me!
45 They lose all their courage and come out of their hiding places shaking with fear.

46 The LORD lives!
I praise my Rock, the God who saves me.
How great he is!
47 He is the God who punishes my enemies for me,
the one who puts people under my control.
48 He saves me from my enemies!

You, Lord, help me defeat those who attack me.
You save me from cruel people.
49 LORD, that is why I praise you among the nations.
That is why I sing songs of praise to your name.

50 The Lord helps his king win battle after battle.
He shows his faithful love to his chosen one, to David and his descendants forever.

To the director: A song of David.

1 The heavens tell about the glory of God.
The skies announce what his hands have made.
2 Each new day tells more of the story,
and each night reveals more and more about God’s power.\(^b\)
3 You cannot hear them say anything.
They don’t make any sound we can hear.
4 But their message goes throughout the world.
Their teaching reaches the ends of the earth.

The sun’s tent is set up in the heavens.
5 It comes out like a happy bridegroom from his bedroom.
It begins its path across the sky like an athlete eager to run a race.
6 It starts at one end of the sky and runs all the way to the other end.
Nothing can hide from its heat.

7 The LORD’s teachings are perfect.
They give strength to his people.
The LORD’s rules can be trusted.
They help even the foolish become wise.
8 The LORD’s laws are right.
They make people happy.
The LORD’s commands are good.
They show people the right way to live.

9 Learning respect for the LORD is good.
It will last forever.
The LORD’s judgments are right.
They are completely fair.
10 His teachings are worth more than pure gold.
They are sweeter than the best honey dripping from the honeycomb.
11 His teachings warn his servants, and good things come to those who obey them.

12 People cannot see their own mistakes, so don’t let me commit secret sins.
Don’t let sin control me.
13 Don’t let me do what I know is wrong.
Don’t let sin control me.

\(^a\) 18:50 his chosen one Literally, “his anointed one.”
\(^b\) 19:2 Or “Like the changing of the guards, each day passes the news to the next day and each night passes information to the next night.”
Psalm 20

1 If you help me, I can be pure and free from sin.
2 May my words and thoughts please you.
3 Lord, you are my Rock—the one who rescues me.

To the director: A song of David.

20 May the Lord answer you in times of trouble.
May the God of Jacob protect you.
May he send you help from his Holy Place.
May he support you from Zion.
May he remember all the gifts you have offered.
May he accept all your sacrifices.

Selah

2 May he give you what you really want.
May he make all your plans successful.
We will celebrate when he helps you.
We will praise the name of God.
May the Lord give you everything you ask for.

3 Now I know the Lord helps his chosen king.
From his holy heaven he answered.
With his great power he saved him.
Some give the credit for victory to their chariots and soldiers, but we honor the Lord our God.
They fall in battle, totally defeated, but we survive and stand strong!

4 Lord, save the king!
Answer us when we call to you for help.

To the director: A song of David.

21 Lord, your strength makes the king happy.
He is so happy when you give him victory.
And you gave him what he wanted.
You gave him what he asked for.

Selah

3 You gave the king such wonderful blessings.
You put a golden crown on his head.
He asked for life, and you gave it.
You gave him life that goes on forever.
You led him to victory that brought him great glory.
You gave him honor and fame.
You have given him blessings that will last forever.
You have given him the joy of being near you.
The king trusts in the Lord, and the faithful love of God Most High will keep him from falling.
Lord, you will show all your enemies that you are strong.
Your power will defeat those who hate you.
When you appear, you will burn them up like a blazing furnace.
In your anger, Lord, you will completely destroy them; they will be swallowed by flames of fire.
Their families will be destroyed.
They will be removed from the earth.
That is because they made evil plans against you.
They wanted to do things they could not do.
You will make them turn and run away when you aim your arrows at their faces.
Lord, we lift you up with our songs of praise.
We sing and play songs about your power!

To the director: To the tune “The Deer of Dawn.”

22 My God, my God, why have you left me?

Selah

a 21:9 Or “You will make your king like a burning oven when you come to help him, Lord. And in his anger, he will completely destroy them.”

b Psalm 22 “The Deer of Dawn” This is probably the name of the tune for this song, but it might refer to a music style or type of instrument.
Psalm 22

1 You seem too far away to save me, too far to hear my cries for help!

2 My God, I kept calling by day, and I was not silent at night. But you did not answer me.

3 God, you are the Holy One. You sit as King upon the praises of Israel.

4 Our ancestors trusted you. Yes, they trusted you, and you saved them.

5 They called to you for help and escaped their enemies. They trusted you and were not disappointed!

6 But I feel like a worm, less than human! People insult me and look down on me.

7 Everyone who sees me makes fun of me. They shake their heads and stick out their tongues at me.

8 They say, “Call to the Lord for help. Maybe he will save you. If he likes you so much, surely he will rescue you!”

9 God, the truth is, you are the one who brought me into this world. You made me feel safe while I was still at my mother’s breasts.

10 You have been my God since the day I was born. I was thrown into your arms as I came from my mother’s womb.

11 So don’t leave me! Trouble is near, and there is no one to help me.

12 My enemies surround me like angry bulls. They are like the powerful bulls of Bashan, and they are all around me.

13 Their mouths are opened wide, like a lion roaring and tearing at its prey.

14 My strength is gone, like water poured out on the ground.

15 My bones have separated. My courage is gone.\(^a\)

16 My mouth\(^b\) is as dry as a piece of baked pottery. My tongue is sticking to the roof of my mouth. You have left me dying in the dust.

17 The “dogs” are all around me—a pack\(^c\) of evil people has trapped me. They have pierced my hands and feet.\(^d\)

18 I can see each one of my bones. My enemies are looking at me; they just keep staring.

19 They divide my clothes among themselves, and they throw lots for what I am wearing.

20 LORD, don’t leave me! You are my strength—hurry and help me!

21 Save me from the sword. Save my precious life from these dogs.

22 Rescue me from the lion’s mouth. Protect me from the horns of the bulls.\(^e\)

23 I will tell my people about you. I will praise you in the great assembly.

24 Praise the Lord, all you who worship him! Honor him, you descendants of Jacob! Fear and respect him, all you people of Israel!

\(^a\) 22:14 My courage is gone Literally, “My heart is melted inside me like wax.”

\(^b\) 22:15 mouth Or “strength.”

\(^c\) 22:16 pack A group of dogs. Dogs travel together in packs to hunt and kill other animals for food.

\(^d\) 22:16 They … feet Literally, “Like a lion, my hands and feet.”

\(^e\) 22:21 Protect me … bulls Or “You have answered me and protected me from the horns of the bulls.” This could be both a prayer for help (like the first half of the psalm) and also a statement that God had answered this prayer (like the second half of the psalm).
PsALm 23

24 He does not ignore those who need help.
    He does not hate them.
    He does not turn away from them.
    He listens when they cry for help.

25 Lord, because of you I offer praise in the great assembly.
    In front of all these worshipers I will do all that I promised.

26 Poor people, come eat and be satisfied. You who have come looking for the LORD, praise him!
    May your hearts be happy forever.

27 May those in faraway countries remember the Lord and come back to him.
    May those in distant lands worship him,

28 because the Lord is the King.
    He rules all nations.

29 The people have eaten all they wanted and bowed down to worship him.
    Yes, everyone will bow down to him—all who are on the way to the grave, unable to hold on to life.

30 Our descendants will serve him.
    Those who are not yet born will be told about him.

31 Each generation will tell their children about the good things the Lord has done.

A song of David.

23 The Lord is my shepherd.
    I will always have everything I need.

2 He gives me green pastures to lie in.
    He leads me by calm pools of water.

3 He restores my strength.
    He leads me on right paths to show that he is good.

4 Even if I walk through a valley as dark as the grave, I will not be afraid of any danger, because you are with me.
    Your rod and staff comfort me.

5 You prepared a meal for me in front of my enemies.
    You welcomed me as an honored guest.
    My cup is full and spilling over.

6 Your goodness and mercy will be with me all my life, and I will live in the LORD’s house a long, long time.

A song of David.

24 The earth and everything on it belong to the Lord.
    The world and all its people belong to him.

2 He built the earth on the water.
    He built it over the rivers.

3 Who can go up on the Lord’s mountain? Who can stand in his holy Temple?

4 Only those who have not done evil, who have pure hearts, who have not used my name to hide their lies, and who have not made false promises.

5 Good people ask the Lord to bless others.
    They ask God, their Savior, to do good things.

6 They try to follow God.
    They go to the God of Jacob for help.
    Selah

7 Gates, proudly lift your heads!
    Open, ancient doors, and the glorious King will come in.

8 Who is the glorious King?

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Psalm 26

1 LORD, I put my life in your hands.\(^a\)
I trust in you, my God, and I will not be disappointed. My enemies will not laugh at me.

2 No one who trusts in you will be disappointed. But disappointment will come to those who try to deceive others. They will get nothing.

3 LORD, help me learn your ways. Show me how you want me to live.

4 Guide me and teach me your truths. You are my God, my Savior. You are the one I have been waiting for.

5 Remember to be kind to me, LORD. Show me the tender love that you have always had.

6 Don’t remember the sinful things I did when I was young. Because you are good, LORD, remember me with your faithful love.

7 The LORD is good and does what is right. He shows sinners the right way to live.

8 He teaches his ways to humble people. He leads them with fairness.

9 The LORD is kind and true to those who obey what he said in his agreement.

10 LORD, I have done many wrong things. But I ask you to forgive them all to show your goodness.

11 When people choose to follow the LORD, he shows them the best way to live.

12 They will enjoy good things, and their children will get the land God promised.

13 The LORD tells his secrets to his followers. He teaches them about his agreement.

14 I always look to the LORD for help. Only he can free me from my troubles.\(^c\)

15 I am hurt and lonely. Turn to me, and show me mercy. Free me from my troubles. Help me solve my problems.

16 Look at my trials and troubles. Forgive me for all the sins I have done.

17 Look at all the enemies I have. They hate me and want to hurt me. Protect me! Save me from them! I come to you for protection, so don’t let me be disappointed.

18 You are good and do what is right. I trust you to protect me.

19 God, save the people of Israel from all their enemies.

A song of David.

Psalm 25

In Hebrew, each verse in this psalm begins with the next letter of the alphabet.

25 I lift my soul to you.\(^b\)

Lord, I put my life in your hands.\(^b\)

I trust in you, my God, and I will not be disappointed. My enemies will not laugh at me.

No one who trusts in you will be disappointed. But disappointment will come to those who try to deceive others. They will get nothing.

LORD, help me learn your ways. Show me how you want me to live.

Guide me and teach me your truths. You are my God, my Savior. You are the one I have been waiting for.

Remember to be kind to me, LORD. Show me the tender love that you have always had.

Don’t remember the sinful things I did when I was young. Because you are good, LORD, remember me with your faithful love.

The LORD is good and does what is right. He shows sinners the right way to live.

He teaches his ways to humble people. He leads them with fairness.

The LORD is kind and true to those who obey what he said in his agreement.

A song of David.

26 Lord, you be the judge and prove that I have lived a pure life. I have depended on you, LORD, to keep me from falling.

Look closely at me, LORD, and test me. Judge my deepest thoughts and emotions.

I always remember your faithful love. I depend on your faithfulness.

I don’t run around with troublemakers. I have nothing to do with hypocrites.

Psalm 25

25:15 Only…troubles Literally, ‘For he will remove my feet from the net.’

25:1 I lift my soul to you. Literally, ‘I lift my soul to you.’

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5 I hate being around evil people. I refuse to join those gangs of crooks.

6 LORD, I wash my hands to make myself pure, so that I can come to your altar.

7 I sing a song to give you thanks, and I tell about all the wonderful things you have done.

8 LORD, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory is.

9 Lord, don’t treat me like one of those sinners. Don’t kill me with those murderers.

10 They are guilty of cheating people. They take bribes to do wrong.

11 But I am innocent, so be kind to me and save me.

12 I am safe from all danger as I stand here praising you, LORD, in the assembly of your people.

A song of David.

27 LORD, you are my Light and my Savior, so why should I be afraid of anyone?

The LORD is where my life is safe, so I will be afraid of no one!

2 Evil people might attack me. They might try to destroy my body. Yes, my enemies might attack me and try to destroy me, but they will stumble and fall.

3 Even if an army surrounds me, I will not be afraid. Even if people attack me in war, I will trust in the Lord.

4 I ask only one thing from the LORD. This is what I want most: Let me live in the LORD’s house all my life, enjoying the LORD’s beauty and spending time in his palace.

He will protect me when I am in danger. He will hide me in his tent. He will take me up to his place of safety.

6 If he will help me defeat the enemies around me, I will offer sacrifices in his tent with shouts of joy. I will sing and play songs to honor the LORD.

7 LORD, hear my voice. Be kind and answer me. My heart told me to come to you, LORD, so I am coming to ask for your help. Don’t turn away from me. Don’t be angry with your servant. You are the only one who can help me. My God, don’t leave me all alone. You are my Savior.

10 Even if my mother and father leave me, the LORD will take me in.

11 I have enemies, LORD, so teach me your ways. Show me the right way to live.

12 My enemies have attacked me. They have told lies about me and have tried to hurt me.

13 But I really believe that I will see the LORD’s goodness before I die.

14 Wait for the LORD’s help. Be strong and brave, and wait for the LORD’s help.

A song of David.

28 LORD, you are my Rock. I am calling to you for help. Don’t close your ears to my prayers. If you don’t answer me, I will be counted among the dead.

2 I lift my hands and pray toward your Most Holy Place. Hear me when I call to you.

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Show mercy to me.

3 Don’t treat me like the evil people who do wicked things. They greet their neighbors like friends, but secretly plan to hurt them.

4 They do bad things to others, so make bad things happen to them. Give them the punishment they deserve.

5 They don’t notice what the LORD does. They ignore all the good things he has made. So instead of building them up, he will destroy them.

6 Praise the LORD! He has heard my prayer for mercy.

7 The LORD is my strength and shield. I trusted him with all my heart. He helped me, so I am happy. I sing songs of praise to him.

8 The LORD protects his chosen one. He saves him and gives him strength.

9 Save your people. Bless those who belong to you. Lead them and honor them forever.

A song of David.

29 Praise the LORD, you heavenly angels!
Praise the LORD’s glory and power.

2 Praise the LORD and honor his name! Worship the LORD in all his holy beauty.

3 The LORD’s voice can be heard over the sea. The voice of our glorious LORD God is like thunder over the great ocean.

4 The LORD’s voice is powerful. It shows the LORD’s glory.

5 The LORD’s voice shatters great cedars.

The LORD breaks the great cedars of Lebanon.

6 He makes Lebanon shake like a young calf dancing. Sirion trembles like a young bull jumping up and down.

7 The LORD’s voice cuts the air with flashes of lightning.

8 The LORD’s voice shakes the desert. The desert of Kadesh trembles at the LORD’s voice.

9 The LORD’s voice frightens the deer. He destroys the forests. In his temple everyone shouts, “Glory to God!”

10 The LORD ruled as king at the time of the flood, and the LORD will rule as king forever.

11 May the LORD make his people strong. May the LORD bless his people with peace.

A song of David for the dedication of the Temple.

30 LORD, you lifted me out of my troubles.

You did not give my enemies a reason to laugh, so I will praise you.

2 LORD my God, I prayed to you, and you healed me.

3 LORD, you lifted me out of the grave. I was falling into the place of death, but you saved my life.

4 Praise the LORD, you who are loyal to him! Praise his holy name! His anger lasts for a little while, but then his kindness brings life. The night may be filled with tears,
Psalm 31

but in the morning we can sing for joy!

6 When I was safe and secure, I thought nothing could hurt me.

7 Yes, LORD, while you were kind to me, I felt that nothing could defeat me. But when you turned away from me, I was filled with fear.

8 So, LORD, I turned and prayed to you. I asked you, LORD, to show me mercy.

9 I said, “What good is it if I die and go down to the grave? The dead just lie in the dirt. They cannot praise you. They cannot tell anyone how faithful you are.

10 LORD, hear my prayer, and be kind to me. LORD, help me!”

11 You have changed my sorrow into dancing. You have taken away my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

12 You wanted me to praise you and not be silent. LORD my God, I will praise you forever!

To the director: A song of David.

1 LORD, I come to you for protection. Don’t let me be disappointed. You always do what is right, so save me.

2 Listen to me. Come quickly and save me. Be my Rock, my place of safety. Be my fortress and protect me!

3 Yes, you are my Rock and my protection. For the good of your name, lead me and guide me.

4 Save me from the traps my enemy has set. You are my place of safety.

5 LORD, you are the God we can trust. I put my life in your hands. Save me!

6 I hate those who worship false gods. I trust only in the LORD.

7 Your kindness makes me so happy. You have seen my suffering. You know about the troubles I have.

8 You will not let my enemies take me. You will free me from their traps.

9 LORD, I have many troubles, so be kind to me. I have cried until my eyes hurt. My throat and stomach are aching.

10 Because of my sin, my life is ending in grief; my years are passing away in sighs of pain. My life is ending in weakness. My strength is draining away.

11 My enemies despise me, and even my neighbors have turned away. When my friends see me in the street, they turn the other way. They are afraid to be around me.

12 People want to forget me like someone already dead, thrown away like a broken dish.

13 I hear them whispering about me. They have turned against me and plan to kill me.

14 LORD, I trust in you. You are my God.

15 My life is in your hands. Save me from those who are persecuting me.

16 Please welcome and accept your servant. Be kind to me and save me.

17 LORD, I am praying to you. Don’t let me be disappointed. The wicked are the ones who should be disappointed. Let them go to the grave in silence.

18 Those evil people brag and tell lies about those who do

\[a\] 30:7 I felt ... defeat me Literally, “You placed me on the strong mountains.”

\[b\] 31:5 life Literally, “spirit.”

\[c\] 31:16 Please ... servant Literally, “Let your face shine on your servant.”

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right.
They are so proud now,
but their lying lips will be silent.

19 Lord, you have hidden away many
wonderful things for your
followers.
You have done so many good things
for those who trust in you.
You have blessed them so that all
the world can see.

20 Others make plans to hurt them.
They say such bad things about
them.
But you hide your people in your
shelter and protect them.

21 Praise the LORD, because he showed
me how wonderful his faithful
love is
when the city was surrounded by
enemies.

22 I was afraid and said, “I am in a place
where he cannot see me.”
But I prayed to you, and you heard
my loud cries for help.

23 Love the LORD, all of you who are his
loyal followers.
The LORD protects those who are
loyal to him.
But he punishes those who brag about
their own power.
He gives them all the punishment
they deserve.

24 Be strong and brave,
all of you who are waiting for the
LORD’s help.

A maskil of David.

32 1 It is a great blessing
when people are forgiven for the
wrongs they have done,
when their sins are erased.\(^a\)

2 It is a great blessing
when the LORD says they are not
guilty,
when they don’t try to hide their
sins.

\(^a 32:1\) erased Or “covered over” or “atoned.”

3 Lord, I prayed to you again and again,
but I did not talk about my sins.
So I only became weaker and more
miserable.

4 Every day you made life harder for me.
I became like a dry land in the hot
summertime.  

Selah

5 But then I decided to confess my sins
to the LORD.
I stopped hiding my guilt and told
you about my sins.
And you forgave them all!  

Selah

6 That is why your loyal followers pray to
you while there is still time.
Then when trouble rises like a flood,
it will not reach them.

7 You are a hiding place for me.
You protect me from my troubles.
You surround me and protect me,
so I sing about the way you saved
me.  

Selah

8 The Lord says, “I will teach you
and guide you in the way you
should live.
I will watch over you and be your
guide.

9 Don’t be like a stupid horse or mule
that will not come to you
unless you put a bit in its mouth
and pull it with reins.”

10 Many pains will come to the wicked,
but the LORD’s faithful love will
surround those who trust in him.

11 Good people, rejoice and be very
happy in the LORD.
All you who want to do right,
rejoice!

33 1 Rejoice in the LORD, good
people!
It is only right for good people to
praise him.

2 Play the lyre and praise the LORD.
Play the ten-stringed harp for him.

3 Sing a new song\(^b\) to him.

\(^b 33:3\) new song Whenever God did a new and wonderful
Psalm 34

Play it well and sing it loud!
4 The LORD’s word is true, and he is faithful in everything he does.
5 He loves goodness and justice. The LORD’s faithful love fills the earth.
6 The LORD spoke the command, and the world was made. The breath from his mouth created everything in the heavens.
7 He gathered together the water of the sea. He put the ocean in its place.
8 Everyone on earth should fear and respect the LORD. All the people in the world should fear him,
9 because when he speaks, things happen. And if he says, “Stop!”—then it stops.a
10 The LORD can ruin every decision the nations make. He can spoil all their plans.
11 But the LORD’s decisions are good forever. His plans are good for generation after generation.
12 Great blessings belong to those who have the LORD as their God! He chose them to be his own special people.
13 The LORD looked down from heaven and saw all the people.
14 From his high throne he looked down at all the people living on earth.
15 He created every person’s mind, and he knows what each one is doing.
16 A king is not saved by the power of his army. A soldier does not survive by his own great strength.
17 Horses don’t really bring victory in war. Their strength cannot help you escape.
18 The LORD watches over his followers, those who wait for him to show his faithful love.
19 He saves them from death. He gives them strength when they are hungry.
20 So we will wait for the LORD. He helps us and protects us.
21 He makes us happy. We trust his holy name.
22 LORD, we worship you, so show your great love for us.

b A song of David when he pretended to be crazy so that Abimelech would send him away, which he did.

I will praise the LORD at all times. I will never stop singing his praises.
2 Humble people, listen and be happy, while I brag about the LORD.
3 Praise the LORD with me. Let us honor his name.
4 I went to the LORD for help, and he listened. He saved me from all that I fear.
5 If you look to him for help, he will put a smile on your face. You will have no need to be ashamed.
6 As a poor, helpless man I prayed to the LORD, and he heard me. He saved me from all my troubles.
7 The LORD’s angel builds a camp around his followers, and he protects them.
8 Give the LORD a chance to show you how good he is. Great blessings belong to those who depend on him!
9 The LORD’s holy people should fear and respect him. Those who respect him will always have what they need.
10 Even strong lions get weak and hungry, but those who go to the LORD for help will have every good thing.

b Psalm 34 In Hebrew, each verse in this psalm begins with the next letter of the alphabet.

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Children, come and listen to me;  
I will teach you to respect the L ORD.  
12 Do you want to enjoy life?  
Do you want to have many happy 
days?  
13 Then avoid saying anything hurtful,  
and never let a lie come out of your 
mouth.  
14 Stop doing anything evil, and do good. 
Look for peace, and do all you can  
to help people live peacefully. 
15 The L ORD watches over those who do  
what is right, 
and he hears their prayers. 
16 But the L ORD is against those who do  
evil, 
so they are forgotten soon after they die. 

17 Pray to the L ORD, and he will hear you. 
He will save you from all your 
troubles. 
18 The L ORD is close to those who have  
suffered disappointment.  
He saves those who are discouraged. 
19 Good people might have many 
problems, 
but the L ORD will take them all away. 
20 He will protect them completely. 
Not one of their bones will be 
broken. 
21 But troubles will kill the wicked.  
The enemies of those who live right  
will all be punished. 
22 The L ORD saves his servants.  
All who go to him for protection  
will escape punishment. 

A song of David. 

35 1 Lord, oppose those who oppose 
me.  
Fight those who fight me.  
2 Pick up your shields, large and small. 
Get up and help me!  
3 Take a spear and javelin  
and fight those who are chasing me. 
Tell me, “I will rescue you.” 
4 Some people are trying to kill me.  

Disappoint them and make them  
as ashamed. 
Make them turn and run away. 
They are planning to hurt me.  
Defeat and embarrass them. 
5 Make them like chaff blown by the 
wind.⁹ 
Let them be chased by the L ORD’s 
angel. 
6 Make their road dark and slippery. 
Let the L ORD’s angel chase them. 
7 I did nothing wrong, but they tried to 
trap me. 
For no reason at all, they dug a pit  
to catch me. 
8 So let them fall into their own traps. 
Let them stumble into their own nets. 
Let some unknown danger catch  
them. 
9 Then I will rejoice in the L ORD. 
I will be happy when he saves me. 
10 With my whole self I will say, 
“L ORD, there is no one like you. 
You protect the poor from those who  
are stronger. 
You save the poor and helpless from  
those who try to rob them.” 
11 There are witnesses b trying to harm  
me. 
They ask me questions that I know  
nothing about. 
12 They pay me back evil for the good I  
have done. 
They make me so very sad. 
13 When they were sick, I was sad and  
wore sackcloth. 
I went without eating to show my  
sorrow. 
(May my prayers for them not be  
answered!) 
14 I mourned for them as I would for a 
friend or a brother. 
I bowed low with sadness, crying as  
I would for my own mother. 
15 But when I had troubles, they laughed  
at me. 

⁹ 35:5 wind This may be a wordplay, because the Hebrew word also means “spirit.” 
¹⁰ 35:11 witnesses People who tell what they have seen or heard. Here, these people were probably telling lies.
They were not really friends.  
I was surrounded and attacked by people I didn’t even know.
16 They made fun of me, using the worst language.  
They ground their teeth to show their anger.

17 My Lord, how long will you watch this happen?  
Save my life from these people who are attacking me like lions and trying to destroy me.

18 I will praise you in the great assembly.  
I will praise you there among the crowds.
19 Don’t let my lying enemies keep on laughing at me.  
They have no reason to hate me.  
Surely they will be punished for their secret plans.  
20 They have no friendly words for others, but plan ways to hurt those who want to live in peace.
21 They are telling lies about me.  
They say, “Aha! We know what you did!”
22 LORD, surely you can see what is happening.  
So don’t keep quiet.  
Lord, don’t leave me.
23 Wake up! Get up!  
My God and my Lord, fight for me, and bring me justice.
24 LORD my God, judge me with your fairness.  
Don’t let those people laugh at me.
25 Don’t let them think, “Aha! We got what we wanted!”  
Don’t let them say, “We destroyed him!”
26 Let my enemies be ashamed and embarrassed—all those who were happy about my troubles.
Proud of themselves, they treated me as worthless.

So let them be covered with shame and disgrace.
27 To those who want the best for me, I wish they joy and happiness.  
May they always say, “Praise the LORD, who wants what is best for his servant.”

28 So, Lord, I will tell people how good you are.  
I will praise you all day long.

To the director: A song of David, the Lord’s servant.

36 1 Deep in the hearts of the wicked a voice tells them to do wrong.  
They have no respect for God.
2 They lie to themselves.  
They don’t see their own faults, so they are not sorry for what they do.
3 Their words are wicked lies.  
They have stopped doing anything wise or good.
4 They make wicked plans in bed at night.  
They choose a way of life that does no good.  
And they never say no to anything evil.

5 LORD, your faithful love reaches to the sky.  
Your faithfulness is as high as the clouds.
6 Your goodness is higher than the highest mountains.  
Your fairness is deeper than the deepest ocean.
LORD, you protect people and animals.
7 Nothing is more precious than your loving kindness.  
All people can find protection close to you.
8 They get strength from all the good things in your house.  
You let them drink from your wonderful river.
9 The fountain of life flows from you.  
Your light lets us see light.

a 35:19 Surely … plans Literally, "Will the people who hate me freely wink their eyes?"
Continue to love those who really know you,
and do good to those who are true to you.\textsuperscript{a}

Don’t let proud people trap me.
Don’t let the wicked force me to run away.

Put this on their grave markers:
“Here fell the wicked.
They were crushed.
They will never stand up again.”

\textit{A song of David.}

Don’t get upset about evil people.
Don’t be jealous of those who do wrong.

They are like grass and other green plants
that dry up quickly and then die.

So trust in the LORD and do good.
Live on your land and be dependable.\textsuperscript{c}

Enjoy serving the LORD,
and he will give you whatever you ask for.

Depend on the LORD.
Trust in him, and he will help you.

He will make it as clear as day that you are right.
Everyone will see that you are being fair.

Trust in the LORD and wait quietly for his help.
Don’t be angry when people make evil plans and succeed.

Don’t become so angry and upset that you, too, want to do evil.

The wicked will be destroyed,
but those who call to the LORD for help will get the land he promised.

In a short time there will be no more evil people.
You can look for them all you want, but they will be gone.

Humble people will get the land God promised,
and they will enjoy peace.

The wicked plan bad things for those who are good.
They show their teeth in anger at them.

But our Lord will laugh at them.
He will make sure they get what they deserve.

The wicked draw their swords to kill the poor and the helpless.
They aim their arrows to murder all who live right.

But their bows will break,
and their swords will pierce their own hearts.

A few good people are better than a large crowd of those who are evil.

The wicked will be destroyed,
but the LORD cares for those who are good.

The LORD protects pure people all their life.
Their reward will continue forever.

When trouble comes,
good people will not be destroyed.
When times of hunger come,
good people will have plenty to eat.

But evil people are the LORD’s enemies,
and they will be destroyed.
Their valleys will dry up and burn.
They will be destroyed completely.

The wicked borrow money and never pay it back.
But good people are kind and generous.

Everyone the Lord blesses will get the land he promised.
Everyone he curses will be destroyed.

The LORD shows us how we should live,
and he is pleased when he sees people living that way.

If they stumble, they will not fall,
because the LORD reaches out to steady them.

I was young, and now I am old,
but I have never seen good people...
Psalm 38

left with no one to help them; I have never seen their children begging for food.

26 They are kind and generous, and their children are a blessing.

27 Stop doing anything evil and do good, and you will always have a place to live.

28 The LORD loves what is right, and he will never leave his followers without help. He will always protect them, but he will destroy the families of the wicked.

29 Good people will get the land God promised and will live on it forever.

30 Those who do what is right give good advice. Their decisions are always fair.

31 They have learned God's teachings, and they will never stop living right.\(^a\)

32 The wicked are always looking for ways to kill good people.

33 But the LORD will not let the wicked defeat them. He will not let good people be judged guilty.

34 Do what the LORD says, and wait for his help. He will reward you and give you the land he promised. You will see the wicked being forced to leave.

35 I once saw a wicked man who was powerful. He was like a strong, healthy tree.

36 But then he was gone. I looked for him, but I could not find him.

37 Be pure and honest. Peace-loving people will have many descendants.

38 But those who break the law will be destroyed completely. And their descendants will be

\(^a\) Psalm 38:31 they ... right Literally, “his steps will not slip.”

39 The LORD saves those who are good. When they have troubles, he is their strength.

40 The LORD helps good people and rescues them. They depend on him, so he rescues them from the wicked.

A song of David for the day of remembrance.\(^b\)

1 Lord, don’t criticize me when you are angry.

2 You have hurt me. You punished me and hurt me deeply.

3 You punished me severely, so my whole body is sore. I sinned, and now all my bones hurt.

4 My guilt is like a heavy burden. I am sinking beneath its weight.

5 I did a foolish thing, and now I have infected sores that stink.

6 I am bent and bowed down. I am depressed all day long.

7 I am burning with fever, and my whole body hurts.

8 I hurt so much I cannot feel anything. My pounding heart makes me scream!

9 My Lord, you heard my groaning. You can hear my sighs.

10 My heart is pounding. My strength is gone, and I am going blind.\(^d\)

11 Because of my sickness, my friends and neighbors will not visit me; my family will not come near me.

12 My enemies say bad things about me. They are spreading lies and rumors. They talk about me all the time.

13 But I am like a deaf man and cannot hear. I am like someone who cannot

\(^b\) Psalm 38:38 forced to leave the land Or “destroyed.” Literally, “cut off.”

\(^c\) Psalm 38 for ... remembrance The ancient Greek version has “for the Sabbath.”

\(^d\) Psalm 38:10 I am going blind Or “My eyes have lost their sparkle.” Literally, “Even the light of my eyes is no longer with me.”
Ps 39 | speak.
14 I am like those who cannot hear what people are saying about them. I cannot answer to prove my enemies wrong.
15 LORD, you must defend me. Lord my God, you must speak for me.
16 That’s why I prayed, “Don’t let my enemies smile at my pain. Full of pride, they will laugh if I stumble and fall.”
17 I know I am guilty of doing wrong. I cannot forget my pain.
18 Lord, I told you about the evil I have done. I am sorry for my sin.
19 But my enemies are alive and healthy, and they have told many lies.
20 I did nothing but good, and they paid me back with evil. I try to do what is right, but that only makes them turn against me.
21 LORD, don’t leave me. My God, stay close to me.
22 Come quickly and help me. My Lord, you are the one who saves me.

To the director, Jeduthun. A song of David.

Psalm 39

1 I said, “I will be careful about what I say. I will not let my tongue cause me to sin. I will keep my mouth closed when I am around wicked people.”

2 So I didn’t say anything. I didn’t even say anything good, but I became even more upset.
3 I was very angry, and the more I thought about it, the angrier I became. So I said something.

4 LORD, tell me, what will happen to me now? Tell me, how long will I live? Let me know how short my life really is.
5 You gave me only a short life. Compared to you, my whole life is nothing. The life of every human is like a cloud that quickly disappears. Selah

6 Our life is like an image in a mirror. We rush through life collecting things, but we don’t know who will get them after we die.

7 So, Lord, what hope do I have? You are my hope!
8 Save me from the bad things I did. Don’t let me be treated like a fool. I will not open my mouth. I will not say anything. You did what should have been done.
9 But please stop punishing me. You will destroy me if you do not stop.
10 You punish people for doing wrong to teach them the right way to live. As a moth destroys cloth, you destroy what people love. Yes, our lives are like a small cloud that quickly disappears. Selah

12 LORD, hear my prayer! Listen to the words I cry to you. Look at my tears. I am only a traveler passing through this life with you. Like all my ancestors, I will live here only a short time.
13 Leave me alone and let me be happy before I am dead and gone.

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Psalm 40

To the director: A song of David.

I called the LORD, and he heard me.
He heard my cries.
He lifted me out of the grave.
He lifted me from that muddy place.
He picked me up, put me on solid ground, and kept my feet from slipping.
He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.
Many will see what he did and worship him.
They will put their trust in the LORD.
Great blessings belong to those who trust in the LORD, for those who do not turn to demons and false gods for help.
LORD my God, you have done many amazing things! You have made great plans for us—too many to list. I could talk on and on about them, because there are too many to count.

Lord, you made me understand this:
You don't really want sacrifices and grain offerings.
You don't want burnt offerings and sin offerings.
So I said, “Here I am, ready to do what was written about me in the book.
My God, I am happy to do whatever you want.
I never stop thinking about your teachings.”

I told the good news of victory to the people in the great assembly.

And, LORD, you know that I will never stop telling that good news.
I told about the good things you did.
I did not hide these things in my heart.
I spoke of how you can be trusted to save us.
I did not hide your love and loyalty from those in the great assembly.
LORD, do not hide your mercy from me.
Let your love and loyalty always protect me.

Troubles have surrounded me.
They are too many to count!
My sins have caught me, and I cannot escape them.
They are more than the hairs on my head.
I have lost my courage.

Please, LORD, rescue me!
LORD, hurry and help me!
People are trying to kill me.
Please disappoint them.
Humiliate them completely!
They wanted to hurt me.
Make them run away in shame!

May those who make fun of me be too embarrassed to speak!
But may those who come to you be happy and rejoice.
May those who love being saved by you always be able to say, “Praise the LORD!”

My Lord, I am only a poor, helpless man, but please pay attention to me.
You are my helper, the one who can save me.
My God, don’t be too late.

To the director: A song of David.

Those who help the poor succeed will get many blessings.
When trouble comes, the LORD will save them.

Praise the LORD. Literally, “The LORD is great” or “May the LORD be magnified.”
41:1 Or “Those who teach the poor will be very fortunate.”
Psalm 42

2 The LORD will protect them and save their lives. He will bless them in this land. He will not let their enemies harm them.

3 When they are sick in bed, the LORD will give them strength and make them well!

4 I say, “LORD, be kind to me. I sinned against you, but forgive me and make me well.”

5 My enemies say bad things about me. They ask, “When will he die and be forgotten?”

6 If they come to see me, they don’t say what they are really thinking. They come to gather a little gossip and then go to spread their rumors.

7 Those who hate me whisper about me. They think the worst about me.

8 They say, “He did something wrong. That is why he is sick. He will never get well.”

9 My best friend, the one I trusted, the one who ate with me—even he has turned against me.

10 LORD, please be kind to me. Let me get up, and I will pay them back.

11 Don’t let my enemy defeat me. Then I will know that you care for me.

12 I was innocent and you supported me. You let me stand and serve you forever.

13 Praise the LORD, the God of Israel. He always was, and he always will be.

Amen and Amen!

BOOK 2 (PSALMS 42–72)

To the director: A maskil from the Korah family.

42 Like a deer drinking from a stream,

I reach out to you, my God.a

2 My soul thirsts for the living God. When can I go to meet with him?

3 Instead of food, I have only tears day and night, as my enemies laugh at me and say, “Where is your God?”

4 My heart breaks as I remember the pleasant times in the past, when I walked with the crowds as I led them up to God’s Temple. I remember the happy songs of praise as they celebrated the festival.

5–6 Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset? I tell myself, “Wait for God’s help! You will again be able to praise him, your God, the one who will save you.”

In my sadness I say, “I will remember you from here on this small hill, where Mount Hermon and the Jordan River meet.”

7 I hear the roar of the water coming from deep within the earth. It shouts to the water below as it tumbles down the waterfall. God, your waves come one after another, crashing all around and over me.c

8 By day the LORD shows his faithful love, and at night I have a song for him—a prayer for the God of my life.d

9 I say to God, my Rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I suffer this sadness that my enemies have brought me?”

10 Their constant insults are killing me. They never stop asking, “Where is your God?”

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PsALm 43

11 Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset?
I tell myself, “Wait for God’s help! You will again be able to praise him, your God, the one who will save you.”

43 1Defend me, God.
Argue my case against those people who don’t know you.
Protect me from those evil liars.
2 God, you are my place of safety.
Why have you turned me away? Why must I suffer this sadness that my enemies have brought me?
3 Send your light and your truth to guide me,
to lead me to your holy mountain, to your home.
4 I want to go to God’s altar,
to the God who makes me so very happy.
God, my God, I want to play my harp and sing praises to you!

5 Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset?
I tell myself, “Wait for God’s help! You will again have a chance to praise him, your God, the one who will save you.”

To the director: A maskil from the Korah family.

PsALm 44

1 'God, we have heard about you. Our fathers told us what you did in their lifetime.
They told us what you did long ago.
2 With your great power you took this land from other people, and you gave it to us.
You crushed those foreigners and forced them to leave this land.
3 It was not our fathers’ swords that took the land. It was not their strong arms that brought them victory.
It was your power. It was because you accepted them and smiled down on them.

4 God, you are my king.
Give the command and lead Jacob’s people to victory.
5 We need your help to push our enemies back.
Only in your name can we trample those who attacked us.
6 I don’t put my trust in my bow. My sword cannot save me.
7 You are the one who saved us from our enemies.
You are the one who put our enemies to shame.
8 We have praised you all day long, and we will praise your name forever. Selah

9 But you left us and put us to shame.
You did not go with us into battle.
10 You let our enemies push us back.
You let them take our wealth.
11 You gave us away like sheep to be killed and eaten.
You scattered us among the nations.
12 You sold your people for nothing.
You did not even argue over the price.
13 You made us a joke to our neighbors.
They laugh and make fun of us.
14 You made us one of the stories that people love to tell.
People all over the world laugh at us and shake their heads.
15 All I can think about is my shame.
Just look at my face, and you will see it.
16 All I can hear are the jokes and insults of my enemies, as I watch them take their revenge.
17 We have not forgotten you.
But you do all those things to us. We did not break the agreement you gave us.
18 We did not turn away from you.
We did not stop following you.
19 But you crushed us in this home of jackals.
You left us in this place as dark as death.
Did we forget the name of our God?  
Did we pray to foreign gods?  
If we did, then God knows it,  
because he knows our deepest  
secrets.  
All day long we died for you.  
We are like sheep being led away to  
be killed.  
Lord, wake up!  
Why are you sleeping?  
Get up! Don’t ignore us forever!  
Why are you hiding from us?  
Have you forgotten our pain and  
troubles?  
We have been pushed down into the  
dirt.  
We are lying face down in the dust.
Get up and help us!  
Rescue us because of your faithful  
love.

To the director: To the tune “Shoshanim.”
A maskil from the Korah family. A love song.

You love what is right and hate what is  
wrong.  
So God, your God, chose you to be  
king,  
giving you more joy and honor than  
anyone like you.  
From your clothes comes the  
beautiful smell of myrrh, aloes,  
and cassia.  
In palaces decorated with ivory,  
you enjoy the music of stringed  
instruments.  
Here are ladies of honor, daughters of  
kings.  
Your bride stands at your right side,  
wearing a gown decorated with  
the finest gold.

My lady, listen to me.  
Listen carefully and understand me.  
Forget your people and your father’s  
family,  
so that the king will be pleased with  
your beauty.  
He will be your new husband,  
so you must honor him.  
People from Tyre will bring you gifts.  
Their richest people will try to win  
your friendship.

The princess is so beautiful in her  
gown,  
like a pearl set in gold.  
Clothed in beauty, she is led to the  
king,  
followed by her bridesmaids.  
Filled with joy and excitement,  
they enter into the king’s palace.

Your sons will be kings like their  
ancestors.  
You will make them rulers  
throughout the land.  
You will be famous for generations.  
People will praise you forever and  
ever.

44:25 This shows that the people were being treated like 
slaves who must bow down to their masters.  
Psalm 45 To the tune “Shoshanim” Or “On the Shoshanim.”  
45:4 right arm This pictures God as a warrior-king. The right  
arm is a symbol of his power and authority.  
45:6 God This might be a song to God as king. Or here, the  
writer might be using the word “God” as a title for the king.  
45:7 chose … anyone like you Literally, “anointed you with  
the oil of gladness above your companions.” This refers to  
the special oil used in the dedication of a new priest or king.  
45:9 bride Or “queen.”  
45:10 My lady Literally, “Daughter.”  
45:11 husband Or “master.”
Psalm 46

To the director: A song from the Korah family.

Use the alamoth.①

A song.

1 God is our protection and source of strength.
   He is always ready to help us in times of trouble.

2 So we are not afraid when the earth quakes
   and the mountains fall into the sea.

3 We are not afraid when the seas become rough and dark
   and the mountains tremble.  Selah

4 There is a river whose streams bring happiness to God’s city,
   to the holy city of God Most High.

5 God is in that city, so it will never be destroyed.
   He is there to help even before sunrise.

6 Nations will shake with fear and kingdoms will fall
   when God shouts and makes the earth move.

7 The LORD All-Powerful is with us.
   The God of Jacob is our place of safety.  Selah

8 Look at the powerful things the LORD has done.
   See the awesome things he has done on earth.

9 He stops wars all over the world.
   He breaks the soldiers’ bows, shatters their spears, and burns
   their shields.②

10 God says, “Stop fighting and know that I am God!
   I am the one who defeats the nations;
   I am the one who controls the world.”

11 The LORD All-Powerful is with us.
   The God of Jacob is our place of safety.

① Psalm 46 alamoth  This might be a musical instrument, a special way of tuning an instrument, a music style, or one of the groups that played harps in the Temple orchestra. See 1 Chron. 15:21.

② 46:9 shields  Or “chariots.”

Psalm 47

To the director: A song from the Korah family.

Everyone, clap your hands.
   Shout with joy to God!

2 The LORD Most High is awesome.
   He is the great King over all the earth.

3 He helped us defeat other nations.
   He put those people under our control.

4 He chose our land for us.
   He chose that wonderful land for Jacob, the one he loved.  Selah

5 The LORD God goes up to his throne at the sound of the trumpet and horn.

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises!
   Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

7 God is the King of the whole world.
   Sing songs of praise!③

8 God sits on his holy throne; he rules all the nations.

9 The leaders of the nations have come together
   with the people of the God of Abraham.
   All the rulers of the world belong to God.
   He is over them all!

A song of praise from the Korah family.

1 The LORD is great!
   He is praised throughout the city of our God, his holy mountain.

2 His city is such a pleasant place.
   It brings joy to people from around the world.

Mount Zion is the true mountain of God.④

3 It is the city of the great King.

4 Once some kings met together


④ 48:2 true mountain of God  Literally, “the summit of Zaphon.” In Canaanite stories, Mt. Zaphon was where the gods lived.
and planned an attack against this city.
They marched toward the city,
but when they saw it, they were amazed.
They all panicked and ran away.

Fear grabbed them;
they trembled like a woman giving birth.

God, with a strong east wind,
you wrecked their big ships.

Yes, we heard the stories about your power.
But we also saw it in the city of our God, the city of the LORD All-Powerful.
God makes that city strong forever.

Selah

9 God, in your Temple we remember your loving kindness.
10 Your name is known everywhere, God,
and people throughout the earth praise you.
You have shown that you do what is right.
11 Mount Zion is happy,
and the towns of Judah rejoice,
because your decisions are fair.
12 Walk around Jerusalem,
and count its towers.
13 Look at the tall walls,
and see the palaces.
Then you can tell the next generation about them.
14 This God is our God forever and ever.
He will lead us from now to the end of time!

To the director: A song from the Korah family.

1 Listen to this, all you nations.
Pay attention, all you people on earth.

2 Everyone, rich and poor, listen to me.
I have some very wise words for you.
My thoughts will give you understanding.

4 I listened to these sayings.
And now, with my harp, I will sing

and make the hidden meaning clear.

5 Why should I be afraid when trouble comes?
There is no need to fear when evil enemies surround me.
6 They think their wealth will protect them.
They brag about how rich they are.
7 But no one has enough to buy back a life,
and you cannot bribe God.
8 You will never get enough money to pay for your own life.
9 You will never have enough to buy the right to live forever and keep your body out of the grave.
10 Look, the wise die the same as fools and stupid people.
They die and leave their wealth to others.
11 The grave will be their new home forever.
And how much land they owned will not make any difference.
12 People might be wealthy, but they cannot stay here forever.
They will die like the animals.
13 That is what happens to all who trust in themselves and to anyone who accepts their way of life.

14 They are just like sheep, but the grave will be their pen.
Death will be their shepherd.
When morning comes, the good people will enjoy victory,
as the bodies of the proud slowly rot in the grave,
far away from their fancy houses.

15 But God will pay the price to save me from the grave.
He will take me to be with him.

Selah

16 Don’t be afraid of people just because

\[49:7\] bribe Here, this means offering a gift or sacrifice so that God will not punish a guilty person.

\[49:10\] stupid people Or “animals.”
Psalm 50

they are rich.
Don’t be afraid of people just
because they have big, fancy
houses.

17 They will not take anything with them
to the day.
They will not take their wealth with
them.

18 A wealthy man might tell himself how
well he has done in life.
And other people might praise him.

19 But the time will come for him to die
and go to his ancestors.
And he will never again see the light
doing.

20 Wealthy people don’t seem to
understand
that they will die like the animals.

One of Asaph’s songs.

50  The LORD God Most Powerful
has spoken.
He calls to everyone on earth, from
where the sun rises to where it
sets.

2 God appeared from Zion, the city of
perfect beauty.

3 Our God is coming and will not keep
quiet.
Fire burns in front of him.
There is a great storm around him.

4 He tells the sky and the earth to be
witnesses
as he judges his people.

5 He says, “My followers, gather around
me.
Come, my worshipers, who made
an agreement with me.”

6 God is the judge,
and the skies tell how fair he is.

Selah

7 God says, “My people, listen to me!
People of Israel, I will show my
evidence against you.
I am God, your God.

8 The problem I have with you is not
your sacrifices
or the burnt offerings you bring to
me every day.

9 Why would I want more bulls from
your barns
or goats from your pens?

10 I already own all the animals in the
forest.
I own all the animals on a thousand
hills.

11 I know every bird in the mountains.
Everything that moves in the fields
is mine.

12 If I were hungry, I would not ask you
for food.
I already own the world and
everything in it.

13 I don’t eat the meat of bulls or drink
the blood of goats.”

14 You made promises to God Most High,
so give him what you promised.
Bring your sacrifices and thank
offerings.

15 God says, “Call me when trouble
comes.
I will help you, and you will honor
me.”

16 But God says to the wicked,

“Stop quoting my laws!
Stop talking about my agreement!”

17 You hate for me to tell you what to do.
You ignore what I say.

18 You see a thief and run to join him.
You jump into bed with those who
commit adultery.

19 You say evil things and tell lies.

20 You sit around talking about people,
finding fault with your own
brothers.

21 When you did these things, I said
nothing.
So you thought that I was just like
you.
But I will not be quiet any longer.
I will correct you and make clear
what I have against you.

22 You people who have forgotten God,

a 50:2 God … beauty Or “God shining from Zion is absolutely
beautiful.”
b 50:21 that I Or “that the I Am.”
understand what I am telling you, or I will tear you apart, and no one will be able to save you!

23 Whoever gives a thank offering shows me honor. And whoever decides to live right will see my power to save.”

To the director: A song of David written when Nathan the prophet came to him after David's sin with Bathsheba.

51

1 God, be merciful to me because of your faithful love. Because of your great compassion, erase all the wrongs I have done.

2 Scrub away my guilt. Wash me clean from my sin.

3 I know I have done wrong. I remember that sin all the time.

4 I did what you said is wrong. You are the one I have sinned against.

I say this so that people will know that I am wrong and you are right. What you decided is fair.

5 I was born to do wrong, a sinner before I left my mother’s womb.

6 You want me to be completely loyal, so put true wisdom deep inside of me.

7 Remove my sin and make me pure. Wash me until I am whiter than snow!

8 Let me hear sounds of joy and happiness again. Let the bones you crushed be happy again.

9 Don’t look at my sins. Erase them all.

10 God, create a pure heart in me, and make my spirit strong again.

11 Don’t push me away or take your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Your help made me so happy.

Give me that joy again. Make my spirit strong and ready to obey you.

13 I will teach the guilty how you want them to live, and the sinners will come back to you.

14 God, spare me from the punishment of death.

My God, you are the one who saves me!

Let me sing about all the good things you do for me!

15 My Lord, I will open my mouth and sing your praises!

16 You don’t really want sacrifices, or I would give them to you.

17 The sacrifice that God wants is a humble spirit.

God, you will not turn away someone who comes with a humble heart and is willing to obey you.

18 God, please be good to Zion.

Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then you can enjoy the kind of sacrifices you want.

You will receive whole burnt offerings, and people will again offer bulls on your altar.

To the director: A maskil of David written when Doeg the Edomite went to Saul and told him, “David is in Ahimelech’s house.”

52

1 Great warrior, why are you bragging about the evil you did? You are a disgrace to God.

2 You are nothing but a hired killer, making plans to hurt people and making up lies!

3 You love evil more than goodness. You love lies more than truth.

Selah

4 You and your lying tongue love to hurt people.

5 So God will ruin you forever!

a 51:7 Remove … pure Literally, “Cleanse me with hyssop.” See “hyssop” in the Word List.

b 51:14 spare … death Or “don’t consider me guilty of murder.”

c 51:17 someone … obey you Literally, “a broken and crushed heart.”

d 51:19 the kind … you want Or “the offering of righteousness.”

e 52:2 hired killer Literally, “sharpened razor.”
Psalm 53

He will grab you and pull you from your home,\textsuperscript{a} like someone pulling up a plant by the roots!\textsuperscript{b}

Selah

6 Good people will see this and learn to fear and respect God. They will laugh at you and say,

7 “Look what happened to the warrior who did not depend on God. That fool thought his wealth and lies would protect him.”

8 But I am like a green olive tree growing in God’s Temple. I will trust God’s faithful love forever and ever.

9 God, I praise you forever for what you have done.

I will speak your name\textsuperscript{c} before your followers because it is so good!

To the director: Use the mahalath.\textsuperscript{d} A maskil of David.

53

1 Only fools think there is no God. People like that are evil and do terrible things. They never do what is right.

2 God looks down from heaven to see if there is anyone who is wise, anyone who looks to him for help.

3 But everyone has turned away from him. Everyone has become evil. No one does anything good.

4 Those who are evil treat my people like bread to be eaten. And they never ask for God’s help. Don’t they understand what they are doing?

5 They will be filled with fear—a fear like they have never felt before!

People of Israel, you will defeat those who attacked you, because God has rejected them. And he will scatter their bones.

6 I wish the one who lives on Mount Zion would bring victory to Israel! When God makes Israel successful again, the people of Jacob will be very happy; the people of Israel will be glad.

To the director: With instruments. A maskil of David written when the Ziphites went to Saul and told him, “We think David is hiding among our people.”

54

1 God, use your power and save me. Use your great power to set me free.\textsuperscript{e}

2 God, listen to my prayer. Listen to what I say.

3 Strangers who don’t even think about God have turned against me. Those powerful men are trying to kill me.

Selah

4 Look, my God will help me. My Lord will support me.

5 He will punish the people who turned against me. God, be faithful to me and destroy them.

6 LORD, I will give freewill offerings to you. I will praise your good name.

7 You saved me from all my troubles. I saw my enemies defeated.

\textsuperscript{a} 52:5 home This means the body. This is a poetic way of saying, “God will end your life here on earth.”

\textsuperscript{b} 52:5 like someone … roots Literally, “He will root you up from the land of the living.” This also means “He will kill you and your descendants.”

\textsuperscript{c} 52:9 speak your name Or “I will trust your name.”

\textsuperscript{d} Psalm 53 mahalath Probably a musical term. It might be the name of an instrument or a tune, or it might mean a certain musical style.

\textsuperscript{e} 54:1 Literally, “God, save me with your name, judge me with your might.”
Psalm 56

To the director: With instruments. A maskil of David.

1 God, hear my prayer.
Don’t ignore my cry for help.

2 Please listen and answer me.
Let me speak to you and tell you what upsets me.

3 My enemies shout at me and threaten me.
In their anger they attack me.
They bring troubles crashing down on me.

4 My heart is pounding inside me.
I am afraid to die.

5 I am trembling with fear.
I am terrified!

6 Oh, I wish I had wings like a dove.
I would fly away and find a place to rest.

7 I would go far into the desert and stay there. Selah

8 I would run away.
I would escape from this storm of trouble.

9 My Lord, confuse their words and stop their plans.
I see so much cruelty and fighting in this city.

10 Day and night, in every neighborhood,
the city is filled with evil and trouble.

11 There is so much crime in the streets.
People who hurt and cheat others are everywhere.

12 If it were an enemy insulting me,
I could bear it.
If it were my enemies attacking me,
I could hide.

13 But it is you, the one so close to me,
my companion, my good friend,
who does this.

14 We used to share our secrets with one another,
as we walked through the crowds together in God’s Temple.

15 I wish death would take my enemies by surprise!

16 I will call to God for help,
and the Lord will save me.

17 I speak to God morning, noon, and night.
I tell him what upsets me, and he listens to me!

18 I have fought in many battles,
but he has always rescued me and brought me back safely.

19 God, who has always ruled as king,
will hear me and punish my enemies.

But they will never change.
They don’t fear and respect God.

20 This one who was once my friend now attacks his friends.
He is breaking every promise he made.

21 His words about peace are as smooth as butter,
but he has only war on his mind.
His words are as slick as oil,
but they cut like a knife.

22 Give your worries to the Lord,
and he will care for you.
He will never let those who are good be defeated.

23 But, God, you will send those liars and murderers to the grave.
They will die before their life is half finished!
As for me, I will put my trust in you.

To the director: To the tune “The Dove in the Distant Oak.” A miktam of David written when the Philistines captured him in Gath.

56 1 God, people have attacked me,
so be merciful to me.
They have been chasing me all day,
closing in to attack me.

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2 My enemies come at me constantly. There are too many fighters to count.a
3 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. I trust God, so I am not afraid of what people can do to me! I praise God for his promise to me.
4 My enemies are always twisting my words. They are always making plans against me.
6 They hide together and watch every move I make, hoping for some way to kill me.
7 God, send them away because of the bad things they did. Show your anger and defeat those people.
8 You know I am very upset. You know how much I have cried. Surely you have kept an account of all my tears.
9 I know that when I call for help, my enemies will turn and run. I know that because God is with me!
10 I praise God for his promise. I praise the LORD for his promise to me.
11 I trust God, so I am not afraid of what people can do to me!

12 God, I will keep the special promises I made to you. I will give you my thank offering.
13 You saved me from death. You kept me from being defeated. So I will serve you in the light that only the living can see.

To the director: To the tune “Don’t Destroy.” A miktam of David written when he escaped from Saul and went into the cave.

57 God, be merciful to me. Be kind because my soul trusts in you.

a 56:2 There are … count Or “There are many attacking me from above.”

58 1 You judges are not being fair in your decisions. You are not judging people fairly.
2 No, you only think of evil things to do. You do violent crimes in this country.
3 Those wicked people started doing wrong as soon as they were born. They have been liars from birth.
4 Their anger is as deadly as the poison...
Psalm 59

God, save me from my enemies. Protect me from those who stand against me.

Save me from those who do wrong. Save me from those murderers.

Look, powerful men are waiting for me. LORD, they are waiting to kill me,

even though I did not sin or commit a crime.

I have done nothing wrong, but they are rushing to attack me. Come and see for yourself!

You are the LORD God All-Powerful, the God of Israel! Get up and punish them. Don’t show any mercy to those traitors.

Those evil men are like dogs that come into town in the evening, growling and roaming the streets.

Listen to their threats and insults. They say such cruel things, and they don’t care who hears them.

LORD, laugh at them. Make fun of them all.

God, my strength, I look to you for help.

You are my place of safety, high in the mountains.

God loves me, and he will help me win. He will help me defeat my enemies.

Don’t just kill them, or my people might forget. My Lord and Protector, scatter and defeat them with your strength.

Those evil people curse and tell lies. Punish them for what they said. Let their pride trap them.

Destroy them in your anger. Destroy them completely! Then people all over the world will know that God rules over the people of Jacob.

Those evil men are like dogs that come into town in the evening, growling and roaming the streets.

They roam around looking for food, but even if they eat their fill, they still growl and complain.

But I will sing about your strength. I will rejoice in your love every

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morning.
You have been my place of safety, the place I can run to when troubles come.
17 I will sing praises to you, my source of strength.
You, God, are my place of safety. You are the God who loves me!

Psalm 60

1 God, you were angry with us. You rejected us and destroyed our defenses.
   Please make us strong again.
2 You shook the earth and split it open.
   It is falling apart like a broken wall.
   Please put it back together.
3 You have given your people many troubles.
   We are dizzy and fall down like drunks.
4 But you have provided a flag to show your faithful followers where to gather to escape the enemy’s attack.
   Selah

5 Use your great power and give us victory!
   Answer our prayer and save the people you love.

6 God has spoken in his Temple:
   “I will win the war and rejoice in victory!
   I will divide this land among my people.
   I will give them Shechem.
   I will give them Sukkoth Valley.
7 Gilead and Manasseh will be mine.
   Ephraim will be my helmet.
   Judah will be my royal scepter.
8 Moab will be the bowl for washing my feet.
   Edom will be the slave who carries my sandals.
   I will defeat the Philistines and shout in victory!”

9–10 But, God, it seems that you have left us!
   You do not go out with our army.
   So who will lead me into the strong, protected city?
   Who will lead me into battle against Edom?
11 Help us defeat the enemy!
   No one on earth can rescue us.
12 Only God can make us strong.
   Only God can defeat our enemies!

Psalm 61

1 God, hear my cry for help.
   Listen to my prayer.
2 From a faraway land I call to you for help.
   I feel so weak and helpless!
   Carry me to a high rock where no one can reach me.
3 You are my place of safety, a strong tower that protects me from my enemies.
4 I want to live in your tent forever.
   I want to hide where you can protect me.
   Selah

5 God, you heard what I promised to give you,
   but everything your worshipers have comes from you.
6 Give the king a long life.
   Let him live forever!
7 Let him rule in your presence forever.
   Protect him with your faithful love.
8 Then I will praise your name forever.
   Every day I will do what I promised.

Psalm 62

1 I must calm down and turn to God;

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only he can rescue me.

2 He is my Rock, the only one who can save me.
He is my high place of safety, where no army can defeat me.

3 How long will you people attack me?
Do you all want to kill me?
I am like a leaning wall,
like a fence ready to fall.

4 You want only to destroy me,
to bring me down from my important position.
It makes you happy to tell lies about me.
In public, you say nice things,
but in private, you curse me. Selah

5 I must calm down and turn to God;
he is my only hope.
6 He is my Rock, the only one who can save me.
He is my high place of safety, where no army can defeat me.
7 My victory and honor come from God.
He is the mighty Rock, where I am safe.

8 People, always put your trust in God!
Tell him all your problems.
God is our place of safety. Selah

9 People cannot really help.
You cannot depend on them.
Compared to God, they are nothing—no more than a gentle puff of air!

10 Don’t trust in your power to take things by force.
Don’t think you will gain anything by stealing.
And if you become wealthy,
don’t put your trust in riches.

11 God says there is one thing you can really depend on, and I believe it:
“Strength comes from God!”

12 My Lord, your love is real.
You reward all people for what they do.

Psalm 64 | 645

A song of David written when he was in the desert of Judah.

1 God, you are my God.
I am searching so hard to find you.
Body and soul, I thirst for you in this dry and weary land without water.

2 Yes, I have seen you in your Temple.
I have seen your strength and glory.
3 Your faithful love is better than life, so my lips praise you.
4 By my life, I will praise you.
In your name, I lift my hands in prayer.
5 When I sit down to satisfy my hunger,
my joyful lips hunger to praise you!
6 I remember you while lying on my bed.
I think about you in the middle of the night.

7 That is because you are the one who helps me.
It makes me happy to be under your protection!

8 I stay close to you,
and you hold me with your powerful arm.

9 Those who are trying to kill me will be destroyed.
They will go down to their graves.
10 They will be killed with swords.
Wild dogs will eat their dead bodies.
11 But the king will be happy with his God,
and those who promised to obey him will praise him when he defeats those liars.

To the director: A song of David.

1 God, listen to my complaint.
Save me from the terrible threats of my enemies!

2 Protect me from the secret plans of the wicked.
Hide me from that gang of evil people.

3 They sharpen their tongues to use like swords.
They aim their poisonous words

63:2 your Temple Or “your holiness.”
like arrows.

4 Suddenly, from their hiding places, they let their arrows fly.
   They shoot to kill innocent people.

5 They encourage each other to do wrong.
   They talk about setting traps and say, “No one will see them here!”

6 No one will discover our crime.
   We have the perfect plan!”
   Yes, people can be very tricky and hard to understand.

7 But suddenly, God will shoot his arrows, and those wicked people will be hit.

8 He will use their own words against them, and they will be destroyed.
   Then everyone who sees them will shake their heads in amazement.

9 People will see what God has done.
   They will tell other people about him.
   Then everyone will learn more about God.
   They will learn to fear and respect him.

10 Good people are happy to serve the Lord.
   They depend on him to protect them.
   All those who want to do right will praise him!

To the director: A praise song of David.

1 God in Zion, we praise you and give you what we promised.
2 Anyone can come to you, and you will listen to their prayers.
3 When our sins become too heavy for us, you wipe them away.
4 Oh, how wonderful it is to be the people you chose to come and stay in your Temple.
   And we are so happy to have the wonderful things that are in your Temple, your holy palace.

5 God, you answer our prayers and do what is right.
   You do amazing things to save us.
   People all over the world know they can trust in you, even those who live across the sea.

6 You made the mountains.
   We see your power all around us.
7 You can calm the roughest seas or the nations raging around us.

8 People all around the world are amazed at the wonderful things you do.
   You make all people, east and west, sing with joy.

9 You take care of the land.
   You water it and make it fertile.
   Your streams are always filled with water.
   That’s how you make the crops grow.

10 You pour rain on the plowed fields; you soak the fields with water.
   You make the ground soft with rain, and you make the young plants grow.

11 You start the new year with a good harvest.
   You end the year with many crops.⁶
12 The desert and hills are covered with grass.

13 The pastures are covered with sheep.
   The valleys are filled with grain.
   Everything is singing and shouting for joy.

To the director: A song of praise.

1 Everything on earth, shout with joy to God!
2 Praise his glorious name!
   Honor him with songs of praise!
3 Tell God, “Your works are wonderful!
   Your great power makes your enemies bow down in fear before you.
4 Let the whole world worship you.

⁶ 65:11 In ancient Israel there were two calendars. The calendar for religious festivals began in the spring, at the barley harvest. The other calendar started in the fall, when they gathered other crops.
Psalm 68

1 Let everyone sing praises to your name.”  \textit{Selah}

5 Look at what God has done! These things amaze us.
6 He changed the sea to dry land,\textsuperscript{a}
   and his people went across the water\textsuperscript{b} on foot.
   So let’s celebrate because of what he has done!
7 He rules the world with his great power.
   He watches people everywhere.
   No one can rebel against him.  \textit{Selah}

8 People, praise our God.
   Sing loud songs of praise to him.
9 He continues to give us life, and he keeps us from falling.
10 God, you have tested us, as people test silver with fire.
11 You let us be trapped.
   You put heavy burdens on us.
12 You let our enemies run over us.
   We went through fire and water, but you brought us to a safe place.
13–14 So I bring sacrifices to your Temple.
   When I was in trouble, I asked for help and made promises to you.
   Now I am giving you what I promised.
15 I bring my best sheep as burnt offerings.
   I offer the smoke from them up to you.
   I give you sacrifices of bulls and goats.  \textit{Selah}

16 All you people who worship God, come and I will tell you what he has done for me.
17–18 I cried out to him for help, and I praised him.
   If I had been hiding sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened to me.
19 But God did listen to me; he heard my prayer.

\textsuperscript{a} 68:6 changed the sea to dry land  This was with Moses at the Red Sea. See Ex. 14.
\textsuperscript{b} 68:6 water  Literally, “river.” Although this word is not used for the Jordan River elsewhere, some think this line may refer to the later crossing there. See Josh. 3:14–17.

20 Praise God!
   He did not turn away from me—he listened to my prayer.
   He continues to show his love to me!

\textit{To the director: With instruments. A song of praise.}

67 1 God, show mercy to us and bless us.
   Please accept us!  \textit{Selah}

2 Let everyone on earth learn about you.
   Let every nation see how you save people.
3 May people praise you, God!
   May all people praise you.
4 May all nations rejoice and be happy because you judge people fairly.
   You rule over every nation.
5 May the people praise you, God!
   May all people praise you.
6 God, our God, bless us.
   Let our land give us a great harvest.
7 May God bless us, and may all people on earth fear and respect him.

\textit{To the director: A praise song of David.}

68 1 God, get up and scatter your enemies!
   May all your enemies run from you.
2 May your enemies be scattered like smoke blown away by the wind.
   May your enemies be destroyed like wax melting in a fire.
3 But let good people be happy.
   Let them gather before God and enjoy themselves together.
4 Sing to God! Sing praises to his name!
   Prepare the way for the one who rides on the clouds.
   His name is Yah.\textsuperscript{c}
   Worship before him with joy.
5 God, who lives in his holy palace, is a father to orphans, and he takes care of widows.
6 God provides homes for those who are

\textsuperscript{c} 68:4 Yah  This is a Hebrew name for God. It is like the Hebrew name usually translated “Lord.” Also in verse 18.
Psalm 68

isolated. He frees people from prison and makes them happy. But those who turn against him will live in the desert.

7 God, you led your people out of Egypt. You marched across the desert.

8 The ground shook and rain poured from the sky when God, the God of Israel, came to Sinai.

9 God, you sent the rain to make a tired, old land strong again.

10 Your people came back to live there, and you provided good things for the poor.

11 My Lord gave the command, and many people went to tell the good news:

12 “The armies of powerful kings ran away! At home, the women divide the things brought from the battle.

13 Those who stayed home will share in the wealth—metal doves with wings covered in silver and feathers sparkling with gold.”

14 God All-Powerful scattered the kings like snow falling on Mount Zalmon.

15 Mount Bashan is a great mountain with many high peaks.

16 But, Bashan, why are you jealous of Mount Zion?

17 With his millions of chariots, the Lord came from Sinai into the holy place.

18 You went up to your high place, leading a parade of captives.

19 Praise the Lord! Every day he helps us with the loads we must carry.

20 He is our God, the God who saves us. My Lord God saves us from death.

21 God will smash the heads of his enemies. He will punish those who fight against him.

22 My Lord said, “If they run up to Bashan or down to the depths of the sea, I will bring them back.

23 So you will march through pools of their blood, and there will be plenty left for your dogs.”

24 God, everyone can see your victory parade—the victory march of my God and King into his holy place!

25 Singers come marching in front, followed by the musicians; they are surrounded by young girls playing tambourines.

26 Praise God in the meeting place.

27 There is the smallest tribe, Benjamin, leading them. And there comes a large group of leaders from Judah. Following them are the leaders of Zebulun and Naphtali.

28 God, show us your power! Show us the power you used for us in the past.

29 Kings will bring their wealth to you, to your Temple in Jerusalem.

30 Punish the people in Egypt. They are like cattle in the marshes.

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like bulls among the calves. 
You humiliated them. 
You scattered them in war. 
Now let them come crawling to you, 
bringing their pieces of silver. 

31 Messengers from Egypt will come bearing gifts. 
Ethiopia will offer God their tribute. 

32 Kings on earth, sing to God! 
Sing songs of praise to our Lord! 
Selah

33 Sing to him who rides his chariot through the ancient skies. 
Listen to his powerful voice! 

34 Tell everyone how powerful he is! 
He rules over Israel. 
His power fills the skies. 

35 God, you are awesome in your Temple! 
The God of Israel is the one who gives strength and power to his people. 

Praise God!

To the director: To the tune “The Lilies.” A song of David.

69

1 God, save me from all my troubles! 
The rising water has reached my neck. 

2 I have nothing to stand on. 
I am sinking down, down into the mud. 
I am in deep water, 
and the waves are about to cover me. 

3 I am getting weak from calling for help. 
My throat is sore. 
I have waited and looked for your help 
until my eyes are hurting. 

4 I have more enemies than the hairs on my head. 
They hate me for no reason. 
They try hard to destroy me. 
My enemies tell lies about me. 
They say I stole from them 
and they demand that I pay for things I did not steal. 

5 God, you know my faults.

I cannot hide my sins from you. 
6 My Lord God All-Powerful, don’t let me embarrass your followers. 
God of Israel, don’t let me bring disgrace to those who worship you. 

7 My face is covered with shame. 
I carry this shame for you. 

8 My own brothers treat me like a stranger. 
They act as if I came from a foreign land. 

9 My strong devotion to your Temple is destroying me. 
Those who insult you are also insulting me. 

10 When I spend time crying and fasting, 
they make fun of me. 

11 When I wear sackcloth to show my sorrow, 
they tell jokes about me. 

12 They talk about me in public places. 
The beer drinkers make up songs about me. 

13 As for me, LORD, this is my prayer to you: 
Please accept me! 
God, I want you to answer me with love. 
I know I can trust you to save me. 

14 Pull me from the mud, 
and don’t let me sink down deeper. 
Save me from those who hate me. 
Save me from this deep water. 

15 Don’t let the waves drown me. 
Don’t let the deep sea swallow me 
or the grave close its mouth on me. 

16 Answer me, LORD, from the goodness of your faithful love. 
Out of your great kindness turn to me and help me! 

17 Don’t turn away from your servant. 
I am in trouble, so hurry and help me! 

18 Come save my soul. 
Rescue me from my enemies. 

19 You know the shame I have suffered. 
You know all my enemies. 
You saw how they humiliated me. 

20 I feel the pain of their insults.
Psalm 70

The shame makes me feel like dying!
I wanted some sympathy,
but there was none.
I waited for someone to comfort me,
but no one came.

21 They gave me poison, not food.
They gave me vinegar, not wine.

22 Their tables are covered with food.
Let their fellowship meals destroy them.

23 Let them go blind and their backs become weak.

24 Show them how angry you are.
Let them feel what your anger can do.

25 Make their homes empty.
Don't let anyone live there.

26 They try to hurt people you have already punished.
They tell everyone about the suffering you gave them.

27 Punish them for the bad things they have done.
Don't show them how good you can be.

28 Erase their names from the book of life.
Don't let their names appear on the list of those who do what is right.

29 I am sad and hurting.
God, lift me up and save me!

30 I will praise God's name in song.
I will honor him by giving him thanks.

31 The LORD will be happier with this than with the offering of an ox or a full-grown bull as a sacrifice.

32 Poor people, you came to worship God.
You will be happy to know these things.

33 The LORD listens to poor, helpless people.
He does not turn away from those who are in prison.

34 Praise him, heaven and earth!
Sea and everything in it, praise him!

35 God will save Zion.
He will rebuild the cities of Judah.
The people will settle there again and own the land.

36 The descendantsofhis servants will get that land.
Those who love his name will live there.

To the director: A song of David to help people remember.

70 1 Please, God, rescue me!
LORD, hurry and help me!

2 People are trying to kill me.
Please disappoint them.
Humiliate them!
They want to hurt me.
Make them run away in shame.

3 May those who make fun of me be too embarrassed to speak.

4 But may those who come to you be happy and rejoice.
May those who love being saved by you always be able to say, “Praise God!”

5 I am only a poor, helpless man.
God, please hurry to me.
You are my helper, the one who can save me.
LORD, don't be too late!

71 1 LORD, I depend on you for protection.
Don't let me be disappointed.

2 You always do what is right, so come and save me.
Listen to me and save me.

3 Be my Rock, my place of safety.
Be my fortress, and protect me!
You are my Rock and my protection.

4 My God, save me from wicked people.
Save me from cruel, evil people.

5 Lord GOD, you are my hope.
I have trusted you since I was a young boy.

6 I depended on you even before I was born.
I relied on you even in my mother's womb.
I have always prayed to you.

7 You are my source of strength,

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Psalm 72

1 God, help the king be like you and make fair decisions. Help the king’s son know what justice is.
2 Help the king judge your people fairly. Help him make wise decisions for your poor people.
3 Let there be peace and justice throughout the land, known on every mountain and hill.
4 May the king be fair to the poor. May he help the helpless and punish those who hurt them.
5 May people always fear and respect you, God, as long as the sun shines and the moon is in the sky.
6 Help the king be like rain falling on the fields, like showers falling on the land.
7 Let goodness grow everywhere while he is king. Let peace continue as long as there is a moon.
8 Let his kingdom grow from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River to the faraway places on earth.
9 May all the people living in the desert bow down to him. May all his enemies bow before him with their faces in the dirt.
10 May the kings of Tarshish and all the

Psalm 72 To Solomon

This might mean that this song was written by Solomon or dedicated to him, or that it is from some special collection of songs.

72:8 faraway places on earth This usually means the countries around the Mediterranean Sea.
Psalm 73

faraway lands by the sea bring
  gifts to him.  
May the kings of Sheba and Seba
  bring their tribute to him.  
11 May all kings bow down to our king. 
  May all nations serve him. 
12 Our king helps the poor who cry out to
  him— those in need who have no one to
  help them. 
13 He feels sorry for all who are weak and
  poor. 
  He protects their lives. 
14 He saves them from the cruel people
  who try to hurt them. 
  Their lives are important to him. 
15 Long live the king! 
  Let him receive gold from Sheba. 
Always pray for the king. 
  Ask God to bless him every day. 
16 May the fields grow plenty of grain
  and the hills be covered with crops. 
  May the fields be as fertile as Lebanon, 
  and may people fill the cities as
  grass covers a field. 
17 May the king be famous forever. 
  May people remember his name as
  long as the sun shines. 
  May all nations be blessed through
  him, 
  and may they all bless him. 
18 Praise the LORD God, the God of
  Israel! 
  Only he can do such amazing things. 
19 Praise his glorious name forever! 
  Let his glory fill the whole world. 
Amen and Amen! 
20 (This ends the prayers of David son of
  Jesse.) 

BOOK 3 (PSALMS 73–89)

Asaph’s song of praise.

73

1 God is so good to Israel, 
  to those whose hearts are pure. 
2 But I almost slipped and lost my
  balance. 
  I almost fell into sin. 
3 I saw that wicked people were
  successful, 
  and I became jealous of those
  proud people. 
4 They are healthy. 
  They don’t have to struggle to
  survive.  
5 They don’t suffer like the rest of us. 
  They don’t have troubles like other
  people. 
6 So they are proud and hateful. 
  This is as easy to see as the jewels
  and fancy clothes they wear. 
7 If they see something they like, they
  go and take it. 
  They do whatever they want. 
8 They make fun of others and say cruel
  things about them. 
  In their pride they make plans to
  hurt people. 
9 They think they are gods! 
  They think they are the rulers of the
  earth. 
10 Even God’s people turn to them
  and do what they say. 
11 Those evil people say, “God does not
  know what we are doing! 
  God Most High does not know!” 
12 Those proud people are wicked, 
  but they are rich and getting richer. 
13 Clearly, then, I gain nothing by keeping
  my thoughts pure! 
  What good is it to keep myself from
  sin? 
14 God, I suffer all day long, 
  and you punish me every morning. 
15 I wanted to tell others these things, 
  but that would have made me a
  traitor to your people. 
16 I tried hard to understand all this, 
  but it was too hard for me. 
17 But then, God, I went to your Temple, 
  and I understood what will happen 
  to the wicked. 
18 Clearly, you have put them in danger. 
  You make it easy for them to fall and

73:4 Literally, “They have no bonds to their death.”
73:10 The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.

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Psalm 74

Come back to the Holy Place that the enemy destroyed.

4 The enemy shouted their war cries in the Temple. They put up their flags there to show they had won the war.

5 Their soldiers attacked the doors, like workmen chopping down trees.

6 Using axes and hatchets, they smashed the carved panels inside.

7 They burned down your Holy Place. It was built to honor your name, but they pulled it down to the ground.

8 The enemy decided to crush us completely. They burned every holy place in the country.

9 We do not see any of our signs. There are no more prophets. And no one knows how long this will last.

10 God, how much longer will the enemy make fun of us? Will you let them insult your name forever?

11 Why won’t you help us? Use your power to defeat our enemies!

12 God, you have been our King for a long time. You have saved us many times on this earth.

13 With your great power you split open the sea and broke the heads of the sea monster.

14 Yes, you smashed the heads of Leviathan and left his body for animals to eat.

15 You make the springs and rivers flow,

A maskil of Asaph.

1 God, why have you turned away from us for so long? Why are you still angry with us, your own flock?

2 Remember the people you bought so long ago. You saved us, and we belong to you. And remember Mount Zion, the place where you lived.

3 God, come walk through these ancient ruins.

The enemy shouted their war cries in the Temple. They put up their flags there to show they had won the war.

Their soldiers attacked the doors, like workmen chopping down trees.

Using axes and hatchets, they smashed the carved panels inside.

They burned down your Holy Place. It was built to honor your name, but they pulled it down to the ground.

The enemy decided to crush us completely. They burned every holy place in the country.

We do not see any of our signs. There are no more prophets. And no one knows how long this will last.

God, how much longer will the enemy make fun of us? Will you let them insult your name forever?

Why won’t you help us? Use your power to defeat our enemies!

God, you have been our King for a long time. You have saved us many times on this earth.

With your great power you split open the sea and broke the heads of the sea monster.

Yes, you smashed the heads of Leviathan and left his body for animals to eat.

You make the springs and rivers flow,
Psalm 75

and you make the rivers dry up.
16 You control the day and the night.
   You made the sun and the moon.
17 You set the limits for everything on
   earth.
   And you created summer and
   winter.
18 LORD, remember, the enemy insulted
   you!
   Those foolish people hate your
   name!
19 Don’t give us like a helpless dove to
   those wild animals.
   Never forget your poor, suffering
   people.
20 Remember the agreement you gave us,
   because violence fills every dark
   place in this land.
21 Your people were treated badly.
   Don’t let them be hurt anymore.
   Let your poor, helpless people
   praise you.
22 God, get up and defend yourself!
   Remember, those fools challenged
   you.
23 Don’t forget the shouts of your
   enemies.
   They insulted you again and again.

To the director: To the tune “Don’t Destroy.”
One of Asaph’s songs of praise.

75

1 We praise you, God!
   We praise you because you are near to us.
   We tell about the amazing things you have done.

2 God says, “I have chosen a time for
   judgment,
   and I will judge fairly.
3 The earth and all its people may shake,
   but I am the one who keeps it
   steady.

4 “To those who are proud I say, ‘Stop
   your boasting.’
I warn the wicked, ‘Don’t brag
about how strong you are.
5 Don’t be so sure that you will win.

   a 75:1 you Literally, “your name.”

Don’t boast that victory is yours!’”

6 There is no power on earth
   that can make a person important.
7 God is the judge.
   He decides who will be important.
   He lifts one person up and brings
   another down.
8 The LORD has a cup in his hand.
   It is filled with the poisoned wine of
   his anger.
   He will pour out this wine,
   and the wicked will drink it to the
   last drop.
9 I will always tell people how great God
   is.
   I will sing praise to the God of
   Jacob.
10 God says, “I will take away any power
   the wicked have
   and give it to those who are good.”

To the director: With instruments. One of
Asaph’s songs of praise.

76

1 People in Judah know God.
   People in Israel respect his name.
2 His Temple is in Salem. Another name for Jerusalem. This name means “Peace.”
3 There he shattered the arrows,
   shields, swords, and other weapons
   of war.
   Selah

4 God, you are glorious coming back
   from the hills where you defeated
   your enemies.
5 They thought they were strong, but
   now they lie dead in the fields.
   Their bodies are stripped of all they
   owned.
   They could not defend themselves.
6 The God of Jacob shouted at them,
   and their army of chariots and
   horses fell dead.
7 God, you are awesome!
   No one can stand against you when
   you are angry.

b 75:6 Literally, “Not from the east or the west and not from the desert mountains.”
C 76:2 Salem Another name for Jerusalem. This name means “Peace.”
d 76:5 They…themselves Literally, “The warriors could not find their hands.”
Psalm 78

8–9 You stood as judge and announced your decision. You saved the humble people of the land. From heaven you gave the decision, and the whole earth was silent and afraid. 

10 Even human anger can bring you honor when you use it to punish your enemies. 

11 People, you made promises to the LORD your God. Now give him what you promised. People everywhere fear and respect God, and they will bring gifts to him. 

12 God defeats great leaders; all the kings on earth fear him. 

To the director, Jeduthun. One of Asaph’s songs. 

77 I cry out to God for help. I cry out to you, God; listen to me! 
2 My Lord, in my time of trouble I came to you. I reached out for you all night long. My soul refused to be comforted. 
3 I thought about you, God, and tried to tell you how I felt, but I could not. 

4 You would not let me sleep. I tried to say something, but I was too upset. 
5 I kept thinking about the past, about things that happened long ago. 
6 During the night, I thought about my songs. I talked to myself, trying to understand what is happening. 
7 I wondered, “Has our Lord rejected us forever? Will he ever accept us again? Is his love gone forever? Will he never again speak to us?” 
8 Has God forgotten what mercy is? 

Has his compassion changed to anger?” Selah 

10 Then I said to myself, “What bothers me most is the thought that God Most High has lost his power.” 

11 LORD, I remember what you have done. I remember the amazing things you did long ago. 
12 I think about those things. I think about them all the time. 
13 God, all that you do is holy. No god is as great as you are. 
14 You are the God who does amazing things. You showed the nations your great power. 
15 By your power you saved your people, the descendents of Jacob and Joseph. Selah 

16 God, the water saw you and became afraid. The deep water shook with fear. 
17 The thick clouds dropped their water. Thunder roared in the sky above. Your arrows of lightning flashed through the clouds. 
18 There were loud claps of thunder. Lightning lit up the world. The earth shook and trembled. 
19 You walked through the water and crossed the deep sea, but you left no footprints. 
20 You led your people like sheep, using Moses and Aaron to guide them. 

One of Asaph’s maskils. 

78 My people, listen to my teachings. Listen to what I say. 
2 I will tell you a story. I will tell you about things from the past that are hard to understand. 
3 We have heard the story, and we know it well. Our fathers told it to us. 
4 And we will not forget it. 

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Psalm 78

Our people will be telling this story to the last generation. We will all praise the Lord and tell about the amazing things he did.

5 He made an agreement with Jacob. He gave the law to Israel. He gave the commands to our ancestors. He told them to teach the law to their children.

6 Then the next generation, even the children not yet born, would learn the law. And they would be able to teach it to their own children.

7 So they would all trust in God, never forgetting what he had done and always obeying his commands.

8 They would not be like their ancestors, who were stubborn and refused to obey. Their hearts were not devoted to God, and they were not faithful to him.

9 The men from Ephraim had their weapons, but they ran from the battle.

10 They did not keep their agreement with God. They refused to obey his teachings.

11 They forgot the great things he had done and the amazing things he had shown them.

12 While their ancestors watched, he showed his great power at Zoan in Egypt.

13 He split the Red Sea and led the people across. The water stood like a solid wall on both sides of them.

14 Each day God led them with the tall cloud, and each night he led them with the light from the column of fire.

15 He split the rocks in the desert and gave them an ocean of fresh water.

16 He brought a stream of water out of the rock and made it flow like a river!

17 But they continued sinning against him. They rebelled against God Most High in the desert.

18 Then they decided to test God by telling him to give them the food they wanted.

19 They complained about him and said, “Can God give us food in the desert? Yes, he struck the rock and a flood of water came out. But can he give us bread and meat?”

20 The Lord heard what they said and became angry with Jacob’s people. He was angry with Israel,

22 because they did not trust in him. They did not believe that God could save them.

23–24 But then God opened the clouds above, and manna rained down on them for food. It was as if doors in the sky opened, and grain poured down from a storehouse in the sky.

25 These people ate the food of angels. God sent plenty of food to satisfy them.

26 He sent a strong wind from the east, and by his power he made the south wind blow.

27 He made quail fall like rain until they covered the ground. There were so many birds that they were like sand on the seashore.

28 The birds fell in the middle of the camp, all around their tents.

29 The people ate until they were full. God had given them what they wanted.

30 But before they were fully satisfied, while the food was still in their mouths,

31 God became angry and killed even the strongest of them. He brought down Israel’s best young men.
But the people continued to sin! They did not trust in the amazing things God could do. So he ended their worthless lives; he brought their years to a close with disaster. When he killed some of them, the others would turn back to him. They would come running back to God. They would remember that God was their Rock. They would remember that God Most High had saved them. But they tried to fool him with their words; they told him lies. Their hearts were not really with him. They were not faithful to the agreement he gave them. But God was merciful. He forgave their sins and did not destroy them. Many times he held back his anger. He never let it get out of control. He remembered that they were only people, like a wind that blows and then is gone. Oh, they caused him so much trouble in the desert! They made him so sad. Again and again they tested his patience. They really hurt the Holy One of Israel. They forgot about his power. They forgot the many times he saved them from the enemy. They forgot the miracles in Egypt, the miracles in the fields of Zaan. God turned the rivers into blood, and the Egyptians could not drink the water. He sent swarms of flies that bit them. He sent the frogs that ruined their lives. He gave their crops to grasshoppers and their other plants to locusts. He destroyed their vines with hail and their trees with sleet. He killed their animals with hail and their cattle with lightning. He showed the Egyptians his anger. He sent his destroying angels against them. He found a way to show his anger. He did not spare their lives. He let them die with a deadly disease. He killed all the firstborn sons in Egypt. He killed every firstborn in Ham’s family. Then he led Israel like a shepherd. He led his people like sheep into the desert. He guided them safely. They had nothing to fear. He drowned their enemies in the sea. He led his people to his holy land, to the mountain he took with his own power. He forced the other nations out before them and gave each family its share of the land. He gave each tribe of Israel a place to live. But they tested God Most High and made him very sad. They didn’t obey his commands. They turned against him and were unfaithful just like their ancestors. They changed directions like a boomerang. They built high places and made God angry. They built statues of false gods and made him jealous. God heard what they were doing and became very angry. So he rejected Israel completely! He abandoned his place at Shiloh, the Holy Tent where he lived among the people. He let foreigners capture the Box of the

Ps 78:51 Ham The Egyptians were Ham’s descendants. See Gen. 10:6–10.

Ps 78:60 place at Shiloh See 1 Sam. 4:4–11; Jer. 7:17.
Agreement,  
the symbol of his power and glory.

62 He showed his anger against his people  
and let them be killed in war.

63 Their young men were burned to death,  
and there were no wedding songs  
for their young women.

64 Their priests were killed,  
but the widows had no time to  
mourn for them.

65 Finally, our Lord got up  
like a man waking from his sleep,  
like a soldier after drinking too  
much wine.

66 He forced his enemies to turn back  
defeated.  
He brought them shame that will  
last forever.

67 Then he rejected Joseph's family.  
He did not accept Ephraim's family.

68 No, he chose the tribe of Judah,  
and he chose Mount Zion, the place  
he loves.

69 He built his holy Temple high on that  
mountain.  
Like the earth, God built his  
Temple to last forever.

70 He chose David to be his special  
servant.  
He took him from the sheep pens.

71 He took him away from the job of  
caring for sheep  
and gave him the job of caring for  
the descendants of Jacob—Israel,  
his chosen people.

72 And David led them with a pure heart  
and guided them very wisely.

One of Asaph's songs of praise.

79 God, some people from other  
nations came to fight your  
people.  
They ruined your holy Temple.  
They left Jerusalem in ruins.

2 They left the bodies of your servants for  
the wild birds to eat.  
They let wild animals eat the bodies  
of your followers.

3 Blood flowed like water all over  
Jerusalem.  
No one is left to bury the bodies.

4 The countries around us insult us.  
The people around us laugh at us  
and make fun of us.

5 LORD, will you be angry with us  
forever?  
Will your strong feelings continue  
to burn like a fire?

6 Turn your anger against the nations  
that do not know you,  
against the people who do not  
honor you as God.

7 Those nations killed Jacob's family  
and destroyed their land.  
Please don’t punish us for the sins of  
our ancestors.  
Hurry, show us your mercy!  
We need you so much!

8 Our God and Savior, help us!  
That will bring glory to your name.  
Save us and forgive our sins  
for the good of your name.

9 Don’t give the other nations a reason to  
say,  
"Where is their God? Can’t he help  
them?"

Let us see you punish those people.  
Punish them for killing your  
servants.

10 Listen to the sad cries of the prisoners!  
Use your great power to free those  
who are sentenced to die.

11 Punish the nations around us!  
Pay them back seven times for what  
they did to us.  
Punish them for insulting you.

12 We are your people, the sheep of your  
flock.  
We will praise you forever.  
We will praise you forever and ever!

To the director: To the tune “Lilies of the  
Agreement.” One of Asaph's songs of praise.

80 Shepherd of Israel, listen to us.  
You lead your people like sheep.  
You sit on your throne above the  

Strong feelings The Hebrew word can mean any  
strong feelings such as zeal, jealousy, or love.

b 80:1 your people Literally, "Joseph," the father of Ephraim  
and Manasseh, whose names are often used to mean all the  
tribes in northern Israel.
Psalm 81

Cherub angels.
Let us see you.

2 Shepherd of Israel, show your greatness to the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh.
Come and save your people.

3 God, accept us again.
Smile down on us and save us!

4 LORD God All-Powerful, when will you listen to our prayers?
How long will you be angry with us?

5 Instead of bread and water, you gave your people tears.

6 You made us the target of everyone’s hatred.
Our enemies make fun of us.

7 God All-Powerful, accept us again.
Smile down on us and save us!

8 When you brought us out of Egypt, we were like your special vine.
You forced other nations to leave this land,
and you planted that vine here.

9 You prepared the ground for it, and it sent its roots down deep and spread throughout the land.

10 It covered the mountains, and its leaves shaded even the giant cedar trees.

11 Its branches spread to the Mediterranean Sea, its shoots to the Euphrates River.

12 God, why did you pull down the walls that protect your vine?
Now everyone who passes by picks its grapes.

13 Wild pigs come and ruin it.
Wild animals eat the leaves.

14 God All-Powerful, come back.
Look down from heaven at your vine and protect it.

15 Look at the vine you planted with your own hands.
Look at the young plant you raised.

16 Our enemies have cut it down and burned it up.

Show them how angry you are and destroy them.

17 Reach out and help your chosen one.
Reach out to the people you raised up.

18 Then we will never leave you.
Let us live, and we will worship you.

19 LORD God All-Powerful, accept us again.
Smile down on us and save us!

To the director: On the gittith. One of Asaph’s songs.

1 Be happy and sing to God, our strength.
Shout with joy to the God of Jacob.

2 Begin the music.
Play the tambourines.
Play the pleasant harps and lyres.

3 Blow the ram’s horn at the time of the new moon and at the time of the full moon, when our festival begins.

4 This is the law for the people of Israel.
The God of Jacob gave the command.

5 God made this agreement with Joseph’s people, when he led them out of Egypt.
In a language we didn’t understand, God said,

6 “I took the load from your shoulder.
I let you drop the worker’s basket.

7 When you were in trouble, you called for help, and I set you free.
I was hidden in the storm clouds, and I answered you.
I tested you by the water at Meribah.”

Selah

8 “My people, I am warning you.
Israel, listen to me!

9 Don’t worship any of the false gods

b 80:17 chosen one Literally, “the man of your right hand.”
C 80:17 people Literally, “son of man.”

80:13 new moon The first day of the Hebrew month. There were special meetings on these days when the people shared fellowship offerings as part of their worship to God.

80:13 full moon The middle of the Hebrew month. Many of the special meetings and festivals started at the time of a full moon.


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Psalm 82

that the foreigners worship.
10 I, the LORD, am your God.
   I brought you out of Egypt.
   Israel, open your mouth,
   and I will feed you.

11 “But my people did not listen to me.
   Israel did not obey me.
12 So I let them go their own stubborn way
   and do whatever they wanted.
13 If my people would listen to me
   and would live the way I want,
14 then I would defeat their enemies.
   I would punish those who cause them trouble.
15 Those who hate the LORD would shake with fear.
   They would be punished forever.
16 I would give the best wheat to my people.
   I would give them the purest honey,
   until they were satisfied.”

One of Asaph’s songs of praise.

82 1 God stands in the assembly of the gods. He stands as judge among the judges.
2 He says, “How long will you judge unfairly
   and show special favors to the wicked?”

3 “Defend the poor and orphans.
   Protect the rights of the poor.
4 Help those who are poor and helpless.
   Save them from those who are evil.

5 “They don’t know what is happening.
   They don’t understand!
   They don’t know what they are doing.
   Their world is falling down around them!”

8 Get up, God! You be the judge!
   You be the leader over all the nations!

One of Asaph’s songs of praise.

83 1 God, don’t keep quiet!
   Don’t close your ears!
   Please say something, God.
2 Your enemies are getting ready to do something.
   Those who hate you will soon attack.
3 They are making secret plans against your people.
   Your enemies are discussing plans against the people you love.
4 They say, “Come, let us destroy them completely.
   Then no one will ever again remember the name Israel.”
5 God, they have all joined together.
   They have united against you.
6–7 Their army includes the Edomites,
   Ishmaelites, Moabites, and Hagar’s descendants,
   the people of Byblos, Ammon, and Amalek,
   the Philistines, and the people of Tyre.
8 Even the Assyrians have joined them.
   They have made Lot’s descendants very powerful.

9 God, defeat them just as you defeated Midian.
   Do what you did to Sisera and Jabin at the Kishon River.
10 You destroyed the enemy at Endor,
   and their bodies rotted on the ground.
11 Punish their leaders as you did Oreb and Zeeb.
   Do what you did to Zebah and

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Psalm 85

12 They said, “Let’s make this land our own—these fields of grass that belong to God!”
13 Make them like weeds blown by the wind.
Scatter them the way wind scatters straw.
14 Be like a fire that destroys a forest or like a flame that sets the hills on fire.
15 Chase them away with your blasts of wind; frighten them with your storms.
16 LORD, cover them with shame until they come to you for help.
17 May they be forever ashamed and afraid.
Disgrace and defeat them.
18 Then they will know that your name is YAHWEH—that you alone are the LORD.
They will know that you are God Most High, ruler over all the earth!

To the director: On the gittith. A song of praise from the Korah family.

84 1 LORD All-Powerful, the place where you live is so beautiful!
2 LORD, I cannot wait to enter your Temple.
I am so excited!
Every part of me cries out to be with the Living God.
3 LORD All-Powerful, my King, my God, even the birds have found a home in your Temple.
They make their nests near your altar, and there they have their babies.
4 Great blessings belong to those who live at your Temple!
They continue to praise you. Selah

5 Great blessings belong to those who depend on you for strength!
Their heart’s desire is to make the trip to your Temple.
6 They travel through Baca Valley, which God has made into a place of springs.
Autumn rains form pools of water there.
7 The people travel from town to town on their way to Zion, where they will meet with God.

8 LORD God All-Powerful, listen to my prayer.
God of Jacob, listen to me. Selah

9 God, watch over the king, our protector.
Be kind to him, the one you have chosen.
10 One day in your Temple is better than a thousand days anywhere else.
Serving as a guard at the gate of my God’s house is better than living in the homes of the wicked.
11 The LORD God is our protector and glorious king.
He blesses us with kindness and honor.
The LORD freely gives every good thing to those who do what is right.
12 LORD All-Powerful, great blessings belong to those who trust in you!

To the director: A song of praise from the Korah family.

85 1 LORD, you have been so kind to your land.
You have brought success again to the people of Jacob.
2 You have forgiven the bad things your people did.
You have taken away the guilt of their sins! Selah

3 You stopped being angry with them. Your terrible anger has gone away.

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PsALm 86

4 Our God and Savior, accept us again.
Don’t be angry with us anymore.
5 Will you be angry with us forever?
Will your anger reach to our children and to their children?
6 Please, give us new life!
Make your people happy to be yours.
7 LORD, save us
and show us your love.

8 I heard what the LORD God said.
He said there would be peace for his people and his loyal followers.
So they must not go back to their foolish way of living.
9 He will soon save his faithful followers.
His glory will again live in our land.
10 God’s love will come together with his faithful people.
Goodness and peace will greet them with a kiss.
11 People on earth will be loyal to God,
and God in heaven will be good to them.
12 The LORD will give us many good things.
The ground will grow many good crops.
13 Goodness will go before the Lord and prepare the way for him.

A prayer of David.

86 I am a poor, helpless man.
LORD, please listen to me and answer my prayer!
2 I am your follower, so please protect me.
I am your servant, and you are my God.
I trust in you, so save me.
3 My Lord, be kind to me.
I have been praying to you all day.
4 My Lord, I put my life in your hands.
I am your servant, so make me happy.
5 My Lord, you are good and merciful.
6 LORD, hear my prayer.
Listen to my cry for mercy.
7 I am praying to you in my time of trouble.
I know you will answer me.
8 My Lord, there is no God like you.
No one can do what you have done.
9 My Lord, you made everyone.
I wish they all would come worship you and honor your name.
10 You are great and do amazing things.
You and you alone are God.
11 LORD, teach me your ways,
and I will live and obey your truths.
Help me make worshiping your name the most important thing in my life.
12 My Lord God, I praise you with all my heart.
I will honor your name forever!
13 You have such great love for me.
You save me from the place of death.
14 Proud people are attacking me, God.
A gang of cruel men is trying to kill me.
They don’t respect you.
15 My Lord, you are a kind and merciful God.
You are patient, loyal, and full of love.
16 Show that you hear me and be kind to me.
I am your servant, so give me strength.
I am your slave, as my mother was, so save me!
17 LORD, show me a sign that you care for me.
My enemies will see it and be disappointed,
because you helped and comforted me.

A song of praise from the Korah family.

87 The LORD built his city on the holy hills.
2 He loves the gates of Zion more than any other place in Israel.

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3 Wonderful things are said about you, 
City of God.  

Selah

4 God says, “Some of my people live in 
Egypt, and Babylon. 
Some of them were born in Philistia, 
Tyre, and even Ethiopia.”

5 But about Zion he says, 
“I know each and every person born 
there.”

It is the city built by God Most High.

6 The Lord keeps a list of all his people, 
and he knows where each of them 
was born.

Selah

7 At the festivals, people will dance and 
sing, 
“All good things come from Zion.”

A song from the Korah family. To the director: 
About a painful sickness. A maskil of Heman 
the Ezrahite.

88 1 LORD God, you are my Savior. 
I have been praying to you day 
and night.

2 Please pay attention to my prayers. 
Listen to my prayers for mercy.

3 My soul has had enough of this pain!

I am ready to die.

4 People already treat me like a dead 
man, 
like someone too weak to live.

5 Look for me among the dead, 
like a body in the grave.

I am one of those you have forgotten, 
cut off from you and your care.

6 You put me in that hole in the ground. 
Yes, you put me in that dark place.

7 Your anger presses down on me like a 
heavy weight.

It’s like one wave after another 
pounding against me.

Selah

8 You made my friends leave me. 
They all avoid me like someone no 
one wants to touch.

Like a prisoner in my house, I cannot 
go out.

9 My eyes hurt from crying. 
LORD, I pray to you constantly! 
I lift my arms in prayer to you.

10 Do you do miracles for the dead? 
Do ghosts rise up and praise you? 
No! 

Selah

11 The dead in their graves cannot talk 
about your faithful love. 
People in the world of the 
dead cannot talk about your 
faithfulness.

12 The dead who lie in darkness cannot 
see the amazing things you do. 
Those in the world of the forgotten 
cannot talk about your goodness.

13 LORD, I am asking you to help me! 
Early each morning I pray to you.

14 LORD, why have you abandoned me? 
Why do you refuse to listen to me?

15 I have been sick and weak since I was 
young. 
I have suffered your anger, and I am 
helpless.

16 Your anger covers me like a flood. 
Your attacks are killing me.

17 They surround me on every side. 
I feel like a drowning man.

18 You caused my friends and loved ones 
to leave me. 
Now darkness is my closest friend.

A maskil from Ethan the Ezrahite.

89 1 I will sing forever about the 
LORD’s love. 
I will sing about his faithfulness 
forever and ever!

2 I will say, “Your faithful love will last 
forever. 
Your loyalty is like the sky—there is 
no end to it!”

3 You said, “I made an agreement with 
my chosen king. 
I made this promise to my servant 
David:

4 “There will always be someone from 
your family to rule.

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Psalm 89

I will make your kingdom continue forever and ever.”

Selah

5 LORD, the heavens praise you for the amazing things you do. The assembly of holy ones sings about your loyalty.

6 No one in heaven is equal to the LORD. None of the “gods” can compare to the LORD.

7 When God’s holy ones—the angels around his throne—meet together, they fear and respect him; he is more awesome than all those around him.

8 LORD God All-Powerful, there is no one like you. You are strong, LORD, and always faithful.

9 You rule the stormy sea. You can calm its angry waves.

10 You defeated Rahab. You scattered your enemies with your own powerful arm.

11 Everything in heaven and earth belongs to you. You made the world and everything in it.

12 You created everything north and south. Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon sing praises to your name.

13 You have the power! Your power is great! Victory is yours!

14 Your kingdom is built on truth and justice. Love and faithfulness are servants before your throne.

15 LORD, your loyal followers are happy. They live in the light of your kindness.

16 Your name always makes them happy. They praise your goodness.

17 You are their amazing strength. Their power comes from you.

18 The king, our protector, belongs to the LORD, who is the Holy One of Israel.

19 Lord, you once spoke in a vision to your followers:

“I have made a young soldier strong. From among my people I chose him for an important position.

20 I have found my servant David and anointed him as king with my special oil.

21 I will support him with my right hand, and my arm will make him strong.

22 So no enemy will ever control him. The wicked will never defeat him.

23 I will destroy his enemies before his eyes. I will defeat those who hate him.

24 I will always love and support him. I will always make him strong.

25 I will put him in charge of the sea. He will control the rivers.

26 He will say to me, ‘You are my father. You are my God, my Rock, my Savior.’

27 And I will make him my firstborn son. He will be the great king on earth.

28 My love will protect him forever. My agreement with him will never end.

29 I will make his family continue forever. His kingdom will last as long as the skies.

30 If his descendants stop following my law and stop obeying my commands,

31 if they break my laws and ignore my commands,

32 I will punish them severely for their sins and wrongs.

33 But I will never take my love from him. I will never stop being loyal to him.

34 I will not break my agreement with David. I will never change what I said.

35 By my holiness, I made a promise to him, and I would not lie to David.

36 His family will continue forever. His kingdom will last as long as the sun.

37 Like the moon, it will continue forever. The sky is a witness to the
agreement that can be trusted.”

Selah

38 But now, Lord, you have become angry
with your chosen king, and you have left him all alone.
39 You ended the agreement you made
with your servant.
You threw the king’s crown into the
dirt.
40 You pulled down the walls of his city.
You destroyed all his fortresses.
41 Everyone passing by steals from him.
His neighbors laugh at him.
42 You made all the king’s enemies happy
and let his enemies win the war.
43 You helped them defend themselves.
You did not help your king win the battle.
44 You did not let him win.
You threw his throne to the ground.
45 You cut his life short.
You shamed him.

Selah

46 LORD, how long will this continue?
Will you ignore us forever?
Will your anger burn like a fire
forever?
47 Remember how short my life is.
You created us to live a short life
and then die.
48 Is there anyone alive who will never
die?
Will anyone escape the grave? Selah

49 Lord, where is the love you showed in
the past?
You promised David that you would
be loyal to his family.
50–51 My Lord, please remember how
people insulted your servant.
LORD, I had to listen to all the insults
from your enemies.
They insulted your chosen king
wherever he went.

52 Praise the LORD forever!
Amen and Amen!

BOOK 4 (PSALMS 90–106)

The prayer of Moses, the man of God.

90 1 My Lord, you have been our
home forever and ever.
2 You were God before the mountains
were born,
before the earth and the world were
made.
You have always been and will
always be God!

3 You bring people into this world,
and you change them into dust
again.
4 To you, a thousand years is like
yesterday,
like a few hours in the night.
5 Our life is like a dream that ends when
morning comes.
We are like grass
that grows and looks so fresh in the
morning,
but in the evening it is dry and
dying.
6 Your anger could destroy us.
Your anger frightens us!
8 You know about all our sins.
You see every one of our secret sins.
9 Your anger can end our life.
Our lives fade away like a whisper.
10 We live about 70 years
or, if we are strong, 80 years.
But most of them are filled with hard
work and pain.
Then, suddenly, the years are gone,
and we fly away.
11 No one really knows the full power of
your anger,
but our fear and respect for you is
as great as your anger.
12 Teach us how short our lives are
so that we can become wise.
13 LORD, come back to us.
Be kind to your servants.
14 Fill us with your love every morning.
Let us be happy and enjoy our lives.
15 For years you have made life hard
for us and have given us many
troubles.

a 89:38 chosen king Literally, “anointed one.”
Psalm 91

Now make us happy for just as long.
Let your servants see the wonderful things you can do for them.
And let their children see your glory.
Lord, our God, be kind to us.
Make everything we do successful.
Yes, make it all successful.

1 You can go to God Most High to hide.
   You can go to God All-Powerful for protection.
2 I say to the LORD, “You are my place of safety, my fortress.
   My God, I trust in you.”
3 God will save you from hidden dangers and from deadly diseases.
4 You can go to him for protection.
   He will cover you like a bird spreading its wings over its babies.
   You can trust him to surround and protect you like a shield.
5 You will have nothing to fear at night and no need to be afraid of enemy arrows during the day.
6 You will have no fear of diseases that come in the dark or terrible suffering that comes at noon.
7 A thousand people may fall dead at your side or ten thousand right beside you, but nothing bad will happen to you!
8 All you will have to do is watch, and you will see that the wicked are punished.
9 You trust in the LORD for protection.
   You have made God Most High your place of safety.
10 So nothing bad will happen to you. No diseases will come near your home.
11 He will command his angels to protect you wherever you go.
12 Their hands will catch you so that you will not hit your foot on a rock.
13 You will have power to trample on lions and poisonous snakes.
14 The Lord says, “If someone trusts me, I will save them.
   I will protect my followers who call to me for help.
15 When my followers call to me, I will answer them.
   I will be with them when they are in trouble.
   I will rescue them and honor them.
16 I will give my followers a long life and show them my power to save.”

A song of praise for the Sabbath.

It is good to praise the LORD. God Most High, it is good to praise your name.
2 It is good to sing about your love in the morning and about your faithfulness at night.
3 It is good to play for you on the ten-stringed instrument and lyre and to add the soft sounds of the harp to my praise.
4 LORD, you make us very happy because of what you did.
   I gladly sing about it.
5 LORD, you did such great things.
   Your thoughts are too hard for us to understand.
6 Stupid people don’t know this. Fools don’t understand.
7 The wicked may sprout like grass, and those who do evil may blossom like flowers, but they will be destroyed, never to be seen again.
8 But, LORD, you will be honored forever.
9 LORD, all your enemies will be destroyed, and all who do evil will be scattered.
10 But you have made me as strong as a wild ox.
   You have given me your blessing.
11 My eyes will see the defeat of those waiting to attack me.

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My ears will hear the cries of my evil enemies.

12 Good people are like budding palm trees.
They grow strong like the cedar trees of Lebanon.
13 They are planted in the house of the LORD.
They grow strong there in the courtyards of our God.
14 Even when they are old, they will continue producing fruit like young, healthy trees.
15 They are there to show everyone that the LORD is good. He is my Rock, and he does no wrong.

93 The LORD is King.
The LORD wears majesty and strength like clothes.
He is ready, so the whole world is safe. It will not be shaken.
2 Your kingdom has continued forever.
You have lived forever!
3 LORD, the ocean roars.
The mighty ocean sounds like thunder as the waves crash on the shore.
4 The crashing waves of the sea are loud and powerful, but the LORD above is even more powerful.
5 LORD, your laws will continue forever. Your holy Temple will stand for a long time.

94 The LORD is a God who punishes people.
God, come punish them.
2 You are the judge of the whole earth.
Give proud people the punishment they deserve.
3 LORD, how long will the wicked have their fun?

How much longer?
4 How much longer will those criminals brag about the evil they did?
5 LORD, they hurt your people and make them suffer.
6 They kill widows and foreigners living in our country.
They murder orphans.
7 And they say the LORD does not see them doing these evil things!
They say the God of Jacob does not know what is happening.

8 You evil people are foolish.
When will you learn your lesson?
You are so stupid!
You must try to understand.
9 God made our ears, so surely he can hear what is happening!
He made our eyes, so surely he can see you!
10 The one who disciplines nations will surely correct you.
He is the one who teaches us everything.
11 The LORD knows what people are thinking.
He knows that their thoughts are like a puff of wind.

12 LORD, great blessings belong to those you discipline, to those you teach from your law.
13 You help them stay calm when trouble comes.
You will help them until the wicked are put in their graves.
14 The LORD will not leave his people.
He will not leave them without help.
15 Justice will return and bring fairness.
And those who want to do right will be there to see it.

16 No one helped me fight against the wicked.
No one stood with me against those who do evil.
17 And if the LORD had not helped me, I would have been silenced by
Psalm 95

18 I know I was ready to fall, but, LORD, your faithful love supported me.
19 I was very worried and upset, but you comforted me and made me happy!

20 You don’t help crooked judges. They use the law to make life hard for the people.
21 They attack those who do right. They say innocent people are guilty and put them to death.
22 But the LORD is my place of safety, high on the mountain.
   God, my Rock, is my safe place!
23 He will punish those evil judges for the bad things they did.
   He will destroy them because they sinned.
   The LORD our God will destroy them.

95

1 Come, let us sing praise to the LORD!
   Let us shout praises to the Rock who saves us.
2 Come and worship him with songs of thanks.
   Let us sing happy songs of praise to him.
3 For the LORD is a great God, the great King ruling over all the other “gods.”
4 The deepest caves and the highest mountains belong to him.
5 The ocean is his—he created it.
   He made the dry land with his own hands.
6 Come, let us bow down and worship him!
   Let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
7 He is our God, and we are the people he cares for, his sheep that walk by his side.

Listen to his voice today:

8 “Don’t be stubborn, as you were at Meribah, as you were at Massah in the desert.
9 Your ancestors doubted and tested me, even after they saw what I could do!
10 I was angry with them for 40 years. I said, ‘They are not faithful to me.
   They refuse to do what I say.’
11 So in my anger I made this vow: ‘They will never enter my land of rest.’”

96

1 Sing a new song to the LORD!
   Let the whole world sing to the LORD!
2 Sing to the LORD and praise his name!
   Tell the good news every day about how he saves us!
3 Tell all the nations how wonderful he is!
   Tell people everywhere about the amazing things he does.
4 The LORD is great and worthy of praise.
   He is more awesome than any of the “gods.”
5 All the “gods” in other nations are nothing but statues, but the LORD made the heavens.
6 He lives in the presence of glory and honor.
   His Temple is a place of power and beauty.
7 Praise the LORD, all people of every nation;
   praise the LORD’s glory and power.
8 Give the LORD praise worthy of his glory!
   Come, bring your offerings into his courtyard.
9 Worship the LORD in all his holy beauty.
   Everyone on earth should tremble before him.
10 Tell the nations that the LORD is King!
   The world stands firm and cannot be moved.
   He will judge all people fairly.

a 95:2 songs of thanks Or “thank offerings.”


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Psalm 99

11 Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be happy! Let the sea and everything in it shout for joy!
12 Let the fields and everything in them be happy! Let the trees in the forest sing for joy!
13 when they see the LORD coming! He is coming to rule the world. He will rule all the nations of the world with justice and fairness.

97 The LORD rules, and the earth is happy.
All the faraway lands are happy.
2 Thick, dark clouds surround him. Goodness and justice make his kingdom strong.
3 Fire goes before him and destroys his enemies.
4 His lightning flashes in the sky. The earth sees it and trembles with fear.
5 The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.
6 The skies tell about his goodness, and the nations see his glory.

7 People worship their idols.
They brag about their “gods.” But they will be embarrassed.
And all their “gods” will bow down before the Lord.
8 Zion, listen and be happy! Cities of Judah, be glad! Rejoice because the LORD’s decisions are fair.
9 LORD Most High, you really are the ruler of the earth.
You are much better than the “gods.”
10 Hate evil, you who love the LORD. He protects his followers and saves them from evil people.
11 Light and happiness shine on those who want to do right.
12 Good people, be happy in the LORD!

98 Sing a new song to the LORD, because he has done amazing things!
His powerful and holy right arm has brought him another victory.
2 The LORD showed the nations his power to save. He showed them his goodness.
3 He has kept his promise of love and loyalty to the people of Israel. People everywhere have seen our God’s power to save.
4 Everyone on earth, shout with joy to the LORD.
Start singing happy songs of praise!
5 Praise the LORD with harps. Yes, praise him with music from the harps.
6 Blow the pipes and horns, and shout for joy to the LORD our King!
7 Let the sea and everything in it, the earth and all who live in it shout his praise!
8 Rivers, clap your hands! All together now, mountains sing out!
9 Sing before the LORD because he is coming to judge the world.
He will rule the world fairly. He will rule the people with goodness.

99 The LORD is King, so let the nations shake with fear.
He sits as King above the Cherub angels, so let the whole earth shake.
2 The LORD in Zion is great! He is the great leader over all people.
3 Let all the nations praise your name.

The LORD is King, so let the nations shake with fear.
He sits as King above the Cherub angels, so let the whole earth shake.
2 The LORD in Zion is great! He is the great leader over all people.
3 Let all the nations praise your name.

A song of praise.

98:1 new song Whenever God did a new and wonderful thing for his people, they would write a new song about it.
98:1 holy right arm This pictures God as a warrior-king. The right arm symbolizes his power and authority. “Holy” may refer to the special cleansing and dedication that Israelites performed before going into battle.
Your name is great and awesome.
Your name is holy.
4 You are the powerful King who loves justice.
You have made things right.
You have brought goodness and fairness to Jacob.
5 Praise the LORD our God,
and bow down before his footstool, for he is holy.
6 Moses and Aaron were some of his priests,
and Samuel was one of the men who called on his name.
They prayed to the LORD, and he answered them.
7 God spoke from the tall cloud,
and they obeyed his commands and the law he gave them.
8 LORD our God, you answered their prayers.
You showed them that you are a forgiving God
and that you punish people for the evil they do.
9 Praise the LORD our God.
Bow down toward his holy mountain and worship him.
The LORD our God is holy!

A song of thanks.

100 1 Earth, sing to the LORD!
2 Be happy as you serve the LORD!
Come before him with happy songs!
3 Know that the LORD is God.
He made us, and we belong to him.
We are his people, the sheep he takes care of.
4 Come through the gates to his Temple
giving thanks to him.
Enter his courtyards with songs of praise.
Honor him and bless his name.
5 The LORD is good!
There is no end to his faithful love.
We can trust him forever and ever!

A song of David.

101 1 I will sing about love and justice.
LORD, I will sing to you.
2 I will be careful to live a pure life.
I will live in my house with complete honesty.
When will you come to me?
3 I will not even look at anything shameful.
I hate all wrongdoing.
I want no part of it!
4 I will not be involved in anything dishonest.
I will have nothing to do with evil.
5 I will stop anyone who secretly says bad things about a neighbor.
I will not allow people to be proud and think they are better than others.
6 I will look throughout the land for those who can be trusted.
Only such people can live with me.
Only those who live pure lives can be my servants.
7 I will never let a dishonest person live in my house.
I will not let liars stay near me.
8 My goal each day will be to destroy the wicked living in our land.
I will force all who do evil to leave the city of the LORD.

A prayer for a time of suffering, when anyone feels weak and wants to tell their complaints to the LORD.

102 1 LORD, hear my prayer.
Listen to my cry for help.
2 Don’t turn away from me when I have troubles.
Listen to me, and answer me quickly when I cry for help.
3 My life is passing away like smoke.
My life is like a fire slowly burning out.
4 My strength is gone—I am like dry, dying grass.
I even forget to eat.

a 99:5 footstool This probably means the Temple. See "Temple" in the Word List.

b 101:3 anything shameful Or ‘an idol.’
5 Because of my sadness, I am losing so much weight
that my skin hangs from my bones.
6 I am lonely, like an owl living in the desert,
like an owl living among old ruined buildings.
7 I cannot sleep.
   I am like a lonely bird on the roof.
8 My enemies insult me all the time.
   They make fun of me and use me as an example in their curses.
9 My great sadness is my only food.
   My tears fall into my drink.
10 You were angry with me,
   so you picked me up and threw me away.

11 My life is almost finished, like the long shadows at the end of the day.
   I am like dry and dying grass.
12 But you, LORD, will rule as king forever!
   Your name will continue forever and ever!
13 You will rise up and comfort Zion.
   The time has come for you to be kind to Zion.
14 Your servants love her stones.
   They love even the dust of that city!
15 The nations will worship the LORD’s name.
   All the kings on earth will honor you.
16 The LORD will rebuild Zion,
   and people will again see her glory.
17 He will listen to the prayers of those in poverty.
   He will not ignore them.
18 Write these things for future generations,
   so that they will praise the LORD.
19 The LORD will look down from his Holy Place above.
   He will look down at the earth from heaven.
20 And he will hear the prisoner’s prayers.
   He will free those who were condemned to die.
21 Then people in Zion will tell about the LORD.
   They will praise his name in Jerusalem.
22 when nations gather together
   and kingdoms come to serve the LORD.

23 My strength failed me.
   My life is cut short.
24 So I said, “Don’t let me die while I am still young.
   God, you will live forever and ever!
25 Long ago, you made the world.
   You made the sky with your own hands!
26 The earth and sky will end,
   but you will live forever!
   They will wear out like clothes,
   and like clothes, you will change them.
27 But you never change.
   You will live forever!
28 We are your servants today.
   Our children will live here,
   and their descendants will come here to worship you.”

A song of David.

103 1 My soul, praise the LORD!
    Every part of me, praise his holy name!
2 My soul, praise the LORD
    and never forget how kind he is!
3 He forgives all our sins
    and heals all our sicknesses.
4 He saves us from the grave,
    and he gives us love and compassion.
5 He gives us plenty of good things.
    He makes us young again,
    like an eagle that grows new feathers.
6 The LORD does what is fair.
    He brings justice to all who have been hurt by others.
7 He taught his laws to Moses.
    He let Israel see the powerful things he can do.
8 The LORD is kind and merciful.
    He is patient and full of love.

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Psalm 104

1 My soul, praise the LORD!
   LORD my God, you are very great!
   You are clothed with glory and honor.
   You wear light like a robe.
   You spread out the skies like a curtain.
   You built your home above them.\(^b\)
   You use the thick clouds like a chariot and ride across the sky on the wings of the wind.
   You make the winds your messengers and flames of fire your servants.\(^c\)
   You built the earth on its foundations, so it can never be moved.
   You covered it with water like a blanket.
   The water covered even the mountains.
   But you gave the command, and the water turned back.
   You shouted at the water, and it rushed away.
   The water flowed down from the mountains into the valleys, to the places you made for it.
   You set the limits for the seas, and the water will never again rise to cover the earth.

   Lord, you cause water to flow from springs into the streams that flow down between the mountains.
   The streams provide water for all the wild animals. Even the wild donkeys come there to drink.
   Wild birds come to live by the pools; they sing in the branches of nearby trees.
   You send rain down on the mountains. The earth gets everything it needs from what you have made.
   You make the grass grow to feed the animals.

103:21 armies This word can mean "armies," "angels," or the "stars and planets." This word is part of the name translated "LORD All-Powerful." It shows that God is in control of all the powers in the universe.
You provide plants for the crops we grow—
the plants that give us food from
the earth.

15 You give us the wine that makes us happy,
the oil that makes our skin soft,
and the food that makes us strong.

16 The great cedar trees of Lebanon belong to the LORD.
He planted them and gives them the water they need.

17 That’s where the birds make their nests,
and the storks live in the fir trees.

18 The high mountains are a home for wild goats.
The large rocks are hiding places for rock badgers.

19 Lord, you made the moon to show us when the festivals begin.
And the sun always knows when to set.

20 You made darkness to be the night—the time when wild animals come out and roam around.

21 Lions roar as they attack, as if they are asking God for the food he gives them.

22 When the sun rises, they leave and go back to their dens to rest.

23 Then people go out to do their work, and they work until evening.

24 LORD, you created so many things!
With your wisdom you made them all.
The earth is full of the living things you made.

25 Look at the ocean, so big and wide!
It is filled with all kinds of sea life.
There are creatures large and small—too many to count!

26 Ships sail over the ocean, and playing there is Leviathan.

27 Lord, all living things depend on you.
You give them food at the right time.

28 You give it, and they eat it.
They are filled with good food from your open hands.

29 When you turn away from them, they become frightened.
When you take away their breath, they die, and their bodies return to the dust.

30 But when you send out your life-giving breath, things come alive, and the world is like new again!

31 May the LORD’s glory continue forever!
May the LORD enjoy what he made.

32 He just looks at the earth, and it trembles.
He just touches the mountains, and smoke rises from them.

33 I will sing to the LORD for the rest of my life.
I will sing praises to my God as long as I live.

34 May my words be pleasing to him.
The LORD is the one who makes me happy.

35 I wish sinners would disappear from the earth.
I wish the wicked would be gone forever.

My soul, praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

1 Give thanks to the LORD and call out to him!
Tell the nations what he has done!

2 Sing to him; sing praises to him.
Tell about the amazing things he has done.

3 Be proud of his holy name.

\[\text{Psalm 105}\]

\[\text{104:15 makes our skin soft} \] Literally, “makes our face shine.” This can also mean “makes us happy.”

\[\text{104:26 Leviathan} \] This might mean any large sea animal, like a whale. But it probably means “the sea monster,” the great sea creature you made.

\[\text{104:29 breath} \] Or “spirit.”

\[\text{104:30 life-giving breath} \] Or “Spirit.”
You followers of the Lord, be happy!
4 Depend on the Lord for strength.
Always go to him for help.
5 Remember the amazing things he has done.
Remember his miracles and his fair decisions.
6 You belong to the family of his servant Abraham.
You are descendants of Jacob, the people God chose.
7 The Lord is our God.
He rules the whole world.
8 He will remember his agreement forever.
He will always keep the promises he made to his people.
9 He will keep the agreement he made with Abraham
and the promise he made to Isaac.
10 He gave it as a law to Jacob.
He gave it to Israel as an agreement that will last forever!
11 He said, “I will give you the land of Canaan.
It will be your very own.”
12 At the time God said this, there were only a few of his people,
and they were strangers there.
13 They traveled around from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another.
14 But the Lord did not let anyone mistreat them.
He warned kings not to harm them.
15 He said, “Don’t hurt my chosen people.
Don’t harm my prophets.”
16 He caused a famine in that country,
and people did not have enough food.
17 But he sent a man named Joseph to go ahead of them.
Joseph was sold like a slave.
18 They tied a rope around his feet
and put an iron ring around his neck.
19 Joseph was a slave until what he said had really happened.
The Lord’s message proved that
Joseph was right.
20 So the king of Egypt set him free.
That nation’s leader let him out of jail.
21 He put Joseph in charge of his house.
Joseph took care of everything the king owned.
22 Joseph gave instructions to the other leaders.
He taught the older men.
23 Then Israel came to Egypt.
Jacob lived there in Ham’s country.a
24 Jacob’s family became very large
and more powerful than their enemies.
25 So the Egyptians began to hate his people.
They made plans against his servants.
26 So the Lord sent Moses, his servant,
and Aaron, his chosen priest.
27 He used Moses and Aaron
to do many miracles in Ham’s country.
28 He sent darkness to cover their land,
but the Egyptians did not listen to him.
29 So he changed the water into blood,
and all their fish died.
30 Their country was filled with frogs,
even in the king’s bedroom.
31 The Lord gave the command,
and the flies and gnats came.
They were everywhere!
32 He made the rain become hail.
Lightning struck throughout their land.
33 He destroyed their vines and fig trees.
He destroyed every tree in their country.
34 He gave the command, and the locusts and grasshoppers came.
There were too many to count!
35 They ate all the plants in the country,
including all the crops in their fields.
36 Then the Lord killed every firstborn in their country.
He killed their oldest sons.

a 105:23 Ham’s country Or “Egypt.” The Egyptians were Ham’s descendants. See Gen. 10:6–20.
Psalm 106

37 He led his people out of Egypt.
They were carrying gold and silver,
and none of them stumbled or fell behind.
38 Egypt was happy to see his people go,
because they were afraid of them.
39 The Lord spread out his cloud like a blanket.
He used his column of fire to give
his people light at night.
40 They asked for food, and he sent them quail.
He also gave them plenty of bread from heaven.
41 He split the rock, and water came bubbling out.
A river began flowing in the desert!

42 The Lord remembered his holy promise
that he had made to his servant Abraham.
43 He brought his people out of Egypt.
They came out rejoicing and singing their happy songs!
44 Then he gave his people the lands of other nations.
His people got what others had worked for.
45 He did this so that his people would obey his laws and follow his teachings.

Praise the LORD!

106 1Praise the LORD!
Give thanks to the LORD because he is good!
His faithful love will last forever!
2 No one can describe how great the LORD really is.
No one can praise him enough.
3 Those who obey his commands are happy.
They do good things all the time.
4 LORD, remember me when you show kindness to your people.
Remember to save me too!
5 Let me share in the good things
that you do for your chosen people.
Let me rejoice with your nation.
Let me join with your people in praise.
6 We sinned just as our ancestors did.
We were wrong; we did bad things!
7 Lord, our ancestors learned nothing from the miracles you did in Egypt.
They forgot your kindness at the Red Sea
and rebelled against you.
8 But the Lord saved our ancestors for the honor of his name.
He saved them to show his great power.
9 He gave the command, and the Red Sea became dry.
He led them through the deep sea on land as dry as the desert.
10 He saved our ancestors and rescued them from their enemies.
11 He covered their enemies with the sea.
Not one of them escaped!
12 Then our ancestors believed what he had said.
They sang praises to him.
13 But they quickly forgot about what he did.
They did not listen to his advice.
14 They became hungry in the desert, and they tested him in the wilderness.
15 He gave them what they asked for, but he also gave them a terrible disease.
16 The people became jealous of Moses.
They became jealous of Aaron, the LORD's holy priest.
17 The ground opened up and swallowed Dathan.
Then the ground closed up and covered Abiram's group.
18 Then a fire burned that mob of people.
It burned those wicked people.
19 The people made a golden calf at Mount Horeb.

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PsALm 106

They worshiped a statue!

20 They traded their glorious God for a statue of a grass-eating bull!

21 They forgot all about God, the one who saved them, the one who did the miracles in Egypt.

22 He did amazing things there in Ham’s country! He did awesome things at the Red Sea!

23 God wanted to destroy those people, but Moses, the leader he chose, stood in the way.

God was very angry, but Moses begged him to stop, so God did not destroy the people.

24 But then they refused to go into the wonderful land of Canaan. They did not believe that God would help them defeat the people there.

25 Our ancestors complained in their tents and refused to obey the LORD.

26 So he swore that they would die in the desert.

27 He promised to scatter them among the nations and to let other people defeat their descendants.

28 At Baal Peor they joined in worshiping Baal and ate sacrifices to honor the dead.

29 The LORD became angry with his people, so he made them sick.

30 But Phinehas prayed to God, and God stopped the sickness.

31 He considered what Phinehas did a good work, and it will be remembered forever and ever.

32 At Meribah the people made the LORD angry and created trouble for Moses.

33 They upset Moses, and he spoke without stopping to think.

34 The LORD told the people to destroy the other nations living in Canaan.

But the Israelites did not obey him.

35 They mixed with the other people and did what those people were doing.

36 They began worshiping the false gods those people worshiped. And their idols became a trap.

37 They even offered their own children as sacrifices to demons.

38 They killed their innocent sons and daughters and offered them to the false gods of Canaan. So the land was polluted with the sin of murder.

39 They were unfaithful to him, and they became dirty with the sins of other nations.

40 So the LORD became angry with his people.

He rejected those who belonged to him.

41 He gave his people to other nations and let their enemies rule over them.

42 Their enemies controlled them and made life hard for them.

43 He saved his people many times, but they turned against him and did what they wanted to do.

His people did many bad things.

44 But whenever they were in trouble, he listened to their prayers.

45 He always remembered his agreement,
and because of his faithful love, he comforted them.

46 Other nations took them as prisoners, but the Lord caused them to be kind to his people.

47 LORD our God, save us!
Bring us back together from those nations.
Then we will give thanks to your holy name
and joyfully praise you.

48 Praise the LORD, the God of Israel!
He always was and will always be worthy of praise.
Let all the people say, “Amen!”

Praise the LORD!

BOOK 5 (PSALMS 107–150)

107 1Praise the LORD, because he is good!
His faithful love will last forever!

2 Everyone the LORD has saved should repeat that word of thanks.
Praise him, all who have been rescued from the enemy.

3 He gathered his people together from many different countries.
He brought them from east and west, north and south.

4 Some of them wandered in the dry desert.
They were looking for a place to live, but they could not find a city.

5 They were hungry and thirsty and growing weak.

6 Then they called to the LORD for help, and he saved them from their troubles.

7 He led them straight to the city where they would live.

8 Thank the LORD for his faithful love and for the amazing things he does for people.

9 He satisfies those who are thirsty.
He fills those who are hungry with good things.

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wind began to blow.
The waves became higher and higher.
26 The waves lifted them high into the sky
and dropped them into the deep sea.
The storm was so dangerous that
the men lost their courage.
27 They were stumbling and falling like
someone who is drunk.
Their skill as sailors was useless.
28 They were in trouble, so they called to
the Lord for help,
and he saved them from their troubles.
29 He stopped the storm
and calmed the waves.
30 The sailors were happy that the sea
became calm,
and he led them safely to where
they wanted to go.
31 Thank the Lord for his faithful love
and for the amazing things he does
for people.
32 Praise God in the great assembly.
Praise him when the older leaders
meet together.

33 He changed rivers into a desert.
He stopped springs from flowing.
34 He made the fertile land become salty,
because the people living there did
such evil things.
35 He changed the desert into a land with
pools of water.
He caused springs to flow from dry ground.
36 He led the hungry to that good land,
and they built a city to live in.
37 They planted seeds in their fields and
grapes in their vineyards,
and they had a good harvest.
38 God blessed them with many children
and plenty of animals.
39 But because of disaster and troubles,
their families became small and
weak.
40 God shames even great leaders
and makes them wander through
empty deserts.
41 But he rescues the poor from their
misery.
He makes their families large like
flocks of sheep.
42 Good people see this and are happy.
But the wicked see it and don’t
know what to say.
43 Whoever is wise will remember these
things
and begin to understand the Lord’s
faithful love.

A praise song of David.

108 1 God, I am ready, heart and soul,
to sing songs of praise.
Wake up, my soul!
2 Harps and lyres, wake up,
and let’s wake the dawn!
3 Lord, I will praise you before all people.
I will sing praises about you to
every nation.
4 Your faithful love is higher
than the highest clouds in the sky!
5 Rise above the heavens, God.
Let all the world see your glory.
6 Use your great power and help us!
Answer my prayer and save the
people you love.

7 God has made this promise in his Temple:
“I will win the war and rejoice in victory!
I will divide this land among my people.
I will give them Shechem.
I will give them Succoth Valley.
Gilead and Manasseh will be mine.
Ephraim will be my helmet.
Judah will be my royal scepter.
Moab will be the bowl for washing my feet.
Edom will be the slave who carries my sandals.
I will defeat the Philistines and
shout in victory!”

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But, God, it seems that you have left us!
You do not go out with our army.
So who will lead me into the strong, protected city?
Who will lead me into battle against Edom?
12 Help us defeat the enemy!
No one on earth can rescue us.
13 Only God can make us strong.
Only God can defeat our enemies!

To the director: A praise song of David.

1 God, I praise you!
Hear my prayer and do something!
2 Wicked people are telling lies about me.
They are saying things that are not true.
3 They are saying hateful things about me.
They are attacking me for no reason.
4 I loved them, but they were against me.
So I said a prayer.
5 I did good things to them, but they are doing bad things to me.
I loved them, but they hated me.
6 They said, “Choose someone evil to represent him.
Let the one at his side really be his accuser.
7 Let even his prayer be used as evidence against him, and let the court find him guilty.
8 Let his life be cut short, and let someone else take over his work.
9 Let his children become orphans and his wife a widow.
10 Make his children wander around as beggars, forced from homes that lie in ruins.
11 Let the people he owes take everything he owns.
Let strangers get everything he worked for.
12 Let no one be kind to him.

Let no one show mercy to his children.
13 May his family come to an end.
May his name be unknown to future generations.
14 May the LORD remember the sins of his father, and may his mother’s sins never be erased.
15 May the LORD remember their sins forever, and may he cause people to forget his family completely.
16 He never did anything good.
He never loved anyone.
He made life hard for the poor and the helpless.
17 He loved to curse others, so let those bad things happen to him.
He never blessed others, so don’t let good things happen to him.
18 Cursing was a daily part of his life, like the clothes he wears.
Cursing others became a part of him, like the water he drinks and the oil he puts on his body.
19 So let curses cover him like the robe he wears and always surround him like a belt.”

20 My enemies said these evil things against me.
But may those curses be the way the LORD punishes them.
21 My Lord God, treat me in a way that brings honor to your name.
Save me because of your faithful love.
22 I am only a poor, helpless man.
I am so sad; my heart is broken.
23 I feel my life is over, fading like a shadow at day’s end.
I feel like a bug that someone brushed away.
24 My knees are weak from fasting.
I have lost weight and become thin.
25 My enemies insult me.
They look at me and shake their
Psalm 110

1 The Lord said to my lord, "Sit at my right side, while I put your enemies under your control."

2 The Lord will cause your kingdom to grow, beginning at Zion, until you rule the lands of your enemies!

3 Your people will gladly join you when you gather your army together.

4 The Lord has made a promise with an oath and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever—the kind of priest Melchizedek was."

5 My Lord is at your right side.

Psalm 111

1 Praise the Lord! I thank the Lord with all my heart in the assembly of his good people.

2 The Lord does wonderful things, more than anyone could ask or receive.

3 The things he does are great and glorious! There is no end to his goodness.

4 He does amazing things so that we will remember that the Lord is kind and merciful.

5 He gives food to his followers. He remembers his agreement forever.

6 He has shown his people how powerful he is by giving them the land of other nations.

7 Everything he does is good and fair. All his commands can be trusted.

8 His commands will continue forever. They must be done with truth and honesty.

9 He rescued his people and made his agreement with them forever. His name is awesome and holy.

10 Wisdom begins with fear and respect for the Lord. Those who obey him are very wise. Praises will be sung to him forever.

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112  

1 Praise the LORD!  
Great blessings belong to those who fear and respect the LORD, who are happy to do what he commands.
2 Their descendants will be given power on earth.  
Those who do right will be greatly blessed.
3 Their family will be very rich, and their goodness will continue forever.
4 A light shines in the dark for those who are good, for those who are merciful, kind, and fair.
5 It is good for people to be kind and generous and to be fair in business.
6 Such good people will never fall. They will always be remembered.
7 They will not be afraid of bad news. They are confident because they trust in the LORD.
8 They remain confident and without fear, so they defeat their enemies.
9 They freely give to the poor. Their goodness will continue forever. They will be honored with victory.
10 The wicked become angry when they see this. They grind their teeth in anger, but then they disappear. They will never get what they want most.

113  

1 Praise the LORD!  
Servants of the LORD, praise him!  
Praise the LORD's name.
2 May the LORD's name be praised now and forever.
3 May the LORD's name be praised from where the sun rises to where it goes down.
4 The LORD is higher than all nations. His glory rises to the skies.

114  

1 The people of Israel escaped from Egypt. Yes, Jacob's descendants left that foreign country.
2 Then Judah became God's special people, and Israel became his kingdom.
3 The Red Sea saw this and ran away. The Jordan River turned and ran.
4 The mountains danced like rams. The hills danced like lambs.
5 Red Sea, why did you run away? Jordan River, why did you turn and run away?
6 Mountains, why did you dance like rams? Hills, why did you dance like lambs?
7 The earth shook in front of the Lord, the God of Jacob.
8 He is the one who caused water to flow from a rock. He made a spring of water flow from that hard rock.

115  

1 LORD, you should receive the honor, not us. The honor belongs to you because of your faithful love and loyalty.
2 Why should the nations wonder where our God is?
Psalm 116

1 I love the LORD for hearing me, for listening to my prayers.
2 Yes, he paid attention to me, so I will always call to him whenever I need help.
3 Death’s ropes were around me. The grave was closing in on me. I was worried and afraid.
4 Then I called on the LORD’s name. I said, “LORD, save me!”
5 The LORD is good and merciful; our God is so kind.
6 The LORD takes care of helpless people. I was without help, and he saved me.
7 My soul, relax! The LORD is caring for you.
8 Lord, you saved my soul from death. You stopped my tears. You kept me from falling.
9 I will continue to serve the LORD in the land of the living.
10 I continued believing even when I said, “I am completely ruined!”
11 Yes, even when I was upset and said, “There is no one I can trust!”
12 What can I give the LORD for all that he has done for me?
13 He saved me, so I will give him a drink offering, and I will call on the LORD’s name.
14 I will give the LORD what I promised. I will go in front of all his people now.
15 Very dear to the LORD are the lives of his followers. He cares when they face death.
16 LORD, I am your servant! Yes, I am your slave, as my mother was. You set me free from the chains of death.
17 I will give you a thank offering. I will call on the LORD’s name.
18 I will stand before the gathering of his people and give the LORD what I promised.

116:15 May ... the LORD Or “The Lord welcomes you with a blessing.”

3 Our God is in heaven, and he does whatever he wants.
4 The “gods” of those nations are only statues that some human made from gold and silver.
5 Those statues have mouths, but cannot talk. They have eyes, but cannot see.
6 They have ears, but cannot hear. They have noses, but cannot smell.
7 They have hands, but cannot feel. They have feet, but cannot walk. No sounds come from their throats.
8 The people who make and trust in those statues will become like them!

9 People of Israel, trust in the LORD! He is your strength and shield.
10 Aaron’s family, trust in the LORD! He is your strength and shield.
11 Followers of the LORD, trust in the LORD! He is your strength and shield.

12 The LORD remembers us. He will bless us. He will bless Israel. He will bless Aaron’s family.
13 The LORD will bless his followers, great and small.

14 May the LORD give more and more to you and to your children.
15 May you receive blessings from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
16 Heaven belongs to the LORD, but he gave the earth to people.
17 The dead don’t praise him. Those in the grave don’t praise the LORD.
18 But we will praise the LORD now and forever!

Praise the LORD!

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19 I will do this in Jerusalem, in the courtyards of the LORD’s Temple.

Praise the LORD!

117 ¹Praise the LORD, all you nations. Praise him, all you people.
²He loves us very much! The LORD will be faithful to us forever!

Praise the LORD!

118 ¹Praise the LORD because he is good! His faithful love will last forever!
²Israel, say it:
   “His faithful love will last forever!”
³Aaron’s family,¹ say it:
   “His faithful love will last forever!”
⁴You people worshiping the LORD, say it:
   “His faithful love will last forever!”

5 I was in trouble, so I called to the LORD for help.
The LORD answered and made me free.
6 The LORD is with me, so I will not be afraid.
   No one on earth can do anything to harm me.
7 The LORD is my helper.
   I will see my enemies defeated.
8 It is better to trust in the LORD than to trust in people.
9 It is better to trust in the LORD than to trust in great leaders.

10 Many enemies surrounded me, but with the LORD’s power I defeated them.
11 They surrounded me again and again, but I defeated them with the LORD’s power.
12 They surrounded me like a swarm of bees, but they were quickly destroyed like a fast-burning bush.
   I defeated them with the LORD’s power.

13 My enemy attacked me and almost destroyed me, but the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD is my strength and my reason for singing.² He saved me!
15 You can hear the victory celebration in the homes of those who live right.
The LORD has shown his great power again!
16 The LORD’s arm is raised in victory.
The LORD has shown his great power again.

17 I will live and not die, and I will tell what the LORD has done.
18 The LORD punished me, but he did not let me die.
19 Gates of goodness, open for me, and I will come in and worship the LORD.
20 Those are the LORD’s gates, and only good people can go through them.
21 Lord, I thank you for answering my prayer.
   I thank you for saving me.

22 The stone that the builders rejected became the cornerstone.
23 The LORD made this happen, and we think it is wonderful!
24 This is the day the LORD has made.
   Let us rejoice and be happy today!

25 [The people say,] “Praise the LORD! The LORD saved us!”
26 Welcome to the one who comes in the name of the LORD.”
[The priests answer,] “We welcome you to the LORD’s house!”

¹ 118:3 Aaron’s family That is, the priests.
² 118:14 my reason for singing Or “my protection.”
³ 118:25 Literally, “Lord, please save us. Lord, please make us successful.” This was a shout of victory to honor a king returning after winning a war.
Psalm 119

The Lord is God, and he accepts us. Tie up the lamb for the sacrifice and carry it to the horns of the altar.”

Lord, you are my God, and I thank you. My God, I praise you!

Praise the Lord because he is good. His faithful love will last forever.

Great blessings belong to those who live pure lives! They follow the Lord’s teachings.

Great blessings belong to those who follow his rules! They seek him with all their heart.

They don’t do wrong. They follow his ways.

Lord, you gave us your instructions and told us to always obey them.

How I wish I could be more faithful in obeying your laws!

Then I would never feel ashamed when I look closely at your commands.

The more I understand how fair your laws are, the more sincerely I will praise you.

I will obey your laws, so please don’t leave me!

How can a young person live a pure life? By obeying your word.

I try with all my heart to serve you. Help me obey your commands.

I study your teachings very carefully so that I will not sin against you.

Lord, you are worthy of praise! Teach me your laws.

I will repeat the laws we have heard from you.

I enjoy following your rules as much as others enjoy great riches.

I will study your instructions. I will give thought to your way of

Be good to me, your servant, so that I may live to obey your word.

Open my eyes so that I can see all the wonderful things in your teachings.

I feel like a stranger visiting here on earth.

I need to know your commands. Don’t keep them hidden from me.

I constantly feel a hunger to understand your laws.

You tell the proud how angry you are with them.

All those who refuse to obey your word are cursed.

Don’t let me be ashamed and embarrassed.

I have obeyed your rules.

Even if rulers say bad things about me, I am your servant, and I continue to study your laws.

Your rules make me happy.

They give me good advice.

I lie here like a dying man.

Say the word, and I will live again.

I told you about my life, and you answered me.

Now, teach me your laws.

Help me understand your instructions, and I will think about your wonderful teachings.

I am sad and tired.

Say the word, and make me strong again.

Don’t let me live a lie.

Guide me with your teachings.

I have chosen to be loyal to you.

I respect your laws.

I follow your rules closely, Lord. Don’t let me be put to shame.

I do my best to follow your commands,

Psalm 119 Aleph

The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This psalm has a section for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and each of the eight verses in each section begins with the Hebrew letter for its section.
Psalm 119 | 685

because you are the one who gives me the desire.

He
33 LORD, teach me your laws, and I will always follow them.
34 Help me understand your teachings, and I will follow them. Obeying them will be my greatest desire.
35 Help me follow your commands, because that makes me happy.
36 Give me the desire to follow your rules, not the desire to get rich.
37 Don’t let me look at worthless things. Help me live your way.
38 Do what you promised me, your servant, so that people will respect you.
39 Take away the shame I fear. Your laws are good.
40 See how much I want to obey your instructions! Be good to me, and let me live.

Waw
41 LORD, show me your faithful love. Save me, as you promised.
42 Then I will have an answer for those who make fun of me for trusting what you say.
43 Let me always say what is true. I depend on your judgment to be fair.
44 I will follow your teachings forever and ever.
45 So I will live in freedom, because I do my best to know your instructions.
46 I will discuss your rules with kings, and no one will embarrass me.
47 What joy your commands give me! How I love them!
48 Not only do I love your commands, but I also honor them. I will study your laws.

Zain
49 Remember your promise to me, your servant.

It gives me hope.
50 You comfort me in my suffering, because your promise gives me new life.
51 People full of pride are always making fun of me, but I have not stopped following your teachings.
52 I remember the laws you gave us long ago, LORD, and they bring me comfort.
53 I am overcome with anger when I see wicked people, who have stopped following your teachings.
54 Your laws are the songs I sing wherever I am living.
55 LORD, in the night I remembered your name, and I obeyed your teachings.
56 This happened because I carefully obey your instructions.

Heth
57 LORD, I decided that my duty is to obey your commandments.
58 I beg you with all my heart, be kind to me, as you promised.
59 I thought very carefully about my life, and I decided to follow your rules.
60 Without wasting any time, I hurried back to obey your commands.
61 The wicked tried to trap me, but I have not forgotten your teachings.
62 In the middle of the night, I get up to thank you because your laws are so fair.
63 I am a friend to everyone who worships you. I am a friend to everyone who obeys your instructions.
64 LORD, your faithful love fills the earth. Teach me your laws.

Teth
65 LORD, you did good things for me, your servant. You did what you promised to do.

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Give me the knowledge to make wise decisions. I trust your commands.

Before I suffered, I did many wrong things. But now I carefully obey everything you say. You are good, and you do good things. Teach me your laws. People full of pride made up lies about me. But I keep obeying your instructions with all my heart. Those people are so stupid that they care for nothing, but I enjoy studying your teachings. Suffering was good for me; I learned your laws. Your teachings are worth more to me than a thousand pieces of silver and gold.

With your hands you made me and helped me become what I am. Now help me learn and understand your commands. Your followers will see me and be happy, because I trust in your word. LORD, I know that your decisions are fair, and you were right to punish me. Now comfort me with your faithful love, as you promised. Comfort me and let me live. I enjoy your teachings. Bring shame on those proud people who lied about me. All I want to do is study your instructions. Let your followers come back to me so that they may learn your rules. Let me obey your laws perfectly so that I will not be ashamed.

I feel weaker and weaker as I wait for you to save me.

But I put my trust in your word. I keep looking for what you promised, but my eyes are feeling tired. When will you comfort me?

Even when I am like a dried wineskin on the trash pile, I will not forget your laws. How long must I wait for you to punish those who persecute me?

Proud people have tried to trap me and make me disobey your teachings. All your commands can be trusted. Those people are wrong to persecute me. Help me!

They have almost destroyed me, but I have not stopped obeying your instructions. Show me your faithful love and let me live. I will do whatever you say.

LORD, your word continues forever in heaven. You are loyal forever and ever. You made the earth, and it still stands. All things continue today because of your laws. Like slaves, they all obey you. If I had not found joy in your teachings, my suffering would have destroyed me. I will never forget your commands, because through them you gave me new life. I am yours, so save me! I have done my best to know your instructions. The wicked tried to destroy me, but your rules made me wise. Everything has its limits, except your commands.

Oh, how I love your teachings! I talk about them all the time. Your commands are always with me,
and they make me wiser than my enemies.

99 I am wiser than all my teachers, because I study your rules.

100 I understand more than those who are older, because I obey your instructions.

101 I have avoided every path that leads to evil so that I could obey your word.

102 You are my teacher, so I will always do whatever you decide.

103 Your words are so sweet to me, like the taste of honey!

104 I gain understanding from your instructions, so I hate anything that leads people the wrong way.

Nun

105 Your word is like a lamp that guides my steps, a light that shows the path I should take.

106 Your laws are good and fair. I have promised to obey them, and I will keep my promise.

107 LORD, I have suffered for a long time. Say the word, and I will live again! a

108 LORD, accept the praise I want to give you, and teach me your laws.

109 My life is always in danger, but I have not forgotten your teachings.

110 The wicked try to trap me, but I have not disobeyed your instructions.

111 The rules you have given me to follow will be mine forever. They give me great joy.

112 More than anything I want to obey your laws always, until the end of my life.

Samekh

113 Lord, I hate those who are not completely loyal to you, but I love your teachings.

114 Hide me and protect me. I trust what you say.

115 Don’t come near me, you who are evil, so that I can obey my God’s commands.

116 Support me, Lord, as you promised, and I will live. I trust in you, so don’t disappoint me.

117 Help me and I will be saved. And I will always give attention to your laws.

118 You reject all who don’t obey your laws, because they are liars and did not do what they said.

119 You throw away the wicked of this world like trash. So I love your rules.

120 I am shaking with fear before you. I fear and respect your judgments.

Ain

121 I have done what is right and good. Don’t let me fall into the hands of those who want to hurt me.

122 Promise to be good to me, your servant. Don’t let those proud people do harm to me.

123 I have worn out my eyes looking for your help, waiting for you to save me, as you promised.

124 Show your faithful love to me, your servant. Teach me your laws.

125 I am your servant. Give me wisdom to understand your rules.

126 LORD, it is time for you to do something. The people do what is against your teachings.

127 I love your commands more than gold, more than the purest gold.

128 I carefully obey all your commands. So I hate anything that leads people the wrong way.
Psalm 119

129 Lord, your rules are wonderful. That is why I follow them.
130 As people understand your word, it brings light to their lives. Your word makes even simple people wise.
131 My desire to hear your commands is so strong that I wait with open mouth, gasping for breath.
132 Look at me, and be kind to me, just as you always are to those who love your name.
133 Guide me, as you promised. Don’t let evil rule over me.
134 Save me from those who want to hurt me, and I will obey your instructions.
135 Accept your servant, and teach me your laws.
136 I have cried a river of tears because people don’t obey your teachings.

Qoph

145 LORD, I call to you with all my heart. Answer me, and I will obey your laws.
146 I call to you. Save me, and I will obey your rules.
147 I get up early in the morning to pray to you. I trust what you say.
148 Late into the night I stay awake to think about your word.
149 I know your love is true, so listen to me. LORD, you always do what is right, so let me live.
150 Here come those who have evil plans to hurt me. They live far away from your teachings.
151 But you are near me, LORD, and all your commands can be trusted.
152 Long ago, I learned from your rules that you made them to last forever.

Resh

153 Look at my suffering and rescue me. I have not forgotten your teachings.
154 Argue my case, and set me free. Let me live, as you promised.
155 The wicked have no hope of being saved, because they don’t follow your laws.
156 LORD, you are very kind. You always do what is right, so let me live.
157 I have many enemies trying to hurt me, but I have not stopped following your rules.
158 I look at those traitors and hate what I see, because they refuse to do what you say.
159 See how much I love your instructions! LORD, I know your love is true, so let me live.
160 Every word you say can be trusted. Your laws are fair and will last forever.
Psalm 122

689

Shin

161 Powerful leaders attack me for no reason, but the only thing I fear is your command.

162 Your word makes me happy, like someone who has found a great treasure.

163 I hate lies; they make me sick! But I love your teachings.

164 Seven times a day I praise you because your laws are fair.

165 Those who love your teachings will find true peace.

Nothing can make them fall.

166 Lord, I am waiting for you to save me. I obey your commands.

167 I follow your rules.

I love them very much.

168 I obey all your instructions and rules, because you know everything I do.

Taw

169 Lord, listen to my cry for help.

Make me wise, as you promised.

170 Listen to my prayer.

Save me, as you promised.

171 I will burst into songs of praise, because you have taught me your laws.

172 Let my voice sing about your word, because all your commands are good.

173 I have chosen to follow your instructions, so reach out and help me!

174 Lord, I want you to save me.

Your teachings make me happy.

175 Let me live to praise you.

Let me find the help I need in your laws.

176 I have wandered away like a lost sheep.

Come and find me.

I am your servant, and I have not forgotten your commands.

A song for going up to the Temple.

121 I look up to the hills, but where will my help really come from?

2 My help will come from the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth.

3 He will not let you fall.

Your Protector will not fall asleep.

4 Israel’s Protector does not get tired.

He never sleeps.

5 The Lord is your Protector.

The Lord stands by your side, shading and protecting you.

6 The sun cannot harm you during the day, and the moon cannot harm you at night.

7 The Lord will protect you from every danger.

He will protect your soul.

8 The Lord will protect you as you come and go, both now and forever!

A song of David for going up to the Temple.

122 I was happy when the people said, “Let us go to the Lord’s Temple.”

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Psalm 123

2 Here we are, standing at the gates of Jerusalem.
3 This is New Jerusalem!
The city has been rebuilt as one united city.
4 This is where the tribes come, the tribes who belong to the Lord.
The people of Israel come here to praise the Lord’s name.
5 The kings from David’s family put their thrones here.
They set up their thrones to judge the people.

6 Pray for peace in Jerusalem:
“May those who love you find peace.
May there be peace within your walls.
May there be safety in your great buildings.”

7 For the good of my family and neighbors,
I pray that there will be peace here.
8 For the good of the Temple of the Lord our God,
I pray that good things will happen to this city.

A song for going up to the Temple.

Psalm 124

1 What would have happened to us if the Lord had not been on our side when people attacked us?
2 They would have swallowed us alive when they became angry with us.
3 Their armies would have been like a flood washing over us, like a river drowning us.
4 Those proud people would have been like water rising up to our mouth and drowning us.

5 Praise the Lord!
He did not let our enemies tear us apart.
6 We escaped like a bird from the net of a hunter.
The net broke, and we escaped!
7 Our help came from the Lord, the one who made heaven and earth!

A song for going up to the Temple.

Psalm 125

1 Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion.
They will never be shaken.
They will continue forever.
2 Like the mountains that surround Jerusalem,
the Lord surrounds and protects his people now and forever.
3 The wicked will not always control the land of those who do right.
If they did, even those who do right might start doing wrong.
4 Lord, be good to those who are good,
to those who have pure hearts.
5 But, Lord, when you punish those who do evil,
also punish those who have stopped following your way.

Let Israel always enjoy peace!

A song for going up to the Temple.

Psalm 126

1 It will be like a dream when the Lord comes back
Psalm 129

129:1 Great blessings belong to those who fear and respect the LORD and live the way he wants.

2 You will get what you work for.
   You will enjoy the Lord’s blessings, and all will go well for you.

3 At home, your wife will have many children, like a vine full of grapes.
   The children around your table will be like an orchard full of olive trees.

4 Yes, the LORD will really bless those who respect him.

5 May the LORD bless you from Mount Zion.
   May you enjoy the blessings of Jerusalem all your life.

6 And may you live to see your grandchildren.

Let Israel always enjoy peace!

A song for going up to the Temple.

128:1 Great blessings belong to those who fear and respect the LORD and live the way he wants.

2 You will get what you work for.
   You will enjoy the Lord’s blessings, and all will go well for you.

3 At home, your wife will have many children, like a vine full of grapes.
   The children around your table will be like an orchard full of olive trees.

4 Yes, the LORD will really bless those who respect him.

5 May the LORD bless you from Mount Zion.
   May you enjoy the blessings of Jerusalem all your life.

6 And may you live to see your grandchildren.

Let Israel always enjoy peace!

A song for going up to the Temple.

127:1 If it is not the LORD who builds a house, the builders are wasting their time.
   If it is not the LORD who watches over the city, the guards are wasting their time.

2 It is a waste of time to get up early and stay up late, trying to make a living.
   The Lord provides for those he loves, even while they are sleeping.

3 Children are a gift from the LORD, a reward from a mother’s womb.

4 A young man’s sons are like the arrows in a soldier’s hand.

5 The man who fills his quiver with sons will be very blessed.
   He will never be defeated when he opposes his enemy at the city gates.

A song from Solomon for going up to the Temple.

126:1 when . . . Zion Or “when the Lord restores Zion.” See “Zion” in the Word List.

b 126:6 carried the seeds Or “carried all their possessions.”

c 127:3 gift Literally, “inheritance.” This usually means the land God gave to each family in Israel.

d 127:5 city gates This can refer to either a battle to protect the city or to a court case held in this public place.
Psalm 130
A song for going up to the Temple.

1 LORD, I am in deep trouble, so I am calling to you for help.
2 My Lord, listen to me.
   Listen to my cry for help.
3 LORD, if you punished people for all their sins,
   no one would be left alive.
4 But you forgive people, so they fear and respect you.

5 I am waiting for the LORD to help me.
   My soul waits for him.
   I trust what he says.
6 I am waiting for my Lord,
   like a guard waiting and waiting for the morning to come.
7 Israel, trust in the LORD.
   The LORD is the one who is faithful and true.
   He saves us again and again,
   and he is the one who will save the people of Israel from all their sins.

Psalm 131
A song of David for going up to the Temple.

1 LORD, I don’t feel proud.
   I don’t see myself as better than others.
   I am not thinking about doing great things
   or reaching impossible goals.
2 No, right now I am calm and quiet,
   like a child after nursing,
   content in its mother’s arms.

3 Israel, trust in the LORD.
   Trust in him now and forever!

Psalm 132
A song for going up to the Temple.

1 LORD, remember how David suffered.
2 He made a promise to you, LORD,
   an oath to the Mighty God of Jacob.
3 He said, “I will not go into my house
   or lie down on my bed.
4 I will not sleep

   132:6 Ephrathah Bethlehem, the town where David was born.
   132:6 Kiriathe Jearim Literally, “fields of the forest.” The Hebrew word meaning “forest” is like the name of this city.
   132:9 tent The word for Tent is like the name of the city.
   132:9 at his throne Literally, “at his footstool.” This can mean the Box of the Agreement, the Holy Tent, or the Temple. God is like a king sitting on his throne and resting his feet on the place where people worship him.
   132:8 LSion, get up The people said this when they lifted the Box of the Agreement and took it into battle with them. This showed that God was with them. See Num. 10:35–36.
   132:10 chosen king Literally, “anointed one.”

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family strong.
I will never let the lamp of my
chosen king stop burning.

18 I will cover his enemies with shame,
and on his head will be a shining
crown.”

A song of David for going up to the Temple.

133
1 Oh, how wonderful, how
pleasing it is
when God’s people all come
together as one*

2 It is like the sweet-smelling oil that is
poured over the high priest’s head,
that runs down his beard flowing
over his robes.

3 It is like a gentle rain from Mount
Hermon falling on Mount Zion.
It is there that the LORD has
promised his blessing of eternal
life.

A song for going up to the Temple.

134
1 Praise the LORD, all his servants
who serve in the Temple at night.

2 Lift your hands toward the Temple,
and praise the LORD.

3 May the LORD, who made heaven and
earth, bless you from Zion.

135
1 Praise the LORD!
Praise the name of the LORD!
Praise him, you servants of the
LORD,

2 you who serve in the LORD’s Temple,
in the courtyard of the Temple of
our God.

3 Praise the LORD, because he is good.
Praise his name, because it brings
such joy!

4 The LORD chose Jacob to be his own.
Yes, he chose Israel to be his own
people.

5 I know the LORD is great!
Our Lord is greater than all the
gods!

6 The LORD does whatever he wants,
in heaven and on earth, in the seas
and the deep oceans.

7 He brings the clouds from the other
side of the earth.
He sends the lightning and the rain,
and he opens the doors to release
the winds.

8 He destroyed the firstborn males of
the people in Egypt and their
animals.

9 He did great wonders and miracles in
Egypt.
He used them against Pharaoh and
his officials.

10 He defeated many nations
and killed powerful kings.

11 He defeated Sihon, king of the
Amorites,
Og, king of Bashan,
and all the kingdoms in Canaan.

12 Then he gave their land to Israel, his
people.

13 LORD, your name will be famous
forever!
LORD, people will remember you
forever and ever.

14 The LORD defends his people;
he is kind to his servants.

15 The gods of other nations are only gold
and silver idols
that people have made.

16 They have mouths, but cannot speak.
They have eyes, but cannot see.

17 They have ears, but cannot hear.
They have mouths, but no breath.

18 Those who make idols and trust in
them
will become just like the idols they
have made.

19 Family of Israel, praise the LORD!
Aaron’s family, praise the LORD!

20 Levi’s family, praise the LORD!
All you who worship the LORD,
Psalm 136

Praise the Lord because he is good.
His faithful love will last forever.

Praise the God of gods!
His faithful love will last forever.

Praise the Lord of lords!
His faithful love will last forever.

Praise him who alone does wonderful miracles!
His faithful love will last forever.

Praise the one who used wisdom to make the skies!
His faithful love will last forever.

He spread the land over the sea.
His faithful love will last forever.

He made the great lights.
His faithful love will last forever.

He made the sun to rule the day.
His faithful love will last forever.

He made the moon and stars to rule the night.
His faithful love will last forever.

He killed the firstborn males in Egypt, both men and animals.
His faithful love will last forever.

He took Israel out of Egypt.
His faithful love will last forever.

He used his powerful arms and strong hands.
His faithful love will last forever.

He split the Red Sea into two parts.
His faithful love will last forever.

He led Israel through the sea.
His faithful love will last forever.

He drowned Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea.
His faithful love will last forever.

He led his people through the desert.
His faithful love will last forever.

He defeated powerful kings.
His faithful love will last forever.

He defeated strong kings.
His faithful love will last forever.

He defeated Sihon king of the Amorites.
His faithful love will last forever.

He defeated Og king of Bashan.
His faithful love will last forever.

He gave their land to Israel.
His faithful love will last forever.

He gave it as a gift to Israel, his servant.
His faithful love will last forever.

He remembered us when we were defeated.
His faithful love will last forever.

He saved us from our enemies.
His faithful love will last forever.

He provides food for all living things.
His faithful love will last forever.

He gave their land to Israel.
His faithful love will last forever.

He gave it as a gift to Israel, his servant.
His faithful love will last forever.

He remembered us when we were defeated.
His faithful love will last forever.

He saved us from our enemies.
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He gave it as a gift to Israel, his servant.
His faithful love will last forever.

He remembered us when we were defeated.
His faithful love will last forever.

He saved us from our enemies.
His faithful love will last forever.

He provides food for all living things.
His faithful love will last forever.

137

1 We sat by the rivers in Babylon and cried as we remembered Zion.

2 We hung our harps nearby, there on the willow trees.

3 There in Babylon, those who captured us told us to sing.
Our enemies told us to entertain them.

They said, “Sing us one of your songs about Zion.”

4 But we cannot sing the Lord’s songs in a foreign country!

5 Jerusalem, if I ever forget you, may I never play a song again.

6 If I fail to remember you, may I never sing again.
I will always remember Jerusalem as my greatest joy!

7 Lord, be sure to punish the Edomites for what they did when Jerusalem was captured.
They shouted, “Destroy its buildings! Pull them down to the ground!”

8 Babylon, you will be destroyed!
Bless the one who pays you back for what you did to us.

9 Bless the one who grabs your babies and smashes them against a rock.

These instruments were used to praise God in the Temple in Jerusalem. Since it was destroyed, the people had no reason to play the songs.
A song of David.

138 1LORD, I praise you with all my heart.
     I sing songs of praise to you before the gods.
2 I bow down toward your holy Temple,
     and I praise your name for your love and loyalty.
You are famous,
     and doing what you promised will make you even more famous!
3 When I called to you for help,
     you answered me and gave me strength.
4 LORD, all the kings on earth will praise you
     when they hear what you say.
5 They will sing about what the LORD has done,
     because the glory of the LORD is very great.
6 The LORD has the highest place above all others,
     but he still cares for the humble.
Even from there, so high above,
     he knows what the proud do.
7 If I am in trouble, you keep me alive.
     If my enemies are angry, you save me from them.
8 LORD, I know you will do what you have promised.
     LORD, your faithful love will last forever.
You are the one who made us, so don’t leave us!

To the director: A praise song of David.

139 1LORD, you have tested me,
     so you know all about me.
2 You know when I sit down and when I get up.
     You know my thoughts from far away.
3 You know where I go and where I lie down.
     You know everything I do.
4 LORD, you know what I want to say,
     even before the words leave my mouth.

5 You are all around me—in front of me and behind me.
     I feel your hand on my shoulder.
6 I am amazed at what you know;
     it is too much for me to understand.
7 Your Spirit is everywhere I go.
     I cannot escape your presence.
8 If I go up to heaven, you will be there.
     If I go down to the place of death,
     you will be there.
9 If I go east where the sun rises
     or go to live in the west beyond the sea,
10 even there you will take my hand and lead me.
     Your strong right hand will protect me.
11 Suppose I wanted to hide from you and said,
     “Surely the darkness will hide me.
     The day will change to night and cover me.”
12 Even the darkness is not dark to you.
     The night is as bright as the day.
     Darkness and light are the same.
13 You formed the way I think and feel.a
     You put me together in my mother’s womb.
14 I praise you because you made me in such a wonderful way.
     I know how amazing that was!
15 You could see my bones grow as my body took shape,
     hidden in my mother’s womb.b
16 You could see my body grow each passing day.c
     You listed all my parts, and not one of them was missing.
17 Your thoughts are beyond my understanding.d
     They cannot be measured!
18 If I could count them, they would be more than all the grains of sand.

a 139:13 the way I think and feel Literally, “my kidneys,” which were thought to be the center of emotions.
b 139:15 mother’s womb Literally, “deepest parts of the earth,” meaning a place we know nothing about.
c 139:16 You…day Or “You watched me every day.”
d 139:17 beyond my understanding Or “precious to me.”
Psalm 140

But when I finished, I would have just begun.\(^a\)

You murderers, get away from me! God, kill those wicked people—
those who say bad things about you. Your enemies use your name falsely.\(^b\)

**LORD,** I hate those who hate you.
I hate those who are against you.
I hate them completely!
Your enemies are also my enemies.

God, examine me and know my mind.
Test me and know all my worries.

Make sure that I am not going the wrong way.\(^c\)
Lead me on the path that has always been right.\(^d\)

To the director: A praise song of David.

140

*Lord, save me from people who are evil.*

Protect me from those who are cruel,
from those who plan to do evil and always cause trouble.

Their words are as harmful as the fangs of a snake,
as deadly as its venom. \(\text{Selah}\)

*Lord, save me from the wicked!*

Protect me from these cruel people who plan to hurt me.

These proud people are trying to trap me;
they spread nets to catch me;
they set traps in my path. \(\text{Selah}\)

*Lord, you are my God.*

*Lord, listen to my prayer.*

My Lord God, you are the powerful one who saves me.
You protect my head in battle.

*Lord, don’t let the wicked have what they want.*

Don’t let their plans succeed. \(\text{Selah}\)

My enemies are planning trouble for me.

*Lord, make that trouble fall on them.*

Pour burning coals on their heads.
Throw them into the fire.
Throw them into pits they can never escape.

Don’t let those cruel liars enjoy success here.
Let disaster hunt them down.

I know the **LORD** will provide justice for the poor
and will defend the helpless.

Those who do what is right will praise your name;
those who are honest will live in your presence.

A praise song of David.

141

*LORD, I call to you for help.*

Listen to me as I pray.
Please hurry and help me!

Accept my prayer like a gift of burning incense,
the words I lift up like an evening sacrifice.

*Lord, help me control what I say.*

Don’t let me say anything bad.

Take away any desire to do evil.
Keep me from joining the wicked in doing wrong.
Help me stay away from their feasts.

If good people correct me,
I will consider it a good thing.
If they criticize me,
I will accept it like a warm welcome.\(^e\)

But my prayer will always be against the wicked and the evil they do.

Let their judges be put to death.\(^f\)

Then everyone will know that I told the truth.

Like rocks in a field that a farmer has plowed,
so our bones will be scattered in the

\(^a\) 139:18 I would still be with you.

\(^b\) 139:20 Your enemies ... falsely The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.

\(^c\) 139:24 Make sure ... way Or “See that I don’t worship idols.”

\(^d\) 139:24 Lead me ... right Or “Guide me on the ancient path.”

\(^e\) 141:5 a warm welcome Or “like oil poured over my head.”

\(^f\) 141:6 Let their judges ... to death Or “Let their judges be thrown from the cliffs.”
Psalm 144

8 My Lord God, I look to you for help.
   I look to you for protection; don’t let me die.
9 Those evil people are trying to trap me.
   Don’t let me fall into their traps.
10 Let the wicked fall into their own traps,
   while I walk away unharmed.

A maskil of David written when he was in the cave. A prayer.

142 I cry out to the LORD.
   I beg the LORD to help me.
2 I tell him my problems;
   I tell him about my troubles.
3 I am ready to give up.
   But you, Lord, know the path I am on,
   and you know that my enemies have set a trap for me.

4 I look around,
   and I don’t see anyone I know.
   I have no place to run.
   There is no one to save me.
5 LORD, I cry out to you for help:
   “You are my place of safety.
   You are all I need in life.”
6 Listen to my prayer.
   I am so weak.
   Save me from those who are chasing me.
   They are stronger than I am.
7 Help me escape this trap,
   so that I can praise your name.
   Then good people will celebrate with me,
   because you took care of me.

A praise song of David.

143 LORD, hear my prayer.
   Listen to my call for help and answer my prayer.
   Show me how good and loyal you are.
2 Don’t judge me, your servant.
   No one alive could be judged innocent by your standards.
3 My enemies are chasing me.

A song of David.

144 Praise the LORD!
   He is my Rock.
   He prepares me for war.
   He trains me for battle.
2 He loves me and protects me.
   He is my safe place high on the
Psalm 145

3 LORD, why are people important to you? Why do you even notice us? Our life is like a puff of air. It is like a passing shadow.

5 LORD, tear open the skies and come down. Touch the mountains, and smoke will rise from them.

6 Send the lightning and make my enemies run away. Shoot your “arrows” and make them run away.

7 Reach down from heaven and save me! Don’t let me drown in this sea of enemies. Save me from these foreigners.

8 They are all liars, even when they swear to tell the truth.

9 God, I will sing a new song[a] for you. I will play a ten-stringed harp and sing praise to you.

10 You are the one who gives victory to kings. You saved your servant David from the sword of his enemy.

11 Save me from these foreigners. They are all liars, even when they swear to tell the truth.

12 May our sons be as strong as trees and our daughters as beautiful as the carved columns of a palace.

13 May our barns be filled with crops of all kinds. May our sheep produce so many lambs,

14 And may our cows be heavy with calves. May no enemy break through our walls or carry away any of our people. May there be no cries of pain in our streets.

15 How wonderful to have such blessings! Yes, great blessings belong to those who have the LORD as their God.

A song of David.

1 I will tell of your greatness, my God and King. I will praise your name forever and ever.

2 I will praise you every day. I will praise your name forever and ever.

3 The LORD is great and deserves all our praise! No one can fully understand his greatness!

4 Each generation will praise you and tell the next generation about the great things you do.

5 Your majesty and glory are wonderful. I will tell about your miracles.

6 People will tell about the amazing things you do, and I will tell everyone how great you are.

7 They will talk about your goodness and sing about your justice.

8 The LORD is kind and merciful, patient and full of love.

9 The LORD is good to everyone. He shows his mercy to everything he made.

10 LORD, all you have made will give thanks to you. Your loyal followers will praise you. They will tell how great your kingdom is.

12 So others will learn about the mighty

[a] 144:9 new song Whenever God did a new and wonderful thing for his people, they would write a new song about it.
Psalm 147

Your kingdom will never end, and you will rule forever.

The LORD can be trusted in all that he says.
He is loyal in all that he does.\(^a\)

The LORD lifts up people who have fallen.
He helps those who are in trouble.

All living things look to you for their food, and you give them their food at the right time.

You open your hands and give every living thing all that it needs.

Everything the LORD does is good. Everything he does shows how loyal he is.

The LORD is near to everyone who sincerely calls to him for help.

He listens to his followers and does what they want.
He answers their prayers and saves them.

The LORD protects everyone who loves him, but he destroys all who do evil.

I will praise the LORD!
Let everyone praise his holy name forever and ever!

Praise the LORD!

Sing praises to our God.
It is good and pleasant to praise him.

The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem.
He brings back the Israelites who were taken as prisoners.

He heals their broken hearts and bandages their wounds.
He counts the stars and knows each of them by name.

Our Lord is great and powerful.
There is no limit to what he knows.

The LORD supports the humble, but he shames the wicked.

Give thanks to the LORD.
Praise our God with harps.

He fills the sky with clouds.
He sends rain to the earth.
He makes the grass grow on the mountains.

He gives food to the animals.
He feeds the young birds that cry out.

War horses and powerful soldiers are not what he cares about.

\(^a\) 145:13 The Lord ... he does This is found in the ancient Greek and Syriac versions and a Hebrew scroll from Qumran, but not in the standard Hebrew text.
Psalm 148

11 The Lord enjoys people who worship him and trust in his faithful love.
12 Jerusalem, praise the Lord! Zion, praise your God!
13 He makes your gates strong, and he blesses the people in your city.
14 He brought peace to your country, so you have plenty of grain for food.
15 He gives a command to the earth, and it quickly obeys.
16 He makes the snow fall until the ground is as white as wool.
   He makes sleet blow through the air like dust.
17 He makes hail fall like rocks from the sky.
   No one can stand the cold he sends.
18 Then he gives another command, and warm air begins to blow.
   The ice melts, and water begins to flow.
19 He gave his commands to Jacob.
   He gave his laws and rules to Israel.
20 He did not do this for any other nation.
   He did not teach his laws to other people.

Praise the Lord!

Psalm 149

1 Praise the Lord! Sing a new song to the Lord!
   Sing his praise in the assembly of his followers.
2 Let Israel be happy with their Maker.
   Let the people of Zion rejoice with their King.
3 Let them praise him by dancing and playing their tambourines and harps.
4 The Lord is happy with his people.
   He did a wonderful thing for his humble people.
   He saved them!
5 Let his followers rejoice in this victory!
   Let them sing for joy, even in their beds!
6 Let the people shout praise to God.
   And with a sharp sword in their hand,
7 Everything on earth, praise him!
   Great sea animals and all the oceans, praise the Lord!
8 Praise him, fire and hail, snow and clouds, and the stormy winds that obey him.
9 Praise him, mountains and hills, fruit trees and cedar trees.
10 Praise him, wild animals and cattle, reptiles and birds.
11 Praise him, kings of the earth and all nations, princes and all rulers on earth.
12 Praise him, young men and women, old people and children.
13 Praise the Lord’s name!
   Honor his name forever!
   His name is greater than any other.
   He is more glorious than heaven and earth.
14 He made his people strong.
   His loyal followers praise him.
   Israel, his precious people, praise the Lord!

a 148:2 his army This can mean “angels,” “stars and planets,” or “soldiers in an army.”
b 149:1 new song Whenever God did a new and wonderful thing for his people, they would write a new song about it.
nations. 
Let them go punish those people.
8 They will put their kings in chains 
and their leaders in chains of iron.
9 They will punish those nations as God 
commanded.
This is an honor for all his followers.

Praise the LORD!

150 1Praise the LORD! 
Praise God in his Temple! 
Praise him in heaven, his strong 
fortress!
2 Praise him for the great things he does!

Praise him for all his greatness!
3 Praise him with trumpets and horns! 
Praise him with harps and lyres!
4 Praise him with tambourines and 
dancing! 
Praise him with stringed 
instruments and flutes!
5 Praise him with loud cymbals! 
Praise him with crashing cymbals!

6 Everything that breathes, praise the 
LORD!

Praise the LORD!
Proverbs

Introduction

1 These are the proverbs of Solomon, the son of David and king of Israel. They will help you learn to be wise, to accept correction, and to understand wise sayings. They will teach you to develop your mind in the right way. You will learn to do what is right and to be honest and fair. These proverbs will make even those without education smart. They will teach young people what they need to know and how to use what they have learned. Even the wise could become wiser by listening to these proverbs. They will gain understanding and learn to solve difficult problems. These sayings will help you understand proverbs, stories with hidden meanings, words of the wise, and other difficult sayings.

2 Knowledge begins with fear and respect for the Lord, but stubborn fools hate wisdom and refuse to learn.

Advice to a Son

8 My son, listen to your father when he corrects you, and don’t ignore what your mother teaches you. What you learn from your parents will bring you honor and respect, like a crown or a gold medal. My son, those who love to do wrong will try to trick you. Don’t listen to them. They will say, “Come with us. Let’s hide and beat to death anyone who happens to walk by. We will swallow them whole, as the grave swallows the dying. We will take everything they have and fill our houses with stolen goods. So join us, and you can share everything we get.”

9 My son, don’t follow them. Don’t even take the first step along that path. They run to do something evil, and they cannot wait to kill someone. You cannot trap birds with a net if they see you spreading it out. But evil people cannot see the trap they set for themselves. This is what happens to those who are greedy. Whatever they get destroys them.

The Good Woman—Wisdom

20 Listen! Wisdom is shouting in the streets. She is crying out in the marketplace. She is calling out where the noisy crowd gathers:

21 “Fools, how long will you love being ignorant? How long will you make fun of wisdom? How long will you hate knowledge? I wanted to tell you everything I knew and give you all my knowledge, but you didn’t listen to my advice and teaching. I tried to help, but you refused to listen. I offered my hand, but you turned away from me. You ignored my advice and refused to be corrected. So I will laugh at your troubles and make fun of you when what you fear happens. Disasters will strike you like a storm. Problems will pound you like a strong wind. Trouble and misery will weigh you down.

22 “Fools will call for me, but I will not answer. They will look for me, but they will not find me. That is because they hated knowledge. They refused to fear and respect the Lord. They ignored my advice and refused to be corrected. Wisdom is pictured here as a good woman trying to get the attention of this young man, calling him to be wise and obey God. In a later passage (9:7–18), Foolishness is represented as another woman who is urging him toward a life of sin.

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filled their lives with what they wanted. They went their own way, so they will get what they deserve.

32“Fools die because they refuse to follow wisdom. They are content to follow their foolish ways, and that will destroy them. 33But those who listen to me will live in safety and comfort. They will have nothing to fear.”

Listen to Wisdom

1My son, pay attention to what I say. Remember my commands. 2Listen to wisdom, and do your best to understand. 3Ask for good judgment. Cry out for understanding. 4Look for wisdom like silver. Search for it like hidden treasure. 5If you do this, you will understand what it means to respect the Lord, and you will come to know God.

6The Lord is the source of wisdom; knowledge and understanding come from his mouth. 7He gives good advice to honest people and shields those who do what is right. 8He makes sure that people are treated fairly. He watches over his loyal followers.

9If you listen to him, you will understand what is just and fair and how to do what is right. 10You will gain wisdom, and knowledge will bring you joy.

11Planning ahead will protect you, and understanding will guard you. 12These will keep you from following the wrong path and will protect you from those who have evil plans. 13Such people have left the straight path and now walk in darkness. 14They enjoy doing evil and are happy with the confusion it brings. 15Their ways are crooked; they lie and cheat.

16Wisdom will save you from that other woman, another man’s wife, who tempts you with sweet words. 17She married when she was young, but then she left her husband. She forgot the marriage vows she made before God. 18Going into her house leads to death. She will lead you to the grave. 19All who enter lose their life and never return.

20Wisdom will help you follow the example of good people and stay on the right path. 21Honest people will live in the land, and those who do right will remain there. 22But the wicked will be forced to leave. Those who lie and cheat will be thrown out of the land.

The Blessing of Wisdom

3My son, don’t forget my teaching. Remember what I tell you to do. 2What I teach will give you a good, long life, and all will go well for you.

3Don’t ever let love and loyalty leave you. Tie them around your neck, and write them on your heart. 4Then God will be pleased and think well of you and so will everyone else.

5Trust the Lord completely, and don’t depend on your own knowledge. 6With every step you take, think about what he wants, and he will help you go the right way. 7Don’t trust in your own wisdom, but fear and respect the Lord and stay away from evil. 8If you do this, it will be like a refreshing drink and medicine for your body.

9Honor the Lord with your wealth and the first part of your harvest. 10Then your barns will be full of grain, and your barrels will be overflowing with wine.

11My son, don’t reject the Lord’s discipline, and don’t be angry when he corrects you. 12The Lord corrects the one he loves, just as a father corrects a child he cares about.

13Those who find wisdom are fortunate; they will be blessed when they gain understanding. 14Profit that comes from wisdom is better than silver and even the finest gold. 15Wisdom is worth more than fine jewels. Nothing you desire has more value.

16With her right hand, Wisdom offers long life—with the other hand, riches and honor. 17Wisdom will lead you to a life of joy and peace. 18Wisdom is like a life-giving tree to those who hold on to her; she is a blessing to those who keep her close.

19With wisdom and understanding, the Lord created the earth and sky. 20With his
knowledge, he made the oceans and the clouds that produce rain.

21 My son, don’t ever let wisdom out of your sight. Hold on to wisdom and careful planning. They will bring you a long life filled with honor. As you go through life, you will always be safe and never fall. When you lie down, you will not be afraid. When you rest, your sleep will be peaceful. You have no reason to fear a sudden disaster or the destruction that comes to the wicked. You can trust the Lord to protect you. He will not let you fall into harm.

22 Do everything you possibly can for those who need help. If your neighbor needs something you have, don’t say, “Come back tomorrow.” Give it to him immediately.

23 Don’t make plans to harm your neighbor, who lives near you and trusts you. Don’t take people to court without good reason, especially when they have done nothing to harm you.

24 Don’t envy those who are violent. Never choose to be like them. Such crooked people are disgusting to the Lord. But he is a friend to those who are good and honest.

25 The Lord curses a wicked family, but he blesses the homes of those who live right.

26 He will humiliate those who make fun of others, but he is kind to those who are humble.

27 The way the wise live will bring them honor, but the way fools live will bring them shame.

A Father’s Advice About Wisdom

1 Children, listen to your father’s teaching. Pay attention and you will learn how to learn. The advice I give is good, so don’t ever forget what I teach you.

2 When I was my father’s little boy and my mother’s dear son, my father taught me this: “Pay attention to what I say. Obey my commands and you will have a good life. Try to get wisdom and understanding. Don’t forget my teaching or ignore what I say. Don’t turn away from wisdom, and she will protect you. Love her, and she will keep you safe.

3 The first step to becoming wise is to look for wisdom, so use everything you have to get understanding. Love wisdom, and she will make you great. Hold on to wisdom, and she will bring you honor. Wisdom will reward you with a crown of honor and glory.”

4 Son, listen to me. Do what I say, and you will live a long time. I am teaching you about wisdom and guiding you on the right path. As you walk on it, you will not step into a trap. Even if you run, you will not trip and fall. Always remember this teaching. Don’t forget it. It is the key to life, so guard it well.

5 Don’t take the path of the wicked; don’t follow those who do evil. Stay away from that path; don’t even go near it. Turn around and go another way.

6 The path of the wicked cannot sleep until they have done something evil. They will not rest until they bring someone down. Evil and violence are their food and drink.

7 The path of those who live right is like the early morning light. It gets brighter and brighter until the full light of day. But the path of the wicked is like a dark night. They trip and fall over what they cannot see.

8 My son, pay attention to what I say. Listen closely to my words. Don’t let them out of your sight. Never stop thinking about them. These words are the secret of life and health to all who discover them. Above all, be careful what you think because your thoughts control your life.

9 Don’t bend the truth or say things that you know are not right. Keep your eyes on the path, and look straight ahead. Make sure you are going the right way, and nothing will make you fall. Don’t go to the right or to the left, and you will stay away from evil.
The Wisdom of Avoiding Adultery

1 Son, listen to this piece of wisdom from me. Pay attention to what I know to be true. Remember to live wisely, and what you learn will keep your lips from saying the wrong thing. 2 Now, another man’s wife might be very charming, and the words from her lips so sweet and inviting. 4 But in the end, she will bring only bitterness and pain. It will be like bitter poison and a sharp sword. 5 She is on a path leading to death, and she will lead you straight to the grave. 6 Don’t follow her. She has lost her way and does not even know it. Be careful. Stay on the road that leads to life.

7 Now, my sons, listen to me. Don’t forget the words I say. 8 Stay away from the woman who commits adultery. Don’t even go near her house. 9 If you do, others will get the honor you should have had. Some stranger will get everything you worked years to get. 10 People you don’t know will take all your wealth. Others will get what you worked for. 11 At the end of your life, you will be sad that you ruined your health and lost everything you had. 12-13 Then you will say, “Why didn’t I listen to my parents? Why didn’t I pay attention to my teachers? I didn’t want to be disciplined. I refused to be corrected. 14 So now I have suffered through just about every kind of trouble anyone can have, and everyone knows it.”

15 Now, about sex and marriage: Drink only the water that comes from your own well, 16 and don’t let your water flow out into the streets. 17 Keep it for yourself, and don’t share it with strangers. 18 Be happy with your own wife. Enjoy the woman you married while you were young. 19 She is like a beautiful deer, a lovely fawn. Let her love satisfy you completely. Stay drunk on her love, and don’t go stumbling into the arms of another woman.

20 The LORD clearly sees everything you do. He watches where you go. 21 The sins of the wicked will trap them. Those sins will be like ropes holding them back. 22 Evil people will die because they refuse to be disciplined. They will be trapped by their own desires.

Dangers of Debt

6 My son, don’t make yourself responsible for the debts of others. Don’t make such deals with friends or strangers. 2 If you do, your words will trap you. 3 You will be under the power of other people, so you must go and free yourself. Beg them to free you from that debt. 4 Don’t wait to rest or sleep. 5 Escape from that trap like a deer running from a hunter. Free yourself like a bird flying from a trap.

The Dangers of Being Lazy

6 You lazy people, you should watch what the ants do and learn from them. 7 Ants have no ruler, no boss, and no leader. 8 But in the summer, ants gather all of their food and save it. So when winter comes, there is plenty to eat.

9 You lazy people, how long are you going to lie there? When will you get up? 10 You say, “I need a rest. I think I’ll take a short nap.” 11 But then you sleep and sleep and become poorer and poorer. Soon you will have nothing. It will be as if a thief came and stole everything you owned.

Troublemakers

12 Some people are just troublemakers. They are always thinking up some crooked plan and telling lies. 13 They use secret signals to cheat people; they wink their eyes, shuffle their feet, and point a finger. 14 They are always planning to do something bad. 15 But they will be punished. Disaster will strike, and they will be destroyed. There will be no one to help them.

What the Lord Hates

16 The LORD hates these seven things:

   - eyes that show pride,
   - tongues that tell lies,
   - hands that kill innocent people,
   - hearts that plan evil things to do,
   - feet that run to do evil,
   - witnesses in court who tell lies,
and anyone who causes family members to fight.

**Warning Against Adultery**

20 My son, remember your father’s command, and don’t forget your mother’s teaching. Remember their words always. Tie them around your neck and keep them over your heart. 21 Let this teaching lead you wherever you go. It will watch over you while you sleep. And when you wake up, it will give you good advice.

22 Your parents give you commands and teachings that are like lights to show you the right way. This teaching corrects you and trains you to follow the path to life. It stops you from going to an evil woman, and it protects you from the smooth talk of another man’s wife. 23 Such a woman might be beautiful, but don’t let that beauty tempt you. Don’t let her eyes capture you. A prostitute might cost a loaf of bread, but the wife of another man could cost you your life. 24 If you drop a hot coal in your lap, your clothes will be burned. If you step on one, your feet will be burned.

27 If you sleep with another man’s wife, you will be punished. 28 A hungry man might steal to fill his stomach. If he is caught, he must pay seven times more than he stole. It might cost him everything he owns, but other people understand. They don’t lose all their respect for him.

32 But a man who commits adultery is a fool. He brings about his own destruction.

33 He will suffer disease and disgrace and never be free from the shame.

35 No payment—no amount of money—will stop him.

**Wisdom Will Keep You From Adultery**

7 My son, remember my words. Don’t forget what I have told you. Consider my teaching as precious as your own eyes. Obey my commands, and you will have a good life. Tie them around your finger. Write them on your heart. 4 Treat knowledge like the one dearest to you. 5 Wisdom will save you from that other woman, the other man’s wife, who tempts you with such sweet words.

6 One day I was looking out my window at some foolish teenagers and noticed one who had no sense at all. 8 He was walking through the marketplace and came to the corner where a certain woman lived. He then turned up the road that goes by her house. 9 The day was ending. The sun had set, and it was almost dark. Suddenly, there she was in front of him, dressed like a prostitute. She had plans for him. 11 She was a wild and rebellious woman who would not stay at home. She walked the streets, always looking for someone to trap. She grabbed the young man and kissed him. Without shame, she looked him in the eye and said, 14 I offered a fellowship offering today. I gave what I promised to give, and I still have plenty of food left. So I came out to find you, and here you are! 16 I have clean sheets on my bed—special ones from Egypt. 17 My bed smells wonderful with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. 18 Come, let’s enjoy ourselves all night. We can make love until dawn. 19 My husband has gone on a business trip.

20 He took enough money for a long trip and won’t be home for two weeks.

21 This is what the woman said to tempt the young man, and her smooth words tricked him.

22 He followed her, like a bull being led to the slaughter. He was like a deer walking into a trap, where a hunter waits to shoot an arrow through its heart. The boy was like a bird flying into a net, never seeing the danger he was in.

24 Now, sons, listen to me. Pay attention to what I say. Don’t let your heart lead you to an evil woman like that. Don’t go where she wants to lead you. She has brought down some of the most powerful men; she has left many dead bodies in her path. Her house is the place of death. The road to it leads straight to the grave.

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Wisdom—the Good Woman

1 Listen, Wisdom is calling.
Yes, Understanding is shouting for us.

2 Wisdom stands at the top of the hill,
by the road where the paths meet.

3 She is near the entrance to the city,
calling from the open gates.

4 “I am calling out to all of you.
I am speaking to everyone.

5 You who are ignorant, learn to be wise.
You who are foolish, get some common sense.

6 Listen, I have something important to say,
and I am telling you what is right.

7 My words are true,
and I will not say anything that is wrong.

8 Everything I say is right;
there is nothing false or crooked about it.

9 These things are clear to any intelligent person.
They are right to anyone with knowledge.

10 Choose discipline over silver
and knowledge over the finest gold.

11 Wisdom is better than pearls,
and nothing you desire compares with her.

The Value of Wisdom

12 “I am Wisdom.
I live with Good Judgment.
I am at home with Knowledge and Planning.

13 To respect the Lord means to hate evil.
I hate pride and boasting,
evil lives and hurtful words.

14 I have good advice and common sense to offer.
I have understanding and power.

15 With my help kings rule,
and governors make good laws.

16 With my help leaders govern,
and important officials make good decisions.a

17 I love those who love me,
and those who look for me will find me.

18 With me there are riches and honor.
I have lasting wealth to give to you.

19 What I give is better than fine gold.
What I produce is better than pure silver.

20 I lead people the right way—
along the paths of justice.

21 I give riches to those who love me,
and I fill their houses with treasures.

22 “The Lord made me in the beginning,
long before he did anything else.

23 I was formed a long time ago,
before the world was made.

24 I was born before there was an ocean,
before the springs began to flow.

25 I was born before the mountains and hills
were set into place,
before the earth and fields were made,
before the dust of this world was formed.

26 I was there when he set up the skies,
when he drew a circle in the ocean

27 I was there when he put the clouds in the sky
and made the deep springs flow.

28 I was there when he set the limits on the sea
to make it stop where he said.

29 I was there when he laid the foundations of the earth.

30 I grew up as a child by his side,
laughing and playing all the time.

31 I played in the world he made
and enjoyed the people he put there.

32 “Now, children, listen to me.
If you follow my ways,
you will be happy too.

33 Listen to my teaching and be wise;
don’t ignore what I say.

some Hebrew copies have “as well as important officials, all the judges on earth.”

b 8:30 I grew … his side Or “I was beside him like a skilled worker.”
Whoever waits at my door and listens for me will be blessed.

Those who find me find life, and the LORD will reward them.

But those who do not find me put their lives in danger.

Whoever hates me loves death.”

Wisdom's Invitation

Wisdom has built her house; she has made it strong with seven columns. She has cooked meat, mixed wine, and put food on the table. She has sent her servant girls to announce from the highest hill in the city, “Whoever needs instruction, come.” She invites all the simple people and says, “Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have prepared. Leave your old, foolish ways and live! Advance along the path of understanding.”

Criticize a person who is rude and shows no respect, and you will only get insults. Correct the wicked, and you will only get hurt. Don’t correct such people, or they will hate you. But correct those who are wise, and they will love you. Teach the wise, and they will become wiser. Instruct those who live right, and they will gain more knowledge.

Wisdom begins with fear and respect for the LORD. Knowledge of the Holy One leads to understanding. Wisdom will help you live longer; she will add years to your life. If you become wise, it will be for your own good. If you are rude and show no respect, you are the one who will suffer.

Foolishness—the Other Woman

Foolishness is that other woman, who is loud, stupid, and knows nothing. She sits on her chair at the door of her house, up on the highest hill of the city. When people walk by, she calls out to them. They show no interest in her, but still she says, “Whoever needs instruction, come.”

She invites all the simple people and says, “Stolen water is sweet. Stolen bread tastes good.” Those simple people don’t realize that her house is full of ghosts and that her guests have entered the world of the dead.

Solomon's Proverbs

These are the proverbs of Solomon: A wise son makes his father happy; a foolish one makes his mother sad.

Wealth gained by doing wrong will not really help you, but doing right will save you from death.

The LORD takes care of good people and gives them the food they need, but he keeps the wicked from getting what they want.

Lazy hands will make you poor; hard-working hands will make you rich.

A son who works hard while it is harvest time will be successful, but one who sleeps through the harvest is worthless.

People say good things about those who live right, but the words of the wicked only hide their violent plans.

Good people leave memories that bless us, but the wicked are soon forgotten.

The wise accept instruction, but fools argue and bring trouble on themselves.

Honest people can always feel secure, but lying cheaters will be caught.

If you fail to speak the truth, trouble will follow. If you speak openly, peace will come.

The words of good people are like a spring of fresh water, but the words of the wicked only hide their violent plans.

Hatred causes arguments, but love overlooks all wrongs.

Intelligent people speak words of wisdom, but fools must be punished before they learn their lesson.

Wise people are quiet and learn new things, but fools talk and bring trouble on themselves.

d: 10:11 spring of fresh water Or “the source of life.”

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15 Wealth protects the rich, but poverty destroys the poor.
16 What good people do brings life, but wicked people produce only sin.
17 Those who accept correction show others how to live. Those who reject correction lead others the wrong way.
18 People sometimes lie to hide their hatred, but saying bad things about someone is even more foolish.
19 A person who talks too much gets into trouble. A wise person learns to be quiet.
20 Words from good people are like pure silver, but thoughts from the wicked are worthless.
21 Good people say things that help others, but the wicked die from a lack of understanding.
22 It is the Lord’s blessing that brings wealth, and no hard work can add to it.a
23 Fools enjoy doing wrong, but the wise enjoy wisdom.
24 The wicked will be defeated by what they fear, but good people will get what they want.
25 The wicked are destroyed when trouble comes, but good people stand strong forever.
26 Sending a lazy person to do anything is as irritating as vinegar on your teeth or smoke in your eyes.
27 Respect for the Lord will add years to your life, but the wicked will have their lives cut short.
28 What good people hope for brings happiness, b but what the wicked hope for brings destruction.
29 The Lord protects those who do right, but he destroys those who do wrong.
30 Good people will always be safe, but the wicked will be forced out of the land.
31 Those who live right say wise things, but people stop listening to troublemakers.c
32 Good people know the right things
to say, but the wicked say things to make trouble.

The Lord hates false scales, but he loves accurate weights.
2 Proud and boastful people will be shamed, but wisdom stays with those who are modest and humble.
3 Good people are guided by their honesty, but crooks who lie and cheat will ruin themselves.
4 Money is worthless when you face God’s punishment, but living right will save you from death.
5 Doing right makes life better for those who are good, but the wicked are destroyed by their own wicked ways.
6 Doing right sets honest people free, but people who can’t be trusted are trapped by their greed.
7 When the wicked die, all their hopes are lost; everything they thought they could do comes to nothing.
8 Good people escape from trouble, but the wicked come along and are trapped by it.
9 With their words hypocrites can destroy their neighbors. But with what they know, good people can escape.
10 When good people are successful, the whole city is happy, and they all shout with joy when evil people are destroyed.
11 Blessings from the honest people living in a city will make it great, but the things evil people say can destroy it.
12 Stupid people say bad things about their neighbors.d Wise people know to be quiet.
13 People who tell secrets about others cannot be trusted. Those who can be trusted keep quiet.
14 A nation without wise leaders will fall. Many good advisors make a nation safe.
15 You will be sorry if you promise to pay a stranger’s debt. Refuse to make such promises and you will be safe.
16 A kind and gentle woman gains respect, but violent men gain only wealth.
17 People who are kind will be rewarded

a 10:22 Or “A blessing from the Lord will bring you true wealth—wealth without troubles.”
b 10:28 good people … happiness Or “Good people can look forward to happiness.”
c 10:31 Or “The mouth of a good man speaks wisdom, but the tongue of a troublemaker will be cut off.”
d 11:12 Stupid people … neighbors Or “The neighbors hate a stupid person.”
for their kindness, but cruel people will be 
rewarded with trouble.

18 The work of evil people is all lies, but 
those who do right will receive a good 
reward. a

19 People who do what is right are on 
their way to life, but those who always 
want to do wrong are on their way to 
death.

20 The Lord hates those who love to do 
evil, but he is pleased with those who try 
to do right.

21 The truth is, evil people will be pun-
ished, and good people will be set free.

22 A beautiful woman without good 
sense is like a gold ring in a pig’s nose.

23 What good people want brings more 
good. What evil people want brings more 
trouble.

24 Some people give freely and gain 
more; others refuse to give and end up 
with less.

25 Give freely, and you will profit. Help 
others, and you will gain more for yourself.

26 People curse a greedy man who 
refuses to sell his grain, but they bless a 
man who sells his grain to feed others.

27 People are pleased with those who try 
to do good. Those who look for trouble 
will find it.

28 Those who trust in their riches will 
fall like dead leaves, but good people will 
blossom.

29 Those who cause trouble for their 
families will inherit nothing but the wind. 
A foolish person will end up as a servant to 
one who is wise.

30 What good people produce is like a 
life-giving tree. Those who are wise give 
new life to others. b

31 If good people are rewarded here on 
earth, then surely those who do evil will 
also get what they deserve.

12 Whoever loves discipline loves 
to learn; whoever hates to be cor-
rected is stupid.

2 It is good to learn what pleases the 

Lord, because he condemns those who 
plan to do wrong.

3 Evil people are never safe, but good 
people remain safe and secure.

4 A good wife is like a crown to her hus-
band, but a shameful wife is like a cancer.

5 Good people are honest and fair in all 
they do, but those who are evil lie and can-
not be trusted.

6 Evil people use their words to hurt 
others, but the words from good people 
can save others from danger.

7 When evil people are destroyed, they 
are gone and forgotten, but good people 
are remembered long after they are gone.

8 You praise people for their intelli-
gence, but no one respects those who are 
stupid.

9 It is better to appear unimportant 
and have a servant than to pretend to be 
important and have no food.

10 Good people take good care of their 
animals, but the wicked know only how 
to be cruel. c

11 Farmers who work their land have 
plenty of food, but those who waste their 
time on worthless projects are foolish.

12 The wicked want a share of what an 
evil man might catch. But like a plant with 
deep roots, a good man is the one who 
produces the most. d

13 The wicked are trapped by their fool-

ish words, but good people escape from 
such trouble.

14 People get good things for the words 
they say, and they are rewarded for the 
work they do.

15 Fools always think their own way is 
best, but wise people listen to what oth-
ers tell them.

16 Fools are easily upset, but wise peo-
ple avoid insulting others.

17 Good people speak the truth and can 
be trusted in court, but liars make bad 
worstones.

18 Speak without thinking, and your 
words can cut like a knife. Be wise, and 
your words can heal.

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a 11:18 This is a wordplay in Hebrew. The word “lies” sounds 
like the word “reward.”
b 11:30 Or, according to one ancient version, “The fruit of a 
good man is a tree of life, but a violent man takes lives.”
c 12:10 but the wicked . . . cruel Or “but even the ‘kindness’ of 
the wicked is still cruelty.”
d 12:12 The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.
19 Lies last only a moment, but the truth lasts forever.
20 People who work for evil make trouble, but those who plan for peace bring happiness.
21 The Lord will keep good people safe, but evil people will have many troubles.
22 The Lord hates people who tell lies, but he is pleased with those who tell the truth.
23 Smart people don’t tell everything they know, but fools tell everything and show they are fools.
24 Those who work hard will be put in charge of others, but lazy people will have to work like slaves.
25 Worry takes away your joy, but a kind word makes you happy.
26 Good people are careful about choosing their friends, but evil people always choose the wrong ones.
27 Lazy people don’t get what they want, but riches come to those who work hard.
28 Along the path of goodness there is life; that is the way to live forever.\(^a\)

13 1 A wise son listens to his father’s advice, but a proud son will not listen to correction.
2 People get good things for the words they say, but those who cannot be trusted say only bad things.
3 People who are careful about what they say will save their lives, but those who speak without thinking will be destroyed.
4 Lazy people always want things but never get them. Those who work hard get plenty.
5 Good people hate lies, but the wicked do evil, shameful things.
6 Goodness protects honest people, but evil destroys those who love to sin.
7 Some people pretend they are rich, but they have nothing. Others pretend they are poor, but they are really rich.
8 The rich might have to pay a ransom to save their lives, but the poor never receive such threats.
9 The light of those who do right shines brighter and brighter, but the lamp of the wicked becomes darker and darker.\(^b\)
10 Pride causes arguments, but those who listen to others are wise.
11 Money gained by cheating others will soon be gone. Money earned through hard work will grow and grow.
12 Hope that is delayed makes you sad, but a wish that comes true fills you with joy.
13 Those who reject a command hurt themselves; those who respect a command will be rewarded.
14 The teaching of the wise is a source of life; their words will save you from deadly traps.
15 People like a person with good sense, but life is hard for someone who cannot be trusted.
16 Wise people always think before they do anything, but fools show how stupid they are by what they do.
17 Disaster will catch up to the wicked messenger, but a runner who can be trusted will bring peace.
18 If you refuse to learn from your mistakes, you will be poor, and no one will respect you. If you listen when you are criticized, you will be honored.
19 People are happy when they get what they want. But stupid people want nothing but evil, and they refuse to change.
20 Be friends with those who are wise, and you will become wise. Choose fools to be your friends, and you will have trouble.
21 Trouble chases sinners wherever they go, but good things happen to good people.
22 It is good to have something to pass down to your grandchildren. But wealth hidden away by sinners will be given to those who live right.
23 The poor might have good land that produces plenty of food, but bad decisions can take it away.\(^c\)
24 If you don’t correct your children,
Proverbs 14

14 A wise woman makes her home what it should be, but the home of a foolish woman is destroyed by her own actions.  

25 Good people will have plenty to eat, but the wicked will go hungry.

26 Good people will have plenty to eat, but the wicked will go hungry.

1 A wise woman makes her home what it should be, but the home of a foolish woman is destroyed by her own actions.  

2 Those who live right respect the LORD, but dishonest people hate him.

3 Foolish words cause you trouble; wise words protect you.

4 A barn with no cattle might be clean, but strong bulls are needed for a good harvest.

5 A good witness is one who does not lie. A bad witness is a liar who cannot be trusted.

6 Anyone who makes fun of wisdom will never find it, but knowledge comes easily to those who understand its value.

7 Stay away from fools, there is nothing they can teach you.

8 Wisdom lets smart people know what they are doing, but stupid people only think they know.

9 Fines are needed to make fools obey the law, but good people are happy to obey it.

10 When you are sad, no one else feels the pain; and when you are happy, no one else can really feel the joy.

11 An evil person’s house will be destroyed, but a good person’s family will do well.

12 There is a way that people think is right, but it leads only to death.

13 Laughter might hide your sadness. But when the laughter is gone, the sadness remains.

14 Evil people will be paid back for the wrong they do, and good people will be rewarded for the good they do.

15 Fools believe every word they hear, but wise people think carefully about everything.

16 Wise people are careful and avoid trouble; fools are too confident and careless.

17 A quick-tempered person does stupid things, but it is also true that people don’t like anyone who quietly plans evil.

18 Fools are rewarded with more foolishness. Smart people are rewarded with knowledge.

19 Good people will defeat those who are evil, and the wicked will be forced to show respect to those who live right.

20 The poor have no friends, not even their neighbors, but the rich have many friends.

21 It is wrong to say bad things about your neighbors. Be kind to the poor, and you will be blessed.

22 Whoever works to do good will find love and loyalty. It is a mistake to work at doing evil.

23 If you work hard, you will have plenty. If you do nothing but talk, you will not have enough.

24 A wise person’s reward is wealth, but a fool’s reward is foolishness.

25 A witness who tells the truth saves lives, but one who tells lies hurts others.

26 People who respect the LORD will be safe, and they will make their children feel secure.

27 Respect for the LORD gives true life and will save you from death’s trap.

28 Kings of large nations have great honor. Rulers without a country have nothing.

29 A patient person is very smart. A quick-tempered person makes stupid mistakes.

30 Peace of mind makes the body healthy, but jealousy is like a cancer.

31 Whoever takes advantage of the poor insults their Maker, but whoever is kind to them honors him.

32 The wicked will be defeated by their evil, but good people are protected by their honesty.

33 A wise person is always thinking wise a 14:1 Or "Wisdom builds her house, but Foolishness tears hers down with her own hands." b 14:32 Or "The wicked will be crushed by their evil, and those who hope for their destruction are right to do so."
thoughts, but a fool knows nothing about wisdom.

34 Goodness makes a nation great, but sin is a shame to any people.

35 Kings are pleased with intelligent officials, but they will punish shameful ones.

1 A gentle answer makes anger disappear, but a rough answer makes it grow.

2 Listening to wise people increases your knowledge, but only nonsense comes from the mouths of fools.

3 The Lord sees what happens everywhere. He watches everyone, good and evil.

4 Kind words are like a life-giving tree, but lying words will crush your spirit.

5 Fools refuse to listen to their father’s advice, but those who accept discipline are smart.

6 Good people are rich in many ways, but those who are evil get nothing but trouble.

7 Wise people say things that give you new knowledge, but fools say nothing worth hearing.

8 The Lord hates the offerings of the wicked, but he is happy to hear the prayers of those who live right.

9 The Lord hates the way evil people live, but he loves those who try to do good.

10 Whoever stops living right will be punished. Whoever hates to be corrected will be destroyed.

11 The Lord knows everything, even what happens in the place of death. So surely he knows what people are thinking.

12 Fools hate to be told they are wrong, so they refuse to ask wise people for advice.

13 If you are happy, your face shows it. If you are sad, your spirit feels defeated.

14 Intelligent people want more knowledge, but fools only want more nonsense.

15 Life is always hard for the poor, but the right attitude can turn it into a party.

16 It is better to be poor and respect the Lord than to be rich and have many troubles.

17 It is better to eat a little where there is love than to eat a lot where there is hate.

18 A quick temper causes fights, but patience brings peace and calm.

19 For lazy people, life is a path overgrown with thorns and thistles. For those who do what is right, it is a smooth highway.

20 Wise children make their parents happy. Foolish children bring them shame.

21 Doing foolish things makes a fool happy, but a wise person is careful to do what is right.

22 If you don’t ask for advice, your plans will fail. With many advisors, they will succeed.

23 People are happy when they give a good answer. And there is nothing better than the right word at the right time.

24 What wise people do leads to life here on earth and stops them from going down to the place of death.

25 The Lord destroys a proud man’s house but protects a widow’s property.

26 The Lord hates evil thoughts, but he is pleased with kind words.

27 Whoever takes money to do wrong invites disaster. Refuse such gifts, and you will live.

28 Good people think before they answer, but the wicked do not, and what they say causes trouble.

29 The Lord is far away from the wicked, but he always hears the prayers of those who do what is right.

30 A smile makes people happy. Good news makes them feel better.

31 To be counted among the wise, you must learn to accept helpful criticism.

32 If you refuse to be corrected, you are only hurting yourself. Listen to criticism, and you will gain understanding.

33 Wisdom teaches you to respect the Lord. You must be humbled before you can be honored.

16 People might plan what they want to say, but it is the Lord who gives them the right words.

\[ 15:24 \text{ here on earth} \] Literally, “above,” that is, “above the ground.”

\[ 15:30 \text{ smile} \] Literally, “a sparkle in the eyes.”
People think that whatever they do is right, but the LORD judges their reason for doing it.

Turn to the LORD for help in everything you do, and you will be successful.

The LORD has a plan for everything. In his plan, the wicked will be destroyed.

The LORD hates those who are proud. You can be sure he will punish them all.

Faithful love and loyalty will remove your guilt. Respect the LORD, and you will stay far away from evil.

When people live to please the LORD, even their enemies will be at peace with them.

It is better to be poor and do right than to be rich and do wrong.

People can plan what they want to do, but it is the LORD who guides their steps.

When a king speaks, his words are law. So when he makes a decision, it is never a mistake.

The LORD wants all scales and balances to be right; he wants all business agreements to be fair.

Kings hate to see anyone doing wrong, because kingdoms grow strong only when everyone is honest and fair.

Kings want to hear the truth. They like those who are honest.

When a king gets angry, he can put someone to death. So it is wise to keep the king happy.

When the king is happy, life is better for everyone. When he is pleased, it is like a refreshing spring rain.

Wisdom is worth much more than gold. Understanding is worth much more than silver.

Good people try to avoid evil. They watch what they do and protect themselves.

Pride is the first step toward destruction. Proud thoughts will lead you to defeat.

It is better to be a humble person living among the poor than to share the wealth among the proud.

Good things happen to those who learn from their experiences, and the LORD blesses those who trust him.

People will know if someone is wise. Those who choose their words carefully can be very convincing.

Good sense is a spring of fresh water to those who have it, but fools can offer only foolishness.

Wise people always think before they speak, so what they say is worth listening to.

Kind words are like honey; they are easy to accept and good for your health.

There is a way that seems right to people, but that way leads only to death.

The thought of hunger keeps the workers working so that they can eat.

Troublemakers create disasters. Their advice destroys like a wildfire.

Troublemakers are always causing problems. Their gossip breaks up the closest of friends.

Cruel people trick their neighbors and make them do wrong. With a wink of the eye, they plan to trick someone. With a grin, they make plans to hurt their friends.

Gray hair is a crown of glory on people who have lived good lives. It is earned by living right.

It is better to be patient than to be a strong soldier. It is better to control your anger than to capture a city.

People might throw lots to make a decision, but the answer always comes from the LORD.

It is better to have nothing but a dry piece of bread to eat in peace than a whole house full of food with everyone arguing.

A smart servant will gain control over his master’s foolish son. He will be treated like a son and get a share of the inheritance.

Fire is used to make gold and silver pure, but a person’s heart is made pure by the LORD.
4 People who do evil listen to evil ideas. Liars listen to liars.
5 Whoever makes fun of beggars insults their Maker. Whoever laughs at someone else’s trouble will be punished.
6 Grandchildren are the pride and joy of old age, and children take great pride in their parents.
7 You wouldn’t expect to hear a fine speech from a fool, and you shouldn’t expect lies from a ruler.
8 Some people think a bribe is like a lucky charm—it seems to work wherever they go.
9 Forgive someone, and you will strengthen your friendship. Keep reminding them, and you will destroy it.
10 Smart people learn more from a single correction than fools learn from a hundred beatings.
11 Those who are evil only want to cause trouble. In the end, punishment without mercy will be sent to them.
12 It is better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool who is busy doing foolish things.
13 If you do wrong to those who were good to you, you will have trouble the rest of your life.
14 The start of an argument is like a small leak in a dam. Stop it before a big fight breaks out.
15 The Lord hates these two things: punishing the innocent and letting the guilty go free.
16 Money is wasted on fools. They cannot buy wisdom when they have no sense.
17 A friend loves you all the time, but a brother was born to help in times of trouble.
18 Only a fool would promise to pay for someone else’s debts.
19 A troublemaker loves to start arguments. Anyone who likes to brag is asking for trouble.
20 Crooks will not profit from their crimes, and those who plan to cause trouble will be trapped when it comes.
21 A man who has a fool for a son will be disappointed. A fool brings no joy to his father.
22 Happiness is good medicine, but sorrow is a disease.
23 A wicked judge will accept a bribe, and that keeps justice from being done.
24 Intelligent people think about what needs to be done here and now. Fools are always dreaming about faraway places.
25 Foolish children upset their parents and make them sad.
26 It is wrong to punish an innocent person or attack leaders for doing what is right.
27 Intelligent people choose their words carefully. Those who know what they are doing remain calm.\(^a\)
28 Silent fools seem wise. They say nothing and appear to be smart.

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try to answer them. That way you will not embarrass yourself and look foolish.

14 A good attitude will support you when you are sick, but if you give up, nothing can help.a

15 Wise people want to learn more, so they listen closely to gain knowledge.

16 Gifts can open many doors and help you meet important people.

17 The first person to speak always seems right until someone comes and asks the right questions.

18 The best way to settle an argument between two powerful people may be to use lots.

19 An insulted brother is harder to win back than a city with strong walls. Arguments separate people like the strong bars of a palace gate.

20 Your words can be as satisfying as fruit, as pleasing as the food that fills your stomach.

21 The tongue can speak words that bring life or death. Those who love to talk must be ready to accept what it brings.

22 If you find a wife, you have found something good. She shows that the LORD is happy with you.

23 The poor are polite when they beg for help. The rich are rude with their answer.

24 Some friends are fun to be with, but a true friend can be better than a brother.

1 It is better to be poor and honest than to be a liar and a fool.

2 Being excited about something is not enough. You must also know what you are doing. Don’t rush into something, or you might do it wrong.

3 People ruin their lives with the foolish things they do, and then they blame the LORD for it.

4 Wealth will bring you many friends, but become poor and your friends will leave you.

5 A witness who lies will be punished; that liar will not escape.

6 Many people are nice to a generous person. Everyone wants to be friends with someone who gives gifts.

7 If you are poor, your family will turn against you, and your friends will avoid you even more. You might beg them for help, but no one will come to help you.

8 Be a friend to yourself; do all you can to be wise. Try hard to understand, and you will be rewarded.

9 A witness who lies will be punished. That liar will be destroyed.

10 A fool should not be rich, and a slave should not rule over princes.

11 Experience makes you more patient, and you are most patient when you ignore insults.

12 The shouts of an angry king are like a roaring lion, but his kind words are like a gentle rain falling softly on the grass.

13 A foolish son brings a flood of troubles to his father, and a complaining wife is like the constant dripping of water.

14 People receive houses and money from their parents, but a good wife is a gift from the LORD.

15 Laziness brings on sleep, and an appetite for rest brings on hunger.

16 Obey the law and live; ignore it and die.

17 Giving help to the poor is like loaning money to the LORD. He will pay you back for your kindness.

18 Discipline your children while there is still hope. Avoiding it can be deadly.

19 People who are quick to become angry must pay the price. Protect them from punishment, and they become worse.

20 Listen to advice and accept discipline; then you, too, will become wise.

21 People might make many plans, but what the LORD says is what will happen.

22 People want a friend they can trust. It is better to be poor than to be a liar.

23 Respect the LORD and you will have a good life, one that is satisfying and free from trouble.

24 Some people are too lazy to take care of themselves. They will not even lift the food from their plate to their mouth.

25 Punish a rude, arrogant person, and

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a 18:14 help Literally, “lift up” or “heal.”

b 18:24 Some friends … with Or “Some friends can bring disaster.”
even slow learners will become wiser. But just a little correction is enough to teach a person who has understanding.

Those who would steal from their father and chase away their mother are disgusting, shameful people.

My son, if you stop listening to instructions, you will keep making stupid mistakes.

Using a criminal as a witness makes a joke of justice. People like that only want to do wrong.

People who show no respect for anything must be brought to justice. You must punish such fools.

Wine and beer make people lose control; they get loud and stumble around. And that is foolish.

An angry king is like a roaring lion. If you make him angry, you could lose your life.

People who refuse to argue deserve respect. Any fool can start an argument.

Some people are too lazy to plant seeds. So at harvest time, they look for food and find nothing.

Getting information from someone can be like getting water from a deep well. If you are smart, you will draw it out.

You might call many people your “friends,” but it is hard to find someone who can really be trusted.

When people live good, honest lives, their children are blessed.

When the king sits and judges people, he must look carefully to separate the evil from the good.

Can anyone say their heart is pure? Who can say, “I am free from sin”?

The Lord hates for people to use the wrong weights and measures to cheat others.

Even children show what they are like by the things they do. You can see if their actions are pure and right.

It was the Lord who gave us eyes for seeing and ears for hearing.

If you love to sleep, you will become poor. Use your time working and you will have plenty to eat.

When buying something, people always say, “It’s no good. It costs too much.” Then they go away and tell others what a good deal they got.

The right knowledge can bring you gold, pearls, and other expensive things.

If someone promises to pay the debt of a stranger, get a coat or something from him to keep until the debt is paid.

It may seem to be a good thing to get something by cheating, but in the end, it will be worth nothing.

Get good advice when you make your plans. Before you start a war, find good advisors.

You cannot trust someone who would talk about things told in private. So don’t be friends with someone who talks too much.

Those who would curse their father or mother are like a lamp that goes out on the darkest night.

If your wealth was easy to get, it will not be worth much to you.a

Don’t ever say, “I’ll pay them back for what they did to me!” Wait for the Lord. He will make things right.

The Lord hates for people to use the wrong weights to cheat others. It is wrong to use scales that are not accurate.

The Lord guides our steps, and we never know where he will lead us.b

Think carefully before you promise to give something to God. Later, you might wish you had not made that promise.

Like a farmer who separates wheat from the chaff, a wise king will decide who is wrong and crush them.

Your spirit is like a lamp to the Lord. He is able to see into your deepest parts.c

A king who is loyal and true will keep his power. Loyalty will keep his kingdom strong.

We admire a young man for his strength, but we respect an old man for his gray hair.

a 20:21 Or “An inheritance greedily guarded in the beginning will not be blessed in the end.”

b 20:24 Or “A man’s steps are from the Lord, and people don’t understand his way.”

c 20:27 Or “The Lord examines your breath and searches your deepest thoughts.”
A beating can remove evil and make you completely clean.\(^a\)

To the LORD, a king’s mind is like a ditch used to water the fields. He can lead the king wherever he wants him to go.

People think that whatever they do is right, but the LORD judges the reasons for everything they do.

Do what is right and fair. The LORD loves that more than sacrifices.

Proud looks and proud thoughts are sins. They show a person is evil.

Careful planning leads to profit. Acting too quickly leads to poverty.

The bad things that evil people do will destroy them, because they refuse to do what is right.

Criminals cause trouble wherever they go, but good people are honest and fair.

It is better to live in a small corner on the roof than to share the house with a woman who is always arguing.

Evil people always want to do more evil, and they show no mercy to people around them.

When you punish a proud person who laughs at what is right, even fools will learn something.\(^b\) But a little instruction is enough for the wise to learn what they should.

God is good. He knows what the wicked are doing, and he will punish them.

Those who refuse to help the poor will not receive help when they need it themselves.

If anyone is angry with you, give them a gift in private. A gift given in secret will calm even the strongest anger.

A decision that is fair makes good people happy, but it makes those who are evil very afraid.

Whoever leaves the path of wisdom will be on their way to an early death.

Loving pleasure leads to poverty.

Wine and luxury will never make you wealthy.

The wicked must pay for what happens to good people—the cheaters will be taken in exchange for the honest.

It is better to live alone in the desert than with a quick-tempered wife who loves to argue.

Wise people save the nice things they have. Fools use up everything as soon as they get it.

People who try hard to do good and be faithful will find life, goodness, and honor.

A wise person can defeat a city full of warriors and tear down the defenses they trust in.

People who are careful about what they say will save themselves from trouble.

Proud people think they are better than others. They show they are evil by what they do.

Lazy people will cause their own destruction because they refuse to work.

Some people are greedy and never have enough. Good people are generous and have plenty.

God hates sacrifices from the wicked, especially when their reason for offering them is evil.

Witnesses who lie will be caught and punished. A careful listener will always be there to speak up.

Good people know they are right, but the wicked have to pretend.

There is no one wise enough to make a plan that can succeed if the LORD is against it.

You can prepare your horses for battle, but only the LORD can give you the victory.

It is better to be respected than to be rich. A good name is worth more than silver or gold.

The rich and the poor are the same. The LORD made them all.

Wise people see trouble coming and get out of its way, but fools go straight to it and suffer for it.

Respect the LORD and be humble.
Then you will have wealth, honor, and true life.

5 Evil people are trapped by many troubles, but those who want to live avoid them.

6 Teach children in a way that fits their needs, and even when they are old, they will not leave the right path.

7 The rich rule over the poor. The one who borrows is a slave to the one who lends.

8 Those who spread trouble will harvest trouble. In the end, they will be destroyed for the trouble they caused.

9 Generous people will be blessed, because they share their food with the poor.

10 Get rid of the proud who laugh at what is right, and trouble will leave with them. All arguments and insults will end.

11 Love a pure heart and kind words, and the king will be your friend.

12 The Lord watches over true knowledge, and he opposes those who try to deceive others.

13 A person who is lazy and wants to stay home says, “There is a lion outside, and I might be killed in the streets!”

14 The sin of adultery is a trap, and the Lord gets very angry with those who fall into it.

15 Children do foolish things, but if you punish them, they will learn not to do them.

16 These two things will make you poor: hurting the poor to make yourself rich and giving gifts to the rich.

Thirty Wise Sayings

17 Listen carefully to these words from the wise. Pay attention to what I have learned. It will be good for you to remember these words and have them ready when they are needed. I will teach you these things now. I want you to trust the Lord. I have written 30 sayings for you. These are words of advice and wisdom. They will teach you things that you can know for sure to be true. Then you can give good answers to the one who sent you.

— 1 —

21 It is easy to steal from the poor, but don’t do it. And don’t take advantage of them in court. The Lord is on their side. He supports the poor, and he will take from those who take from them.

— 2 —

24 Don’t be friends with people who become angry easily. Don’t stay around quick-tempered people. If you do, you may learn to be like them. Then you will have the same problems they do.

— 3 —

26 Don’t promise to pay someone else’s debt. If you cannot pay, you will lose everything you have. So why should you lose the bed you sleep on?

— 4 —

28 Never move an old property line that was marked long ago by your ancestors.

— 5 —

29 Skilled workers will always serve kings. They will never have to work for less important people.

— 6 —

When you sit and eat with an important person, remember who you are with. Never eat too much, even if you are very hungry. Don’t eat too much of his fine food. It might be a trick.

— 7 —

Don’t ruin your health trying to get rich. If you are smart, you will give it up. In the blink of an eye, money can disappear, as if it grew wings and flew away like a bird.

— 8 —

Don’t eat with selfish people. Control any desire you have for their finest foods. They might tell you to eat and drink all you want, but they don’t really mean
it. They are the kind of people who are only thinking about the cost. And if you eat their food, you will get sick and be embarrassed.

9 Don’t try to teach fools. They will make fun of your wise words.

10 Never move an old property line, and don’t take land that belongs to orphans. The Lord will be against you. He is powerful and protects orphans.

11 Listen to your teacher and learn all you can.

12 Always correct children when they need it. If you spank them, it will not kill them. In fact, you might save their lives.

13 My son, it makes me happy when you make a wise decision. It makes me feel good inside when you say the right things.

14 Never envy evil people, but always respect the Lord. This will give you something to hope for that will not disappoint you.

15 So listen, my son, and be wise. Always be careful to follow the right path. Don’t make friends with people who drink too much wine and eat too much food. Those who eat and drink too much become poor. They sleep too much and end up wearing rags.

16 Listen to your father. Without him, you would never have been born. Respect your mother, even when she is old. Truth, wisdom, learning, and understanding are worth paying money for. They are worth far too much to ever sell.

17 The father of a good person is very happy. A wise child brings him joy. Make both of your parents happy. Give your mother that same joy.

18 Who gets into fights and arguments? Who gets hurt for no reason and has red, bloodshot eyes? People who stay out too late drinking wine, staring into their strong drinks.

19 So be careful with wine. It is pretty and red as it sparkles in the cup. And it goes down so smoothly when you drink it. But in the end, it will bite like a snake.

20 Wine will cause you to see strange things and to say things that make no sense. When you lie down, you will think you are on a rough sea and feel like you are at the top of the mast. You will say, “They hit me, but I never felt it. They beat me, but I don’t remember it. Now I can’t wake up. I need another drink.”

21 Don’t be jealous of evil people. Have no desire to be around them. In their hearts they plan to do evil. All they talk about is making trouble.

22 Good homes are built on wisdom and understanding. Knowledge fills the rooms with rare and beautiful treasures.

23 Wisdom makes a man more powerful. Knowledge gives a man strength. Get good advice before you start a war. To win, you must have many good advisors.

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7 Fools cannot understand wisdom. They have nothing to say when people are discussing important things.

8 If you start planning ways to do wrong, people will learn that you are a troublemaker. Such foolish plans are wrong, and people have no respect for someone who laughs at what is right.

9 If you are weak in times of trouble, that is real weakness.

10 If you see someone on their way to death or in danger of being killed, you must do something to save them. You cannot say, “It’s none of my business.” The Lord knows everything, and he knows why you do things. He watches you, and he will pay you back for what you do.

11 My son, eat honey; it is good. Honey straight from the honeycomb is the sweetest. In the same way, know that wisdom is good for you. Wisdom will give you something to hope for that will not disappoint you.

12 Don’t be like a criminal who makes plans to rob those who are good or take away their homes. Good people might fall again and again, but they always get up. It is the wicked who are defeated by their troubles.

13 Don’t be happy when your enemy has troubles. Don’t be glad when they fall. The Lord will see this, and he might be upset with you and decide not to punish your enemy.

14 Don’t let those who are evil upset you, and don’t be jealous of them. They have no hope. Their light will burn out.

15 Son, respect the Lord and the king, and don’t join with those who are against them, because people like that can quickly be destroyed. You have no idea how much trouble God and the king can make for their enemies.

More Wise Sayings

23 These are also words from the wise: A judge must be fair. He must not support some people simply because he knows them. The people will turn against a judge who lets the guilty go free. Even the people of other nations will curse him. But if a judge punishes the guilty, then people will be happy with him, and he will be a blessing to them.

24 An honest answer is as pleasing as a kiss on the lips.

25 First get your fields ready, next plant your crops, and then build your house.

26 Don’t speak against someone without a good reason, or you will appear foolish.

27 Don’t say, “You hurt me, so I will do the same to you. I will punish you for what you did to me.”

28 I walked past a field that belonged to a lazy man. It was a vineyard that belonged to someone who understood nothing. Weeds were growing everywhere! Wild vines covered the ground, and the wall around the vineyard was broken and falling down. I looked at this and thought about it. This is what I learned: A little sleep, a little rest, folding your arms, and taking a nap—these things will make you poor very quickly. Soon you will have nothing, as if a thief broke in and took everything away.

More Wise Sayings From Solomon

25 These are some more wise sayings from Solomon. These proverbs were copied by servants of Hezekiah, the king of Judah.

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We cannot discover how high the sky is above us or how deep the earth is below. The same is true with the minds of kings. We cannot understand them.

Remove the worthless things from silver to make it pure, and a worker can make something beautiful. Take the evil advisors away from a king, and goodness will make his kingdom strong.

Don’t brag about yourself before the king and pretend you are someone important. It is much better for the king to invite you to take a more important position than to embarrass you in front of his officials.

Don’t be too quick to tell a judge about something you saw. You will be embarrassed if someone else proves you wrong.

If you want to tell your friends about your own problems, tell them. But don’t discuss what someone told you in private. Whoever hears it will lose their respect for you and will never trust you again.

Saying the right thing at the right time is like a golden apple in a silver setting. Wise advice to a listening ear is like gold earrings or fine jewelry.

To his master who sent him, a messenger who can be trusted is as refreshing as a drink of cold water on a hot summer day. People who promise to give gifts but never give them are like clouds and wind that bring no rain.

With patience, you can make anyone change their thinking, even a ruler. Gentle speech is very powerful.

Honey is good, but don’t eat too much of it, or you will be sick. And don’t visit your neighbors’ homes too often, or they will begin to hate you.

A person who gives false testimony against a neighbor is as deadly as a club, a sword, or a very sharp arrow. Never depend on a liar in times of trouble. It’s like chewing with a bad tooth or walking with a crippled foot.

Singing happy songs to a sad person is as foolish as taking a coat off on a cold day or mixing soda and vinegar.

If your enemies are hungry, give them something to eat. If they are thirsty, give them some water. This will make them feel the burning pain of shame, and the LORD will reward you for being good to them.

Just as wind blowing from the north brings rain, telling secrets brings anger.

It is better to live in a small corner of the roof than to share the house with a woman who is always arguing.

Good news from a faraway place is like a cool drink of water when you are hot and thirsty.

Good people who don’t stand strong against evil are like springs that have been polluted or pools that have turned dirty and muddy.

Just as eating too much honey is not good, it is not good for people to always be looking for honor.

People who cannot control themselves are like cities without walls to protect them.

Wise Sayings About Fools

Just as snow should not fall in summer, nor rain at harvest time, so people should not honor a fool.

Don’t worry when someone curses you for no reason. Nothing bad will happen. Such words are like birds that fly past and never stop.

You have to whip a horse, you have to put a bridle on a mule, and you have to beat a fool.

There is no good way to answer fools when they say something stupid. If you answer them, then you, too, will look like a fool. If you don’t answer them, they will think they are smart.

Never let a fool carry your message. If

a 25:13 drink ... day Literally, “as the cold snow at harvest time.” This probably refers to snow or ice brought down from Mt. Hermon in Lebanon.

b 25:22 This … shame Literally, “for you will heap coals of fire on his head.”
you do, it will be like cutting off your own feet. You are only asking for trouble.

7 A fool trying to say something wise is like a crippled person trying to walk.

8 Showing honor to a fool is as bad as tying a rock in a sling.

9 A fool trying to say something wise is like a drunk trying to pick a thorn out of his hand.

10 Hiring a fool or a stranger who is just passing by is dangerous—you don’t know who might get hurt.

11 Like a dog that returns to its vomit, a fool does the same foolish things again and again.

12 People who think they are wise when they are not are worse than fools.

13 A person who is lazy and wants to stay home says, “What if there is a lion out there? Really, there might be a lion in the street!”

14 Like a door on its hinges, a lazy man turns back and forth on his bed.

15 Lazy people are too lazy to lift the food from their plate to their mouth.

16 Lazy people think they are seven times smarter than the people who really have good sense.

17 To step between two people arguing is as foolish as going out into the street and grabbing a stray dog by the ears.

18–19 Anyone who would trick someone and then say, “I was only joking” is like a fool who shoots flaming arrows into the air and accidentally kills someone.

20 Without wood, a fire goes out. Without gossip, arguments stop.

21 Charcoal keeps the coals glowing, wood keeps the fire burning, and troublemakers keep arguments alive.

22 People love to hear gossip. It is like tasty food on its way to the stomach.

23 Good words that hide an evil heart are like silver paint over a cheap, clay pot.

24 Evil people say things to make themselves look good, but they keep their evil plans a secret. What they say sounds good, but don’t trust them. They are full of evil ideas. They hide their evil plans with nice words, but in the end, everyone will see the evil they do.

27 Whoever digs a pit can fall into it. Whoever rolls a large stone can be crushed by it.

28 Liars hate the people they hurt, and false praise can hurt people.

27 1 Never brag about what you will do in the future; you have no idea what tomorrow will bring.

2 Never praise yourself. Let others do it.

3 A stone is heavy, and sand is hard to carry, but the irritation caused by a fool is much harder to bear.

4 Anger is cruel and can destroy like a flood, but jealousy is much worse.

5 Open criticism is better than hidden love.

6 You can trust what your friend says, even when it hurts. But your enemies want to hurt you, even when they act nice.

7 When you are full, you will not even eat honey. When you are hungry, even something bitter tastes sweet.

8 A man away from home is like a bird away from its nest.

9 Perfume and incense make you feel good, and so does good advice from a friend.

10 Don’t forget your own friends or your father’s friends. If you have a problem, go to your neighbor for help. It is better to ask a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.

11 My son, be wise. This will make me happy. Then I will be able to answer those who criticize me.

12 Wise people see trouble coming and get out of its way, but fools go straight to the trouble and suffer for it.

13 When you make a deal with a stranger, get something from him and any other foreigners with him to make sure he will pay you.

14 Don’t wake up your neighbors early in the morning with a shout of “Good morning!” They will treat it like a curse, not a blessing.

15 A complaining wife is like water that never stops dripping on a rainy day.
16 Stopping her is like trying to stop the wind or trying to hold oil in your hand.

17 As one piece of iron sharpens another, so friends keep each other sharp.

18 People who take care of fig trees are allowed to eat the fruit. In the same way, people who take care of their masters will be rewarded.

19 Just as you can see your own face reflected in water, so your heart reflects the kind of person you are.

20 Just as the place of death and destruction is never full, people always want more and more.

21 People use fire to purify gold and silver. In the same way, you are tested by the praise people give you.

22 Even if you pound fools to powder like grain in a bowl, you will never force the foolishness out of them.

23 Learn all you can about your sheep. Take care of your goats the best you can.

24 Neither wealth nor nations last forever.

25 Cut the hay, and new grass will grow. Then gather the new plants that grow on the hills. Cut the wool from your lambs, and make your clothes. Sell some of your goats, and buy some land. Then there will be plenty of goat’s milk for you and your family, with enough to keep the servants healthy.

28 1 The wicked are afraid of everything, but those who live right are as brave as lions.

2 A lawless nation will have many bad leaders. But a smart leader will rule for a long time in a land where people obey the law.

3 A leader who takes advantage of the poor is like a hard rain that destroys the crops.

4 Those who refuse to obey the law promote evil. Those who obey the law oppose evil.

5 The wicked don’t understand justice, but those who love the LORD understand it completely.

6 It is better to be poor and honest than rich and evil.

7 A smart son obeys the laws, but a son who spends time with worthless people brings shame to his father.

8 If you get rich by charging high interest rates, your wealth will go to someone who is kind to the poor.

9 When people do not listen to God’s teachings, he does not listen to their prayers.

10 Those who plan to hurt good people will fall into their own traps, but good things will happen to those who are good.

11 The rich always think they are wise, but a poor person who is wise can see the truth.

12 When good people become leaders, everything is great, but when the wicked rise to power, everyone hides.

13 Whoever hides their sins will not be successful, but whoever confesses their sins and stops doing wrong will receive mercy.

14 People who respect others will be blessed, but stubborn people will have plenty of troubles.

15 An evil ruler over those who are helpless is like an angry lion or a charging bear.

16 A foolish ruler hurts the people under him, but a ruler who hates wrong will rule for a long time.

17 A murderer will never have peace. Don’t support such a person.

18 Honest people will be safe, but dishonest people will be ruined.

19 Whoever works hard will have plenty to eat, but whoever wastes their time with dreams will always be poor.

20 People who can be trusted will have many blessings, but those who are just trying to get rich in a hurry will be punished.

21 It is wrong for a judge to support someone simply because he knows them. But some judges will change their decisions for the price of a loaf of bread.

22 Selfish people only want to get rich. They do not realize that they are very close to being poor.

23 Correct someone, and later they will
thank you. That is much better than just saying something to be nice.

24 Someone might steal from their parents and say, “I did nothing wrong.” But that person is as bad as an enemy who smashes everything in the house.

25 Greedy people might sue you in court, but those who trust the LORD are rewarded.

26 It is foolish to be too confident. Those who ask for advice are wise and will escape disaster.

27 Whoever gives to the poor will have plenty. Whoever refuses to help them will get nothing but curses.

28 When the wicked rise to power, everyone hides. When they are defeated, good people multiply.

29 Some people refuse to bend when someone corrects them. Eventually they will break, and there will be no one to repair the damage.

2 When the rulers are good, the people are happy. When the rulers are evil, the people complain.

3 A son who loves wisdom makes his father happy. One who wastes his money on prostitutes will lose his wealth.

4 A nation will be strong when it has a fair and just king. A nation will be weak when it has a king who is selfish and demands gifts.

5 If you give false praise to others in order to get what you want, you are only setting a trap for yourself.

6 Evil people are defeated by their sin, but good people will sing and be happy.

7 Good people want to do what is right for the poor, but the wicked don’t care.

8 Proud people who laugh at what is right cause problems that divide whole cities, but people who are wise are able to calm those who are angry.

9 If someone who is wise tries to settle a problem with a fool, the fool will argue and say stupid things, and they will never agree.

10 If you always try to be honest, murderers will hate you, but those who do what is right will want you to be their friend.

11 Fools are quick to express their anger, but wise people are patient and control themselves.

12 If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials will be evil.

13 In one way the poor and those who steal from them are the same—the LORD made them both.

14 If a king judges the poor fairly, he will rule for a long time.

15 Punishment and discipline can make children wise, but children who are never corrected will bring shame to their mother.

16 If the wicked are ruling the nation, sin will be everywhere, but those who live right will win in the end.

17 Correct your children whenever they are wrong. Then you will always be proud of them. They will never make you ashamed.

18 If a nation is not guided by God, the people will lose self-control, but the nation that obeys God’s law will be happy.

19 Servants will not learn a lesson if you only talk to them. They might understand you, but they will not obey.

20 There is more hope for a fool than for someone who speaks without thinking.

21 Give your servants everything they want, and they will learn to be wasteful.

22 An angry person causes arguments, and someone who is quick-tempered is guilty of many sins.

23 Your pride can bring you down. Humility will bring you honor.

24 You are your own worst enemy if you take part in a crime. You will not be able to tell the truth even when people threaten you.

25 Fear can be a trap, but if you trust in the LORD, you will be safe.

26 Many people want the friendship of a ruler, but the LORD is the only one who judges people fairly.

27 Good people think the wicked are disgusting, and the wicked feel disgust for those who are honest.
Wise Sayings of Agur Son of Jakeh

1These are the wise sayings of Agur son of Jakeh from Massa. He says, “God, I am tired, so tired. How can I keep going?”

2I am stupid. I am not as smart as other people are. I have not learned to be wise. I know nothing about the Holy One.

3Who has ever gone up to heaven and come back down? Who gathered the winds in his hand? Who can gather up all the water in his lap? Who set the limits for the world? What is his name, and what is his son’s name? Do you know?

4You can trust this: Every word that God speaks is true. God is a safe place for those who go to him. So don’t try to change what God says. If you do, he will punish you and prove that you are a liar.

5God, I ask you to do two things for me before I die. Don’t let me tell lies. And don’t make me too rich or too poor—give me only enough food for each day. If I have too much, I might deny that I need you, Lord. But if I am too poor, I might steal and bring shame to the name of my God.

6Never say bad things about a slave to his master. If you do, he will curse you, and you will suffer for it.

7Some people curse their fathers and refuse to bless their mothers.

8Some people think they are pure, but they have done nothing to remove the filth of their sin.

9Some people are so proud of themselves, and they look down on everyone else.

10There are people whose teeth are like swords and their jaws like knives. They take everything they can from the poor.

11Greedy people know only two things: “Give me,” and “Give me.” There are three other things that are never satisfied—really, four things that never have enough: the place of death, a woman with no children, dry ground that needs rain, and a fire that will never stop by itself.

12People who make fun of their father or refuse to obey their mother should have their eyes plucked out by wild birds and be eaten by vultures.

13There are three things that are hard for me to understand—really, four things that I don’t understand: an eagle flying in the sky, a snake moving on a rock, a ship moving across the ocean, and a man in love with a woman.

14A woman who is not faithful to her husband acts innocent. She eats, wipes her mouth, and says she has done nothing wrong.

15There are three things that make trouble on the earth—really, four things that the earth cannot bear: a slave who becomes a king, fools who have everything they need, a woman whose husband hated her but still married her, and a servant girl who becomes ruler over the woman she serves.

16There are four things on the earth that are small but very wise:

17Ants are small and weak, but they save their food all summer;

18Badgers are small animals, but they make their homes in the rocks;

19Locusts have no king, but they are able to work together;

20Lizards are small enough to catch with your hands, but you can find them living in kings’ palaces.

21There are three things that act important when they walk—really, there are four:

22A lion—he is the warrior of the animals and runs from nothing,

23A rooster walking proudly,

24A goat,

25And a king among his people.

26If you have been foolish enough to become proud and make plans against other people, stop and think about what you are doing.

27Stirring milk causes butter to form. Hitting someone’s nose causes blood to


\[\text{d} 30:31 \text{a rooster walking proudly} \quad \text{Or possibly, “a greyhound” or “a war horse.”} \]

\[\text{a} 30:1 \text{He says, “God, … keep going?” Or “This is his message to Ithiel and Ucal.”} \]

\[\text{b} 30:3 \text{Holy One. Literally, “the holy ones.”} \]

\[\text{c} 30:15 \text{Literally, “A leech has two daughters.”} \]
flow. And making people angry causes trouble.

**Wise Words for a King**

31 These are the wise sayings that King Lemuel’s mother taught him:

1 I prayed for a son, and you are the son I gave birth to. 2 Don’t waste your strength on women. Women destroy kings, so don’t waste yourself on them. 4 Lemuel, it is not wise for kings to drink wine. It is not wise for rulers to want beer. 5 They may drink too much and forget what the law says. Then they might take away the rights of the poor. 6 Give beer to people without hope. Give wine to those who are in trouble. 7 Let them drink to forget their troubles. Let them forget they are poor.

8 Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Help people who are in trouble. 9 Stand up for what you know is right, and judge all people fairly. Protect the rights of the poor and those who need help.

**The Perfect Wife**

10 How hard it is to find the perfect wife. She is worth far more than jewels. Her husband depends on her. He will never be poor. She does good for her husband all her life. She never causes him trouble. She is always gathering wool and flax and enjoys making things with her hands. She is like a ship from a faraway place. She brings home food from everywhere. She wakes up early in the morning, cooks food for her family, and gives the servants their share.

16 She looks at land and buys it. She uses the money she has earned and plants a vineyard.

17 She works very hard. She is strong and able to do all her work.

18 She works late into the night to make sure her business earns a profit.

19 She makes her own thread and weaves her own cloth.

20 She always gives to the poor and helps those who need it.

21 She does not worry about her family when it snows. She has given them all good, warm clothes.

22 She makes sheets and spreads for the beds, and she wears clothes of fine linen.

23 Her husband is a respected member of the city council, where he meets with the other leaders.

24 She makes clothes and belts and sells them to the merchants.

25 She is a strong person, and people respect her. She looks to the future with confidence.

26 She speaks with wisdom and teaches others to be loving and kind.

27 She oversees the care of her house. She is never lazy.

28 Her children say good things about her. Her husband brags about her and says, “There are many good women, but you are the best.”

29 Grace and beauty can fool you, but a woman who respects the Lord should be praised.

30 Give her the reward she deserves. Praise her in public for what she has done.

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Ecclesiastes

1 These are the words from the Teacher, a son of David and king of Jerusalem.
2 Everything is so meaningless. The Teacher says that it is all a waste of time!\(^d\)
3 Do people really gain anything from all the hard work they do in this life?\(^b\)

**Things Never Change**

4 People live and people die, but the earth continues forever. \(^5\) The sun rises and the sun goes down, and then it hurries to rise again in the same place.
6 The wind blows to the south, and the wind blows to the north. The wind blows around and around. Then it turns and blows back to the place it began.
7 All rivers flow again and again to the same place. They all flow to the sea, but the sea never becomes full.
8 Words cannot fully explain things,\(^c\) but people continue speaking.\(^d\) Words come again and again to our ears, but our ears don’t become full. And our eyes don’t become full of what we see.

**Nothing Is New**

9 All things continue the way they have been since the beginning. The same things will be done that have always been done. There is nothing new in this life.
10 Someone might say, “Look, this is new,” but that thing has always been here. It was here before we were.
11 People don’t remember what happened long ago. In the future, they will not remember what is happening now.

\(^a\) Ecc 1:2 meaningless ... a waste of time  The Hebrew word means “vapor or breath” or “something that is useless, meaningless, empty, wrong, or a waste of time.”
\(^b\) Ecc 1:3 in this life  Literally, “under the sun.” Also in verses 9, 13.
\(^c\) Ecc 1:8 Words cannot fully explain things  Literally, “All words are weak.”
\(^d\) Ecc 1:8 but people continue speaking  The Hebrew could also be translated, “People cannot speak.”

And later, other people will not remember what the people before them did.

**Does Wisdom Bring Happiness?**

12 I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. \(^13\) I decided to study and to use my wisdom to learn about everything that is done in this life. I learned that it is a very hard thing that God has given us to do. \(^14\) I looked at everything done on earth, and I saw that it is all a waste of time. It is like trying to catch the wind.\(^e\) \(^15\) If something is crooked, you cannot say it is straight. And if something is missing, you cannot say it is there.
16 I said to myself, “I am very wise. I am wiser than all the kings who ruled Jerusalem before me. I know what wisdom and knowledge really are.”
17 I decided to learn how wisdom and knowledge are better than thinking foolish thoughts. But I learned that trying to become wise is like trying to catch the wind. \(^18\) With much wisdom comes frustration. The one who gains more wisdom also gains more sorrow.

**Does “Having Fun” Bring Happiness?**

1 I said to myself, “I should have fun—I should enjoy everything as much as I can.” But I learned that this is also useless. \(^2\) It is foolish to laugh all the time. Having fun does not do any good.
3 So I decided to fill my body with wine while I filled my mind with wisdom. I tried this foolishness because I wanted to find a way to be happy. I wanted to see what was good for people to do during their few days of life.

\(^e\) Ecc 1:14 trying to catch the wind  Or “It is very troubling to the spirit.” The word for “troubling” can also mean “craving,” and the word for “spirit” can also mean “wind.” Also in verse 17.
Does Hard Work Bring Happiness?

4 Then I began doing great things. I built houses, and I planted vineyards for myself. 5 I planted gardens, and I made parks. I planted all kinds of fruit trees. 6 I made pools of water for myself, and I used them to water my growing trees. 7 I bought men and women slaves, and there were slaves born in my house. I owned many great things. I had herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. I owned more things than any other person in Jerusalem did.

8 I also gathered silver and gold for myself. I took treasures from kings and their nations. I had men and women singing for me. I had everything any man could want.

9 I became very rich and famous. I was greater than anyone who lived in Jerusalem before me. My wisdom was always there to help me. 10 Anything my eyes saw and wanted, I got for myself. My mind was pleased with everything I did. And this happiness was the reward for all my hard work.

11 But then I looked at everything I had done and the wealth I had gained. I decided it was all a waste of time! It was like trying to catch the wind. 12 There is nothing to gain from anything we do in this life.

Maybe Wisdom Is the Answer

12 Then I decided to think about what it means to be wise or to be foolish or to do crazy things. And I thought about the one who will be the next king. The new king will do the same as the kings before him. 13 I saw that wisdom is better than foolishness in the same way that light is better than darkness. 14 Wise people use their minds like eyes to see where they are going. But for fools, it is as if they are walking in the dark.

I also saw that fools and wise people both end the same way. 15 I thought to myself, “The same thing that happens to a fool will also happen to me. So why have I tried so hard to become wise?” I said to myself, “Being wise is also useless.” 16 Whether people are wise or foolish, they will still die, and no one will remember either one of them forever. In the future, people will forget everything both of them did. So the two are really the same.

Is There Real Happiness in Life?

17 This made me hate life. It was depressing to think that everything in this life is useless, like trying to catch the wind.

18 I began to hate all the hard work I had done, because I saw that the people who live after me would get the things that I worked for. I will not be able to take them with me. 19 Some other person will control everything I worked and studied for. And I don’t know if that person will be wise or foolish. This is also senseless.

20 So I became sad about all the work I had done. 21 People can work hard using all their wisdom and knowledge and skill. But they will die and other people will get the things they worked for. They did not do the work, but they will get everything. That makes me very sad. It is also not fair and is senseless.

22 What do people really have after all their work and struggling in this life? 23 Throughout their life, they have pain, frustrations, and hard work. Even at night, a person’s mind does not rest. This is also senseless.

24–25 There is no one who has tried to enjoy life more than I have. And this is what I learned: The best thing people can do is eat, drink, and enjoy the work they must do. I also saw that this comes from God. 26 If people do good and please God, he will give them wisdom, knowledge, and joy. But those who sin will get only the work of gathering and carrying things. God takes from the bad person and gives to the good person. But all this work is useless. It is like trying to catch the wind.

\[ \text{a 2:11 trying to catch the wind Or “It is very troubling to the spirit.” The word for “troubling” can also mean “craving,” and the word for “spirit” can also mean “wind.” Also in verses 17, 26.} \]

\[ \text{b 2:17 in this life Literally, “under the sun.” Also in verses 17, 22.} \]

\[ \text{c 2:12 And I thought … before him The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.} \]

\[ \text{d 2:24–25 Or “The best people can do is eat, drink, and enjoy their work. I also saw that this comes from God.” No one can eat or enjoy life without God.”} \]

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A Time for Everything

3 There is a right time for everything, and everything on earth will happen at the right time.
2 There is a time to be born and a time to die.
There is a time to plant and a time to pull up plants.
3 There is a time to kill and a time to heal.
There is a time to destroy and a time to build.
4 There is a time to cry and a time to laugh.
There is a time to be sad and a time to dance with joy.
5 There is a time to throw weapons down and a time to pick them up.
There is a time to hug someone and a time to stop holding so tightly.
6 There is a time to look for something and a time to consider it lost.
There is a time to keep things and a time to throw things away.
7 There is a time to tear cloth and a time to sew it.
There is a time to be silent and a time to speak.
8 There is a time to love and a time to hate.
There is a time for war and a time for peace.

God Controls His World

9 Do people really gain anything from their hard work? 10 I saw all the hard work God gave us to do. 11 God gave us the ability to think about his world, but we can never completely understand everything he does. And yet, he does everything at just the right time.
12 I learned that the best thing for people to do is to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live. 13 God wants everyone to eat, drink, and enjoy their work. These are gifts from God.
14 I learned that anything God does will continue forever. People cannot add anything to the work of God, and they cannot take anything away from it. God did this so that people would respect him.
15 What happened in the past has happened, and what will happen in the future will happen. But God wants to help those who have been treated badly.
16 I also saw these things in this life: I saw that the courts should be filled with goodness and fairness, but there is evil there now. 17 So I said to myself, “God has planned a time for everything, and he has planned a time to judge everything people do. He will judge good people and bad people.”

Are People Like Animals?

18 I thought about what people do to each other. And I said to myself, “God wants people to see that they are like animals.
19 The same thing happens to animals and to people—they die. People and animals have the same ‘breath.’ Is a dead animal different from a dead person? It is all so senseless!
20 The bodies of people and animals end the same way. They came from the earth, and, in the end, they will go back to the earth. 21 Who knows what happens to a person’s spirit? Who knows if a human’s spirit goes up to God while an animal’s spirit goes down into the ground?”
22 So I saw that the best thing people can do is to enjoy what they do, because that is all they have. Besides, no one can help another person see what will happen in the future.

Is It Better to Be Dead?

4 Again I saw that many people are treated badly. I saw their tears, and I saw that there was no one to comfort them. I saw that cruel people had all the power, and I saw that there was no one to comfort the people they hurt. I decided that it is better for those who have died than for those who are still alive.

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is even better for those who die at birth, because they never saw the evil that is done in this world.\(^a\)

**Why Work So Hard?**

4Then I thought, “Why do people work so hard?” I saw people try to succeed and be better than other people. They do this because they are jealous. They don’t want other people to have more than they have. This is senseless. It is like trying to catch the wind.\(^b\)

5Some people say, “It is foolish to fold your hands and do nothing. If you don’t work, you will starve to death.” \(^6\)Maybe that is true. But I say it is better to be satisfied with the few things you have than to always be struggling to get more.

7Again I saw something else that didn’t make sense: \(^8\)I saw a man who has no family, not a son or even a brother. But he continues to work very hard. He is never satisfied with what he has. And he works so hard that he never stops and asks himself, “Why am I working so hard? Why don’t I let myself enjoy my life?” This is also a very bad and senseless thing.

**Friends and Family Give Strength**

9Two people are better than one. When two people work together, they get more work done.

10If one person falls, the other person can reach out to help. But those who are alone when they fall have no one to help them.

11If two people sleep together, they will be warm. But a person sleeping alone will not be warm.

12An enemy might be able to defeat one person, but two people can stand back-to-back to defend each other. And three people are even stronger. They are like a rope that has three parts wrapped together—it is very hard to break.

\(^a\) 4:3 in this world Literally, “under the sun.”

\(^b\) 4:4 trying to catch the wind Or “It is very troubling to the spirit.” The word for “troubling” can also mean “craving,” and the word for “spirit” can also mean “wind.” Also in verse 16.

**People, Politics, and Popularity**

13A young leader who is poor but wise is better than a king who is old but foolish. That old king does not listen to warnings. \(^14\)Maybe the young ruler was born a poor man in the kingdom. And maybe he came from prison to rule the country. \(^15\)But I have watched people in this life, and I know this: People will follow that young man. He will become the new king. \(^16\)Many people will follow this young man. But later, those same people will not like him. This is also senseless. It is like trying to catch the wind.

**Be Careful About Making Promises**

1Be very careful when you go to worship God. It is better to listen to God than to give sacrifices like fools. Fools often do bad things, and they don’t even know it. \(^2\)Be careful when you make promises to God. Be careful about what you say to him. Don’t let your feelings cause you to speak too soon. God is in heaven, and you are on the earth. So you need to say only a few things to him. This saying is true: \(^3\)Bad dreams come from too many worries, and too many words come from the mouth of a fool.

4If you make a promise to God, keep your promise. Don’t be slow to do what you promised. God is not happy with fools. Give God what you promised to give him. \(^5\)It is better to promise nothing than to promise something and not be able to do it. \(^6\)So don’t let your words cause you to sin. Don’t say to the priest, “I didn’t mean what I said.” If you do this, God might become angry with your words and destroy everything you have worked for. \(^7\)You should not let your useless dreams and bragging bring you trouble. You should respect God.

**For Every Ruler There Is a Ruler**

8In some country you will see poor people who are forced to work very hard. You will
see that this is not fair to them. It is against their rights. But don’t be surprised! The ruler who forces them to work has another ruler who forces him. And there is still another ruler who forces both of these rulers. 

9 Even the king is a slave—his country owns him.

**Wealth Cannot Buy Happiness**

10 Those who love money will never be satisfied with the money they have. Those who love wealth will not be satisfied when they get more and more. This is also senseless.

11 The more wealth people have, the more “friends” they have to help spend it. So the rich really gain nothing. They can only look at their wealth.

12 Those who work hard all day come home and sleep in peace. It is not important if they have little or much to eat. But the rich worry about their wealth and are not able to sleep.

13 There is a very sad thing that I have seen happen in this life. People save their money for the future. Then something bad happens and they lose everything. So they have nothing to give to their children.

15 People come into the world with nothing. And when they die, they leave with nothing. They might work hard to get things, but they cannot take anything with them when they die. It is very sad that people leave the world just as they came. So what does a person gain from “trying to catch the wind”? They only get days that are filled with sadness and sorrow. In the end, they are troubled, sick, and angry.

**Enjoy Your Life’s Work**

18 I have seen what is best for people to do on earth: They should eat, drink, and enjoy the work they have during their short time here. God has given them these few days, and that is all they have.

19 If God gives some people wealth, property, and the power to enjoy those things, they should enjoy them. They should accept the things they have and enjoy their work—that is a gift from God.

20 People don’t have many years to live, so they must remember these things all their life. God will keep them busy with the work they love to do.

**Wealth Does Not Bring Happiness**

6 I have seen another thing in this life that is not fair and is very hard to understand. God gives some people great wealth, riches, and honor. They have everything they need and everything they could ever want. But then God does not let them enjoy those things. Some stranger comes and takes everything. This is a very bad and senseless thing.

3 A man might live a long time and have 100 children. But if he is not satisfied with those good things, and if no one remembers him after his death, I say that a baby who dies at birth is better off than that man. It is senseless when a baby is born dead. The baby is quickly buried in a dark grave, without even a name. The baby never saw the sun and never knew anything. But the baby finds more rest than the man who never enjoyed what God gave him. He might live 2000 years. But if he does not enjoy life, then the baby who was born dead has found the easiest way to the same end.

7 People work and work to feed themselves, but they are never satisfied. In the same way a wise person is no better than a fool is. It is better to be a poor person who knows how to accept life as it is. It is better to be happy with what you have than to always want more and more. Always wanting more and more is useless. It is like trying to catch the wind.
about this because he is more powerful than they are, and a long argument will not change that fact.

Who knows what is best for people during their short life on earth? Their life passes like a shadow. No one can tell them what will happen later.

A Collection of Wise Teachings

1 A good reputation is better than expensive pleasures. The day someone dies is better than the day they were born.

2 It is better to go to a funeral than to a party, because everyone must die, and the living need to remember this.

3 Sorrow is even better than laughter, because when our face is sad, our heart becomes good.

4 A wise person thinks about death, but a fool thinks only about having a good time.

5 It is better to be criticized by the wise than praised by the foolish.

6 The laughter of fools is such a waste. It is like thorns burning under a pot. The thorns burn so quickly that the pot does not get hot.

7 Even the wise will forget their wisdom, if someone pays them enough. That money destroys their understanding.

8 It is better to finish something than to start it. It is better to be gentle and patient than to be proud and impatient.

9 Don’t become angry quickly, because anger is foolish.

10 Don’t say, “Life was better in the ‘good old days.’” What happened?” Wisdom does not lead us to ask that question.

11 Wisdom is better if you also have property. Wise people will get more than enough wealth. Wisdom and money can protect you. But knowledge gained through wisdom is even better—it can save your life.

Look at what God has made. You cannot change a thing, even if you think it is wrong. When life is good, enjoy it. But when life is hard, remember that God gives us good times and hard times. And no one knows what will happen in the future.

People Cannot Really Be Good

In my short life, I have seen everything. I have seen good people die young, and I have seen evil people live long lives. So why ruin your life? Don’t be too good or too bad, and don’t be too wise or too foolish. Why should you die before your time?

Try to be a little of this and a little of that. Even God’s followers will do some good things and some bad things.

Surely there is no one on earth who always does good and never sins. But wisdom can make one person stronger than ten leaders in a city.

Don’t listen to everything people say. You might hear your own servant saying bad things about you. And you know that many times you too have said bad things about other people.

I used my wisdom and thought about all these things. I wanted to be wise, but I couldn’t do it. I cannot understand why things are as they are. It is too hard for anyone to understand.

I studied and I tried very hard to find true wisdom. I tried to find a reason for everything.

I did learn that it is foolish to be evil, and it is crazy to act like a fool. I also found that some women are dangerous like traps. Their hearts are like nets, and their arms are like chains. It is worse than death to be caught by these women. God’s
followers should run away from them. Let the sinners be caught by them.

27–28 The Teacher says, “I added all this together to see what answer I could find. I am still looking for answers, but I did find this: I found one good man in a thousand. But I did not find even one good woman.

29 “There is one other thing I have learned. God made people good, but they have found many ways to be bad.”

Wisdom and Power

8 1 No one can understand and explain things the way wise people can. Their wisdom makes them happy. It changes a sad face into a happy one.

2 I say you should always obey the king’s command. Do this because you made a promise to God. 3 Don’t be afraid to give suggestions to the king, and don’t support something that is wrong. But remember, the king gives the commands that please him. 4 He has the authority to give commands, and no one can tell him what to do. 5 People will be safe if they obey his command. But wise people know the right time to do this, and they also know when to do the right thing.

6 There is a right time and a right way to do everything. You must decide what you should do, even when it might cause problems and you are not sure what will happen. No one can tell you what will happen in the future.

8 No one has the power to keep their spirit from leaving or to stop their death. During war, no soldier has the freedom to go wherever he wants. In the same way evil does not allow anyone who does wrong to go free.

9 I saw all this. I thought very hard about the things that happen in this world. I saw that people always struggle for the power to rule others, and this is bad for them.

10 I also saw great and beautiful funerals for evil people. While the people were going home after the funeral services, they said good things about the evil people who had died. This happened even in the same towns where the evil people had done many bad things. This is senseless.

Justice, Rewards, and Punishment

11 Sometimes people are not immediately punished for the bad things they do. Their punishment is slow to come, and that makes other people want to do bad things too.

12 A sinner might do a hundred evil things and still live a long time. But I know that it is still better to obey and respect God. 13 Evil people don’t respect God, so they will not get good things or live long lives. Their lives will not be like the shadows that become longer and longer as the sun goes down.

14 There is something else that happens on earth that does not seem fair. Bad things should happen to bad people, and good things should happen to good people. But sometimes bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people. This is not fair.

15 So I decided it was more important to enjoy life because the best thing people can do in this life is to eat, drink, and enjoy life. At least that will help people enjoy the hard work God gave them to do during their life on earth.

We Cannot Understand All God Does

16 I carefully studied the things people do in this life. I saw how busy people are. They work day and night, and they almost never sleep. 17 I also saw that no one can understand all that God does. People can try and try to understand the things that happen here on earth, but they cannot. There may be wise people who claim to understand the meaning of these things, but they are wrong. No one can understand it all.

Is Death Fair?

18 I thought about all this very carefully. I saw that God controls what happens to the good and wise people and what they do. People don’t know if they will be loved.

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or hated, and they don’t know what will happen in the future.

2But, there is one thing that happens to everyone—we all die! Death comes to good people and bad people. Death comes to those who are pure and to those who are not pure. Death comes to those who give sacrifices and to those who don’t give sacrifices. Good people will die just as sinners do. Those who make promises to God will die just as those who are afraid to make those promises.

3Of all the things that happen in this life, the worst thing is that all people end life the same way. But it is also very bad that people always think evil and foolish thoughts. And those thoughts lead to death. 4There is hope for those who are still alive—it does not matter who they are. But this saying is true:

A living dog is better than a dead lion.

5The living know that they will die, but the dead don’t know anything. They have no more reward. People will soon forget them. 6After people are dead, their love, hate, and jealousy are all gone. And they will never again share in what happens on earth.

Enjoy Life While You Can

7So go and eat your food now and enjoy it. Drink your wine and be happy. It is all right with God if you do these things. 8Wear nice clothes and make yourself look good. 9Enjoy life with the wife you love. Enjoy every day of your short life. God has given you this short life on earth—and it is all you have. So enjoy the work you have to do in this life. 10Every time you find work to do, do it the best you can. In the grave there is no work. There is no thinking, no knowledge, and there is no wisdom. And we are all going to the place of death.

Life Is Not Fair

11I also saw other things in this life that were not fair. The fastest runner does not always win the race; the strongest soldier does not always win the battle; wise people don’t always get the food; smart people don’t always get the wealth; educated people don’t always get the praise they deserve. When the time comes, bad things can happen to anyone!

12You never know when hard times will come. Like fish in a net or birds in a snare, people are often trapped by some disaster that suddenly falls on them.

The Power of Wisdom

13I also saw a person doing a wise thing in this life, and it seemed very important to me. 14There was a small town with a few people in it. A great king fought against that town and put his armies all around it. 15But there was a wise man in that town. He was poor, but he used his wisdom to save his town. After everything was finished, the people forgot about the poor man. 16But I still say that wisdom is better than strength. They forgot about the poor man’s wisdom, and the people stopped listening to what he said. But I still believe that wisdom is better.

17Words spoken by the wise are heard more clearly than those shouted by a leader among fools.

18Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one fool can destroy much good.

1A few dead flies will make even the best perfume stink. In the same way, a little foolishness can ruin much wisdom and honor.

2The thoughts of the wise lead them the right way, but the thoughts of the foolish lead them the wrong way. 3Fools show how foolish they are, just walking down the road. Their minds are empty, and everyone knows it.

4Don’t quit your job simply because the boss is angry with you. If you remain calm and helpful, you can correct even great mistakes. 5Here is something else that I have seen

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in this life\(^a\) that isn’t fair. It is the kind of mistake that rulers make. \(^b\) Fools are given important positions, while the rich get jobs that are not important. \(^a\) I have seen servants riding on horses, while rulers were walking beside them like slaves.

**Every Job Has Its Dangers**

\(^8\) If you dig a hole, you might fall into it. If you break down a wall, you might be bitten by a snake. \(^9\) If you are moving large stones, you might be hurt by them. If you cut down a tree, you are in danger of it falling on you.

\(^10\) But wisdom will make any job easier. It is very hard to cut with a dull knife. But if you sharpen the knife, the job is easier.

\(^11\) Someone might know how to control snakes. But that skill is useless if a snake bites when that person is not around.

\(^12\) Words from the wise bring praise, but words from a fool bring destruction.

\(^13\) Fools begin by saying something foolish. But in the end, they speak nonsense.

\(^14\) Fools are always talking about what they will do, but you never know what will happen. People cannot tell what will happen in the future.

\(^15\) Fools aren’t smart enough to find their way home, so they must work hard all their lives.

**The Value of Work**

\(^16\) It is very bad for a country if the king is like a child. And it is very bad for a country if its rulers use all their time eating. \(^17\) But it is very good for a country if the king comes from a good family. \(^b\) And it is very good for a country if the rulers control their eating and drinking. They eat and drink to become strong, not to become drunk.

\(^18\) If someone is too lazy to work, their house will begin to leak, and the roof will fall in.

\(^19\) People enjoy eating, and wine makes life happier. But money solves a lot of problems.

**Gossip**

\(^20\) Don’t say bad things about the king. Don’t even think bad things about him. And don’t say bad things about rich people, even if you are alone in your home. A little bird might fly and tell them everything you said.

**Boldly Face the Future**

\(^11\)\(^1\) Do good wherever you go.\(^c\) After a while, the good you do will come back to you.

\(^2\) Invest what you have in several different things.\(^d\) You don’t know what bad things might happen on earth.

\(^3\) There are some things you can be sure of. If clouds are full of rain, they will pour water on the earth. If a tree falls—to the south or to the north—then it will stay where it falls.

\(^4\) But there are some things that you cannot be sure of. You must take a chance. If you wait for perfect weather, you will never plant your seeds. If you are afraid that every cloud will bring rain, you will never harvest your crops.

\(^5\) You don’t know where the wind blows. And you don’t know how a baby grows in its mother’s womb. In the same way, you don’t know what God will do—and he makes everything happen.

\(^6\) So begin planting early in the morning, and don’t stop working until evening. You don’t know what might make you rich. Maybe everything you do will be successful.

\(^7\) It is good to be alive. It is nice to see the light from the sun. \(^8\) You should enjoy every day of your life, no matter how long you live. But remember that you will die, and you will be dead much longer than you were alive. And after you are dead, you cannot do anything.

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\(^a\) 10:5 in this life Literally, “under the sun.”

\(^b\) 10:17 comes from a good family Literally, “is a son of freedmen.” This is a person who was never a slave and whose parents were not slaves.

\(^c\) 11:1 Do good... go Or “Throw your bread on the water.”

\(^d\) 11:2 Invest... different things Or “Give a part to seven, or even eight.”
Serve God While You Are Young
9 So young people, enjoy yourselves while you are young. Be happy. Do whatever your heart leads you to do. Do whatever you want, but remember that God will judge you for everything you do. 10 Don’t let your anger control you, and don’t let your body lead you to sin. People do foolish things in the dawn of life while they are young.

The Problems of Old Age
12 1 Remember your Creator while you are young, before the bad times come—before the years come when you say, “I have wasted my life.”
2 Remember your Creator while you are young, before the time comes when the sun and the moon and the stars become dark to you—before problems come again and again like one storm after another.
3 At that time your arms will lose their strength. Your legs will become weak and bent. Your teeth will fall out, and you will not be able to chew your food. Your eyes will not see clearly. You will become hard of hearing. You will not hear the noise in the streets. Even the sound of a bird singing will wake you early in the morning because you will not be able to sleep.
5 You will be afraid of high places. You will be afraid of tripping over every small thing in your path. Your hair will become white like the flowers on an almond tree. You will drag yourself along like a grasshopper when you walk. You will lose your desire, and then you will go to your eternal home. The mourners will gather in the streets as they carry your body to the grave.

Death
6 Remember your Creator while you are young, before the silver rope snaps and the golden bowl is crushed like a jar broken at the well, like a stone cover on a well that breaks and falls in.
7 Your body came from the earth. And when you die, it will return to the earth. But your spirit came from God, and when you die, it will return to him.
8 Everything is so meaningless. The Teacher says that it is all a waste of time!

Final Words of Advice
9 The Teacher was very wise. He used his wisdom to teach the people. He very carefully studied and arranged many wise teachings. 10 The Teacher tried very hard to find the right words, and he wrote the teachings that are true and dependable.
11 Words from the wise are like sharp goads. When these sayings are written down and saved, they can be used to guide people, just as a shepherd uses a sharp stick to make his sheep go the right way. 12 So, son, study these sayings, but be careful about other teachings. People are always writing books, and too much study will make you very tired.
13–14 Now, what should we learn from everything that is written in this book? The most important thing a person can do is to respect God and obey his commands, because he knows about everything people do—even the secret things. He knows about all the good and all the bad, and he will judge people for everything they do.
Song of Songs

1 Solomon’s Most Wonderful Song.

The Woman to the Man She Loves

2 Cover me with kisses, for your love is better than wine.
3 Your perfume smells wonderful, but your name is sweeter than the best perfume.
   That is why the young women love you.
4 Take me with you.
   Let’s run away.

The Women of Jerusalem to the Man

We will rejoice and be happy for you.
Remember, your love is better than wine.
With good reason, the young women love you.

She Speaks to the Women

5 Daughters of Jerusalem,
   I am dark and beautiful,
   as black as the tents of Kedar and Salma.
6 Don’t look at how dark I am, at how dark the sun has made me.
   My brothers were angry with me.
   They forced me to take care of their vineyards,
   so I could not take care of myself.

She Speaks to Him

7 I love you with all my soul!

Tell me, where do you feed your sheep?
   Where do you lay them down at noon?
   I should come to be with you, or I will be like a hired woman caring for the sheep of your friends.

He Speaks to Her

8 You are such a beautiful woman.
   Surely you know what to do.
   Go, follow the sheep.
   Feed your young goats near the shepherds’ tents.

9 My darling, you are more exciting to me than any mare among the stallions pulling Pharaoh’s chariots.
10 Your cheeks are so beautiful with those ornaments hanging beside them.
   Your neck is so lovely under that beautiful string of jewels.
11 Let’s make you some more gold jewelry and decorate it with silver.

She Speaks

12 The smell of my perfume reaches out to the king lying on his couch.
13 My lover is like the small bag of myrrh around my neck, lying all night between my breasts.
14 My lover is like a bunch of henna flowers.

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near the vineyards of En Gedi.

He Speaks
15 My darling, you are so beautiful!
   Oh, you are beautiful!
   Your eyes are like doves.

She Speaks
16 You are so handsome, my lover!
   Yes, and so charming!
   Our bed is so fresh and pleasant.a
17 The beams of our house are cedar.
   The rafters are fir.

2 I am a rose on the plain of Sharon,b a lilyc in the valleys.

He Speaks
2 My darling, among other women,
   you are like a lily among thorns!

She Speaks
3 My lover, among other men,
   you are an apple tree among the wild trees in the forest!

She Speaks to the Women
I enjoy sitting in my lover’s shadow;
   his fruit is so sweet to my taste.
4 My lover took me to the wine house;
   his intent toward me was love.
5 Strengthen me with raisinsd;
   refresh me with apples, because I am weak with love.e
6 My lover’s left arm is under my head,
   and his right arm holds me.

7 Women of Jerusalem, promise me by
   the gazelles and wild deer,
   don’t awaken love,
   don’t arouse love, until I am ready.f

She Speaks Again
8 I hear my lover’s voice.
   a 1:16 fresh and pleasant Or “lush and green” like a fresh field of grass.
   b 2:1 rose ... Sharon Or “a crocus on the plain.”
   c 2:1 lily A kind of flower. Here, it is probably a red flower.
   d 2:5 raisins Or “raisin cakes.”
   e 2:5 I am weak with love Or “I am lovesick.”
   f 2:7 until I am ready Literally, “until it desires.”

   Here it comes, jumping over the mountains,
   skipping over the hills.
9 My lover is like a gazelle
   or a young deer.
Look at him standing behind our wall,
   staring out the window,
   looking through the lattice.g
10 My lover speaks to me,
   “Get up, my darling, my beautiful one.
   Let’s go away!
11 Look, winter is past,
   the rains have come and gone.
12 The flowers are blooming in the fields.
   It’s time to sing!h
   Listen, the doves have returned.
13 Young figs are growing on the fig trees.
   Smell the vines in bloom.
   Get up, my darling, my beautiful one.
   Let’s go away!”

He Speaks
14 My dove, hiding in the caves high on
   the cliff,
   hidden here on the mountain,
   let me see you,
   let me hear your voice.
   Your voice is so pleasant,
   and you are so beautiful!

She Speaks to the Women
15 Catch the foxes for us—
   the little foxes
   that spoil the vineyard.
   Our vineyard is now in bloom.
16 My lover is mine,
   and I am his!
   My lover feeds among the lilies,
17 while the day breathes its last breath
   and the shadows run away.
   Turn, my lover,
   be like a gazelle or a young deer on
   the cleft mountains!
   g 2:9 lattice A wooden screen over a window.
   h 2:12 sing Or “prune.”
   i 2:17 the cleft mountains Or “the mountains of Bether” or “the mountains of spice.”
She Speaks

3 At night on my bed, I look for the man I love. I looked for him, but I could not find him. I will go up now! I will go around the city. In the streets and squares, I will look for the man I love.

I looked for him, but I could not find him.

3 The guards patrolling the city found me. I asked them, “Have you seen the man I love?”

I had just left the guards when I found the man I love! I held him and would not let him go, while I took him to my mother’s house, to the room of one who bore me.

She Speaks to the Women

5 Women of Jerusalem, promise me by the gazelles and wild deer, don’t awaken love, don’t arouse love, until I am ready.

The Women of Jerusalem Speak

6 Who is this woman coming from the desert, with this large group of people? The dust rises behind them like clouds of smoke from burning myrrh and frankincense and other spices.

7 Look, Solomon’s traveling chair. There are 60 soldiers guarding it, strong soldiers of Israel. All of them are trained fighting men with their swords at their side, ready for any danger of the night.

9 King Solomon made a traveling chair for himself. The wood came from Lebanon.

10 The poles were made from silver, and the supports were made from gold. The seat was covered with purple cloth. It was inlaid with love by the women of Jerusalem.

11 Women of Zion, come out and see King Solomon. See the crown his mother put on him the day he was married, the day he was so happy!

He Speaks to Her

4 My darling, you are so beautiful! Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are like doves under your veil.

Your hair is long and flowing, like little goats dancing down the slopes of Mount Gilead.

Your teeth are white like ewes just coming from their bath. They all give birth to twins; not one of them has lost a baby.

Your lips are like a red silk thread. Your mouth is beautiful. Your cheeks under your veil are like two slices of pomegranate.

Your neck is long and thin like David’s tower. That tower was built to be decorated with a thousand shields on its walls, with the shields of powerful soldiers.

Your breasts are like twin fawns, like twins of a gazelle, feeding among the lilies.

I will go to that mountain of myrrh.

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and to that hill of frankincense
while the day breathes its last breath,
and the shadows run away.
7 My darling, you are beautiful all over.
   Every part of you is perfect.
8 Come with me, my bride, from Lebanon.
   Come with me from Lebanon.
   Come from the peak of Amana," from the top of Senir and Hermon,
   from the mountain of the leopards.
9 My darling, my bride, you excite me!
   You have stolen my heart with just one quick look from your eyes,
   with just one of the jewels from your necklace.
10 Your love is so beautiful, my darling, my bride!
   Your love is better than wine.
   The smell of your perfume is better than any kind of spice!
11 My bride, your lips drip honey.
   Honey and milk are under your tongue.
   Your clothes smell as sweet as perfume.
12 My darling, my bride,
   you are pure like a locked garden.
   You are like a locked pool, a closed fountain.
13 Your limbs are like a garden filled with pomegranates and other pleasant fruit,
   with all the best spices: henna, nard, saffron, calamus, and cinnamon.
   Your limbs are like a garden filled with trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloe.
15 You are like a garden fountain—
a well of fresh water—
   flowing down from the mountains of Lebanon.

She Speaks
16 Wake up, north wind.
   Come, south wind.
   Blow on my garden.
   Spread its sweet smell.
   Let my lover enter his garden and eat its pleasant fruit.

He Speaks
5 My darling my bride, I have entered my garden.
   I have gathered my myrrh and spice.
   I have eaten my honey and honeycomb.
   I have drunk my wine and milk.

The Women Speak to the Lovers
Dearest friends, eat, drink!
   Be drunk with love!

She Speaks
2 I am asleep,
   but my heart is awake.
   I hear my lover knocking, saying,
   “Open to me, my darling, my love, my dove, my perfect one!
   My head is soaked with dew.
   My hair is wet with the mist of the night.”
3 “I have taken off my robe. I don’t want to put it on again.
   I have washed my feet.
   I don’t want to get them dirty again.”
4 But my lover put his hand through the opening and I felt sorry for him.
5 I got up to open for my lover, myrrh dripping from my hands,
myrrh scented lotion dripped from my fingers onto the handles of the lock.

6 I opened for my lover, but my lover had turned away and was gone!
I nearly died when he came and went.a
I looked for him, but I couldn’t find him.
I called for him, but he didn’t answer me.

7 The guards patrolling the city found me.
They hit me.
They hurt me.
The guards on the wall took my robe from me.

8 I tell you, women of Jerusalem, if you find my lover, tell him I am weak with love.b

The Women of Jerusalem Answer Her
9 Beautiful woman, how is your lover different from other lovers?
Is your lover better than other lovers?
Is that why you ask us to make this promise?

She Answers the Women of Jerusalem
10 My lover is tanned and radiant.
   He would stand out among 10,000 men.
11 His head is like the purest gold.
   His hair is curly and as black as a raven.
12 His eyes are like doves by a stream,
   like doves in a pool of milk,
   like a jewel in its setting.
13 His cheeks are like a garden of spices,
   like flowers used for perfume.
14 His lips are like lilies,
   dripping with liquid myrrh.
15 His arms are like gold rods,
   filled with jewels.
   His body is like smooth ivory with sapphires set in it.
16 His legs are like marble pillars on bases of fine gold.
   He stands tall like the finest cedar tree in Lebanon!
16 Yes, women of Jerusalem, my lover is everything I desire.
   His mouth is the sweetest of all.
   This is my lover; this is my darling.

The Women of Jerusalem Speak to Her
6 Beautiful woman, where has your lover gone?
Which way did your lover go?
Tell us so that we can help you look for him.

She Answers the Women of Jerusalem
2 My lover has gone down to his garden, where sweet-smelling spices grow.
   There, like a sheep, he will eat the grass,
   and he will enjoy the lilies.
3 I belong to my lover, and my lover belongs to me.
   He is the one feeding among the lilies.

He Speaks to Her
4 My darling, you are as beautiful as Tirzah,c
   as pleasant as Jerusalem,
   as awesome as the stars in the sky.d
5 Don’t look at me!
   Your eyes excite me too much!
   And your hair is long and flowing,
   like little goats dancing down the slopes of Mount Gilead.
6 Your teeth are white like ewese just coming from their bath.
   They all give birth to twins.
   Not one of them has lost a baby.
7 Your cheeks under your veil are like slices of pomegranate.

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There might be 60 queens and 80 slave women, and young women too many to count, but there is only one woman for me, my dove, my perfect one. She is the favorite of her mother, her mother’s favorite child. The young women see her and praise her. Even the queens and slave women praise her.

The Women Praise Her
10 Who is that young woman? She shines out like the dawn. She is as pretty as the moon. She is as bright as the sun. She is as awesome as the stars in the sky.

He Speaks to Her
11 I went down to the grove of walnut trees, to see the fruit of the valley, to see if the vines were in bloom, to see if the pomegranates had budded.
12 I was so excited when she put me in the royal chariot. The Women of Jerusalem Call to Her
13 Come back, come back, Shulamith! Come back, come back, so we may look at you. Why are you staring at Shulamith, as she dances the Mahanaim dance?

He Praises Her Beauty
7 Princess, your feet are beautiful in those sandals. The curves of your thighs are like jewelry made by an artist. Your navel is like a round cup; may it never be without wine. Your belly is like a pile of wheat surrounded by lilies. Your breasts are like twin fawns of a young gazelle. Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are like the pools in Heshbon near the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon that looks toward Damascus. Your head is like Carmel, and the hair on your head is like silk. Your long flowing hair captures even a king. You are so beautiful and so pleasant, a lovely, delightful young woman! You are tall— as tall as a palm tree. And your breasts are like the clusters of fruit on that tree. I would love to climb that tree and take hold of its branches. May your breasts be like clusters of grapes and your fragrance like apples. May your mouth be like the best wine, flowing straight to my love, flowing gently to the sleeper’s lips.

She Speaks to Him
10 I belong to my lover, and he wants me. 11 Come, my lover, let’s go out into the field; let’s spend the night in the villages. Let’s get up early and go to the vineyards. Let’s see if the vines are in bloom. Let’s see if the blossoms have opened and if the pomegranates are in bloom.

7:8 fragrance Literally, “breath of your nose.”

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There I will give you my love.

13 Smell the mandrakes\(^a\) and all the pleasant flowers by our door. I have saved many pleasant things for you, my lover, pleasant things, new and old.

8 If you were a baby, like my little brother nursing at his mother’s breasts, and if I found you outside, I could kiss you, and no one would say it was wrong.

I would lead you into my mother’s house, to the room of she who taught me. I would give you spiced wine squeezed from my pomegranate.

She Speaks to the Women

3 His left arm is under my head, and his right hand holds me.

4 Women of Jerusalem, promise me, don’t awaken love, don’t arouse love, until I am ready.\(^b\)

The Women of Jerusalem Speak

5 Who is this woman coming from the desert, leaning on her lover?

She Speaks to Him

I woke you under the apple tree, where your mother gave birth to you, where you were born.

6 Keep me near you like a seal you wear over your heart, like a signet ring you wear on your hand. Love is as strong as death. Passion is as strong as the grave.\(^c\) Its sparks become a flame, and it grows to become a great fire.\(^d\)

7 A flood cannot put out love. Rivers cannot drown love. Would people despise a man for giving everything he owns for love?

Her Brothers Speak

8 We have a little sister, and her breasts are not yet grown. What should we do for our sister when a man comes asking to marry her?

9 If she were a wall, we would put silver trim\(^e\) around her. If she were a door, we would put a cedar board around her.

She Answers Her Brothers

10 I am a wall, and my breasts are my towers. And he is satisfied with me!\(^f\)

He Speaks

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon. He put men in charge of the vineyard. Each man brought in grapes worth 1000 shekels\(^g\) of silver.

12 Solomon, you can keep your 1000 shekels. Give 200 shekels to each man for the grapes he brought. But I will keep my own vineyard.

He Speaks to Her

13 There you are, sitting in the garden. Friends are listening to your voice. Let me hear it too!

She Speaks to Him

14 Hurry, my lover! Be like a gazelle or a young deer on the mountains of spice.

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\(^a\) **7:13** mandrakes Plants with roots that look like people. People thought these plants had the power to make people fall in love.

\(^b\) **8:4** until I am ready Literally, “until it desires.”

\(^c\) **8:6** the grave Or “Sheol,” the place where dead people go.

\(^d\) **8:6** great fire Or “the flame of the Lord.”

\(^e\) **8:9** trim Or “supports.” Often horizontal beams and towers were built into walls to strengthen and support them. But here, this seems to be a decoration.

\(^f\) **8:10** he is satisfied with me Literally, “in his eyes I find peace.” In Hebrew this is also like the names “Solomon” and “Shulamith.”

\(^g\) **8:11** 1000 shekels About 25 pounds (11.5 kg). Also in verse 12.
This is the vision of Isaiah son of Amoz.

God showed Isaiah what would happen to Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah saw this during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah.

God’s Case Against Israel

Heaven and earth, listen! This is what the Lord says:

“I raised my children and helped them grow up,
but they have turned against me.

A bull knows its master,
and a donkey knows where its owner feeds it.
But Israel does not know me.
My people do not understand.”

Oh, what a sinful nation! Their guilt is like a heavy weight that they must carry.

They are evil, destructive children. They left the Lord and insulted the Holy One of Israel. They turned away and treated him like a stranger.

What good will it do to keep punishing you? You will continue to rebel. Your whole head and heart are already sick and aching.

From the bottom of your feet to the top of your head, every part of your body has wounds, cuts, and open sores. You have not taken care of them. Your wounds have not been cleaned and bandaged.

Your land is in ruins, and your cities are in flames. Your enemies have taken your land, and foreigners are taking what it produces. It looks like some foreigners destroyed it.

The city of Jerusalem\textsuperscript{d} is now like an empty shed left in a vineyard. It is like an old straw hut abandoned in a field of cucumbers or like a city surrounded by enemies. If the Lord All-Powerful had not allowed a few people to live, we would have been destroyed completely like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And that almost happened!

You officers of Sodom, listen to the Lord’s message. You people of Gomorrah,\textsuperscript{e} listen to God’s teaching. The Lord says, “Why do you continue giving me all these sacrifices? I have had enough of your sacrifices of rams and the fat from well-fed animals. I don’t want the blood of those bulls, sheep, and goats. When you people come to meet with me, you trample everything in my yard. Who told you to do this?

Don’t keep bringing me those worthless sacrifices. I hate the incense you give me. I cannot stand your festivals for the New Moon, the Sabbath, and other special meeting days. I hate the evil you do during those holy times together. I hate your monthly meetings and councils. They have become like heavy weights to me, and I am tired of carrying them.

When you raise your arms to pray to me, I will refuse to look at you. You will say more and more prayers, but I will refuse to listen because your hands are covered with blood.

Wash yourselves and make yourselves clean. Stop doing the evil things I see you do. Stop doing wrong.

\textsuperscript{a} 1:4 They … children Or “They are destructive children of evil parents.”

\textsuperscript{b} 1:5 Your whole … aching Or “Every head and heart is already sick and aching.”

\textsuperscript{c} 1:7 It looks … destroyed it Or “It looks like the land of the foreigners that was destroyed.” This might refer to civil war in Israel or to some time when God destroyed foreign nations, such as Sodom and Gomorrah.

\textsuperscript{d} 1:8 city of Jerusalem Literally, “daughter Zion.” See “Zion” in the Word List.

\textsuperscript{e} 1:10 officers of Sodom … Gomorrah Here, this refers to leaders and people from Judah.
do good. Treat people fairly. Punish those who hurt others. Speak up for the widows and orphans. Argue their cases for them in court.

"I, the LORD, am the one speaking to you. Come, let’s discuss this. Even if your sins are as dark as red dye, that stain can be removed and you will be as pure as wool that is as white as snow.

"If you listen to what I say, you will get the good things from this land. But if you refuse to listen and rebel against me, your enemies will destroy you.”

The LORD himself said this.

Unfaithful Jerusalem

Look at Jerusalem. She was a faithful city. What made her become like a prostitute? In the past, Jerusalem was filled with justice, and goodness should live there now. Instead, there are murderers.

Once you were like pure silver, but now you are like the impurities that people throw away when the silver is purified. You are like good wine that has been weakened with water. Your rulers are rebels and friends of thieves. They demand bribes and accept money for doing wrong. They take money to cheat people, and they don’t speak up for widows and orphans. They will not even listen to their cries for help.

Because of this, the Lord GOD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, says, “Look, I will get relief from my enemies. You will not cause me any more trouble. People use lye to clean silver. In the same way, I will clean away all your wrongs. I will remove all the impurities from you. I will bring back the kind of judges you had in the beginning. Your counselors will be like those you had long ago. Then you will be called “The Good and Faithful City.’”

God is good and does what is right, so he will rescue Zion and the people who come back to him. But all the criminals and sinners will be destroyed. Those who stopped following the LORD will be removed.

In the future, you will be ashamed of the oak trees and special gardens you chose to worship, because you will be like an oak tree whose leaves are dying. You will be like a garden dying without water. Powerful people will be like small, dry pieces of wood, and what they did will be like the sparks that start a fire. These people and their works will both burn up, and no one will be able to put out that fire.

God’s Message to Judah and Jerusalem

Isaiah son of Amoz received this message about Judah and Jerusalem.

In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s Temple will be the highest of all mountains. It will be raised higher than the hills. There will be a steady stream of people from all nations going there.

People from many places will go there and say, “Come, let’s go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the Temple of the God of Jacob. Then God will teach us his way of living, and we will follow him.”

His teaching, the LORD’s message, will begin in Jerusalem on Mount Zion and will go out to all the world.

Then God will act as judge to end arguments between nations. He will decide what is right for people from many lands. They will stop using their weapons for war. They will hammer their swords into plows and use their spears to make tools for harvesting. All fighting between nations will end. They will never again train for war.

Family of Jacob, let us follow the LORD.

Family of Jacob, you have abandoned...
your people. This is clear because they have been filled with bad influences from the East, and now your people try to tell the future like the Philistines. They have completely accepted those strange ideas.

7 Jacob’s land has been filled with silver and gold from other places. There are many treasures there. His land has been filled with horses and many chariots. His land is full of gods that the people bow down to worship. They made those idols themselves. The people have become worse and worse. They have become very low, and you leaders did nothing to lift them up!

8 You should be afraid of the LORD! Go hide in the dirt and behind the rocks. Hide from his glorious power!

9 Proud people will stop being proud. They will bow down to the ground with shame, and only the LORD will still stand high.

10 The LORD All-Powerful has a special day planned when he will punish the proud and boastful people. They will be brought down. They might be like the tall cedar trees from Lebanon or the great oak trees from Bashan, but they will be cut down. They might be like the tall mountains and high hills or like the tall towers and high walls, but they will be brought down. They might be like great ships from Tarshish, filled with such wonderful cargo, but they will be brought down.

11 At that time those proud people will fall. They will bow low to the ground, and only the LORD will stand high. All the idols will be gone. People will go into the holes in the ground where bats and moles live. They will go down into cracks in the rocks and boulders because they are afraid of the LORD and his glorious power as he stands to shake the earth.

22 Stop trusting other people to save you. Do not think too highly of them; they are only humans who have not stopped breathing yet.

3 Understand what I am telling you: The Lord GOD All-Powerful will take away everything Judah and Jerusalem depend on. He will take away all the food and water. He will take away all the heroes and soldiers. He will take away all the judges, the prophets, the fortunetellers, and the elders.

6 At that time a man will grab one of his brothers from his own family and tell him, “You have a coat, so you will be our leader. You will be the leader over all these ruins.”

7 But the brother will refuse and say, “I cannot help you. I don’t have enough food or clothes for my own family. You will not make me your leader.”

8 This will happen because Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen. They turned against the LORD. They said and did things against him, right in front of his glorious eyes.

9 The look on their faces shows that they are guilty. They are like the people of Sodom; they don’t care who sees their sin. But it will be very bad for them. They will get what they deserve.

10 Tell the good people who do what is right that good things will happen to them. They will receive a reward for what they did things against him, right in front of his glorious eyes.

11 Under what I am telling you: The Lord GOD All-Powerful will take away everything Judah and Jerusalem depend on. He will take away all the food and water. He will take away all the heroes and soldiers. He will take away all the judges, the prophets, the fortunetellers, and the elders. He will take away the army officers and important officials. He will take away the skilled counselors, the magicians, and those who try to tell the future.

4 He says, “I will put young boys in charge of you. They will be your leaders. The people will turn against each other. Young people will not respect those who are older. The common people will not respect important leaders.”

5 These are the things that will happen to your people. You must be afraid of the LORD, so you will not be brought down as the people of Sodom. They don’t care who sees their sin. They will be destroyed because they are guilty. The Lord will turn against them. He will give them what they deserve.

2:6 East This usually refers to the area around Babylon.

2:9 They ... up Or “The people have become very low. Surely you will not forgive them!”

2:16 ships from Tarshish This is probably a special type of cargo ship.

3:6 coat Or “robe.” This showed that a person was a leader of the people.
do. 11 But it will be very bad for wicked people, because they, too, will get what they deserve. They will get what they did to others. 12 Even children will defeat my people, and women will rule over them.

My people, your guides lead you the wrong way, and they destroy the path you should follow.

**God’s Decision About His People**

13 Look, the LORD is standing to judge his people. 14 The LORD is ready to present his case against the elders and leaders of his people.

He says, “You people have burned the vineyard, and what you stole from the poor is still in your houses. 15 What gives you the right to hurt my people? What gives you the right to push the faces of the poor into the dirt?” The Lord GOD Almighty said this.

16 The LORD says, “The women in Zion have become very proud. They walk around with their heads in the air, acting like they are better than other people. They flirt with their eyes and make tinkling sounds with their ankle bracelets as they take their quick little steps.”

17 The Lord will put sores on the heads of those women in Zion. The Lord will make their heads bald.

18 Then the Lord will take away everything they are proud of: the beautiful ankle bracelets, the necklaces that look like the sun and the moon, the earrings, bracelets, and veils, the scarves, the ankle chains, the cloth belts worn around their waists, the bottles of perfume, the charms, the signet rings, and the nose rings, the fine dresses, robes, veils, and purses, the mirrors, linen dresses, turbans, and long shawls.

20 Those women now have sweet-smelling perfume, but it will get moldy and stink. Now they wear belts, but then they will have only ropes to wear. Now they have their hair fixed in fancy ways, but then their heads will be shaved—they will have no hair. 21 Now they have party dresses, but then they will have only mourning clothes. They have beauty marks on their faces now, but then they will have another mark. It will be a mark burned into their skin to show that they are slaves.

25 Your men will be killed with swords. Your heroes will die in war. 26 There will be crying and sadness in the meeting places by the city gates. Jerusalem will sit there empty, like a woman who has lost everything to thieves and robbers and now just sits on the ground and cries.

4 1 At that time seven women will grab one man and say, “Please marry us! We will supply our own food and make our own clothes. You won’t have to do anything else if you let us wear your name and take away our shame.”

2 At that time the LORD’s plant will be very beautiful and glorious. The people in Israel who survived will be very proud of what the land grows. 3 And all those who are left in Zion and Jerusalem will be called holy. Their names were on the list of people in Jerusalem who were allowed to live.

4 The Lord will wash away the filth from the daughters of Zion. He will wash away the blood from Jerusalem. With a spirit of judgment that burns like fire, he will make everything pure. 5 Then the LORD will create a cloud of smoke in the day and a bright flame of fire at night over every building and over every meeting of the people on the mountain of Zion. And there will be a covering over everyone for protection. 6 It will be a shelter to protect the people from the heat of the sun and from all kinds of storms and rain.

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*a* 3:14 vineyard A garden for growing grapes. Here, this probably means Judah.

*b* 3:20 charms Things people wore on bracelets and necklaces. People thought these things would protect them from evil or danger.

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Judah, God’s Vineyard

1 Now I will sing a song for my friend, my love song about his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.
2 He dug and cleared the field and planted the best grapevines there. He built a tower in the middle and cut a winepress into the stone. He expected good grapes to grow there, but there were only rotten ones.

3 My friend said, “You people living in Jerusalem and you people of Judah, think about me and my vineyard.

4 What more could I do for my vineyard? I did everything I could. I hoped for good grapes to grow, but there were only rotten ones. Why did that happen?

5 “Now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard:
I will pull up the thornbushes that protect it, and I will burn them.
I will break down the stone wall and use the stones for a walkway.
I will turn my vineyard into useless land.
No one will care for the plants or work in the field.
Weeds and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.”

7 The vineyard that belongs to the LORD All-Powerful is the house of Israel. The grapevine, the plant he loves, is the man of Judah.
8 The Lord hoped for justice, but there was only killing.
He hoped for fairness, but there were only cries from people being treated badly.

8 Look at you people! You join houses to houses and fields to fields until there is no room for anyone else. But when the punishment comes, you will be forced to live alone. You will be the only people in the whole land. I heard the LORD All-Powerful make this oath: “I swear, all these houses will be destroyed. These big, fancy houses will be empty. A ten-acre vineyard will make only a little wine, and many sacks of seed will grow only a little grain.”

11 How terrible it will be for you people who rise early in the morning and go looking for beer to drink. You stay awake late at night, getting drunk on wine. At your parties with your wine, harps, drums, flutes, and other musical instruments, you don’t see what the LORD has done. You don’t notice what his hands have made.

13 My people don’t really know God. So they will be captured and taken away. Everyone, the respected leaders and the common people as well, will be hungry and thirsty. They will die, and the place of death will open its mouth wide and swallow many of them. Then the noisy crowds and all the beautiful, happy people who are now so comfortable will go down into the grave.

15 Everyone, common people and leaders alike, will be humbled. Those who are now so proud will bow their heads in shame. The LORD All-Powerful will judge fairly, and people will honor him. They will respect the Holy God when he brings justice.

17 Then sheep will be able to go wherever they want and graze on the land that rich people once owned.

18 Look at those people! They pull their guilt and sins behind them like people pulling wagons with ropes. They say, “We wish God would hurry and do what he plans to do so that we can see it. Let the

a 5:3 You people . . . Judah Or “Rulers of Jerusalem and leader of Judah . . .”

b 5:7 man of Judah This could mean either “the king of Judah” or simply, “people of Judah.”

c 5:10 only a little wine Literally, “one bath,” a measure that equals about 6 gallons (22 l).

d 5:10 only a little grain Literally, “A homer of seed will grow only an ephah of grain.” A homer equals about 6 bushels (220 l).

An ephah equals about 2/3 bushel (22 l).

e 5:18 ropes Literally, “useless ropes.” The Hebrew words here are like those meaning “useless things,” that is, idols.
plan of the Holy One of Israel happen soon so that we can know what it is.”

20 Look at those people! They say good is bad and bad is good. They think light is dark and dark is light. They think sour is sweet and sweet is sour. 21 They think they are so smart. They think they are very intelligent. 22 They are famous for drinking wine and are heroes known for mixing drinks. 23 And if you pay them enough money, they will forgive a criminal. But they will not let good people be judged fairly. 24 So bad things will happen to them. Their descendants will be destroyed completely, just as fire burns straw and leaves. Their descendants will be like plants with rotten roots, whose flowers have all blown away like dust in the wind.

Those people refused to obey the teachings of the Lord All-Powerful. They hated the message from the Holy One of Israel. 25 So the Lord became angry with his people, and he raised his hand to punish them. Even the mountains shook with fear. Dead bodies were left in the streets like garbage. And he is not finished yet. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing his people.

God Will Bring Armies to Punish Israel

26 Look! God is giving a sign to the nations far away. He is raising a flag and whistling for them to come.

Now the enemy is coming from a faraway land and will soon enter the country. They are moving very quickly. 27 The enemy soldiers never get tired and stumble. They never get sleepy and fall asleep. Their weapon belts are always ready. Their sandal straps never break. 28 Their arrows are sharp. Their bows are strung and ready to shoot. The horses’ hooves are as hard as flint. Clouds of dust rise from behind their chariots.

29 The shouts of the enemy sound like the roar of lions. Like strong, young lions, they growl and grab their prey. The captives struggle and try to escape, but there is no one to save them. 30 Then there is a roar as loud as the ocean waves, and the captives turn their faces to the ground. And there is only darkness closing in as the light fades away in a black cloud.

God Calls Isaiah to Be a Prophet

In the year that King Uzziah died, b I saw the Lord sitting on a very high and wonderful throne. His long robe filled the Temple. 2 Seraph angels stood around him. Each angel had six wings. They used two wings to cover their faces, two wings to cover their bodies, and two wings to fly. 3 The angels were calling to each other, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord All-Powerful. His Glory fills the whole earth.” 4 The sound was so loud that it caused the frame around the door to shake, and the Temple was filled with smoke. c

5 I was frightened and said, “Oh, no! I will be destroyed. I am not pure enough to speak to God, and I live among people who are not pure enough to speak to him. d But I have seen the King, the Lord All-Powerful.”

6 There was a fire on the altar. One of the Seraph angels used a pair of tongs to take a hot coal from the fire. Then the angel flew to me with it in his hand. 7 Then he touched my mouth with the hot coal; your guilt was taken away, and your sins were erased. e

8 Then I heard the Lord’s voice, saying, “Who can I send? Who will go for us?” 9 So I said, “Here I am. Send me!” 10 Then the Lord said, “Go and tell the people, ‘Listen closely, but don’t understand. Look closely, but don’t learn.’ 11 Confuse them. Make them unable to understand what they hear and see. If you don’t do this, they might really look with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their minds. Then they might come back to me and be healed!”

This is also called “laws.” Sometimes this means the laws God gave Moses to teach to the people of Israel.

b 6:1 year . . . died This was probably 740 b.c.

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Then I asked, “Lord, how long should I do this?”

He answered, “Do this until the cities are destroyed and all the people are gone. Do this until there is no one left living in the houses and the land is destroyed and empty.”

The Lord will make the people go far away, and there will be large areas of empty land in the country. A tenth of the people will be allowed to stay in the land, but it will be destroyed again. They will be like an oak tree. When the tree is chopped down, a stump is left. This stump will be a very special seed that will grow again.

Trouble With Aram

Ahaz was the son of Jotham, who was the son of Uzziah. Rezin was the king of Aram, Pekah son of Remaliah was the king of Israel. When Ahaz was king of Judah, Rezin and Pekah went up to Jerusalem to attack it, but they were not able to defeat the city.

The family of David received a message that said, “The armies of Aram and Ephraim have joined together in one camp.” When King Ahaz heard this message, he and the people became frightened. They shook with fear like trees of the forest blowing in the wind.

Then the Lord told Isaiah, “You and your son Shear Jashub should go out and talk to Ahaz. Go to the place where the water flows into the Upper Pool, on the street that leads up to Laundryman’s Field.

“Tell Ahaz, ‘Be careful, but be calm. Don’t be afraid. Don’t let those two men, Rezin and Remaliah’s son, frighten you! They are like two burning sticks. They might be hot now, but soon they will be nothing but smoke. Rezin, Aram, and Remaliah’s son became angry and made plans against you. They said, “Let’s go fight against Judah and divide it among ourselves. Then we will make Tabeel’s son the new king of Judah.”’ ”

But the Lord God says, “Their plan will not succeed. It will not happen because Aram depends on its capital Damascus, and Damascus is led by its weak king Rezin. And don’t worry about Ephraim. Within 65 years it will be crushed, no longer a nation. Ephraim depends on its capital Samaria, and Samaria is led by Remaliah’s son. So you have no reason to fear. Believe this, or you will not survive.”

Immanuel—God Is With Us

Then the Lord spoke to Ahaz again and said, “Ask for a sign from the Lord your God to prove to yourself that this is true. You can ask for any sign you want. The sign can come from a place as deep as Sheol or as high as the skies.”

But Ahaz said, “I will not ask for a sign as proof. I will not test the Lord.”

Then Isaiah said, “Family of David, listen very carefully! Is it not enough that you would test the patience of humans? Will you now test the patience of my God? But the Lord will still show you this sign: The young woman is pregnant and will give birth to a son. She will name him Immanuel.

He will eat milk curds and honey as he learns to choose good and refuse evil.

But before he is old enough to make that choice, the land of the two kings you fear will be empty.

“But the Lord will bring troubled
times to you. These troubles will be worse than anything that has happened since the time Israel separated from Judah. This will happen to your people and to your father’s family when God brings the king of Assyria to fight against you.

18“At that time the LORD will call for the ‘Fly’ that is now near the streams of Egypt, and he will call for the ‘Bee’ that is now in the country of Assyria. Those enemies will come to your country. 19They will settle in the deep valleys and in the caves, by the thornbushes and watering holes. 20The Lord will use Assyria to punish Judah. Assyria will be hired and used like a razor to shave off Judah’s beard and to remove the hair from his head and body.a

21“At that time someone might keep only one young cow and two sheep alive. 22But there will be enough milk for them to eat milk curds. In fact, everyone left in the country will eat milk curds and honey. 23There are now fields that have 1000 grapevines, and each grapevine is worth 1000 pieces of silver. But those fields will be covered with weeds and thorns. 24That land will be wild and used only as a hunting ground where people go with bows and arrows. 25People once worked the soil and grew food on these hills, but at that time they will not go there, because the fields will be covered with weeds and thorns. It will be a place where cattle graze and sheep wander.”

Assyria Is Coming Soon

8'The LORD told me, “Get a large scroll,b and use an ordinary penc to write these words: ‘This is for Maher Shalal Hash Baz.’d

2I found some men who could be trusted to serve as witnesses: Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah. They watched me write those words. Then I went to my wife, the woman prophet. She became pregnant and had a son. The LORD told me, “Name the boy Maher Shalal Hash Baz.” e He said that because before the boy learns to say “Mama” and “Daddy,” God will take all the wealth and riches from Damascus and Samaria and give them to the king of Assyria.

5The LORD spoke to me again. f He said, “These people refuse to accept the slow-moving waters of Shiloah. They prefer Rezin and Remaliah’s son.” g But the Lord will bring the king of Assyria and all his power against them. The Assyrians will come like their swift moving river, like water that rises and spills over its banks. This water will be like a flash flood as it passes through Judah. It will rise to Judah’s throat and almost drown him.

But he will spread his wings over your whole country, Immanuel.h

9All you nations, prepare for war. You will be defeated. Listen, all you faraway countries! Prepare for battle. You will be defeated.

10Make your plans for the fight. Your plans will be defeated. Give orders to your armies, but your orders will be useless, because God is with us!i

Warnings to Isaiah

11The LORD spoke to me with his great power and warnedj me not to be like these people. He said, “Don’t think there is a plan against you just because the people say there is. Don’t be afraid of what they fear. Don’t let them frighten you!” k

13The LORD All-Powerful is the one you should fear. He is the one you should

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a 7:20 shave ... body This means that the people of Judah would be humiliated and treated like slaves.

b 8:1 scroll This Hebrew word might also mean a clay or stone tablet.

c 8:1 ordinary pen Literally, “stylus of a man.” This might be a pen for writing on clay.

d 8:1 Maher Shalal Hash Baz This means “There will soon be looting and stealing.”

e Damascus A city in the country of Aram (Syria).

f These people Probably Judeans who wanted to join Rezin and Pekah. Also in verse 11.

gh Shiloah A channel that carried water from Gihon Spring to a pool at the south end of the City of David (Jerusalem). Men from David’s family were anointed to be kings there.

i 8:8 But he ... Immanuel Or “Immanuel, it will spread throughout your whole country.” This might be a promise of God’s protection, or it might be a warning about Assyria’s power.

j 8:10 God is with us In Hebrew this is like the name Immanuel.

k 8:11 warned Or “prevented:”

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But there will be an end to the gloom those people suffered. In the past, people thought the land of Zebulun and Naphtali was not important. But later, that land will be honored—the land along the sea, the land east of the Jordan River, and Galilee where people from other nations live. Those people lived in darkness, but they will see a great light. They lived in a place as dark as death, but a great light will shine on them.

God, you will make the nation grow, and you will make the people happy. They will rejoice in your presence as they do at harvest time. It will be like the joy when people take their share of things they have won in war. That will happen because you will lift the heavy yoke off their shoulders and take away their heavy burden. You will take away the rod that the enemy used to punish your people, as you did when you defeated Midian.

Every boot that marched in battle and every uniform stained with blood will be destroyed and thrown into the fire. This will happen when the special child is born. God will give us a son who will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be “Wonderful Counselor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.” His power will continue to grow, and there will be peace without end. This will establish him as the king sitting on David’s throne and ruling his kingdom. He will rule with goodness and justice forever and ever. The strong love that the Lord All-Powerful has for his people will make this happen!

God Will Punish Israel

The Lord gave a command against Jacob and someone in Israel fell. So all the people in Ephraim, including the ruler in Samaria, learned their lesson. Those people are very proud and
boastful now. They say, “Yes, those bricks fell, but we will rebuild with strong stone. Yes, those little trees were chopped down, but we will plant new trees. And they will be large, strong trees.”

10 The LORD found people to go up and fight against Rezin. He stirred up Rezin’s enemies. As for Israel, the Arameans are in front of him and the Philistines are behind him. And they are both eating away at him. But the Lord is not finished yet. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing Israel.

11 The people did not stop sinning. They did not come to the LORD All-Powerful for help. So the LORD cut off Israel’s head and tail. He took away the branch and the stalk in one day. (The head means the elders and important leaders. The tail means the prophets who told lies.)

12 Their guides are leading them the wrong way, so those who follow them will be destroyed. All of them are evil. So the Lord is not happy with the young men, and he will not show mercy to their widows and orphans. That is because they are evil hypocrites. They tell lies.

The Lord has punished them, but he is not finished yet. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing his people.

13 That evil was like a small fire that started among the weeds and thorns and then spread to the larger bushes in the forest. Finally, it became a giant fire, and everything went up in smoke.

14 The LORD All-Powerful was angry, so the land was burned. The people were fuel for the fire. No one showed any compassion to anyone else. People looked to the right and grabbed whatever they could, but they were still hungry. They grabbed whatever was on their left, but still they were not satisfied. So they turned on themselves and began to eat the bodies of their own children.

But the Lord is not finished punishing his people. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing them.

10 Just look at those lawmakers who write evil laws and make life hard for the people. They are not fair to the poor. They take away the rights of the poor and allow people to steal from widows and orphans.

Lawmakers, you will have to explain what you have done. What will you do then? Your destruction is coming from a faraway country. Where will you run for help? Your money and your riches will not help you. You will have to bow down like a prisoner. You will fall down like a dead man, but that will not help you. God will still be angry and ready to punish you.

God Will Punish Assyria’s Pride

5 The Lord says, “I will use Assyria like a stick. In my anger I will use Assyria to punish Israel. I will send Assyria to fight against the people who do evil. I am angry with them, and I will command Assyria to fight against them. Assyria will defeat them and take their wealth. Israel will be like dirt for Assyria to walk on in the streets.

6 “But Assyria does not understand that I will use him. He does not think of himself as my tool. He only wants to destroy other people. He only plans to destroy many nations. Assyria says to himself, ‘All of my officers are like kings! The city of Calno is no better than the city of Carchemish. Arpad is like Hamath, and Samaria is like Damascus. I defeated those evil kingdoms and now I control them. The idols those people worship are better than the idols of Jerusalem and Samaria. I defeated Samaria and her gods. I will also defeat Jerusalem and the idols her people have made.’ ”

12 When the Lord finishes doing what he planned to Jerusalem and Mount Zion, he will punish Assyria. The king of Assyria is very proud. His pride made him do many bad things, so God will punish him.

13 The king of Assyria said, “I am very wise. By my own wisdom and power...
I have done many great things. I have defeated many nations. I have taken their wealth and their people as slaves. I am a very powerful man. With my own hands I have taken the riches of all these people—like someone taking eggs from a bird’s nest. A bird often leaves its nest and eggs, and there is nothing to protect the nest. There is no bird to chirp and fight with its wings and beak, so anyone can come take the eggs. And there is no one to stop me from taking all the people on earth.”

15 An ax is not better than the one who cuts with it. A saw is not better than the one who uses it. Is a stick stronger than the one who picks it up? It can’t do anything to the person who is using it to punish someone! But Assyria doesn’t understand this. So the Lord God All-Powerful will send a terrible disease against him. He will lose his wealth and power like a sick man losing weight. Then Assyria’s glory will be destroyed. It will be like a fire burning until everything is gone. The Light of Israel will be like a fire. The Holy One will be like a flame. He will be like a fire that first begins to burn the weeds and thorns and then spreads to burn up the tall trees and vineyards. Finally, everything will be destroyed—even the people. Assyria will be like a rotting log. There will be a few trees left standing in the forest—so few that even a child could count them.

20 Then the people from Jacob’s family who are left living in Israel will stop depending on the one who beat them. They will learn to depend on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. Those who are left in Jacob’s family will again follow the Powerful God.

22 Israel, your people are as many as the sands of the sea, but only a few of them will be left to come back to God. But before that happens, your country will be destroyed. God has announced that he will destroy the land. And then justice will come into the land like a river flowing full.

23 The Lord God All-Powerful really will destroy this land.

24 The Lord God All-Powerful says, “My people living in Zion, don’t be afraid of Assyria! Yes, he will beat you, and it will be just as the time when Egypt beat you with a stick. But after a short time my anger will stop. I will be satisfied that Assyria has punished you enough.”

Then the Lord All-Powerful will beat Assyria with a whip, just as he defeated Midian at Raven Rock. He will punish his enemies, as he did when he raised his stick over the sea and led his people from Egypt.

27 He will take away the troubles Assyria brought you—troubles that are like heavy weights carried with a yoke on your neck. But that yoke will be taken off your neck. The burden will be lifted from your shoulders.

The Army of Assyria Invades Israel

28 The army of Assyria will enter near the “Ruins” (Aiath). The army will walk on the “Threshing Floor” (Migron). It will keep its food in the “Storehouse” (Mikmash). The army will cross the river at the “Crossing” (Maabarah) and sleep at Geba. Ramah will be afraid. The people at Gibeah of Saul will run away.

30 Cry out, Bath Gallim! Laishah, listen! Anathoth, answer me! The people of Madmenah are running away. The people of Gebim are hiding. This day the army will stop at Nob and prepare to fight against Mount Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

33 Look, the Lord God All-Powerful will use his great power and chop down that great tree. Their highest officials will be brought down. Their most important officials will be brought down. Their most important officials will be brought down.

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leaders will be humbled. God will cut down his enemies. Like the tall trees of Lebanon he will cut them down with an ax.

The King of Peace Is Coming

11A small tree will begin to grow from the stump of Jesse. That branch will grow from Jesse’s roots. The LORD’s Spirit will always be with that new king to give him wisdom, understanding, guidance, and power. The Spirit will help him know and respect the LORD. He will find joy in obeying the LORD.

This king will not judge people by the way things look. He will not judge by listening to rumors. He will judge the poor fairly and honestly. He will be fair when he decides what to do for the poor of the land. If he decides people should be beaten, he will give the command, and they will be beaten. If he decides people must die, he will give the command, and those evil people will be killed. Goodness and fairness will be like a belt he wears around his waist.

6Then wolves will live at peace with lambs, and leopards will lie down in peace with young goats. Calves, lions, and bulls will all live together in peace. A little child will lead them. Bears and cattle will eat together in peace, and all their young will lie down together and will not hurt each other. Lions will eat hay like cattle. Even snakes will not hurt people. Babies will be able to play near a cobra’s hole and put their hands into the nest of a poisonous snake.

9People will stop hurting each other. People on my holy mountain will not want to destroy things because they will know the LORD. The world will be full of knowledge about him, like the sea is full of water.

10At that time there will be someone special from Jesse’s family. He will be like a flag that all the nations gather around. The nations will come to him and ask him what they should do. And the place where he is will be filled with glory.

11At that time the Lord will again reach out and take his people who are left in countries like Assyria, North Egypt, South Egypt, Ethiopia, Elam, Babylonia, Hamath, and other faraway countries around the world. He will gather the people of Israel and Judah who were forced to leave their country. They were scattered to all the faraway places on earth. But he will raise the flag as a sign for the other nations, and he will gather his people together again.

13Then Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, and Judah will have no enemies left. And Judah will not cause trouble for Ephraim. But Ephraim and Judah will attack the Philistines. These two nations will be like birds flying down to catch a small animal. Together, they will take the riches from the people in the East. Ephraim and Judah will control Edom, Moab, and the people in Ammon.

15Just as the Lord divided the Red Sea near Egypt, he will raise his arm in anger over the Euphrates River and hit it. It will divide into seven small rivers. They will be so small that the people can walk across with their sandals on. Then God’s people who are left in Assyria will have a way to leave. It will be just like the time God took the people out of Egypt.

A Song of Praise to God

12At that time you will say, “I praise you, LORD! You have been angry with me, but don’t be angry with me now. Show your love to me. God is the one who saves me. I trust him, and I am not afraid. The LORD YAH is my strength. He saves me, and I sing songs of praise about him.”

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3 You people will get your water from the spring of salvation. Then you will be happy.
4 At that time you will say, "Praise the LORD and call out his name! Tell everyone what he has done and how wonderful he is."
5 Sing songs of praise about the LORD, because he has done great things. Spread this news about God throughout the whole world. Let all people know these things.
6 People of Zion, shout about these things! The Holy One of Israel is with you in a powerful way. So sing and be happy!

God’s Message to Babylon

13 God showed Isaiah son of Amoz this message$^a$ about Babylon:
2 "Raise a flag on that mountain$^b$ where nothing grows. Call out to the men. Wave your arms to let them know they should enter through the gates for important leaders.
3 "I have separated these men from the people, and I myself will command them. I have gathered these proud, happy soldiers of mine to show how angry I am.
4 "Listen to that loud noise in the mountains. It sounds like crowds of people. People from many kingdoms are gathering together. The LORD All-Powerful is calling his army together.
5 They are coming from a faraway land. They are coming from beyond the horizon. The LORD will use this army as a weapon to show his anger.

They will destroy the whole country."
6 The LORD’s special day is near. So cry and be sad for yourselves. A time is coming when the enemy will steal your wealth. God All-Powerful will make that happen.$^c$
7 People will lose their courage. Fear will make them weak. Everyone will be afraid. They will stare at each other with shock on their faces. Fear will grip them like the pains of a woman in childbirth.

God’s Judgment Against Babylon

9 Look, the LORD’s special day is coming! It will be a terrible day. God will be very angry. He will destroy the country and wipe out the sinful people who live there. The skies will be dark. The sun, the moon, and the stars will not shine.
11 The Lord says, “I will cause bad things to happen to the world. I will punish the evil people for their sin. I will make proud people lose their pride. I will stop the bragging of cruel people. There will be only a few people left. They will be as rare as pure gold. In my anger I will shake the sky, and the earth will be moved from its place.”

That will happen on the day the LORD All-Powerful shows his anger. Then the people from Babylon will run away like wounded deer or sheep that have no shepherd. Everyone will turn and run back to their own country and people. Anyone caught by the enemy will be killed with a sword. Everything in their houses will be stolen. Their wives will be raped, and their little children will be beaten to death while they watch.
17 The Lord says, “Look, I will cause the armies of Media to attack Babylon. Nothing will stop them, even if someone offers them gold and silver. They will walk on the bows of the young soldiers of Babylon. The enemy soldiers will not show any kindness or mercy even to the babies and young children. Babylon will

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$^a$ Isaiah 13:1 message Or “burden.”
$^b$ Isaiah 13:2 mountain This probably means Babylon.
$^c$ Isaiah 13:6 A time . . . happen This is a wordplay in Hebrew. The word meaning “stealing things in war” sounds like the word meaning “God All-Powerful.”
be destroyed like the time God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

“Babylon is the most beautiful of all kingdoms. The Babylonians\textsuperscript{a} are very proud of their city. But Babylon will not continue to be beautiful. People will not continue to live there in the future. Arabs will not put their tents there. Shepherds will not bring their sheep to let them eat there. The only animals living there will be wild animals from the desert. People will not be living in their houses in Babylon. The houses will be full of owls and large birds. Wild goats\textsuperscript{b} will play in the houses. Wild dogs and wolves will howl in the great and beautiful buildings. Babylon will be finished. The end is near, and it will not be delayed.”

Israel Will Return Home

14 The LORD will again show his love to Jacob. He will again choose the people of Israel. He will give them their land. Then the non-Israelites\textsuperscript{c} will join the Israelites, and both will become one family—Jacob’s family. Those nations will bring the Israelites back to their land. The men and women from the other nations will become slaves to Israel. In the past, those people forced the Israelites to become their slaves. But in the future the Israelites will defeat those nations, and Israel will then rule over them in the LORD’s land. In the past, you were slaves. People forced you to work hard. But the LORD will take away the hard work you were forced to do.

A Song About the King of Babylon

4 At that time you will begin to sing this song about the king of Babylon:

The king was cruel when he ruled us,
but now his rule is finished.

5 The LORD breaks the scepter of evil rulers;
he takes away their power.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{a} 13:19 Babylonians Literally, “Chaldeans.”
\textsuperscript{b} 13:21 Wild goats The Hebrew word means “hairy,” “goat,” or “goat-demon.”
\textsuperscript{c} 14:1 non-Israelites This usually means those who live in a country but are not yet citizens of that country. Here, it is the non-Israelites who decided to follow God.
\textsuperscript{d} 14:13 Zaphon This Hebrew word literally means “north” or “hidden.”

6 In anger, the king of Babylon beat the people.
He never stopped beating them.
He was an evil ruler who ruled in anger.
He never stopped hurting people.

7 But now, the whole country rests and is quiet.
Now the people begin to celebrate.

8 You were an evil king,
and now you are finished.
Even the pine trees are happy.
The cedar trees of Lebanon rejoice.
They say, “The king chopped us down, but now the king has fallen, and he will never stand again.”

9 The place of death is excited that you are coming.
Sheol is waking the spirits of all the leaders of the earth for you.
Sheol is making the kings stand up from their thrones to meet you.

10 They will make fun of you, saying, “Now you are as dead as we are. Now you are just like us.”

11 Your pride has been sent down to Sheol.
The music from your harps announces the coming of your proud spirit.
Maggots will be the bed you lie on, and other worms will cover your body like a blanket.

12 You were like the morning star, but you have fallen from the sky.
In the past, all the nations on earth bowed down before you, but now you have been cut down.

13 You always told yourself, “I will go to the skies above. I will put my throne above God’s stars. I will sit on Zaphon, the holy mountain where the gods meet. I will go up to the altar above the tops of the clouds. I will be like God Most High.”}
But that did not happen. You were brought down to the deep pit—Sheol, the place of death.

People will come to look at your dead body. They will think about you and say, “Is this the same man who caused great fear in all the kingdoms on earth, who destroyed cities and turned the land into a desert, who captured people in war and would not let them go home?”

The kings of other nations lie buried with honor, each king with his own grave.

But you were thrown out of your grave like a branch cut from a tree and thrown away. You are like a dead man who fell in battle, trampled under the feet of other soldiers.

Now you look like any other dead man wrapped in burial clothes.

Other kings have their own graves, but you will not join them, because you ruined your own country and killed your own people. So your wicked descendants will be stopped.

Prepare to kill his children, because their father is guilty. His children will never take control of the land. They will never fill the world with their cities.

The Lord All-Powerful said, “I will stand and fight against those people. I will destroy the famous city, Babylon. I will destroy all the people there. I will destroy their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren.” The Lord himself said this.

“I will change Babylon. It will be a place for animals, not people. It will be a swamp. I will use the ‘broom of destruction’ to sweep Babylon away.” The Lord All-Powerful said this.

God Will Also Punish Assyria

The Lord All-Powerful made this promise: “This will happen exactly as I meant for it to happen. It will happen just the way I planned. I will destroy the king of Assyria in my country. I will walk on him on my mountains. That pole will be taken off Judah’s neck, and that burden will be removed. This is what I plan to do for this land. I will use my power to punish all those nations.”

When the Lord All-Powerful makes a plan, no one can change it. When he raises his arm to punish, no one can stop him.

God’s Message to Philistia

This message was given to me the year King Ahaz died:

Country of Philistia, don’t be happy that the king who beat you is now dead. It is true that his rule has ended, but his son will come and rule. It will be like one snake giving birth to a more dangerous one. The new king will be like a quick and dangerous snake to you. But even the poorest of my people will be able to eat safely. And their children will be able to lie down and feel safe. But I will make your family die from hunger, and your enemy will kill anyone who survives.

People near the city gates, cry! People in the city, cry out! Everyone in Philistia, your courage will melt like hot wax. Look to the north! There is a cloud of dust. An army is coming, and everyone in that army is strong.

But what will the messengers from that nation report about us?

14:28 message Or “burden.” Also in 15:1.

14:28 year King Ahaz died About 727 B.C.

14:31 everyone … strong Or “there are no stragglers in that group.”

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They will say, “The Lord made Zion strong, and his poor people went there for safety.”

God’s Message to Moab

15 This is a message about Moab: One night armies took the wealth from Ar in Moab, and the city was destroyed. One night armies took the wealth from Kir in Moab, and the city was destroyed. The king’s family and the people of Dibon go to the places of worship to cry. The people of Moab are crying for Nebo and Medeba. They have shaved their heads and beards to show their sadness. Everywhere in Moab, on the rooftops and in the streets, people are wearing sackcloth. Everyone is crying. In Heshbon and Elealeh they are crying loudly. You can hear their voices as far away as Jahaz. Even the soldiers are frightened. The people of Moab are crying as they go up the road to Luhith. They are crying loudly as they walk on the road to Horonaim. But Nimrim Brook is as dry as a desert. The grass has dried up, and the plants are all dead. Nothing is green.

So the people gather up everything they own and cross the border at Arabah stream.

You can hear crying everywhere in Moab—as far away as Eglaim and Beer Elim. The water of Dimon is full of blood, and I will bring even more troubles to Dimon. A few people living in Moab have escaped the enemy, but I will send lions to eat them.

You people should send a gift to the king of the land. You should send a lamb from Sela, through the desert, to the mountain in the city of Jerusalem. The women of Moab try to cross the river Arnon. They run around looking for help, like little birds that have fallen from their nest. They say, “Help us! Tell us what to do. Protect us from our enemies as shade protects us from the noon sun. We are running from our enemies. Hide us! Don’t give us to our enemies. People from Moab were forced to leave their homes. So let them live in your land. Hide them from their enemies.”

The robbing will stop. The enemy will be defeated. The men who hurt the people will be gone from the land. Then a new king will come. He will be from David’s family. He will be loyal, loving, and kind. He will be a king who judges fairly. He will do what is right and good.

d 15:2 Dibon A city in the country of Moab. This name is like a Hebrew word meaning “to be very sad.”

15:2 places of worship Or “high places.” See “high places” in the Word List.

15:2 Nebo A city in the country of Moab and the name of a false god.

d 15:2 Medeba A city in the country of Moab. This name is like a Hebrew word meaning “to be very sad.”

15:9 Dimon This is probably the city of Dibon. Dimon is like the Hebrew word meaning “blood.”


g 16:5 David’s family The royal family of Judah. God promised that men from David’s family would be kings in Judah.
We have heard that the people of Moab are very proud and conceited.
They are hot-tempered braggarts, but their boasts are only empty words.
Because of their pride, everyone in Moab will mourn.
They will wish for the way things used to be.
They will wish for the raisin cakes from Kir Hareseth.a
The fields of Heshbon and the vines of Sibmah no longer grow grapes.
Foreign rulers have destroyed the vines.
The enemy has reached Jazer and has spread into the desert and down to the sea.
I will cry with the people of Jazer and Sibmah, because the grapes have been destroyed.
I will cry with the people of Heshbon and Elealeh because there will be no harvest.
I will hum a sad song for Moab and Kir Heres, like a harp playing a funeral song.
The people of Moab will go to their high places to worship.
They will go to their temple to pray, but it will not help them.
The Lord said these things about Moab many times.
And now the Lord says, “In three years (counting as exactly as a hired helper would) all those people and the things they are proud of will be gone. Only a few of their weakest people will be left.”

God’s Message to Aram

17 This is a message d about Damascus:
“Damascus is now a city, but it will be destroyed.
Only ruined buildings will be left there.
People will leave the cities of Aroer.f
Flocks of sheep will wander freely in those empty towns;
there will be no one to bother them.
The fort cities of Ephraim will be destroyed.
The government in Damascus will be finished.
Those left in Aram will lose everything,
just like the people of Israel,” says the Lord All-Powerful.

“At that time Jacob’s wealth will all be gone.
Yes, Israel will be like a sick man who has become weak and thin.
“That time will be like the grain harvest in Rephaim Valley. The workers gather the plants that grow in the field. Then they cut the heads of grain from the plants and collect the grain.
“That time will also be like the olive harvest. People knock olives from the trees, but a few olives are usually left at the top of each tree. Four or five olives are left on some of the top branches. It will be the same for those cities,” says the Lord All-Powerful.

Then the people will look up to the one who made them. Their eyes will see the Holy One of Israel. They will not trust the great things they have made. They will not go to the special gardens and altars they made for false gods.

d 17:1 message Or “burden.”
e 17:1 Damascus A city in the country of Aram (Syria).
f 17:2 Aroer A place in the country of Aram (Syria).
g 17:5 Rephaim Valley A valley southwest of Jerusalem.
h 17:8 special gardens Gardens where people worshiped false gods.
i 17:8 altars These might be altars for burning incense, or they might be altars for worshiping a special false god.
the walled cities will be empty. They will be like the mountains and the forests in the land before the Israelites came. In the past, all the people ran away because the Israelites were coming. In the future, the country will be empty again. This will happen because you have forgotten the God who saves you. You have not remembered that God is your place of safety. You brought some very good grapevines from faraway places. You might plant those grapevines, but they will not grow. You will plant your grapevines one day and try to make them grow, and the next day they will blossom. But at harvest time, you will go to gather the fruit from the plants, and you will see that everything is dead. A sickness will kill all the plants. Listen to all these people! Their loud crying sounds like the noise from the sea. Listen, it is like the crashing of waves in the sea. And like the waves, they will rush away when God speaks harshly to them. They will be like chaff blown away by the wind. They will be like weeds chased by a storm. That night, the people will be frightened. By morning, nothing will be left. So our enemies will get nothing. They will come to our land, but nothing will be there.

God’s Message to Ethiopia

18 A message about Ethiopia: Look, the Lord is coming on a fast cloud. He will enter Egypt, and all the false gods of Egypt will shake with fear. Egypt’s courage will melt away like hot wax.

19 The Lord says, “I will cause the Egyptians to fight against themselves. Men will fight their brothers. Neighbors will be against neighbors. Cities will be against cities. Kingdoms will be against kingdoms.

A message about Egypt: Look, the Lord is coming on a fast cloud. He will enter Egypt, and all the false gods of Egypt will shake with fear. Egypt’s courage will melt away like hot wax.

The Lord says, “I will cause the Egyptians to fight against themselves. Men will fight their brothers. Neighbors will be against neighbors. Cities will be against cities. Kingdoms will be against kingdoms.

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The Egyptians will be afraid and confused. They will ask their false gods and wise men what they should do. They will ask their wizards and magicians, but I will ruin their plans." The Lord GOD All-Powerful says, “I will give Egypt to a hard master. A powerful king will rule over the people.”

The water in the Nile River will dry up and disappear. All the rivers will smell very bad. The canals in Egypt will be dry, and the water will be gone. All the water plants will rot. All the plants along the riverbanks will die and blow away. Even the plants at the widest part of the river will dry up, blow away, and disappear.

The fishermen, all those who catch fish from the Nile River, will become sad and they will cry. They depend on the Nile River for their food, but it will be dry.

The leaders of the city of Zoan are fools. Pharaoh’s “wise advisors” give bad advice. They say they are wise. They say they are from the old family of the kings, but they are not as smart as they think.

The leaders of Zoan have been fooled. The leaders of Noph have believed lies, so they lead Egypt the wrong way. The Lord confused them, so they wander around and lead Egypt the wrong way. Everything they do is wrong. They are like drunks rolling in their vomit.

There is nothing the leaders can do. (They are “the heads and the tails.” They are “the tops and the stalks of plants.”)

At that time the Egyptians will be like frightened women. They will be afraid of the LORD All-Powerful, because he will raise his arm to punish the people. The Lord who makes the land of Judah brings fear to everyone in Egypt. Anyone in Egypt who hears the name Judah will be afraid. This will happen because the LORD All-Powerful has planned terrible things to happen to Egypt.

At that time there will be five cities in Egypt where people speak Hebrew. One of these cities will be named “Destruction City.” The people in these cities will promise to follow the LORD All-Powerful.

At that time there will be an altar for the LORD in the middle of Egypt. At the border of Egypt there will be a monument to show honor to the LORD. This will be a sign to show that the LORD All-Powerful does amazing things. Any time the people cry for help from the LORD, he will send help. He will send someone to save and defend the people—to rescue the people from those who hurt them.

At that time the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and they really will know the LORD. They will serve him and give him many sacrifices. They will make promises to the LORD, and they will do what they promise.

The LORD will punish the Egyptians, but then he will heal them, and they will come back to him. The LORD will listen to their prayers and heal them.

At that time there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. Then the Assyrians will go to Egypt, and the Egyptians will go to Assyria. Egypt will work with Assyria. Then Israel, Assyria, and Egypt will join together and control the land. This will be a blessing for the land.

The LORD All-Powerful will bless these countries. He will say, “Egypt, you are my people. Assyria, I made you. Israel, I own you. You are all blessed!”
Assyria Will Defeat Egypt and Ethiopia

20 Sargon was the king of Assyria. He sent his military commander to fight against Ashdod. The commander went there and captured the city. At that time the LORD spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz. He said, “Go, take the sackcloth off your waist and the sandals off your feet.” So Isaiah obeyed the Lord and went without clothes or sandals.

3Then the LORD said, “My servant Isaiah has gone without clothes or sandals for three years. This is a sign for Egypt and Ethiopia. The king of Assyria will defeat Egypt and Ethiopia. Assyria will take prisoners and lead them away from their countries. The people, young and old, will be led away without clothes or sandals. They will be completely naked. Those who looked to Ethiopia for help will be shattered. Those who were amazed by Egypt’s glory will be ashamed.”

5People are rushing around shouting their orders:
“Set the table!
Post the guard!
Get something to eat and drink!
Officers, get up!
Polish your shields!”
6The Lord said to me, “Go find someone to guard this city. He must report whatever he sees. Whether he sees a chariot and a team of horses or men riding donkeys or camels, he must listen carefully.”

God’s Message About Babylon

21 This is a message about the “desert by the sea”:
It is coming like a storm blowing through the Negev.
It is coming in from the desert, from a frightening nation.
I was given a vision of the hard times to come.
I see traitors turning against you.
I see people taking your wealth.
Elam, go against them!
Media, surround the city!
I will put an end to all their moaning.

3 I saw those terrible things, and now I am afraid.

My fear makes my stomach hurt like the pain of giving birth.
What I hear frightens me.
What I see makes me shake with fear.
4 I am worried and shaking with fear.
My pleasant evening has become a nightmare.

5 People are rushing around shouting their orders:
“Set the table!
Post the guard!
Get something to eat and drink!
Officers, get up!
Polish your shields!”
6The Lord said to me, “Go find someone to guard this city. He must report whatever he sees. Whether he sees a chariot and a team of horses or men riding donkeys or camels, he must listen carefully.”

8Then one day the watchman called out,
“My master, every day I have been in the watchtower watching.
Every night I have been standing on duty.
9 Look! I see a man in a chariot with a team of horses.

The messenger said,
“Babylon has been defeated!
It has fallen to the ground!
All the statues of her false gods were thrown to the ground and broken to pieces.”
10My people, you will be like the grain crushed on my threshing floor. I have told you everything I heard from the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel.

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God’s Message About Dumah

11 This is a message about Dumah:
   There is someone calling to me from Seir, b
   “Guard, how much of the night is left?
   How much longer will it be night?”

12 The guard answered,
   “Morning is coming, but then night will come again.
   If you have something else to ask, then come back later and ask.”

God’s Message About Arabia

13 This is a message about Arabia:
   A caravan from Dedan spent the night near some trees in the Arabian Desert.
14 They gave water to some thirsty travelers.
   The people of Tema gave them food.
15 They were running from swords that were ready to kill.
   They were running from bows that were ready to shoot.
   They were running from a hard battle.
16 The Lord told me this would happen. He said, “In one year, the way a hired helper counts time, all Kedar’s glory will be gone.
17 Only a few of the archers, the great soldiers of Kedar, will be left alive.”

God’s Message to Jerusalem

22 This is a message about the Valley of Vision:
   Jerusalem, what is wrong?
   Why has everyone gone up to hide in their upper rooms?
2 This city was so happy, but now there is a terrible uproar.
   There are bodies lying everywhere, but they were not killed with swords.
   The people died, but not while fighting.
3 All your officers ran away together, but they have all been captured without bows.f
   All the leaders ran away together, but they were found and captured.
4 So I say, “Don’t look at me! Let me cry!
   Don’t rush to comfort me about the destruction of Jerusalem.”
5 The Lord God All-Powerful chose a special day for there to be riots and confusion. People trampled on each other in the Valley of Vision. The city walls were pulled down.
   People in the valley shouted up at those on the mountain.
6 Horse soldiers from Elam took their bags of arrows and rode into battle. Soldiers from Kir rattled their shields.
7 Your favorite valley was filled with chariots. Horse soldiers were stationed in front of the city gates.
8 Then the cover protecting Judahg was removed, and the people turned to the weapons they kept at the Forest Palace.h
9–11 Then you noticed how many cracks there were in the walls around the City of David, so you began collecting water from the Lower Pool.i You counted the houses and used stones from them to repair the walls.
   Then you built a pool between the double walls for storing water from the Old Pool.k
   You did all this to protect yourselves, but you did not trust the God who made all these things.
   You did not even notice the one who made all these things so long ago.
   So the Lord God All-Powerful told the people to cry and mourn for their dead friends.
   He told them to shave their heads

a 21:11 Dumah This Hebrew word means “silence.” It may refer to Edom or to a city in Arabia.
b 21:11 Seir A mountain in Edom or a city in Arabia.
c 21:12 come back This can also mean “change your heart” or “repent.”
d 22:1 message Or “burden.”
e 22:1 Valley of Vision This probably means one of the valleys near Jerusalem. Also in verse 5.
f 22:3 but they have … bows Or “but the archers captured them.”
g 22:8 cover protecting Judah This might be the wall around Jerusalem, but see Isa. 4:5–6.
h 22:8 Forest Palace A part of Solomon’s palace where his weapons and wealth were stored.
i 22:9–11 Lower Pool The pool at the southern tip of the City of David, just below the Upper Pool (the Pool of Siloam).
j 22:9–11 pool between the double walls This is probably the Upper Pool (the Pool of Siloam).
k 22:9–11 Old Pool Probably the pool at Gihon Spring on the eastern slopes of the city.
and wear mourning clothes. 13But look, everyone was happy. The people rejoiced, saying, “Kill the cattle and sheep, and let’s celebrate. Let’s eat meat and drink wine. Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

14The LORD All-Powerful said this to me and I heard it with my own ears: “You are guilty of doing wrong, and I promise that you will die before this guilt is forgiven.” The Lord God All-Powerful said these things.

God’s Message to Shebna
15The Lord God All-Powerful told me to go to Shebna, the palace manager, 16and say this: “What are you doing here? None of your relatives are buried here, are they? Then what right do you have to prepare a tomb for yourself in this high place? Why are you cutting a tomb out of this rock?

17–18“What a big man you are! But the Lord will crush you. He will roll you into a small ball and throw you far away into the open arms of another country, and there you will die.

“You are very proud of your chariots. But in that faraway land, your new ruler will have better chariots. And your chariots will not look important in his palace.

19I will force you out of your position here. Your new leader will take you away from your important job. 20At that time I will call for my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah. 21I will take your robe and put it on him. I will give him your scepter. I will give him the important job you have, and he will be like a father to the people of Jerusalem and Judah’s family.

22“I will put the key to David’s house around his neck. If he opens a door, no one will be able to close it. If he closes a door, no one will be able to open it. He will be like a favorite chair in his father’s house. I will make him like a strong peg in a solid board. All the honored and important things of his father’s house will hang on him. All the adults and little children will depend on him. They will be like little dishes and big water bottles hanging on him.”

25The LORD All-Powerful said, “At that time the peg that is now in the solid board will get weak and break. It will fall to the ground, and everything hanging on it will be destroyed. Then everything I said in this message will happen. It will happen because the LORD said it would.”

God’s Message About Tyre
23This is a message about Tyre: Ships traveling from Cyprus heard this message: “Cry, you ships from Tarshish! Your harbor has been destroyed.”

2 You people living near the sea, mourn in silence.

The merchants of Sidon sent traders across the sea and filled the city with riches.

3 They traveled the seas looking for grain. The men from Tyre bought grain that grows near the Nile River and sold it to other nations.

4 Sidon, you should be very sad, because now the Sea and the Fort of the Sea say, “I have no children. I have never felt the pain of birth; I have never given birth to children. I have never raised young men and women.”

5 When Egypt hears the news about Tyre, it will feel the pain of sorrow.

6 You ships, try to escape to Tarshish! Cry out, you people living near the sea!

7 Can this be that happy city that was founded so long ago?

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4a 22:21 people of Jerusalem and Judah’s family Or “The king sitting on the throne in Jerusalem, the royal family of Judah.”

b 23:1 message Or “burden.”

c 23:1 ships from Tarshish This is probably a special type of cargo ship. Also in verse 14.

d 23:4 Fort of the Sea Another name for the city of Tyre.
Is it that same city whose people traveled so far to settle other lands?  

This city produced so many leaders. Its merchants were like princes. Its traders had the whole world’s respect. So who made these plans against Tyre?  

It was the Lord All-Powerful. He decided to destroy the great things they were so proud of. He wanted to disgrace those who were so highly respected.  

Ships from Tarshish, go back home. Cross the sea as if it were a river. No one will stop you now.  

The Lord raised his arm over the sea to make the kingdoms angry enough to fight against Tyre. He commanded Canaan to destroy her place of safety.  

He said, “Daughter Sidon, you have been hurt badly, so you will no longer rejoice like a bride. Go ahead, go to Cyprus for help, but you will not find a place to rest there either.”  

As for Babylon, look at the land of the Chaldeans! It is not even a country now. Assyria built war towers to attack it. The soldiers took everything from the beautiful houses. Assyria destroyed Babylon. They turned it into a pile of ruins and made it a place for wild animals.  

So be sad, you ships from Tarshish. Your place of safety has been destroyed.  

People will forget about Tyre for 70 years—that is, about the length of a king’s rule. After 70 years, Tyre will be like the prostitute in this song:  

‘Oh, woman who men forgot, take your harp and walk through the city. Play your song well and sing it often. Maybe someone will remember you.’  

After 70 years, the Lord will review Tyre’s case, and he will give her a decision. Tyre will again have trade. She will be like a prostitute for all the nations on earth. But Tyre will not keep the money she earns. The profit from her trade will be saved for the Lord. Tyre will give that money to the people who serve the Lord to buy good food and nice clothes.

God Will Punish Israel

Look, the Lord is destroying this land. He will clean out the land completely and force all the people to go far away. At that time whatever happens to the common people will also happen to the priests. Slaves and masters will be the same. Women slaves and their women masters will be the same. Buyers and sellers will be the same. Those who borrow and those who lend will be the same. Bankers and those who owe the bank will be the same. Everyone will be forced out of the land. All the wealth will be taken. This will happen because the Lord commanded it. The country will be empty and sad. The world will be empty and weak. The great leaders of the people in this land will become weak.

The people have ruined the land. They did what God said was wrong. They did not obey God’s laws. They made an agreement with God a long time ago, but they broke their agreement with God. The people living in this land are guilty of doing wrong, so God promised to destroy the land. The people will be punished, and only a few of them will survive.

The grapevines are dying. The new wine is bad. People who were happy are now sad. They have stopped showing their joy. The happy music from the drums and harps has ended. They no longer sing...
as they drink their wine. The beer now tastes bitter to those who drink it.

10 “Total Confusion” is a good name for this city. The city has been destroyed. People cannot enter the houses. The doors are blocked. 11 People still ask for wine in the marketplaces, but all the joy is gone. It was carried off with everything else. 12 All that is left is destruction. Even the gates are crushed.

13 At harvest time, people knock olives from the trees.
   But a few olives are left in the trees.
   It will be like that in this land and among the nations.
14 Those who are left will begin shouting louder than the ocean.
   They will rejoice about the LORD’s greatness.
15 They will say, “People in the east, praise the LORD!
   People in faraway lands, praise the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.”
16 We hear songs of praise for God from every place on earth.
   They praise the God who does what is right.
   But I say, “Enough!
   I have had enough.
   What I see is terrible.
   Traitors are turning against people and hurting them.”

17 I see troubles for you people living in this land.
   I see fear, pits, and problems all around.
18 People will hear about the danger, and they will be afraid.
   Some of them will run away, but they will fall into holes and be trapped.
   Some of them will climb out of the holes, but they will be caught in another trap.
   The floodgates in the sky above will open, and the floods will begin.

   The foundations of the earth will shake.
19 There will be earthquakes, and the earth will split open.
20 The sins of the world are very heavy, so the earth will fall under the weight.
   It will shake like an old house.
   It will fall like a drunk.
   It will not be able to stand.

21 At that time the LORD will judge the heavenly armies in heaven and the earthly kings on earth.
22 Many people will be gathered together. They have been locked in the Pit.
   They have been in prison. 24:22
   But finally, after a long time, they will be judged.
23 The LORD will rule as king on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.
   His Glory will be shown to the city leaders with such brightness that the moon will be embarrassed and the sun will be ashamed.

A Song of Praise to God

25 1 LORD, you are my God. I honor you and praise your name, because you did amazing things.
   The words you said long ago are completely true; everything happened exactly as you said it would.
2 And you destroyed the city that was protected by strong walls.
   Now it is only a pile of rocks.
   The foreign palace has been destroyed. It will never be rebuilt.
3 That is why powerful nations will honor you.
   Powerful people from strong cities will fear you.
4 You have been a safe place for poor people in trouble.
   You are like a shelter from floods and shade from the heat when powerful men attack.
   They are like rain streaming down the

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24:22 Pit … prison This is probably “Sheol,” the grave.
walls
that protect us from the storm.
Like the heat of summer in a dry land,
the angry shouts of those foreigners
brought us to our knees.
But like a thick cloud that blocks the
summer heat,
you answered their challenge.

God’s Banquet for His Servants
6 The LORD All-Powerful will give a feast
for all the people on this mountain. At
the feast, there will be the best foods and
wines. The meat will be good and tender,
the wine pure and clear.
7 But now there is a veil covering all
nations and people. This veil is called
“death.” 8 But death will be destroyed for-
ever. And the Lord God will wipe away
every tear from every face. In the past, all
of his people were sad, but God will take
away that sadness from the earth. All of
this will happen because the LORD said
it would.
9 At that time people will say,
“Here is our God!
He is the one we have been waiting for.
He has come to save us.
We have been waiting for our LORD.
So we will rejoice and be happy
when he saves us.”
10 The LORD’s power is on this mountain,
and Moab will be defeated.
The Lord will trample the enemy
like someone walking on straw in a
pile of waste.
11 They will reach out their arms to
escape
like someone trying to swim.
But their pride will sink
with each stroke they take.
12 He will destroy their high walls and
safe places.
He will throw them down into the
dust on the ground.

A Song of Praise to God

1 At that time people will sing this
song in Judah:
We have a strong city with strong walls
and defenses.
But God gives us our salvation.
2 Open the gates for the good people to
enter.
They are the God’s faithful followers.
3 God, you give true peace
to people who depend on you,
to those who trust in you.
4 So trust the LORD always,
because in the LORD YAH you have
a place of safety forever.
5 But he will destroy the proud city
and punish those who live there.
He will throw that high city down to
the ground.
It will fall into the dust.
6 Then poor and humble people will
walk on those ruins.
7 Honesty is the path good people
follow.
They follow the path that is straight
and true.
And God, you make that way smooth
and easy to follow.
8 But, LORD, we are waiting for your way
of justice.
We want to honor you and your
name.
9 At night my soul longs to be with you,
and the spirit in me wants to be
with you at the dawn of every
new day.
When your way of justice comes to the
world,
people will learn the right way of
living.
10 Evil people will not learn to do good,
even if you show them only
kindness.
They will still do wrong, even if they
live in a good world.

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They never see the Lord’s greatness.

11 Lord, your arm is raised to punish them, but they don’t see it. Show them how strong your love is for your people. Then those who are evil will be ashamed. Yes, your fire will destroy your enemies.

12 Lord, you have succeeded in doing everything we tried to do, so give us peace.

God Will Give New Life to His People

13 Lord, you are our God, but in the past, we followed other lords. We belonged to other masters, but now we want people to remember only one name—yours.

14 Those dead lords will not come to life. Those ghosts will not rise from death. You decided to destroy them, and you destroyed everything that makes us think about them.

15 Lord, you have helped the nation you love. You made our nation grow and brought honor to yourself.

16 Lord, people remember you when they are in trouble. So because of your punishment, we called out to you.

17 Lord, because of you we were in pain, like a woman giving birth, who struggles and cries out when it is time.

18 But we struggled in pain for nothing. We gave birth only to wind. We did nothing to save the land. No one was born to live in the world.

19 But the Lord says, “Your people have died, but they will live again. The bodies of my people will rise from death. Dead people in the ground, stand and be happy! The dew covering you is like the dew sparkling in the light of a new day. It shows that a new time is coming, when the earth will give birth to the dead who are in it.”

Judgment: Reward or Punishment

20 My people, go into your rooms and lock your doors. Hide in there for a short time until God’s anger is finished.

21 Look! The Lord is coming out from his place to judge the people of the world for the bad things they have done. The earth will reveal the blood that has been spilled on it. It will no longer hide the proof of those murders.

27 At that time the Lord will judge Leviathan, the crooked snake. He will use his great sword, his hard and powerful sword, to punish Leviathan, that twisting, turning snake. He will kill the monster of the sea.

2 At that time people will sing about the pleasant vineyard.

3 “I, the Lord, will care for the vineyard. I will water it at the right time. I will guard it day and night. No one will hurt it.

4 I am not angry. But if there is war and someone builds
a wall of thornbushes, then I will march to it and burn it.
5 But if anyone comes to me for safety and wants to make peace with me, then let them come and make peace.
6 In the future, Jacob will take root firmly on his soil. Then Israel will sprout and bloom, and the world will be filled with his fruit.”

God Will Send Israel Away
7 Israel was not hurt as badly as the enemy who tried to hurt it. Not as many of its people were killed as those who tried to kill them.
8 The Lord will settle his argument with Israel by sending the people far away. He will speak harshly to Israel. His words will burn like the hot desert wind.
9 How will Jacob’s guilt be forgiven? What will happen so his sins can be taken away? The rocks of the altar will be crushed to dust; the statues and altars for worshiping false gods will all be destroyed.
10 The great city will be empty; it will be like a desert. All the people will be gone—they will run away. The city will be like an open pasture. Young cattle will eat grass there. The cattle will eat leaves from the branches of the vines. The vines will become dry, and the branches will break off. Women will use them for firewood.

Warnings to Northern Israel
11 The people refuse to understand. So God, their Maker, will not comfort them or be kind to them.
12 At that time the Lord will begin separating his people from others. He will begin at the Euphrates River and will gather his people from there to the River of Egypt. You people of Israel will be gathered together one by one.

are now lost in Assyria. Some of my people have run away to Egypt. But at that time a great trumpet will be blown, and all those people will come back to Jerusalem. They will bow down before the Lord on that holy mountain.

1 Look at Samaria! The drunks of Ephraim are proud of that city.
It sits on a hill with a rich valley around it.
The Samarians think their city is a beautiful crown of flowers.
But they are drunk with wine, and this “beautiful crown” is just a dying plant.

2 Look, the Lord has someone who is strong and brave.
He will come into the country like a storm of hail and rain.
Like a powerful river of water flooding the country, he will throw that crown down to the ground.

3 The drunks of Ephraim are proud of their beautiful crown, but that city will be trampled down.

4 That city sits on a hill with a rich valley around it.
But that beautiful crown of flowers is just a dying plant.
It will be like the first figs of summer.
As soon as someone sees a ripe one, they pick it and eat it.

5 At that time the Lord All-Powerful will become the “Beautiful Crown.” He will be the “Wonderful Crown of Flowers” for his people who are left. Then he will give wisdom to the judges who rule his people. He will give strength to the people who are in battles at the city gates.

6 At that time the Lord will begin separating his people from others. He will begin at the Euphrates River and will gather his people from there to the River of Egypt. You people of Israel will be gathered together one by one.

Many of my people are now lost in Assyria. Some of my people have run away to Egypt. But at that time a great trumpet will be blown, and all those people will come back to Jerusalem. They will bow down before the Lord on that holy mountain.

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make their decisions. Every table is covered with vomit. There is not a clean place anywhere.

**God Wants to Help His People**

The people say, “Who does he think he is trying to teach and explain his message to? Does he think we are babies who were at our mother’s breast only a very short time ago? He speaks to us as though we were babies: “Saw lasaw saw lasaw Qaw laqaw qaw laqaw Ze’er sham ze’er sham.”

So God will use this strange way of talking, and he will use other languages to speak to these people.

In the past he spoke to them and said, “Here is a resting place. Let those who are tired come and rest. This is the place of peace.”

But they would not listen to him. So the LORD’s words will be senseless sounds to them: “Saw lasaw saw lasaw Qaw laqaw qaw laqaw Ze’er sham ze’er sham.”

When the people try to walk, they will fall backwards. They will be defeated, trapped, and captured.

**No One Escapes God’s Judgment**

You leaders in Jerusalem should listen to the LORD’s message, but now you refuse to listen to him. You have said, “We have made an agreement with death. We have a contract with death. So we will not be punished. Punishment will pass us without hurting us. We will hide behind our tricks and lies.”

Because of these things, the Lord GOD says, “I will put a rock—a cornerstone—in the ground in Zion. This will be a very precious stone. Everything will be built on this very important rock. Anyone who trusts in that rock will not be disappointed.

Workers use a string and weight to show their work is straight and true. I will use justice as the string and goodness as the weight when I lay that foundation. But your safe places were built on lies. So they will be destroyed and washed away when the troubles come against you like hail storms and floods. Your agreement with death will be erased. Your contract with Sheol will not help you.

“Someone will come and punish you. He will make you like the dirt he walks on. He will come and take you away. Your punishment will be terrible. Your punishment will come early in the morning, and it will continue late into the night.

Then you will understand this story: A man tried to sleep on a bed that was too short for him. He had a blanket that was not wide enough to cover him. The bed and blanket were useless, and so were your agreements.”

The LORD will fight as he did at Mount Perazim. He will be angry as he was in Gibeon Valley. He will do what he must do. It will be what some stranger should do, but he will finish his work. Yes, this is a stranger’s job.

Now don’t complain about these things. If you fight against them, you will only tighten the ropes around you.

The words I heard will not change. They came from the Lord GOD All-Powerful, the ruler of all the earth, and these things will be done.

**The Lord Punishes Fairly**

Listen closely to the message I am telling you. Does a farmer plow his field all the time? No, he doesn’t work the soil all the time. He prepares the ground, and then he plants the seed. He plants different kinds of seeds different ways. He scatters
dill seeds, he throws cumin seeds on the ground, and he plants wheat in rows. A farmer plants barley in its special place, and he plants spelt seeds at the edge of his field.

26 Our God is using this to teach you a lesson. This example shows us that God is fair when he punishes his people. 27 Does a farmer use large boards with sharp teeth to crush dill seeds? No, and he doesn’t use a wagon to crush cumin seeds. A farmer uses a small stick to break the hulls from these seeds of grain. 28 People grind grain to make flour, but they don’t grind it forever. As God does in punishing people, a worker might drive his wagon over the grain to remove the hulls, but he does not allow the horses to crush it. 29 This lesson comes from the Lord All-Powerful, who gives wonderful advice. He is very wise.

God Punishes Jerusalem

29 God says, “Look at Ariel, the city where David camped. Keep on having your festivals, year after year. 2 But I will punish Ariel. The city will be filled with sadness and crying, but it will always be my Ariel. 3 I will put armies all around you, Ariel. I will raise war towers against you. 4 You will be pulled to the ground. Your voice will rise from the ground like the voice of a ghost. Your words come like a whisper from the dirt.”

5 There will be so many foreigners that they will be like dust. Cruel people will be like the chaff blowing in the wind. Then suddenly, the Lord All-Powerful will punish you with earthquakes, thunder, and loud noises. There will be storms, strong winds, and a burning, destructive fire. 7 Many nations will fight against Ariel. It will be a nightmare. Armies will surround Ariel and punish her. 8 But it will also be like a dream to those armies. They will not get what they want. It will be like a hungry man dreaming about food. When the man wakes up, he is still hungry. It will be like a thirsty man dreaming about water. When the man wakes up, he is still thirsty. The same thing is true about all the nations fighting against Zion. Those nations will not get what they want.

9 Be surprised and amazed!

You will become drunk, but not from wine.
Look and be amazed!
You will stumble and fall, but not from beer.

10 The Lord will make you sleepy.
He will close your eyes. (The prophets are your eyes.)
He will cover your heads. (The prophets are your heads.)

11 To you my words are like the words in a book that is closed and sealed. You can give the book to someone who can read and tell that person to read it. But that person will say, “I cannot read the book. It is closed and I cannot open it.” 12 Or you can give the book to someone who cannot read and tell that person to read it. That person will say, “I cannot read the book because I don’t know how to read.”

13 The Lord says, “These people come to honor me with words, but I am not really important to them. The worship they give me is nothing but human rules they have memorized. 14 So I will continue to amaze them by doing powerful and amazing things. Their wise men will lose their wisdom. Even the most intelligent among them will not be able to understand.”

15 Look at them! They try to hide things from the Lord. They think he will not understand. They do their evil things in darkness. They tell themselves: “No one can see us. No one will know who we are.”

16 You turn things upside down. You think the clay is equal to the potter. You think that something that is made can tell the one who made it, “You did not make me!” This is like a pot telling its maker, “You know nothing.”
A Better Time Is Coming

17 This is the truth: After a very short time, Lebanon will become rich farmland, and the farmland will be like thick forests. The deaf will hear the words in the book. The blind will see through the darkness and fog. 19 The LORD will make poor people happy. The poorest people will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

20 This will happen when the people who are mean and cruel have come to an end. It will happen when those who enjoy doing bad things are gone. They lie about good people. They try to trap innocent people.

21 So the LORD, who made Abraham free, speaks to Jacob’s family. He says, “Now the people of Jacob will not be embarrassed and ashamed. Yes, when they see all their children, the children I myself have made for them, they will honor my name as holy. They will honor the Holy One of Jacob, and they will respect the God of Israel. Many of these people did not understand, so they did what was wrong. They complained, but now they will learn their lesson.”

Israel Should Trust in God, Not Egypt

30 The LORD said, “Look at these children. They don’t obey me. They make plans, but they don’t ask me to help them. They make agreements with other nations, but my Spirit does not want those agreements. These people are adding more and more sins to the ones they have already done. They are going down to Egypt for help, but they did not ask me if that was the right thing to do. They hope they will be saved by the Pharaoh. They want Egypt to protect them.

31 But I tell you, hiding in Egypt will not help you. Pharaoh will not be able to protect you. Your leaders have gone to Zoan, and your representatives have gone to Hanes. But they will be disappointed. They are depending on a nation that cannot help them. Egypt is useless—it will not help. Egypt will bring nothing but shame and embarrassment.”

God’s Message to Judah

6 This is a message about the Negev animals:

There is a dangerous place full of lions, adders, deadly snakes, and useless people. And there are people who load their wealth onto donkeys and their treasures on the backs of camels. They carry them to a people who cannot help. That useless nation is Egypt. Egypt’s help is worth nothing, so I call Egypt the “Do-Nothing Dragon.”

8 Now write this on a sign so that all people can see it, and write this in a book. Write these things for a future time. This will be far, far in the future:

9 These people are like children who refuse to obey. They lie and refuse to listen to the LORD’s teachings. They tell the prophets, “Don’t see dreams about things we should do. Don’t tell us the truth. Say nice things to us and make us feel good. See only good things for us. Stop seeing things that will really happen. Get out of our way. Stop telling us about the Holy One of Israel.”

Judah’s Help Comes Only From God

12 The Holy One of Israel says, “You people have refused to accept this message from me. You depend on fighting and lies to help you. You are guilty of these things. So you are like a tall wall with cracks in it. That wall will fall and break into small pieces. You will be like a large clay jar that breaks into many small, useless pieces. 29:23 honor Or “treat as holy.”

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You cannot use them to get a hot coal from the fire or to get water from a pool in the ground.”

15 The Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, says, “If you come back to me you will be saved. Only by remaining calm and trusting in me can you be strong.”

But you don’t want to do that. 16 You say, “No, we need fast horses for battle.” That is true—you will need fast horses, but only to run away because your enemy will be faster than your horses. One enemy soldier will make threats, and a thousand of your men will run away. And when five of them make threats, all of you will run away. The only thing that will be left of your army will be a flagpole on a hill.

God Will Help His People

18 So the Lord is waiting to show his mercy to you. He wants to rise and comfort you. The Lord is the God who does the right thing, so he will bless everyone who waits for his help.

19 You people who live in Jerusalem on Mount Zion will not continue crying. The Lord will hear your crying, and he will comfort you. When he hears you, he will help you.

20 The Lord might give you sorrow and pain like the bread and water you eat every day. But God is your teacher, and he will not continue to hide from you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes. 21 If you wander from the right path, either to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice behind you saying, “You should go this way. Here is the right way.”

22 Then you will take your idols covered with gold and silver and make them unfit to be used again. You will throw them away like filthy rags a and say, “Go away!”

23 At that time the Lord will send you rain. You will plant seeds, and the ground will grow food for you. You will have a very large harvest. You will have plenty of food in the fields for your animals. There will be large fields for your sheep. 24 Your cattle and donkeys will have all the food they need. There will be much food. You will have to use shovels and pitchforks to spread all the food b for your animals to eat. 25 Every mountain and hill will have streams filled with water. These things will happen after many people are killed and the enemy’s towers are pulled down.

26 At that time the light from the moon will be as bright as the sun, and the light from the sun will be seven times brighter than it is now. One day of sunlight will be like a whole week’s worth. This will happen when the Lord bandages his broken people and heals the hurts from their beatings.

27 Look! The Lord is coming from far away. His anger is like a fire with thick clouds of smoke. His mouth is filled with anger, and his tongue is like a burning fire. 28 His breath is like a great river that rises until it reaches the throat. He will judge the nations as if putting them through a strainer that separates the ones fit for destruction. He will put a bit in their mouths to lead them to the place they don’t want to go.

29 You will sing happy songs, like the nights when you begin a festival. You will be very happy walking to the Lord’s mountain and listening to the flute on the way to worship the Rock of Israel.

30 The Lord will cause all people to hear his great voice and to see his powerful arm come down in anger. That arm will be like a great fire that burns everything. His power will be like a great storm with much rain and hail. 31 Assyria will be frightened by the Lord’s voice and the stick that will beat him. 32 And as the Lord beats Assyria, his people will keep the rhythm with their drums and harps.

33 Topheth c has been made ready for a long time. It is ready for the king. d It was made very deep and wide. There is a very big pile of wood and fire there, and the

a 30:22 You … rags Or “You will throw those gods away like menstrual clothes.”

b 30:24 food This was special food that had been allowed to ferment. This made the meat of the animal tender and good.

c 30:33 Topheth Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom. In this valley people killed their children to honor the false god, “Molech.”

d 30:33 king This is like the name of the false god, “Molech.”
Lord’s breath will come like a stream of burning sulfur to start the fire.

Israel Should Depend on God’s Power

1 Look at the people going down to Egypt for help. They think the horses they get will save them. They hope the many chariots and powerful soldiers will protect them. But the people don’t trust the Holy One of Israel. They didn’t ask the Lord for help. 2 But he is the wise one who is bringing the disaster. And they will not be able to stop what he commanded. The Lord will attack those who are evil and all who try to help them.

3 The Egyptians are only human, not God. The horses from Egypt are only animals, not spirit. The Lord will stretch out his arm, and the helper will be defeated. And those who wanted help will fall. They will all be destroyed together.

4 The Lord told me: “When a lion or its cub catches an animal to eat, the lion stands over the dead animal and roars, and nothing can frighten it away. If men come and yell at the lion, the lion will not be afraid. They might make a lot of noise, but the lion will not run away.”

In the same way, the Lord All-Powerful will come down to Mount Zion. He will fight on that hill. 5 Just as birds fly over their nest to protect it, so the Lord All-Powerful will defend Jerusalem. He will save her. He will “pass over” and save Jerusalem.

6 People of Israel, you should come back to the God you turned away from. 7 That is because when those things happen, people will reject the gold and silver idols you made when you sinned against me.

8 It is true that Assyria will be defeated with a sword, but it will not be a human sword that defeats him. Assyria will be destroyed, but that destruction will not come from a man’s sword. Assyria will run away from God’s sword, but the young men will be caught and made slaves. 9 Their place of safety will be destroyed.

Their leaders will be defeated, and they will abandon their flag.

The Lord, whose fireplace is on Zion and whose oven is in Jerusalem, is the one who said this.

Leaders Should Be Good and Fair

Listen to what I say! A king should rule in a way that brings justice. Leaders should make fair decisions when they lead the people. 10 If this would happen, the king would be like a shelter to hide from the wind and rain, like streams of water in a dry land, and like the cool shadow of a large rock in a hot land. 11 Then people would actually see what they look at. They would actually listen to what they hear. 12 People who are now confused would be able to understand. Those who cannot speak clearly now would be able to speak clearly and quickly. 13 Fools would not be called great men. People would not respect men who make secret plans.

14 Fools say foolish things, and in their minds they plan evil things to do. They want to do what is wrong. They say bad things about the Lord. They don’t let hungry people eat their food. They don’t let thirsty people drink the water. 15 They use evil like a tool and plan ways to steal from the poor. They tell lies about the poor and keep them from being judged fairly.

16 But a good leader plans good things to do, and that will make him a leader over other leaders.

Hard Times Are Coming

17 Some of you women are calm now; you feel safe. But you should stand and listen to the words I say. 18 You feel safe now, but after one year you will be troubled. That is because you will not gather grapes next year—there will be no grapes to gather.

19 Women, you are calm now, but you should be afraid. You feel safe now, but you should be worried. Take off your nice clothes and put on sackcloth. Wrap

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it around your waist. 12Beat your breasts in sorrow. Cry because your fields are empty. Your vineyards once gave grapes, but now they are empty. 13Cry for the land of my people. Cry because only thorns and weeds will grow there. Cry for the city and for all the houses that were once filled with joy.

14People will leave the capital city. The palace and towers will be left empty. People will not live in houses—they will live in caves. Wild donkeys and sheep will live in the city—animals will go there to eat grass.

15This will continue until God gives us his Spirit from above. Then the desert will become rich farmland and the farmland will be like thick forests. 16That is, what is now a desert will be filled with right decisions, and what is now a farmland will be filled with justice. 17That justice will bring peace and safety forever. 18My people will be safe in their homes and in their calm, peaceful fields.

19But before this happens, the forest must fall and the city must be torn down. 20Some of you live away from the cities. You plant seeds by every stream and let your cattle and donkeys roam free. You will be very blessed.

The Lord Will Show His Power 33

1Look at you. You attack others when you have not been attacked. You turn against others when no one has turned against you. So when you stop your attacks, you will be attacked. When you stop turning against others, they will turn against you.

2 LORD, be kind to us.
   We have waited for your help.
   Give us strength every morning.
   Save us when we are in trouble.

3 Your powerful voice makes people run away in fear.
   Your greatness causes the nations to run away.

4You people stole things in war. Those things will be taken from you. Many will come and take your wealth. It will be like the times when locusts come and eat all your crops.

5The LORD is very great. He lives in a very high place. He fills Zion with justice and goodness.

6Jerusalem, you are rich with wisdom and knowledge of God. You are rich with salvation. You respect the LORD, and that makes you rich.

7But listen! The messengers are crying outside. The messengers who bring peace are crying very hard. 8The roads are empty; there is no one walking along the paths. People don’t respect each other. They have broken the agreements they made, and they refuse to believe what witnesses tell them. 9The land is sick and dying. Lebanon is dying and Sharon Valley is dry and empty. Bashan and Carmel once grew beautiful plants—but now those plants have stopped growing.

10The LORD says, “Now, I will stand and show people how great and powerful I am. “You people have done useless things. These things are like hay and straw. They are worth nothing! Your breath will be like a fire and burn you. 12People will be burned until their bones become lime. 13They will burn quickly like thorns and dry bushes.

14 “You people in faraway lands, listen to what I have done. You people who are near me, learn about my power.”

15The sinners in Zion are afraid. Those who do wrong shake with fear. They say, “Can any of us live through this fire that destroys? Who can live near this fire that burns forever?”

16Good, honest people who refuse to hurt others for money will live through that fire. They refuse to take bribes or listen to plans to murder other people. They refuse to look at plans for doing bad things. They will live safely in high places. They
will be protected in high rock fortresses. They will always have food and water.

17 Your eyes will see the King in his beauty. You will see the great land. 18-19 When you think about the troubles you had in the past, you will wonder, “Where are those foreigners who spoke languages we could not understand? Where are the officials and tax collectors from other lands? Where are the spies who counted our defense towers?”

God Will Protect Jerusalem

20 Look at Zion, the city of our religious festivals. Look at Jerusalem—that beautiful place of rest. Jerusalem is like a tent that will never be moved. Her ropes will never be broken, 21-23 because the LORD is our powerful leader there. That land is a place with streams and wide rivers, but there will be no enemy boats or powerful ships on those rivers. You men who work on such boats can stop your work with the ropes. You cannot make the mast strong enough. You will not be able to open your sails, because the LORD is our judge. He makes our laws. He is our king. He saves us. The LORD will give us our wealth. Even crippled people will get their share. 24 No one living there will say, “I am sick,” because everyone living there has had their guilt removed.

God Will Punish His Enemies

34 1 All you nations, come near and listen! Listen, all you people. The earth and everyone on it should listen to these things. Everything in this world should hear this. 2 The LORD is angry with all the nations and their armies. He will destroy them all and put them to death. 3 Their bodies will be thrown outside. The stink will rise from the bodies, and the blood will flow down the mountains. 4 The skies will be rolled shut like a scroll, 5 and the stars will die and fall like leaves from a vine or a fig tree. All the stars in the sky will rot away. 5 The LORD says, “This will happen when my sword in the sky is covered with blood.”

Look, the LORD’s sword will cut through Edom. He judged them guilty, and they must die. 6 The LORD decided there should be a time for killing in Bozrah and in Edom. So the sword of the LORD is covered with blood and fat. The blood is from the “goats.” The fat is from the kidneys of the “rams.” 7 So the rams, the cattle, and the strong bulls will be killed. The land will be filled with their blood. The dirt will be covered with their fat.

8 This will happen because the LORD has chosen a time for punishment. He has chosen a year when people must pay for the wrong they did to Zion. 9 Edom’s rivers will be like hot tar. Edom’s ground will be like burning sulfur. 10 The fires will burn day and night—no one will stop the fire. The smoke will rise from Edom forever. The land will be destroyed forever. No one will ever travel through that land again. 11 Birds and small animals will own that land. It will be a home for owls and ravens. God will leave that land in ruins. People will call it “the empty desert.” 12 The free men and leaders will all be gone, and there will be nothing left for them to rule.

13 Thorns and wild bushes will grow in all the beautiful homes there. Wild dogs and owls will live in them. Wild animals will make their homes there. Big birds will live in the grasses that grow there. 14 Wild cats will live there with hyenas. 15 Wild goats will call to their friends. Night
animals. Snakes will make their homes there and lay their eggs. The eggs will open, and small snakes will crawl from the dark places. Birds that eat dead things will gather there like women visiting their friends.

Look in the LORD’s scroll and read what it says: Not one of these will be missing. Not one will be without its mate. God said he would make this happen, so his Spirit will bring them together. God decided what he should do with them, and then he chose a place for them. He drew a line and showed them their land. So the animals will own that land forever. They will live there year after year.

God Will Comfort His People

The dry desert will rejoice. The desert will be glad and blossom. It will be covered with flowers and dance with joy. It will be as beautiful as the forest of Lebanon, the hill of Carmel, and the Sharon Valley. This will happen because all people will see the Glory of the LORD. They will see the beauty of our God. Make the weak arms strong again. Strengthen the weak knees. People are afraid and confused. Say to them, “Be strong! Don’t be afraid!” Look, your God will come and punish your enemies. He will come and give you your reward. He will save you. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened so that they can see, and the ears of the deaf will be opened so that they can hear. Crippled people will dance like deer, and those who cannot speak now will use their voices to sing happy songs. This will happen when springs of water begin to flow in the dry desert.

Now people see mirages that look like water, but then there will be real pools of water. There will be wells in the dry land where water flows from the ground. Tall water plants will grow where wild animals once ruled.

There will be a road there. This highway will be called “The Holy Road.” Evil people will not be allowed to walk on that road. No fools will walk on it. Only good people will walk there. There will be no dangers on that road. There will be no lions there to hurt people or any dangerous animals on it. That road will be for the people God saves.

The LORD will make his people free, and they will come back to him. They will come into Zion rejoicing. They will be happy forever. Their happiness will be like a crown on their heads. Gladness and joy will fill them completely. Sorrow and sadness will be far, far away.

The Assyrians Invade Judah

During Hezekiah’s 14th year as king, Sennacherib king of Assyria went to fight against all the strong cities of Judah. Sennacherib defeated those cities. He sent his commander with a large army to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. The commander and his army left Lachish and went to Jerusalem. They stopped near the aqueduct by the Upper Pool, on the street that leads up to Launryman’s Field.

Three men from Jerusalem went out to talk with the commander. These men were Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Joah son of Asaph, and Shebna. Eliakim was the palace manager, Joah was the record keeper, and Shebna was the royal secretary. The commander told them, “Tell Hezekiah this is what the great king, the king of Assyria says:

“What are you trusting in to help you? I tell you, if you are trusting in power and great battle plans, that is useless. Those are nothing but empty words. Now I ask you, who do you trust so much that you are willing to rebel against

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me? 6 Are you depending on Egypt to help you? Egypt is like a broken walking stick. If you lean on it for support, it will only stab you and hurt you. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, cannot be trusted by anyone who depends on him for help.

7“ ‘So maybe you will say, “We trust the LORD our God to help us.” But Hezekiah destroyed the altars and high places where people worshiped your God, right? Hezekiah told the people of Judah and Jerusalem, “You must worship only at this one altar here in Jerusalem.” ’

8“ ‘If you still want to fight, my master, the king of Assyria, will make this agreement with you. I promise that I will give you 2000 horses if you can find enough men to ride them into battle. But even then, you couldn’t beat even one of my master’s lowest ranking officers. So why do you still depend on Egypt’s chariots and horse soldiers?

9“ ‘Now, do you think I came to this country to destroy it without the LORD’s help. No, it was the LORD who said to me, “Go up against this country and destroy it!” ’”

10Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the commander, “Please, speak to us in Hebrew. We understand that language. Don’t speak to us in the language of Judah. If you use our language, the people on the city walls will understand you.”

11But the commander said, “My master sent me to speak to everyone, not just to you and your master. I must also speak to those people sitting there on the wall. When we surround your city, they will suffer too. Like you, they will become so hungry they will eat their own waste and drink their own urine!”

12Then the commander, shouting loudly in Hebrew, gave this warning to them all:

Hear this message from the great king, the king of Assyria!
14This is what the king says: Don’t let Hezekiah fool you! He cannot save you from my power. 15Don’t listen to him when he tells you to trust in the LORD. Don’t believe him when he says, “The LORD will save us. He will not let the king of Assyria defeat the city.”

16Don’t listen to Hezekiah! This is what the king of Assyria says: Come out here and show me that you want peace. Then you will all be free to have grapes from your own vines, figs from your own trees, and water from your own well. 17After some time, I will come and take you to a land like your own. In that new land, you will have plenty of grain for making bread and vineyards for producing wine.

18Don’t believe Hezekiah when he tells you, “The LORD will save us.” He is wrong. Did any of the gods of other nations save their land from the king of Assyria?

19When I destroyed the cities of Hamath and Arpad, where were their gods? What about the gods of Sepharvaim? Were any gods able to save Samaria from my power?

20None of the gods of these other places were able to save their land from me! So why do you think the LORD can save Jerusalem from me?

21But the people were silent. They did not say a word to the commander, because King Hezekiah had commanded them, “Don’t say anything to him.”

22Then the palace manager (Eliakim son of Hilkiah), the royal secretary (Shebna), and the record keeper (Joah son of Asaph) went to Hezekiah. Their clothes were torn to show they were upset. They told Hezekiah everything the Assyrian commander had said.
Hezekiah Asks God to Help

1When King Hezekiah listened to their message, he tore his clothes to show he was upset. Then he put on sackcloth and went to the LORD’s Temple.

2Hezekiah sent Eliakim, the palace manager, Shebna, the royal secretary, and the elders of the priests to the prophet, Isaiah son of Amoz. They wore the special clothes that showed they were sad and upset. 3They said to Isaiah, “King Hezekiah has commanded that today will be a special day for sorrow and sadness. It will be a very sad day—as sad as when a baby should be born, but there is not enough strength for the birth. 4The commander’s master, the king of Assyria, has sent him to say bad things about the living God. Maybe the LORD your God will hear it and prove the enemy is wrong. So pray for those who are still left alive.”

5When King Hezekiah’s officers came to Isaiah, 6he said to them, “Give this message to your master, Hezekiah: The LORD says, ‘Don’t be afraid of what you heard from the commanders! Don’t believe what those “boys” from the king of Assyria said to make fun of me. Look, I will send a spirit against the king of Assyria. He will get a report that will make him return to his own country. And I will cut him down with a sword in his own country.’”

The Assyrian Army Leaves Jerusalem

8The commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. He found him at Libnah, fighting against that city. 9Then the king of Assyria got a report that said, “King Tirhakah of Ethiopia is coming to fight you.”

So the king of Assyria sent messengers to Hezekiah again. 10He told them, “Tell King Hezekiah of Judah these things: ‘Don’t be fooled by the god you trust when he says, “Jerusalem will not be defeated by the king of Assyria.”’ 11You have heard what the kings of Assyria did to all the other countries. We destroyed them completely. Will you be saved? No! 12Did the gods of those people save them? No, my ancestors destroyed them all. They destroyed the cities of Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden living in Tel Assar. 13Where is the king of Hamath? The king of Arpad? The king of the city of Sepharvaim? The kings of Hena and Ivvah?’”

Hezekiah Prays to the Lord

14Hezekiah received the letters from the messengers and read them. Then he went up to the LORD’s Temple and laid the letters out in front of the LORD. 15He prayed to the LORD: 16“LORD All-Powerful, God of Israel, you sit as King above the Cherub angels. You alone are the God who rules all the kingdoms on earth. You made heaven and earth. LORD, please pay attention and hear this. Open your eyes, LORD, and see what is happening. Listen to all the insults against the living God in the message Sennacherib sent! It is true, LORD. The kings of Assyria did destroy all those nations. They did throw the gods of those nations into the fire, but they were not real gods. They were only wood and stone—statues that people made. That is why the kings of Assyria could destroy them. But you are the LORD our God, so please save us from the king of Assyria. Then all the other nations will know that you are the LORD, the only God.”

God Answers Hezekiah

21Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: “The LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘You prayed to me about the message that came from King Sennacherib of Assyria. I have heard you.’”

22“So this is the LORD’s message against Sennacherib:

‘The virgin daughter Zion does not
think you are important. She makes fun of you. Daughter Jerusalem shakes her head at you and laughs behind your back.

23 But who was it that you insulted and made fun of? Who was it that you spoke against? You were speaking against the Holy One of Israel. You acted like you were great and he was nothing.

24 You sent your officers to insult the Lord. This is what you said: “I took my many chariots up the high mountains deep inside Lebanon. I cut down its tallest cedars and its best fir trees. I have been on its highest mountain and deep inside its forests. I dug wells and drank water from new places. I dried up the rivers of Egypt and walked where the water was.”

25 ‘How could you say this, Sennacherib? Did no one ever tell you that I, the Lord, planned these things long ago? From ancient times I decided what would happen. And now I have made it happen. I let you tear down strong cities and change them into piles of rocks.

27 The people living there had no power. They were afraid and confused. They were about to be cut down like grass and plants in the field. They were like grass growing on the housetops, dying before it grows tall.

28 I know all about your battles; I know when you rested, when you went out to war, and when you came home. I also know when you got upset at me.

29 Yes, you were upset at me. I heard your proud insults. So I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth. Then I will turn you around and lead you back the way you came.’”

The Lord’s Message for Hezekiah

30 Then the Lord said, “I will give you a sign to show you that these words are true. You will not be able to plant seeds this year, so next year you will eat grain that grew wild from the previous year’s crop. But in the third year, you will eat grain from seeds that you planted. You will harvest your crops, and you will have plenty to eat. You will plant vineyards and eat grapes from them.

31 “The people from the family of Judah who have escaped and are left alive will be like plants that send their roots deep into the ground and produce fruit above the ground. That is because a few people will come out of Jerusalem alive. There will be survivors coming from Mount Zion.” The strong love of the Lord All-Powerful will do this.

33 So the Lord says this about the king of Assyria: “He will not come into this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not bring his shields up against this city or build up a hill of dirt to attack its walls.

34 He will go back the way he came. He will not come into this city. The Lord says this!

35 I will protect this city and save it. I will do this for myself and for my servant David.”

The Assyrian Army Is Destroyed

36 That night the angel of the Lord went out and killed 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up in the morning, they saw all the dead bodies.
So King Sennacherib of Assyria went back to Nineveh and stayed there.

One day Sennacherib was in the temple of his god Nisroch, worshiping him. His sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with a sword and ran away to Ararat. So Sennacherib’s son Esarhaddon became the new king of Assyria.

Hezekiah’s Illness

At that time Hezekiah became sick and almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to see him and told him, “The LORD told me to tell you this: ‘You will die soon. So you should tell your family what they should do when you die. You will not get well.’”

Hezekiah turned toward the wall that faced the Temple and began praying to the LORD. “Lord, remember that I have faithfully served you with all my heart. I have done what you say is good.” Then Hezekiah cried very hard.

Then Isaiah received this message from the LORD: “Go to Hezekiah and tell him that the LORD, the God of your ancestor David, says, ‘I heard your prayer, and I saw your tears. I will add 15 years to your life. I will save you and this city from the king of Assyria. I will protect this city.’”

Then Isaiah told Hezekiah, “Crush figs together and put them on your sore. Then you will get well.”

Hezekiah asked Isaiah, “What is the sign that proves I will get well and go to the LORD’s Temple?”

This is the sign from the LORD to show you that he will do what he says: “Look, I am causing the shadow that is on the steps of Ahaz to move back ten steps. The sun’s shadow will go back up the ten steps that it has already been on.”

Hezekiah’s Song

This is the letter from Hezekiah when he became well:

I thought I would live a full life. But now, in the middle of my life, the time has come for me to die.

So I said, “I will not see the LORD YAH in the land of the living again. I will not see the people living on earth.

My home, my shepherd’s tent, is being pulled down and taken from me. I am finished like the cloth someone rolls up and cuts from the loom.

You ended my life in such a short time.

All night I cried as loud as a lion, but my hopes were crushed like a lion eating bones.

You finished my life in such a short time.

I cried like a bird and moaned like a dove. My eyes became tired, but I continued looking to the heavens.

Lord, I am so depressed. Promise to help me.”

What can I say? He told me what would happen, and he will make it happen. I have had these troubles in my soul, so now I will be humble all my life.

Lord, use this hard time to make my spirit live again. Help my spirit become strong and healthy. Help me become well! Help me live again!

Look, my troubles are gone! I now have peace. You love me very much. You did not let me rot in the grave. You took my sins and threw them away.

The dead cannot praise you. People in Sheol cannot sing praises to you. Those who have died and gone below

c 38:17 the LORD YAH Or “YAHWEH,” a Hebrew name for God. See “YAHWEH” in the Word List.
are not trusting in your faithfulness. 19 People who are alive, people like me, are the ones who will praise you. Fathers should tell their children about how faithful you are. 20 So I say, “The LORD saved me. So we will sing and play songs in the LORD’s Temple all our lives.”

Messengers From Babylon

39 1 At that time Merodach Baladan son of Baladan was king of Babylon. He sent some men with letters and a gift to Hezekiah when he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 2 This made Hezekiah very happy, so he showed them all the valuable things in his storehouses. He showed them the silver, the gold, the spices, and the expensive perfumes. He showed them the building where he stored the weapons. He showed them everything in his treasuries and everything in his house and throughout his kingdom.

3 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked him, “What did these men say? Where did they come from?” Hezekiah said, “These men came all the way from Babylon just to see me.” 4 So Isaiah asked him, “What did they see in your house?” Hezekiah said, “They saw everything in my palace. I showed them all my wealth.” 5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Listen to this message from the LORD All-Powerful: 6 ‘The time is coming when everything in your house and everything your ancestors have saved until today will be carried away to Babylon. Nothing will be left!’ The LORD All-Powerful said this. 7 The Babylonians will take your own sons, and your sons will become officers\(^d\) in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

8 Then Hezekiah told Isaiah, “This message from the LORD is good.” (Hezekiah said this because he thought, “There will be real peace and security during my lifetime.”)

\(^d\) 39:7 officers Or “eunuchs.” See “eunuch” in the Word List.

Israel’s Punishment Will End

40 1 Your God says, “Comfort, comfort my people. 2 Speak kindly to Jerusalem and tell her, ‘Your time of service is finished. You have paid the price for your sins.’ I, the LORD, have punished you twice for every sin you committed.”

3 Listen, there is someone shouting: “Prepare a way in the desert for the LORD. Make a straight road there for our God.”

4 Every valley must be filled. Every mountain and hill should be made flat. The crooked roads should be made straight, and the rough ground made smooth.

5 Then the Glory of the LORD will be shown to everyone. Together, all people will see it. Yes, this is what the LORD himself said!”

6 A voice said, “Speak!” So the man said, “What should I say?”

The voice said, “People are like grass. Any glory they enjoy is like a wildflower.

7 When a wind from the LORD blows on them, the grass dies and the flower falls. Yes, all people are like grass.

8 Grass dies and flowers fall, but the word of our God lasts forever.”

Salvation: God’s Good News

9 Zion, you have good news to tell. Go up on a high mountain and shout the good news. Jerusalem, you have good news to tell. Don’t be afraid; speak loudly. Tell this news to all the cities of Judah: “Look, here is your God!”
The Lord God is coming with power. He will use his power to rule all the people. He will bring rewards for his people. He will have their payment with him.

Like a good shepherd, he takes care of his people. He gathers them like lambs in his arms. He holds them close, while their mothers walk beside him.

God Made the World; He Rules It

12 Who measured the oceans in the palm of his hand? Who used his hand to measure the sky? Who used a bowl to measure all the dust of the earth? Who used scales to measure the mountains and hills?

13 Who could know the Lord's mind? Who could be his teacher or give him advice?

14 Did the Lord ask for anyone's help? Did anyone teach him to be fair? Did anyone teach him knowledge? Did anyone teach him to be wise?

15 Look, all the nations in the world are like one small drop in the bucket. If the Lord took all the faraway nations and put them on his scales, they would be like small pieces of dust.

16 All the trees in Lebanon are not enough to burn on the altar for the Lord. And all the animals in Lebanon are not enough to kill for a sacrifice.

17 Compared to God, all the nations of the world are nothing. Compared to him, they are worth nothing at all.

People Cannot Imagine What God Is Like

18 Can you compare God to anything? Can you make a picture of God?

19 No, but some people make statues from rock or wood, and they call them gods. One worker makes a statue. Then another worker covers it with gold and makes silver chains for it.

20 For the base he chooses special wood, a kind of wood that will not rot. Then he finds a good wood worker, and the worker makes a “god” that will not fall over.

21 Surely you know the truth, don’t you? Surely you have heard. Surely someone told you long ago. Surely you understand who made the earth.

22 It is the Lord who sits above the circle of the earth. And compared to him, people are like grasshoppers. He rolled open the skies like a piece of cloth. He stretched out the skies like a tent to sit under.

23 He takes away the power of rulers. He makes the world’s leaders completely worthless.

24 They are like plants that are planted in the ground. But before they can send their roots into the ground, God blows on the “plants”; they become dead and dry, and the wind blows them away like straw.

25 The Holy One says, “Can you compare me to anyone? No one is equal to me.”

26 Look up to the skies. Who created all those stars? Who created all those “armies” in the sky? Who knows every star by name? He is very strong and powerful, so not one of these stars is lost.

27 People of Jacob, this is true. Israel, you should believe it. So why do you say, “The Lord cannot
I, the LORD, am the one.
I was here at the beginning, and I will be here when all things are finished.

5 People along the coast saw this, and they were frightened.
Nations at the ends of the earth shook with fear.
They have come near.
They have arrived.

6 “Workers help each other. They encourage each other to be strong. 7 One worker cuts wood to make a statue. He encourages the man who works with gold. Another worker uses a hammer and makes the metal smooth. Then he encourages the man at the anvil. 8 This last worker says, ‘This work is good; the metal will not come off.’ Then he nails the statue to a base so that it will not fall over. And it never moves!”

Only the Lord Can Save Us
8 The Lord says, “You, Israel, are my servant.
Jacob, I chose you.
You are from the family of my friend, Abraham.

9 You were in a faraway country, but I reached out to you.
I called you from that faraway place.
I said, ‘You are my servant.’
I chose you, and I have not rejected you.

10 Don’t worry—I am with you.
Don’t be afraid—I am your God.
I will make you strong and help you.
I will support you with my right hand that brings victory.

11 Look, some people are angry with you, but they will be ashamed and disgraced.
Your enemies will be lost and disappear.

12 You will look for the people who were against you, but you will not be able to find them.

The Lord Is the Eternal Creator

1 The Lord says,
“Faraway countries, be quiet and listen to me!
Nations be brave.  
Come to me and speak.
We will meet together and decide who is right.

2 Who woke up the man who is coming from the east?
He called Justice to march with him.
He uses his sword to crush nations.
He uses his bow and conquers kings—they run away like straw blown by the wind.

3 He chases armies and is never hurt.
He goes places he has never been before.

4 Who was able to make all this happen? Who controlled the lives of everyone from the beginning?

40:27 The Lord … punish me Or “My way is hidden from the Lord; he ignores my case.”
40:31 like … feathers This probably refers to the ancient belief that eagles regain their youth when they molt (lose and grow back their feathers). See Ps. 103:5. This line could also be translated, “They will rise up like eagles on their wings.”
41:1 be brave Or “be strong again,” as in Isa. 40:31.

41:avil A heavy metal block. A worker puts hot metal on an anvil and beats the hot metal to change its shape.
Those who fought against you will disappear completely.

13 I am the LORD your God, who holds your right hand. And I tell you, ‘Don’t be afraid! I will help you.’

14 People of Israel, descendants of Jacob, you may be weak and worthless, but do not be afraid. I myself will help you.”

This is what the LORD himself says.

“I am the Holy One of Israel, the one who saves you.

15 Look, I have made you like a new threshing board with many sharp teeth. You will trample mountains and crush them. You will make the hills like chaff.

16 You will throw them into the air, and the wind will blow them away and scatter them. Then you will be happy in the LORD. You will be proud of the Holy One of Israel.

17 “The poor and needy look for water, but they cannot find any. Their tongues are dry with thirst. I, the LORD, will answer their prayers. I, the God of Israel, will not leave them to die.

18 I will make rivers flow on dry hills. I will make springs of water flow through the valleys. I will change the desert into a lake filled with water. There will be springs of water in that dry land.

19 I will make trees grow in the desert. There will be cedar, acacias, olive trees, cypress, fir trees, and pines.

20 I will do this so that people will see it and know who did it. They will notice what happened.

Then they will understand that the LORD’s hand made it happen, that the Holy One of Israel created it all.”

The Lord Challenges the False Gods

21 The LORD, the king of Jacob, says, “Come, present your arguments. Show me your proof. Let your idols come in and tell us what will happen. Idols, tell us what happened in the beginning. We will listen closely so that we can make a decision. Tell us what will happen in the future. What signs did you give in the past to prove that you really are gods? Do something! Do anything, good or bad, so that we can see that you are alive. Then we might fear and respect you.

24 “Look, you false gods are worthless. You cannot do anything. Only some horrible fool would want to worship you.”

The Lord Proves He Is the Only God

25 “I called someone in the north to come. He is coming from the east where the sun rises, and he honors my name. He tramples kings the way a potter softens clay with his feet.

26 “Who told us about this before it happened so that we could say he was right? None of your idols told us anything. They didn’t say a word, and they cannot hear anything you say.

27 I, the Lord, was the first one to tell Zion about these things. I sent a messenger to Jerusalem to say, ‘Look, your people are coming back!’ ”

28 I looked at those false gods.

\[a\] 41:14 Jacob … worthless Literally, “Worm of Jacob, men of Israel.”

\[b\] 41:15 mountains … hills Symbols of the power of Israel’s enemies.

\[c\] 41:24 fool Literally, “horrible thing.” The Hebrew word usually describes idols and other wicked things that God hates.

\[d\] 41:25 someone in the north This probably means Cyrus, a king of Persia. He ruled about 550–530 B.C.
Not one of them said anything.
They had no advice to offer.
I asked them questions,
but they didn’t say a word.

29 Those gods are all less than nothing.
They cannot do anything.
They are worthless.

The Lord’s Special Servant

42 “Here is my servant,
the one I support.
He is the one I have chosen,
and I am very pleased with him.
I have filled him with my Spirit,
and he will bring justice to the nations.

2 He will not cry out or shout
or try to make himself heard in the streets.

3 He will not break even a crushed reed.
He will not put out even the weakest flame.
He will bring true justice.

4 He will not grow weak or give up
until he has brought justice to the world.
And people in faraway places will hope to receive his teachings.”

The Lord Is Ruler and Maker of the World

5 The LORD, the true God, said these things.
(He created the sky and spread it out over the earth.
He formed the earth and everything it produced.
He breathes life into all the people on earth.
He gives a spirit to everyone who walks on the earth.)

6 “I, the LORD, was right to call you.
I will hold your hand and protect you.
You will be the sign of my agreement with the people.
You will be a light for the other nations.

7 You will make the blind able to see.
You will free those who are held as captives.
You will lead those who live in darkness out of their prison.

8 “I am YAHWEH.
That is my name.
I will not give my glory to another.
I will not let statues take the praise that should be mine.

9 In the past, I told you what would happen,
and it happened!
Now I am telling you something new,
and I am telling you now, before it happens.”

A Song of Praise to the Lord

10 Sing a new song to the LORD;
praise him everywhere on earth—all who sail on the seas,
everything in the sea,
and all you people in faraway places!

11 Deserts and cities, villages of Kedar,
praise the Lord!
People living in Sela, sing for joy!
Sing from the top of your mountain.

12 Give glory to the LORD.
Praise him, all you people in faraway lands!

13 The LORD will go out like a strong soldier.
Like a man going into battle, he will be full of excitement.
He will shout with a loud cry,
and he will defeat his enemies.

God Is Very Patient

14 “For a long time I have said nothing.
I have controlled myself and kept quiet.
But now I will cry out like a woman giving birth.
My breathing is getting faster and louder.

15 I will destroy the hills and mountains.
I will dry up all the plants that grow there.
I will change rivers to dry land and dry up pools of water.

16 Then I will lead the blind along a path they never knew.

a 42:3 reed A plant that grows near water.

b 42:10 new song Whenever God did a new and wonderful thing for his people, they would write a new song about it.
to places where they have never been before.
I will change darkness into light for them.
I will make the rough ground smooth.
I will do these things for them;
I will not abandon my people.

17 But some of them have left me.
They say to their gold statues, ‘You are my gods.’
They trust their false gods,
but they will be disappointed and shamed.

Israel Refused to Listen to God

18 “Deaf people, listen to me!
Blind people, look and see!
19 In all the world, no one is more blind than my servant.a
No one is more deaf than my messenger.
No one is more blind than my chosen people,
the servant of the LORD.
20 My people see what they should do,
but they do not obey me.
They can hear with their ears,
but they refuse to listen to me.”
21 The LORD wants them to do what is right.
He wants them to honor his wonderful teachings.b
22 But look at his people.
Others have defeated them and have stolen from them.
The young men are afraid.
They are locked in prisons.
People have taken advantage of them,
and there is no one to protect them.
Others take their money,
and there is no one to say, “Give it back!”
23 Will any of you pay attention to this warning? Will you ever learn to listen?
24 Who let Jacob be defeated? Who let others take what belonged to Israel? The LORD allowed them to do this. We sinned against him, so he let people take away our wealth. The people did not want to live the way he wanted. They refused to listen to his teaching. 25 So he poured out his anger on them and brought wars against them. It was as if there were fires all around them, but they didn’t know what was happening. It was as if they were burning, but they didn’t try to understand.

God Is Always With His People

43 1 Jacob, the LORD created you.
Israel, he made you, and now he says, “Don’t be afraid. I saved you. I named you. You are mine. 2When you have troubles, I am with you. When you cross rivers, you will not be hurt. When you walk through fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not hurt you. 3That’s because I, the LORD, am your God. I, the Holy One of Israel, am your Savior. I gave Egypt to pay for you. I gave Ethiopia and Seba to make you mine. 4You are precious to me, and I have given you a special place of honor. I love you. That’s why I am willing to trade others, to give up whole nations, to save your life.
5“So don’t be afraid, because I am with you. I will gather your children and bring them to you. I will gather them from the east and from the west. 6I will tell the north: Give my people to me. I will tell the south: Don’t keep my people in prison. Bring my sons and daughters to me from the faraway places. 7Bring to me all the people who are mine—the people who have my name. I made them for myself. I made them, and they are mine.
8“Bring out the people who have eyes but are blind. Bring out the people who have ears but are deaf.c 9All people and all nations should also be gathered together. Which of their gods said this would happen? Which of their gods would tell what happened in the beginning? They should bring their witnesses. The witnesses

a 42:19 my servant Here, this probably means the people of Israel.
b 42:21 Or “The LORD will make his teachings very wonderful. He will do this because he is good.”
c 43:8 blind … deaf This probably means the Israelites who would not believe God. See Isa. 6:9–10.
should speak the truth. This will show they are right.”

10 The LORD says, “You people are my witnesses and the servant I chose. I chose you so that you would help people believe me. I chose you so that you would understand that ‘I Am He’—I am the true God. There was no God before me, and there will be no God after me. 11 I myself am the LORD, and there is no other Savior. 12 I am the one who spoke to you, saved you, and told you those things. It was not some stranger who was with you. You are my witnesses, and I am God.” (This is what the LORD himself said.) 13 “I have always been God. When I do something, no one can change what I have done. And no one can save people from my power.”

14 The Lord, the Holy One of Israel, saves you, and he says, “I will send armies to Babylon for you. Many people will be captured. Those Chaldeans will be taken away in their own boats. (They are so proud of those boats.)

15 I am the LORD your Holy One. I made Israel. I am your King.”

God Will Save His People Again

16 The Lord is making roads through the sea. He is making a path for his people, even through rough waters. The LORD says, “Those who fight against me with their chariots, horses, and armies will be defeated. They will never rise again. They will be destroyed. They will be put out like the flame in a lamp. So don’t remember what happened in earlier times. Don’t think about what happened a long time ago, because I am doing something new! Now you will grow like a new plant. Surely you know this is true. I will even make a road in the desert, and rivers will flow through that dry land. The wild animals will thank me. The large animals and birds will honor me when I put water in the desert and make rivers flow through that dry land. I will do this to give water to my chosen people. I made them, and they will sing songs of praise to me.

22 Jacob, you did not pray to me. Israel, you became tired of me. 23 You have not brought your sheep as sacrifices to me. You have not honored me with your sacrifices. I did not force you to give gifts to me like slaves. I did not force you to burn incense until you became tired. 24 So you did not use your money to buy things to honor me. But you did force me to be like your slave. You sinned until the bad things you did made me very tired.

25 I, I am the one who wipes away all your sins. I do this to please myself. I will not remember your sins. But you should remember me. Let’s meet together and decide what is right. Tell your story and prove that you are innocent. 27 Your first father sinned, and your lawyers b committed crimes against me. 28 I will make your Temple leaders unfit to serve there. I will destroy Jacob. c Bad things will happen to Israel.

The Lord Is the Only God

44 Jacob, you are my servant. Israel, I chose you. Listen to me! 2 I am the LORD, and I made you. I am the one who created you. I have helped you since you were in your mother’s womb. Jacob, my servant, don’t be afraid. Jeshurun, d I chose you.

3 I will pour water for thirsty people, and streams will flow through the desert. I will pour my Spirit on your children, and I will bless your family. 4 They will sprout like grass in the spring and grow like trees by streams of water.

5 “One man will call himself, ‘I am the Lord’s.’ Another will use the name, ‘Jacob.’ Another man will sign his name as ‘The Lord’s Hand.’ And another will use the name, ‘Israel.’”

6 The LORD is the king of Israel. The

b 43:27 lawyers Or “speakers,” people who argue a person’s case in court. This might refer to priests or prophets.

c 43:28 destroy Jacob Or “I will make Jacob completely mine.”

d 44:2 Jeshurun Another name for Israel. It means “good” or “honest.”

e 44:3 bless This is a wordplay. This Hebrew word sounds like the word meaning “pool.”
Lord All-Powerful is the one who will set Israel free. And he says, “I am the only God. There are no other gods. I am the Beginning and the End. There is no other God like me. If there is, that god should speak now. Let him lay out everything he has done since the time I made these ancient people. Let him show me the signs he gave long ago that prove he knew what would happen in the future.

8“Don’t be afraid! Don’t worry. I am the one who always told you what would happen. You are my proof. There is no other God; I am the only one. There is no other ‘Rock’; I know I am the only one.”

False Gods Are Useless

9Some people make idols, but they are worthless. They love their statues, which are useless. Those who serve as witnesses for these statues cannot even see. They don’t know enough to be ashamed.

10Who made these false gods? Who covered these useless statues? Workers made them, and the workers are only human. If they all would come together before me, we could discuss this. Then they would all be ashamed and afraid.

11One worker uses his tools to heat iron over hot coals. Then he uses his hammer to beat the metal to shape it into a statue. He uses his own powerful arms, but when he gets hungry, he loses his strength. If he does not drink water, he becomes weak.

12Another worker uses his string line and compass to draw lines on the wood to show where he should cut. Then he uses his chisels and cuts a statue from the wood. He uses his calipers to measure the statue. In this way the worker makes the wood look exactly like a man, and this statue of a man does nothing but sit in the house.

13To split the cedar tree, the worker took some oak or cypress wedges. To make sure he had plenty of wood, he planted some pines. But it was the rain that made them grow.

15When the man wanted a fire, he took some of the wood to keep him warm. He also used some of it to bake his bread. But then he used that same wood to make a statue to worship as a god! That god is only a statue that he made, but he bows down to it! He burns half of the wood in the fire. He uses the fire to cook his meat, and he eats the meat until he is full. He burns the wood to keep himself warm. He says, “Good! Now I am warm, and I can see by the light of the fire.” There is a little of the wood left, so he makes a statue and calls it his god. He bows down before it and worships it. He prays to it and says, “You are my god, save me!”

18People like that don’t know what they are doing! They don’t understand. It is as if they have mud in their eyes so they cannot see. Their minds cannot understand.

19They don’t realize what they are doing. They aren’t smart enough to think, “I burned half of the wood in the fire. I used the hot coals to bake my bread and cook the meat I ate. And I used the wood that was left to make this terrible thing. I am worshiping a block of wood!”

20Someone like that is deceived. They don’t know what they are doing. They cannot save themselves, and they will not admit, “This statue I am holding is a lie!”

The Lord, the True God, Helps Israel

21“Jacob, remember these things! Israel, remember, you are my servant.

I made you, and you are my servant. So, Israel, don’t forget me.

22Your sins were like a big cloud, but I wiped them all away. Your sins are gone, like a cloud that disappeared into thin air.

I rescued and protected you, so come back to me.”
Skies, rejoice for what the LORD has done.
Earth, shout for joy down to your deepest parts!
Start singing, you mountains and all you trees in the forest!
Yes, the LORD has saved Jacob.
He has shown his glory by rescuing Israel.
The one who rescued you is the LORD, the one who formed you in your mother’s womb.
He says, “I, the LORD, made everything.
I put the skies there myself.
I spread out the earth before me.”
False prophets tell lies, but the Lord shows that their lies are false. He makes fools of those who do magic. He confuses even the wise. They think they know a lot, but he makes them look foolish. The Lord sends his servants to tell his messages to the people, and he makes those messages come true. He sends messengers to tell the people what they should do, and he proves that the advice is good.

God Chooses Cyrus to Rebuild Judah
The Lord says to Jerusalem, “People will live in you again.”
He says to the cities of Judah, “You will be rebuilt.”
He says to them, “I will repair your ruins.”
He tells the deep waters, “Become dry!
I will make your streams dry too.”
He says to Cyrus, “You are my shepherd.
You will do what I want.
You will say to Jerusalem, ‘You will be rebuilt!’
You will tell the Temple, ‘Your foundations will be put in place!’”

God Chooses Cyrus to Make Israel Free
“This is what the LORD said to Cyrus, his chosen king:
“I took you by your right hand to help
you defeat nations,
to strip other kings of their power,
and to open city gates that will not be closed again.
I will go in front of you and make the mountains flat.
I will break the city gates of bronze and cut the iron bars on the gates.
I will give you the wealth that is stored in secret places.
I will give you those hidden treasures.
Then you will know that I am the LORD,
the God of Israel, who calls you by name.
I do this for my servant, Jacob.
I do it for my chosen people, Israel.
Cyrus, I am calling you by name.
You don’t know me, but I know you.
I am the LORD, the only God.
There is no other God except me.
I put your clothes on you, but still you don’t know me.
I am doing this so that everyone will know
that I am the only God.
From the east to the west, people will know that I am the LORD and that there is no other God.
I made the light and the darkness.
I bring peace, and I cause trouble. I, the LORD, do all these things.
“May the clouds in the skies above pour goodness on the earth like rain.
May the earth open up to let salvation grow.
And may goodness grow with that salvation, which I, the LORD, created.

God Controls His Creation

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of clay from a broken pot. Clay does not say to the one molding it, ‘Man, what are you doing?’ Things that are made don’t have the power to question the one who makes them. A father gives life to his children, and they cannot ask, ‘Why are you giving me life?’ They cannot question their mother and ask, ‘Why are you giving birth to me?’

10 The LORD God is the Holy One of Israel. He created Israel, and he says, “My children, you asked me to show you a sign. You told me to show you what I have done."

11 I made the earth, and I created the people on it. I used my own hands to make the skies. And I command all the armies in the sky.

12 I was right to give power to Cyrus, and I will make his work easy. He will rebuild my city, and he will set my people free without bribes or payment.” The LORD All-Powerful said this.

13 You are the God people cannot see. You are the God who saves Israel.

14 The LORD says, “Egypt and Ethiopia are rich, but, Israel, you will get those riches. The tall people from Seba will be yours. They will walk behind you with chains around their necks. They will bow down before you and ask you to pray for them and say, ‘The true God really is with you, and there is no other God.’”

15 You are the God people cannot see. You are the God who saves Israel.

16 Many people make false gods, but they will be disappointed. All of them will go away ashamed.

17 But Israel will be saved by the LORD. That salvation will continue forever. Never again will Israel be shamed.

18 The LORD is God. He made the skies and the earth. He put the earth in its place. He did not want the earth to be empty when he made it. He created it to be lived on.

19 The LORD. There is no other God.

20 I have spoken openly, not in secret. I did not hide my words in a dark and secret place. I did not tell the people of Jacob to look for me in empty places. I am the LORD, and I speak the truth. I say only what is right.

The Lord Proves He Is the Only God

20 “You people who escaped from other nations, gather together before me. (These people carry statues of false gods. They pray to useless gods, but they don’t know what they are doing. Tell them to come to me. Let them present their case and discuss these things.)

21 Who told you about this before it happened? Who told you this so long ago? I, the LORD, am the one who said these things. I am the only God, the one who does what is right. I am the one who saves, and there is no other! So all you people in faraway places, turn to me and be saved, because I am God, and there is no other.

22 When I make a promise, that promise is true. It will happen. And I swear by my own power that everyone will bow before me and will take an oath to obey me. They will say, ‘Goodness and strength come only from the LORD.’

23 And all who show their anger against him will be humiliated.

24 The Lord will help the people of Israel live right and praise their God.

25 The LORD will help the people of Israel live right and praise their God.

\[\text{d 45:11 My children \ldots done Or “Those who are coming asked for my children. They commanded me to give them, the people I made with my own hands.”}\]

\[\text{b 45:12 armies in the sky Sometimes this means the angels, and sometimes it means the stars.}\]

\[\text{c 45:13 I was right \ldots Cyrus Or “I gave Cyrus power to do something good.”}\]

\[\text{d 45:25 live right Or “find justice.”}\]
**False Gods Are Useless**

46 The Lord says, “Bel has fallen to the ground. Nebo\(^d\) is kneeling before me. Men put those idols on the backs of animals. They are only heavy burdens that must be carried. They do nothing but make people tired. But they all bowed down and fell to the ground. They couldn’t escape; they were all carried away like prisoners.

The Lord says, “Bel has fallen to the ground. Nebo\(^d\) is kneeling before me. Men put those idols on the backs of animals. They are only heavy burdens that must be carried. They do nothing but make people tired. But they all bowed down and fell to the ground. They couldn’t escape; they were all carried away like prisoners.

Family of Jacob, listen to me! You who are left from the family of Israel, listen! I have carried you since you left your mother’s womb. I carried you when you were born, and I will still be carrying you when you are old. Your hair will turn gray, and I will still carry you. I made you, and I will carry you to safety.

Can you compare me to anyone? No one is equal to me. You cannot understand everything about me. There is nothing like me. Some people are rich with gold and silver. Gold falls from their purses, and they weigh their silver on scales. They pay an artist to make a false god from wood. Then they bow down and worship that false god. They put their false god on their shoulders and carry it. That false god is useless; people have to carry it! People set the statue on the ground, and it cannot move. That false god never walks away from its place. People can yell at it, but it will not answer. That false god is only a statue; it cannot save people from their troubles.

Sinners, change your heart and mind. Think about this again. Remember it and be strong. Remember what happened long ago. Remember, I am God and there is no other God. There is no other like me. In the beginning, I told you what would happen in the end. A long time ago, I told you things that have not happened yet. When I plan something, it happens. I do whatever I want to do. I am calling a man from the east to do what I want. He will come like an eagle from a faraway country. He will do all that I have planned. Everything I said will happen just as I said it would.

Everything I said will happen just as I said it would. Listen to me, you stubborn\(^b\) people! You are far from doing what is right. But I am close to making things right. Salvation will not be delayed much longer. I will bring salvation to Zion and to my wonderful Israel.”

**God’s Message to Babylon**

47 Fall down and sit in the dirt, Virgin Daughter Babylon. You have no throne, so sit on the ground, daughter of the Chaldeans.\(^c\)

You are not the ruler now. You are no longer the beautiful young princess that people said you were. Get the millstones ready and grind the grain into flour. Take off your veil and fancy clothes. Lift your skirt and get ready to cross the rivers.\(^d\)

Men will see your naked body and use you for sex. I will make you pay for the bad things you did, and I will not let anyone help you.

“My people say, ‘God saves us. His name is the LORD All-Powerful, the Holy One of Israel.’”

So Babylon, sit down and shut up. Daughter of the Chaldeans, go into the dark prison. You will no longer be ‘The Queen of the Kingdoms.’

“I was angry with my people. They were mine, but I turned against them. I let you punish them, but you showed them no mercy. Even for those who were old

\(^{d}\) Nebo \textit{A false god of Babylon.}
you made the work hard.
7 You said, ‘I will live forever.
   I will always be the queen.’
You didn’t care what you did to my
people.
You didn’t think about what might
happen later.
8 So now listen, you who love only
   pleasure!
   Feeling so safe, you tell yourself,
   ‘I alone am important, and no one else
   matters.
   I will never be a widow or lose my
   children.’
9 These two things will happen to you:
   First, you will lose your children
   and then your husband.
   And none of your magic spells will
   help you.
10 You do bad things but still feel safe.a
    You say to yourself, ‘No one sees the
    wrong I do.’
    You thought that your wisdom and
    knowledge would save you.
    You tell yourself, ‘I alone am
    important, and no one else matters.’
11 “But disaster is coming your way.
    You don’t know when it will happen,
    but disaster is coming.
    And there is nothing you can do to
    stop it.
12 You worked hard all your life
   learning magic and spells.
   So start using that magic.
   Maybe those spells will help you.
   Maybe you will be able to frighten
   someone.
13 You have many advisors.
    Are you tired of the advice they
give?
Then send out your men who read the
stars.
   They can tell when the month starts,
   so maybe they can tell you when
   your troubles will come.
14 But they cannot even save themselves.
   They will burn like straw.

They will burn so fast that there will be
   no coals left to cook bread.
   There will be no fire left to sit by.
15 That’s what will happen to those you
   have worked with,
   the people you did business with all
   your life.
   They will all go their own way.
   There will be no one left to save
   you.”

God Rules His World

48 14 ‘Family of Jacob, listen to me!
   You people call yourself ‘Israel,’
   but you are from Judah’s family.
   When you take an oath, I, the LORD,
   the God of Israel,
   am the one whose name you use,
   but you are not honest and sincere.

2 “Yes, you call yourselves citizens of the
   holy city,b
   those who depend on the God of
   Israel.
   The LORD All-Powerful is his name.

3 “Long ago I told you what would
   happen.
   I told you about these things.
   And suddenly I made them happen.
4 I did that because I knew you were
   stubborn.
   You were like iron that will not
   bend,
   with heads as hard as bronze.
5 So long ago I told you what would
   happen.
   I told you about those things long
   before they happened.
   I did this so that you could not say,
   ‘The gods we made did this.
   Our idols, our statues, made this
   happen.’ ”

God Punishes Israel to Make Them Pure

6 “You heard what I said would happen.
   And you can see it has all been done.
   Shouldn’t you tell this to others?
   Now I will tell you about new things,

a 47:10 You … safe Or “You put your trust in your evil.”
b 48:2 holy city That is, Jerusalem.
secrets you have not known before.

7 This is something that is happening now, not long ago.
You have not heard about it before today.
So you cannot say, ‘We already knew that.’

8 But even in the past you didn’t listen.
You didn’t learn anything.
You never listen to what I say.
I have always known that you would turn against me.
You have rebelled against me from the time you were born.

9 “But I will be patient.
I will do this for myself.
People will praise me for not becoming angry and destroying you.
You will praise me for waiting.

10 “Look, I will make you pure,
but not in the way you make silver pure.
I will make you pure by giving you troubles.
I will do this for myself—for me!
I will not let you treat me as if I am not important.
I will not let some false god take my glory and praise.

12 “Jacob, listen to me!
Israel, I called you to be my people.
So listen to me!
I am the Beginning,
and I am the End.
I made the earth with my own hands.
My right hand made the sky.
And if I call them,
they will come to stand before me.

14 “All of you, come here and listen to me.
Did any of the false gods say these things would happen? No!
The LORD’s friend \(^a\) will do what he wants

to Babylon and the Chaldeans.

15 “I told you that I would call him.
I will lead him,
and I will make him succeed.

16 Come here and listen to me!
I was there when Babylon began as a nation.
And from the beginning, I spoke clearly
so that people could know what I said.”

Now, the Lord God sends me and his Spirit to tell you these things. \(^b\)The LORD, the Savior, the Holy One of Israel, says,

“I am the LORD your God.
I teach you for your own good.
I lead you in the way you should go.

18 If you had obeyed me,
then peace would have come to you like a full flowing river.
Good things would have come to you again and again,
like the waves of the sea.

19 If you had obeyed me,
you would have had as many children as there are grains of sand.
And they would always have been mine
and would never have been destroyed.”

20 My people, leave Babylon!
My people, run from the Chaldeans!
Tell the news with joy.
Spread the news around the world.
Tell them,

“The LORD rescued his servant Jacob.”

21 They never got thirsty as he led them through the desert,
because he made water flow from a rock.
He split the rock,
and water flowed out.

22 But the LORD also said,
“There is no peace for evil people.”

\(^a\) 48:14 friend Or “partner.” This probably means Cyrus, king of Persia. He ruled about 550–530 B.C.

\(^b\) Passages like 48:16–17 have often been understood as referring to the coming of Cyrus the Persian who, in 539 B.C., led the Babylonian captives back to Jerusalem.
God Calls His Special Servant

1Hear me, people by the sea. Listen to me, you faraway nations.
The LORD called me before I was born. He called my name while I was still in my mother’s womb.

2He used me to speak for him. He used me like a sharp sword, but he also held me in his hand to protect me. He used me like a sharp arrow, but he also kept me safe in his arrow bag.

3He told me, “Israel, you are my servant. I will do wonderful things with you.”

4I said, “I worked hard for nothing. I wore myself out, but I did nothing useful. I used all my power, but I did not really do anything. So the LORD must decide what to do with me. He must decide my reward.”

5The LORD is the one who made me in my mother’s womb, so that I could be his servant. He wanted me to lead Jacob and Israel back to him. The LORD gives me honor. I get my strength from my God.

6And now he says, “You are a very important servant to me. You must bring back to me the tribes of Jacob. You must bring back the people of Israel who are still alive. But I have something else for you to do that is even more important: I will make you a light for the other nations. You will show people all over the world the way to be saved.”

7The LORD, the Holy Protector of Israel, speaks to his servant. People hate that servant. Nations despise him. He is now a slave to rulers. The Lord says to him, “Kings will see you and stand to honor you. Great leaders will bow down to you.”

8This will happen for the LORD. The Holy One of Israel is the one who chose you, and he can be trusted.

The Day of Salvation

8This is what the LORD says: “There will be a special time when I show my kindness. Then I will answer your prayers. There will be a special day when I will save you. Then I will help you and protect you. And you will be the proof of my agreement with the people. The country is destroyed now, but you will give the land back to the people who own it.

9You will tell the prisoners, ‘Come out of your prison!’ You will tell those who are in darkness, ‘Come out of the dark!’ The people will eat along the road, and they will have food even on empty hills.

10They will not be hungry or thirsty. The hot sun and wind will not hurt them. Their Comforter will lead them. He will lead them by springs of water.

11I will make a road for my people. The mountains will be made flat, and the low roads will be raised.

12“Look! People are coming to me from faraway places. They are coming to me from the north and from the west. They are coming to me from Aswan in Egypt.”

13Heavens and earth, be happy!
Mountains, shout with joy!
The LORD comforts his people.
He is good to his poor people.

But now Zion says, “The LORD has left me;
the Lord has forgotten me.”

But the Lord says,
“Can a woman forget her baby?
Can she forget the child who came from her body?
Even if she can forget her children,
I cannot forget you.
I drew a picture of you on my hand.
You are always before my eyes.
Your children will come back to you,
and those who destroyed you will leave.
Look up! Look all around you!
All of your children are gathering together and coming to you.”
The LORD says, “On my life, I promise you this:
Your children will be like jewels that you tie around your neck.
Your children will be like the necklace that a bride wears.

“You are destroyed and defeated now.
Your land is useless.
But after a short time, you will have many people in your land.
And those who destroyed you will be far, far away.

You were sad for the children you lost,
but they will tell you,
‘This place is too small!
Give us a bigger place to live!’

Then you will say to yourself,
‘Who gave me all these children?
I was sad and lonely.
My children were taken away.
They were gone.
So who gave me these children?
Look, I was the only one left.
Where did all these children come from?’”

This is the LORD God says:
“Look, I will wave my hand to the nations.
I will raise my flag for everyone to see.
Then they will bring your children to you.
They will carry your children on their shoulders,
and they will hold them in their arms.
Kings will be their teachers.
The daughters of kings will care for them.
The kings and their daughters will bow down to you.
They will kiss the dirt at your feet.
Then you will know that I am the Lord,
and anyone who trusts in me will not be disappointed.”

If a strong soldier takes a prisoner, can you set him free?
If a powerful soldier guards someone, can the prisoner escape?
Here is the LORD’s answer:
“The prisoners will escape.
Those captured by the strong soldier will be set free.
That’s because I will fight your battles,
and I will save your children.
Those people hurt you,
but I will force them to eat their own bodies.
Their own blood will be the wine that makes them drunk.
Then everyone will know that the Lord saved you.
Everyone will know that the Powerful One of Jacob saved you.”

Israel Punished Because of Their Sin

‘This is what the LORD says:
“People of Israel, you say that I divorced your mother, Jerusalem.
But where is the legal paper that proves I divorced her?
My children, did I owe money to
someone?  
Did I sell you to pay a debt?  
No, you were sold because of the bad things you did.  
Your mother was sent away because of the bad things you did.

2 I came home and found no one there.  
I called and called, but no one answered.  
Do you think I cannot get you back?  
Do you think I cannot save you?  
Look, if I gave the command, the ocean would dry up!  
I can turn rivers into a desert.  
The fish would die without water, and their bodies would rot.  
3 I can make the skies dark.  
I can cover the skies in darkness as black as sackcloth.”

God’s Servant Depends on God

4 The Lord God gave me the ability to teach, so now I teach these sad people. Every morning he wakes me and teaches me like a student.  
5 The Lord God helps me learn, and I have not turned against him. I will not stop following him.  
6 I will let those people beat me and pull the hair from my beard. I will not hide my face when they say bad things to me and spit at me.  
7 The Lord God will help me, so the bad things they say will not hurt me. I will be strong. I know I will not be disappointed.

8 God is with me, and he is the one who shows that I am innocent. So no one can say I am guilty. If anyone wants to try to prove me wrong, they should come here, and we will have a trial.  
9 But look, the Lord God helps me, so no one can prove me guilty. As for them, they will all be like worthless old clothes, eaten by moths.

10 People who respect the Lord also listen to his servant. That servant lives completely trusting in God without knowing what will happen. He really trusts in the Lord’s name and depends on his God.

11 The Lord says, “Look, you people want to do whatever you want. So light your own fires and torches, but you will be punished. You will fall into your fires and torches and be burned. I will make that happen.”

Israel Should Be Like Abraham

51 “Some of you people try hard to live good lives. You go to the Lord for help. Listen to me. You should look at Abraham your father. He is the rock you were cut from.  
2 Abraham is your father, so look at him. Look at Sarah, who gave birth to you. Abraham was alone when I called him. Then I blessed him, and he began a great family with many descendants.”  
3 In the same way, the Lord will bless Zion. He will feel sorry for her and her people, and he will do something great for her. He will turn the desert into a garden. It will be like the Garden of Eden. The land was empty, but it will become like the Lord’s garden. People there will be very happy. They will sing victory songs to thank God for what he did.

4 “My people, listen to me!  
My decisions will be like lights showing people how to live.

5 I will soon save you and show that I am fair.  
I will use my power and judge all nations.  
All the faraway places are waiting for me.  
They wait for my power to help them.

6 Look up to the heavens!  
Look around you at the earth below!  
The skies will disappear like clouds of smoke.  
The earth will become like worthless old clothes.  
The people on earth will die, but my salvation will continue forever.  
My goodness will never end.

7 You people who understand goodness should listen to me.  
You people who follow my teachings should hear the things I say.
Don’t be afraid of evil people.
Don’t let their insults upset you.
8 They will be like old clothes eaten by moths.
They will be like wool eaten by worms.
But my goodness will last forever.
My salvation will continue forever and ever.”

God’s Own Power Will Save His People
9 Wake up! Wake up!
Arm of the LORD, clothe yourself with strength.
Show your power the way you did long ago,
as you have from ancient times.
You are the one who destroyed Rahab.
You defeated the Dragon.\(^a\)
10 You dried up the water that was in the deep sea.
You made a road through the deepest parts of the sea.
Your people crossed over and were saved.
11 The LORD will save his people.
They will return to Zion with joy.
They will be very happy.
Their happiness will be like a crown on their heads forever.
They will be singing with joy.
All sadness will be gone far away.

12 The Lord says, “I am the one who comforts you.
So why should you be afraid of people?
They are only humans who live and die like the grass.

13 “I, the LORD, am the one who made you.
With my power I made the earth and spread the sky over the earth.
But you have forgotten me,
so you are always afraid that angry men will hurt you.
Those men planned to destroy you,
but where are they now?

14 “People in prison will soon be made free.
They will not die and rot in prison.
They will have plenty of food.

15 “I am the LORD your God,
the one who stirs up the sea and makes the waves roar.”
The LORD All-Powerful is his name.
16“My servant, I gave you the words I want you to say, and I covered you with my hands to protect you. I did this to make a new heaven and earth and so that you would say to Israel, ‘You are my people.’”

God Punished Israel
17 Wake up! Wake up!
Jerusalem, get up!
The LORD was very angry with you.
So you were punished.
It was like a cup of poison you had to drink,
and you drank it all.
18 Jerusalem had many people, but none of them became leaders for her. None of the children she raised became guides to lead her. 19Troubles came to you, Jerusalem, in pairs: Your land was destroyed and lies in ruins, and your people suffered from famine and war.

But no one felt sorry for you or showed you mercy. 20 Your people became weak. They fell on the ground and lay there. They were lying on every street corner, like animals caught in a net. They were punished by the LORD’s anger until they could not accept any more punishment. When God said he would give them more punishment, they became very weak.

21Listen to me, poor Jerusalem. You are weak like a drunk, but you are not drunk from wine. You are weak \(\text{from that ‘cup of poison’}\).

22 Your God is the one who fights for his people. He is your Lord God, and he says to you, “Look, I am taking this ‘cup of poison’ away from you. It is full of my anger, and I am taking it out of your hand. You

\(^a\) 51:9 Rahab … Dragon This is Rahab the great sea monster. Some ancient stories tell about Rahab fighting with God.
will not be punished by my anger again.  
23 I will now use my anger to punish the people who hurt you. They tried to kill you. They told you, ‘Bow down before us, and we will walk on you.’ They forced you to bow down before them, and then they walked on your back like dirt. You were like a road for them to walk on.”

Israel Will Be Saved

52 1 Wake up! Wake up! Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Holy city of Jerusalem, stand up and put on your beautiful clothes! Those filthy foreigners\(^d\) will not enter you again.  
2 Jerusalem, get up and shake off the dust! Daughter Zion,\(^b\) you were a prisoner, but take the chains off your neck.  
3 The LORD says,  
“You were not sold for money. So I will not use money to set you free.”  
4 The Lord God says, “First, my people went down to Egypt and became slaves. Then Assyria made them slaves. \(^5\) Now look what has happened. Another nation has taken my people,” says the LORD. “That country did not pay to take my people, but they rule over them and laugh at them, and they say bad things about me all the time.” The LORD is the one saying these things.  
5 “This happened so that my people will learn about me. My people will know who I am. My people will know my name, and they will know that I Am He\(^c\) is speaking to them.”  
6 How wonderful it is to see someone coming over the hills to tell good news. How wonderful to hear him announce, “There is peace! We have been saved!” and to hear him say to Zion, “Your God is the king!”

8 The city guards\(^d\) are shouting. They are all rejoicing together. They can all see the LORD returning to Zion.  
9 Ruins of Jerusalem, be happy again! Rejoice because the LORD comforted his people and set Jerusalem free.  
10 The LORD showed his holy strength to all the nations. All the faraway countries saw how God saved his people.

11 So leave Babylon! Leave that place! Priests, you carry the things that belong to the LORD. So make yourselves pure. Don’t touch anything that is not pure.  
12 You will leave Babylon, but they will not force you to leave in a hurry. You will not be forced to run away. The LORD will be in front of you. The God of Israel will be behind you.\(^e\)

God’s Suffering Servant

13 The Lord says, “Look, my servant will succeed in what he has to do, and he will be raised to a position of high honor. \(^14\) It is true that many were shocked when they saw him. He was beaten so badly that he no longer looked like a man. \(^15\) But it is also true that many nations will be amazed at him. Kings will look at him and be unable to speak. They will see what they had never been told. They will understand what they had never heard."\(^f\)  
14 Who really believed what we heard? Who saw in it the LORD’s great power?\(^g\)

\(^a\) 52:1 filthy foreigners Or “unclean men that have not been circumcised.”  
\(^b\) 52:2 Daughter Zion Another name for Jerusalem.  
\(^c\) 52:6 I Am He This is like YAHWEH, the Hebrew name for God. It shows that God lives forever, and that he is always with his people. See Ex. 3:13–17.  
\(^d\) 52:8 guards Men who stand on the city walls and watch for messengers or trouble coming to the city. Here, this probably means the prophets.  
\(^e\) 52:12 The LORD … behind you This shows that God will protect his people. Compare Ex. 14:19, 20.  
\(^f\) 52:15 They will see … heard Or “Those who were not told the message saw what happened. Those who did not hear understood.”  
\(^g\) 53:1 Who … power Or “Upon whom was the arm of the
2He was always close to the Lord. He grew up like a young plant, like a root growing in dry ground. There was nothing special or impressive about the way he looked, nothing we could see that would cause us to like him. 3 People made fun of him, and even his friends left him. He was a man who suffered a lot of pain and sickness. We treated him like someone of no importance, like someone people will not even look at but turn away from in disgust.

4The fact is, it was our suffering he took on himself; he bore our pain. But we thought that God was punishing him, that God was beating him for something he did. 5 But he was being punished for what we did. He was crushed because of our guilt. He took the punishment we deserved, and this brought us peace. We were healed because of his pain. 6 We had all wandered away like sheep. We had gone our own way. And yet the Lord put all our guilt on him.

7He was treated badly, but he never protested. He said nothing, like a lamb being led away to be killed. He was like a sheep that makes no sound as its wool is being cut off. He never opened his mouth to defend himself. 8 He was taken away by force and judged unfairly. The people of his time did not even notice that he was killed. a But he was put to death b for the sins of his c people. 9 He had done no wrong to anyone. He had never even told a lie. But he was denied the life of a rich man. His tomb was among the wicked.

10But the Lord was pleased with this humble servant who suffered such pain. d Even after giving himself as an offering for sin, he will see his descendants and enjoy a long life. He will succeed in doing what the Lord wanted. e After his suffering he will see the light, e and he will be satisfied with what he experienced.

The Lord says, “My servant, who always does what is right, will make his people right with me; he will take away their sins. 12 For this reason, I will treat him as one of my great people. I will give him the rewards of one who wins in battle, and he will share them with his powerful ones. I will do this because he gave his life for the people. He was considered a criminal, but the truth is, he carried away the sins of many. Now he will stand before me and speak for those who have sinned.”

God Brings His People Home 54 1 “Woman, be happy! You have not had any children, but you should be very happy.

“Yes, the woman who is alone f will have more children than the woman with a husband.”

This is what the Lord says.

2 “Make your tent bigger. Open your doors wide. Don’t think small! Make your tent large and strong, because you will grow in all directions. Your children will take over many nations and live in the cities that were destroyed.

3 Don’t be afraid! You will not be disappointed. People will not say bad things against you. You will not be embarrassed. When you were young, you felt shame. But you will forget that shame now. You will not remember the shame you felt when you lost your husband.”

Lord revealed?” This could mean, “Who received the punishment from the Lord?”

a 53:8 The people … killed Or “There is no story about his descendants, because he was taken from the land of the living.”

b 53:8 put to death Or “punished.”

c 53:8 his This is the reading in a Hebrew copy among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The standard Hebrew text has “my.”

d 53:10 But the Lord … such pain Or “The Lord decided to crush him. He decided that he must suffer.”

e 53:11 the light This is found in some Hebrew scrolls from Qumran and the ancient Greek version. Light is often used as a symbol for life.

f 54:1 Yes, the woman … alone This Hebrew word is like the word “destroyed.” This probably means “Jerusalem, the city that is destroyed.”

g 54:4 husband In Hebrew this word is like the name Baal. This means that the Lord is Jerusalem’s true God, not the false god Baal.
Your real husband is the one who made you.
His name is the Lord All-Powerful.
The Holy One of Israel is your Protector, and he is the God of all the earth!

Like a woman whose husband has left her,
you were very sad.
You were like a young wife left all alone.
But the Lord has called you back to him."
This is what your God says.

For a short time I turned away from you,
but with all my love I will welcome you again.

I was so angry that for a while I did not want to see you.
But now I want to comfort you with kindness forever.
The Lord your Savior said this.

Remember, in Noah's time I punished the world with the flood.
But I made a promise to Noah that I would never again destroy the world with water.
In the same way, I promise that I will never again be angry with you and say bad things to you.

The mountains may disappear,
and the hills may become dust,
but my faithful love will never leave you.
I will make peace with you, and it will never end."
The Lord who loves you said this.

You poor city!
Enemies came against you like storms,
and no one comforted you.
But I will rebuild you.

I will use a beautiful mortar to lay the stones of your walls.
I will use sapphire stones when I lay the foundation.
The stones on top of the wall will be made from rubies.
I will use shiny jewels for the gates.
I will use precious stones to build the walls around you.
I, the Lord, will teach your children, and they will have real peace.
You will be built on goodness.
You will be safe from cruelty and fear.
So you will have nothing to fear.
Nothing will come to hurt you.
I will never send anyone to attack you.
And if any army tries to attack you, you will defeat them.

Look, I made the blacksmith. He blows on the fire to make it hotter. Then he takes the hot iron and makes the kind of tool he wants to make. In the same way, I made the 'Destroyer' to destroy things.

People will make weapons to fight against you, but their weapons will not defeat you. Some people will say things against you, but anyone who speaks against you will be proved wrong.
The Lord says, "That is what my servants get! They get the good things that come from me, their Lord.

God Gives "Food" That Really Satisfies

All you people who are thirsty,
come!
Here is water for you to drink.
Don't worry if you have no money.
Come, eat and drink until you are full!
You don't need money.
The milk and wine are free.

Why waste your money on something that is not real food?
Why should you work for something that does not really satisfy you?
Listen closely to me and you will eat what is good.

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You will enjoy the food that satisfies your soul.

Listen closely to what I say.
Listen to me so that you will live.
I will make an agreement with you that will last forever.
It will be an agreement you can trust, like the one I made with David—a promise to love him and be loyal to him forever.

I made David a witness of my power for all nations.
I promised him that he would become a ruler and commander of many nations.”

There are nations in places you don’t know,
but you will call for them to come.
They don’t know you,
but they will run to you.
This will happen because the LORD, your God, wants it.
It will happen because the Holy One of Israel honors you.

So you should look for the LORD before it is too late.
You should call to him now, while he is near.

Evil people should stop living evil lives.
They should stop thinking bad thoughts.
They should come to the LORD again, and he will comfort them.
They should come to our God because he will freely forgive them.

People Cannot Understand God

The LORD says, “My thoughts are not like yours.
Your ways are not like mine.

Just as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so my ways are higher than your ways,
and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.

“Rain and snow fall from the sky and don’t return until they have watered the ground.
Then the ground causes the plants to sprout and grow,
and they produce seeds for the farmer and food for people to eat.

In the same way, my words leave my mouth,
and they don’t come back without results.
My words make the things happen that I want to happen.
They succeed in doing what I send them to do.

“So you will go out from there with joy.
You will be led out in peace.
When you come to the mountains and hills, they will begin singing.
All the trees in the fields will clap their hands.

Large cypress trees will grow where there were thornbushes.
Myrtle trees will grow where there were weeds.
All this will happen to make the LORD known,
to be a permanent reminder of his goodness and power.”

All Nations Will Follow the Lord

The LORD said these things, “Be fair to all people. Do what is right, because soon my salvation will come to you. My goodness will soon be shown to the whole world. I will bless those who refuse to do wrong and who obey the law about the Sabbath.”

Some foreigners will choose to follow the LORD. They should not say, “The LORD will not really accept me like the rest of his people.” A eunuch should not say, “I am only a dry piece of wood. I cannot have any children.”

They should not say that because the LORD says, “Some eunuchs obey the laws about the Sabbath. They choose to do what I want, and they follow my agreement.” So I will put a memorial stone in agreement This usually means the agreement God
my Temple for them. Their name will be remembered in my city! Yes, I will give those eunuchs something better than sons and daughters. I will give them a name that will last forever! They will not be cut off from my people.

6 “Some foreigners have chosen to follow the LORD. They do this so that they can serve him and love his name and be his servants. They keep the Sabbath as a special day of worship, and they will continue to follow closely my agreement. So I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them happy in my house of prayer. The offerings and sacrifices they give me will please me, because my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

8 The Lord God said these things.

The Israelites were forced to leave their country, but the Lord will gather them together again. He says, “I will bring them back together again!”

9 Wild animals in the forest, come and eat.

10 The watchmen are all blind.
   They don’t know what they are doing.
   They are like dogs that will not bark.
   They lie on the ground and sleep.
   Oh, they love to sleep.

11 They are like hungry dogs.
   They are never satisfied.
   The shepherds don’t know what they are doing.
   Like their sheep, they have all wandered away.
   They are greedy.
   All they want is to satisfy themselves.

12 They come and say,
   “I will drink some wine.
   I will drink some beer.
   I will do the same thing tomorrow,
   but I will drink even more.”

Made with Israel through Moses. (See “agreement” in the Word List.) Here, it might mean the agreement of Isa. 55:3. Here, it might mean the agreement of Isa. 55:3.

d 56:5 cut off To be removed from the list of the people of Israel. This included a person’s being forced to leave family, land, and the people of Israel.

b 56:10 The watchmen Literally, “The seers,” an ancient title for prophets.

Israel Does Not Follow God

1 All the good people are gone, and no one even noticed.
   The loyal followers were gathered up, but no one knows why.

2 But peace will come too, and those who trust him will get to rest in their own beds.

3 “Come here, you children of witches.
   Your father committed adultery,
   and your mother was unfaithful.

4 You are children out of control, full of lies.
   You make fun of me.
   You make faces and stick out your tongue at me.

5 All you want is to worship false gods under every green tree.
   You kill children by every stream and sacrifice them in the rocky places.

6 You love to worship the smooth rocks in the rivers.
   You pour wine on them to worship them.
   You give sacrifices to them, but those rocks are all you get.
   Do you think this makes me happy? You make your bed on every hill and high mountain.

7 You make your bed on every hill and high mountain.
   You go up to those places and offer sacrifices.

8 You hide the things that help you remember me behind the doors and doorframes.
   You were with me, but you got up to go to them.
   You spread out your bed and gave yourself to them.

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You love their beds and enjoy looking at their naked bodies.\(^a\)

9 You use your oils and perfumes to look nice for Molech.
You sent your messengers to faraway lands, and this will bring you down to the place of death.\(^b\)

10 All of them made you tired, but you never gave up.
You found new strength, because you enjoyed them.

11 You did not remember me.
You did not even notice me! So who were you worrying about?
Who were you afraid of? Why did you lie?
Look, I have been quiet for a long time.
Is that why you didn’t honor me?

12 I could tell about your ‘good works’ and all the ‘religious’ things you do, but that will not help you.

13 When you need help, you cry to those false gods that you have gathered around you.
Let them help you!
But I tell you, the wind will blow them all away.
A puff of wind will blow them all away.
But the one who depends on me will get the land I promised and enjoy my holy mountain.\(^c\)”

The Lord Will Save His People

14 Clear the road! Clear the road!
Make the way clear for my people!

15 God is high and lifted up.
He lives forever.
His name is holy.
He says, “I live in a high and holy place,
but I also live with people who are humble and sorry for their sins.
I will give new life to those who are humble in spirit.
I will give new life to those who are sorry for their sins.

16 I will not accuse my people forever.
I will not always be angry.
If I continued to show my anger, then the human spirit, the life I gave them, would die before me.

17 Israel’s evil greed made me angry, so I punished them.
I turned away from them because I was angry.
But they continued to do wrong.
They did whatever they wanted.

18 I have seen their way of life, but I will heal them.
I will guide and comfort them and those who mourn for them.

19 I will teach them a new word: peace.
I will give peace to those who are near and to those who are far away.
I will heal them.” The LORD himself said this.

20 But evil people are like the angry ocean.
They cannot be quiet and peaceful.
They are angry, and like the ocean, they stir up mud.

21 My God says, “There is no peace for evil people.”

People Must Be Told to Follow God

1 Shout as loud as you can and don’t stop.
Shout like a trumpet!
Tell the people what they did wrong.
Tell the family of Jacob about their sins.

2 They still come every day to worship me, acting as if they want to learn my ways.
They pretend to be a nation that lives right and obeys the commands of their

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\(^a\) 57:8 naked bodies. This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word also means “memorial,” as in Isa. 56:3.

\(^b\) 57:9 this will ... death. Or “You even send them down to Sheol.”

\(^c\) 57:13 holy mountain. Mount Zion, one of the mountains Jerusalem was built on.

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God.
They ask me to judge them fairly.
They want their God to be near them.

3They say, “We fast to show honor to you. Why don’t you see us? We starve our bodies to show honor to you. Why don’t you notice us?”

But God says, “You do things to please yourselves on those special days of fasting. And you punish your servants, not your own bodies. 4You are hungry, but not for food. You are hungry for arguing and fighting, not for bread. You are hungry to hit people with your evil hands. This is not the way to fast if you want your prayers to be heard in heaven! 5Do you think I want to see people punish their bodies on those days of fasting? Do you think I want people to look sad and bow their heads like dead plants? Do you think I want people to wear mourning clothes and sit in ashes to show their sadness? That is what you do on your days of fasting. Do you think that is what the Lord wants?

6“I will tell you the kind of day I want—a day to set people free. I want a day that you take the burdens off others. I want a day when you set troubled people free and you take the burdens from their shoulders. 7I want you to share your food with the hungry. I want you to find the poor who don’t have homes and bring them into your own homes. When you see people who have no clothes, give them your clothes! Don’t hide from your relatives when they need help.”

8If you do these things, your light will begin to shine like the light of dawn. Then your wounds will heal. Your “Goodness” will walk in front of you, and the Glory of the Lord will come following behind you. 9Then you will call to the Lord, and he will answer you. You will cry out to him, and he will say, “Here I am.”

Stop causing trouble and putting burdens on people. Stop saying things to hurt people or accusing them of things they didn’t do. 10Feel sorry for hungry people and give them food. Help those who are troubled and satisfy their needs. Then your light will shine in the darkness. You will be like the bright sunshine at noon.

11The Lord will always lead you and satisfy your needs in dry lands. He will give strength to your bones. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring that never goes dry.

12Your cities have been destroyed for many years, but you will rebuild them and their foundations will last for a long time. You will be called “Fence Fixer” and “Builder of Roads and Houses.”

13That will happen when you stop sinning against God’s law about the Sabbath and when you stop doing things to please yourself on that special day. You should call the Sabbath a happy day. You should honor the Lord’s special day by not saying and doing things that you do every other day of the week. 14Then you could enjoy the Lord. As the Lord himself says, “I could carry you up to the highest mountain and let you enjoy the land that I gave to your father Jacob.”

Evil People Should Change Their Lives

591Look, the Lord’s power is enough to save you. He can hear you when you ask him for help. 2It is your sins that separate you from your God. He turns away from you when he sees them. 3That’s because your hands are covered with blood from the people you murdered. You tell lies and say evil things. 4You can’t be trusted, even in court. You lie about each other and depend on false arguments to win your cases. You create pain and produce wickedness. 5You hatch evil, like eggs from a poisonous snake. Anyone who eats the eggs will die. And if you break one of them open, a poisonous snake will come out.

Your lies are like spider webs. 6They cannot be used for clothes, and you cannot cover yourself with them.

Your hands are always busy sinning and hurting others. 7Your feet run toward evil. You are always ready to kill innocent people. You think of nothing but evil.
Everywhere you go you cause trouble and ruin. You don’t know how to live in peace. You don’t do what is right and fair. You are crooked, and anyone who lives like that will never know true peace.

Israel’s Sin Brings Trouble
9 All fairness and goodness is gone. There is only darkness around us, so we must wait for the light. We hope for a bright light, but all we have is darkness.
10 We are like people without eyes. We walk into walls like blind people. We stumble and fall as if it was night. Even in the daylight, we cannot see. At noontime, we fall like dead men.
11 We are always complaining; we growl like bears and moan like doves. We are waiting for justice, but there is none. We are waiting to be saved, but salvation is still far away.
12 That’s because we committed crimes against our God. Our own sins speak out against us. We know we are guilty. We know we have sinned.
13 We rebelled against the LORD and lied to him. We turned away from our God and left him. We planned to hurt others and to rebel against God. From hearts filled with lies, we talked about it and made our plans.
14 We pushed Justice away. Fairness stands off in the distance. Truth has fallen in the streets. Goodness is not allowed in the city.
15 Loyalty is gone, and people who try to do good are robbed.

The LORD looked and saw there was no justice. He did not like what he saw. He did not see anyone speak up for the people. He was shocked to see that no one stood up for them. So with his own power he saved them. His desire to do what is right gave him strength.

He put on the armor of goodness, the helmet of salvation, the uniform of punishment, and the coat of strong love.\(^a\)
18 He will give his enemies the punishment they deserve. They will feel his anger. He will punish all his enemies. People along the coast will get the punishment they deserve.
19 People from the west to the east will fear the LORD and respect his Glory. He will come quickly, like a fast-flowing river driven by a wind\(^b\) from the LORD.
20 Then a redeemer\(^c\) will come to Zion to save the people of Jacob who have turned away from sin.
21 The LORD says, “As for me, this is the agreement that I will make with these people. I promise my Spirit that I put on you and my words that I put in your mouth will never leave you. They will be with you and your children and your children’s children, for now and forever.

God Is Coming
60 Jerusalem, get up and shine!\(^d\) Your Light is coming!
The Glory of the LORD will shine on you.
2 Darkness now covers the earth, and the people are in darkness. But the LORD will shine on you, and his Glory will appear over you.
3 Then the nations will come to your light. Kings will come to your bright sunrise.

\(^a\) 59:17 strong love  The Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.
\(^b\) 59:19 wind  Or “spirit.”
\(^c\) 59:20 redeemer  Someone who sets a person free by paying their debt.
\(^d\) 60:1 Jerusalem . . . shine  Or “Jerusalem, my light, get up!”
4 Look around you!
   See all the people gathering around.
   Those are your sons coming from far away,
   and your daughters are there beside them.

5 “At that time you will see your people,
   and your faces will shine with happiness.
   First, you will be afraid,
   but then you will be excited.
   All the riches from across the seas will be set before you.
   The riches of the nations will come to you.
6 Herds of camels from Midian and Ephah
   will cross your land.
   Long lines of camels will come from Sheba.
   They will bring gold and incense.
   People will sing praises to the LORD.
7 People will collect all the sheep from Kedar and give them to you.
   They will bring you rams from Nebaioth.
   You will offer those animals on my altar,
   and I will accept them.
   I will make my wonderful Temple even more beautiful.
8 Look at the people.
   They are rushing toward you like clouds quickly crossing the sky.
   They are like doves flying to their nests.
9 The faraway lands are waiting for me.
   The great cargo ships are ready to sail.
   They are ready to bring your children from faraway lands.
   They will bring silver and gold with them to honor the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel.
   He has done wonderful things for you.
10 Children from other lands will rebuild your walls.
   Their kings will serve you.
   “When I was angry, I hurt you,
   but now I want to be kind to you.
   So I will comfort you.
11 Your gates will always be open.
   They will not be closed, day or night.
   Nations and kings will bring their wealth to you.
12 Any nation or kingdom that does not serve you will be destroyed.
13 All the great things of Lebanon will be given to you.
   People will bring pine trees, fir trees, and cypress trees to you.
   These trees will be used for lumber to make my Holy Place a more beautiful.
   This place is like a stool in front of my throne,
   and I will honor it.
14 In the past, people hurt you,
   but they will bow down before you.
   In the past, people hated you,
   but they will bow down at your feet.
   They will call you ‘The City of the Lord’s,’
   ‘Zion of the Holy One of Israel.’
15 “People hated you.
   You were left all alone with no one passing through.
   But I will make you great from now on.
   You will be happy forever and ever.
16 Nations will give you what you need,
   like a child drinking milk from its mother.
   But you will ‘drink’ riches from kings.
   Then you will know that it is I, the LORD, who saves you.
   You will know that I, the Great God of Jacob, protect you.
17 “You now have copper,
   but I will bring you gold.
   You now have iron,
   and I will make your Temple even more beautiful.

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but I will bring you silver.
I will change your wood into copper
and your rocks into iron.
I will change your punishment into
peace.
And those who punished you will
be replaced with those who are
kind to you.
18 There will never again be news of
violence in your country.
People will never again attack your
country and steal from you.
You will name your walls, ‘Salvation’
and your gates, ‘Praise.’

19 “The sun will no longer be your light
during the day.
The light from the moon will no
longer be your light at night.
The LORD will be your light forever.
Your God will be your glory.
20 Your sun will never go down again.
Your moon will never again be dark.
That’s because the LORD will be your
light forever,
and the dark days of mourning will
end.

21 “All your people will be good.
They will get the land forever.
They are the young plant in my
garden\(^a\)
that will grow to be a wonderful
tree.
I made them with my own hands.\(^b\)
22 The smallest family will become a large
family group.
The smallest tribe will become a
powerful nation.
When the time is right,
I, the LORD, will come quickly.
I will make these things happen.”

The Lord’s Message of Freedom

61 “The Spirit of the Lord God is on
me. The LORD has chosen me to
tell good news to the poor and to comfort

\(^a\) 60:21 young plant ... garden  See Isa. 4:13 and 57.
\(^b\) 60:21 They are ... hands Or “They are the plant I planted,
which I made with my own hands, to show how wonderful
I am.”

those who are sad. He sent me to tell the
captives and prisoners that they have
been set free.\(^2\) He sent me to announce
that the time has come for the LORD to
show his kindness, when our God will
also punish evil people. He has sent me to
comfort those who are sad, \(^3\) those in Zion
who mourn. I will take away the ashes on
their head, and I will give them a crown.
I will take away their sadness, and I will
give them the oil of happiness. I will take
away their sorrow, and I will give them
celebration clothes. He sent me to name
them ‘Good Trees’ and ‘The LORD’s Won-
derful Plant.’

4 Then the old cities that were destroyed
will be rebuilt. Those ancient ruins will be
made new, as they were in the beginning.
5 Then your enemies will come to care
for your sheep, and their children will
work in your fields and in your gardens.
6 You will be called, ‘The LORD’s Priests,’
‘The Servants of our God.’ You will be
proud of all the riches that have come to
you from all the nations on earth.
7 In the past, other people shamed
you and said bad things to you. You were
shamed much more than any other peo-
ple. So in your land you will get two times
more than other people. You will get the
joy that continues forever.\(^4\) That’s because
I am the LORD and I love justice. I hate
stealing and everything that is wrong. So
I will give the people what they deserve. I
will make an agreement with my people
forever.\(^9\) Their descendants will be known
throughout the earth, and everyone will
know their children. Whoever sees them
will know that the LORD has blessed them.

God’s Servant Brings Salvation

10 The LORD makes me very happy.
I am completely happy with my
God.
He dressed me in the clothes of
salvation.
He put the victory coat on me.
I look like a man dressed for his
wedding,
like a bride covered with jewels.
The earth causes plants to grow, and a garden makes the seeds planted there rise up. In the same way, the Lord God will make goodness and praise grow throughout the nations.

New Jerusalem: A City Full of Goodness

62 "I love Zion, so I will continue to speak for her. I love Jerusalem, so I will not stop speaking. I will speak until goodness \(^a\) shines like a bright light, until salvation burns bright like a flame.

2 Then all nations will see your goodness. All kings will see your honor. Then you will have a new name that the LORD himself will give you.

3 You will be like a beautiful crown that the LORD holds up, like a king’s crown in the hand of your God.

4 You will never again be called ‘The People God Left.’ Your land will never again be called ‘The Land God Destroyed.’ You will be called ‘The People God Loves.’ Your land will be called ‘God’s Bride,’ because the LORD loves you, and your land will be his.\(^b\)

5 As a young man takes a bride and she belongs to him, so your land will belong to your children.\(^c\)

As a man is happy with his new wife, so your God will be happy with you.

6 Jerusalem, I put guards on your walls. They will not be silent. They will keep praying day and night.

7 Guards, keep praying to the LORD. Remind him of his promise. Don’t ever stop praying.

8 The LORD made a promise and guaranteed it by his own power. And he will use that power to keep his promise.

The Lord said, “I promise that I will never again give your food to your enemies. I promise that they will never again take the wine you make.

9 Whoever gathers the food will eat it and praise the LORD. Whoever gathers the grape will drink the wine in the courtyards of my Temple.”

10 Come through the gates! Clear the way for the people! Prepare the road! Move all the stones off the road! Raise a flag as a sign for the nations!

11 Listen, the LORD is speaking to all the faraway lands: “Tell the people of Zion, ‘Look, your Savior is coming. He is bringing your reward to you. He is bringing it with him.’”

12 His people will be called “The Holy People,” “The Saved People of the Lord.” And you, Jerusalem, will be called “The City God Wants,” “The City God Is With.”

The Lord Punishes the Nations

63 Who is this coming from Edom, from the city of Bozrah? His clothes are stained bright red. He is glorious in his clothes. He is walking tall with his great power. He says, “I have the power to save you,

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\(^a\) 62:1 goodness Or “victory.”

\(^b\) 62:4 your land … his Or “He will marry your land.” This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word also means “He will be the lord of the land.”

\(^c\) 62:5 your land … children Or “Your builders will marry you.”
and I speak the truth.”

2 “Why are your clothes bright red?
They are like the clothes of
someone who tramples grapes to
make wine.”

3 He answers, “I walked in the winepress
by myself.
No one helped me.
I was angry, and I trampled the grapes.
The juice\(^a\) splashed on my clothes,
so now they are stained.
4 I chose a time to punish people.
Now the time has come for me to
save and protect my people.
5 I looked around, but I saw no one to
help me.
I was surprised that no one
supported me.
So I used my own power to save my
people.
My own anger supported me.
6 In my anger I trampled down the
nations.
I punished them in anger and
spilled their blood\(^b\) on the
ground.”

The Lord Has Been Kind to His People
7 I will remember the kind things the
LORD has done,
and I will remember to praise him.
The LORD has given many good things
to the family of Israel.
He has been very kind to us.
He has shown us mercy.
8 He said, “These are my people.
These are my real children.”
So he saved them.
9 The people had many troubles,
but he was not against them.
He loved them and felt sorry for them,
so he saved them.
He sent his special angel to save them.
He picked them up and carried
them, just as he did long ago.
10 But they turned against him

\(^a\) 63:3 juice Or “strong drink” or “blood.”
\(^b\) 63:6 blood Or “strong drink” or “strength.”

and made his Holy Spirit very sad.
So the Lord became their enemy
and fought against them.

11 Then they remembered what happened
long ago.
They remembered Moses and those
with him.
So where is the one who brought them
through the sea
along with the shepherds who led
his flock?
Where is the one
who sent his Holy Spirit to live
among them?
12 He was by Moses’ side and led him
with his wonderful hand.
He divided the water,
so that the people could walk
through the sea.
He made his name famous
by doing those great things.
13 He led the people through the deep sea.
Like a horse running through the
desert,
they walked without falling.
14 Like cattle going down to the valley,
The Spirit of the LORD led them.
This is how you led your people
and made your name wonderful.

A Prayer for God to Help His People
15 Please, look down from the heavens.
See what is happening now.
Look down at us from your great and
holy home in heaven.
Where is your strong love\(^c\) for us?
Where is your compassion?
Why are you hiding your kind love
from me?
16 Look, you are our father!
Abraham does not know us.
Israel does not recognize us.
LORD, you are our father!
You are the one who has always
saved us!
17 LORD, why are you pushing us away
from you?

\(^c\) 63:15 strong love The Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.
Why are you making it hard for us to follow you?
Come back to us!
We are your servants.
Come to us and help us!
Our tribes belong to you.
Your holy people had their land only a short time.
Then your enemies trampled down your holy Temple.
Some people don’t follow you.
They don’t wear your name.
And we have been like them for a very long time.

64 If you would tear open the skies and come down to earth, then everything would change.
Mountains would melt before you.

2 The mountains would burst into flames like burning bushes.
The mountains would boil like water on the fire.
Then your enemies would learn about you.
And all nations would shake with fear when they see you.

3 But you have done awesome things that we did not expect.
You came down, and mountains shook in fear before you.

4 No one has ever heard of such a God.
No one has ever heard such a story.
No one has ever seen any God except you,
who does such great things for those who trust him.

5 You welcome people who enjoy doing good and who remember you by living the way you want them to.
But we sinned against you, and you became angry with us.
But you always saved us!

6 We are all dirty with sin.
Even our good works are not pure.
They are like bloodstained rags.
We are all like dead leaves.

Our sins have carried us away like wind.

7 We don’t call to you for help.
We aren’t excited about following you, so you have turned away from us.
We are helpless before you, because we are full of sin.

8 But, LORD, you are our father.
We are like clay, and you are the potter.
Your hands made us all.

9 LORD, don’t continue to be angry with us!
Don’t remember our sins forever!
Please, look at us!
We are all your people.

10 Your holy cities are as empty as the desert.
Zion has become a desert.
Jerusalem is destroyed.

11 Our ancestors worshiped you in our holy Temple.
That wonderful Temple has now been burned.
All our precious possessions have been destroyed.

12 LORD, will these things always keep you from helping?
Will you continue to say nothing?
Will you punish us forever?

All People Will Learn About God

65 “I helped people who had not come to me for advice. Those who found me were not looking for me.

b I spoke to a nation that does not use my name. I said, ‘Here I am! Here I am!’

2 All day long I stood ready to accept those who turned against me. But they kept doing whatever they wanted to do, and all they did was wrong. 3 They keep doing things, right in front of me, that make me angry. They offer sacrifices and burn incense in their special gardens.

4 They sit among the graves, waiting to get messages from the dead. They eat

a 64:5 we sinned … us Or “But you became angry with us and we sinned:”

b 65:11 helped … me Or “I was ready to answer those who did not come to me for advice. I was ready to be found by those who did not look for me.”

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the meat of pigs, and their pots are full of soup made from unclean meat. But they tell others, ‘Don’t come near me! Don’t touch me because I am holy!’ They are like smoke in my eyes, and their fire burns all the time.”

**Israel Must Be Punished**

6 “Look, here is a letter that lists all your sins. I will not be quiet until I pay you back for these sins. I will do it by punishing you.

7 I, the LORD, am doing this because of your sins and the sins of your ancestors. They did these sins when they burned incense in the mountains. They shamed me on those hills, and I punished them first.”

8 The LORD says, “When there is new wine in the grapes, people squeeze out the wine. But they don’t completely destroy the grapes because the grapes can still be used. I will do the same thing to my servants. I will not destroy them completely.

9 I will keep some of the people of Jacob. Some of the people of Judah will get my mountains. I will choose the people who will get the land. My servants will live there.

10 Then Sharon Valley will be a field for sheep. The Valley of Achor \(a\) will be a place for cattle to rest. All this will be for my people—for the people who come to me for help.

11 “But you people left the LORD, so you will be punished. You forgot about my holy mountain. You began to worship Luck. You held feasts for the false god, Fate. \(c\) But I decided what would happen to you: you will be killed with a sword. You will all be killed because I called to you, but you refused to answer me. I spoke to you, but you would not listen. You did what I said is evil and chose to do what I did not like.”

13 So this is what the Lord GOD says:

“My servants will eat,

but you evil people will be hungry.

My servants will drink,

but you will be thirsty.

My servants will be happy,

but you will suffer shame.

14 My servants will shout for joy,

but you will cry out in pain.\(d\)

Your spirits will be broken,

and you will be very sad.

15 Your names will be like curses to my chosen servants.”

The Lord GOD will kill you, and then he will call his servants by a new name.

16 The Lord says, “People now ask blessings from the earth.

But in the future they will ask blessings from the faithful God.

People now trust in the power of the earth when they make a promise.

But in the future they will trust in the God who is faithful.

That’s because the troubles in the past will all be forgotten.

They will be hidden from my sight.”

**A New Time Is Coming**

17 “I am creating a new heaven and a new earth. The troubles of the past will be forgotten.

No one will remember them.

18 My people will be happy and rejoice forever and ever because of what I will make.

I will make a Jerusalem that is full of joy, and I will make her people happy.

19 “Then I will rejoice with Jerusalem. I will be happy with my people. There will never again be crying and sadness in that city.

In that city there will never be a baby who lives only a few days, and every older person will live for a long, long time.

A person who lives 100 years will be called young.

\(a\) 65:10 Valley of Achor A valley about ten miles north of Jerusalem.

\(b\) 65:11 my holy mountain Mount Zion, the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

\(c\) 65:11 Luck ... Fate Two false gods. The people thought these gods controlled their futures.

\(d\) 65:14 My servants ... pain Literally, “My servants will rejoice with good hearts, and you will scream with painful hearts.”
And whoever doesn’t live that long will be considered cursed.

21 “In that city whoever builds a house will live there; whoever plants a vineyard will eat the grapes from that garden.

22 Never again will one person build a house and another person live there. Never again will one person plant a garden and another eat the fruit from it. My people will live as long as the trees. My chosen people will get full use of whatever they make.

23 Never again will a woman suffer childbirth and have her baby die. Women will not fear childbirth. I, the Lord, will bless all my people and their children.

24 I will answer them before they call for help. I will help them before they finish asking.

25 Wolves and little lambs will eat together. Lions will eat hay like cattle, and snakes will eat only dust. They will not hurt or destroy each other on my holy mountain.”

This is what the Lord said.

God Will Judge All Nations

1 This is what the Lord says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is where I rest my feet. So do you think you can build a house for me? Do I need a place to rest?

2 I am the one who made all things. They are all here because I made them,” says the Lord.

“These are the people I care for: the poor, humble people who obey my commands.

3 Some people kill bulls as a sacrifice, but they also beat people. They kill sheep as a sacrifice, but they also break the necks of dogs. They offer up grain offerings, but they also offer the blood of pigs.⁴ They burn incense, but they also love their worthless idols. They choose their own ways, and they love their terrible idols.

4 So I decided to use their own tricks. I will punish them using what they are most afraid of. I will do this because I called to them, but they did not answer. I spoke to them, but they did not listen. They did what I said is evil. They chose to do what I did not like.”

5 You who obey the Lord’s commands, listen to what he says: “Your brothers hated you. They turned against you because you followed me. Your brothers said, ‘When the Lord shows his glory, then we will rejoice with you.’ But they will be punished.”

Punishment and a New Nation

6 Listen! There is a loud noise coming from the city and from the Temple. It is the Lord punishing his enemies. He is giving them the punishment they deserve.

7-8 A woman does not give birth before she feels the pain. A woman must feel the pain of childbirth before she can see the boy she gives birth to. Who ever heard of such a thing? In the same way, no one ever saw a new world begin in one day. No one has ever heard of a new nation that began in one day. But when Zion feels the pain, she will give birth to her children. In the same way, I will not cause pain without allowing something new to be born.”

The Lord says this: “I promise that if I

⁴66:3 dogs … pigs God did not want his people to offer dogs and pigs as sacrifices.
cause you the pain of birth, I will not stop you from having your new nation.” Your God said this.

10 Jerusalem and all her friends, be happy!

All of you who were sad for her, be happy and rejoice with her!

11 Be happy that you will receive mercy like milk coming from her breast. Jerusalem’s “milk” will satisfy you! You will drink it and enjoy her glory.

12 This is what the LORD says:

“Look, I will give Jerusalem peace that will flow in like a river. Wealth from all the nations will come flowing into her like a flood.

And like little babies, you will drink that ‘milk.’

I will hold you in my arms, and bounce you on my knees.

13 I will comfort you like a mother comforting her child. You will be comforted in Jerusalem.”

14 When you see these things, you will be happy.

You will be free and grow like grass. The LORD’s servants will see his power, but his enemies will see his anger.

15 Look, the LORD is coming with fire. His armies are coming with clouds of dust.

He is angry, and he will punish his enemies with flames.

16 The LORD will judge the people and will punish them with fire and his sword.

There will be many people killed by the LORD.

17 The LORD says, “These are the people who wash themselves and make themselves pure so that they can go into their special gardens\(^d\) to worship their idols. They follow each other into the gardens to eat meat from pigs, rats, and other dirty things. But they will all be destroyed together.

18 “They have evil thoughts and do evil things, so I am coming to punish them. I will gather all nations and all people. Everyone will be gathered together to see my Glory.\(^b\) I will put a mark on some of the people. I will send some of these saved people to the nations of Tarshish, Libya,\(^c\) Lud\(^d\) (the land of archers), Tubal,\(^e\) Greece, and all the faraway lands. Those people have never heard my teachings. They have never seen my Glory. So the saved people will tell the nations about my glory.\(^20\) And they will bring all your brothers and sisters from those other nations to my holy mountain\(^f\) Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD. Your brothers and sisters will ride on horses, mules, camels, and in chariots and wagons. They will be like the gifts that the Israelites bring on clean plates to the Temple of the LORD.\(^21\) I will also choose some of these people to be priests and Levites.” The LORD himself said this.

**The New Heavens and the New Earth**

22 The LORD says, “I will make a new world—new heavens and a new earth—that will last forever. In the same way, your names and your children will always be with me.\(^2\) Everyone will come to worship me on every worship day; they will come every Sabbath and every first day of the month.\(^g\) This is what I, the LORD, have said.

24 “Whoever goes out of the city will see the dead bodies of those who sinned against me. The worms eating those bodies will never die, and the fires burning them will never go out. It will be horrible to anyone who sees it.”

\(^a\) 66:17 special gardens Gardens where people worshiped false gods.

\(^b\) 66:18 my Glory See “glory” in the Word List.

\(^c\) 66:19 Libya A country in North Africa, west of Egypt.

\(^d\) 66:19 Lud This country was probably in the country that is now western Turkey.

\(^e\) 66:19 Tubal This country was probably in what is now eastern Turkey.

\(^f\) 66:20 my holy mountain This is probably Mount Zion, the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

\(^g\) 66:23 first day of the month Literally, “new moon.” See “new moon” in the Word List.
These are the messages of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah. Jeremiah belonged to the family of priests who lived in the town of Anathoth. That town is in the land that belongs to the tribe of Benjamin. The Lord began to speak to Jeremiah in the 13th year that Josiah, son of Amon, was king of the nation of Judah. He continued to speak to Jeremiah during the time that Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, was king of Judah and during the eleven years and five months that Zedekiah, also a son of Josiah, was king of Judah. In the fifth month of Zedekiah’s eleventh year as king, the people who lived in Jerusalem were taken away into exile.

God Calls Jeremiah

The Lord’s message came to me:

Before I made you in your mother’s womb, I knew you.
Before you were born, I chose you for a special work.
I chose you to be a prophet to the nations.

Then I said, “But, Lord God, I don’t know how to speak. I am only a boy.”
But the Lord said to me,
“Don’t say, ‘I am only a boy.’
You must go everywhere I send you and say everything I tell you to say.
Don’t be afraid of anyone.
I am with you, and I will protect you.”

This message is from the Lord.

Then the Lord reached out with his hand and touched my mouth. He said to me,
“Jeremiah, I am putting my words in your mouth.
Today I have put you in charge of nations and kingdoms.
You will pull up and tear down.
You will destroy and overthrow.
You will build up and plant.”

Two Visions

The Lord’s message came to me: “Jeremiah, what do you see?”
I answered, “I see a stick made from almond wood.”
The Lord said to me, “You have seen very well, and I am watching to make sure that my message to you comes true.”
The Lord’s message came to me again: “Jeremiah, what do you see?”
I answered, “I see a pot of boiling water. That pot is tipping over from the north.”
The Lord said to me, “Something terrible will come from the north. It will happen to all the people who live in this country.
In a short time I will call all the people in the northern kingdoms.”
This is what the Lord said.

“The kings of those countries will come and set up their thrones near the gates of Jerusalem.
They will attack the city walls of Jerusalem.
They will attack all the cities in Judah.
And I will announce judgment against my people,”

a 1:1 priests . . . of Anathoth These priests probably belonged to the family of the priest Abiathar. Abiathar was a high priest in Jerusalem during the time David was king. He was sent away to Anathoth by King Solomon. See 1 Kings 2:26.
b 1:2 the 13th year That is, 627 B.C.
because they are evil and have turned away from me. They offered sacrifices to other gods and worshiped idols they made with their own hands.

17 “As for you, Jeremiah, get ready. Stand up and speak to the people. Tell them everything that I tell you to say. Don’t be afraid of the people. If you are afraid of them, I will give you good reason to be afraid of them.

18 As for me, today I will make you like a strong city, an iron column, a bronze wall. You will be able to stand against everyone in the land, against the kings of the land of Judah, the leaders of Judah, the priests of Judah, and against the people of the land of Judah.

19 All those people will fight against you, but they will not defeat you, because I am with you, and I will save you.” This message is from the LORD.

Judah Was Not Faithful

1 The LORD’s message came to me:
2 “Jeremiah, go and speak to the people of Jerusalem. Tell them that this is what the LORD says:

   ‘At the time you were a young nation, you were faithful to me. You followed me like a young bride. You followed me through the desert, through a land that had never been used for farmland.

3 The people of Israel were a holy gift to the LORD. They were the first fruit he gathered. Any people who tried to hurt them were judged guilty. Bad things happened to those wicked people.’” This message is from the LORD.

4 Family of Jacob, hear the LORD’s message. Tribes of Israel, listen.

5 This is what the LORD says:
   “Do you think that I was not fair to your ancestors? Is that why they turned away from me? Your ancestors worshiped worthless idols, and they became worthless themselves.

6 Your ancestors did not say, ‘The LORD brought us out of Egypt. He led us through the desert, through a dry and rocky land. He led us through a dark and dangerous land. No one lives there; people don’t even travel through that land. But the Lord led us through that land. So where is he now?’

7 “I brought you into a good land, a land filled with many good things. I did this so that you could eat the fruit and crops that grow there. But you only made my land ‘dirty.’ I gave that land to you, but you made it a bad place.

8 “The priests did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD?’ The people who know the law did not want to know me. The leaders of the people of Israel turned against me. The prophets spoke in the name of the false god Baal. They worshiped worthless idols.”

9 The LORD says, “So now I will accuse you again, and I will also accuse your grandchildren.

10 Go across the sea to the Islands of

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Kittim.①
Send someone to the land of Kedar.
Look very carefully.
See if anyone has ever done
anything like this.

11 Has any nation ever stopped
worshiping their old gods
so that they could worship new
gods?
No! And their gods are not really
gods at all!
But my people stopped worshiping
their glorious God
and started worshiping idols that
are worth nothing.

12 “Skies, be shocked at what happened!
Shake with great fear!”
This message is from the Lord.

13 “My people have done two evil things.
They turned away from me,
and they dug their own water
cisterns.②
I am the source of living water;
those cisterns are broken and
cannot hold water.

14 “Israel is not a slave, is he?
He was not born a slave, was he?
Then why did the enemy carry him
away as a captive?

15 Like a lion the enemy has roared at
Israel.
They have destroyed your③ land.
Your cities have been burned,
and no one is left in them.

16 People from Memphis and Tahpanhes④
have smashed the top of your head.

17 This trouble is your own fault.
The Lord your God was leading
you the right way,⑤
but you turned away from him.

18 People of Judah, think about this:
How did it help you to go to Egypt
and drink from the Nile River?
How did it help you to go to Assyria
and drink from the Euphrates
River?

19 You have done wrong,
and that will only bring punishment
to you.
Trouble will come to you,
and it will teach you a lesson.
Think about it and understand how
bad it is to turn away from the
Lord your God.
It is wrong not to fear and respect
me.”
This message is from Lord God
All-Powerful.

20 “Judah, long ago you broke free from
me,
like an ox that breaks its yoke and
the ropes that held it.
You said to me, ‘I will not serve
you!’
On every high hill and under every
green tree,
you acted like a prostitute.⑥

21 Judah, I planted you like a special vine.
You were all from good seed.
How did you turn into a different vine
that grows bad fruit?

22 Even if you wash yourself with lye,
even if you use much soap,
I can still see your guilt.”
This message is from the Lord God.

23 “Judah, how can you say to me,
‘I am not guilty because I have not
worshiped the Baal idols’?
Think about what you did in the valley.
Think about what you have done.
You are like a fast she-camel
that runs from place to place.

24 You are like a wild donkey that lives in
the desert.
At mating time, she sniffs the wind.
No one can control her when she is
in heat.
At mating time, every male that wants
her will get her.
She is easy to find.

① 2:10 Islands of Kittim The name means the Island of
Cyprus. But the name was often used for the other islands and
coastlands of the Mediterranean Sea.
② 2:13 they dug . . . cisterns That is, they made false gods.
③ 2:15 your Hebrew, “his,” referring to “Israel,” which here
means his people, as in verse 16.
④ 2:16 Memphis and Tahpanhes Two cities in Egypt.
⑤ 2:17 was leading . . . way This is not in the ancient Greek
version.
⑥ 2:20 On every . . . prostitute This means the people wor-
shiped their false gods in these places.
25 Judah, stop chasing after idols! 
Stop wanting those other gods.
But you say, ‘It is no use! I cannot stop! 
I love those other gods. 
I can’t stop chasing them.’

26 “A thief is ashamed when people catch him stealing. 
The people of Israel should be ashamed too and so should their kings and leaders, priests and prophets.

27 They say to pieces of wood, ‘You are my father.’
They say to a rock, ‘You gave birth to me.’
All these people will be ashamed. 
They don’t look to me for help.
They have turned their backs to me.
But when the people of Judah get into trouble, they say to me, ‘Come and save us!’

28 But where are the idols you made for yourselves? 
Let’s see if they come and save you when you are in trouble!
People of Judah, you have as many idols as you have cities!

29 “Why do you argue with me? 
You have all turned against me.” 
This message was from the LORD.

30 “I punished you people of Judah, but it did not help.
You did not come back when you were punished.
With your swords you killed the prophets who came to you.
Like a dangerous lion, you killed the prophets.”

31 People of this generation, pay attention to the LORD’s message!

“Have I been like a desert to the people of Israel? 
Have I been like a dark and dangerous land to them?

My people say, ‘We are free to go our own way. 
We will not come back to you!’ 
Why do they say these things?

32 A young woman does not forget her jewelry. 
A bride does not forget to wear her wedding dress. 
But my people have forgotten me too many times to count.

33 “Judah, you have become so good at finding lovers. 
Even the worst women could learn some evil ways from you.

34 You have blood on your hands! 
It is the blood of poor, innocent people.
You did not catch them breaking into your house.
You killed them for no reason!

35 But still, you say, ‘I am innocent. 
God is not angry with me.’
So I will also judge you guilty of lying, because you say, ‘I have done nothing wrong.’

36 You go from one place to another looking for help, always changing your mind.
But Egypt will also disappoint you, just as Assyria did.

37 So you will eventually leave Egypt too, and you will hide your face in shame.
You trusted these countries, but the LORD rejected them, so they cannot help you win.

3 “If a man divorces his wife and she goes and marries someone else, the first husband cannot take her back. 
If he did, it would make the land unclean.
Judah, you and all your false gods are like a prostitute with many lovers!
So why do you think you can come back to me?”

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This message is from the LORD.

2 “Look up to the bare hilltops, Judah. Is there any place where you have not had sex with your lovers? You sat by the road waiting for lovers, like an Arab in the desert. You made the land ‘dirty’ with all the evil sins you did when you were unfaithful to me.

3 You sinned, so the rain has not come. There has not been any springtime rains. But still you refuse to be ashamed. The look on your face is like that of a prostitute who refuses to be ashamed.

4 But didn’t you just call me ‘Father’? Didn’t you say, ‘You have been my friend since I was a child’?

5 You also said, ‘God will not always be angry with me. His anger will not continue forever.’

“Judah, you say that, but you do as much evil as you can.”

The Two Bad Sisters: Israel and Judah

6 The LORD spoke to me during the time King Josiah was ruling the nation of Judah. He said, “Jeremiah, you saw the bad things Israel did! You saw how she was unfaithful to me. She was unfaithful to me with every idol on every hill and under every green tree. I said to myself, ‘Israel will come back to me after she has finished doing these evil things.’ But she did not come back to me. And Israel’s unfaithful sister, Judah, saw what she did.

8 Israel was unfaithful, and she knew why I sent her away. Israel knew that I divorced her because she committed the sin of adultery. But that did not make her unfaithful sister afraid. Judah was not afraid. She also went out and acted like a prostitute. Judah did not care that she was acting like a prostitute. So she made her country ‘dirty.’ She committed the sin of adultery by worshiping idols made out of stone and wood.

Israel’s unfaithful sister did not come back to me with her whole heart. She only pretended that she came back to me.” This message is from the LORD.

11 The LORD said to me, “Israel was not faithful to me, but she had a better excuse than unfaithful Judah. 12 Jeremiah, look toward the north and speak this message: ‘Come back, you faithless people of Israel.’ This message is from the LORD.

‘I will stop frowning at you. I am full of mercy.’ The LORD says, ‘I will not be angry with you forever.

13 But you must recognize your sin. You turned against the LORD your God. That is your sin. You worshiped the idols of other nations. You worshiped them under every green tree. You did not obey me.’” This message is from the LORD.

14 The LORD says, “You people are unfaithful, but come back to me because I am your master. I will take one person from every city and two people from every family and bring you to Zion.

15 Then I will give you new rulers who will be faithful to me. They will lead you with knowledge and understanding. In those days there will be many of you in the land.” This message is from the LORD.

“At that time people will never again say, ‘I remember the days when we had the Box of the LORD’S Agreement.’ They will not even think about the Holy Box anymore. They will not even remember or miss it. They will never make another Holy Box.

17 At that time the city of Jerusalem will be called the ‘LORD’S Throne.’ All nations will come together in the city of Jerusalem to give honor to the name of the LORD. They will not follow their stubborn, evil hearts anymore. In those days the family of Judah will join the family of Israel. They will come together from a land in the north to the land I gave to their ancestors.”

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19-20 This message is from the LORD: “I want to treat you like my own children. I want to give you a pleasant land, a land more beautiful than any other nation. I thought you would call me ‘Father.’ I thought you would always follow me. But you have been unfaithful to me, family of Israel! You have been like an unfaithful wife who leaves her husband.

21 You can hear crying on the bare hills. The people of Israel are crying and praying for mercy. They became very evil. They forgot the LORD their God.

22 “People of Israel, you are unfaithful to me, but come back to me. Come back and I will forgive you for being unfaithful.

“Just say, ‘Yes, we will come back, because you are the LORD our God.’

23 It was foolish to worship idols on the hills. All the loud parties on the mountains were wrong. Surely the salvation of Israel comes from the LORD our God.

24 That terrible false god Baal has eaten everything our fathers owned. This has happened since we were children. That terrible false god took our fathers’ sheep and cattle and their sons and daughters.

25 Let us lie down in our shame. Let our shame cover us like a blanket. We have sinned against the LORD our God. We and our fathers have sinned. We have not obeyed the LORD our God from the time we were children.’”

This message is from the LORD: “Israel, if you want to come back, then come back to me. Throw away your idols. Don’t wander farther away from me. If you do these things, you will be able to use my name to make a promise. You will be able to say, ‘As the LORD lives.’ You will be able to use these words in a truthful, honest, and right way.

If you do these things, the nations will be blessed by the LORD. They will brag about what the LORD has done.”

3 This is what the LORD says to the people of Judah and to Jerusalem: “Your fields have not been plowed. Plow those fields! Don’t plant seeds among the thorns.

4 Become the LORD’s people. Change your hearts, b Men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, if you don’t change, then I will become very angry. My anger will spread fast like a fire, and it will burn you up. No one will be able to put out that fire because of the evil you have done.”

Disaster From the North

5 “Give this message to the people of Judah: Tell everyone in the city of Jerusalem: ‘Blow the trumpet all over the country.’ Shout out loud and say, ‘Come together! Let us all escape to the strong cities for protection.’

6 Raise the signal flag toward Zion. Run for your lives! Don’t wait! Do this because I am bringing disaster from the north.”

b 4:4 Change your hearts Literally, “Be circumcised to the Lord. Cut away the foreskin of your hearts.” See “circumcise, circumcision” in the Word List. Jeremiah is saying that real circumcision must be from inside a person’s heart (mind).

c 4:6 north The Babylonian army came from this direction to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

a 3:22 forgive Literally, “heal.”
I am bringing terrible destruction.”

7 A lion has come out of his cave.
A destroyer of nations has begun to
march.
He has left his home to destroy your
land.
Your towns will be destroyed.
There will be no one left to live in
them.
8 The LORD is angry with us,
so put on sackcloth and cry out
loud!
9 The LORD says, “When this happens,
the king and his officers will lose
their courage.
The priests will be filled with fear,
and the prophets will be shocked.”

10 Then I, Jeremiah, said, “Lord God,
you have tricked the people of Judah and
Jerusalem. You said to them, ‘You will
have peace.’ But now the sword is point-
ing at their throats!”

11 At that time this message will be given
to the people of Judah and
Jerusalem:
“A hot wind blows from the bare hills.
It comes from the desert to my
people.
It is not like the gentle wind that is
used
to separate the grain from the chaff.
12 It is a stronger wind than that,
and it comes from me.
Now I will announce my judgment
against the people of Judah.”

13 Look! The enemy rises up like a cloud.
His chariots look like a windstorm.
His horses are faster than eagles.
It will be very bad for us!
We are ruined!

14 People of Jerusalem,
wash the evil from your hearts.
Make your hearts pure so that you can
be saved.
Don’t continue making evil plans.
15 Listen! The voice of a messenger
from the land of Dan a is speaking.

Someone is bringing bad news
from the hill country of Ephraim b:

16 “Report it to this nation. c
Spread the news to the people in
Jerusalem.
Enemies are coming from a faraway
country.
They are shouting words of war
against the cities of Judah.
17 The enemy has surrounded Jerusalem
like men guarding a field.
Judah, you turned against me,
so the enemy is coming against you.”
This message is from the LORD.

18 “The way you lived and the things you
did
brought this trouble to you.
It is your evil that made your life so
hard.
Your evil life brought the pain that
hurts deep in your heart.”

Jeremiah’s Cry

19 My sadness and worry is making my
stomach hurt.
I am bent over in pain.
I am so afraid.
My heart is pounding inside me.
I cannot keep quiet, because I have
heard the trumpet blow.
The trumpet is calling the army to
war.

20 Disaster follows disaster.
The whole country is destroyed.
Suddenly my tents are destroyed.
My curtains are torn down!
21 How long must I see the war flags?
How long must I hear the war
trumpets?

22 The Lord said, “My people are foolish.
They don’t know me.
They are stupid children.
They don’t understand.
They are skillful at doing evil,

a 4:15 land of Dan The people from the tribe of Dan lived
near the border in the northern part of Israel. They would be
the first to be attacked by an enemy from the north.

b 4:15 hill country of Ephraim This was the central part of the
land that had been the northern kingdom of Israel.

c 4:16 “Report . . . nation The Hebrew text here is hard to
understand.

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Disaster Is Coming

23 I looked at the earth.
   It was empty; there was nothing on it.
I looked at the sky,
   and its light was gone.\(^a\)

24 I looked at the mountains,
   and they were trembling.
All the hills were trembling.

25 I looked, but there were no people.
   All the birds of the sky had flown away.
26 I looked, and the good land had become a desert.
   All the cities in that land were destroyed
   by the Lord and his great anger.

27 This is what the Lord says:
   “The whole country will be ruined,
   but I will not completely destroy the land.
28 So the people in the land will cry for the dead.
   The sky will grow dark.
I have spoken and will not change.
   I have made a decision, and I will not change my mind.”

29 The people of Judah will hear the sound
   of the horse soldiers and the archers,
and the people will run away!
   Some of them will hide in caves;\(^b\)
   some will hide in the bushes;
   some will climb up into the rocks.
All the cities of Judah will be empty.
   No one will live in them.

30 Judah, you have been destroyed.
   So what are you doing now?
   Why are you putting on your best red dress?
   Why are you putting on your gold jewelry?
Why are you putting on your eye makeup?
   You make yourself beautiful,
   but it is a waste of time.
Your lovers hate you.
   They are trying to kill you.
31 I hear a cry like a woman in labor,
   a scream like a woman giving birth to her first baby.
It is the cry of daughter Zion.\(^c\)
She is lifting her hands in prayer,
saying,
   “Oh! I am about to faint!
   Murderers are all around me!”

The Evil of the People of Judah

5 The Lord says, “Walk the streets of Jerusalem. Look around and think about these things. Search the public squares of the city. See if you can find one good person, one who does honest things and who searches for the truth. If you find one good person, I will forgive Jerusalem.

2 The people make promises and say, ‘As the Lord lives.’ But they don’t really mean it!”

3 Lord, I know that you want people to be loyal to you.
   You hit the people of Judah,
   but they did not feel any pain.
   You destroyed them,
   but they refused to learn their lesson.
   They became very stubborn.
   They refused to be sorry for the bad things they did.

4 But I said to myself,
   “It must be only the poor who are so foolish.
   They have not learned the way of the Lord.
   They don’t know the teachings of their God.

5 So I will go to the leaders of Judah.
   I will talk to them.
   Surely the leaders know the way of the...

\(^a\) 4:23 the earth ... gone Jeremiah is comparing his country to the time before people were put on the earth. See Gen. 1:1.
\(^b\) 4:29 hide in caves This is from the ancient Greek version.
\(^c\) 4:31 daughter Zion Another name for Jerusalem. See "Zion" in the Word List.

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Surely they know the law of their God.”
But the leaders had all joined together to break away from serving God.
6 So a lion from the forest will attack them.
A wolf from the desert will kill them.
A leopard is hiding near their cities, to tear to pieces anyone who comes out.
That’s because the people have sinned again and again.
Many times they have wandered away from God.

7 God says, “People of Judah, why should I forgive you?
Your children have abandoned me. They made promises to idols that are not really gods!
I gave your children everything they needed, but they were still unfaithful to me!
They spent their time with prostitutes.
8 They are like horses that have had plenty to eat and are ready to mate.
They are like a horse that is calling its neighbor’s wife.
9 Should I punish the people of Judah for doing these things?”
This message is from the LORD.
“You know I should punish a nation such as this.
I should give it the punishment it deserves.

10 “Go along the rows of Judah’s grapevines.
Cut down the vines. (But don’t completely destroy them.)
Cut off all their branches, because they don’t belong to the LORD.
11 The family of Israel and the family of Judah have been unfaithful to me in every way.”

This message is from the LORD.
12 “Those people lied about the LORD.
They said, ‘He will not do anything to us.
Nothing bad will happen to us.
We will never see an army attack us.
We will never starve.’
13 The prophets are only empty wind.\(^a\)
The word of God is not in them.\(^b\)
Bad things will happen to them.”

14 The LORD God All-Powerful said these things:
“The people said I would not punish them.
So, Jeremiah, the words I give you will be like fire,
and these people will be like wood.
That fire will burn them up completely.”
15 Family of Israel, this message is from the LORD.
“I will soon bring a nation from far away to attack you.
It is an old nation; it is an ancient nation.
The people of that nation speak a language that you do not know.
You cannot understand what they say.
16 Their arrow bags are like open graves.
All their men are strong soldiers.
17 They will eat all the crops that you gathered.
They will eat all your food.
They will destroy your sons and daughters.
They will eat your flocks and your herds.
They will eat your grapes and your figs.
They will destroy your strong cities with their swords.
They will destroy the strong cities that you trust in.”

18 This message is from the LORD: “But,
\(^a\) 5:13 wind This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word for wind is like the word for spirit.
\(^b\) 5:13 The word . . . them Literally, “And the ‘He said’ is not in them.”
Jeremiah 6

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Judah, when these terrible days come, I will not fully destroy you. 19 The people of Judah will ask you, ‘Jeremiah, why has the LORD our God done this bad thing to us?’ Give them this answer: ‘You people of Judah have left me, and you have served foreign idols in your own land. You did these things, so now you will serve foreigners in a land that does not belong to you.’

20 “Tell this message to the family of Jacob, and tell it in the nation of Judah.

21 Hear this message, you foolish people who have no sense. You have eyes, but you don’t see! You have ears, but you don’t listen! Surely you are afraid of me.” This message is from the LORD. “You should shake with fear in front of me. I am the one who made the sandy shores to hold back the sea. I made it that way to keep the water in its place forever. The waves may pound the beach, but they will not destroy it. The waves may roar as they come in, but they cannot go beyond the beach.

23 But the people of Judah are stubborn. They are always planning ways to turn against me. They turned away from me and left me.

24 The people of Judah never say to themselves, ‘Let’s fear and respect the LORD our God. He gives us autumn and spring rains at just the right time. He makes sure that we have the harvest at just the right time.’

25 You don’t have these blessings because you have done wrong. Your sins have kept these good things away from you.

26 There are evil men among my people. They are like men who make nets for catching birds. They set their traps, but they catch people instead of birds.

27 Their houses are full of lies, like a cage full of birds. Their lies made them rich and powerful.

28 They have grown big and fat from the evil they have done. There is no end to the evil they do. They will not plead the case of children who have no parents. They will not help these orphans. They will not let the poor be judged fairly.

29 Should I punish the people of Judah for doing these things?” This message is from the LORD. “You know I should punish a nation such as this. I should give it the punishment it deserves.

30 “A terrible and shocking thing has happened in the land of Judah. The prophets tell lies. The priests will not do what they were chosen to do, and my people love it this way! But what will you people do when your punishment comes?

The Enemy Surrounds Jerusalem

16 Run for your lives, people of Benjamin! Run away from the city of Jerusalem! Blow the war trumpet in the city of Tekoa! Put up the warning flag in the city of Beth Hakkerem! Do these things because disaster is coming from the north. Terrible destruction is coming to

a 5:26 men … birds The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.
b 5:31 priests … were chosen to do The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.
c 6:1 north The Babylonian army came from this direction to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

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you.

2 Jerusalem, you are like a beautiful meadow. But I will destroy you!

3 Enemy shepherds will surround you with all their flocks. They will set up their tents all around you, and each one will let his sheep eat the grass.

4 “Get ready to fight against Jerusalem. Get up! We will attack the city at noon. But it is already getting late. The evening shadows are growing long.

5 So get up! We will attack the city at night! Let’s destroy the strong walls that are around Jerusalem.”

6 This is what the LORD All-Powerful says:

“Cut down the trees around Jerusalem, and build a siege mound against it. This city should be punished because inside there is no justice—only slavery.

7 As a well keeps its water fresh, so Jerusalem keeps its wickedness fresh.

I hear about the robbing and violence in this city all the time.

I see nothing but pain and sickness there all the time.

8 Listen to this warning, Jerusalem, or I will turn my back on you.

I will make your land an empty desert. No one will be able to live there.”

9 This is what the LORD All-Powerful says:

$d$ 6:2 Jerusalem Literally, “daughter Zion.” See “Zion” in the Word List.

$b$ 6:2 you are like a beautiful meadow The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.

$c$ 6:6 siege mound A large pile of dirt and rock that an army put against the wall of a city they were attacking. This made it easier for the enemy soldiers to climb over the wall into the city.

“Gather the people of Israel who were left on their land.

Gather them the way you would gather the last grapes on a grapevine.

Check each vine, like the workers check each vine when they pick the grapes.”

10 Who can I speak to?

Who can I warn?

Who will listen to me?

The people of Israel have closed their ears, so they cannot hear my warnings.

They don’t like the LORD’s teachings.

They don’t want to hear his message.

11 But I am full of the LORD’s anger, and I am tired of holding it in!

“Pour out my anger on the children playing in the streets and on the young soldiers gathered there as well.

A man and his wife will both be captured as well as all the old people.

12 Their houses will be given to others.

Their fields and their wives will be given to other people.

I will raise my hand and punish the people of Judah.”

This message is from the LORD.

13 “All the people of Israel want more and more money.

All of them, from the least important to the most important, are like that.

Even the prophets and priests tell lies.

14 They should bandage the wounds my people have suffered, but they treat their wounds like small scratches.

They say, ‘It’s all right, everything is all right.’

But it is not all right!

15 They should be ashamed of the evil
things they do, 
but they are not ashamed at all. 
They don’t know enough to be 
embarrassed by their sins. 
So they will be punished with 
everyone else. 
They will be thrown to the ground 
when I punish the people.” 
This is what the LORD said.

16 This is what the LORD says: 
“Stand at the crossroads and look. 
Ask where the old road is. 
Ask where the good road is, 
and walk on that road. 
If you do, you will find rest for 
yourselves. 
But you people have said, ‘We will 
not walk on the good road.’

17 I chose watchmen to watch over you. 
I told them, ‘Listen for the sound of 
the war trumpet.’ 
But they said, ‘We will not listen!’

18 So listen, all you nations, 
and pay attention, you people in 
those countries.\textsuperscript{a}

19 Hear this, people of the earth: 
I am going to bring disaster to the 
people of Judah 
because of all the evil they planned, 
and because they ignored my 
messages. 
They refused to obey my law.

20 “Why do you bring me incense from 
the country of Sheba\textsuperscript{b}? 
Why do you bring me sweet- 
smelling cane from a faraway 
country? 
Your burnt offerings don’t make me 
happy. 
Your sacrifices don’t please me.”

21 So this is what the LORD says: 
“I will give the people of Judah 
problems.

They will be like stones that make 
people fall. 
Fathers and sons will stumble over 
them. 
Friends and neighbors will die.”

22 This is what the LORD says: 
“An army is coming from the north.\textsuperscript{c} 
A great nation is coming from 
faraway places on earth.

23 The soldiers carry bows and spears. 
They are cruel; they have no mercy. 
They are so powerful. 
They sound like the roaring ocean 
as they ride their horses. 
That army is coming, ready for battle. 
It is coming to attack you, 
Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{d}”

24 We have heard the news about that 
army, 
and we are paralyzed with fear. 
We feel trapped by our troubles, 
in pain like a woman giving birth.

25 Don’t go out into the fields. 
Don’t go on the roads 
because the enemy has swords, 
and there is danger everywhere.

26 My people, put on sackcloth 
and roll in the ashes.\textsuperscript{e} 
Cry loudly for the dead. 
Cry as if you lost an only son. 
Do this because the destroyer 
will come against us very quickly.

27 “Jeremiah, I want you to be 
like a worker who tests metals. 
You will test my people 
and watch how they live.

28 My people have turned against me, 
and they are very stubborn. 
They say bad things about people. 
They are like bronze and iron 
that are covered with rust and 
tarnish.

29 They are like a worker who tried to

\textsuperscript{a} 6:18 pay ... countries The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.
\textsuperscript{b} 6:20 Sheba A land south of Israel, located where part of 
Saudi Arabia is today. Sheba controlled the spice trade in the time of Jeremiah.

\textsuperscript{c} 6:22 north The Babylonian army came from this direction 
to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel 
often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

\textsuperscript{d} 6:23 Jerusalem Literally, “daughter Zion.” See “Zion” in the 
Word List.

\textsuperscript{e} 6:26 roll in the ashes This is one way people showed that 
they were sad or crying for a dead person.
make silver pure.\textsuperscript{a}
The bellows\textsuperscript{a} blew strongly, and the fire became hotter, but only lead came from the fire.\textsuperscript{b}
The worker wasted his time trying to make that silver pure. In the same way the evil was not removed from my people.

30 My people will be called ‘Rejected Silver.’ They will be given that name because the LORD did not accept them.”

Jeremiah’s Temple Sermon

7 This is the LORD’s message to Jeremiah: “Jeremiah, stand at the gate of the LORD’s house. Teach this message at the gate:

‘Hear the message from the LORD, all you people of the nation of Judah. All you who come through these gates to worship the LORD, hear this message.\textsuperscript{3}The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Change your lives and do good things. If you do this, I will let you live in this place.\textsuperscript{c} Don’t trust the lies that some people say. They say, “This is the Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD!” \textsuperscript{d} If you change your lives and do good things, I will let you live in this place. You must be fair to each other.\textsuperscript{e} You must be fair to strangers. You must help widows and orphans. Don’t kill innocent people in this place! And don’t follow other gods, because they will only ruin your lives.\textsuperscript{f} If you obey me, I will let you live in this place. I gave this land to your ancestors for them to keep forever.

8 “But you are trusting lies that are worthless. Will you steal and murder? Will you commit adultery? Will you falsely accuse other people? Will you worship the false god Baal and follow other gods that you have not known?\textsuperscript{10} If you commit these sins, do you think that you can stand before me in this house that is called by my name? Do you think you can stand before me and say, “We are safe,” just so you can do all these terrible things?\textsuperscript{11} This Temple is called by my name. Is this Temple nothing more to you than a hideout for robbers? I have been watching you.’ ” This message is from the LORD.

12 “You people of Judah, go now to the town of Shiloh. Go to the place where I first made a house for my name. The people of Israel also did evil things. Go and see what I did to that place because of the evil they did.\textsuperscript{e} You people of Judah were doing all these evil things too. This message is from the LORD! I spoke to you again and again, but you refused to listen to me. I called to you, but you did not answer.\textsuperscript{14} So I will destroy the house called by my name in Jerusalem. I will destroy that Temple as I destroyed Shiloh. And that house in Jerusalem that is called by my name is the Temple you trust in. I gave that place to you and to your ancestors.\textsuperscript{15} I will throw you away from me just as I threw away all your brothers from Ephraim.’

16 “As for you, Jeremiah, don’t pray for these people of Judah. Don’t beg for them or pray for them. Don’t beg me to help them. I will not listen to your prayer for them.\textsuperscript{17} I know you see what they are doing in the towns of Judah. You can see what they are doing in the streets of the city of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{18} This is what the people of Judah are doing: The children gather wood. The fathers use the wood to make a fire. The women make the dough and then make cakes of bread to offer to the Queen of Heaven. The people of Judah pour out drink offerings to worship other gods. They do this to make me angry.\textsuperscript{19} But I am not the one they are really hurting.” This message is from the LORD. “They are

\textsuperscript{a} 6:29 bellows A tool for blowing air on a fire to make the fire hotter.
\textsuperscript{b} 6:29 lead came from the fire Workers melted metals like silver to make the metals pure. Lead was the first metal to melt, so the workers poured the lead out, leaving the other metal pure. Here, Jeremiah is saying the people are all bad—they are all lead and no silver!
\textsuperscript{c} 7:3 I will … place This can also mean “I will live with you.”
\textsuperscript{d} 7:4 This is … Lord Many people in Jerusalem thought the Lord would always protect the city where his Temple was, so it didn’t matter how evil they were.
\textsuperscript{e} 7:12 Go … they did Shiloh was probably destroyed by the Philistines in the time of Eli and Samuel. See 1 Sam. 4.
only hurting themselves. They are bringing shame on themselves.”

20 So this is what the Lord God says: “I will show my anger against this place. I will punish people and animals. I will punish the trees in the field and the crops that grow in the ground. My anger will be like a hot fire—no one will be able to stop it.”

Obedience Is Better Than Sacrifice

21 This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: “Go and offer as many burnt offerings and sacrifices as you want. Eat the meat of those sacrifices yourselves.

22 I brought your ancestors out of Egypt. I spoke to them, but I did not give them any commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices. 23 I only gave them this command: ‘Obey me and I will be your God, and you will be my people. Do all that I command, and good things will happen to you.’

24 “But your ancestors did not listen to me. They did not pay attention to me. They were stubborn and did what they wanted to do. They did not become good. They became even more evil—they went backward, not forward. 25 From the day that your ancestors left Egypt to this day, I have sent my servants to you. My servants are the prophets. I sent them to you again and again.

26 But your ancestors did not listen to me. They did not pay attention to me. They were very stubborn and did evil even worse than their fathers did.

27 “Jeremiah, you will tell these things to the people of Judah. But they will not listen to you. You call to them, but they will not answer you. 28 So you must tell them these things: ‘This is the nation that did not obey the Lord its God. These people did not listen to God’s teachings. They don’t know the true teachings.’

The Valley of Slaughter

29 “Jeremiah, cut off your hair and throw it away. Go up to the bare hilltop and cry, because the Lord has rejected this generation of people. He has turned his back on these people. And in anger he will punish them. 30 Do this because I have seen the people of Judah doing evil things.” This message is from the Lord. “They have set up their idols, and I hate those idols. They have set up idols in the Temple that is called by my name. They have made my house ‘dirty’! 31 The people of Judah built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom where they killed their own sons and daughters and burned them as sacrifices. This is something I never commanded. Something like this never even entered my mind! 32 So I warn you. The days are coming,” says the Lord, “when people will not call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom anymore. No, they will call it the Valley of Slaughter. They will give it this name because they will bury the dead people in Topheth until there is no more room to bury anyone else.

33 Then the bodies of the dead people will become food for the birds of the sky. Wild animals will eat the bodies of those people. There will be no one left alive to chase the birds or animals away. 34 I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and happiness in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. There will be no more sounds of the bride and bridegroom in Judah or Jerusalem. The land will become an empty desert.”

8 This message is from the Lord: “At that time men will take the bones of the kings and important rulers of Judah from their tombs. They will take the bones of the priests and prophets from their tombs. They will take the bones of all the people of Jerusalem from their tombs. 2 They will spread the bones on the ground under the sun, the moon, and the stars. The people of Jerusalem love to worship the sun, the moon, and the stars. No one will gather the bones and bury them again. So the bones of those people will be like dung thrown on the ground.

3 I will force the people of Judah to leave their homes and their land. They will be taken away to foreign lands. Some of the people of Judah who were not killed in the war will wish that they had been
Jeremiah, say this to the people of Judah:

This is what the Lord says:

“You know if a man falls down, he gets up again. And if a man goes the wrong way, he turns around and comes back.

The people of Judah went the wrong way. But why do the people of Jerusalem continue going the wrong way? They believe their own lies. They refuse to turn around and come back.

I have listened to them very carefully, but they don’t say what is right. They are not sorry for their sins. They don’t think about the evil they have done. They do things without thinking. They are like horses running into a battle.

Even the birds in the sky know the right time to do things. The storks, doves, swifts, and thrushes know when it is time to fly to a new home. But my people don’t know what the Lord wants them to do.

“You keep saying, “We have the Lord’s teachings. So we are wise!” But this is not true, because the scribes have lied with their pens. These “wise people” refused to listen to the Lord’s teachings. So they are not really wise at all. These “wise people” were trapped. They became shocked and ashamed.

So I will give their wives to other men. I will give their fields to new owners. All the people of Israel want more and more money. All of them, from the least important to the most important, are like that. Even the prophets and priests tell lies.

They should bandage the wounds my people have suffered, but they treat their wounds like small scratches. They say, “It’s all right, everything is all right.” But it is not all right!

They should be ashamed of the evil things they do, but they are not ashamed at all. They don’t know enough to be embarrassed by their sins. So they will be punished with everyone else. They will be thrown to the ground when I punish the people.’”

This is what the Lord said.

“I will take away their fruit and crops so that there will be no harvest, says the Lord. There will be no grapes on the vine and no figs on the fig tree. Even the leaves will become dry and die. I will take away the things I gave them.’”

“They will say, ‘Why are we just sitting here? Come, let’s run to the strong cities. If the Lord our God is going to make us die, then let’s die there. We have sinned against the Lord, so he has given us poisoned water to drink.

We hoped to have peace, but nothing good has come. We hoped that he would forgive us, but only disaster has come.

From the land of the tribe of Dan, we hear the snorting of the enemy’s horses.

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The ground shakes from the pounding of their hooves. They have come to destroy the land and everything in it. They have come to destroy the city and all the people who live there.’”

17 “People of Judah, I am sending poisonous snakes to attack you. These snakes cannot be controlled. They will bite you.”

This message is from the LORD.

18 God, I am very sad and afraid.

19 Listen to my people.
   Everywhere in this country, people are crying for help.
   They say, “Is the LORD still at Zion?
   Is Zion’s King still there?”

But God says,
“The people of Judah worshiped their worthless foreign idols.
That made me very angry!
Why did they do that?”

20 And the people say,
   “Harvest time is over.
   Summer is gone,
   and still we have not been saved.”

21 My people are hurt, so I am hurt.
   I am too sad to speak.

22 Surely there is some medicine in Gilead.
   Surely there is a doctor in Gilead.
   So why are the wounds of my people not healed?

9 If my head were filled with water,
   and if my eyes were a fountain of tears,
   I would cry day and night for my people who have been destroyed.

2 If only I had a place in the desert—
a house where travelers spend the night—
so I could leave my people.
I could go away from them,
because they are all unfaithful to God.
   They have all turned against him.

3 “They use their tongues like a bow;
   lies fly from their mouths like arrows.
   Lies, not truth,
   have grown strong in this land.
   They go from one sin to another.
   They don’t know me.”
   This is what the LORD said.

4 “Watch your neighbors!
   Don’t trust your own brothers,
   because every brother is a cheat.
   Every neighbor talks behind your back.

5 Everyone lies to their neighbor.
   No one speaks the truth.
   The people of Judah have taught their tongues to lie.
   They sinned until they were too tired to come back.

6 One bad thing followed another,
   and lies followed lies.
   The people refused to know me.”
   This is what the LORD said.

7 So the LORD All-Powerful says,
   “A worker heats metal in a fire to test it
   and see if it is pure.
   I will test the people of Judah like that.
   I have no other choice.
   My people have sinned.

8 The people of Judah have tongues as sharp as arrows.
   Their mouths speak lies.
   They all speak kindly to their neighbors,
   but they are secretly planning ways to attack them.

9 Should I punish the people of Judah for doing these things?”
   This message is from the LORD.
   “You know I should punish a nation such as this.
   I should give it the punishment it deserves.”

a 8:17 poisonous snakes This probably means one of Judah’s enemies.
I, Jeremiah, will cry for the mountains. I will sing a funeral song for the empty fields, because all the animals were taken away. No one travels there now. The sounds of cattle cannot be heard. The birds have flown away, and the animals are gone.

The Lord says, “I will make the city of Jerusalem a pile of garbage. It will be a home for jackals. I will destroy the cities in the land of Judah, so no one will live there.”

Is there a man who is wise enough to understand these things? Is there someone who has been taught by the Lord? Can anyone explain his message? Why was the land ruined? Why was it made like an empty desert where no one goes?

The Lord answered, “It is because the people of Judah stopped following my teachings. I gave them my teachings, but they refused to listen to me. They did not follow my teachings.

The people of Judah lived their own way. They were stubborn. They followed the false god Baal. Their fathers taught them to follow those false gods.”

So the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says, “I will soon make the people of Judah eat bitter food and drink poisoned water. I will scatter the people of Judah throughout other nations. They will live in strange nations that they and their fathers never knew about. I will send men with swords. They will kill the people of Judah. They will kill them until all the people are gone.”

This is what the Lord All-Powerful says:

“Now think about these things! Call for the women who get paid to cry at funerals. Send for the people who are good at that job.

The people say, ‘Let those women come quickly and cry for us. Then our eyes will fill with tears that flow over our eyelids like streams of water.’

“The sound of loud crying is heard from Zion: ‘We are really ruined! We are so ashamed! We must leave our land, because our houses have been destroyed. Now our houses are only piles of rock.’”

Now, women of Judah, listen to the message from the Lord. Listen to the words from his mouth. Teach your daughters how to cry loudly. Each of them must learn to sing this funeral song:

“Death has climbed in through our windows and has come into our palaces. Death has come to our children who play in the streets and to the young men who meet in the public places.”

This is what you should say: “The Lord says, ‘Dead bodies will lie in the fields like dung. Their bodies will lie on the ground like grain a farmer has cut. But there will be no one to gather them.’”

This is what the Lord says:

“The wise must not brag about their wisdom. The strong men must not brag about their strength. The rich must not brag about their money.

But if someone wants to brag, then let them brag about this:
Let them brag that they learned to know me.
Let them brag that they understand that I am the LORD,
that I am kind and fair,
and that I do good things on earth.
I love this kind of bragging.”
This message is from the LORD.

25 This is what the LORD says: “The time is coming when I will punish all those who are circumcised only in the body.
26 I am talking about the people of the nations of Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and all those who live in the desert. The circumcision they do is not the kind the Lord wants. But the people of Israel are not really circumcised either. They are not circumcised in their hearts.”

The Lord and the Idols

10 Family of Israel, listen to the LORD! This is what the LORD says:
“Don’t live like people from other nations.
Don’t be afraid of special signs in the sky.
The other nations are afraid of what they see in the sky.
But you must not be afraid of them.

3 The customs of other people are worth nothing.
Their idols are nothing but wood from the forest.
Their idols are made by workers with their chisels.

4 They make their idols beautiful with silver and gold.
They use hammers and nails to fasten their idols down so that they will not fall over.

5 The idols of the other nations are like a scarecrow in a cucumber field. They cannot walk.
They cannot talk, and the people must carry them.
So don’t be afraid of their idols.

They cannot hurt you.
And they cannot help you either.”

6 LORD, there is no one like you.
You are great!
Your name is great and powerful!

7 Everyone should respect you, King of all the nations.
You deserve their respect.
There are many wise men among the nations,
but not one of them is as wise as you.

8 All the people of the other nations are stupid and foolish.
Their teachings come from worthless wooden statues.

9 They use silver from the city of Tarshish and gold from the city of Uphaz and make their statues.
Carpenters and metalworkers make the idols.
They put blue and purple clothes on them.
“Wise men” make these “gods.”

10 But the LORD is the only true God.
He is the only God who is alive.
He is the King who rules forever.
The earth shakes when he is angry.
The people of the nations cannot stop his anger.

11 The Lord says, “Tell them this message:
‘These false gods did not make heaven and earth.
They will be destroyed and disappear from heaven and earth.’”

12 God is the one who used his power and made the earth.
He used his wisdom and built the world.
With his understanding he stretched the sky over the earth.
God causes the loud thunder,  
and he causes great floods of water  
to fall from the sky.  
He makes clouds rise in the sky every  
place on earth.  
He sends lightning with the rain.  
He brings out the wind from his  
storehouses.

People are so stupid!  
Metalworkers are fooled by the  
idoles that they themselves made.  
These statues are nothing but lies.  
They are stupid.  
These idols are worth nothing.  
They are something to make fun of.  
In the time of judgment they will be  
destroyed.  
But Jacob’s God\(^b\) is not like the idols.  
He made everything,  
and Israel is the family that God chose  
to be his own people.  
His name is LORD All-Powerful.

**Destruction Is Coming**

Get everything you own and prepare  
to leave.  
People of Judah, you are trapped in  
the city,  
and the enemy is all around it.

This is what the LORD says:  
“This time, I will throw the people of  
Judah out of this country.  
I will bring pain and trouble to  
them.  
I will do this so that they will learn  
their lesson.”\(^c\)

I am hurt badly.  
I am injured and I cannot be healed.  
But I told myself, “This is my sickness;  
I must suffer through it.”

My tent is ruined.  
All its ropes are broken.  
My children left me.

They are gone.  
No one is left to put up my tent.  
No one is left to fix a shelter for me.

The shepherds are stupid.  
They don’t try to find the LORD.  
They are not wise,  
so their flocks are scattered and lost.

Listen! A loud noise!  
The noise is coming from the north.\(^d\)  
It will destroy the cities of Judah.  
Judah will become an empty desert.  
It will be a home for jackals.

**The Agreement Is Broken**

11 This is the message from the LORD:  
“Jeremiah, listen to the words of this  
agreement and tell them to the people  
living in Jerusalem and the rest of Judah.  
Tell them that this is what the LORD, the  
God of Israel, says: ‘Bad things will hap -  
pen to anyone who does not obey this  
agreement.  
I am talking about the agree -  
ment I made with your ancestors when I  
brought them out of that furnace\(^e\) called  
Egypt.’ At that time I told them, ‘Listen to  
me and obey all the commands I give you.  
Then you will be my people and I will be  
your God.’

I did this to keep the promise that I  
had made to your ancestors. I promised

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\(^a\) 10:14 **They are stupid** Literally, “They have no spirit.” This
might also mean “They are not alive.”

\(^b\) 10:16 **Jacob’s God** Literally, “Jacob’s share.” This means that
God and Jacob (the people of Israel) had a special relation-
ship—God belonged to Israel, and Israel belonged to God.

\(^c\) 10:18 **they will learn their lesson** The Hebrew text here is
hard to understand.

\(^d\) 10:22 **north** The Babylonian army came from this direction
to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel
often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

\(^e\) 11:4 **furnace** Literally, “iron furnace.” That is, an oven hot
enough to soften iron so that it can be hammered into some-
thing useful.
to give them a very fertile land—a land flowing with milk and honey. And you are living in that country today.”

I answered, “Amen, LORD.”

6 The LORD said to me, “Jeremiah, tell this message in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: ‘Listen to the words of this agreement, and then obey these laws. 7 I gave a warning to your ancestors at the time I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I have warned them again and again to this day. I told them to obey me. 8 But your ancestors did not listen to me. They were stubborn and did what their own evil hearts wanted. The agreement says that bad things will happen to them if they don’t obey. So I made all the bad things happen to them. I commanded them to obey the agreement, but they did not.”

9 The LORD said to me, “Jeremiah, I know that the people of Judah and the people living in Jerusalem have made secret plans. 10 They are committing the same sins that their ancestors did. Their ancestors refused to listen to my message. They followed and worshiped other gods. The family of Israel and the family of Judah have broken the agreement I made with their ancestors.”

11 So this is what the LORD says: “I will soon make something terrible happen to the people of Judah. They will not be able to escape. They will be sorry and cry to me for help, but I will not listen to them. 12 The people in the towns of Judah and in the city of Jerusalem will go and pray to their idols for help. They burn incense to those idols. But their idols will not be able to help the people of Judah when that terrible disaster comes.

13 “People of Judah, you have many idols—there are as many idols as there are towns in Judah. You have built many altars for worshiping that disgusting god Baal—there are as many altars as there are streets in Jerusalem.

14 “As for you, Jeremiah, don’t pray for these people of Judah. Don’t beg for them. Don’t say prayers for them. I will not listen. They will suffer and then call to me for help, but I will not listen.

15 “Judah is the one I love, but why is she in my temple? She has done too many evil things. Judah, do you think vows and sacrifices will keep you from being destroyed? Will I then allow you to enjoy your evil ways?”

16 The LORD gave you a name.

He called you, “A green olive tree, beautiful to look at.” But with a powerful storm, he will set that tree on fire, and its branches will be burned up.a

17 The LORD All-Powerful planted you, and he said that disaster will come to you. That is because the family of Israel and the family of Judah have done evil things. They offered sacrifices to Baal, and that made him angry!

**Evil Plans Against Jeremiah**

18 The LORD showed me that the men of Anathothb were making plans against me. He showed me what they were doing, so I knew they were against me. 19 Before he showed me this, I was like a gentle lamb waiting to be butchered. I did not understand that they were against me. They were saying this about me: “Let us destroy the tree and its fruit! Let us kill him! Then people will forget him.”

20 So I prayed, “LORD All-Powerful, you are a fair judge. You know how to test people’s hearts and minds. I will tell you my arguments, and I will let you give them the punishment they deserve.”

21 The LORD said to me, “Those people from Anathoth are planning to take your life. They are telling you not to prophesy in the name of the LORD or they will kill you. This is what I have to say about them: 22 I, the LORD All-Powerful, promise that I will soon punish those people. Their young men will die in war. Their sons and

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a 11:15–16 The meaning of these verses is uncertain.
b 11:18 men of Anathoth Anathoth was Jeremiah’s hometown. The people who were plotting against him there included his own relatives. See Jer. 12:6. © 2014 Bible League International
daughters will die from hunger. 22 No one from the city of Anathoth will be left. No one will survive. I will punish them and cause something bad to happen to them.”

Jeremiah Complains to God

12 1 LORD, if I argue with you, you are always right.
   But I want to ask you about some things that don’t seem right.
   Why are wicked people successful?
   Why do people you cannot trust have such easy lives?
2 You have put these wicked people here like plants with strong roots.
   They grow and produce fruit.
   With their mouths they say that you are near and dear to them,
   but in their hearts they are really far away from you.
3 But you know my heart, LORD.
   You see me and test my mind.
   Drag the evil people away like sheep to be killed.
   Choose them for the day of slaughter.
4 How much longer will the land be dry?
   How long will the grass be dry and dead?
   The birds and the animals of this land have all died,
   and it is the fault of the wicked.
   But they are saying, “Jeremiah will not live long enough to see what happens to us.”

God’s Answer to Jeremiah

5 “Jeremiah, if running in a race against men makes you tired,
   how will you race against horses?
   If you trip and fall in a safe place,
   what will you do in a dangerous place?
   What will you do in the thornbushes that grow along the Jordan River?
6 These men are your own brothers.
   Members of your own family are making plans against you.
   People from your own family are shouting at you.

The Lord Rejects Judah

7 I have abandoned my house.
   I have left my own property, a
   I have given Judah, the one I love, to her enemies.
8 My own people turned against me like a wild lion.
   They roared at me, so I turned away from them.
9 My own people have become like a dying animal surrounded by vultures.
   These birds are circling around her.
   Come on, wild animals.
   Come get something to eat.
10 Many shepherds have ruined my vineyard.
   They have trampled the plants in my field.
   They have made my beautiful field a desert.
11 They have turned it into an empty desert.
   It is dry and dead.
   The whole land has been ruined, and no one is left to care for it.
12 The empty hills are covered with soldiers who have come to destroy everything.
   The LORD is using them to punish that land from one end to the other.
   No one is safe.
13 The people will plant wheat, but they will harvest only thorns.
   They will work hard until they are very tired, but they will get nothing for all their work.
   They will be ashamed of their crop. The LORD’s anger caused this.”

The Lord’s Promise to Israel’s Neighbors

14 This is what the LORD says: “I will tell
you what I will do for all those who live around the land of Israel. They are very wicked. They have destroyed the land I gave to the people of Israel. I will pull the evil people up and throw them out of their land, and I will pull the people of Judah up with them. But after I pull them up out of their land, I will feel sorry for them. I will bring each family back to its own property and to its own land. I want these people to learn their lessons well. In the past they taught my people to use Baal’s name to make promises. Now, I want them to learn to use my name. I want them to say, ‘As the Lord lives …’ If they do that, I will allow them to be successful, and I will let them live among my people. But if a nation does not listen to my message, I will completely destroy it. I will pull it up like a dead plant.” This message is from the Lord.

The Sign of the Loincloth

13 This is what the Lord said to me: “Jeremiah, go and buy a linen loincloth. Then put it around your waist. Don’t let it get wet.”

So I bought a linen loincloth, just as the Lord told me to do, and I put it around my waist. Then the message from the Lord came to me a second time. This was the message: “Jeremiah, take the loincloth you bought and are wearing, and go to Perath. Hide the loincloth there in a crack in the rocks.”

So I went to Perath and hid the loincloth there, just as the Lord told me to do. Many days later the Lord told me, “Now, Jeremiah, go to Perath. Get the loincloth that I told you to hide there.”

So I went to Perath and dug the loincloth out of the crack in the rocks where I had hidden it. But now I could not wear the loincloth, because it was ruined. It was not good for anything.

Then the message from the Lord came to me. This is what the Lord said: “The loincloth is ruined and not good for anything. In the same way, I will ruin the proud people of Judah and Jerusalem. I will ruin them because they refuse to listen to my messages. They are stubborn and do only what they want to do. They follow and worship other gods. They will be like this linen loincloth. They will be ruined and not good for anything. A loincloth is wrapped tightly around a man’s waist. In the same way, I wrapped the family of Israel and the family of Judah around me.” This message is from the Lord. “I did that so that they would be my people and bring me fame, praise, and honor. But my people did not listen to me.”

Warnings to Judah

12 “Jeremiah, say to the people of Judah: ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Every wineskin should be filled with wine.’ They will laugh and say to you, ‘Of course, we know that every wineskin should be filled with wine.’ Then you will say to them, ‘This is what the Lord says: I will make everyone who lives in this land helpless, like a drunken man. I am talking about the kings who sit on David’s throne. I am also talking about the priests, the prophets, and all the people who live in Jerusalem. I will make them stumble and fall against each other, even the fathers and sons.’ This message is from the Lord. ‘I will not feel sorry or have pity for them. I will not allow compassion to stop me from destroying the people of Judah.’”

15 Listen and pay attention. The Lord has spoken to you. Do not be proud.

16 Honor the Lord your God. Praise him or he will bring darkness. Praise him before you fall on the dark hills. You people of Judah are hoping for light, but the Lord will turn the light into thick darkness. He will change it into the deepest gloom.
17 If you people of Judah don’t listen to him, I will hide and cry. Your pride will cause me to cry. I will cry very hard. My eyes will overflow with tears, because the LORD’s flock\textsuperscript{a} will be captured.

18 Tell these things to the king and his wife, “Come down from your thrones. Your beautiful crowns have fallen from your heads.”

19 The cities in the Negev are locked. No one can open them. All the people of Judah have been taken away as captives. They were carried away as prisoners.

20 Jerusalem, look! The enemy is coming from the north\textsuperscript{b}! Where is the flock\textsuperscript{c} you were once in charge of? That beautiful flock is gone now.

21 I will let your enemies become your rulers—people you once trusted with your secrets.

What will you say then? Surely you will feel great pain, like a woman giving birth.

22 You might ask yourself, “Why has this bad thing happened to me?” It happened because of your many sins. Because of your sins, your skirt was torn off, and your sandals were taken away. They did this to embarrass you.

23 A black man cannot change the color of his skin, and a leopard cannot change its spots.

\textsuperscript{a} 13:17 Lord’s flock This is a figurative name for the people of Judah. The Lord is thought of as a shepherd, while his people are seen as his flock of sheep.

\textsuperscript{b} 13:20 north The Babylonian army came from this direction to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

\textsuperscript{c} 13:20 flock Here, the word “flock” refers to all the towns around Jerusalem, as if Jerusalem were the shepherd and the towns of Judah were her flock.

In the same way, Jerusalem, you cannot change and do good. You always do bad things.

24 “I will force you to leave your homes. You will run in all directions. You will be like chaff blown away by the desert wind.

25 This is what will happen to you. This is your part in my plans.” This message is from the LORD.

“Why will this happen? Because you forgot me. You trusted false gods.

26 Jerusalem, I will pull your skirt up over your face. Everyone will see you, and you will be ashamed.

27 I saw the terrible things you did.\textsuperscript{d} I saw you laughing and having sex with your lovers. I know about your plans to be like a prostitute. I have seen you on the hills and in the fields. It will be very bad for you, Jerusalem. How long will you continue doing your dirty sins?”

Drought and False Prophets

14 This is the LORD’s message to Jeremiah about the drought\textsuperscript{e}:

2 “The nation of Judah cries for people who have died. The people in the cities of Judah grow weaker and weaker. They lie on the ground. People in Jerusalem, cry to God for help.

3 The leaders of the people send their servants to get water. The servants go to the water storage places, but they don’t find any water. The servants come back with empty jars,

\textsuperscript{d} 13:27 I saw . . . you did This is probably talking about worshiping false gods. But part of that worship was having sex with temple prostitutes.

\textsuperscript{e} 14:1 drought A time when no rain falls and the crops become dry and die.
so they are ashamed and embarrassed.
They cover their heads from shame.

4 No one prepares the ground for crops.\(^a\)
No rain falls on the land.
The farmers are depressed.
So they cover their heads from shame.

5 Even the mother deer in the field leaves her newborn baby alone, because there is no grass.

6 Wild donkeys stand on the bare hills.
They sniff the wind like jackals.
But their eyes cannot find any food, because there are no plants to eat.

7 “We know that this is our fault. We are now suffering because of our sins.
Lord, do something to help us for the good of your name.
We admit that we have left you many times.
We have sinned against you.

8 God, you are the hope of Israel!
You save Israel in times of trouble.
But now it seems like you are a stranger in the land, like a traveler who only stays one night.

9 You seem like a man who has been attacked by surprise, like a soldier who does not have the power to save anyone.
But, Lord, you are with us.
We are called by your name, so don’t leave us without help!”

10 This is what the Lord says about the people of Judah: “The people of Judah really love to leave me. They don’t stop themselves from leaving me. So now the Lord will not accept them. Now he will remember the evil they do. He will punish them for their sins.”

11 Then the Lord said to me, “Jeremiah, don’t pray for good things to happen to the people of Judah. They might begin to fast and pray to me, but I will not listen to their prayers. Even if they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings to me, I will not accept them. I will destroy the people of Judah with war. I will take away their food, and they will starve. And I will destroy them with terrible diseases.”

13 But I said, “Lord God, the prophets were telling the people something different. They were telling the people of Judah, ‘You will not suffer from war or from hunger. The Lord will give you peace in this land.’”

14 Then the Lord said to me, “Jeremiah, those prophets are telling lies in my name. I did not send them or command them or speak to them. Their prophecies came from false visions, worthless magic, and their own wishful thinking.\(^b\) So this is what I, the Lord, say about the prophets who are speaking in my name. I did not send them. They said, ‘No enemy will ever attack this country. There will never be hunger in this land.’ So those prophets will die from hunger or by an enemy’s sword. And the people they spoke to will be thrown into the streets. The people will die from hunger and war. I will punish them, and no one will be there to bury them, their wives, their sons, or their daughters.

15 Jeremiah, speak this message to the people of Judah:
‘My eyes fill with tears night and day without stopping.
I cry for my virgin daughter,\(^b\) and for my dear people, because someone hit them and crushed them.
They have been hurt very badly.

16 If I go into the country, I see the bodies of those killed in war.
If I go into the city, I see people sick from hunger.
The priests and prophets continue their work, but they don’t understand what is happening.’”

\(^{a}\) 14:4 No one … crops This follows the ancient Greek version. The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.

\(^{b}\) 14:17 virgin daughter Another name for Jerusalem.
Lord, have you completely rejected the nation of Judah? Do you hate Zion? You hurt us so badly that we cannot be made well again. Why did you do that? We were hoping for peace, but nothing good has come. We were hoping for a time of healing, but only terror came. 

**20** LORD, we know that we are wicked. We know that our ancestors did evil things. Yes, we sinned against you. 

**21** For the good of your name, don’t push us away. Don’t take away the honor from your glorious throne. Remember your agreement with us and do not break it. 

**22** Foreign idols don’t have the power to bring rain. The sky does not have the power to send down showers of rain. You, the LORD our God, are our only hope. You are the one who made all these things. 

**15** The LORD said to me, “Jeremiah, even if Moses and Samuel were here to pray for the people of Judah, I would not feel sorry for them. Send the people of Judah away from me! Tell them to go! They might ask you, ‘Where will we go?’ Tell them this is what the LORD says: “I have chosen some people to die. They will die. I have chosen some to be killed with swords. They will be killed with swords. I have chosen some to die from hunger. They will die from hunger. I have chosen some to be taken away to a foreign country. They will be prisoners there. **3** I will send four kinds of destroyers against them.’ This message is from the LORD. ‘I will send the enemy with a sword to kill. I will send the dogs to drag their bodies away. I will send birds of the air and wild animals to eat and destroy their bodies. 

**4** I will make the people of Judah an example of something terrible for all the people on earth. I will do this to the people of Judah because of what Manasseh did in Jerusalem. Manasseh was the son of King Hezekiah. Manasseh was a king of Judah.’ 

**5** “No one will feel sorry for you, city of Jerusalem. No one will be sad and cry for you. No one will go out of their way to even ask how you are. 

**6** Jerusalem, you left me.” This message is from the LORD. “Again and again you left me! So I will punish and destroy you. I am tired of holding back your punishment. 

**7** I will separate the people of Judah with my pitchfork. I will scatter them at the city gates of the land. My people have not changed, so I will destroy them. I will take away their children. 

**8** Many women will lose their husbands. There will be more widows than there is sand in the sea. I will bring a destroyer at noon time. The destroyer will attack the mothers of the young men of Judah. I will bring pain and fear on the people of Judah. I will make this happen very quickly. 

**9** The enemy will attack with swords and kill the people. They will kill the survivors from 

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**15:4 Manasseh** Manasseh was the most evil king of Judah according to 2 Kings 21:1–16. He worshiped many gods.

**15:7 pitchfork** A tool with sharp points for throwing hay from one place to another.
Jeremiah 15

Jeremiah Complains to God Again

10 Mother, I am sorry that you gave birth to me. I am the one who must accuse and criticize the whole land. I have not loaned or borrowed anything, but everyone curses me.

11 Surely, L ORD, I have served you well. In times of disaster and trouble, I prayed to you about my enemies.

God Answers Jeremiah

12 “Jeremiah, you know that no one can shatter a piece of iron. I mean the kind of iron that is from the north. And no one can shatter a piece of bronze either.

13 The people of Judah have many treasures. I will give these riches to other people. They will not have to buy them, because Judah has many sins. The people sinned in every part of Judah.

14 People of Judah, I will make you slaves of your enemies. You will be slaves in a land that you never knew. I am very angry. My anger is like a hot fire, and you will be burned.”

15 L ORD, you understand me. Remember me and take care of me. People are hurting me.

Give them the punishment they deserve.
You are being patient with them.
But don’t destroy me while you remain patient with them.
Think about me.
Think about the pain I suffer for you.

16 Your words came to me, and I ate them up.
They made me very happy.
I was glad to be called by your name, L ORD God All-Powerful.

17 I never sat with the crowd as they laughed and had fun. I sat by myself because of your influence on me. You filled me with anger at the evil around me.

18 I don’t understand why I still hurt. I don’t understand why my wound is not cured and cannot be healed.
I think you have changed.
You are like a spring of water that became dry.
You are like a spring whose water has stopped flowing.

19 Then the L ORD said, “Jeremiah, if you change and come back to me, I will not punish you. If you change and come back to me, then you may serve me. If you speak important things, not worthless words, then you may speak for me. The people of Judah should change and come back to you. But don’t you change and be like them.

20 I will make you strong.
The people will think you are strong, like a wall made of bronze. The people of Judah will fight against you, but they will not defeat you. They will not defeat you, because I am with you. I will help you, and I will save you.”

This message is from the L ORD.
“I will save you from these evil people. They frighten you, but I will save you from them.”

**The Day of Disaster**

The Lord’s message came to me:

Jeremiah, you must not get married. You must not have sons or daughters in this place.

This is what the Lord says about the sons and daughters who are born in the land of Judah and about their mothers and fathers:

They will die from terrible disease. And no one will cry for them or bury them. Their bodies will lie on the ground like dung. Or they will die in war or starve to death. Their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the earth.

So the Lord says, “Jeremiah, don’t go into a house where people are eating a funeral meal. Don’t go there to cry for the dead or to show your sorrow. Don’t do these things, because I have taken back my blessing. I will not be kind to the people of Judah. I will not feel sorry for them.” This message is from the Lord.

Important people and common people will die in the land of Judah. No one will bury them or cry for them. No one will cut himself or shave his head to show sorrow for them.

No one will bring food to those who are crying for the dead. No one will comfort those whose mother or father has died. No one will offer a drink to comfort those who are crying for the dead.

Jeremiah, don’t go into a house where the people are having a party. Don’t go into that house and sit down to eat and drink. This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel says: I will soon stop the sounds of people having fun. I will stop the happy sounds of people enjoying a wedding party. This will happen during your lifetime. I will do these things very soon.

Jeremiah, you will tell the people of Judah these things, and the people will ask you, ‘Why has the Lord said these terrible things to us? What have we done wrong? What sin have we done against the Lord our God?’ You must tell them: ‘Terrible things will happen to you because your ancestors stopped following me.’ This message is from the Lord. ‘They stopped following me and began to follow and serve other gods. They worshiped those other gods. Your ancestors left me and stopped obeying my law. But you people have sinned more than your ancestors. You are very stubborn, and you are doing only what you want to do. You are not obeying me. Because you do only what you want to do, I will throw you out of this country. I will force you to go to a foreign land. You will go to a land that you and your ancestors never knew. There you can serve false gods all you want to. I will not help you or show you any favors.’

People make promises and say, ‘As surely as the Lord lives—the Lord who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt . . .’ But the time is coming,” says the Lord, “when people will not say that.

They will say something new. They will say, ‘As surely as the Lord lives—the Lord who brought the Israelites out of the northern land, who brought them out of all the countries where he had sent them . . .’ Why will they say that? Because I will bring the Israelites back to the land that I gave to their ancestors.

I will soon send for many fishermen to come to this land.” This message is from the Lord. “They will catch the people of Judah. After that happens, I will send for many hunters to come to this land. They will hunt the people of Judah on every mountain and hill and in the cracks of the rocks. I see everything they do. The people of Judah cannot hide the things they do. Their sin is not hidden from me.

I will pay the people of Judah back for the evil things they did—I will punish them two times for every sin. I will do this because they have made my land ‘dirty.’ They made my land ‘dirty’ with their terrible idols. I
hate those idols, but they have filled my country with their idols.”

19 LORD, you are my strength and my protection.
You are a safe place to run to in time of trouble.
The nations will come to you from all around the world.
They will say, “Our fathers had false gods.
They worshiped those worthless idols, but the idols did not help them.

20 Can people make real gods for themselves?
No, they can only make statues that are not really gods.”

21 “So I will teach those who make idols.
Right now I will teach them about my power and my strength.
Then they will know that I am God.
They will know that I am the LORD.

Guilt Written on the Heart

17 “The sins of Judah are written where they cannot be erased—
cut into stone with an iron pen, cut deep with a hard tip into the stone that is the hearts of the people.
Their sins are carved into the horns of their altars.a

2 Their children remember the altars that were dedicated to false gods.
They remember the wooden poles that were dedicated to Asherah.
They remember those things under the green trees and on the hills.

3 They remember those things on the mountains in the open country.
The people of Judah have many treasures.
I will give those things to other people.
People will destroy all the high places in your country.

You worshiped there, and that was a sin.

4 You will lose the land I gave you.
I will let your enemies take you to be their slaves.
That is because I am very angry.
My anger is like a hot fire, and you will be burned forever.”

5 This is what the LORD says:
“Bad things will happen to those who put their trust in people.
Bad things will happen to those who depend on human strength.
That is because they have stopped trusting the LORD.

6 They are like a bush in a desert where no one lives.
It is in a hot and dry land.
It is in bad soil.
That bush does not know about the good things that God can give.

7 “But those who trust in the LORD will be blessed.
They know that the LORD will do what he says.

8 They will be strong like trees planted near a stream that send out roots to the water.
They have nothing to fear when the days get hot.
Their leaves are always green.
They never worry, even in a year that has no rain.
They always produce fruit.

9 “Nothing can hide its evil as well as the human mind.
It can be very sick, and no one really understands it.

10 But I am the LORD, and I can look into a person’s heart.
I can test a person’s mind and decide what each one should have.
I can give each person the right payment for what they do.

11 Sometimes a bird will hatch an egg that it did not lay.

a 17:1 horns of their altars The corners of altars were shaped like horns, and the blood of sacrifices was smeared on them. So Jeremiah may mean that the people’s sins have made their altars unfit for sacrifices.
Those who cheat to get money are like that bird. But when their lives are half finished, they will lose the money. At the end of their lives, it will be clear that they were fools.”

12 From the very beginning, our Temple has been a glorious throne for God. It is a very important place.

13 LORD, you are the hope of Israel. You are like a spring of living water. Those who stop following the LORD will have a very short life.

Jeremiah’s Third Complaint

14 LORD, if you heal me, I surely will be healed. Save me, and I surely will be saved. Lord, I praise you!

15 The people of Judah continue to ask me questions. They say, “Jeremiah, what about the message from the LORD? Let’s see that message come true.”

16 Lord, I did not run away from you. I followed you. I became the shepherd you wanted. I did not want the terrible day to come. You know what I said. You see all that is happening.

17 Please don’t make me afraid of you. I depend on you in times of trouble.

18 People are hurting me. Make them ashamed, but don’t disappoint me. Let them be filled with fear, but don’t give me any reason to fear. Bring the terrible day of disaster to my enemies. Break them, and break them again.

19 This is what the LORD said to me: “Jeremiah, go and stand at the People’s Gate, where the kings of Judah go in and out. Tell the people my message, and then go to all the other gates of Jerusalem and do the same.”

20 Say to the people, “Listen to this message from the LORD. Listen, kings of Judah. Listen, all you people of Judah. All you who come through these gates into Jerusalem, listen to me! This is what the LORD says: ‘Be careful that you don’t carry a load on the Sabbath day. And don’t bring a load through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. Don’t bring a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day. Don’t do any work on that day. You must make the Sabbath day a holy day. I gave this same command to your ancestors, but they did not obey me. They did not pay attention to me. Your ancestors were very stubborn. I punished them, but it did not do any good. They did not listen to me. But you must be careful to obey me, says the LORD. You must not bring a load through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath. You must make the Sabbath day a holy day. You will do this by not doing any work on that day.

21 ‘If you obey this command, the kings and leaders will be from David’s family. It will be the kings who sit on David’s throne and the leaders from Judah and Jerusalem who come through the gates of Jerusalem riding on chariots and on horses. And Jerusalem will have people living in it forever.

22 People will come to Jerusalem from the towns and villages of Judah, from the land where the tribe of Benjamin lives, from the western foothills, from the hill country, and from the Negev. All these people will bring burnt offerings, sacrifices, grain offerings, incense, and thank offerings to the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem.

Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy

19:17 This might be one of the gates into Jerusalem or perhaps one of the southern gates into the Temple area used by those who were not priests.

19:26 The land of Benjamin was just north of the land of Judah.
But if you don’t listen to me and obey me, bad things will happen. If you carry loads into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, you are not keeping it as a holy day. So I will start a fire that cannot be put out. That fire will start at the gates of Jerusalem, and it will burn until it burns even the palaces.’”

**The Potter and the Clay**

18 ‘This is the message that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: “Jeremiah, go down to the potter’s house. I will give you my message there.”

So I went down to the potter’s house and saw him working with clay at the wheel. He was making a pot from clay. But there was something wrong with the pot. So the potter used that clay to make another pot. With his hands he shaped the pot the way he wanted it to be.

Then this message from the Lord came to me: “Family of Israel, you know that I can do the same thing with you. You are like the clay in the potter’s hands, and I am the potter.” This message is from the Lord. “There may come a time when I will speak about a nation or a kingdom that I will pull up by its roots or tear down and destroy it. But if the people of that nation change their hearts and lives and stop doing evil things, I will change my mind and not bring on them the disaster I planned.

There may come another time when I speak about a nation that I will build up or plant. But if I see that nation doing evil things and not obeying me, I will think again about the good I had planned to do for them.

So, Jeremiah, say to the people of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem, ‘This is what the Lord says: I am the potter preparing troubles for you and making plans against you. So stop doing the evil things you are doing. Each person must change and start doing good.’ But the people of Judah will answer, ‘We don’t care what you say. We will continue to do what we want. We will do the evil our stubborn hearts want.’”

Listen to what the Lord says: “Ask the other nations this question: ‘Have you ever heard of anything so bad?’ Israel, who is as dear to me as a young daughter, has done this terrible thing! It is as strange as not finding snow on Lebanon’s mountains or seeing the cool streams that come from there stop flowing. That just does not happen!

But my people have forgotten me. They burn offerings to worthless idols. They have left the right way that their ancestors followed, and they stumble on the path they have chosen. Instead of staying on the good road I showed them, they prefer to walk on bumpy paths.

So their land will become an empty desert, a place for people from now on to make fun of. All who pass by there will be shocked by what has happened. They will just shake their heads at what they see.

Like a strong east wind, I will scatter my people. I will use their enemies to scatter them like dust. When disaster comes upon them, they will see me leaving, not coming to help.”

**The People Plan Evil and Jeremiah Prays**

Then the enemies of Jeremiah said, “Come, let us make plans against Jeremiah. We will always have a priest to tell us what the law says. We will still have wise men to advise us and prophets to tell us a message from God. So who needs Jeremiah? Let’s tell lies to ruin him and stop listening to what he says.”

Lord, listen to me! Listen to what my enemies are saying.
I have done only good to them. It is not right for them to pay me back with evil. But they are preparing a death trap for me! Remember that I prayed to you for them. I asked only good for them. I tried to keep you from punishing them in anger.

So now make their children starve to death! Let their enemies kill them with swords. Let their wives lose their children and husbands. Let their men die from disease, and let their young men be killed in battle.

Let them cry out in their houses, when you suddenly bring an enemy against them. Let it happen because they prepared a death trap for me. They hid traps for me to step in.

Lord, you know about their plans to kill me. So don’t forgive their crimes or erase their sins. Make them fall down in defeat. Punish them in your anger!

The Broken Jar

The Lord said to me, “Jeremiah, go and buy a clay jar from a potter. Take some of the elders of the people and some priests with you. Go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, near the front of the Potsherd Gate. I have a message I want you to announce there. Say to those who are with you, ‘King of Judah and people of Jerusalem, listen to this message from the Lord! This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: I will soon make a terrible thing happen to this place! Everyone who hears about it will be amazed and full of fear. I will do these things because the people of Judah have stopped following me. They have made this a place for foreign gods. The people of Judah have burned sacrifices in this place to other gods. The people long ago did not worship those gods. Their ancestors did not worship them. These are new gods from other countries. The kings of Judah filled this place with the blood of innocent children. The kings of Judah built high places for the god Baal. They use those places to burn their sons in the fire. They burned their sons as burnt offerings to the god Baal. I did not tell them to do that. I did not ask them to offer their sons as sacrifices. I never even thought of such a thing. Now people call this place Topheth and the Valley of Hinnom. But I give you this warning. This message is from the Lord: The days are coming, when people will call this place the Valley of Slaughter. At this place, I will ruin the plans of the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The enemy will chase them, and I will let the people of Judah be killed with swords in this place. I will make their dead bodies food for the birds and wild animals. I will completely destroy this city. People will whistle and shake their heads when they pass by Jerusalem. They will be shocked when they see how the city was destroyed.

The enemy will bring its army around the city. That army will not let people go out to get food, so the people in the city will begin to starve. They will become so hungry that they will eat the bodies of their own sons and daughters, and then they will begin to eat each other.’

Jeremiah, tell this to the people, and while they are watching, break the jar.

Then say this: ‘The Lord All-Powerful says, I will break the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, just as someone breaks a clay jar! And like a broken jar, the nation of Judah cannot be put together again. It will be the same for the nation of Judah. The dead people will be buried here in Topheth until there is no more room.

I will do this to these people and to this place. I will make this city like Topheth.’ This message is from the Lord.

The exact location of this gate is not known, though it was probably at the southwestern part of the city.
houses in Jerusalem will become as “dirty” as this place, Topheth. The kings’ palaces will be ruined like this place, Topheth, because the people worshiped false gods on the roofs of their houses. They worshiped the stars and burned sacrifices to honor them. They gave drink offerings to false gods.’”

10 Then Jeremiah left Topheth where the LORD had told him to speak. Jeremiah went to the LORD’s Temple and stood in the courtyard of the Temple. Jeremiah said to all the people: “This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel says: ‘I said I would bring many disasters to Jerusalem and the villages around it. I will soon make this happen because the people are very stubborn. They refuse to listen and obey me.’”

Jeremiah and Pashhur

20 Pashhur son of Immer was a priest. He was the highest officer in the Temple of the LORD. When he heard Jeremiah say those things in the Temple yard, he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten. And he had Jeremiah’s hands and feet locked between large blocks of wood. This was at the Upper Gate of Benjamin of the Lord’s Temple. The next day Pashhur took Jeremiah out from between the blocks of wood. Then Jeremiah said to him, “The LORD’s name for you is not Pashhur. Now his name for you is ‘Surrounded by Terror.’ That is your name because of what the LORD says: ‘I will soon make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. You will watch enemies killing your friends with swords. I will give all the people of Judah to the king of Babylon. He will take them away to the country of Babylon, and his army will kill the people of Judah with their swords. The people of Jerusalem worked hard to build things and become wealthy, but I will give all these things to their enemies. The king in Jerusalem has many treasures, but I will give all the treasures to the enemy. The enemy will take them and carry them away to the country of Babylon. And, Pashhur, you and all the people living in your house will be taken away. You will be forced to go and live in the country of Babylon. You will die in Babylon, and you will be buried in that foreign country. You told lies to your friends. You said these things would not happen. But all your friends will also die and be buried in Babylon.’”

Jeremiah’s Fifth Complaint

7 LORD, you tricked me, and I certainly was fooled.
You are stronger than I am, so you won.
I have become a joke.
People laugh at me and make fun of me all day long.
I tell the people about the message that I received from the LORD.
But they only insult me and make fun of me.
Sometimes I say to myself, “I will forget about him.
I will not speak anymore in his name.”
But when I say that, his message is like a fire burning inside me!
It feels like it is burning deep in my bones!
I get tired of trying to hold his message inside.
And finally, I am not able to hold it in.

10 I hear people whispering against me.
Everywhere, I hear things that frighten me.
Even my friends are speaking against me.
People are just waiting for me to make a mistake.
They are saying, “Let us lie and say that he did something bad.
Maybe we can trick Jeremiah.
Then we will have him.
We will finally be rid of him.

" 19:13 roofs of their houses People built their houses with flat roofs that were used as an extra room. © 2014 Bible League International
Then we will grab him and take our revenge on him.”

11 But the LORD is with me. He is like a strong soldier. So those who are chasing me will fail. They will not defeat me. They will fail. They will be disappointed. They will be ashamed, and they will never forget that shame.

12 LORD All-Powerful, you test good people. You look deeply into a person’s mind. I told you my arguments against these people. So let me see you give them the punishment they deserve.

13 Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD! He saves the lives of the poor! He saves them from the wicked!

Jeremiah's Sixth Complaint

14 Curse the day that I was born! Don’t bless the day my mother had me.

15 Curse the man who told my father the news that I was born. “It’s a boy!” he said. “You have a son.” He made my father very happy when he told him the news.

16 Let that man be like the cities the LORD destroyed. He had no pity on them. Let him hear shouts of war in the morning; let him hear battle cries at noontime, because he did not kill me while I was in my mother’s womb. If he had killed me then, my mother would have been my grave, and I would not have been born.

18 Why did I have to come out of her body? All I have seen is trouble and sorrow, and my life will end in shame.

God Rejects King Zedekiah’s Request

21 1 This is the message that came to Jeremiah from the LORD. This was when King Zedekiah of Judah sent Pashhurb son of Malkijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to Jeremiah. They brought a message for Jeremiah. 2 They said to Jeremiah, “Pray to the LORD for us. Ask him what will happen. We want to know, because King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is attacking us. Maybe the LORD will do great things for us, as he did in the past. Maybe he will make Nebuchadnezzar stop attacking us and leave.”

3 Then Jeremiah answered Pashhur and Zephaniah. He said, “Tell King Zedekiah, 4 “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: You have weapons of war in your hands that you are using to defend yourselves from the Babylonians and their king. But I will make those weapons worthless. “The army from Babylon is outside the wall all around the city. Soon I will bring that army into Jerusalem. I myself will fight against you people of Judah. I will fight against you with my own powerful hand. I am very angry with you, so I will fight against you with my own powerful arm. I will fight very hard against you and show how angry I am. I will kill everything living in Jerusalem, both people and animals. They will die from a terrible disease that will spread all through the city. After that happens,” says the LORD, “I will give King Zedekiah of Judah and all his officials to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. And I will give to Nebuchadnezzar the people who remain alive in Jerusalem—those who did not die from the terrible disease and the people who did not die in war or from hunger. I will give them all to King Nebuchadnezzar. The people of Judah will be captured by

\[20:16\] cities the LORD destroyed That is, Sodom and Gomorrah. See Gen. 19.

\[21:1\] Pashhur This is not the same Pashhur as the man in Jer. 20:1.
their enemies who want to kill them. Nebuchadnezzar’s army will use their swords to kill the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar will not show any mercy. He will not feel sorry for them.’

8Also tell the people of Jerusalem, ‘This is what the Lord says: Understand that I will let you choose to live or die. 9Anyone who stays in Jerusalem will die in war or from hunger or disease. But anyone who goes out of Jerusalem and surrenders to the Babylonians attacking you will live. Only those who leave the city will win anything in this war—their lives! 10I have decided to make trouble for the city of Jerusalem. I will not help this city! I will give it to the king of Babylon, who will burn it with fire.’ ” This message is from the Lord.

11“Say this to Judah’s royal family: ‘Listen to the message from the Lord. Family of David, this is what the Lord says: “You must judge people fairly every day. Protect the victims from the criminals. If you don’t do that, I will become very angry. My anger will be like a fire that no one will be able to put out. This will happen because you have done evil things.’

12“Jerusalem, I am against you. You sit on top of the mountain. You sit like a queen over this valley. You people of Jerusalem say, ‘No one can attack us. No one can come into our strong city.’ ” This message is from the Lord.

13“You will get the punishment you deserve. I will start a fire in your forests that will completely burn everything around you.” This message is from the Lord.

Judgment Against Evil Kings

22“The Lord said, “Jeremiah, go down to the king’s palace. Go to the king of Judah and tell this message there: 2Listen to this message from the Lord, King of Judah. You rule from David’s throne, so listen. King, you and your officials must listen well. All of your people who come through the gates of Jerusalem must listen to the message from the Lord. 3This is what the Lord says: Do what is right and fair. Protect those who have been robbed from the ones who robbed them. Don’t hurt or do anything wrong to orphans or widows. Don’t kill innocent people. 4If you obey these commands, kings who sit on David’s throne will continue to come through the gates into the city of Jerusalem. They will come through the gates with their officials. The kings, their officials, and their people will come riding in chariots and on horses. 5But I, the Lord, tell you that if you don’t obey these commands, then I promise with an oath in my own name that this king’s palace will be destroyed—it will become a pile of rocks.”’

6This is what the Lord says about the palace where the king of Judah lives: “The palace is tall like the forests of Gilead, like the mountains of Lebanon. But I will make it like a desert, as empty as a city where no one lives. 7I will send men to destroy the palace, each armed with weapons. They will cut up your strong, beautiful cedar beams and throw them into the fire.

8“People from many nations will pass by this city. They will ask one another, ‘Why has the Lord done such a terrible thing to Jerusalem? Jerusalem was such a great city.’ 9This will be the answer to that question: ‘God destroyed Jerusalem because the people of Judah stopped following the agreement of the Lord their God. They worshiped and served other gods.’”
Judgment Against King Jehoahaz

10 Don’t cry for the king who has died. Don’t cry for him. But cry very hard for the king who must leave this place. Cry for him because he will never return or see his homeland again.

11 This is what the LORD says about Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, who became king of Judah after his father Josiah died: “Jehoahaz has gone away from Jerusalem. He will never return. Jehoahaz will die in the place where the Egyptians have taken him, and he will not see this land again.”

Judgment Against King Jehoiakim

13 “It will be very bad for King Jehoiakim. He is doing wrong so that he can build his palace. He is cheating people so that he can build rooms upstairs. He is not paying his own people. He is making them work for nothing.

14 Jehoiakim says, ‘I will build myself a great palace, with huge rooms upstairs.’ So he built it with large windows. He used cedar wood for paneling, and he painted it red.

15 Jehoiakim, having a lot of cedar in your house does not make you a great king. Your father Josiah was satisfied to have food and drink. He did what was right and fair, so everything went well for him.

16 Josiah helped poor and needy people, so everything went well for him. Jehoiakim, what does it mean “to know God”? It means living right and being fair. That is what it means to know me. This message is from the LORD.

17 “Jehoiakim, your eyes look only for what benefits yourself. You are always thinking about getting more for yourself. You are willing to kill innocent people. You are willing to steal things from other people.”

18 So this is what the LORD says to King Jehoiakim son of Josiah:

“The people of Judah will not cry for Jehoiakim. They will not say to each other, ‘Brother, I am so sad! Sister, I am so sad!’ They will not cry for Jehoiakim. They will not say about him, ‘Master, I am so sad! King, I am so sad!’

19 The people of Jerusalem will bury Jehoiakim like a donkey. They will drag his body away and throw it outside the gates of Jerusalem.

20 “Judah, go up to the mountains of Lebanon and cry out. Let your voice be heard in the mountains of Bashan. Cry out in the mountains of Abarim, because all your ‘lovers’ will be destroyed.

21 “Judah, you felt safe, but I warned you. I warned you, but you refused to listen. You have lived like this from the time you were young. And from the time you were young, you have not obeyed me, Judah.

22 Judah, the punishment I give will come like a storm, and it will blow all your shepherds away. You thought some of the other nations would help you.

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\(a\) 22:10 the king who has died That is, King Josiah who was killed in battle against the Egyptians in 609 B.C.

\(b\) 22:10 the king … place This means Josiah’s son, Jehoahaz. He became king after Josiah died. He is also called Shallum. King Neco of Egypt defeated Josiah. And Neco took Jehoahaz off the throne of Judah and made him a prisoner in Egypt.

\(c\) 22:11 Jehoahaz The Hebrew text has “Shallum,” another name for Jehoahaz.
But these nations will also be defeated.
Then you will really be disappointed.
You will be ashamed of all the evil things you did.

23 “King, you seem so safe in your palace of cedar.
It’s as if you live in Lebanon! But when your punishment comes, you will groan.
You will be in pain like a woman giving birth!”

Judgment Against King Jehoiachin
24 “As surely as I live,” says the LORD, “I will do this to you, Jehoiachin son of Je-
hoiakim, king of Judah: Even if you were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off. 25Jehoiachin, I will give you to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and the Babylonians. Those are the people you are afraid of. They want to kill you.
26 I will throw you and your mother into another country where neither of you was born. You and your mother will die in that country. 27Jehoiachin, you will want to come back to your land, but you will never be allowed to come back.”

28 Jehoiachin is like a broken pot that someone threw away.
He is like a pot that no one wants.
Why will Jehoiachin and his children be thrown out and sent away into a foreign land?
29 Land, land, land of Judah!
Listen to this message from the LORD!
30 The LORD says, “Write this down about Jehoiachin:
‘He does not have children anymore!’
Jehoiachin will not be successful because none of his children will sit on the throne of David.
None of his children will rule in Judah.’”

Q 22:23 It’s as if ... Lebanon The king’s palace in Jerusalem was built with wood from the mountains of Lebanon, which was famous for its cedar trees.

23 1“It will be very bad for the shepherds of the people of Judah. They are destroying the sheep. They are making the sheep run from my pasture in all directions.” This message is from the LORD.

2They are responsible for my people. And this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to them: “You shepherds have made my sheep run away in all directions. You have forced them to go away, and you have not taken care of them. But I will take care of you—I will punish you for the evil things you did.” This message is from the LORD: 3“I sent my sheep to other countries. But I will gather together my sheep that are left, and I will bring them back to their pasture. When my sheep are back in their pasture, they will have many children and grow in number. 4I will place new shepherds over my sheep. They will take care of my sheep, and my sheep will never again feel afraid. None of my sheep will be lost.” This message is from the LORD.

The Good “Branch”
5 This message is from the LORD:
“The time is coming, when I will raise up a good ‘branch’ from David’s family.
He will be a king who will rule in a wise way.
He will do what is fair and right in the land.
6 When he rules, Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety.
This will be his name:
The LORD Makes Things Right for Us.b

7“So the time is coming,” says the LORD, “when people will not make a promise by saying, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, the one who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt ...’ 8But people will say something new: ‘As surely as the LORD lives, the one who brought the Israelites out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had sent them ...’

b 23:6 The LORD Makes Things Right for Us This is a word-play. In Hebrew this is like the name Zedekiah, the king of Judah at the time this prophecy was probably given. But Jeremiah is talking about another king.
Then the people of Israel will live in their own land.”

Judgments Against False Prophets

9 A message to the prophets:
I am very sad—my heart is broken.
All my bones are shaking.
Because of the LORD and his holy words,
I am like a man who is drunk.

10 The land of Judah is full of people who commit adultery.
They are unfaithful in many ways.
So God cursed the land,
and it became very dry.
The plants are dried and dying in the pastures.
The fields have become like the desert.
The prophets are evil.
They use their influence and power in the wrong way.

11 This message is from the LORD:
“The prophets and even the priests are evil.
I have seen them doing evil things in my own Temple.
I will stop giving my messages to them.⁴⁻¹²
They will walk in darkness.
The road will be slippery for those prophets and priests,
and they will fall in that darkness.
I will bring disaster on them;
I will punish them.”
This message is from the LORD.

13 “I saw the prophets of Samaria doing wrong things.
I saw them prophesy in the name of the false god Baal.
They led the people of Israel away from me.

14 I have even seen the prophets of Jerusalem doing sinful things.
They are committing adultery and living a life of lies.
They support their fellow prophets and never stop doing evil.
They have become like Sodom;
they are all like Gomorrah.”

15 So this is what the LORD All-Powerful says about those Jerusalem prophets:
“I will make them suffer.
Their food will be bitter, their water like poison.
I will punish them because they started a spiritual sickness that spread through the whole country.”

16 This is what the LORD All-Powerful says:
“Don’t pay attention to what those prophets are saying to you.
They are trying to fool you.
They talk about visions,
but they did not get their visions from me.
Their visions come from their own minds.

17 Some of the people hate the real messages from the LORD, so the prophets give them a different message.
They say, ‘You will have peace.’
Some of the people are very stubborn.
They do only what they want to do.
So the prophets say, ‘Nothing bad will happen to you!’

18 But none of these prophets has stood in the heavenly council.⁴⁻¹²
None of them has seen or heard the message from the LORD.
None of them has paid close attention to his message.

19 Now the punishment from the LORD will come like a storm.
His anger will be like a tornado.
It will come crashing down on the heads of those wicked people.

20 The LORD’s anger will not stop until he finishes what he plans to do.
When that day is over,
you will understand this clearly.

Or heavenly council The people in the Old Testament often talk about God as the leader of a council of heavenly beings (angels). Compare 1 Kings 22:19–23; Isa. 6:1–8 and Job 1 and 2.
I did not send those prophets, but they ran to tell their messages. I did not speak to them, but they spoke in my name. If they had stood in my heavenly council, then they would have told my messages to the people of Judah. They would have stopped the people from doing bad things. They would have stopped them from doing evil.”

This message is from the LORD. “I am God, and I am always near. I am not far away.

Someone might try to hide from me in some hiding place. But it is easy for me to see that person, says the LORD, because I am everywhere in heaven and earth.”

This message is from the LORD:

There are prophets who tell lies in my name. They say, ‘I have had a dream! I have had a dream!’ I heard them say those things. How long will this continue? They think up lies and then they teach them to the people. They are trying to make the people of Judah forget my name by telling each other these false dreams. They are trying to make my people forget me, just as their ancestors forgot me and worshiped the false god Baal.

Straw is not the same as wheat! In the same way, the dreams of those prophets are not messages from me. If people want to tell about their dreams, let them. But those who hear my message must speak it truthfully.”

This is what the LORD says. “You must treat my message carefully, like a fire or like a hammer that can smash a rock.”

This message is from the LORD: “So I am against the false prophets. They keep stealing my words from each other.” Yes, the LORD says, “I am against the false prophets. They use their own words and pretend that it is a message from me. I am against the false prophets who tell false dreams.” This message is from the LORD. “They mislead my people with their lies and false teachings. I did not send them to teach the people. I never commanded them to do anything for me. They cannot help the people of Judah at all.” This message is from the LORD.

The Sad Message From the Lord

The people of Judah, or a prophet, or a priest may ask you, ‘Jeremiah, what is the announcement of the LORD?’ You will answer them and say, ‘You are a heavy load,’ and I will throw down this heavy load.’ This message is from the LORD.

‘A prophet, or a priest, or maybe one of the people might say, ‘This is an announcement from the LORD.’ Because of that lie, I will punish that person and their whole family. This is what you will say to one another: ‘What did the LORD answer?’ or ‘What did the LORD say?’

But you will never again use the expression, ‘The announcement of the LORD.’ That is because his message should not be a heavy load for anyone. But you changed the words of our God. He is the living God, the LORD All-Powerful!

If you want to learn about God’s message, ask a prophet, ‘What answer did the LORD give you?’ or ‘What did the LORD say?’ But don’t say, ‘What was the announcement from the LORD?’ If you use these words, the LORD will say this to you: ‘You should not have called my message an “announcement from the LORD.” I told you not to use those words. But you called my message a heavy load, so I will pick you up like a heavy load and throw you away from me. I gave the city of Jerusalem to your ancestors. But I will throw you and that city away from me, and I will make you a disgrace forever. You will never forget your shame.’ ”

The Good Figs and the Bad Figs

The LORD showed me these things: I saw two baskets of figs

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arranged in front of the Temple of the LORD. (I saw this vision after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took Jehoiachin as a prisoner. Jehoiachin, the son of King Jehoiakim, and all his important officials were taken away from Jerusalem. They were taken to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also took away all the carpenters and metalworkers of Judah.) One basket had very good figs in it, the kind that ripen early in the season. But the other basket had rotten figs. They were too rotten to eat.

3 The LORD said to me, “What do you see, Jeremiah?”

I answered, “I see figs. The good figs are very good, and the rotten figs are very rotten. They are too rotten to eat.”

4 Then the message from the LORD came to me. 5 The LORD, the God of Israel, said, “The people of Judah were taken from their country. Their enemy brought them to Babylon. Those people will be like these good figs. I will be kind to them. 6 I will protect them. I will bring them back to the land of Judah. I will not tear them down—I will build them up. I will not pull them up—I will plant them so that they can grow. I will make them want to know me. They will know that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God. I will do this because the prisoners in Babylon will turn to me with their whole hearts.”

8 But the LORD also says, “I will treat King Zedekiah of Judah like those figs that are too rotten to eat. Zedekiah, his high officials, all those who are left in Jerusalem, and those people of Judah who are living in Egypt will be like those rotten figs. 9 I will punish them. Their punishment will shock all the people on earth. People will make fun of those people from Judah. People will tell jokes about them and curse them in all the places where I scatter them. 10 I will bring war, famine, and disease against them. I will attack them until they have all been killed. Then they will no longer be on the land that I gave to them and to their ancestors.”

A Summary of Jeremiah’s Message

1 This is the message that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah. This message came in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah. The fourth year of his time as king was the first year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon. 2 This is the message that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the people of Jerusalem:

3 I have been a prophet for these past 23 years, from the 13th year that Josiah son of Amon was the king of Judah. And from that time until today, I have spoken messages to you from the LORD again and again. But you have not listened. 4 The LORD has sent his servants, the prophets, to you over and over again. But you have not listened to them. You have not paid any attention to them.

5 Those prophets said, “Change your lives and stop doing evil! If you change, you can return to the land that the LORD gave you and your ancestors long ago. He gave you this land to live in forever. 6 Don’t follow other gods. Don’t serve or worship them. Don’t worship idols that someone has made. That only makes me angry with you. By doing this you only hurt yourselves.”

7 “But you did not listen to me.” This message is from the LORD. “You worshiped idols that someone made, and that made me angry. And it only hurt you.”

8 So this is what the LORD All-Powerful says, “You have not listened to my messages. 9 I will soon send for all the tribes of the north. This message is from the LORD. “I will soon send for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He is my servant. I will bring those people against the land

a 24:1 Jehoiachin The Hebrew text has “Jecoiach,” another name for King Jehoiachin, who was taken prisoner in the year 597 B.C.

b 25:1 The fourth year...

c 25:6 By doing this you only hurt yourselves This is from the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has “Then I will not hurt you.”

d 25:9 north The Babylonian army came from this direction to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.
of Judah and against the people of Judah. I will bring them against all the nations around you too. I will destroy all those countries. I will make those lands like an empty desert forever. People will see those countries, and whittle at how badly they were destroyed. 10 I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and happiness in those places. There will be no more happy sounds of the brides and bridegrooms. I will take away the sound of people grinding meal. I will take away the light of the lamp. 11 That whole area will be an empty desert. All these people will be slaves of the king of Babylon for 70 years.

12 “But when the 70 years have passed, I will punish the king of Babylon. I will punish the nation of Babylon.” This message is from the Lord. “I will punish the land of the Babylonians for their sins. I will make that land a desert forever. 13 I said many bad things will happen to Babylon, and all of them will happen. Jeremiah spoke about those foreign nations. And all the warnings are written in this book. 14 Yes, the people of Babylon will have to serve many nations and many great kings. I will give them the punishment they deserve for all the things they have done.”

Judgment on the Nations of the World

15 The Lord, the God of Israel, said this to me: “Jeremiah, take this cup of wine from my hand. It is the wine of my anger. I am sending you to different nations. Make all the nations drink from this cup. 16 They will drink this wine. Then they will vomit and act like crazy people. They will do this because of the war that I will soon bring against them.”

17 So I took the cup of wine from the Lord’s hand. I went to those nations and I made them drink from the cup. 18 I poured this wine for the people of Jerusalem and Judah. I made the kings and leaders of Judah drink from the cup. I did this so that they would become an empty desert. I did this so that place would be destroyed so badly that people would whistle and say curses about it. And it happened—Judah is like that now.

19 I also made Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, drink from that cup. I made his officials, his important leaders, and all his people drink from it.

20 I also made all the Arabs and all the kings of the land of Uz drink from the cup. I made all the kings of the land of the Philistines drink from the cup. These were the kings of the cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and what remains of the city Ashdod.

21 Then I made the people of Edom, Moab, and Ammon drink from the cup.

22 I made all the kings of Tyre and Sidon drink from the cup. I also made all the kings of the faraway countries drink from that cup. 23 I made the people of Dedan, Tema, and Buz drink from the cup. I made all those who cut their hair at their temples drink from the cup. 24 I made all the kings of Arabia drink from the cup. These kings live in the desert. 25 I made all the kings from Zimri, Elam, and Media drink from the cup. 26 I made all the kings of the north, those who were near and far, drink from the cup. I made them drink one after the other. I made all the kingdoms that are on earth drink from that cup. Finally, after all these other nations, the king of Babylon will drink from it too.

27 “Jeremiah, say to those nations, this is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: ‘Drink this cup of my anger. Get drunk from it and vomit. Fall down and don’t get up. Don’t get up because I am bringing wars against you.’

28 “They will refuse to take the cup from your hand. They will refuse to drink it, but you will tell them, ‘This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: You will surely drink from this cup! 29 I am already making these bad things happen to Jerusalem, the city that is called by my name. Maybe you people think that you will not be punished, but you are wrong. You will be punished! I am giving the command for war to come
against all the people of the earth.’” This message is from the LORD.

30“Jeremiah, you will give them this message:

‘The LORD shouts from above.
He shouts from his holy Temple.
He shouts against his people.
His shouts are loud like the songs of people walking on grapes to make wine.

31 The noise spreads to all the people on earth.
What is all the noise about?
The LORD tells why he is punishing all the nations.
He has given his arguments against them.
He has judged them, and now he is killing the wicked with his sword.’”
This message is from the LORD.

32 This is what the LORD All-Powerful says:
“Disasters will soon spread from country to country.
They will come like a powerful storm to all the faraway places on earth!”

33 The dead bodies of those killed by the LORD will reach from one end of the earth to the other. No one will cry for them. No one will gather up their bodies and bury them. They will be left lying on the ground like dung.

34 Shepherds, you should be leading the sheep.
Start crying, you great leaders!
Roll around on the ground in pain, you leaders of the sheep.
It is now time for your slaughter.
You will be scattered everywhere, like pieces flying from a broken jar.

35 There will be no place for the shepherds to hide.
They will not escape.

36 I hear the shepherds shouting.
I hear the leaders of the sheep crying, because the LORD is destroying their pastures.

37 Those peaceful pastures will be ruined because of the LORD’s anger.

38 He is like an angry lion that has left his cave.
And because of his terrible anger and by the attacks of the enemy army, their land will become an empty desert.

Jeremiah’s Lesson at the Temple

26 ‘This message came from the LORD during the first year that Jehoiakim 9 son of Josiah was king of Judah.

2 The LORD said, “Jeremiah, stand in the Temple yard of the Lord. Give this message to all the people of Judah who are coming to worship at the Temple of the Lord. Tell them everything that I tell you to speak. Don’t leave out any part of my message. 3Maybe they will listen and obey my message. Maybe they will stop living such evil lives. If they change, I will change my mind about my plans to punish them. I am planning this punishment because of the many evil things they have done. 4 You will say to them, ‘This is what the LORD says: I gave my teachings to you. You must obey me and follow my teachings.

5 You must listen to what my servants say to you. The prophets are my servants. I have sent my prophets to you again and again, but you did not listen to them. 6 If you don’t obey me, I will make my Temple in Jerusalem just like my Holy Tent at Shiloh. 6 People all over the world will think of Jerusalem when they ask for bad things to happen to other cities.’”

7 The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah say all these words at the Lord’s Temple. 8 Jeremiah finished speaking everything the LORD had commanded him to say to the people. Then the priests, the prophets, and all the people grabbed Jeremiah. They said, “You will die for saying such terrible things! 9 How dare you say such a thing in the name of

9 26:1 the first year . . . Jehoiakim This was 609 B.C.
9 26:6 my Holy Tent at Shiloh The Holy Place at Shiloh was probably destroyed during the time of Samuel. See Jer. 7 and 1 Sam. 4.
the LORD! How dare you say that this Temple will be destroyed like the one at Shiloh! How dare you say that Jerusalem will become a desert with no one living in it?" All the people gathered around Jeremiah in the Temple of the LORD.

10Now the rulers of Judah heard about everything that was happening. So they came out of the king’s palace. They went up to the LORD’s Temple. They took their places at the entrance of the New Gate. The New Gate is a gate leading to the LORD’s Temple. 11Then the priests and the prophets spoke to the rulers and all the other people. They said, ”Jeremiah should be killed. He said bad things about Jerusalem. You heard him say those things.”

12Then Jeremiah spoke to all the rulers of Judah and all the other people. He said, “The LORD sent me to say these things about this Temple and this city. Everything that you have heard is from the Lord. 13You people, change your lives! You must start doing good! You must obey the LORD your God. If you do that, he will change his mind. He will not do the bad things he told you about. 14As for me, I am in your power. Do to me what you think is good and right. 15But if you kill me, be sure of one thing. You will be guilty of killing an innocent person. You will make this city and everyone living in it guilty too. The LORD really did send me to you. The message you heard really is from the Lord.”

16Then the rulers and all the people spoke. They said to the priests and the prophets, ”Jeremiah must not be killed. What he told us comes from the LORD our God.”

17Then some of the elders stood up and spoke to all the people. 18They said, “Micah the prophet was from the city of Moresheth. He was a prophet during the time that Hezekiah was king of Judah. Micah said this to all the people of Judah: ‘This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: Zion will be destroyed. It will become a plowed field. Jerusalem will become a pile of rocks. Temple Mount will be an empty hill—a overgrown with bushes.’

19“King Hezekiah of Judah and the people of Judah did not kill Micah. You know that Hezekiah respected the LORD and wanted to please him. So the LORD changed his mind and didn’t do the bad things to Judah that he said he would do. If we hurt Jeremiah, we will bring many troubles on ourselves. And those troubles will be our own fault.”

20In the past there was another man who spoke the LORD’s message. His name was Uriah son of Shemaiah from the city of Kiriath Jearim. Uriah said the same things against this city and this land that Jeremiah did. But King Jehoiakim, his army officers, and the leaders of Judah heard Uriah and became angry. King Jehoiakim wanted to kill Uriah, but Uriah heard about it. Uriah was afraid, so he escaped to the land of Egypt. 22But King Jehoiakim sent Eliannah son of Acbor and some other men to Egypt. 23They brought Uriah from Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim ordered Uriah to be killed with a sword. Uriah’s body was thrown into the burial place where the poor are buried.

24There was an important man named Ahikam son of Shaphan who supported Jeremiah. He kept Jeremiah from being killed by the priests and prophets.

The Lord Made Nebuchadnezzar Ruler

271A message from the LORD came to Jeremiah. It came during the fourth year that Zedekiah son of Josiah was king of Judah. 2This is what the LORD said to me: “Jeremiah, make a yoke out of straps and poles. Put that yoke on the back of your neck. 3Then send a message to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon. Send the message with
the messengers of these kings who have come to Jerusalem to see King Zedekiah of Judah. Tell them to give the message to their masters. Tell them that this is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: ‘Tell your masters that I made the earth and all the people on it. I made all the animals on the earth. I did this with my great power and my strong arm. I can give the earth to anyone I want.

6 Now I have given all your countries to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He is my servant. I will make even the wild animals obey him. All nations will serve Nebuchadnezzar and his son and his grandson. Then the time will come for Babylon to be defeated. Many nations and great kings will make Babylon their servant.

7 ‘But if some nations or kingdoms refuse to serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and refuse to be put under his control, I will punish them, says the LORD. I will destroy them with war, hunger, and disease. I will use Nebuchadnezzar to destroy any nation that fights against him. So don’t listen to your prophets. Don’t listen to those who use magic to tell what will happen in the future. Don’t listen to those who say they can interpret dreams. Don’t listen to those who talk to the dead or to people who practice magic. All of them tell you, “You will not be slaves to the king of Babylon.”

8 But they are telling you lies. They will only cause you to be taken far from your homeland. I will force you to leave your homes, and you will die in another land.

9 ‘But the nations that put their necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and obey him will live. I will let them stay in their own country and serve the king of Babylon,’ says the LORD. ‘The people from those nations will live in their own land and farm it.’

10 I gave the same message to King Zedekiah of Judah. I said, “Zedekiah, you must place your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and obey him. If you serve the king of Babylon and his people, you will live. If you don’t agree to serve the king of Babylon, you and your people will die from war, hunger, and disease. This is what the LORD said would happen.

11 But the false prophets are saying, ‘You will never be slaves to the king of Babylon.’ Don’t listen to those prophets, because they are telling you lies. I didn’t send them,’ says the LORD. ‘They are telling lies and saying that the message is from me. So I will send you people of Judah away. You will die, and the prophets who spoke to you will die also.’

12 Then I told the priests and all the people that this is what the LORD says: “Those false prophets are saying, ‘The Babylonians took many things from the LORD’s Temple. These things will be brought back soon.’ Don’t listen to them because they are telling you lies. Don’t listen to those prophets. Serve the king of Babylon. Accept your punishment, and you will live. There is no reason for you to cause this city of Jerusalem to be destroyed. If they are prophets and their message is from the LORD, let them pray. Let them pray to the LORD about the things that are still in the LORD’s Temple, in the king’s palace, and in Jerusalem. Let them pray that all those things will not be taken away to Babylon.

13 “This is what the LORD All-Powerful says about the things that are still left in Jerusalem. In the Temple, there are the pillars, the bronze sea, the moveable stands, and other things. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon left those things in Jerusalem. He didn’t take them away when he took Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of Judah away as a prisoner. Nebuchadnezzar also took other important people away from Judah and Jerusalem.

14 This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says about the things still left in the LORD’s Temple and in the king’s palace and in Jerusalem: ‘All those things will also be taken to Babylon. They will be brought to Babylon until the day comes when I go to get them,’ says the LORD. For a description of these things, see 1 Kings 7:23–37.
The False Prophet Hananiah

In the fifth month of the fourth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah, the prophet Hananiah son of Azur spoke to me. Hananiah was from the town of Gibeon. Hananiah was in the LORD’s Temple when he spoke to me. The priests and all the people were there also. This is what Hananiah said: “The LORD All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: ‘I will break the yoke that the king of Babylon has put on the people of Judah. Before two years are over, I will bring back all the things that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took from the LORD’s Temple. Nebuchadnezzar has carried those things to Babylon. But I will bring them back here to Jerusalem. I will also bring the king of Judah, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, back to this place. And I will bring back all the people of Judah that Nebuchadnezzar forced to leave their homes and go to Babylon,’ says the LORD. ‘So I will break the yoke that the king of Babylon put on the people of Judah.’”

Then the prophet Jeremiah answered the prophet Hananiah. They were standing in the Temple of the LORD. The priests and all the people there could hear Jeremiah’s answer. Jeremiah said to Hananiah, “Amen! May the LORD do that. May the LORD make the message you say come true. May he bring the things of the LORD’s Temple back to this place from Babylon. And may he bring all those who were forced to leave their homes back to this place.

But listen to what I have to say to you and to all the people. There were prophets long before you and I became prophets, Hananiah. They spoke against many countries and great kingdoms and always warned that war, hunger, and disease would come to them. So the prophet who says that we will have peace must be tested. People can know that he really was sent by the LORD only if his message comes true.”

Jeremiah was wearing a yoke around his neck. The prophet Hananiah took the yoke from Jeremiah’s neck and broke it. Then Hananiah spoke loudly so that all the people could hear him. He said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘In the same way, I will break the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He put that yoke on all the nations of the world, but I will break it before two years are over.’”

After Hananiah said that, Jeremiah left the Temple.

Then the message from the LORD came to Jeremiah. This happened after Hananiah had taken the yoke off Jeremiah’s neck and had broken it. The LORD said to Jeremiah, “Go and tell Hananiah that this is what the LORD says: ‘You have broken a wooden yoke, but I will make a yoke of iron in the place of the wooden yoke. The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, is the one saying this. I will put a yoke of iron on the necks of all these nations. I will do that to make them serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and they will be slaves to him. I will even give Nebuchadnezzar control over the wild animals.’”

Then the prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, “Listen, Hananiah! The LORD did not send you. But you have made the people of Judah trust in lies. So this is what the LORD says: ‘Soon I will take you from this world, Hananiah. You will die this year, because you taught the people to turn against the LORD.’”

Hananiah died in the seventh month of that same year.

A Letter to the Captives in Babylon

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. (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 LORD All-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.”
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. 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!' 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

Also give a message to Shemaiah from the Nehelam family. 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.

"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 and acts like a prophet. You should put that person’s feet between large blocks of wood and put neck irons on him.’"

"Now Jeremiah is acting like a prophet. So why didn’t you arrest him? 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.'"

"Zephaniah the priest read the letter to Jeremiah the prophet. Then this message from the LORD came to Jeremiah: "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. 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

This is the message that came to Jeremiah from the LORD. 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. 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.”

"The LORD spoke this message about the people of Israel and Judah. This is what the LORD said:

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

"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 for fear?"
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.

“At that time,” says the LORD Almighty, “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. 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, and they will serve him.

“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 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.”

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.”

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. There is no one to care for your sores, so you will not be healed. 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. 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. 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.

And I will bring your health back and heal your wounds,” says the LORD, “because other people said you were outcasts. They said, ‘No one cares about Zion.’”

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 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. People in those places will sing songs of praise, and there will be the sound of praise.”

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30:9 David their king This means another king of Israel who will be great like King David.
30:10 captives People taken away as prisoners. Here, it means the Jewish people who were taken to Babylon.
30:17 outcasts People who are thrown out of a group by others who don’t like or respect them.
30:18 city This probably refers to Jerusalem. But it might also mean all the cities of Israel and Judah.
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laughery.
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 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 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!’
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,


31:6 watchmen This usually means a guard who stands on the city walls watching for people coming to the city. Here, it probably means the prophets.

31:6 hill country of Ephraim This was the central part of the land that had been the northern kingdom of Israel.

31:7 Lord, save your people Or “LORD has saved his people!” This is often a shout of victory.
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.
Rachel³ 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:

⁳ 31:15 Rachel Jacob’s wife. Here, this means all the women
who are crying for their husbands and children who have died
in the war with Babylon.
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!’

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. I will give rest and strength to those who are weak and tired.”

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

“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. 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.

People will not use this saying anymore:

“The parents ate the sour grapes, but the children got the sour taste.”

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

The Lord Will Never Leave Israel

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:

“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.”

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

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. 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.

“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. 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 New Agreement

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. 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.
of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39 The measuring line 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.”

Jeremiah Buys a Field

32 1 This is the message from the LORD that came to Jeremiah during the tenth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah. The tenth year of Zedekiah was the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar. At that time the army of the king of Babylon was surrounding the city of Jerusalem, and Jeremiah was under arrest in the courtyard of the guardhouse. This courtyard was at the palace of the king of Judah. King Zedekiah of Judah had put Jeremiah in prison in that place. Zedekiah didn’t like the things Jeremiah prophesied. Jeremiah had said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘I will soon give the city of Jerusalem to the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar will capture this city. The king of Judah will not escape from the army of the Babylonians. But he will surely be given to the king of Babylon. And Zedekiah will speak to the king of Babylon face to face. He will see him with his own eyes. The king of Babylon will take Zedekiah to Babylon. Zedekiah will stay there until I have punished him.’ This message is from the LORD. ‘If you fight against the army of the Babylonians, you will not succeed.’ ”

6 While Jeremiah was a prisoner, he said, “This message from the LORD came to me. This was the message: ‘Jeremiah, your cousin, Hanamel, will come to you soon. He is the son of your uncle Shallum. Hanamel will say to you, ‘Jeremiah, buy my field near the town of Anathoth. Buy it because you are my nearest relative. It is your right and your responsibility to buy this field.’ ”

8 “Then it happened just as the LORD said. My cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guardhouse. Hanamel said to me, ‘Jeremiah, buy my field near the town of Anathoth, in the land of the tribe of Benjamin. Buy that land for yourself because it is your right to buy it and own it.’ ”

So I knew that this was a message from the LORD. I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel. I weighed out 17 shekels of silver for him. I signed the deed and had a copy of the deed sealed up. I got some men to witness what I had done, and I weighed out the silver on the scales. Then I took the sealed copy of the deed, which contained the demands and limits of my purchase, and the copy that was not sealed. I gave the deed to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah. I did this while my cousin Hanamel and the other witnesses were there. They also signed the deed. There were also many people of Judah sitting in the courtyard of the guardhouse who saw me give the deed to Baruch.

13 With all the people watching, I said to Baruch, “This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: ‘Take both copies of the deed—the sealed copy and the copy that was not sealed—and put them in a clay jar. Do this so that these deeds will last a long time.’ ” The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says, ‘In the future my people will once again buy houses, fields, and vineyards in the land of Israel.’ ”

16 After I gave the deed to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD: “Lord GOD, with your great power you made the earth and the sky. There is nothing too hard for you to do. You are loyal and kind to thousands of people, but you

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a 31:39 measuring line A rope or chain for measuring property lines.
b 32:1 the tenth year… Judah This was 588–587 B.C. This was the year Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.
c 32:9 shekel 1/5 of an ounce (11.5 g).
d 32:10 sealed up Important documents were rolled up and tied with a string. Then a piece of clay or wax was put on the string. Then a person’s mark was put in that clay or wax. This way, people could prove nothing in the document was changed.

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also bring punishment to children for their fathers’ sins. Great and powerful God, your name is the LORD All-Powerful. You plan and do great things. You see everything that people do. You give a reward to those who do good things, and you punish those who do bad things—you give them what they deserve. You have been doing powerful miracles in the land of Egypt until now, in Israel and elsewhere. You are the one who made yourself as famous as you are today. You used powerful miracles and brought your people Israel out of Egypt. You used your own powerful hand to do this. Your power was amazing!

You gave the Israelites this land that you promised to give to their ancestors long ago. It is a very good land filled with many good things. They came into this land and took it for their own. But they didn’t obey you. They didn’t follow your teachings or do what you commanded. So you made all these terrible things happen to them.

And now the enemy has surrounded the city. They are building ramps so that they can get over the walls of Jerusalem and capture it. Because of war, hunger, and disease, the city of Jerusalem will fall to the Babylonian army. The Babylonians are attacking the city now. You said this would happen, and now you see it is happening.

Lord GOD, all those bad things are happening. But now you are telling me, ‘Jeremiah, buy the field with silver and choose some men to witness the purchase.’ You are telling me this while the Babylonian army is ready to capture the city. Why should I waste my money like that?”

Then this message from the LORD came to Jeremiah: “Jeremiah, I am the LORD. I am the God of every person on the earth. You know that nothing is impossible for me.” The LORD also said, “I will soon give the city of Jerusalem to the Babylonian army and to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The army will capture the city. The Babylonian army is already attacking the city of Jerusalem. They will soon enter the city and start a fire. They will burn down this city. There are houses in this city where the people of Jerusalem made me angry by offering sacrifices to the false god Baal on the housetops. And they poured out drink offerings to other idol gods. The Babylonian army will burn down those houses. I have watched the people of Israel and the people of Judah. Everything they do is evil. They have done evil things since they were young. The people of Israel have made me very angry because they worship idols that they made with their own hands.” This message is from the LORD. “From the time that Jerusalem was built until now, the people of this city have made me angry. This city has made me very angry, so I must remove it from my sight. I will destroy Jerusalem because of all the evil things the people of Israel and Judah have done. The people, their kings, leaders, their priests and prophets, the people of Judah, and the people of Jerusalem have all made me angry.

“They should have come to me for help, but they turned their backs to me. I tried to teach them again and again, but they would not listen to me. I tried to correct them, but they would not listen. They have made their idols, and I hate those idols. They put their idols in the Temple that is called by my name, so they made my Temple ‘dirty.’

“In the Valley of Ben Hinnom, they built high places to the false god Baal. They built those worship places so that they could burn their sons and daughters as sacrifices. I never commanded them...
to do such a terrible thing. I never even thought the people of Judah would do such a terrible thing.

36“You people are saying, ‘The king of Babylon will capture Jerusalem. He will use war, hunger, and disease to defeat this city.’ But this is what the Lord, the God of the people of Israel, says: 37‘I have forced the people of Israel and Judah to leave their land. I was very angry with them, but I will bring them back to this place. I will gather them from the land where I forced them to go. I will bring them back to this place. I will let them live in peace and safety. 38The people of Israel and Judah will be my people, and I will be their God. 39I will give them the desire to be one, united people. They will have one goal—to worship me all their lives. They and their children will want to do this.

40“I will make an agreement with the people of Israel and Judah that will last forever. In this agreement I will never turn away from them. I will always be good to them. I will make them want to respect me. Then they will never turn away from me. 41They will make me happy. I will enjoy doing good to them. And I will surely plant them in this land and make them grow. I will do this with all my heart and soul.’”

42This is what the Lord says: “I have brought this great disaster to the people of Israel and Judah. In the same way I will bring good things to them. I promise to do good things for them. 43You people are saying, ‘This land is an empty desert. There are no people or animals here. The Babylonian army defeated this country.’ But in the future people will once again buy fields in this land. 44They will use their money and buy fields. They will sign and seal their agreements. They will witness the people signing their deeds. They will again buy fields in the land where the tribe of Benjamin lives, in the area around Jerusalem, in the towns of the land of Judah, in the hill country, in the western foothills, and in the area of the southern desert. This will happen because I will bring them back home.” This message is from the Lord.

The Promise of God

33 1While Jeremiah was still locked up in the courtyard of the guardhouse, the message from the Lord came to him a second time: 2“The Lord made the earth, and he keeps it safe. The Lord is his name. He says, 3‘Judah, pray to me, and I will answer you. I will tell you important secrets. You have never heard these things before.’ 4The Lord is the God of Israel. This is what he says about the houses in Jerusalem and about the palaces of the kings of Judah: ‘The enemy will pull these houses down. They will build ramps up to the top of the city walls. They will use swords and fight the people in these cities.

5“The people in Jerusalem have done many bad things. I am angry with them. I have turned against them, so I will kill many people there. The Babylonian army will come to fight against Jerusalem. There will be many dead bodies in the houses in Jerusalem.

6“But then I will heal the people in that city. I will let them enjoy peace and safety. 7I will make good things happen to Judah and Israel again and make them strong as in the past. 8They sinned against me, but I will wash away that sin. They fought against me, but I will forgive them. 9Then Jerusalem will be a wonderful place. The people will be happy. People from other nations will praise it when they hear about the good things happening there. They will hear about the good things I am doing for Jerusalem.’

10“This is what the Lord says: ‘You people say that your country is an empty desert. There are no people or animals living there.’ It is now quiet in the streets of Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah. But it will be noisy there soon. 11There will be sounds of joy and happiness. There will be the happy sounds of a bride and groom. There will be the sounds of people bringing their gifts to the Lord’s Temple. They will say, ‘Praise the Lord All-Powerful!'
The Lord is good! His faithful love will last forever! They will say this because I will again do good things to Judah. It will be as it was in the beginning.” This is what the Lord said.

12 The Lord All-Powerful says, “This place is empty now. There are no people or animals living here. But there will be people in all the towns of Judah. There will be shepherds, and there will be pastures where they will let their flocks rest. 13 Shepherds will count their sheep as the sheep walk in front of them. They will be counting their sheep all around the country—in the hill country, in the western foothills, in the Negev, and in all the other towns of Judah.”

The Good Branch
14 This message is from the Lord: “I made a special promise to the people of Israel and Judah. The time is coming when I will do what I promised. 15 At that time I will make a good ‘branch’ grow from David’s family. That branch will do what is good and right for the country. 16 When he rules, Judah will be saved. The people of Jerusalem will live in safety. This will be his name: ‘The Lord Makes Things Right For Us.’ ”

17 The Lord says, “Someone from David’s family will always sit on the throne and rule the family of Israel. 18 And there will always be priests from the family of Levi. They will always stand before me and offer burnt offerings and sacrifice grain offerings and give sacrifices to me.”

19 This message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. 20 The Lord says, “I have an agreement with day and night. I agreed that they would continue forever. You cannot change that agreement. Day and night will always come at the right time. If you could change that agreement, then you could change my agreement with David and Levi. Then descendants from David would not be the kings, and the family of Levi would not be priests. 22 But I will give many descendants to my servant David and to the tribe of Levi. They will be as many as the stars in the sky—no one can count all the stars. And they will be as many as the grains of sand on the seashore—no one can count the grains of sand.”

23 Jeremiah received this message from the Lord: 24 “Jeremiah, have you heard what the people are saying? They are saying, ‘The Lord turned away from the two families of Israel and Judah. He chose those people, but now he does not even accept them as a nation.’ ”

25 The Lord says, “If my agreement with day and night does not continue, and if I had not made the laws for the sky and earth, maybe I would leave those people. 26 Then maybe I would turn away from Jacob’s descendants. And then maybe I would not let David’s descendants rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But David is my servant, and I will be kind to those people. I will again cause good things to happen to them.”

A Warning to Zedekiah
34 The message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. The message came at the time when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and all the towns around it. Nebuchadnezzar had with him all his army and the armies of all the kingdoms and peoples in the empire he ruled.

2 This was the message: “This is what the Lord, the God of the people of Israel, says: Jeremiah, go to King Zedekiah of Judah and give him this message: ‘Zedekiah, this is what the Lord says: I will give the city of Jerusalem to the king of Babylon very soon, and he will burn it down. 3 Zedekiah, you will not escape from the king of Babylon. You will surely be caught and given to him. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes. He will talk to you face to face, and you will go to Babylon. 4 But listen to the promise of the Lord, King Zedekiah of Judah. This is what the Lord says about you: You will not be killed with a sword. 5 You will die in a peaceful way. People made funeral
fires to honor your ancestors, the kings who ruled before you became king. In the same way people will make a funeral fire to honor you. They will cry for you and sadly say, “Oh, my master!” I myself make this promise to you.” This message is from the LORD.

6So Jeremiah told all this message to Zedekiah in Jerusalem. 7This was while the army of the king of Babylom was fighting against Jerusalem. The army of Babylom was also fighting against the cities of Judah that had not been captured. These cities were Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities left in the land of Judah.

The People Break an Agreement

8King Zedekiah had made an agreement with all the people in Jerusalem to give freedom to all the Hebrew slaves. A message from the LORD came to Jeremiah after Zedekiah had made that agreement. 9Everyone was supposed to free their Hebrew slaves. All male and female Hebrew slaves were to be set free. No one was supposed to keep another person from the tribe of Judah in slavery. 10So all the leaders of Judah and all the people accepted this agreement. They would free their male and female slaves so that they would no longer serve them. Everyone agreed, and so all the slaves were set free. 11But after that, a the people who had slaves changed their minds. So they took the people they had set free and made them slaves again.

12Then this message from the LORD came to Jeremiah: 13This is what the LORD, the God of the people of Israel, says: ‘I brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt, where they were slaves. When I did that, I made an agreement with them. 14I said to your ancestors, “At the end of every seven years, everyone must set their Hebrew slaves free. If you have fellow Hebrews who have sold themselves to you, you must let them go free after they have served you for six years.” But your ancestors did not listen to me or pay attention to me. 15A short time ago you changed your hearts to do what is right. Everyone set free their fellow Hebrews who were slaves. And you even made an agreement before me in the Temple that is called by my name. 16But now you have changed your minds. You have shown that you do not honor my name because each of you has taken back the male and female slaves that you had set free. You have forced them to become slaves again.’

17“So this is what the LORD says: ‘You people have not obeyed me. You have not given freedom to your fellow Hebrews. So, because you have not given them freedom, I will give a special kind of freedom—freedom to die in war or by disease or by hunger! This message is from the LORD. When the other nations see what I have done to you, they will all be shocked. 18I will hand over those who broke my agreement and have not kept the promises they made before me: the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the important officials of the court, the priests, and the people of the land. 19So I will give them to their enemies and to everyone who wants to kill them. Their bodies will become food for the birds of the air and for the wild animals of the earth. 20I will give King Zedekiah of Judah and his leaders to their enemies and to everyone who wants to kill them. Their bodies will become food for the birds of the air and for the wild animals of the earth. 21I will give King Zedekiah of Judah and his leaders to their enemies and to everyone who wants to kill them. I will give Zedekiah and his people to the army of the king of Babylom, even though that army has left Jerusalem. 22But I will give the order,’

a 34:11 after that In the summer of 588 b.c., the Egyptian army came to help the people of Jerusalem. So the Babylonian army had to leave Jerusalem for a short time to fight the Egyptians. The people of Jerusalem thought God had helped them, and things were back to normal, so they didn’t keep their promise. They took the slaves they had set free back into slavery.

b 34:18 They … two pieces This is part of a ceremony people used when they made an important agreement. An animal was cut into two pieces. Those who were making the agreement would walk between the pieces. Then they would say something like, “May this same thing happen to me if I don’t keep the agreement.” See Gen. 15.

c 34:21left Jerusalem In the summer of 588 b.c., the Egyptian army came to help the people of Jerusalem. So the Babylonian army had to leave Jerusalem for a short time to fight the Egyptians. See Jer. 37:5. See also the footnote to Jer. 34:11.

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says the LORD, ‘to bring the Babylonian army back to Jerusalem. That army will fight against Jerusalem. They will capture it, set it on fire, and burn it down. And I will destroy the towns in the land of Judah. They will become empty deserts. No one will live there.’”

The Recabite Family’s Good Example

1 During the time when Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah, was king of Judah, the LORD spoke this message to Jeremiah: 2 “Go to the Recabite family and invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the LORD’s Temple. Offer them wine to drink.”

3 So I went to get Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, who was the son of Habbaziniah. And I got all of Jaazaniah’s brothers and sons and the whole family of the Recabites together. 4 Then I brought them into the Temple of the LORD. We went into the room of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah. Hanan was a man of God. The room was next to the room where the princes of Judah stay. It was over the room of Maaseiah son of Shallum. Maaseiah was the doorkeeper in the Temple.

5 Then I put some bowls full of wine and some cups in front of the Recabite family. And I said to them, “Drink some wine.”

6 But the Recabite family answered, “We never drink wine. We never drink it because our ancestor Jonadab son of Recab gave us this command: ‘You and your descendants must never drink wine. 7 Also you must never build houses, plant seeds, or plant vineyards. You must never do any of those things. You must live only in tents. If you do that, you will live a long time in the land where you move from place to place.’ 8 So we have obeyed everything our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. None of us ever drinks wine, and neither do our wives, sons, or daughters. 9 We never build houses to live in, we never own vineyards or fields, and we never plant crops. 10 We have lived in tents and have obeyed everything our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. 11 But when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked the country of Judah, we did go into Jerusalem. We said to each other, ‘Come, we must enter the city of Jerusalem so that we can escape the Babylonian army and the Aramean army.’ So we have stayed in Jerusalem.”

12 Then this message from the LORD came to Jeremiah: 13 “The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says to go to the people of Judah and Jerusalem and tell them this message: ‘You should learn a lesson and obey my message.’ This message is from the LORD. 14 ‘Jonadab son of Recab ordered his sons not to drink wine, and that command has been obeyed. To this day the descendants of Jonadab have obeyed their ancestor’s command. They do not drink wine. But I have given commands to you people of Judah again and again, and you have not obeyed me. 15 Time after time I have sent my servants the prophets to you. They said, “You must each stop doing evil things and do what is right. Don’t follow other gods. Don’t worship or serve them. If you obey me, you will live in the land I have given to you and your ancestors.” But you have not paid attention to my message. 16 The descendants of Jonadab obeyed the commands that their ancestor gave them, but the people of Judah have not obeyed me.’

17 “So this is what the LORD God All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: ‘I said that many bad things would happen to Judah and Jerusalem. I will soon make all those bad things happen. I spoke to the people, but they refused to listen. I called out to them, but they didn’t answer me.’”

18 Then Jeremiah said to the Recabite family, “This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: ‘You have obeyed the commands of your descendants descended from Jonadab son of Recab. The family was very loyal to the Lord. See 2 Kings 10:15–28 for the story of Jonadab. Also in verses 6, 18.

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ancestor Jonadab. You have followed all of his teachings. You have done everything he commanded.’ 9 So the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: ‘There will always be a descendant of Jonadab son of Recab to serve me.’

**King Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah’s Scroll**

36 The message from the LORD came to Jeremiah. This was during the fourth year that Jehoiakim⁴ son of Josiah was king of Judah. This was the message from the Lord: 2“Jeremiah, get a scroll and write on it all the messages I have spoken to you. I have spoken to you about the nations of Israel and Judah and all the other nations. Write all the words that I have spoken to you from the time that Josiah was king, until now. 3 Maybe the people of Judah will hear what I am planning to do to them and will stop doing bad things. If they will do that, I will forgive them for the terrible sins they have committed.”

⁴So Jeremiah called a man named Baruch son of Neriah. Jeremiah spoke the messages the LORD had given him. While he spoke, Baruch wrote the messages on the scroll. ⁵Then Jeremiah said to Baruch, “I cannot go to the LORD’s Temple. I am not allowed to go there. ⁶ So I want you to go to the Temple of the LORD. Go there on a day of fasting and read to the people from the scroll. Read to the people the messages from the LORD that you wrote on the scroll as I spoke them to you. Read them to all the people of Judah who come into Jerusalem from the towns where they live. ⁷ Perhaps they will ask the LORD to help them. Perhaps each person will stop doing bad things. The LORD has announced that he is very angry with them.” ⁸ So Baruch son of Neriah did everything Jeremiah the prophet told him to do. Baruch read aloud the scroll that had the LORD’s messages written on it. He read it in the LORD’s Temple.

⁹In the ninth month of the fifth year that Jehoiakim was king, a fast was announced. All those who lived in the city of Jerusalem and everyone who had come into Jerusalem from the towns of Judah were supposed to fast before the LORD.

10 At that time Baruch read the scroll that contained Jeremiah’s words. He read the scroll in the Temple of the LORD to all the people who were there. Baruch was in the room of Gemariah in the upper courtyard when he read from the scroll. That room was located at the entrance of the New Gate of the Temple. Gemariah was the son of Shaphan. Gemariah was a scribe in the Temple.

11 A man named Micaiah heard all the messages from the LORD that Baruch read from the scroll. Micaiah was the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan. ¹² When Micaiah heard the messages from the scroll, he went down to the secretary’s room in the king’s palace. All the royal officials were sitting there in the king’s palace. These are the names of the officials: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Acbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah; all the other royal officials were there too. ¹³ Micaiah told them everything he had heard Baruch read from the scroll.

14 Then all the officials sent a man named Jehudi to Baruch. (Jehudi was the son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah. Shelemiah was the son of Cushi.) Jehudi said to Baruch, “Bring the scroll that you read from and come with me.”

Baruch son of Neriah took the scroll and went with Jehudi to the officials.

¹⁵ Then the officials said to Baruch, “Sit down and read the scroll to us.”

So Baruch read the scroll to them.

¹⁶ When the royal officials heard all the messages from the scroll, they were afraid and looked at one another. They said to Baruch, “We must tell King Jehoiakim about these messages on the scroll.” ¹⁷ Then the officials asked Baruch, “Tell us, Baruch, where did you get these messages that you wrote on the scroll? Did you write down what Jeremiah said to you?”

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18“Yes,” Baruch answered. “Jeremiah spoke, and I wrote down all the messages with ink on this scroll.”

19Then the royal officials said to Baruch, “You and Jeremiah must go and hide. Don’t tell anyone where you are hiding.”

20Then the royal officials put the scroll in the room of Elishama the scribe. They went to King Jehoiakim and told him all about the scroll.

21So King Jehoiakim sent Jehudi to get the scroll. Jehudi brought the scroll from the room of Elishama the scribe. Then Jehudi read the scroll to the king and all the servants who stood around the king. The time this happened was in the ninth month, 2 so King Jehoiakim was sitting in the part of the palace used for winter. There was a fire burning in a small fireplace in front of the king. Jehudi began to read from the scroll. But after he would read two or three columns, King Jehoiakim would grab the scroll. Then he would cut those columns off the scroll with a small knife and throw them into the fireplace. Finally, the whole scroll was burned in the fire.

22And, when King Jehoiakim and his servants heard the message from the scroll, they were not afraid. They did not tear their clothes to show sorrow for doing wrong.

23Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah tried to talk King Jehoiakim out of burning the scroll, but he would not listen to them. Instead King Jehoiakim commanded some men to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. These men were Jerahmeel, a son of the king, Seraiah son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel. But they could not find Baruch and Jeremiah, because the Lord had hidden them.

24King Jehoiakim burned the scroll on which Baruch had written all the words that Jeremiah had spoken to him. Then this message from the Lord came to Jeremiah:

25“Get another scroll. Write all the messages on it that were on the first scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned. 26Also tell King Jehoiakim of Judah that this is what the Lord says: ‘Jehoiakim, you burned that scroll. You said, “Why did Jeremiah write that the king of Babylon will surely come and destroy this land and kill all the people and animals in it?” 27So this is what the Lord says about King Jehoiakim of Judah: Jehoiakim’s descendants will not sit on David’s throne. When Jehoiakim dies, he will not get a king’s funeral, but his body will be thrown out on the ground. His body will be left out in the heat of the day and the cold frost of the night. 28I will punish Jehoiakim and his children, and I will punish his officials. I will do this because they are wicked. I will bring terrible disasters on them and on all those who live in Jerusalem and on the people from Judah. I will bring all these bad things on them, just as I warned them, because they have not listened to me.’”

29Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch son of Neriah, the scribe. As Jeremiah spoke, Baruch wrote on the scroll the same messages that were on the scroll that King Jehoiakim had burned in the fire. And many other words like those messages were added to the second scroll.

Jeremiah Is Put Into Prison

36:22 ninth month That is, November–December.

37Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. He appointed Zedekiah son of Josiah to be the king of Judah in the place of Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim. But Zedekiah, his servants, and the people of Judah did not pay attention to the messages the Lord had given to Jeremiah the prophet.

3King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to Jeremiah the prophet with a message. This was the message they brought to Jeremiah: “Jeremiah, pray to the Lord our God for us.”

4At that time Jeremiah had not yet been put into prison, so he was free to go anywhere he wanted. Also at that time Pharaoh’s army had marched from Egypt toward Judah. The Babylonian army had
surrounded the city of Jerusalem in order to defeat it. Then they had heard about the army from Egypt marching toward them. So the army from Babylon left Jerusalem to fight with the army from Egypt.

This message from the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet: “This is what the Lord, the God of the people of Israel, says: ‘Jehucal and Zephaniah, I know that King Zedekiah of Judah sent you to me to ask questions. Tell King Zedekiah this: Pharaoh’s army marched out of Egypt to come here to help you against the army of Babylon. But Pharaoh’s army will go back to Egypt. After that the army from Babylon will come back here and attack Jerusalem. Then they will capture and burn it.’

This is what the Lord says: ‘People of Jerusalem, don’t fool yourselves. Don’t say to yourselves, “The army of Babylon will surely leave us alone.” They will not. People of Jerusalem, even if you could defeat all the Babylonian army that is attacking you, there would still be a few wounded men left in their tents. Even those few wounded men would come out of their tents and burn Jerusalem down.”

When the Babylonian army left Jerusalem to fight the army of the Pharaoh of Egypt, Jeremiah wanted to travel from Jerusalem to the land of Benjamin. He wanted to be there for a division of some property that belonged to his family. When Jeremiah got to the Benjamin Gate of Jerusalem, the captain in charge of the guards arrested him. The captain’s name was Irijah son of Shelemiah. Shelemiah was the son of Hananiah. So Irijah the captain arrested Jeremiah and said, “Jeremiah, you are leaving us to join the Babylonian side.”

Jeremiah said to Irijah, “That is not true! I am not leaving to join the Babylonians.” But Irijah refused to listen to Jeremiah. And Irijah arrested Jeremiah and took him to the royal officials of Jerusalem.

Those officials were very angry with Jeremiah. They gave an order for Jeremiah to be beaten. Then they put him in a prison. The prison was in the house of Jonathan, a scribe for the king of Judah. His house had been made into a prison. They put Jeremiah into a cell under the house of Jonathan. The cell was in a dungeon under the ground. Jeremiah was there for a long time.

Then King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah and had him brought to the palace. Zedekiah talked to Jeremiah in private. He asked Jeremiah, “Is there any message from the Lord?”

Jeremiah answered, “Yes, he said that you will be given to the king of Babylon.”

Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, “What have I done wrong? What crime have I done against you or your officials or the people of Jerusalem? Why have you thrown me into prison? King Zedekiah, where are your prophets now? They told you a false message. They said, ‘The king of Babylon will not attack you or this land of Judah.’ But now, my lord, king of Judah, please listen to me. Please let me bring my request to you. This is what I ask: Don’t send me back to the house of Jonathan the scribe. If you send me back, I will die there.”

So King Zedekiah gave orders for Jeremiah to be kept in the courtyard of the guardhouse. And he ordered that Jeremiah should be given bread from the street bakers. He was given bread until there was no more bread in the city. So Jeremiah stayed under guard in the courtyard.

Jeremiah Is Thrown Into a Cistern

Some of the royal officials heard what Jeremiah was saying. They were Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah. Jeremiah was telling all the people this message: “This is what the Lord says: ‘Everyone who stays in Jerusalem will die from war, hunger, or disease. But everyone who surrenders to the army of Babylon will live
Jeremiah 38

1 Then the royal officials who heard what Jeremiah was telling the people went to King Zedekiah. They said to the king, “Jeremiah should be put to death. He is discouraging the soldiers who are still in the city and everyone else by what he is saying. He is not looking for peace; he is just trying to cause trouble.”

2 So King Zedekiah said to the officials, “Jeremiah is in your control. I cannot do anything to stop you.”

3 So the officials took Jeremiah and put him into Malkijah’s cistern. Malkijah was the king’s son. The cistern was in the courtyard of the guardhouse. They used ropes to lower Jeremiah into the cistern. The cistern didn’t have any water in it, only mud. And Jeremiah sank down into the mud.

But a man named Ebed Melech heard that the officials had put Jeremiah into the cistern. Ebed Melech was from Ethiopia, and he was a eunuch in the king’s palace. King Zedekiah was sitting at the Benjamin Gate, so Ebed Melech left the king’s palace and went to talk to the king at the gate.

5 Ebed Melech said, “My lord and king, these officials have done evil. They have treated Jeremiah the prophet badly. They have thrown him into a cistern and left him there to die.”

6 But a man named Ebed Melech heard that the officials had put Jeremiah into the cistern. Ebed Melech was from Ethiopia, and he was a eunuch in the king’s palace. King Zedekiah was sitting at the Benjamin Gate, so Ebed Melech left the king’s palace and went to talk to the king at the gate.

7 Ebed Melech said, “My lord and king, these officials have done evil. They have treated Jeremiah the prophet badly. They have thrown him into a cistern and left him there to die.”

8 Then King Zedekiah gave a command to Ebed Melech, the Ethiopian. This was the command: “Ebed Melech, take three men from the palace with you, and go get Jeremiah out of the cistern before he dies.”

9 Ebed Melech said, “My lord and king, these officials have done evil. They have treated Jeremiah the prophet badly. They have thrown him into a cistern and left him there to die.”

10 Then King Zedekiah took the men with him. But first he went to a room under the storeroom in the king’s palace. He took some old rags and worn-out clothes from that room. Then he let the rags down with some ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern.

12 Ebed Melech, the Ethiopian, left him there to die. Literally, “he will starve to death because there is no more bread in the city.”

13 Ebed Melech, the Ethiopian, left him there to die. Literally, “he will starve to death because there is no more bread in the city.”

14 Then King Zedekiah sent someone to get Jeremiah the prophet. He had Jeremiah brought to the third entrance to the Temple of the Lord. Then the king said, “Jeremiah, I am going to ask you something. Don’t hide anything from me, but tell me everything honestly.”

15 Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “If I give you an answer, you will probably kill me. And even if I give you advice, you will not listen to me.”

16 But King Zedekiah secretly swore an oath to Jeremiah. Zedekiah said, “As surely as the Lord lives, who gives us breath and life, I will not kill you, Jeremiah. And I promise not to give you to the officials who want to kill you.”

17 Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, “The Lord God All-Powerful is the God of Israel. This is what he says, ‘If you surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, your life will be saved, and Jerusalem will not be burned down. And you and your family will live. 18 But if you refuse to surrender, Jerusalem will be given to the Babylonian army. They will burn Jerusalem down, and you will not escape from them.’”

19 But King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “But I am afraid of the men of Judah who have already gone over to the side of the Babylonian army. I am afraid that the soldiers will give me to those men, and they will treat me badly and hurt me.”

20 But Jeremiah answered, “The soldiers will not give you to the men of Judah. King Zedekiah, obey the Lord by doing what I tell you. Then things will go well for you, and your life will be saved. 21 But if you
refuse to surrender to the army of Babylon, the LORD has shown me what will happen. This is what he has told me: 22 All the women who are left in the house of the king of Judah will be brought out. They will be brought to the important officials of the king of Babylon. Your women will make fun of you with a song. This is what they will say:

‘Your friends were stronger than you,
and they led you the wrong way.
You trusted them,
but now your feet are stuck in the mud,
and your friends have left you.’
23 “All your wives and children will be brought out. They will be given to the Babylonian army. You yourself will not escape from the army of Babylon. You will be captured by the king of Babylon, and Jerusalem will be burned down.”

24 Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “Don’t tell anyone that I have been talking to you. If you do, you might die. 25 If the officials find out that I talked to you, they will come to you and say, ‘Jeremiah, tell us what you said to King Zedekiah and what he said to you. Be honest with us, and tell us everything, or we will kill you.’ 26 If they say this to you, tell them, ‘I was begging the king not to send me back to the cell in the dungeon under Jonathan’s house. If I were to go back there, I would die.’ ”

It happened that the royal officials of the king did come to Jeremiah to question him. So Jeremiah told them everything the king had ordered him to say. Then they left Jeremiah alone. No one had heard what Jeremiah and the king had talked about.

28 So Jeremiah stayed under guard in the courtyard of the guardhouse until the day Jerusalem was captured.

The Fall of Jerusalem

1 This is how Jerusalem was captured: During the tenth month of the ninth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He surrounded the city to defeat it. 2 And on the ninth day of the fourth month in Zedekiah’s eleventh year, the wall of Jerusalem was broken through. 3 Then all the royal officials of the king of Babylon came into the city of Jerusalem. They came in and sat down at the Middle Gate. These are the names of the officials: Nergal-Sharezer, the governor of the district of Samgar, a very high official; Nebo Sarsekim, another very high official; and various other important officials were there also.

4 King Zedekiah of Judah saw the officials from Babylon, so he and the soldiers with him ran away. They left Jerusalem at night. They went out through the king’s garden and out through the gate that was between the two walls. Then they went toward the desert. 5 The Babylonian army chased Zedekiah and the soldiers with him. They caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They captured Zedekiah and took him to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was at the town of Riblah in the land of Hamath. At that place Nebuchadnezzar decided what to do to Zedekiah. 6 There at the town of Riblah, the king of Babylon killed Zedekiah’s sons and he killed all the royal officials of Judah while Zedekiah watched. 7 Then Nebuchadnezzar tore out Zedekiah’s eyes. He put bronze chains on Zedekiah and took him to Babylon.

8 The army of Babylon set fire to the king’s palace and the houses of the people of Jerusalem. And they broke down the walls of Jerusalem. 9 Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king of Babylon’s special guards. He took all the people who had surrendered to him and all the people still in Jerusalem and made them captives. He carried them away to Babylon. 10 But commander Nebuzaradan left behind some of the poor people of Judah who owned nothing. Nebuzaradan gave them vineyards and farmland in Judah.

11 Nebuchadnezzar also gave an order about Jeremiah to commander Nebuzaradan: 12 “Find Jeremiah and take care of...
him. Don’t hurt him. Give him whatever he asks for.”

13 So Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king’s special guards, Nebushazban, a chief officer in the army of Babylon, Nergal-Sharezer, a high official, and all the other officers of the army of Babylon sent for Jeremiah. 14 They had Jeremiah taken out of the courtyard of the guardhouse where he had been under the guard of the king of Judah. They turned Jeremiah over to Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan. Gedaliah had orders to take Jeremiah back home. So Jeremiah was taken home, and he stayed among his own people.

The Lord’s Message to Ebed Melech
15 While the guards were watching Jeremiah in the courtyard of the guardhouse, a message from the Lord came to him. This was the message: 16 “Jeremiah, go and tell Ebed Melech, the Ethiopian this message: ‘This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: Very soon I will make my messages about this city of Jerusalem come true. My messages will come true through disaster, not through something good. You will see everything come true with your own eyes. 17 But I will save you on that day, Ebed Melech.’ This is the message from the Lord. ‘You will not be given to the people you are afraid of. 18 I will save you, Ebed Melech. You will not die from a sword, but you will escape and live. That will happen because you have trusted in me.’” This message is from the Lord.

Jeremiah Is Set Free
40 The message from the Lord came to Jeremiah after he was set free at the city of Ramah. Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king of Babylon’s special guards, found Jeremiah in Ramah. Jeremiah was bound with chains. He was with all the captives from Jerusalem and Judah. They were being taken away in captivity to Babylon. 2 When commander Nebuzaradan found Jeremiah, he spoke to him. He said, “Jeremiah, the Lord, your God, announced that this disaster would come to this place. 3 And now the Lord has done everything just as he said he would do. This disaster happened because you people of Judah sinned against the Lord. You did not obey him. 4 But now, Jeremiah, I will set you free. I am taking the chains off your wrists. If you want to, come with me to Babylon, and I will take good care of you. But if you don’t want to come with me, then don’t come. Look, the whole country is open to you. Go anywhere you want. 5 Or go back to Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan. The king of Babylon has chosen Gedaliah to be governor over the towns of Judah. Go and live with Gedaliah among the people. Or you can go anywhere you want.”

Then Nebuzaradan gave Jeremiah some food and a present and let him go. 6 So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. He stayed with Gedaliah among those who were left behind in the land of Judah.

The Short Rule of Gedaliah
7 There were some soldiers from the army of Judah, officers and their men, still out in the open country when Jerusalem was destroyed. They heard that the king of Babylon had put Gedaliah son of Ahikam in charge of those who were left in the land. Those who were left were men, women, and children who were very poor. They were not carried off to Babylon as captives. 8 So the soldiers came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. They were Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and his brother Jonathan, sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, sons of Ephai from Netophah, and Jaazaniah son of the Maacathite, and the men who were with them.

9 Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, made an oath to make the soldiers and their men feel more secure.

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This is what he said: “You soldiers, don’t be afraid to serve the Babylonian people. Settle down in the land and serve the king of Babylon. If you do this, things will go well for you.” 10I myself will live in Mizpah. I will speak for you before the Chaldeans who come here. You leave that work to me. You should harvest the wine, the summer fruit, and the oil. Put what you harvest in your storage jars. Live in the towns that you control.”

11All the people of Judah who were in the countries of Moab, Ammon, Edom, and all the other countries heard that the king of Babylon had left some people of Judah in the land. And they heard that the king of Babylon had chosen Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, to be governor over them. 12When the people of Judah heard this news, they came back to the land of Judah. They came back to Gedaliah at Mizpah from all the countries where they had been scattered. So they came back and gathered a large harvest of wine and summer fruit.

13Johanan son of Kareah and all the officers of the army of Judah who were still in the open country came to Gedaliah. Gedaliah was at the town of Mizpah. Johanan and the officers with him said to Gedaliah, “Do you know that Baalis, the king of the Ammonites, wants to kill you? He has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to kill you.” But Gedaliah son of Ahikam didn’t believe them.

14Then Johanan son of Kareah spoke to Gedaliah in private at Mizpah. Johanan said to Gedaliah, “Let me go and kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah with a sword. Gedaliah was the man the king of Babylon had chosen to be governor of Judah.

41In the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah (the son of Elishama) came to Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael came with ten of his men. They came to the town of Mizpah. Ishmael was a member of the king’s family. He had been one of the officers of the king of Judah. Ishmael and his men ate a meal with Gedaliah. 2While they were eating together, Ishmael and his ten men got up and killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam with a sword. Gedaliah was the man the king of Babylon had chosen to be governor of Judah. 3Ishmael also killed all the men of Judah who were with Gedaliah at the town of Mizpah. He also killed the Babylonian soldiers who were there with Gedaliah.

4–5The day after Gedaliah was murdered, 80 men came to Mizpah. They were bringing grain offerings and incense to the Lord’s Temple. They had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes, and cut themselves. They came from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria. None of these men knew that Gedaliah had been murdered.

6Ishmael left Mizpah and went to meet the 80 men. He cried while he walked out to meet them. Ishmael met them and said, “Come with me to meet with Gedaliah son of Ahikam.” 7–8As soon as they were in the city, Ishmael and the men with him began to kill the 80 men and throw them into a deep cistern! But ten of the men said to Ishmael, “Don’t kill us! We have hidden some things in a field. We have wheat and barley and oil and honey.” So Ishmael stopped and didn’t kill them with the others.

9(Ishmael threw the dead bodies into the cistern until it was full, and that cistern was very big! It had been built by a king of Judah named Asa. King Asa had made the cistern so that during war there would be water in the city. Asa did this to protect his city from King Baasha of Israel.)

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Ishmael captured all the other people in the town of Mizpah and started to cross over to the country of the Ammonites. They included the king’s daughters, and all those who were left there. Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king of Babylon’s special guards, had chosen Gedaliah to watch over those people.

Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him heard about all the evil things Ishmael had done. So Johanan and the army officers with him took their men and went to fight Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They caught Ishmael near the big pool of water that is at the town of Gibeon.

When the captives that Ishmael had taken saw Johanan and the army officers, they were very happy. Then all the captives who Ishmael had taken from the town of Mizpah ran to Johanan son of Kareah. But Ishmael and eight of his men escaped from Johanan and ran away to the Ammonites.

So Johanan son of Kareah and all his army officers rescued the captives. Ishmael had murdered Gedaliah and then he had taken those people from Mizpah. Among the survivors were soldiers, women, children, and court officials. Johanan brought them back from the town of Gibeon.

The Escape to Egypt

Johanan and the other army officers were afraid of the Chaldeans. The king of Babylon had chosen Gedaliah to be governor of Judah. But Ishmael murdered Gedaliah, and Johanan was afraid that the Chaldeans would be angry. So they decided to run away to Egypt. On the way to Egypt, they stayed at Geruth Kimham, near the town of Bethlehem.

While they were at Geruth Kimham, Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah son of Hoshaiah went to Jeremiah the prophet. All the army officers went with Johanan and Jezaniah. All the people, from the least important to the most important, went to Jeremiah. They said to him, “Jeremiah, please listen to what we ask. Pray to the Lord your God for all those who are survivors from the family of Judah. Jeremiah, you can see that there are not many of us left. At one time there were many of us. Jeremiah, pray that the Lord your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do.”

Then Jeremiah the prophet answered, “I understand what you want me to do. I will pray to the Lord your God, as you asked me to do. I will tell you everything the Lord says. I will not hide anything from you.”

Then the people said to Jeremiah, “If we don’t do everything the Lord your God tells us, then we hope the Lord will be a true and faithful witness against us. We know he will send you to tell us what to do. It doesn’t matter if we like the message or if we don’t like the message. We will obey the Lord our God. We are sending you to the Lord for a message from him. We will obey what he says. Then good things will happen to us. Yes, we will obey the Lord our God.”

At the end of ten days, the message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. Then Jeremiah called together Johanan son of Kareah and the army officers who were with him. He also called all the other people together, from the least important to the most important. Then Jeremiah said to them, “You sent me to the Lord, the God of Israel, and I asked him what you wanted me to ask. This is what he says: If you will stay in Judah, I will make you strong—I will not destroy you. I will plant you, and I will not pull you up. I will do this because I am sad about the terrible things that I made happen to you. Now you are afraid of the king of Babylon. But don’t be afraid of him. Don’t be afraid of the king of Babylon,’ says the Lord, ‘because I am with you. I will save you. I will rescue you. He will not get his hands on you. I will be kind to you, and the king of Babylon will also treat you with mercy. He will bring you back to your land.’ But you might say, ‘We will not stay in Judah.’ If you say that, you will disobey the Lord your God. And you might say, ‘No, we
will go and live in Egypt. We will not be bothered with war there. We will not hear the trumpets of war, and in Egypt we will not be hungry. If you say that, listen to this message from the LORD, you survivors from Judah. This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: ‘If you decide to go and live in Egypt, this will happen: You are afraid of the sword of war, but it will defeat you there. And you are worried about hunger, but you will be hungry in Egypt. You will die there. Everyone who decides to go live in Egypt will die by war, hunger, or disease. Not one person who goes to Egypt will survive. Not one of them will escape the terrible things that I will bring to them.’

16“This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: ‘I showed my anger against Jerusalem. I punished the people who lived there. In the same way I will show my anger against everyone who goes to Egypt. People will use you as an example when they ask for bad things to happen to other people. You will become like a curse word. People will be ashamed of you, and they will insult you. And you will never see Judah again.’

17“Survivors of Judah, the LORD told you: ‘Don’t go to Egypt.’ I warn you right now, you are making a mistake that will cause your deaths. You sent me to the LORD your God. You said to me, ‘Pray to the LORD our God for us. Tell us everything the LORD our God says to do. We will obey him.’ So today I have told you the message from the Lord. But you have not obeyed the LORD your God. You have not done all that he sent me to tell you to do. So now be sure you understand this: You want to go live in Egypt. But these things will happen to you in Egypt: You will die by a sword, or hunger, or terrible sickness.”

43So Jeremiah finished telling the people the message from the LORD their God. He told them everything that the LORD their God had sent him to tell them.

2Azariah son of Hoshiaiah, Johanan son of Kareah, and some other men were proud and stubborn. They became angry with Jeremiah. They said to him, ‘Jeremiah, you are lying! The LORD our God didn’t send you to say to us, ‘You must not go to Egypt to live there.’ Jeremiah, we think that Baruch son of Neriah is encouraging you to be against us. He wants you to give us to the Babylonians. He wants you to do this so they can kill us. Or he wants you to do this so that they can make us captives and take us to Babylon.”

4So Johanan, the army officers, and all the people disobeyed the LORD’s command. The Lord had commanded them to stay in Judah. But Johanan, son of Kareah, and the army officers did not obey this command. Instead, they took the survivors from Judah to Egypt. In the past the enemy had taken the survivors to other countries, but they had come back to Judah. Now Johanan and all the army officers took all the men, women, and children and led them to Egypt. Among those people were the king’s daughters. (Nebuzaradan had put Gedaliah in charge of those people. Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king of Babylon’s special guards.) Johanan also took Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah.

7These people didn’t listen to the LORD. So they all went to Egypt to the town of Tahpanhes.a

8In the town of Tahpanhes, Jeremiah received this message from the LORD: “Jeremiah, get some large stones. Take them and bury them in the clay and brick sidewalk in front of Pharaoh’s official building in Tahpanhes. Do this while the people of Judah are watching you. Then say to those who are watching you: ‘This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: I will send for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to come here. He is my servant, and I will set his throne over these stones I have buried here. Nebuchadnezzar will spread his canopy above these stones. a 43:7 Tahpanhes A town in northeastern Egypt. b 43:10 canopy A temporary covering used for shade. It is like a tent without sides.
8:11 He will come here and attack Egypt. He will bring death to those who are to die. He will bring captivity to those who are to be taken captive. And he will bring the sword to those who are to be killed with a sword. 12 Nebuchadnezzar will start a fire in the temples of the false gods of Egypt. He will burn the temples and he will take the idols away. Shepherds pick the bugs and thorns off their clothes to make them clean. In the same way Nebuchadnezzar will pick Egypt clean. Then he will safely leave Egypt. 13 He will destroy the memorial stones that are in the temple of the Sun God in Egypt, and he will burn down the temples of the false gods of Egypt.’”

The Lord Warns the People of Judah

44 Jeremiah received a message from the Lord for all the people of Judah living in Egypt. The message was for the people of Judah living in the towns of Migdol, Taanach, Memphis, and southern Egypt. This was the message: 2 “This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: ‘You people saw the disasters that I brought on the city of Jerusalem and on all the towns of Judah. The towns are empty piles of stones today. 3 They were destroyed because the people living in them did evil. They gave sacrifices to other gods, and that made me angry! Your people and your ancestors did not worship those gods in the past. 4 I sent my servants, the prophets, to those people again and again. They spoke my message and said to the people, “Don’t do this terrible thing. I hate for you to worship idols.” 5 But they didn’t listen to the prophets or pay attention to them. They didn’t stop doing wicked things. They didn’t stop making sacrifices to other gods. 6 So I showed my anger against them. I punished the towns of Judah and the towns of Jerusalem. My anger made Jerusalem and the towns of Judah the empty piles of stone they are today.’”

“11 So this is what the LORD God All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: ‘Why are you hurting yourselves by continuing to worship idols? You are separating the men and women, the children and babies from the family of Judah. And so you leave yourselves without anyone left from the family of Judah. 12 Why do you people want to make me angry by making idols? Now you are living in Egypt. And now you are making me angry by offering sacrifices to the false gods of Egypt. You will destroy yourselves, and it will be your own fault. The people of all the other nations on the earth will say bad things about you and make fun of you. 13 Have you forgotten about the wicked things your ancestors did? And have you forgotten about the wicked things the kings and queens of Judah did? Have you forgotten about the wicked things you and your wives did in Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 14 Even to this day the people of Judah have not made themselves humble. They have not shown any respect for me, and they have not followed my teachings. They have not obeyed the laws I gave you and your ancestors.’”

“11 “So this is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: ‘I have decided to make terrible things happen to you. I will destroy the whole family of Judah. 12 There were a few survivors from Judah. They came here to Egypt. But I will destroy the few survivors from the family of Judah. They will be killed with swords or die from hunger. The people of other nations will point at them and wish evil for them. People will be shocked and frightened by what has happened to them. The name Judah will become a curse word and an insult. 13 I will punish those who have gone to live in Egypt. I will use war, hunger, and disease to punish them. I will punish them just as I punished the city of Jerusalem. 14 Not one of the few survivors of Judah who have gone to live in Egypt will escape my punishment. None of them will survive to come back to Judah. They want to come back to Judah and live there. But not one of them will go back to Judah, except a few people who escape.’”
There were many people from Judah living in southern Egypt. Many of the women from Judah were meeting together in a large group and making sacrifices to other gods, and their husbands knew what they were doing. Those men said to Jeremiah, “We will not listen to the message from the LORD that you spoke to us. We promised to make sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven, and we will do everything we promised. We will offer sacrifices and pour out drink offerings in worship to her. We did that in the past. Our ancestors, our kings, and our officials did that in the past. All of us did those things in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. When we worshiped the Queen of Heaven, we had plenty of food. We were successful. Nothing bad happened to us. But then we stopped making sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven, and we stopped pouring out drink offerings to her. And we have had problems ever since we stopped worshiping her. Our people have been killed by war and hunger.”

Then the women spoke up and said to Jeremiah, “Our husbands knew what we were doing. We had their permission to make sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven. We had their permission to pour out drink offerings to her. And we have had problems ever since we stopped worshiping her. Our people have been killed by war and hunger.”

Then Jeremiah spoke to all the men and women who told him these things. He said, “The LORD remembered that you made sacrifices in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. You and your ancestors, your kings, your officials, and the people of the land did that. He remembered what you had done and thought about it. The LORD hated the terrible things you did, and he could not be patient with you any longer. So he made your country an empty desert. No one lives there now. Other people say bad things about that country. The reason all those bad things happened to you is that you made sacrifices to other gods. You sinned against the LORD. You didn’t obey him or follow his teachings or the laws he gave you. You didn’t keep your part of the agreement.”

Then Jeremiah spoke to all the men and women. He said, “All you people of Judah who are now in Egypt, listen to this message from the LORD. This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: ‘You women did what you said you would do. You said, “We will keep the promises we made. We promised to make sacrifices and pour out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven.” So go ahead. Do what you promised you would do. Keep your promises.’ But listen to this message from the LORD, all you people of Judah who are living in Egypt: ‘I, the LORD, use my own great name to make this promise: None of the people of Judah who are now living in Egypt will ever again use my name to make promises. They will never again say, “As surely as the Lord GOD lives . . . .”’ I am watching over the people of Judah, but I am not watching over them to take care of them. I am watching over them to bring them harm. The people of Judah who live in Egypt will die from hunger or be killed in war until they are completely destroyed. Some people of Judah will escape being killed by the sword. They will come back to Judah from Egypt. But only a few people of Judah will escape. Then the survivors of Judah who came to live in Egypt will know whose word proves to be true. They will know whether it was my word or their word that came true. I will give you people proof,” says the LORD, ‘that I will punish you here in Egypt. Then you will know for sure that my promises to harm you will really happen. This will be your proof that I will do what I say.’ This is what the LORD says: ‘Pharaoh Hophra is the king of Egypt. His enemies want to kill him. I will give Pharaoh Hophra to his enemies. Just as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah to his enemies, I will give Pharaoh Hophra to his enemies. This probably means the Law of Moses, the commands and agreement God made with the Israelites.
enemy Nebuchadnezzar, in the same way I will give Pharaoh Hophra to his enemies.’

A Message to Baruch

45 In the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, Jeremiah the prophet spoke these things to Baruch son of Neriah. Baruch wrote them on a scroll. This is what Jeremiah said to Baruch: ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to you: Baruch, you have said, “It is very bad for me. The LORD has given me sorrow along with my pain. I am very tired. I am worn out because of my suffering. I cannot find rest.” Jeremiah, tell Baruch that this is what the LORD says: I will tear down what I have built, and I will pull up what I have planted. I will do that everywhere in Judah. Baruch, you are looking for great things for yourself. Don’t look for them, because I will make terrible things happen to all the people.’ This is what the LORD said. ‘You will have to go many places. But I will let you escape alive wherever you go.’

The Lord’s Messages About the Nations

46 These messages about different nations came to Jeremiah the prophet from the LORD.

Messages About Egypt

2 This message is about the nation of Egypt. It is about the army of Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt. His army was defeated at the town of Carchemish. Carchemish is on the Euphrates River. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated the army of Pharaoh Neco at Carchemish in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah. The Lord said,

3 “Get your large and small shields ready. March out for battle.
Get the horses ready.
Soldiers, get on your horses.
Go to your places for battle.
Put your helmets on.
Sharpen your spears.

8 “Fast men cannot run away.
Strong soldiers cannot escape.
They will all stumble and fall.
This will happen in the north, by the Euphrates River.

7 Who is coming like the Nile River?
Who is coming like that strong, fast river?

8 It is Egypt that comes like the rising Nile River.
It is Egypt that comes like that strong, fast river.
Egypt says, ‘I will come and cover the earth.
I will destroy the cities and the people in them.’

9 Horse soldiers, charge into battle.
Chariot drivers, drive fast.
March on, brave soldiers.
Soldiers from Cush and Put, carry your shields.
Soldiers from Lydia, use your bows.

10 “But on that day, the Lord GOD All-Powerful will win.
He will give his enemies the punishment they deserve.
His sword will kill until it is finished, until it has satisfied its thirst for blood.
Yes, the Lord GOD All-Powerful will kill them as a sacrifice in the land of the north by the Euphrates River.

11 “Egypt, go to Gilead and get some medicine.
You will make up many medicines, but they will not help.
You will not be healed.
12 The nations will hear you crying.  
Your cries will be heard all over the earth. 
One 'brave soldier' will run into another 'brave soldier.' 
And both 'brave soldiers' will fall down together.”

13 This is the message the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet about Nebuchadnezzar coming to attack Egypt.

14 “Announce this message in Egypt. 
Tell it in the city of Migdol. 
Tell it in Memphis and Tahpanhes. 
‘Get ready for war, 
because people all around you are being killed with swords.’

15 Egypt, your strong soldiers will be killed. 
They will not be able to stand 
because the LORD will push them down.

16 They will stumble again and again. 
They will fall over each other. 
They will say, ‘Get up; let’s go back to our own people. 
Let us go back to our homeland. 
Our enemy is defeating us. 
We must get away.’

17 In their homelands, those soldiers will say, 
‘Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is only a lot of noise. 
His time of glory is over.’”

18 This message is from the King. 
The King is the LORD All-Powerful.

“I promise, as surely as I live, a powerful leader will come. 
He will be like Mount Tabor or Mount Carmel among smaller mountains.

19 People of Egypt, pack your things. 
Get ready for captivity, 
because Memphis will be a ruined, empty land. 
Those cities will be destroyed, and no one will live there.

20 “Egypt is like a beautiful cow. 
But a horsefly is coming from the north to attack her.

21 The hired soldiers in Egypt’s army are like fat calves. 
They will all turn and run away. 
They will not stand strong against the attack. 
Their time of destruction is coming. 
They will soon be punished.

22 Egypt is like a snake hissing and trying to escape. 
The enemy comes closer and closer, and the Egyptian army is trying to slither away. 
The enemy will attack Egypt with axes, like men cutting down trees.”

23 This is what the LORD says: 
“They will chop down Egypt’s forest. 
There are many trees in that forest, but they will all be cut down. 
There are more enemy soldiers than locusts. 
There are so many soldiers that no one can count them.

24 Egypt will be ashamed. 
The enemy from the north will defeat her.”

25 The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says, “Very soon I will punish Amon, the god of Thebes, and I will punish Pharaoh, Egypt, and her gods. I will punish the kings of Egypt, and I will punish the people who depend on Pharaoh. 
I will let all of them be defeated by their enemies—their enemies want to kill them. I will give the people to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his servants. 
“Long ago, Egypt lived in peace. And after all these times of trouble, Egypt will live in peace again.” This is what the LORD said.

A Message for Northern Israel

27 “Jacob, my servant, do not be afraid.

and horses and bites them.

D 46:20 north The Babylonian army came from this direction to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

C 46:25 Amon For many centuries Amon was the most important god of Egypt. At the time of this prophecy, he was not worshiped as much in northern Egypt. But he was still the most important god in southern Egypt, especially around the old Egyptian capital city of Thebes.
Do not be frightened, Israel.
I will save you from those faraway places.
I will save your children from the countries where they are captives.
Jacob will have peace and safety again, and no one will make him afraid.”

This is what the LORD says.
“Jacob, my servant, do not be afraid.
I am with you.
I sent you away to many different places.
But I will not destroy you completely.
But I will destroy all those nations.
You must be punished for the bad things you did.
So I will not let you escape your punishment.
I will discipline you, but I will be fair.”

A Message About the Philistine People

This is the message from the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet about the Philistines. This message came before Pharaoh attacked the city of Gaza.

This is what the LORD says:
“Look, the enemy is gathering in the north like rising water.
They will come like a river spilling over its banks.
They will cover the whole country like a flood.
They will cover the towns and the people living in them.
Everyone in the country will cry for help.
Everyone will cry out in pain.
They will hear the sound of running horses,
the noisy chariots, the rumbling wheels.
Fathers will not be able to protect their children.
They will be too weak to help,
because the time has come to destroy
all the Philistines.
The time has come to destroy Tyre and Sidon’s remaining helpers.
The LORD will destroy the Philistines,
the survivors from the Island of Crete.

The people from Gaza will be sad and shave their heads.
The people from Ashkelon will be silenced.
Survivors from the valley, how long will you cut yourselves?

“Sword of the LORD, you have not stopped.
How long will you keep fighting?
Go back into your scabbard!
Stop! Be still!

But how can the sword of the Lord rest?
The LORD gave it a command.
He commanded it to attack the city of Ashkelon and the seacoast.”

A Message About Moab

This message is about the country of Moab. This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says:

“It will be bad for Mount Nebo.
Mount Nebo will be ruined.
The town of Kiriathaim will be humbled.
It will be captured.
The strong place will be humbled.
It will be shattered.

Moab will not be praised again.
Men in Heshbon will plan Moab’s defeat.
They will say, ‘Come, let us put an end to that nation.’
Madmenah, you will also be silenced.
The sword will chase you.

The Babylonian army came from this direction to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

a 47:2 north The Babylonian army came from this direction to attack Judah.
b 47:4 Island of Crete Literally, “Island of Caphtor.” Sometimes this means Crete, and sometimes it means Cyprus. The Bible says the Philistines originally came from Caphtor.
c 47:5 sad … cut yourselves The people did these things to show their sadness.
d 47:6 scabbard A holder for a sword.
e 48:1 This message … says See Isa. 15 for a similar message.
f 48:1 Mount Nebo A mountain in Moab, a country east of Israel.
Listen to the cries from Horonaim. They are cries of much confusion and destruction.

Moab will be destroyed. Her little children will cry for help. Moab’s people go up the path to Luhith. They are crying bitterly as they go. On the road down to the town of Horonaim, cries of pain and suffering can be heard.

Run away! Run for your lives! Run away like a weed blowing through the desert.

“You trust in the things you made and in your wealth, so you will be captured. The god Chemosh will be taken into captivity, and his priests and officials will be taken with him.

The Destroyer will come against every town. Not one town will escape. The valley will be ruined. The high plain will be destroyed. The LORD said this would happen, so it will happen.

Spread salt over the fields in Moab. The country will be an empty desert. Moab’s towns will become empty. No one will live in them.

Bad things will happen to those who don’t obey the LORD and don’t use their swords to kill those people.

“Moab has never known trouble. Moab is like wine left to settle. Moab has never been poured from one jar to another. He has not been taken into captivity. So he tastes as he did before, and his smell has not changed.”

This is what the LORD says: “But I will soon send men to pour you from your jars. Then they will empty the jars and smash them to pieces.”

Then the people of Moab will be ashamed of their false god, Chemosh. They will be like the people of Israel who trusted that god in Bethel but were ashamed when he did not help them.

“You cannot say, ‘We are good soldiers. We are brave men in battle.’ The enemy will attack Moab. The enemy will enter its towns and destroy them. Its best young men will be killed in the slaughter.”

This message is from the King. The King’s name is the LORD All-Powerful.

“The end of Moab is near. Moab will soon be destroyed. All you who live around Moab should cry for that country. You know how famous Moab is. So cry for it. Say, ‘The ruler’s power is broken. Moab’s power and glory are gone.’

“You people living in Dibon, come down from your place of honor. Sit on the ground in the dust, because the Destroyer is coming. And he will destroy your strong cities.

“You people living in Aroer, stand next to the road and watch. See the man running away. See that woman running away. Ask them what happened.

“Moab will be ruined and filled with shame. Moab will cry and cry. Announce at the Arnon River.

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*a 48:6 weed In Hebrew this word is like the name “Aroer,” an important city in Moab.
*b 48:9 The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.
*c 48:12 jars This probably means the cities in Moab.
*d 48:13 in Bethel This means the temple that King Jeroboam built in the town of Bethel (see 1 Kings 12:26–33). It is not clear if this means the people still worshiped the Lord there, but in a wrong way, or if they worshiped a false god, perhaps the Canaanite god El or Baal.
*e 48:18 Dibon A city in the country of Moab.
*f 48:20 Arnon River An important river in Moab.
that Moab is destroyed.

21 People on the high plain have been punished.
Judgment has come to the towns of Holon, Jahzah, and Mephaath.

22 Judgment has come to the towns of Dibon, Nebo, and Beth Diblathaim.

23 Judgment has come to the towns of Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul, and Beth Meon.

24 Judgment has come to the towns of Kerioth and Bozrah.
Judgment has come to all the towns of Moab, far and near.

25 Moab's strength has been cut off.
Its arm has been broken.”
This is what the LORD said.

26 “The people of Moab thought they were greater than the LORD.
So punish them until they act like a drunk,
falling and rolling around in his vomit.
Then people will make fun of them.

27 “Moab, you made fun of Israel.
Israel was caught by a gang of thieves.
Every time you spoke about Israel,
you shook your head and acted as if you were better than Israel.

28 People in Moab, leave your towns.
Go live among the rocks;
be like a dove that makes its nest at the opening of a cave.”

29 “We have heard about Moab’s pride.
He was very proud.
He thought he was important.
He was always bragging.
He was very, very proud.”

30 The LORD says, “I know Moab gets angry quickly and brags about himself,
but his boasts are lies.
He cannot do what he says.

31 So I cry for Moab.
I cry for everyone in Moab.
I cry for the men from Kir Hareseth.

32 I cry with the people of Jazer for Jazer.
Sibmah, in the past your vines spread all the way to the sea.
They reached as far as the town of Jazer.
But the Destroyer has taken your fruit and grapes.

33 Joy and happiness are gone from the large vineyards of Moab.
I stopped the flow of wine from the winepresses.
There is no singing and dancing from people walking on the grapes to make wine.
There are no shouts of joy.

34 “The people of the towns of Heshbon and Elealeh are crying. Their cry is heard even as far away as the town of Jahaz. Their cry is heard from the town of Zoar, as far away as the towns of Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah. Even the waters of Nimrim are dried up. I will stop Moab from making burnt offerings on the high places. I will stop them from making sacrifices to their gods.” This is what the LORD said.

36 “I am very sad for Moab. My heart cries like the sad sound of a flute playing a funeral song. I am sad for the people from Kir Hareseth. Their money and riches have all been taken away. Everyone has a shaved head. Everyone’s beard is cut off. Everyone’s hands are cut and bleeding. Everyone is wearing sackcloth around their waists.

38 People are crying for the dead everywhere in Moab—on every house top and in every public square. There is sadness because I have broken Moab like an empty jar.” This is what the LORD said.

39 “Moab is shattered. The people are crying. Moab surrendered. Now Moab is ashamed. People make fun of Moab, but what happened fills them with fear.”

40 The LORD says, “Look! An eagle is diving down from the sky.
It is spreading its wings over Moab.

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The towns of Moab will be captured.
The strong hiding places will be defeated.
At that time Moab’s soldiers will be filled with fear, like a woman giving birth.

The nation of Moab will be destroyed, because they thought that they were more important than the Lord.”

This is what the LORD says:
“People of Moab, fear, deep holes, and traps wait for you.
People will be afraid and run away, and they will fall into the deep holes.
Anyone who climbs out of the deep holes will be caught in the traps.
I will bring the year of punishment to Moab.”

This is what the LORD said.

“People have run from the powerful enemy.
They ran to safety in the town of Heshbon.
But a fire started in Heshbon.
That fire started in Sihon’s town, and it is destroying the leaders of Moab.
It is destroying those proud people.
It will be bad for you, Moab.
Chemosh’s people are being destroyed.
Your sons and daughters are being taken away as prisoners and captives.
Moab’s people will be taken away as captives.
But in days to come, I will bring them back.”

This message is from the LORD.
This ends the judgment on Moab.

A Message About Ammon

This message is about the Ammonites. This is what the LORD says:
“Ammonites, do you think that the people of Israel don’t have children?
Do you think there are no children to take the land when the parents die?
Maybe that is why Milcom took Gad’s land?”

The LORD says, “The time will come in Rabbah of Ammon when people hear the sounds of battle.
Rabbah of Ammon will be destroyed. It will be an empty hill covered with ruined buildings, and the towns around it will be burned.
Those people forced the people of Israel to leave their own land. But later, Israel will force them to leave.”

This is what the LORD said.

“People in Heshbon, cry because the town of Ai is destroyed!
Women in Rabbah of Ammon, cry! Put on sackcloth and cry.
Run to the city for safety, because the enemy will take away the god Milcom, with his priests and officials.
You brag about your strength, but you are losing your strength.
You trust in your wealth to save you. You think no one would even think of attacking you.”

But this is what the Lord GOD Almighty says:
“I will bring troubles to you from every side.
You will all run away, and no one will be able to bring you together again.”

“People in Heshbon, cry because the town of Ai is destroyed!
Women in Rabbah of Ammon, cry! Put on sackcloth and cry.
Run to the city for safety, because the enemy will take away the god Milcom, with his priests and officials.
You brag about your strength, but you are losing your strength.
You trust in your wealth to save you. You think no one would even think of attacking you.”

But this is what the Lord GOD Almighty says:
“I will bring troubles to you from every side.
You will all run away, and no one will be able to bring you together again.”

“The Ammonites will be taken away

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\(^{a}48:43\) fear, deep holes, and traps This is a wordplay in Hebrew. The Hebrew words are “Pahad, Pahat, and Pah.”

\(^{b}48:45\) Sihon’s town This was Heshbon. See Num. 21:25–30.

\(^{c}49:1\) Gad’s One of the tribes of Israel. Their land was on the east side of the Jordan River, near the country of Ammon.

\(^{d}49:2\) Rabbah of Ammon The capital city of the Ammonites.
as captives. But the time will come when I will bring the Ammonites back.” This message is from the LORD.

A Message About Edom

This message is about Edom. This is what the LORD All-Powerful says:

“Is there no more wisdom in Teman?
Are the wise men of Edom not able to give good advice?
Have they lost their wisdom?

You people living in Dedan, run away and hide,
because I will punish Esau for the bad things he did.

“Workers pick grapes from grapevines,
but they leave a few grapes on the plants.
If thieves come at night,
they don’t take everything.

But I will take everything from Esau.
I will find all his hiding places.
He will not be able to hide from me.
His children, relatives, and neighbors will all die.

No one will be left to care for his children.
His wives will have no one to depend on.”

This is what the LORD says: “Some people don’t deserve to be punished, but they suffer. But, Edom, you deserve to be punished, so you will really be punished. You will not escape the punishment you deserve. You will be punished.”

The LORD says, “By my own power, I make this promise: I promise that the city of Bozrah will be destroyed. It will become a ruined pile of rocks. People will use it as an example when they ask for bad things to happen to other cities. People will insult that city, and all the towns around Bozrah will become ruins forever.”

I heard a message from the LORD:

He sent this messenger to the nations.
This is the message:
“Gather your armies together!
Get ready for battle!

March against the nation of Edom!
Edom, I will make you become unimportant.
Everyone will hate you.

Edom, you made other nations afraid, so you thought you were important.
But your pride has fooled you.
You live in caves, high on the cliff.
Your home is high in the hills.
But even if you build your home as high as an eagle’s nest,
I will bring you down from there.”
This is what the LORD said.

“Edom will be destroyed.
People will be shocked to see the destroyed cities.
They will whistle from amazement at the destroyed cities.

Edom will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns around them.
No one will live there.”
This is what the LORD said.

“Sometimes a lion will come from the thick bushes near the Jordan River. And it will go into the fields where people put their sheep and cattle. I am like that lion. I will go to Edom. And I will frighten the people and make them run away. None of their young men will stop me. No one is like me. No one will challenge me. None of their leaders will stand up against me.”

So listen to what the LORD has planned to do to the people of Edom.
Listen to what he has decided to do to the people in Teman.
The enemy will drag away the young kids of Edom’s flock.
Edom’s pastures will be empty because of what they did.

At the sound of Edom’s fall, the earth will shake.
Their cry will be heard all the way to the Red Sea.

Just as an eagle flies high to see the animal it will attack,
so the Lord will spread his wings over Bozrah.
And Edom’s soldiers will be filled with fear like a woman giving birth.

A Message About Damascus

This message is about the city of Damascus:

“The towns of Hamath and Arpad are afraid.
They are afraid because they heard the bad news.
They are discouraged.
They are worried and afraid.

The city of Damascus has become weak.
The people want to run away.
They are ready to panic.
They are overcome with fear and pain, like a woman giving birth.

“Damascus is a happy city.
The people have not left that ‘fun city’ yet.

So the young men will die in the public squares of that city.
All her soldiers will be killed at that time.”
This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

“I will set the walls of Damascus on fire.
The fire will completely burn up the strong forts of Ben-Hadad.

A Message About Kedar and Hazor

This message is about the tribe of Kedar and the rulers of Hazor. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated them. This is what the LORD says:

“Go and attack the tribe of Kedar.
Destroy the people of the East.
Their tents and flocks will be taken away.
Their tents and all their riches will be carried off.
Their enemy will take away the camels.
Men will shout this to them:

‘Terrible things are happening all around us.’

Run away quickly!
People in Hazor, find a good place to hide.”
This message is from the LORD.
“Nebuchadnezzar has made plans against you.
He thought of a smart plan to defeat you.

“There is a nation that feels so safe and secure that it does not have gates or fences to protect it.
And no one lives near enough to help them.
So attack that nation!” says the LORD.

“Their camels are there to be taken in battle.
Their large herds of cattle will be yours.
I will scatter them throughout the earth—those people who cut their hair short.
I will bring disaster on them from every direction.”
This message is from the LORD.

“Hazor will become a home for wild dogs, an empty desert forever.
No one will live there.
No one will stay in that place.”

A Message About Elam

Early in the time when Zedekiah was king of Judah, Jeremiah the prophet received a message from the LORD about the nation of Elam.

The LORD All-Powerful says,
“I will break Elam’s bow very soon.
It is Elam’s strongest weapon.
I will bring the four winds against Elam.
I will bring them from the four corners of the skies.
I will send the people of Elam to every place on the earth where the four winds blow.

a 49:27 Ben-Hadad This was the name of several of the kings of Aram-Damascus.
b 49:32 cut their hair short Literally, “cut on the side of their heads,” a custom different from that of Israelite men.
c 49:34 Elam A nation east of Babylon.
winds blow.
Elam’s captives will be carried away to every nation.
37 I will break Elam to pieces while their enemies are watching.
I will break Elam in front of the people who want to kill them.
I will bring terrible troubles to them.
I will show them how angry I am.”
This message is from the Lord.
“I will send a sword to chase Elam.
The sword will chase them until I have killed them all.
38 I will show Elam that I am in control, and I will destroy its king and his officials.”
This message is from the Lord.
39 “But in the future I will make good things happen to Elam.”
This message is from the Lord.

A Message About Babylon
50 1This is the message the Lord spoke through the prophet Jeremiah about Babylon and its people.
2 “Announce this to all nations!
   Lift up a flag and announce the message!
Speak the whole message and say, ‘The nation of Babylon will be captured.
The god Bel will be put to shame.
The god Marduk will be very afraid.
Babylon’s idols will be put to shame.
Her gods will be filled with terror.’
3 A nation from the north will attack Babylon.
   That nation will make Babylon like an empty desert.
No one will live there.
   Both men and animals will run away.”
4 The Lord says, “At that time the people of Israel and the people of Judah will be together.
They will cry and cry together, and together, they will go look for the Lord their God.
5 They will ask how to go to Zion.
   They will start to go in that direction.
They will say, ‘Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord.
Let’s make an agreement that will last forever.
Let’s make an agreement that we will never forget.’
6 “My people have been like lost sheep.
   Their shepherds led them the wrong way
   and caused them to wander away into the mountains and hills.
   They forgot where their resting place was.
7 They were attacked by all who saw them.
   And their attackers said, ‘We were not wrong to attack them because they sinned against the Lord.
   They should have stayed close to him, their true resting place.
   The Lord is the one their fathers trusted in.’
8 “Run away from Babylon.
   Leave the land of the Babylonians.
   Be like the goats that lead the flock.
9 I will bring many nations together from the north.
   This group of nations will get ready for war against Babylon.
   Babylon will be captured by people from the north.
   Those nations will shoot many arrows at Babylon.
   Their arrows will be like soldiers who don’t come back from war with their hands empty.
10 The enemy will take all the wealth from the Chaldeans.
   The soldiers will take all they want.”
This is what the Lord said.
11 “Babylon, you are excited and happy.
   You took my land.
   You dance around like a young cow that got into the grain.
   Your laughter is like the happy sounds
that horses make.

12 Now your mother will be very ashamed.
   The woman who gave you birth will be embarrassed.
   Babylon will be the least important of all the nations.
   She will be an empty, dry desert.
13 The Lord will show his anger, so no one will live there.
   Babylon will be completely empty.
   Everyone who passes by Babylon will be afraid.
   They will shake their heads when they see how badly it has been destroyed.

14 “Prepare for war against Babylon.
   All you soldiers with bows, shoot your arrows at Babylon.
   Don’t save any of your arrows.
   Babylon has sinned against the Lord.
15 Soldiers around Babylon, shout the cry of victory!
   Babylon has surrendered!
   Her walls and towers have been pulled down!
   The Lord is giving her people the punishment they deserve.
   You nations should give Babylon the punishment she deserves.
   Do to her what she has done to other nations.
16 Don’t let the people from Babylon plant their crops.
   Don’t let them gather the harvest.
   The soldiers of Babylon brought many prisoners to their city.
   Now the enemy soldiers have come, so the prisoners are going back home.
   They are running back to their own countries.

17 “Israel is like a flock of sheep that was scattered all over the country.
   Israel is like sheep that were chased away by lions.
   The first lion to attack was the king of Assyria.
   The last lion to crush Israel’s bones was King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.
18 So this is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says:
   ‘I will soon punish the king of Babylon and his country as I punished the king of Assyria.
19 “I will bring Israel back to his own fields.
   He will eat food that grows on Mount Carmel and in the land of Bashan.
   He will eat and be full.
   He will eat on the hills in the lands of Ephraim and Gilead.”
20 The Lord says, “At that time people will try hard to find Israel’s guilt, but there will be no guilt.
   People will try to find Judah’s sins, but no sins will be found.
   That is because I am saving a few survivors from Israel and Judah.
   And I am forgiving them for all their sins.”
21 The Lord says, “Attack the country of Merathaim!
   Attack the people living in Pekod!
   Kill them and destroy them completely!
   Do everything I commanded you!
22 “The noise of battle can be heard all over the country.
   It is the noise of much destruction.
23 Babylon was called ‘The Hammer of the Whole Earth.’
   But now the ‘Hammer’ is shattered.
   Babylon is the most ruined of the nations.
24 Babylon, I set a trap for you, and you were caught before you knew it.
   You fought against the Lord, so you were found and captured.
25 The Lord has opened up his
storehouse
and brought out the weapons of his anger.
The Lord God All-Powerful brought out those weapons,
because he has work to do in the land of the Chaldeans.

26 “Come against Babylon from far away.
Break open the storehouses where she keeps her grain.
Destroy Babylon completely.
Don’t leave anyone alive.
Pile up her dead bodies like big piles of grain.
27 Kill all the young men in Babylon.
Let them be slaughtered like bulls.
How terrible for them that their day of defeat has come!
It is time for them to be punished.
28 People are running out of Babylon.
They are escaping from that country and coming to Zion.
They are telling everyone the good news about what the Lord is doing.
The Lord our God is giving Babylon the punishment it deserves.
The Lord is destroying Babylon, because it destroyed his Temple!

29 “Call for the archers.
Tell them to attack Babylon.
Tell them to surround the city.
Don’t let anyone escape.
Pay her back for the bad things she has done.
Do to her what she has done to other nations.
Babylon did not respect the Lord.
Babylon was very rude to the Holy One of Israel.
So punish Babylon.
30 Babylon’s young men will be killed in the streets.
All her soldiers will die on that day.”
This is what the Lord says.

31 “Babylon, you are too proud,
and I am against you,” says the Lord God All-Powerful.
“I am against you,
and the time has come for you to be punished.
32 Proud Babylon will stumble and fall,
and no one will help her get up.
I will start a fire in her towns.
That fire will completely burn up everyone around her.”

33 This is what the Lord All-Powerful says:
“The people of Israel and Judah are slaves.
The enemy took them, and the enemy will not let Israel go.
34 But God will get them back.
His name is the Lord God All-Powerful.
He will defend them very strongly.
He will argue their case so that he can let their land rest.
But there will be no rest for those living in Babylon.”

35 The Lord says,
“Sword, kill the people living in Babylon.
Sword, kill the king’s officials and the wise men of Babylon.
36 Sword, kill the priests of Babylon.
They will be like fools.
Sword, kill the soldiers of Babylon.
They will be full of fear.
37 Sword, kill the horses and chariots of Babylon.
Sword, kill all the soldiers hired from other countries.
They will be like frightened women.
Sword, destroy the treasures of Babylon.
Those treasures will be taken away.
38 Sword, strike the waters of Babylon.
Those waters will be dried up.
Babylon has many, many idols.
These idols show that the people of Babylon are foolish.
So bad things will happen to them.
39 Babylon will never again be filled with

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people. Wild dogs, ostriches, and other desert animals will live there. But no one will live there ever again.

40 God completely destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns around them. In the same way no one will live in Babylon, and no one will ever go to live there.”

This is what the LORD says.

41 “Look! There are people coming from the north. They come from a powerful nation. Many kings are coming together from all around the world.

42 Their armies have bows and spears. The soldiers are cruel. They have no mercy. The soldiers come riding on their horses; the sound is as loud as the roaring sea. They stand in their places, ready for battle. They are ready to attack you, city of Babylon.

43 The king of Babylon heard about those armies, and he is paralyzed with fear. He is overcome with fear and pain, like a woman giving birth.

44 “Sometimes a lion will come from the thick bushes near the Jordan River. It will walk into the fields where people have their animals. I will be like that lion; I will chase Babylon from its land. Who should I choose to do this? There is no one like me. There is no one who can challenge me. No shepherd will come to chase me away. I will chase away the Babylonians.”

45 Listen to what the LORD has planned to do to Babylon. Listen to what he has decided to do to the Babylonians. “I promise that an enemy will drag away the young kids of Babylon’s flock, and Babylon will become an empty pasture.

46 Babylon will fall, and that fall will shake the earth. People in all nations will hear about the destruction of Babylon.”

51 The LORD says, “I will cause a powerful, destructive wind to blow against Babylon and the Babylonians."

2 I will send foreigners to winnow Babylon, and they will take everything from the city. Armies will surround the city, and there will be terrible destruction.

3 The Babylonian soldiers will not get to use their bows and arrows. They will not even put on their armor. Don’t feel sorry for the soldiers of Babylon. Destroy her army completely!

4 Babylon’s soldiers will be killed in the land of the Chaldeans. They will be badly wounded in the streets of Babylon.”

5 The LORD All-Powerful did not leave Israel and Judah alone, like a widow. No, they are guilty of leaving the Holy One of Israel. Their God did not leave them. They left him!

6 Run away from Babylon.

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Jeremiah 51

Run to save your lives!
Don’t stay and be killed because of Babylon’s sins!
It is time for the LORD to punish the Babylonians for the bad things they have done.
Babylon will get the punishment that she should have.

Babylon was like a golden cup in the LORD’s hand.
Babylon made the whole world drunk.
The nations drank Babylon’s wine, so they went crazy.

But Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken.
Cry for her!
Get medicine for her pain, and maybe she can be healed.

We tried to heal Babylon, but she cannot be healed.
So let us leave her, and let each of us go to our own country.
God in heaven will decide Babylon’s punishment.
He will decide what will happen to Babylon.

The LORD got even for us.
Come, let’s tell about that in Zion.
Let’s tell what the LORD our God has done.

Sharpen the arrows!
Get your shields!
The LORD has stirred up the kings of the Medes because he wants to destroy Babylon.
The army from Babylon destroyed his Temple in Jerusalem, so he will give them the punishment they deserve.

Lift up a flag against the walls of Babylon.
Bring more guards.
Put the watchmen in their places.
Get ready for a secret attack.
The LORD will do what he has planned.

He will do what he said he would do against the people of Babylon.
Babylon, you live near much water.
You are rich with treasures, but your end as a nation has come.
It is time for you to be destroyed.

The LORD All-Powerful used his name to make this promise:
“Babylon, I will fill you with so many enemy soldiers they will be like a cloud of locusts.
They will win their war against you. They will stand over you shouting their victory cry.”

God used his great power and made the earth.
He used his wisdom to build the world and his understanding to stretch out the skies.

When he thunders, the waters in the skies roar.
He sends clouds all over the earth.
He sends lightning with the rain.
He brings out the wind from his storehouses.

But people are so stupid.
They don’t understand what God has done.
Skilled workers make statues of false gods.
Those statues are only false gods.
They show how foolish those workers are.
Those statues are not alive.

Those idols are worthless.
People made them, and they are nothing but a joke.
Their time of judgment will come, and those idols will be destroyed.

But God, who is Jacob’s Portion, is not like those worthless statues.
People didn’t make God; God made his people.
He made everything.
His name is the LORD All-Powerful.

The Lord says, “Babylon, you are my club.”

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I used you to smash nations.
I used you to destroy kingdoms.
I used you to smash horse and rider.
I used you to smash chariot and driver.
I used you to smash men and women.
I used you to smash men, old and young.
I used you to smash young men and young women.
I used you to smash shepherds and flocks.
I used you to smash farmers and oxen.
I used you to smash governors and important officials.
But I will repay Babylonia and all the Babylonians for all the evil things they did to Zion.
I will pay them back so that you can see it, Judah.”
This is what the Lord said.

The Lord says,
“Babylon, you are like a volcano that destroys the whole country.
But I have turned against you, and I will turn you into a burned-out mountain.
People will not take stones from Babylon to use as the foundation of a building.
That is because they will not find any stones big enough for cornerstones.
Your city will be a pile of broken rocks forever.”
This is what the Lord said.

“Lift up the war flag in the land!
Blow the trumpet in all the nations!
Prepare the nations for war against Babylon.
Call these kingdoms to come fight against Babylon:
Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.
Choose a commander to lead the army against her.
Send so many horses that they are like a swarm of locusts.
Get the nations ready for battle against her.
Get the kings of the Medes against her.
Get their governors and all their important officials ready.
Get all the countries they rule ready for battle against Babylon.
The land shakes and moves as if it is in pain.
It will shake when the Lord does to Babylon what he plans—to make the land of Babylon an empty desert, a place where no one will live.
Babylon’s soldiers have stopped fighting.
They stay in their forts.
Their strength is gone.
They have become like frightened women.
Babylon’s houses are burning.
The bars of her gates are broken.
One messenger follows another.
Messenger follows messenger.
They announce to the king of Babylon that his whole city has been captured.
The places where people cross the rivers have been captured.
The swamplands are burning.
All of Babylon’s soldiers are afraid.”

This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says:
“Babylon is like a threshing floor, where people beat the grain at harvest time.
And the time to beat Babylon is coming soon.
“King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed us in the past.
In the past he hurt us.
In the past he took our people away, and we became like an empty jar.
He took the best we had.
He was like a giant monster that ate everything until it was full.
He took the best we had
and then threw us away.
Babylon did terrible things to hurt us.
Now I want those things to happen to Babylon.”

The people living in Zion said,
“The people of Babylon are guilty of
killing our people.
Now they are being punished for
the bad things they did.”
The city of Jerusalem said those
things.

So this is what the LORD says:
“I will defend you, Judah.
I will make sure that Babylon is
punished.
I will dry up Babylon’s sea.
And I will make her water springs
become dry.

Babylon will become a pile of ruined
buildings,
a place fit only for wild dogs.
People will be shocked and shake their
heads at what is left there.
It will be a place where no one lives.

“The people of Babylon are like roaring
young lions.
They growl like baby lions.
They are acting like powerful lions.
I will give a party for them.
I will make them drunk.
They will laugh and have a good time,
and then they will sleep forever.
They will never wake up.”

This is what the LORD said.

“Babylon will be like sheep, rams, and
goats waiting to be killed.
I will lead them to the slaughter.

“Sheshach will be defeated.
The best and proudest country of
the whole earth will be taken
captive.
People from other nations will look at
Babylon,
and what they see will make them

afraid.
The sea will rise over Babylon.
Its roaring waves will cover her.
Babylon will be like a dry, desert land.
Its cities will be empty ruins.
No one will live in those cities.
No one will even travel through
them.
I will punish the false god Bel in
Babylon.
I will make him vomit out the
people he swallowed.
The wall around Babylon will fall,
and other nations will stop coming
to Babylon.
Come out of the city of Babylon, my
people.
Run to save your lives.
Run from the LORD’s great anger.

“Don’t be sad, my people.
Rumors will spread, but don’t be
afraid.
One rumor comes this year.
Another rumor will come next year.
There will be rumors about terrible
fighting in the country.
There will be rumors about rulers
fighting against other rulers.
The time will surely come when I will
punish the false gods of Babylon,
and the whole land of Babylon will
be put to shame.
There will be many dead people,
lying in the streets of that city.
Then heaven and earth and all that is in
them
will shout with joy about Babylon.
They will shout because an army came
from the north
and fought against Babylon.”
This is what the LORD said.

“Babylon killed people from Israel.
Babylon killed people from every
place on earth.
So Babylon must fall!
You people escaped the swords.
You must hurry and leave Babylon.
Don’t wait!

a 51:41 Sheshach  Jeremiah used a special code to create this secret name for Babylon.
You are in a faraway land, but remember the LORD where you are and remember Jerusalem.”

51 “We people of Judah are ashamed. We have been insulted, because strangers have gone into the holy places of the LORD’s Temple.”

52 The LORD says, “The time is coming, when I will punish the idols of Babylon. At that time wounded people will cry with pain everywhere in that country.

53 Babylon might grow until she touches the sky. Babylon might make her forts strong, but I will send people to fight against that city. And they will destroy her.” This is what the LORD said.

54 “We can hear people crying in Babylon. We hear the sound of people destroying things in the land of Babylon.

55 The LORD will destroy Babylon very soon. He will stop the loud noises in that city. Enemies will come roaring in like ocean waves. People all around will hear that roar.

56 The army will come and destroy Babylon. Its soldiers will be captured, and their bows will be broken. This will happen because the LORD punishes people for the bad things they do. He gives them the full punishment they deserve.

57 I will make Babylon’s wise men and important officials drunk. I will make the governors, officers, and soldiers drunk too. Then they will sleep forever.

They will never wake up.” This is what the King said. His name is the LORD All-Powerful.

58 This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: “Babylon’s thick, strong wall will be pulled down. Her high gates will be burned. The people of Babylon will work hard, but it will not help. They will get very tired trying to save the city. But they will only be fuel for the flames.”

Jeremiah Sends a Message to Babylon

59 This is the message that Jeremiah gave to the officer Seraiah son of Neriah. Neriah was the son of Mahseiah. Seraiah went to Babylon with King Zedekiah of Judah. This happened in the fourth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah. At that time Jeremiah gave this message to Seraiah, the officer. 60 Jeremiah had written on a scroll all the terrible things that would happen to Babylon. He had written all these things about Babylon.

61 Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “Seraiah, go to Babylon. Be sure to read this message so that all the people can hear you. Then say, ‘LORD, you have said that you will destroy this place, Babylon. You will destroy it so that no people or animals will live in it. This place will be an empty ruin forever.’

62 After you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates River. Then say, ‘In the same way Babylon will sink. Babylon will rise no more. It will sink because of the terrible things that I will make happen here.’”

The words of Jeremiah end here.

The Fall of Jerusalem

52 Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king of Judah. He ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother’s
name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah.\(^a\) Hamutal’s family was from the town of Libnah. \(^2\)Zedekiah did evil things, just as King Jehoiakim had done. The LORD did not like Zedekiah doing those evil things. \(^3\)Terrible things happened to the people of Jerusalem and Judah because the LORD was angry with them. Finally, he threw them out of his presence.

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. \(^4\)So in the ninth year of Zedekiah’s rule, on the tenth day of the tenth month,\(^b\) King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. The army of Babylon set up their camp outside of Jerusalem. Then they built ramps all around the city walls so that they could get over the walls. \(^5\)The city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the army of Babylon until the eleventh year that Zedekiah\(^c\) was king. \(^6\)By the ninth day of the fourth month of that year, the hunger in the city was very bad. There was no food left for the people in the city to eat. \(^7\)On that day the army of Babylon broke into Jerusalem. The soldiers of Jerusalem ran away. They left the city at night. They went through the gate between the two walls. That gate was near the king’s garden. Even though the army of Babylon had surrounded the city, the soldiers of Jerusalem still ran away toward the desert.

But the Babylonian army chased King Zedekiah and caught him on the plains of Jericho. All of Zedekiah’s soldiers ran away. \(^8\)The army of Babylon captured King Zedekiah and took him to the king of Babylon who was at the city of Riblah, in the land of Hamath. At Riblah the king of Babylon announced his judgment on King Zedekiah. \(^9\)There, at the town of Riblah, the king of Babylon killed Zedekiah’s sons while Zedekiah watched. The king of Babylon also killed all the royal officials of Judah. \(^10\)Then the king of Babylon tore out Zedekiah’s eyes. He put bronze chains on him and took him to Babylon. In Babylon he put Zedekiah into prison. He stayed in prison until the day he died.

\(^12\)Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king of Babylon’s special guard. He was one of the king’s most important officials while at Jerusalem. He came to Jerusalem on the tenth day of the fifth month, in the 19th year that Nebuchadnezzar\(^d\) was king. \(^13\)Nebuzaradan burned the LORD’s Temple, the king’s palace, and every important building in Jerusalem, as well as all the houses. \(^14\)All the Babylonian soldiers that were with the commander broke down the walls around Jerusalem. \(^15\)Commander Nebuzaradan took the people who were still in Jerusalem\(^e\) and those who had surrendered earlier and made them captives. He took them and the skilled craftsmen who were left in Jerusalem as captives to Babylon. \(^16\)But Nebuzaradan left some of the poorest people behind in the land. He left them to work in the vineyards and the fields.

The Babylonian army broke up the bronze columns of the LORD’s Temple. They also broke up the stands and the bronze tank\(^f\) that were in the LORD’s Temple. They carried all that bronze to Babylon. \(^18\)The army of Babylon also took these things from the Temple: pots, shovels, lamp snuffers, large bowls, pans, and all the bronze things that were used in the Temple service. \(^19\)The commander of the king’s special guards took these things away: basins, firepans, large bowls, pots, lampstands, pans, and bowls used for drink offerings. He took everything that was made of gold or silver. \(^20\)The two pillars, the Sea and the twelve bronze bulls under it, and the moveable stands were very heavy. King Solomon had made those things for the LORD’s Temple. The bronze that those things were made of was so heavy it could not be weighed.

\(^a\)52:1 Jeremiah This is not the prophet Jeremiah, but a different man with the same name.
\(^b\)52:4 ninth year … tenth month That is, January of 588 B.C.
\(^c\)52:5 the eleventh year … Zedekiah That is, 587 B.C.
\(^d\)52:12 the 19th year … Nebuchadnezzar That is, 587 B.C.
\(^e\)52:15 the people … Jerusalem This is from the ancient Greek version. The phrase, ‘some of the poorest people,’ which appears in the standard Hebrew text, seems to have been accidentally copied from the next verse.
\(^f\)52:17 bronze columns … tank These verses list the things that the Babylonian army took away from the Lord’s Temple. For a description of the Temple furniture, see 1 Kings 7:13–26.
Each of the bronze pillars was 31 feet tall. Each pillar was almost 21 feet around. Each pillar was hollow. The wall of each pillar was 3 inches thick. The bronze capital on top of the first pillar was over 5 feet tall. It was decorated with a net design and bronze pomegranates all around it. The other pillar had pomegranates too. It was like the first pillar. There were 96 pomegranates on the sides of the pillars. All together, there were 100 pomegranates above the net design that went around the pillars.

The commander of the king’s special guards took Seraiah the high priest and Zephaniah the next highest priest as prisoners. The three doorkeepers were also taken as prisoners. The commander of the king’s special guards also took the officer in charge of the fighting men. He also took seven of the king’s advisors as prisoners. They were still there in Jerusalem. He also took the scribe who was in charge of putting people in the army. And he took 60 of the ordinary people who were there in the city. Nebuzaradan, the commander, took all these officials and brought them to the king of Babylon. The king ordered all of them to be killed.

So the people of Judah were taken from their country. This is how many people Nebuchadnezzar carried into captivity:

In Nebuchadnezzar’s 7th year as king of Babylon, 3023 people were taken from Judah.

In Nebuchadnezzar’s 18th year as king of Babylon, 832 people were taken from Jerusalem.

In Nebuchadnezzar’s 23rd year as king, Nebuzaradan took 745 people of Judah into captivity. Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king’s special guards.

In all, 4600 people were taken captive.

**Jehoiachin Is Set Free**

King Jehoiachin of Judah was in prison in Babylon for 37 years. In the 37th year of his imprisonment, King Evil Merodach of Babylon was very kind to Jehoiachin. He let Jehoiachin out of prison in that year. This was the same year that Evil Merodach became king of Babylon. He set Jehoiachin free from prison on the 25th day of the 12th month. Evil Merodach spoke kindly to Jehoiachin. He gave Jehoiachin a place of honor higher than the other kings who were with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin took his prison clothes off. For the rest of his life, he ate regularly at the king’s table. Every day the king of Babylon paid Jehoiachin enough to take care of his needs until the day Jehoiachin died.

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*a* 52:21 31 feet Literally, “18 cubits” (9.33 m).

*b* 52:21 21 feet Literally, “12 cubits” (6.22 m).

*c* 52:23 3 inches Literally, “4 fingers” (7.4 cm).

*d* 52:22 5 feet Or “1.63 m.” Literally, “5 cubits” which would be 8’ 6” (2.6 m), but see 2 Kings 25:17.

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Jerusalem Cries Over Her Destruction

1 Jerusalem once was a city full of people, but now the city is so empty. She was one of the greatest cities in the world, but now she is like a poor widow. She was once a princess among cities, but now she has been made a slave.

2 She cries bitterly in the night. Her tears are on her cheeks. She has no one to comfort her. Many nations were friendly to her, but not one of them comforts her now. All her friends have turned their backs on her and have become her enemies.

3 Judah suffered very much, and then she was taken into captivity. She lives among other nations but has found no rest. The people who chased her caught her where there was no way out. The roads to Zion are very sad, because no one comes to Zion for the festivals anymore. All of Zion’s gates have been destroyed; all her priests groan in sorrow. Zion’s young women have been taken away, and all this made Zion sad. Jerusalem’s enemies have won. Her enemies have been successful. This happened because the Lord punished her.

He punished Jerusalem for her many sins. Her children have gone away. Their enemies captured them and took them away.

6 The beauty of Daughter Zion has gone away. Her princes were like deer that cannot find a meadow to feed in. They walk away without strength from those who chased them.

7 Jerusalem thinks back. She remembers the time when she was hurt and when she lost her home. She remembers all the nice things that she had in the past. She remembers those nice things that she had in the old days. She remembers when her people were captured by the enemy. She remembers when there was no one to help her.

When her enemies saw her, they laughed, because she was destroyed.

8 Jerusalem sinned very badly. Because Jerusalem sinned, she became a ruined city that people shake their heads about. In the past people respected her. But now they hate her, because they abused her. Jerusalem groaned and turned away.

9 Jerusalem’s skirts were dirty. She gave no thought to what would become of her. Her fall was amazing. She had no one to comfort her.

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*a* 1:1 She Throughout this poem, Jerusalem is represented as a woman.

*b* 1:3 where … way out Or “in the narrow valleys.”

*c* 1:4 have been taken away This is from the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has “are upset.”

*d* 1:6 Daughter Zion Another name for Jerusalem. Also in 2:1, 8, 13, 18.
She says, “LORD, see how I am hurt! See how my enemy thinks he is so great!”

10 The enemy stretched out his hand. He took all her nice things. In fact, she saw the foreign nations go inside her Temple. And you said those people could not join in our assembly! All the people of Jerusalem are groaning. All of her people are looking for food. They are giving away all their nice things for food to stay alive. Jerusalem says, “Look, LORD. Look at me! See how people hate me.

11 All you who pass by on the road, you don’t seem to care. But look at me and see. Is there any pain like my pain? Is there any pain like the pain that has come to me? Is there any pain like the pain that the LORD has punished me with? He has punished me on the day of his great anger.

12 The Lord sent fire from above that went down into my bones. He stretched out a net for my feet. He turned me all the way around. He made me into a wasteland. I am sick all day.

13 “My sins were tied up like a yoke. My sins were tied up in the Lord’s hands. His yoke is on my neck. He has made me weak. He has given me to those who I cannot stand up against.

14 “The Lord rejected all my powerful men who were inside the city. Then he brought a group of people against me. He brought them to kill my young soldiers.

The Lord has trampled his dearest city\(^a\) like grapes in a winepress.

16 “I cry about all these things. Tears are flowing down my cheeks. There is no one near to comfort me. There is no one who can make me feel better. My children are like a wasteland, because the enemy won.”

17 Zion spread out her hands. There was no one to comfort her. The LORD had given orders to Jacob’s enemies. He ordered them to surround the city. Jerusalem has become a dirty rag that her enemies threw away.

18 Now Jerusalem says, “I refused to listen to the LORD, so he is right for doing these things. So listen, all you people! Look at my pain! My young women and men have gone into captivity.

19 I called out to my lovers, but they tricked me. My priests and my elders have died in the city. They were looking for food for themselves. They wanted to keep themselves alive.

20 “Look at me, LORD. I am in distress! I am upset, as if my heart turned upside down inside of me. I feel this way because I have been so stubborn. Out in the streets, I lost my children to the swords. Inside, it is like death.

21 “Listen to me, I am groaning. I have no one to comfort me.

\(^a\) 1:15 dearest city Literally, “virgin daughter Judah,” a name for the city of Jerusalem.
All my enemies have heard of my trouble.
They are happy that you did this to me.
You said there would be a time of punishment.
You said you would punish my enemies.
Now do what you said.
Let my enemies be like I am now.

“Look how evil my enemies are!
Then you can treat them the same way you treated me because of all my sins.
Do this because I am groaning again and again.
Do this because my heart is sick.”

The Lord Destroyed Jerusalem

1 Look how the Lord has covered daughter Zion with the cloud of his anger. He has thrown her, the glory of Israel, from the sky to the ground. In his anger he showed no care even for the Temple where he rests his feet.

2 The Lord destroyed the houses of Jacob. He destroyed them without mercy. In his anger he destroyed the fortresses of Daughter Judah. He threw the kingdom of Judah and its rulers to the ground. He ruined the kingdom of Judah.

3 He was angry, and he destroyed all the strength of Israel. He took away his right hand from Israel. He did this when the enemy came. He burned like a flaming fire in Jacob. He was like a fire that burns all around.

4 He bent his bow like an enemy. He held his sword in his right hand.

He killed all the good-looking men of Judah.
He killed them as if they were the enemy.
He poured out his anger like a fire on the tents of Zion.

5 The Lord has become like an enemy. He has swallowed up Israel. He has swallowed up all her palaces and all her fortresses. He has made much sadness and crying for the dead in Daughter Judah.

6 He pulled up his own tent as if it were a garden. He has ruined the place where the people came together to worship him. The Lord has made people forget the special assemblies and special days of rest in Zion. He rejected the king and the priests. He was angry and rejected them.

7 He rejected his altar, and he left his holy place of worship. He let the enemy pull down the walls of the palaces of Jerusalem. The enemy shouted with joy in the Lord’s Temple. They made noise as though it were a festival.

8 The Lord planned to destroy the wall of Daughter Zion. He marked the wall with a measuring line. He didn’t stop himself from destroying it. He made all the walls cry out in sadness. Together they wasted away.

9 Jerusalem’s gates have sunk into the ground. The bars on her gates are completely destroyed.

d 2:1 daughter Zion The city of Jerusalem pictured as a young woman. Similar language is used in verses 8, 13, 15, and 18. See “Zion” in the Word List.
b 2:1 Temple … feet Literally, “the footstool of his feet,” meaning the place God lived among his people.

c 2:6 his own tent This is a reference to the Temple in Jerusalem.
d 2:6 special days of rest Or “Sabbaths.” This might mean Saturday (see “SABBATH” in the Word List) or all the special days when the people were not supposed to work.
Her king and princes have been taken to other nations.  
The teaching of the law has stopped.  
And her prophets no longer receive visions from the LORD.

10 The elders of Zion sit on the ground.  
They sit on the ground and are quiet.  
They pour dust on their heads.  
They put on sackcloth.  
The young women of Jerusalem bow their heads to the ground in sorrow.

11 My eyes are worn out with tears,  
and my insides are upset.  
My heart feels like it has been poured on the ground;  
I feel this way because of the destruction of my people.  
Children and babies are fainting in the public squares of the city.

12 They ask their mothers,  
“Where is the bread and wine?”  
as they pour out their life in their mother’s laps.

13 My dear Jerusalem, what can I say about you?  
What can I compare you to?  
What can I say you are like?  
How can I comfort you, city of Zion?  
You have been hurt much too badly for anyone to heal.

14 Your prophets saw visions for you,  
but their visions were only worthless lies.  
They didn’t speak against your sins.  
They didn’t try to make things better.  
They spoke messages for you,  
but they were false messages that fooled you.

15 Those who pass by on the road clap their hands and laugh at you.  
They make fun of Jerusalem,  
shaking their heads at the sight of her.

They ask, “Is this the city that people called  
‘The Most Beautiful City’  
and ‘The Joy of all the Earth’?”

16 All your enemies laugh at you.  
They whistle and grind their teeth at you.  
They say, “We have swallowed them up!  
This is the day we were hoping for.  
We have finally seen this happen!”

17 The LORD did what he planned to do.  
He did what he said he would do.  
He did what he commanded a long time ago.  
He destroyed, and he had no pity.  
He made your enemies happy because of what happened to you.  
He made your enemies strong.

18 Cry out with all your heart to the Lord!  
Jerusalem, let tears roll down your walls.  
Let your tears flow like a stream day and night.  
Don’t stop crying or let your eyes dry.

19 Get up throughout the night and cry for help.  
Let your sorrow pour out before the Lord like water.  
Lift up your hands in prayer to him.  
Ask him to let your children live.  
They are starving to death on every street corner.

20 Look at us, LORD!  
Have you ever treated anyone else so badly?  
Is it right for women to eat their own babies,  
the children they have cared for?  
Should priests and prophets be killed in the Temple of the Lord?

\[a\: 2:18 \text{ Cry out ... heart} \] Or “Their hearts cried out.”
Young men and old men
lie on the ground in the streets of
the city.
My young women and young men
have been killed by the sword.
You killed them on the day of your
anger.
You killed them without mercy!

You invited terror to come to me from
all around.
You invited terror as though you
were inviting it to a festival.
No one escaped on the day of the
Lord’s anger.
My enemy killed the people who I
raised and brought up.

The Meaning of Suffering

I am a man who has seen much
trouble.
God beat us with a stick, and I saw
it happen.
He led and brought me
into darkness, not light.
He turned his hand against me.
He did this again and again, all day.
He wore out my flesh and skin.
He broke my bones.
He built up bitterness and trouble
against me.
He surrounded me with bitterness
and trouble.
He put me in the dark,
like someone who died long ago.
He shut me in, so I could not get out.
He put heavy chains on me.
Even when I cry out and ask for help,
he does not listen to my prayer.
He has blocked up my path with stones.
He has made my path crooked.
He is like a bear about to attack me,
like a lion that is in a hiding place.
He led me off my path.
He tore me to pieces and ruined me.
He made his bow ready.
He made me the target for his
arrows.
He shot me in the stomach
with his arrows.

I have become a joke to all my people.
All day long they sing songs about
me and make fun of me.
He gave me this poison to drink.
He filled me with this bitter drink.
He pushed my teeth into rocky ground.
He pushed me into the dirt.
I thought I would never have peace
again.
I forgot about good things.
I said to myself, “I no longer have any
hope that the Lord will help me.”
Remember, I am very sad,
and I have no home.
Remember the bitter poison that
you gave me.
I remember well all my troubles,
and I am very sad.
But then I think about this,
and I have hope:
We are still alive because
the Lord’s faithful love never ends.
Every morning he shows it in new
ways!
You are so very true and loyal!
I say to myself, “The Lord is my God,
and I trust him.”

The Lord is good to those who wait
for him.
He is good to those who look for
him.
It is good to wait quietly
for the Lord to save them.
It is good for a man to wear his yoke
from the time he is young.
He should sit alone and be quiet
when the Lord puts his yoke on
him.
He should bow down to the Lord.
Maybe there is still hope.
He should turn his cheek to the one
who hits him
and let people insult him.
He should remember that
the Lord does not reject people
forever.

Or “The Lord is my portion and I trust
him.”
32 When he punishes, he also has mercy. He has mercy because of his great love and kindness.

33 He does not enjoy causing people pain. He does not like to make anyone unhappy.
34 He does not like any prisoner on earth to be trampled down.
35 He does not like anyone to be unfair to another person. Some people will do such things right in front of God Most High.
36 The Lord does not like anyone to cheat another person. He does not like any of these things.
37 No one can say something and make it happen, unless the Lord orders it.
38 God Most High commands both good and bad things to happen.
39 No one alive can complain when he punishes them for their sins.
40 Let us check and see what we have done. Then let us turn back to the LORD.

41 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to the God of heaven.
42 Let us say to him, “We have sinned and have been stubborn. Because of this, you have not forgiven us.
43 You wrapped yourself with anger. You chased us. You killed us without mercy!
44 You wrapped yourself in a cloud so that no prayer could get through.
45 You made us like garbage and dirt to the other nations.
46 All of our enemies speak angrily against us.
47 We have been frightened. We have fallen into a pit. We have been badly hurt. We have been broken.”
48 My eyes flow with streams of tears. I cry because of the destruction of my people.

49 My eyes will flow without stopping. I will keep on crying.
50 I will continue to cry until you look down and see us, LORD! I will continue to cry until you see us from heaven.
51 My eyes make me sad, when I see what happened to the young women in my city.
52 For no reason, my enemies hunted me like a bird.
53 They threw me alive into a pit and then threw stones at me.
54 Water came up over my head. I said to myself, “I am finished.”
55 LORD, I called your name from the bottom of the pit.
56 You heard my voice. You didn’t close your ears. You didn’t refuse to rescue me.
57 You came to me on the day that I called out to you. You said to me, “Don’t be afraid.”
58 You defended me and brought me back to life.
59 LORD, you have seen my trouble. Now judge my case for me.
60 You have seen how my enemies have hurt me. You have seen all the evil plans that they made against me.
61 You heard them insult me, LORD. You have heard all the evil plans that they made against me.
62 The words and the thoughts of my enemies are against me all the time—when they sit down and when they stand up. Look how they make fun of me!
63 Give them back what they deserve, LORD. Pay them back for what they have done.
64 Make them stubborn and then curse them.
65 Chase them in anger and destroy them.
Wipe them off the face of the earth, 
  Lord!

The Horrors of the Attack on Jerusalem

1 See how the gold has grown dark, how the pure gold has changed. There are jewels scattered all around at every street corner.

2 The precious people of Zion were once worth more than gold. But now they are treated like something worthless, like the cheap clay jars a potter makes.

3 Even a wild dog feeds her babies. Even the jackal lets her pups suck at her breast. But the daughter of my people is cruel. She is like the ostrich in the desert that forgets its eggs in the sand.

4 Babies are so thirsty their tongues stick to the roof of their mouths. Young children ask for bread, but no one gives them any.

5 Those who ate rich food are now dying in the streets. Those who grew up wearing nice red clothes now pick through garbage piles.

6 The sin of the daughter of my people was very great. Their sin was greater than the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed suddenly. No human hand caused their destruction.

7 Some of the men of Judah were dedicated to God in a special way. They were very pure. They were whiter than snow, and whiter than milk. Their bodies were red like coral and their beards like sapphire stones.

8 But now their faces are blacker than soot. No one even recognizes them in the streets. Their skin is wrinkled over their bones. Their skin is like wood.

9 It was better for those who were killed by the sword than for those who died of hunger. Those starving people were sad and hurt. They died because they got no food from the field.

10 Then even nice women cooked their own children. The children were food for their mothers. This happened when my people were destroyed.

11 The LORD used all of his anger. He poured out all his anger. He made a fire in Zion that burned it down to the foundations.

12 The kings of the earth could not believe what had happened. The people of the world could not believe what had happened. They could not believe that enemies would be able to come through the city gates of Jerusalem.

13 This happened because the prophets of Jerusalem sinned. This happened because the priests of Jerusalem did evil things. They were shedding the blood of good people in the city of Jerusalem.

14 The prophets and priests walked around like blind men in the streets. They had become dirty with blood. No one could even touch their clothes because they were dirty.

15 People shouted, “Go away! Go away! Don’t touch us.” They wandered around and had no home. People in other nations said,
“We don’t want them to live with us.”

16 The LORD himself destroyed them. He didn’t look after them anymore. He didn’t respect the priests. He was not friendly to the elders of Judah.

17 We have worn out our eyes looking for help, but no help comes. We kept on looking for a nation to save us. We kept watch from our watchtower, but no nation came to us.

18 Our enemies hunted us all the time. We could not even go out into the streets. Our end came near. Our time was up. Our end came!

19 The men who chased us were faster than eagles in the sky. They chased us into the mountains. They hid in the desert to catch us.

20 The king was very important to us. He was like the breath we breathe, but he was trapped by them. The LORD himself chose the king, and we said this about the king, “We will live in his shadow. He protects us from the nations.”

21 Be happy, people of Edom. Be happy, you who live in the land of Uz.

But remember, the cup of the Lord’s anger will come around to you too. When you drink from that cup, you will get drunk and strip off all your clothes.

22 Your punishment is complete, Zion. You will not go into captivity again. But the Lord will punish your sins, people of Edom. He will uncover your sins.

A Prayer to the Lord

5 Remember, LORD, what happened to us. Look and see our shame.

2 Our land has been turned over to strangers. Our houses have been given to foreigners.

3 We have become orphans. We have no father. Our mothers have become like widows.

4 We have to buy the water that we drink. We have to pay for the wood that we use.

5 We are forced to wear a yoke on our necks. We get tired, and we have no rest.

6 We made an agreement with Egypt. We also made an agreement with Assyria to get enough bread.

7 Our ancestors sinned against you, and now they are dead. And we are suffering because of their sins.

8 Slaves have become our rulers. No one can save us from them.

9 We risk our lives to get food. There are men in the desert with swords.

10 Our skin is hot like an oven. We have a high fever because of our hunger.

11 The enemy raped the women of Zion. They raped the women in the cities of Judah.

12 The enemy hanged our princes. They didn’t honor our elders.

13 The enemy made our young men grind grain at the mill. Our young men stumbled under loads of wood.

14 The elders no longer sit at the gates of the city. The young men no longer make music.

15 We have no more joy in our hearts. Our dancing has changed to crying for the dead.

16 The crown has fallen from our head. Things have gone bad for us because we sinned.

17 For this reason, our hearts have become sick,
and our eyes cannot see clearly.
Mount Zion is a wasteland.
Foxes run around on Mount Zion.
But you rule forever, LORD.
Your kingly chair lasts forever and ever.
You seem to have forgotten us forever.
You seem to have left us alone for such a long time.
Bring us back to you, LORD.
We will gladly come back to you.
Make our lives as they were before.
You were very angry with us.
Have you completely rejected us?
Introduction

1 I am the priest, Ezekiel son of Buzi. I was in exile by the Kebar Canal in Babylonia when the skies opened up, and I saw visions of God. This was on the fifth day of the fourth month of the thirtieth year.\(^a\) (This was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin’s exile. The word of the LORD came to Ezekiel. The power of the LORD came over him at that place.)

The Chariot of the Lord—God’s Throne

4 I was watching a big storm come in from the north. It was a big cloud with a strong wind, and there was fire flashing from it. Light was shining out all around it. It looked like hot metal\(^b\) glowing in a fire. 5 Inside the cloud, there were four living beings that looked like people. 6 But each one of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were straight. Their feet looked like calves’ feet, and they sparkled like polished brass. 8 Under their wings were human arms. There were four living beings. Each living being had four faces and four wings. 9 The wings touched each other. The living beings did not turn when they moved. They went in the direction they were looking.

10 Each living being had four faces. In the front they each had a man’s face. There was a lion’s face on the right side and a bull’s face on the left side. There was an eagle’s face on the back. Their wings were spread out over them. With two of the wings each living being reached out to touch the one near it, and with the other two wings it covered its body. 12 Each living being went in the direction it was looking. They went wherever the spirit\(^c\) caused them to go, but they did not turn when they moved. 13 That is what the living beings looked like.

Inside the area between the living beings, there was something that looked like burning coals of fire. This fire was like small torches that kept moving around among the living beings. The fire glowed brightly and lightning flashed from it. 14 The living beings ran back and forth—as fast as lightning.\(^d\)

15–16 I was looking at the living beings when I noticed four wheels that touched the ground. There was one wheel by each living being. All the wheels looked the same. The wheels looked as if they were made from a clear, yellow jewel. They looked like there was a wheel inside a wheel. 17 They could turn to move in any direction. But the living beings did not turn when they moved.\(^e\)

18 The rims of the wheels were tall and frightening. There were eyes all over the rims of all four wheels.

19 The wheels always moved with the living beings. If the living beings went up into the air, the wheels went with them. 20 They went wherever the spirit wanted them to go, and the wheels went with them, because the power that moved the living being was in the wheels. 21 So if the living beings moved, the wheels moved. If the living beings stopped, the wheels stopped. If the wheels went into the air, the living beings went with them, because the spirit was in the wheels.

22 There was an amazing thing over the

\(a\) 1:1–3 fifth day … year If the year refers to Ezekiel’s age, this is the same as the fifth year of exile, that is, July 31, 593 B.C.
\(b\) 1:4 hot metal The Hebrew word might mean “melted copper,” “an alloy of gold and silver,” or “amber.” Also in verse 27.
\(c\) 1:12 spirit Or “wind.” Also in verse 20.
\(d\) 1:14 Or “And there was something like lighting shooting back and forth among the living beings.”
\(e\) 1:17 The wheels … moved Or “The wheels could move in any four directions, but they did not turn when they moved.”
heads of the living beings. It was like a bowl turned upside down, and the bowl was clear like crystal. Under this bowl, each living being had wings reaching out to the one next to it. Two wings spread out one way and two wings spread out the other way, covering its body.

Then I heard the wings. Every time the living beings moved, their wings made a very loud noise like a lot of water rushing by. They were loud like the Lord All-Powerful. They were as loud as an army or a crowd of people. When the living beings stopped moving, they put their wings down by their side.

The living beings stopped moving and lowered their wings. Then there was another loud sound that came from above the bowl over their heads. There was something that looked like a throne on top of the bowl. It was blue like sapphire. There was also something that looked like a man sitting on the throne. I looked at him from his waist up. He looked like hot metal with fire all around him. I looked at him from his waist down. It looked like fire with a glow that was shining all around him. The light shining around him was like a rainbow in a cloud. It was the Glory of the Lord. As soon as I saw that, I fell to the ground. I bowed with my face to the ground, and then I heard a voice speaking to me.

The Lord Speaks to Ezekiel

1 The voice said, “Son of man, stand up and I will speak with you.”
2 Then the Spirit came into me and lifted me up on my feet, and I listened to the one who spoke to me. He said, “Son of man, I am sending you to speak to the family of Israel. Those people and their ancestors turned against me many times. They have sinned against me many times—and they are still sinning against me today.

a 1:22 bowl This Hebrew word is the same word used in Gen. 1:6–7 to describe the dome of the sky.

b 2:1 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel, as one the Lord chose to be his prophet. It is used in this sense throughout this book.

c 2:2 the Spirit came into me Or “a wind came.”

4 I am sending you to speak to them, but they are very stubborn. They are very hardheaded, but you must speak to them. You must say, ‘This is what the Lord God says.’ They are people who refuse to obey, so they may not listen to you. But even if they don’t stop sinning, at least they will know that there is a prophet living among them.

6 Son of man, don’t be afraid of the people or what they say. It is true: they will turn against you and try to hurt you. Their words will be sharp like thorns and will sting like scorpions. But don’t be afraid of what they say. They are people who refuse to obey, but don’t be afraid of them. You must tell them what I say, whether they listen or not. They are people who usually refuse to listen!

8 Son of man, listen to what I am telling you. Don’t turn against me like those people who refuse to obey. Now open your mouth to receive the words I will give you to speak.”

9 Then I saw a hand reach out toward me. It was holding a scroll with words written on it. The hand unrolled the scroll open in front of me. Words were on the front and on the back of the scroll. There were all kinds of sad songs, sad stories, and warnings.

3 God said to me, “Son of man, eat what you see. Eat this scroll, and then go tell these things to the family of Israel.”

2 So I opened my mouth and he put the scroll into my mouth. Then God said, “Son of man, I am giving you this scroll. Swallow it! Let that scroll fill your body.” So I ate the scroll. It was as sweet as honey in my mouth.

4 Then God said to me, “Son of man, go to the family of Israel. Speak my words to them. I am not sending you to some foreigners you cannot understand. You don’t have to learn another language. I am sending you to the family of Israel. I am not sending you to many different countries where people speak languages you cannot
understand. If you went to those people and spoke to them, they would listen to you. But you will not have to learn those hard languages. No, I am sending you to the family of Israel. Only, these people have hard heads—they are very stubborn! And the people of Israel will refuse to listen to you. They don’t want to listen to me.

But I will make you just as stubborn as they are, and your head just as hard. A diamond is harder than flint rock. In the same way you will be more stubborn than they are, and your head will be harder. Then you will not be afraid of them or those who always turn against me.”

Then God said to me, “Son of man, listen to every word I say to you and remember them. Then go to all of your people in exile and tell them, ‘This is what the Lord God says. They will not listen, and they will not stop sinning, but you must still tell them my message.’

Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard a voice behind me. It was very loud, like thunder. It said, “Blessed is the Glory of the Lord!” Then the wings of the living beings began moving. The wings made a very loud noise as they touched each other, and the wheels in front of them began making a noise as loud as thunder.

The Spirit lifted me and took me away. I was very sad and upset in my spirit, but I felt the Lord’s power in me. I went to the people of Israel who were forced to live in Tel Aviv by the Kebar Canal. I sat there among them for seven days, shocked and silent.

The Watchman of Israel

After seven days, the word of the Lord came to me. He said, “Son of man, I am making you a watchman for Israel. I will tell you about bad things that will happen to them, and you must warn Israel. If I say, ‘These evil people will die!’ Then you must warn them. You must tell them to change their lives and stop doing evil. If you don’t warn them, they will die because they sinned. But I will also make you responsible for their death, because you did not go to them and save their lives.

If you warn them and tell them to change their lives and stop doing evil, but they refuse to listen, they will die because they sinned. But since you warned them, you will have saved your own life.

If good people stop being good and begin to do evil, and I send something that makes them stumble and sin, they will die because they sinned. But since you did not warn them and remind them of the good things they had done, I will make you responsible for their death.

But if you warn good people and tell them to stop sinning, and they listen to your warning and stop sinning, they will not die. In that way you will have saved your own life.”

The Lord’s power came to me. He said to me, “Get up and go to the valley. I will speak to you in that place.” So I got up and went out to the valley. The Glory of the Lord was there—as I had seen it by the Kebar Canal. So I bowed with my face to the ground. But the Spirit came into me and lifted me up on my feet. He said to me, “Go home and lock yourself in your house. Son of man, people will come with ropes and tie you up. They will not let you go out among the people.

I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth—you will not be able to talk. So they will not have anyone to teach them that they are doing wrong, because they are always turning against me. But I will talk to you, and then I will allow you to speak. But you must say to them, ‘This is what the Lord God says.’ If a person wants to listen, fine. If a person refuses to listen, fine. But those people always turn against me.

Warnings About the Attack of Jerusalem

Son of man, take a brick and scratch a picture on it. Draw a picture...
tory of a city—the city of Jerusalem. And then pretend you are an army surrounding the city. Build a dirt wall around the city to help you attack it. Build a dirt road leading up to the city wall. Bring battering rams and set up army camps around the city. And then take an iron pan and put it between you and the city. It will be like an iron wall separating you and the city. In this way you will show that you are against it. You will surround the city and attack it. This is an example for the family of Israel to show that I will destroy Jerusalem.

4 “Then you must lie down on your left side. You must do this thing that shows that you are taking the sins of the people of Israel on yourself. You will carry the guilt for as many days as you lie on your left side.

5 You must bear the guilt of Israel for 390 days. In this way I am telling you how long Israel will be punished; one day equals one year.

6 “After that time, you will lie on your right side for 40 days. This time you will bear the guilt of Judah for 40 days. One day equals one year. I am telling you how long Judah must be punished.

7 “Now, roll up your sleeve and raise your arm over the brick. Act like you are attacking the city of Jerusalem. Do this to show that you are speaking as my messenger to the people.

8 You must get some grain to make bread. Get some wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt. Mix all these things together in one bowl and grind them to make flour. You will use this flour to make bread. You will eat only this bread during the 390 days that you lie on your side.

9 You will eat that bread from time to time throughout the day. You can drink only 3 cups of water each day. You can drink it from time to time throughout the day. You must make your bread each day. You must get dry human dung and burn it. Then you must cook the bread over this burning dung. You must eat this bread in front of the people.” Then the Lord said, “This will show that the family of Israel will eat unclean bread in foreign countries and that I am the one who forced them to leave Israel and go to those countries!”

14 Then I said, “Oh, but Lord God, I have never eaten any unclean food. I have never eaten meat from an animal that died from a disease or from an animal that was killed by a wild animal. I have never eaten unclean meat—not from the time that I was a little baby until now. None of that bad meat ever entered my mouth.”

15 Then God said to me, “Very well, I will let you use dry cow dung to cook your bread. You don’t have to use dry human dung.”

16 Then God said to me, “Son of man, I am destroying Jerusalem’s supply of bread. People will have only a little bread to eat. They will be very worried about their food supply, and they will have only a little water to drink. Every time they take a drink, they will feel more afraid. That is because there will not be enough food and water for everyone. They will be terrified as they watch each other wasting away because of their sins.

People of Jerusalem Scattered

5 1–2 Son of man, after your famine you must do this: Take a sharp sword and use it like a barber’s razor. Shave off your hair and beard. Put the hair on a scale and weigh it. Separate it into three equal parts. Put a third of your hair on the brick that has the picture of the city on it. Burn that hair in that ‘city.’ Then use...
the sword and cut a third of your hair into small pieces all around the outside of the ‘city.’ Next, throw a third of your hair into the air and let the wind blow it away. This will show that I will pull out my sword and chase some of the people into faraway countries. 3But then you must get a few of those hairs and wrap them up in your robe. 4Take some of those hairs and throw them into the fire. This will show that a fire will start there and burn throughout the whole house of Israel.a"

5Then the Lord God said to me, “The brick is a picture of Jerusalem. I put Jerusalem in the middle of other nations with countries all around her. 6The people rebelled against my commands. They were worse than any of the other nations! They broke more of my laws than any of the people in the countries around them. They refused to listen to my commands. They did not obey my laws.”

7So the Lord God says, “I will do this because you did not obey my laws and commands. You broke more of my laws than the people who lived around you, and you did what even they know is wrong!” 8So the Lord God says, “So now, even I am against you! I will punish you while those other people watch. 9I will do things to you that I have never done before. And I will never do those terrible things again, because you did so many terrible things. 10People in Jerusalem will be so hungry that parents will eat their own children, and children will eat their own parents. I will punish you in many ways, and those who are left alive, I will scatter to the winds.”

11The Lord God says, “Jerusalem, I promise by my life that I will punish you! I promise that I will punish you, because you did terrible things to my Holy Place. You did horrible things that made it dirty. I will punish you. I will not show any mercy or feel sorry for you. 12A third of your people will die inside the city from diseases and hunger. Another third will die in battle outside the city. And then I will pull out my sword and chase the last third of your people into faraway countries. 13Only then will I stop being angry with your people. I will know that they have been punished for the bad things they did to me. They will know that I am the Lord and that I spoke to them because of my strong loveb for them!”

14God said, “Jerusalem, I will destroy you—you will be nothing but a pile of rocks. The people around you will make fun of you. Everyone who walks by will make fun of you. 15People around you will make fun of you, but you will also be a lesson for them. They will see that I was angry and punished you. I was very angry and I warned you. I, the Lord, told you what I would do. 16I told you I would send you terrible times of hunger. I told you I would send you things that would destroy you. I told you that I would take away your supply of food and that those times of hunger would come again and again. 17I told you I would send hunger and wild animals against you that would kill your children. I told you there would be disease and death everywhere in the city. I told you I would bring enemy soldiers to fight against you. I, the Lord, told you all these things would happen!”

**Prophecies Against Israel**

6Then the word of the Lord came to me again. 2He said, “Son of man, turn toward the mountains of Israel and speak against them for me. 3Tell them this: ‘Mountains of Israel, listen to this message from the Lord God! This is what the Lord God says to the hills and mountains and to the ravines and valleys: Look! I am bringing the enemy to fight against you. I will destroy your high places. 4Your altars will be broken into pieces. Your incense altars will be smashed, and I will throw down your dead bodies in front of your

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a 5:4 house of Israel This probably means the people of the northern ten tribes of Israel.

b 5:13 strong love The Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.

c 6:2 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel. Also in 7:2.
filthy idols. I will put the dead bodies of the people of Israel in front of their filthy idols. I will scatter your bones around your altars. Bad things will happen wherever your people live. Their cities will become piles of rock. Their high places will be destroyed so that those places of worship will never be used again. The altars will all be destroyed. People will never worship those filthy idols again. The incense altars will be smashed. Everything you made will be destroyed completely. Your people will be killed, and then you will know that I am the Lord!"

8 God said, “But I will let a few of your people escape. They will live in other countries for a short time. I will scatter them and force them to live in other countries. Then the survivors will be taken as prisoners. They will be forced to live in other countries, but they will remember me. I broke their spirit. They will hate themselves for the evil things they did. In the past, they turned away from me and left me. They chased after their filthy idols. They were like a woman leaving her husband and running off with another man. They did many terrible things, but they will learn that I am the Lord. Then they will know that if I say that I will do something, I will do it! They will know that I caused all the troubles that happened to them.”

10 Then the Lord God said to me, “Clap your hands and stamp your feet. Speak against all the terrible things that the people of Israel have done. Warn them that they will be killed by disease and hunger. Tell them they will be killed in war. People far away will die from disease. People near this place will be killed with swords, and those who are left in the city will starve to death. Only then will I stop being angry. Only then will you know that I am the Lord. You will know this when you see your dead bodies in front of your filthy idols and around their altars. Those bodies will be near every one of your places for worship, on every high hill and mountain, under every green tree and every oak tree with leaves. You offered your sacrifices everywhere. They were a sweet smell for your filthy idols. But I will raise my arm over you and punish you and your people, wherever they live! I will destroy your country! It will be completely empty from the desert in the south to Riblah in the north. Then they will know that I am the Lord!”

Disaster Is Coming to Jerusalem

7 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, “Now, son of man, here is a message from the Lord God. This message is for the land of Israel: “The end! The end is coming. The whole country will be destroyed. Your end is coming now! I will show how angry I am with you. I will punish you for the evil things you did. I will make you pay for all the terrible things you did. I will not show you any mercy or feel sorry for you. I am punishing you for the evil things you did. You have done such terrible things. Now, you will know that I am the Lord.”

5 This is what the Lord God said: “There will be one disaster after another! The end is coming, and it will come quickly! You people living in Israel, disaster is coming. It is time for punishment. Those are not shouts of joy in the mountains. Those are cries of panic. Very soon now, I will show you how angry I am. I will show all of my anger against you. I will punish you for the evil things you did. I will make you pay for all the terrible things you did. I will not show you any mercy or feel sorry for you. I am punishing you

6:9 spirit  Literally, “heart.”

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for the evil things you did. You have done such terrible things. Now, you will know that I am the LORD.

10“ That time of punishment has come like a plant sprouting, budding, and flowering. God has given the signal, the enemy is prepared, and their proud king is ready. This violent man is ready to punish the evil people. There are many people in Israel—but he is not one of them. He is not a person in that crowd. He is not some important leader from them.

11“ The time of punishment has come. The day is here. Those who buy things will not be happy, and those who sell things will not feel bad about selling them because that terrible punishment will happen to everyone. The people who sold their property will never go back to it. Even if some people escape alive, they will never go back to their property, because this vision is for the whole crowd. So even if some people escape alive, it will not make everyone feel better.

12“ They will blow the trumpet to warn the people. The people will get ready for battle, but they will not go out to fight because I will show the whole crowd how angry I am. The enemy with his sword is outside the city. Disease and hunger is inside the city. If some people go out into the fields, enemy soldiers will kill them. If they stay in the city, hunger and disease will destroy them.

13“ But some people will escape. The survivors will run to the mountains, but they will not be happy. They will be sad for all their sins. They will cry and make sad noises like doves. They will be too tired and sad to raise their arms. Their legs will be like water. They will wear sackcloth and be covered with fear. You will see the shame on every face. They will shave their heads to show their sadness. They will throw their silver idols into the streets. They will treat their gold statues like dirty rags, because those things will not be able to save them when the LORD shows his anger. Those things were nothing but a trap that caused the people to fall. They will not give food to the people or put food in their bellies.

14“ They used their beautiful jewelry and made an idol. They were proud of that statue. They made their terrible statues. They made those filthy things, so I will throw them away like a dirty rag. I will let strangers take them. Those strangers will make fun of them. They will kill some of the people and take others away as prisoners. I will turn my head away from them—I will not look at them. The strangers will ruin my Temple—they will go into the secret parts of that holy building and make it unfit for worship.

15“ Make chains for the prisoners, because many people will be punished for killing other people. There will be violence every place in the city. I will bring evil people from other nations, and they will get all the houses of the people of Israel. I will stop all you powerful people from being so proud. Those people from other nations will get all your places of worship.

16“ You will shake with fear. You will look for peace, but there will be none. You will hear one sad story after another. You will hear nothing but bad news. You will look for a prophet and ask him for a vision. The priests will have nothing to teach you, and the elders will not have any good advice to give you. Your king will be crying for the people who died. The leaders will wear sackcloth. The common people will be very afraid, because I will pay them back for what they did. I will decide their punishment, and I will punish them. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Sinful Things Done at the Temple

8 One day I, Ezekiel, was sitting in my house, and the elders of Judah were sitting there in front of me. This was on the fifth day of the sixth month.

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\( ^a7:13\) sold their property In ancient Israel property did not belong to a person; it belonged to a family. People might sell their property, but at the time of Jubilee, their family would get the land back. Here, Ezekiel says the people will never get their property again.
of the sixth year of exile. Suddenly, the power of the Lord God came on me. I saw something that looked like fire, like a man’s body. From the waist down, he was like fire. From the waist up, he was bright and shining like hot metal in a fire. Then I saw something that looked like an arm. The arm reached out and grabbed me by the hair on my head. Then the Spirit lifted me into the air, and in a vision from God he took me to Jerusalem. He took me to the inner gate—the gate that is on the north side. The statue that makes God jealous is by that gate.

Then God spoke to me. He said, “Son of man, look toward the north.” So I looked, and there, north of the Altar Gate by the entrance, was that statue that made God jealous.

Then God said to me, “Son of man, do you see what terrible things the people of Israel are doing? They built that thing here, right next to my Temple! And if you come with me, you will see even more terrible things!”

So I went to the entrance to the courtyard, and I saw a hole in the wall. God said to me, “Son of man, make a hole in the wall.” So I made a hole in the wall, and there I saw a door.

Then God said to me, “Go in and look at the terrible, evil things that the people are doing here.” So I went in and looked. I saw statues of all kinds of reptiles and animals that you hate to think about. The statues were the filthy idols that the people of Israel worshiped. There were pictures of those animals carved all around on every wall!

Then I noticed that Jaazaniah son of Shaphan and the 70 elders of Israel were there with the people worshiping in that place. There they were, right at the front of the people, and each leader had his own incense dish in his hand. The smoke from the burning incense was rising into the air. Then God said to me, “Son of man, do you see what the elders of Israel do in the dark? Each man has a special room for his own false god. They say to themselves, ‘The Lord cannot see us. The Lord left this country.’ ” Then he said to me, “If you come with me, you will see these men doing even more terrible things!”

Then God led me to the entrance to the Lord’s Temple. This gate was on the north side. I saw women sitting there and crying. They were sad about the false god Tammuz!

God said to me, “Son of man, do you see these terrible things? Come with me and you will see things that are even worse than this!” Then he led me to the inner courtyard of the Lord’s Temple area. There I saw 25 men bowing down and worshiping. They were at the entrance to the Lord’s Temple between the porch and the altar—but they were facing the wrong way. Their backs were to the Holy Place. They were bowing down to worship the sun!

Then God said, “Son of man, do you see this? The people of Judah think my Temple is so unimportant that they will do these terrible things here in my Temple! This country is filled with violence, and they constantly do things to make me angry. Look, they are wearing rings in their noses to honor the moon as a false god! I will show them my anger! I will not show them any mercy or feel sorry for them! They will shout to me—but I refuse to listen to them!”

People thought this false god died and his wife Ishtar asked everyone to be sad and cry with her. Ishtar hoped this would bring him back to life. This ceremony was on the 2nd day of the fourth month (June/July). This month was named Tammuz because of this ceremony.

I will show them my anger! I will not show them any mercy or feel sorry for them! They will shout to me—but I refuse to listen to them!”
God's Messengers Punish Jerusalem

9 Then God shouted to the leaders in charge of punishing the city. Each leader had his own destructive weapon in his hand. 2 Then I saw six men walking on the road from the upper gate. This gate is on the north side. Each man had his own deadly weapon in his hand. One of the men wore linen clothes. He wore a scribe’s pen and ink set at his waist. Those men went to the bronze altar in the Temple and stood there. 3 Then the Glory of the God of Israel rose from above the Cherub angels where he had been. Then the Glory went to the door of the Temple and stopped when he was over the threshold. Then he called to the man wearing the linen clothes and the scribe’s pen and ink set.

4 Then the Lord said to him, “Go through the city of Jerusalem. Put a mark on the forehead of everyone who feels sad and upset about all the terrible things people are doing in this city.”

5–6 Then I heard God say to the other men, “I want you to follow the first man. You must kill all those who do not have the mark on their foreheads. It doesn’t matter if they are elders, young men or young women, children or mothers—you must use your weapon and kill everyone who does not have the mark on their forehead. Don’t show any mercy. Don’t feel sorry for anyone. Start here at my Temple.” So they started with the elders in front of the Temple.

7 He said to them, “Make this Temple unclean—fill this courtyard with dead bodies! Now go!” So they went and killed the people in the city.

8 I stayed there while the men went to kill the people. I bowed with my face to the ground and said, “Oh, Lord God, in showing your anger against Jerusalem, are you killing all the survivors in Israel?”

9 He said, “The family of Israel and Judah has committed many terrible sins! People are being murdered everywhere in this country, and the city is filled with crime. That is because the people say to themselves, ‘The Lord has left this country. The Lord cannot see what we are doing.’ So I will not show any mercy or feel sorry for them. They brought it on themselves. I am only giving them the punishment they deserve!”

10 Then the man wearing linen clothes and a scribe’s pen and ink set spoke up. He said, “I have done what you commanded.”

The Glory of the Lord Leaves the Temple

10 Then I looked up at the bowl over the heads of the Cherub angels. The bowl looked clear blue like sapphire, and there was something that looked like a throne over it. 2 Then the one sitting on the throne said to the man dressed in linen clothes, “Step into the area between the wheels under the Cherub angels. Take a handful of the burning coals from between the Cherub angels and go throw them over the city of Jerusalem.”

The man walked past me. 3 The Cherub angels were standing in the area south of the Temple as the man walked to them. The cloud filled the inner courtyard. 4 Then the Glory of the Lord rose up off the Cherub angels near the threshold of the door of the Temple. Then the cloud filled the Temple, and the bright light from the Glory of the Lord filled the whole courtyard. 5 The noise from the wings of the Cherub angels could be heard all the way out into the outer courtyard. The sound was very loud—like the thundering voice when God All-Powerful speaks.

6 God had given the man dressed in linen clothes a command. He had told him to go into the area between the wheels among the Cherub angels and get some hot coals.
So the man went there and stood by the wheel. 7 One of the Cherub angels reached out his hand and took some of the hot coals from the area between the Cherub angels. He poured the coals into the man’s hands, and the man left. *(The Cherub angels had what looked like human arms under their wings.)*

9 Then I noticed that there were four wheels. There was one wheel by each Cherub angel, and the wheels looked like a clear yellow jewel. 10 There were four wheels, and they all looked the same. They looked like there was a wheel in a wheel.

11 They could go in any direction when they moved, but the Cherub angels did not turn around when they moved. They went in the direction that the head was looking. They did not turn around when they moved. 12 There were eyes all over their bodies. There were eyes on their backs, on their arms, on their wings, and on their wheels—on all four wheels! 13 These wheels were what I heard called, “the area between the wheels.”

14–15 Each Cherub angel had four faces. The first was the face of a Cherub, the second was the face of a man, the third was a lion’s face, and the fourth was an eagle’s face. *(These Cherub angels were the living beings I saw in the vision by the Kebar Canal.)*

Then the Cherub angels rose into the air, and the wheels rose with them. When the Cherub angels raised their wings and flew into the air, not even the wheels turned around. 17 If they flew into the air, the wheels went with them. If they stood still, so did the wheels, because the spirit of the living being was in them.

18 Then the Glory of the LORD rose from the threshold of the Temple, moved to the place over the Cherub angels, and stopped there. 19 Then the Cherub angels raised their wings and flew into the air. I saw them leave. The wheels went with them. Then they stopped at the East Gate of the LORD’s Temple. The Glory of the God of Israel was in the air above them.

20 These were the living beings under the Glory of the God of Israel in the vision at the Kebar Canal, and now I realized that they were Cherub angels. 21 Each living being had four faces, four wings, and something that looked like human arms under their wings. 22 The faces of the Cherub angels were the same as the four faces on the living beings in the vision by the Kebar Canal. They all looked straight ahead in the direction they were going.

### Prophecies Against the Leaders

11 Then the Spirit carried me to the East Gate of the LORD’s Temple. This gate faces the east, where the sun comes up. I saw 25 men there at the entrance of this gate. Some of the leaders were among them, including Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah.

2 Then God spoke to me and said, “Son of man, these are the men who make evil plans for this city. They always tell the people to do evil things. 3 These men say, ‘We will be building our houses again very soon. We are as safe in this city as meat in a pot!’ 4 So you must speak to the people for me. Son of man, prophesy against the people.”

5 Then the Spirit of the LORD came on me. He said to me, “Tell them that this is what the LORD said: House of Israel, you are planning big things. But I know what you are thinking. 6 You have killed many people in this city. You have filled the streets with dead bodies. 7 Now, the Lord GOD says this: ‘The dead bodies are the meat, and the city is the pot. But someone will come and take you out of this safe pot. 8 You are afraid of the sword, but I am bringing the sword against you!’ ” This is what the Lord God said.

9 He also said, “I will take you out of this city and give you to strangers. I will punish you. 10 You will die by the sword. I will..."
punish you here in Israel, so you will know that I am the LORD. 

11 Yes, this place will be the cooking pot, and you will be the meat cooking in it. I will punish you here in Israel. 

12 Then you will know that I am the LORD. It was my law that you broke. You did not obey my commands. You decided to live like the nations around you.”

13 As soon as I finished speaking for God, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died! I fell to the ground. I bowed with my face touching the ground and said, “Oh, Lord God, you are going to completely destroy all the survivors of Israel!”

Prophecies Against Survivors in Jerusalem

14 But then the word of the LORD came to me. He said,

15 “Son of man, remember your brothers, the family of Israel. They were forced to leave their country, but I will bring them back. 

16 But now, the people living in Jerusalem are saying, ‘Stay far away from the LORD. This land was given to us—it is ours!’”

17 “So tell them this: The Lord God says, ‘It is true, I forced my people to go far away to other nations. I did scatter them among many countries. But I will be their temple for a short time while they are in those other countries. 

18 But you must tell those people that the Lord God will bring them back. I have scattered you among many nations, but I will gather you together and bring you back from those nations. I will give the land of Israel back to you. 

19 When my people come back, they will destroy all the terrible, filthy idols that are here now. 

20 I will bring them together and make them like one person. I will put a new spirit in them. I will take away that heart of stone, and I will put a real heart in its place. 

21 Then they will obey my laws and my commands. They will do the things I tell them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.””

The Glory of the Lord Leaves Jerusalem

21 Then God said, “But now, their hearts belong to those terrible, filthy idols, and I must punish those people for the bad things they have done.” This is what the Lord God said. 

22 Then the Cherub angels raised their wings and flew into the air. The wheels went with them. The Glory of the God of Israel was above them. 

23 The Glory of the Lord rose into the air and left the city and stopped on the hill east of Jerusalem.

24 Then the Spirit lifted me into the air and brought me back to Babylonia. It brought me back to the people who were forced to leave Israel. I saw all this in the vision from God. Then the one I saw in the vision rose into the air and left me. 

25 Then I spoke to the people in exile. I told them about everything the Lord showed me.

Ezekiel Leaves Like a Captive

12 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, “Son of man, you live among people who refuse to obey me. They have eyes to see what I have done for them, but they don’t see those things. They have ears to hear what I told them to do, but they don’t hear my commands, because they are a rebellious people. 

3 So, son of man, pack some things as if you are leaving on a trip. Pretend that you are a prisoner being taken far away. Do this during the day so that everyone can see you. Even though these people refuse to listen to me, maybe when they see you going away, they will understand what I have been trying to tell them.

4 During the day, take your bags outside so that the people can see you. Then in the evening, pretend you are going away. Act as if you are a prisoner going to a faraway country. While the people are watching, make a hole in the wall and go out through that hole in the wall. 

5 At night, put your bag on your shoulder and leave. Cover your face so that you cannot see where you are going. You must do
these things so that the people can see you, because I am using you as an example to the family of Israel.”

7 So I did as I was commanded. During the day, I took my bags and acted as if I were going to a faraway country. That evening, I used my hands and made a hole in the wall. During the night, I put my bag on my shoulder and left. I did this so that all the people could see me.

8 The next morning, the word of the Lord came to me. He said, “Son of man, did the people of Israel—those people who always refuse to obey—ask you what you were doing? Tell them that this is what the Lord God said. This sad message is about the leader of Jerusalem and all the people of Israel who live there. Tell them, ‘I am an example for all of you. What I have done will happen to you.’ You will be forced to go to a faraway country as prisoners. And your leader will make a hole in the wall and sneak out at night. He will cover his face so that people will not recognize him. His eyes will not be able to see where he is going. He will try to escape, but I will catch him! He will be caught in my trap. Then I will bring him to Babylonia—the land of the Chaldeans. But he will not be able to see where he is going. I will force the king’s people to live in the foreign countries around Israel, and I will scatter his army to the winds. The enemy soldiers will chase after them. Then they will know that I am the Lord. They will know that I scattered them among the nations. They will know that I forced them to go to other countries.

16 “But I will let a few of the people live. They will not die from the disease, hunger, and war. I will let them live so that they can tell other people about the terrible things they did against me. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

Shake With Fear

17 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, “Son of man, you must act as if you are very frightened. You must shake when you eat your food. You must act worried and afraid when you drink your water. You must say this to the common people: ‘This is what the Lord God says to the people living in Jerusalem and in the other parts of Israel. You will be very worried while you eat your food. You will be terrified while you drink your water, because everything in your country will be destroyed! This will happen because the people living there are so violent.

20 Many people live in your cities now, but those cities will be ruined. Your whole country will be destroyed! Then you will know that I am the Lord.’ ”

Disaster Will Come

21 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, “Son of man, why do people quote this saying about the land of Israel:

‘Trouble will not come soon;
what is seen in visions will not come’?

23 Tell the people that the Lord God will end that saying. They will not say that about Israel anymore. Now they will quote this saying:

‘Trouble will come soon;
what is seen in visions will happen.’

24 “There will not be any more false visions in Israel. There will not be any more magicians telling things that don’t come true. That’s because I am the Lord, and if I say something will happen, it will happen! I will not wait any longer. Those troubles are coming soon—in your own lifetime. Hear me, you people who always refuse to obey! When I say something, I make it happen.” This is what the Lord God said.

26 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, “Son of man, the people of Israel think that the visions I give you are for a time far in the future. They think you are talking about things that will happen many years from now. So you must tell them this: ‘The Lord God says, I will not delay any longer. If I say something will
Warnings Against False Prophets

1Then the word of the LORD came to me. He said, 2“Son of man, you must speak to the prophets of Israel for me. They are only saying what they want to say. You must speak to them. Tell them this: ‘Listen to this message from the LORD! 3This is what the Lord God says. Bad things will happen to you foolish prophets. You are following your own spirits. You are not telling people what you really see in visions.

4“Israel, your prophets are false prophets. They are like jackals hunting for food among the ruins of a city. 5You have not put soldiers near the broken walls of the city. You have not built walls to protect the family of Israel. So when the day comes for the LORD to punish you, you will lose the war!

6“Your prophets say they have seen visions. They did their magic to see what will happen next. But everything they said would happen is a lie. They claim to speak for the LORD, but the LORD did not send them. And they still think that what they said is what will happen.

7“If you prophets saw visions, they were not true. And all you got from your magic was lies! So how can you say that the LORD told you those things? I did not speak to you!”

8So now, the Lord GOD really will speak. He says, “You told lies. You saw visions that were not true. So now I am against you!” This is what the Lord God said. 9“I will punish those prophets whose visions are false and who lie about the future. I will remove them from the list of the family of Israel. They will never again come to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord God!

10“Again and again those false prophets lied to my people. They said there would be peace, but there is no peace. The people need to fix the walls and prepare for war. But they only slap a thin coat of plaster over the broken walls. 11Tell them that I will send hail and a strong rain. The wind will blow hard, and a tornado will come. Then the wall will fall down. 12When the wall falls down, the people will ask the prophets, ‘What happened to the plaster you put on the wall?’ 13The Lord God says, “I am angry and I will send a storm against you. I am angry and I will send a strong rain. I am angry and I will make hail fall from the sky and completely destroy you! 14You put plaster on the wall, but I will destroy the whole wall. I will pull it to the ground. The wall will fall on you, and then you will know that I am the Lord. 15I will finish showing my anger against the wall and those who put plaster on it. Then I will say, ‘There is no wall, and there are no workers to put plaster on it.’

16“All these things will happen to the false prophets of Israel. They speak to the people of Jerusalem and say there will be peace, but there is no peace.” This is what the Lord God said.

17God said, “Son of man, look at the women prophets in Israel. They say the things they want to say, so you must speak against them for me. You must say this to them: 18“This is what the Lord God says: Bad things will happen to you women. You sew cloth bracelets for people to wear on their arms. You make special scarves for people to wear on their heads. You say those things have magic powers to control people’s lives. You trap the people only to keep yourselves alive! 19You make them think I am not important. You turn them against me for a few handfuls of barley and a few scraps of bread. You tell lies to my people. They love to listen to lies. You kill those who should live, and you let people live who should die. 20So this is what the Lord God says to you: You make those cloth bracelets to trap people, but I

a 13:2 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel. Also in verse 17.

b 13:10 plaster A type of mud or cement that people used to cover a wall and make it smooth. This is also a wordplay. The Hebrew word is like the word meaning “It will fall.” Also in verse 14.
will set them free. I will tear those bracelets off your arms, and the people will be free from you. They will be like birds flying from a trap. 21 And I will tear up those scarves and save my people from your power. They will escape from your trap, and you will know that I am the LORD.

22 “You prophets tell lies. Your lies hurt good people—I did not want to hurt them! You support the wicked and encourage them. You don’t tell them to change their lives. You don’t try to save their lives! 23 So you will not see any more useless visions or do any more magic. I will save my people from your power, and you will know that I am the LORD.”

Warnings Against Idol Worship

14 Some of the elders of Israel came to me. They sat down to talk with me. 2 The word of the LORD came to me. He said, 3 “Son of man, these men came to talk to you. But they still have their filthy idols. They kept the things that made them sin. They still worship those statues, so why do they come to me for advice? Should I answer their questions? 4 But I will give them an answer. You must tell them this: ‘This is what the Lord God says: If any Israelites come to a prophet and ask me for advice, I myself will answer their questions. I, the Lord, will answer them even if they still have their filthy idols, even if they kept the things that made them sin, and even if they still worship those statues. I will speak to them in spite of all their filthy idols. 5 This is because I want to touch their hearts. I want to show them that I love them, even though they left me for their filthy idols.’

6 “So tell the family of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord God says: Come back to me and leave your filthy idols. Turn away from those terrible, false gods. 7 If any Israelites or foreigners who live in Israel come to me for advice, I will give them an answer. I, the Lord, will answer them even if they still have their filthy idols, even if they kept the things that made them sin, and even if they still worship those statues. I will speak to them in spite of all their filthy idols.’

8 “You prophets tell lies. Your lies hurt good people—I did not want to hurt them! You support the wicked and encourage them. You don’t tell them to change their lives. You don’t try to save their lives! So you will not see any more useless visions or do any more magic. I will save my people from your power, and you will know that I am the Lord.”

Jerusalem Will Be Punished

12 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, 13 “Son of man, I will punish any nation that leaves me and sins against me. I will stop their food supply. I might cause a famine and remove the people and animals from that country. 14 I would punish that country even if Noah, Daniel, and Job lived there. They could save their own lives by their goodness, but they could not save the whole country.” This is what the Lord God said.

15 “Or I might send wild animals through that country to kill all the people. Then no one would travel through that country because of the wild animals. 16 If Noah, Daniel, and Job lived there, those three men could save their own lives. But I promise by my own life that they could not save the lives of other people—not even their own sons and daughters! That evil country would be destroyed.” This is what the Lord God said.

17 “Or I might send an enemy army to fight against that country. The soldiers
would destroy that country—I would remove all the people and animals from that country. 18 If Noah, Daniel, and Job lived there, those three men could save their own lives. But I promise by my own life that they could not save the lives of other people—not even their own sons and daughters! That evil country would be destroyed.” This is what the Lord God said.

19 Or I might send a disease against that country. I will pour my anger down on the people. I will remove all the people and animals from that country. 20 If Noah, Daniel, and Job lived there, those three men could save their own lives because they are good men. But I promise by my own life that they could not save the lives of other people—not even their own sons and daughters!” This is what the Lord God said.

21 Then the Lord God said, “So think how bad it will be for Jerusalem. I will send all four of those punishments against that city! I will send enemy soldiers, hunger, disease, and wild animals against that city. I will remove all the people and animals from that country. 22 Some of the people will escape from that country. They will bring their sons and daughters and come to you for help. Then you will see how they live and all the bad things they do. Then you will know that I had a good reason for punishing them.” This is what the Lord God said.

### Jerusalem, the Vine, Will Be Burned

15 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said,

2 Son of man, a are the pieces of wood from a grapevine b any better than the little branches cut from trees in the forest? 3 Can you use that wood from a grapevine to make anything? Can you use that wood to make pegs to hang dishes on? 4 People throw that wood into the fire. The ends burn, and the middle is scorched. 5 If you cannot make anything from that wood before it is burned, you surely cannot make anything from that wood after it is burned! So people throw the pieces of wood from a grapevine into the fire. It is just like wood from any other tree in the forest. In the same way I will throw the people living in Jerusalem into the fire!” This is what the Lord God said.

6 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, 2 Son of man, tell the people of Jerusalem about the terrible things they have done. 3 You must say, ‘This is what the Lord God says to Jerusalem: Look at your history. You were born in Canaan. Your father was an Amorite. Your mother was a Hittite. 4 Jerusalem, on the day you were born, there was no one to cut your navel cord. No one put salt on you and washed you to make you clean. No one wrapped you in cloth. 5 No one felt sorry for you or took care of you. On the day you were born, your parents threw you out into the field, because no one wanted you. 6 Then I passed by. I saw you lying there, kicking in the blood. You were covered with blood, but I said, “Please live!” Yes, you were covered with blood, but I said, “Please live!” 7 I helped you grow like a plant in the field. You grew and grew. You became a young woman: your periods began, your breasts grew, and your hair began to grow. But you were still bare and naked. 8 I looked you over. I saw you were ready for love, so I spread my clothes over

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a 15:2 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel.
b 15:2 grapevine The prophets often compared Israel to a vineyard or grapevine. See verse 6.
you and covered your nakedness. I promised to marry you. I made the agreement with you, and you became mine.” This is what the Lord God said.

9 “I washed you in water. I poured water over you to wash away the blood that was on you, and then I put oil on your skin. **c** I gave you a nice dress and soft leather sandals, a linen headband, and a silk scarf. **d** I also gave you some jewelry. I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck. **e** I gave you a nose ring, earrings, and a beautiful crown to wear.

13 You were beautiful in your gold and silver jewelry, and your linen, silk, and embroidered material. You ate the best foods. You were very, very beautiful, and you became the queen! **f** You became famous for your beauty, all because I made you so lovely!” This is what the Lord God said.

Jerusalem, the Unfaithful Bride

15 “But you began to trust in your beauty. You used the good name you had and became unfaithful to me. You acted like a prostitute with every man who passed by. You gave yourself to them all! **g** You took your beautiful clothes and used them to decorate your places for worship. **d** And you acted like a prostitute there. You gave yourself to every man who came by!

17 Then you took your beautiful jewelry that I gave you, and you used the gold and silver to make statues of men, and you had sex with them too! **h** Then you took the beautiful cloth and made clothes for those statues. You took the perfume and incense I gave you and put it in front of those idols. **i** I gave you bread, honey, and oil, but you gave that food to your idols. You offered them as a sweet smell to please your false gods. You acted like a prostitute with those false gods!” This is what the Lord God said.

20 “You and I had children together, but you took our children. You killed them and gave them to those false gods! But that is only some of the evil things you did when you were unfaithful to me and went to those false gods. **k** You slaughtered my sons and then passed them through the fire to those false gods. **l** You left me and did all those terrible things. You never remembered what happened when you were young. You did not remember that you were naked and kicking in blood when I found you.

23 “After all these evil things, … it will be very bad for you!” The Lord God said all these things. **m** After all those things, you made a mound for worshiping that false god. You built those places for worshiping false gods on every street corner. **n** You built your mounds at the head of every road. Then you degraded your beauty. You used it to catch every man who walked by. You raised your skirt so that they could see your legs, and you acted like a prostitute with those men. **o** Then you went to Egypt, your neighbor that is always ready for sex. With more and more sexual sin, you made me angry. **p** So I punished you! I took away part of your land. I let your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, do what they wanted to you. Even they were shocked at the evil things you did. **q** Then you went to have sex with Assyria. You could not get enough. You were never satisfied. **r** So you turned to Canaan, and then to Babylonia, and still you were not satisfied. **s** You are so weak. You let all those men cause you to sin. You acted just like a prostitute who wants to be the one in control.” This is what the Lord God said.

31 God said, “But you were not exactly like a prostitute. You built your mounds at the head of every road, and you built your places for worship at every street corner. You had sex with all those men, but you did not ask them to pay you the way a prostitute does. **t** You are a woman guilty of adultery. You would rather have sex

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\( a \) Ezekiel 16:8 spread my clothes over you This showed that he was agreeing to protect her and care for her. See Ruth 3:1–15.

\( b \) Ezekiel 16:8 agreement Here, this means the marriage agreement. But it also refers to the agreement God made with the people of Israel. See “covenant” in the Word List.

\( c \) 16:10 Verses 10–13 All the materials in this list are the things used in building the Holy Tent. See Ex. 25–40.

\( d \) 16:16 places for worship Or “high places.” See “HIGH PLACE” in the Word List. Also in verses 31, 39.

\( e \) Ezekiel 16:21 slaughtered This usually means to kill an animal and cut it into pieces for meat, but it often means to kill people as if they were animals.
with strangers than with your own husband. 33 Most prostitutes force men to pay them for sex, but you gave money to your many lovers. You paid all the men around to come in to have sex with you. 34 You are just the opposite of most prostitutes who force men to pay them, because you pay the men to have sex with you."

Prostitute, listen to the message from the LORD. 35 This is what the Lord God says: “You have spent your money \( ^a \) and let your lovers and filthy gods see your naked body and have sex with you. You have killed your children and poured out their blood. This was your gift to those false gods. 36 So I am bringing all of your lovers together. I will bring all the men you loved and all the men you hated. I will bring them all together and let them see you naked. \( ^b \) They will see you completely naked. 37 Then I will punish you. I will punish you as a murderer and a woman who committed the sin of adultery. You will be punished as if by an angry and jealous husband. 38 I will let those lovers have you. They will destroy your mounds. They will burn your places for worship. They will tear off your clothes and take your beautiful jewelry. They will leave you bare and naked. \( ^a \) As I live, I swear that your sister Sodom and her daughters never did as many bad things as you and your daughters.

49 “Your sister Sodom and her daughters were proud. They had too much to eat and too much time on their hands, and they did not help poor, helpless people. 50 Sodom and her daughters became too proud and began to do terrible things in front of me. So I punished them! 51 And Samaria did only half as many bad things as you did. You did many more terrible things than Samaria! You have done so many more terrible things than your sisters have done. Sodom and Samaria seem good compared to you.

53 “I destroyed Sodom and the towns around it, and I destroyed Samaria and the towns around it. And I will destroy you too, Jerusalem. But I will build those cities again, and I will rebuild you too. 54 I will comfort you. Then you will remember the terrible things you did, and you will be ashamed. 55 So you and your sisters will be rebuilt. Sodom and the towns around her, Samaria and the towns around her, and

\( ^a \) 16:36 spent your money Literally, “poured out your copper.” This might also mean “you have done the things that stain you with sin.”

\( ^b \) 16:37 let them see you naked The Hebrew words are like the words meaning “to be carried away as a prisoner to a foreign country.”

\( ^c \) 16:46 Samaria ... Sodom Ezekiel is saying the people in Judah are just as evil as the people who lived in Samaria and Sodom—and those people were so evil that God completely destroyed those cities.
you and the towns around you will all be rebuilt.

56 “In the past, you were proud and made fun of your sister Sodom. But you will not do that again. 57 You did that before you were punished, before your neighbors started making fun of you. The daughters of Edom and Philistia are making fun of you now. 58 Now you must suffer for the terrible things you did.” This is what the Lord said.

God Remains Faithful
59 This is what the Lord God said: “I will treat you like you treated me! You broke your marriage promise. You did not respect our agreement. 60 But I will remember the agreement we made when you were young. I made an agreement with you that will continue forever! I will bring your sisters to you, and I will make them your daughters. That was not in our agreement, but I will do that for you. Then you will remember the terrible things you did, and you will be ashamed. 62 So I will make my agreement with you, and you will know that I am the Lord. 63 You will remember me, and you will be so ashamed of the evil things you did that you will not be able to say anything. But I will make you pure, and you will never be ashamed again!” This is what the Lord God said.

The Eagle and the Vine
17 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, 2 “Son of man, 3 I have a story with a hidden meaning for you to tell the family of Israel. 4 Tell them that this is what the Lord God says:

“A large eagle with big wings came to Lebanon.
He had feathers covered with spots.
4 He broke the top out of that big cedar tree and brought it to Canaan.
He set the branch down in a city of merchants.
5 Then the eagle took some of the seeds from Canaan.
He planted them in good soil by a good river.
6 The seeds grew and became a grapevine.
It was a good vine.
The vine was not tall, but it spread to cover a large area.
The vine grew stems, and smaller vines grew very long.
7 Then another eagle with big wings saw the grapevine.
The eagle had many feathers.
The grapevine wanted this new eagle to care for it.
So it stretched its roots and branches toward the eagle.
Its branches stretched toward this eagle.
The branches grew away from the field where it was planted.
The grapevine wanted the new eagle to water it.
8 The grapevine was planted in a good field near plenty of water.
It could have grown branches and fruit.
It could have become a very good grapevine.”

9 This is what the Lord God says: “Do you think that plant will succeed? No, the new eagle will pull the plant from the ground, and the bird will break the plant’s roots.
It will eat up all the grapes.
Then the new leaves will wilt. That plant will be very weak.
It will not take strong arms or a powerful nation to pull that plant up by the roots.
10 Will the plant grow where it is planted? No, the hot east wind will blow, and the plant will become dry and die.
It will die there where it was planted.”

King Zedekiah Punished
11 The word of the Lord came to me. He
said, 12 “Explain this story to the people of Israel who always turn against me. Tell them this: The first eagle is the king of Babylonia. He came to Jerusalem and took away the king and other leaders. He brought them to Babylonia. 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar made an agreement with a man from the king’s family. Nebuchadnezzar forced that man to make a promise. So this man promised to be loyal to Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar made this man the new king of Judah. Then he took all the powerful men away from Judah. 14 So Judah became a weak kingdom that could not turn against King Nebuchadnezzar. The people were forced to keep the agreement Nebuchadnezzar made with the new king of Judah. 15 But this new king tried to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar anyway! He sent messengers to Egypt to ask for help. The new king asked for many horses and soldiers. Now, do you think the new king of Judah will succeed? Do you think the new king will have enough power to break the agreement and escape punishment?”

16 The Lord God says, “By my life, I swear that this new king will die in Babylonia! Nebuchadnezzar made this man the new king of Judah, but he broke his promise with Nebuchadnezzar. This new king ignored that agreement. 17 The king of Egypt will not be able to save the king of Judah. He might send many soldiers, but Egypt’s great power will not save Judah. Nebuchadnezzar’s army will build dirt roads and dirt walls to capture the city. Many people will die. 18 But the king of Judah will not escape, because he ignored his agreement. He broke his promise to Nebuchadnezzar.” 19 The Lord God makes this promise: “By my life, I swear that I will punish the king of Judah, because he ignored my warnings and broke our agreement. 20 I will set my trap, and he will be caught in it. Then I will bring him to Babylon, and I will punish him there. I will punish him because he turned against me, and I will destroy his army. I will destroy his best soldiers and scatter them to the wind. Then you will know that I am the Lord and that I told you these things.”

22 This is what the Lord God says: “I will take a branch from a tall cedar tree. I will take a small branch from the top of the tree, and I myself will plant it on a very high mountain. 23 I myself will plant it on a high mountain in Israel. That branch will grow into a tree. It will grow branches and make fruit and become a beautiful cedar tree. Many birds will sit on its branches and live in the shadows under its branches.

24 “Then the other trees will know that I, the Lord, make tall trees fall to the ground, and I make small trees grow tall. I make green trees become dry, and I make dry trees become green. I am the Lord. If I say that I will do something, then I will do it!”

True Justice

18 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, 2 “Why do you people say this proverb: ‘The parents ate the sour grapes, but the children got the sour taste’? 3 But the Lord God says, “By my life, I swear that people in Israel will not think this proverb is true anymore! 4 I will treat everyone, child and parent, just the same. The one who sins is the one who will die! 5 “A person who is good will live! He is fair and does what is right. 6 He doesn’t go to the mountains to share food offered to idols. He doesn’t pray to those filthy idols in Israel. He doesn’t commit adultery with his neighbor’s wife or with a woman during her period. 7 He doesn’t take advantage of others. If someone

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borrows money from him, he might take something of value before he gives the money. But when that person pays him back, he returns what he took. He gives food to the hungry and clothes to people who need them. 4If someone wants to borrow money from him, he lends the money and doesn’t charge interest on the loan. He refuses to be crooked. He is always fair with everyone. People can trust him. 5He obeys my laws and studies my rules so that he can learn to be fair and dependable. He is good, so he will live.” This is what the Lord God said.

6“ But someone like that might have a son who does not do any of these good things. The son steals things and kills people. 7He does things his father never did. He goes to the mountains and eats foods offered to false gods. He commits the sin of adultery with his neighbor’s wife. 8He mistreats poor, helpless people. He takes advantage of them. When a debt is paid, he does not give back what he took from them. He prays to filthy idols and does other terrible things. 9He lends money to people who need it, but he forces them to pay interest on the loan. The evil son will not be allowed to live. He will be put to death because he did such terrible things, and he will be responsible for his own death.

10“Now, that evil son might also have a son. But this son sees the bad things his father did, and he refuses to live as his father did. He treats people fairly. 11He does not go to the mountains and eat foods offered to false gods. He does not pray to filthy idols in Israel. He does not commit the sin of adultery with his neighbor’s wife. 12He does not take advantage of people. If someone borrows money from him, the good son takes something of value and then gives the other person the money. When that person pays him back, the good son gives back what he took. The good son gives food to hungry people, and he gives clothes to those who need them.

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7He helps the poor. If people want to borrow money, the good son lends them the money, and he does not charge interest on the loan. He obeys my laws and follows them. He will not be put to death for his father’s sins. The good son will live. 18The father hurts people and steals things. He never does anything good for my people! He will die because of his own sins.

19“You might ask, ‘Why will the son not be punished for his father’s sins?’ The reason is that the son was fair and did good things. He very carefully obeyed my laws, so he will live. 20The one who sins is the one who will be put to death. A son will not be punished for his father’s sins, and a father will not be punished for his son’s sins. A good man’s goodness belongs to him alone, and a bad man’s evil belongs to him alone.

21“Now, if evil people change their lives, they will live and not die. They might stop doing all the bad things they did and begin to carefully obey all my laws. They might become fair and good. 22God will not remember all the bad things they did. He will remember only their goodness, so they will live!”

23The Lord God says, “I don’t want evil people to die. I want them to change their lives so that they can live!

24“Now, maybe good people might stop being good. They might change their lives and begin to do all the terrible things that evil people have done in the past. (The evil people changed, so they can live.) So if those good people change and become bad, God will not remember all the good things they did. He will remember that they turned against him and began to sin. So they will die because of their sin.

25“You people might say, ‘The Lord isn’t fair!’ But listen, family of Israel. I am fair. You are the ones who are not fair! 26If good people change and become evil, they must die for the bad things they do. 27And if evil people change and become good and fair, they will save their lives. They will live! 28They saw how wicked they were and came back to me. They stopped
doing the evil things they did in the past. So they will live! They will not die!”

29 The people of Israel said, “That’s not fair! The Lord isn’t fair!”

“I am fair! You are the ones who are not fair! 30 Why? Because, family of Israel, I will judge each of you for what you do!” This is what the Lord God said. “So come back to me! Stop committing those crimes and do away with those things that cause you to sin! 31 Throw away all the terrible idols with which you committed your crimes! Change your heart and spirit. People of Israel, why should you do things that will cost you your life?

32 I don’t want to kill you! Please come back and live!” This is what the Lord God said.

A Sad Song About Israel

1 The Lord said to me, “You must sing this sad song about the leaders of Israel:

2 “Your mother is like a female lion, lying there with the male lions. She went to lie down with the young male lions and had many babies.

3 One of her cubs gets up. He has grown to be a strong young lion.

He has learned to catch his food.
He killed and ate a man.

4 “The people heard him roar, and they caught him in their trap. They put hooks in his mouth and carried the young lion to Egypt.

5 “The mother lion had hoped that cub would become the leader, but now she has lost all hope. So she took another of her cubs and trained him to be a lion.

6 He hunted with the adult lions and became a strong young lion. He learned to catch his food. He killed and ate a man.

7 He attacked the palaces and destroyed the cities. Everyone in that country was too afraid to speak when hearing his growl.

8 Then the people who lived around him set a trap for him, and they caught him in their trap.

9 They put hooks on him and locked him up. They had him in their trap, so they took him to the king of Babylon.
And now, you cannot hear his roar on the mountains of Israel.

10 “Your mother is like a grapevine planted near the water.

She had plenty of water, so she grew many strong vines.

11 Then she grew large branches.

They were like a strong walking stick.

They were like a king’s scepter.

The vine grew taller and taller.

It had many branches and reached to the clouds.

12 But the vine was pulled up by the roots, and thrown down to the ground.

The hot east wind blew and dried its fruit.

The strong branches broke, and they were thrown into the fire.

13 “Now that grapevine is planted in the desert.
It is a very dry and thirsty land.

14 A fire started in the large branch and spread to destroy all of its vines and fruit.

So there was no strong walking stick.
There was no king’s scepter.’ This was a sad song about death, and it was sung as a sad song about death.”

Israel Turned Away From God

20 One day some of the elders of Israel came to me to ask the Lord for advice. This was on the tenth day of the fifth month of the seventh year of exile. a The elders sat down in front of me.

2 Then the word of the Lord came to

a 20:1 seventh year of exile This was the summer of 591 B.C.
Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel. Tell them, ‘This is what the Lord God says: Have you come to ask me what you should do? I, the Lord God, tell you that, as surely as I live, I will not listen to you.’ Should you judge them? Will you judge them, son of man? You must tell them about the terrible things their fathers have done. You must tell them, ‘This is what the Lord God says: On the day I chose Israel, I raised my hand to Jacob’s family and made a promise to them in Egypt. When I let them know who I was, I raised my hand and said, “I am the Lord your God.” On that day I promised to take you out of Egypt and lead you to the land I was giving to you. That was a good land filled with many good things. It was the most beautiful of all countries!

I told the family of Israel to throw away their horrible idols. I told them not to become filthy with those filthy statues from Egypt. I said, “I am the Lord your God.” But they turned against me and refused to listen to me. They did not throw away their horrible idols. They did not leave their filthy statues in Egypt. So I decided to destroy them in Egypt—to let them feel the full force of my anger. But I did not destroy them. The other nations saw me bring Israel out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people.

I made another promise to those people in the desert. I promised that I would not bring them into the land I was giving them. That was a good land filled with many good things. It was the most beautiful of all countries!

Then I gave them my laws and told them all my rules. All those who obey them will live. I also told them about all the special days of rest, which were a special sign between us. They showed that I am the Lord and that I was making them special to me.

But the family of Israel turned against me in the desert. They did not follow my laws. They refused to obey my rules—even though people who obey my laws live because of them. They treated my special days of rest as if they were not important. They worked on those days many times. I decided to destroy them in the desert—to let them feel the full force of my anger. But I did not destroy them. The other nations saw me bring Israel out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people.

I made another promise to those people in the desert. I promised that I would not bring them into the land I was giving them. That was a good land filled with many good things. It was the most beautiful of all countries!

The people of Israel refused to obey my rules or to follow my laws. They treated my days of rest as if they were not important. They did all these things because their hearts belonged to their filthy idols. But I felt sorry for them, so I did not destroy them. I did not completely destroy them in the desert. I spoke to their children and told them, “Don’t be like your parents. Don’t make yourselves filthy with their filthy idols. Don’t follow their laws or obey their commands.” I am the Lord. I am your God. Obey my laws and keep my commands. Do the things I tell you. Show that my days of rest are important to you. Remember, they are a special sign between us. I am the Lord, and these days show you that I am your God.”

But the children turned against me and did not obey my laws. They did not keep my commands—even though people who obey my laws live because of them. They treated my special days of rest as though they were not important. So I decided to destroy them completely in the desert—to let them feel the full force of my anger. But I stopped myself. The other nations saw me bring Israel out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people.

So I made another promise to those people in the desert. I promised to scatter them among the nations, to send them to many different countries.

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a 20:3 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person" or "a human being." Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel. Also in verses 4, 27, 46.
b 20:6 land ... things Literally, "land flowing with milk and honey." Also in verse 15.
24a “The people of Israel did not obey my commands. They refused to obey my laws. They treated my special days of rest as though they were not important, and they worshiped the filthy idols of their fathers. 25So I gave them laws that were not good. I gave them commands that would not bring life. 26I let them make themselves filthy with their gifts. They even began to sacrifice their own first-born children. In this way I would destroy them. Then they would know that I am the LORD.” 27So now, son of man, speak to the family of Israel. Tell them, “This is what the Lord God says: The people of Israel said bad things about me and made evil plans against me. 28But I still brought them to the land I promised to give them. They saw all the hills and green trees, so they went to all those places to worship. They took their sacrifices and anger offerings to all those places. They offered their sacrifices that made a sweet smell, and they offered their drink offerings at those places.

29I asked the people of Israel why they were going to the high places. But that high place is still there today.

30“Since Israel did those things, speak to them and tell them, ‘This is what the Lord God says: You people have made yourselves filthy by doing the things your ancestors did. You have acted like a prostitute. You have left me to be with the horrible gods your ancestors worshiped. 31You are giving the same kind of gifts. You are putting your children in the fire as a gift to your false gods. You are still making yourself filthy with these filthy idols today! Do you really think that I should let you come to me and ask me for advice? I am the Lord God. By my life, I swear that I will not answer your questions or give you advice! 32You keep saying you want to be like the other nations. You live like the people in other nations. You serve pieces of wood and stone idols!”

33The Lord God says, “By my life, I swear that I will rule over you as king. But I will raise my powerful arm and punish you. I will show my anger against you! 34I will bring you out of these other nations. I scattered you among these nations, but I will gather you together and bring you back from these countries. But I will raise my powerful arm and punish you. I will show my anger against you! 35I will lead you into a desert as I did before, but this will be a place where other nations live. We will stand face to face, and I will judge you. 36I will judge you as I judged your ancestors in the desert near Egypt.” This is what the Lord God said.

37“Now, family of Israel, this is what the Lord God says: “Whoever wants to worship their filthy idols, let them go and worship them. But later, don’t think you will get any advice from me. You will not ruin my name anymore—not when you continue to give your gifts to your filthy idols!”

38The Lord God says, “People must come to my holy mountain—the high mountain in Israel—to serve me! The whole family of Israel will be on their land; they will be there in their country. There you can come to ask me for advice, and you must come there to bring me your offerings. You must bring the first part of your crops to me there. You must bring all your holy gifts to me in that place.

39Then you will know that I am the Lord. You will know this when I bring you back to the land of Israel, the land I promised to give to your ancestors. 40Then I will be pleased with the sweet smell of your sacrifices. That will happen when I bring you back. I scattered you among many nations, but I will gather you together and make you my special people again. And all the nations will see it. 41Then you will know that I am the Lord. You will know this when I bring you back to the land of Israel, the land I promised to give to your ancestors. 42In that country...
you will remember all the evil things you did that made you filthy, and you will be ashamed. 44 Family of Israel, you did many evil things, and you should be destroyed because of them. But to protect my good name, I will not give you the punishment you really deserve. Then you will know that I am the LORD.” This is what the Lord God said.

45 Then the word of the LORD came to me. He said, 46 “Son of man, look toward the Negev, the southern part of Judah. Speak against the Negev Forest. 47 Say to the Negev Forest, ‘Listen to the word of the Lord. This is what the Lord God said: Look, I am ready to start a fire in your forest. The fire will destroy every green tree and every dry tree. The flame that burns will not be put out. All the land from south to north will be burned by the fire. 48 Then all people will see that I, the Lord, have started the fire. The fire will not be put out!’ ”

49 Then I said, “Oh, Lord God! If I say this, the people will say that I am only telling stories.”

Babylon, the Sword

1 So the word of the LORD came to me again. He said, 2 “Son of man, look toward Jerusalem and speak against the land of Israel for me. 3 ‘Say to the land of Israel, “This is what the Lord says: I am against you! I will pull my sword from its sheath. I will remove all people from you—the good and the evil. 4 I will cut off both good people and evil people from you. I will pull my sword from its sheath and use it against all people from south to north. 5 Then everyone will know that I am the LORD. They will know that I have pulled my sword from its sheath. My sword will not go back into its sheath again until it is finished.”

6 “Son of man, make sad sounds like a sad person with a broken heart. Make these sad sounds in front of the people. 7 Then they will ask you, ‘Why are you making these sad sounds?’ Then you must say, ‘Because of the sad news that is coming. Every heart will melt with fear. All hands will become weak. Every spirit will become weak. All knees will be like water.’ Look, that bad news is coming. These things will happen!” This is what the Lord God said.

The Sword Is Ready

8 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, 9 “Son of man, speak to the people for me. Say this, ‘This is what the Lord says: “Look, a sword, a sharp sword, and it has been polished.”

10 The sword was made sharp for killing. It was polished to flash like lightning.

My son, you ran away from the stick I used to punish you. You refused to be punished with that wooden stick.

11 So the sword has been polished. Now it can be used. The sword was sharpened and polished. Now it can be put in the hand of the killer.

12 “Son of man, shout out and scream because the sword will be used against my people and all the rulers of Israel. They wanted war—so they will be with my people when the sword comes. So slap your thigh to show your sadness, 13 because it is not just a test. You refused to be punished with the wooden stick, so what else should I use to punish you? [A sword?]” This is what the Lord God said.

14 “Son of man, clap your hands to show your sadness, and speak to the people for me. Let the sword come down twice, no, three times! This sword is for killing the people. This is the sword for the great killing. This sword will cut into them.

15 Their hearts will melt with fear,
and many people will fall. The sword will kill many people by the city gates. Yes, the sword will flash like lightning. It was polished to kill the people!

16 Sword, be sharp! Cut on the right side. Cut straight ahead. Cut on the left side. Go wherever your edge was chosen to go.

17 “Then I, too, will clap my hands and stop showing my anger. I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Jerusalem Punished
18 The word of the LORD came to me. He said, 19 “Son of man, draw two roads that the sword of the king of Babylon can use to come to Israel. Both roads will come from the same country. Then draw a sign at the head of the road to the city. 20 Use the sign to show which road the sword will use. One road leads to the Ammonite city of Rabbah. The other road leads to Judah, to the protected city, Jerusalem. 21 The king of Babylon has come to where the two roads separate. He uses magic to learn which way to go: He shakes his arrows, he asks his family idols, and he looks at the liver from an animal he has killed.

22 “The signs tell him to take the road on his right, the road leading to Jerusalem, where he will use battering rams. The signs tell him to give the command for his soldiers to begin the killing. They will shout the battle cry and set the battering rams against the gates. They will build a wall of dirt around the city and a dirt road leading up to the walls. They will build wooden towers to attack the city. 23 But the people in Jerusalem will think this is all a big mistake. They will not believe that this could happen, because they had made a peace agreement with Babylon’s king. But the king will remind them that they are guilty of breaking that agreement, and he will take them captive.”

24 This is what the Lord GOD says: “You have done many evil things. Your sins are very clear. You forced me to remember that you are guilty, so the enemy will catch you in his hand. 25 And you, evil leader of Israel, you will be killed. Your time of punishment has come! The end is here!”

26 This is what the Lord GOD says: “Take off the turban! Take off the crown! The time has come to change. The important leaders will be brought low, and those who are not important now will become important leaders. 27 I will completely destroy that city! But this will not happen until the right man becomes the new king. Then I will let him have this city.”

The Ammonites Punished
28 “Son of man, speak to the people for me. Say this, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says to the people of Ammon and their shameful god:

‘Look, a sword! The sword is out of its sheath. It has been polished. The sword is ready to kill. It was polished to flash like lightning!’

29 “Your visions are useless. Your magic will not help you. It is only a bunch of lies. The sword is now at the throats of evil men. They will soon be only dead bodies. Their time has come. The time has come for their evil to end.”

Prophecy Against Babylon
30 “Put the sword back in its sheath. Babylon, I will judge you in the place where you were created, in the land where you were born. 31 I will pour out my anger against you. My anger will burn you like a hot wind. I will hand you over to cruel
Those men are skilled at killing people. You will be like fuel for the fire. Your blood will flow deep into the earth—people will never remember you again. I, the LORD, have spoken!"

Ezekiel Speaks Against Jerusalem

CHAPTER 22

1 The word of the LORD came to me. He said, 2 "Son of man, will you judge the city of murderers? Will you tell her about all the terrible things she has done? You must say, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: The city is full of murderers, so her time of punishment will come. She made filthy idols for herself, and those idols made her filthy!’

4 "People of Jerusalem, you killed many people. You made filthy idols. You are guilty, and the time has come to punish you. Your end has come. Other nations will make fun of you and laugh at you. People far and near will make fun of you. You have ruined your name. You are filled with confusion.

6 "Look, all the leaders in Israel are using their strength just to kill other people. And the people in Jerusalem don’t respect their parents. There in the city, they abuse the foreigners. They cheat orphans and widows in that place. You hate all that I consider holy. You treat my special days of rest as if they are not important.

9 In Jerusalem, people tell lies in order to kill innocent people. They go to the mountains to worship false gods and then come back to Jerusalem to eat their fellowship meals.

10 In Jerusalem, people commit many sexual sins. There men commit sexual sins with their father’s wife. There the men rape women—even during their monthly time of bleeding. One man commits a terrible sin against his own neighbor’s wife. Another man has sex with his daughter-in-law and makes her unclean. Another man rapes his father’s daughter—his very own sister. There men accept bribes to kill people. You lend money and charge interest on the loans. You cheat your neighbors just to make a little money. You have even forgotten me.’ This is what the Lord GOD said.

13 ‘Now look! I will slam my hand down and stop you! I will punish you for cheating and killing people. Will you be brave then? Will you be strong at the time I come to punish you? I am the LORD. I have spoken, and I will do what I said! I will scatter you among the nations. I will force you to go to many countries. I will completely destroy the filthy things in this city. But Jerusalem, you will become unclean. And the other nations will see all these things happen. Then you will know that I am the LORD.’"

Israel Is Like Worthless Waste

7 The word of the LORD came to me. He said, 8 "Son of man, bronze, iron, lead, and tin are important metals, but when a worker melts silver to make it pure, those metals are poured off as waste. Israel has become like that waste to me.

9 So this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘All of you have become like worthless waste. So I will gather you into Jerusalem.

20 Workers put silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into a fire. They blow on the fire to make it hotter. Then the metals begin to melt. In the same way I will put you in my fire and melt you. That fire is my hot anger. I will put you in my fire of anger and blow on it, and you will begin to melt. In that city, you will be like silver melting in a fire. Then you will know that I am the LORD, and that I poured out my anger on you.’"

Ezekiel Speaks Against Jerusalem

23 The word of the LORD came to me. He said, 24 "Son of man, speak to Israel. Tell her that she is not pure. I am angry at that country, so that country has not received its rain. The prophets in Jerusalem are making evil plans. They are like a lion—it

\[a 21:31 \text{cruel men} \] This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word is like the word meaning “to burn.”

\[b 22:2 \text{Son of man} \] This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel. Also in verses 18, 24.

\[c 22:24 \text{not pure} \] This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word also means “not rained on.”
roars when it begins to eat the animal it caught. They have destroyed many lives. They have taken many valuable things and made widows of many of the women in Jerusalem.

26“Then priests have really hurt my teachings. They don’t treat my holy things right—they don’t show they are important. They treat holy things the same as things that are not holy. They treat clean things like things that are unclean. They don’t teach the people about these things. They refuse to respect my special days of rest. They treat me as though I am not important.

27“The leaders in Jerusalem are like a wolf eating the animal it has caught. They attack people and kill them just to get rich.

28“The prophets don’t warn the people—they cover up the truth. They are like workers who don’t really repair a wall—they only put plaster over the holes. They only see lies. They do their magic to learn the future, but they only tell lies. They say, ‘This is what the Lord GOD said.’ But they are only lying—the LORD did not speak to them!

29“The common people take advantage of each other. They cheat and steal from each other. They get rich by taking advantage of poor, helpless beggars, and they really cheat the foreigners. They are not fair to them at all!

30“I asked the people to change their lives and protect their country. I asked people to fix the walls. I wanted them to stand by those holes in the wall and fight to protect their city. But no one came to help! 31So I will show them my anger—I will completely destroy them. I will punish them for the evil things they have done. It is all their fault.” This is what the Lord GOD said.

23The word of the LORD came to me. He said, 24“Son of man, listen to this story about Samaria and Jerusalem. There were two sisters, daughters of the same mother. 25They became prostitutes in Egypt while they were still young girls. That’s where they first let men touch and handle their young breasts. 26The older daughter was named Oholah, and her sister was named Oholibah. They became my wives, and we had children. I am using the name Oholah to mean Samaria and the name Oholibah to mean Jerusalem.

27“Then Oholah became unfaithful to me—she began to live like a prostitute. She began to want her lovers. She saw the Assyrian soldiers 6 in their blue uniforms. They were all handsome young men riding horses. They were leaders and officers, and Oholah gave herself to all those men. All of them were handpicked soldiers in the Assyrian army, and she wanted them all! She became filthy with their filthy idols. 8Besides that, she never stopped her love affair with Egypt. Egypt made love to her when she was a young girl. Egypt was the first lover to touch her young breasts. Egypt poured his untrue love on her. 9So I let her lovers have her. She wanted Assyria, so I gave her to them! 10They raped her. They took her children and killed her. They punished her, and women still talk about her.

11“Her younger sister Oholibah saw all these things happen. But Oholibah sinned more than her sister did! She was more unfaithful than Oholah. 12She wanted the Assyrian leaders and officers. She wanted those soldiers in blue uniforms riding their horses. They were all handsome young men. 13I saw that both women were going to ruin their lives with the same mistakes.

14“Oholibah continued to be unfaithful to me. In Babylon, she saw pictures of men carved on the walls. These were pictures of Chaldean men wearing their red uniforms. 15They wore belts around their waists and long turbans on their heads. All those men looked like chariot officers. They all looked like native-born
Babylonian men, 16 and Oholibah wanted them. 17 So the Babylonian men came to her bed to have sex with her. They used her and made her so filthy that she became disgusted with them.

18 “Oholibah let everyone see that she was unfaithful. She let so many men enjoy her naked body that I became disgusted with her—just as I had become disgusted with her sister. 19 But Oholibah thought about her time as a prostitute in Egypt when she was young, and she turned to even more prostitution. 20 She remembered the lovers who excite her there, who were like animals in their sexual desires and abilities.

21 “Oholibah, you dreamed of those times when you were young, when your lovers touched and handled your young breasts. 22 So Oholibah, this is what the Lord God says: ‘You became disgusted with your lovers, but I will bring them here, and they will surround you. 23 I will bring all the men from Babylon, especially the Chaldeans. I will bring the men from Pekod, Shoa, and Koa, and all the men from Assyria. I will bring all the leaders and officers, all those desirable young men, chariot officers, and handpicked soldiers riding their horses. 24 That crowd of men will come to you in large groups, riding on their horses and in their chariots. They will have their spears, shields, and helmets. They will gather around you, and I will tell them what you have done to me. Then they will punish you their own way. 25 I will show you how jealous I am. They will become angry and hurt you. They will cut off your nose and ears. They will kill you with a sword. Then they will take your children and burn whatever is left of you.

26 They will take your nice clothes and jewelry. 27 So I will stop your dreams about your love affair with Egypt. You will never again look for them. You will never remember Egypt again!’”

28 This is what the Lord God says: “I am giving you to the men you hate. I am giving you to the men you became disgusted with. 29 And they will show how much they hate you! They will take everything you worked for, and they will leave you bare and naked! People will clearly see your sins. They will see that you acted like a prostitute and dreamed wicked dreams. 30 You did those bad things when you left me to chase after the other nations. You did those bad things when you began to worship their filthy idols. 31 You followed your sister and lived as she did. You, yourself, took her cup of poison and held it in your hands. 32 This is what the Lord God says:

“You will drink your sister’s cup of poison. It is a tall, wide cup of poison. It holds much poison. People will laugh at you and make fun of you.

33 You will stagger like a drunk. You will become very dizzy. That is the cup of destruction and devastation. It is like the cup of punishment that your sister drank.

34 You will drink the poison in that cup. You will drink it to the last drop. You will throw down the glass and break it to pieces. You will tear at your breasts from the pain. This will happen because I am the Lord God, and this is what I said.

35 “So this is what the Lord God said: ‘Jerusalem, you forgot me. You threw me away and left me behind. So now you must suffer for leaving me and living like a prostitute. You must suffer for your wicked dreams.’”

Judgment Against Oholah and Oholibah

36 The Lord said to me, “Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then tell them about the terrible things they have done. 37 They committed the sin of adultery. They are guilty of murder. They acted like prostitutes—they left me to be with..."
their filthy idols. They had my children, but they forced them to pass through fire. They did this to give food to their filthy idols. 38 They also treated my special days of rest and my holy place as though they were not important. 39 They killed their children for their idols, and then they went into my holy place and made it filthy too! They did this inside my Temple!

40 They have sent for men from faraway places. You sent a messenger to these men, and they came to see you. You bathed for them, painted your eyes, and put on your jewelry. 41 You sat on a fine bed with a table set before it. You put my incense and my oil on this table.

42 The noise in Jerusalem sounded like a crowd of people having a party. Many people came to the party. People were already drinking as they came in from the desert. They gave bracelets and beautiful crowns to the women. 43 Then I spoke to one of the women who was worn out from her sexual sins. I asked her, ‘Will they continue to do sexual sins with her, and she with them?’ 44 But they kept going to her as they would go to a prostitute. Yes, they went again and again to Oholah and Oholibah, those wicked women.

45 But good men will judge them guilty of adultery and murder, because Oholah and Oholibah committed adultery and their hands are covered with blood!”

46 This is what the Lord God said: “Gather the people together to punish and terrorize Oholah and Oholibah. 47 They will throw stones at these women and kill them. They will cut the women to pieces with their swords. They will kill their children and burn their houses. 48 In this way I will remove that shame from this country, and all the other women will be warned not to do the shameful things you have done. 49 They will punish you for the wicked things you did. You will be punished for worshiping your filthy idols. Then you will know that I am the Lord God.”

The Pot and the Meat

24 The word of the Lord came to me. This was on the tenth day of the tenth month in the ninth year of exile. 2 He said, “Son of man, write today’s date and this note: ‘On this date the army of the king of Babylon surrounded Jerusalem.’ 3 The people there refuse to obey me. I have a story with a message for them. Tell them, ‘This is what the Lord God says: “Put the pot on the fire. Put on the pot and pour in the water. Put in the pieces of meat. Fill the pot with the best bones. Use the best animals in the flock. Pile the wood under the pot, and boil the pieces of meat. Boil the soup until even the bones are cooked. “So this is what the Lord God says: It will be bad for Jerusalem. It will be bad for that city of murderers. Jerusalem is like a pot with rust on it, and those spots of rust cannot be removed! That pot is not clean, and the rust cannot be removed, so the meat must be thrown out and not divided among the priests. Jerusalem is like a pot with rust on it. This is because the blood from the murders is still there! She put the blood on the bare rock.”

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She did not pour the blood on the ground and cover it with dirt.\(^a\)

I put her blood on the bare rock so that it would not be covered. I did this so that people would become angry and punish her for killing innocent people.

So this is what the Lord God says: It will be bad for that city of murderers! I will pile up plenty of wood for the fire.

Put plenty of wood under the pot. Light the fire. Cook the meat until it is well done. Mix in the spices,\(^b\) and let the bones be burned up.

Then let the pot stand empty on the coals. Let it become so hot that its stains\(^c\) begin to glow. Those stains will be melted away. The rust will be destroyed.

Jerusalem might work hard to scrub away her stains. But that ‘rust’ will not go away! Only the fire of punishment will remove it.

You sinned against me and became stained with sin. I wanted to wash you and make you clean, but the stains would not come out. I will not try washing you again until my hot anger is finished with you!

‘I am the Lord. I said your punishment would come, and I will make it happen. I will not hold back the punishment or feel sorry for you. I will punish you for the evil things you did. This is what the Lord God said.’

The Death of Ezekiel’s Wife

Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ‘Son of man, you love your wife very much, but I am going to take her away from you. Your wife will die suddenly, but you must not show your sadness. You must not cry loudly. You will cry and your tears will fall, \(b\) but you must mourn quietly. Dress as you normally do; wear your turban and sandals; don’t cover your mustache, and don’t eat the food people normally eat when someone dies.’

The next morning I told the people what God had said. That evening, my wife died. The next morning I did what God commanded. Then the people said to me, “Why are you doing this? What does it mean?”

Then I said to them, “The word of the Lord came to me. He told me to speak to the family of Israel. The Lord God said, ‘Look, I will destroy my holy place. You are proud of that place and sing songs of praise about it. You love to see it. You really love that place. But I will destroy it, and your children that you left behind will be killed in battle. \(b\) But you will do the same things that I have done about my dead wife. You will not cover your mustache or eat the food people normally eat when someone dies. \(b\) You will wear your turbans and your sandals. You will not show your sadness publicly or cry publicly, but you will waste away with guilt and talk to each other quietly about your grief. \(b\) So Ezekiel is an example for you. You will do all the same things he did. That time of punishment will come, and then you will know that I am the Lord God.’”

The Lord said, “Son of man, I will take away the place that makes the people feel safe—Jerusalem, that beautiful city that makes them so happy. They really love that place. They love to look at it. But I will take it away from them, and I will also take their children. On that day one of the survivors will come to you with the

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\(a\) 24:7 blood . . . dirt The Law of Moses teaches that whoever killed an animal for food must pour the blood on the ground and cover it with dirt. This showed that they were giving the life of that animal back to God. See Lev. 17:1-16 and Deut. 12:23. If the blood was not covered with dirt, it was a witness against the killer. See Gen. 4:10, Job 15:18, and Isa. 26:21.

\(b\) 24:10 Mix in the spices The meaning of this sentence is uncertain.

\(c\) 24:11 stains Or “bronze.”
bad news about Jerusalem. 27 That same day you will be able to talk to the messenger. You will not be silent anymore. This will be a sign to the people, and they will know that I am the LORD.”

Prophecy Against Ammon

25 1The word of the LORD came to me. He said, 2 “Son of man, a look toward the people of Ammon and speak against them for me. 3 Say to them: ‘Listen to the word of the Lord God! This is what the Lord God says: You were happy when my holy place was destroyed. You were against the land of Israel when it was polluted. You were against the family of Judah when the people were carried away as prisoners. 4 So I will give you to the people from the east. They will get your land. Their armies will set up their camps in your country and will live among you. They will eat your fruit and drink your milk.

5 “I will make the city Rabbah a pasture for camels and the country of Ammon a sheep pen. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 6 This is what the Lord God says: You were happy that Jerusalem was destroyed. You clapped your hands and stamped your feet. You had fun insulting the land of Israel, 7 so I will punish you. You will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. You will lose your inheritance and die in faraway lands. I will destroy your country! Then you will know that I am the LORD.’”

Prophecy Against Moab and Seir

8 This is what the Lord God says: “Moab and Seir b say, ‘The family of Judah is just like any other nation.’ 9 I will cut into Moab’s shoulder—I will take away the cities that are on its borders—the glory of the land, Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon, and Kiriathaim. 10 Then I will give these cities to the people of the east. They will get your land. I will also let those people from the east destroy the Ammonites, and people will forget they were ever a nation. 11 So I will punish Moab, and then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Prophecy Against Edom

12 This is what the Lord God says: “The people of Edom turned against the family of Judah and tried to get even. The people of Edom are guilty.” 13 So the Lord God says: “I will punish Edom. I will destroy the people and the animals in Edom. I will destroy the whole country of Edom, all the way from Teman to Dedan. The Edomites will be killed in battle. 14 I will use my people Israel and get even against Edom. In this way the people of Israel will show my anger against Edom. Then the people of Edom will know that I punished them.” This is what the Lord God said.

Prophecy Against the Philistines

15 This is what the Lord God says: “The Philistines tried to get even. They were very cruel. They let their anger burn inside them too long.” 16 So the Lord God said, “I will punish the Philistines. Yes, I will destroy those people from Crete. I will completely destroy those people who live on the seacoast. 17 I will punish them—I will get even. I will let my anger teach them a lesson. Then they will know that I am the LORD!”

The Sad Message About Tyre

26 1 In the eleventh year of exile, c on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me. He said, 2 “Son of man, d Tyre said bad things about Jerusalem: ‘Hurray! The city gate protecting the people is destroyed! The city gate is open for me. The city of Jerusalem is ruined, so I can get plenty of valuable things out of it!’”

3 So the Lord God says: “I am against you, Tyre! I will bring many nations to fight against you. They will come again and again, like waves on the beach.

a 25:2 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel.

b 25:8 Seir Or “Edom.”

c 26:1 eleventh year of exile This was probably the summer of 587 B.C. See 2 Kings 25:3.

d 26:2 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel.
“The enemy soldiers will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers. I will also scrape the topsoil from her land. I will make Tyre a bare rock. Tyre will become a place by the sea for spreading fishing nets. I have spoken!” The Lord God says, “Tyre will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. Her daughters on the mainland will be killed in battle. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

Nebuchadnezzar Will Attack Tyre

This is what the Lord God says: “I will bring an enemy from the north against Tyre. That enemy is Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon! He will bring a very large army. There will be horses, chariots, horse soldiers and many other soldiers. They will be from many different nations. Nebuchadnezzar will kill your daughters on the mainland. He will build towers to attack your city. He will build a dirt road around your city and a dirt road leading up to the walls. He will bring the logs to break down your walls. He will use picks and break down your towers. There will be so many of his horses that the dust from them will cover you. Your walls will shake at the noise of horse soldiers, wagons, and chariots when the king of Babylon enters the city through your city gates. Yes, they will come into your city because its walls will be pulled down. The king of Babylon will come riding through your city. His horses’ hoofs will come pounding over your streets. He will kill your people with swords. The strong columns in your city will fall to the ground. Nebuchadnezzar’s men will take away your riches. They will take the things you wanted to sell. They will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses. They will throw the wood and stones into the sea like garbage. So I will stop the sound of your happy songs. People will not hear your harps anymore. I will make you a bare rock. You will be a place by the sea for spreading fishing nets! You will not be rebuilt, because I, the LORD, have spoken!” This is what the Lord God said.

Other Nations Will Cry for Tyre

This is what the Lord God says to Tyre: “The countries along the Mediterranean coast will shake at the sound of your fall. That will happen when your people are hurt and killed. Then all the leaders of the countries by the sea will step down from their thrones and show their sadness. They will take off their special robes and their beautiful clothes. Then they will put on their ‘clothes of shaking.’ They will sit on the ground and shake with fear. They will be shocked at how quickly you were destroyed. They will sing this sad song about you:

“Tyre, you were a famous city. People came from across the sea to live in you. You were famous, but now you are gone! You were strong on the sea, and so were the people who lived in you. You made all who live on the mainland afraid of you. Now, on the day you fall, the countries along the coast will shake with fear. You started many colonies along the coast. Now those people will be afraid when you are gone!”

This is what the Lord God says: “Tyre, you will become an old, empty city. No one will live there. I will cause the sea to flow over you. The great sea will cover you. I will send you down into that deep hole—to the place of death. You will join those who died long ago. I will send you to the world below, like all the other old, empty cities. You will be with all the others who go down to the grave. No one will live in you then. You will never again be in the land of the living!”

Other people...
will be afraid about what happened to you. You will be finished. People will look for you, but they will never find you again.” That is what the Lord God says.

Tyre, the Door to the Seas

1 The word of the Lord came to me again. He said, 2 “Son of man, sing this sad song about Tyre. 3 Say this about Tyre: ‘Tyre, you are the door to the seas. You are the merchant for many nations. You travel to many countries along the coast. This is what the Lord God says: “Tyre, you think that you are so beautiful.

You think you are perfectly beautiful!
4 The Mediterranean Sea is the border around your city. Your builders made you perfectly beautiful, like the ships that sail from you.
5 Your builders used cypress trees from the mountains of Senir to make your planks. They used cedar trees from Lebanon to make your mast.
6 They used oak trees from Bashan to make your oars. They used pine trees from Cyprus to make the cabin on your deck. They decorated that shelter with ivory.
7 For your sail, they used colorful linen made in Egypt. That sail was your flag. The coverings over your cabin were blue and purple. They came from the coast of Cyprus.
8 Men from Sidon and Arvad rowed your boats for you. Tyre, your wise men were the pilots on your ships.
9 The elders and wise men from Byblos were on board to help put caulking between the boards on your ship. All the ships of the sea and their sailors came to trade and do business with you.

10 Men from Persia, Lud, and Put were in your army. They were your men of war who hung their shields and helmets on your walls. They brought honor and glory to your city.

11 Men from Arvad and Cilicia were guards standing on the wall around your city. Men from Gammad were in your towers. They hung their shields on the walls around your city and made your beauty complete.

12 Tarshish was one of your best customers. They traded silver, iron, tin, and lead for all the wonderful things you sold.

13 People in Greece, Turkey, and the area around the Black Sea traded with you. They traded slaves and bronze for the things you sold.

14 People from the nation of Togarmah traded horses, war horses, and mules for the things you sold.

15 The people of Rhodes traded with you. You sold your things in many places. People brought ivory tusks and ebony wood to pay you.

16 Aram traded with you because you had so many good things. They traded emeralds, purple cloth, fine needlework, fine linen, coral, and rubies for the things you sold.

17 The people in Judah and Israel traded with you. They paid for the things you sold with the wheat, olives, early figs, honey, oil, and balm.

18 Damascus was a good customer. They traded with you for the many wonderful things you had. They traded wine from Helbon and white wool for those things. Damascus traded wine from Uzal for the things you sold. They paid with wrought iron, cassia, and sugar cane.

20 Dedan provided good business and traded with you for saddle blankets.

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*a* 27:2 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel.

*b* 27:6 deck The floor of a ship.

*c* 27:7 Cyprus Literally, “Elishah.” This might be the area near Enkomi, Cyprus, or it might be the Greek islands.

*d* 27:9 Byblos Literally, “Gebal.”

*27:9 caulking* Often a mixture of tar and rope that was put between the boards to make a ship watertight so that it would not leak. Also in verse 27.

*27:14 nation* Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country.


*27:17 balm* An ointment from some kinds of trees and plants. It is used as medicine.
and riding horses. 21Arabia and all the leaders of Kedar traded lambs, rams, and goats for your goods. 22The merchants of Sheba and Raamah traded with you. They traded all the best spices and every kind of precious stone and gold for your goods. 23Haran, Canneh, Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Kilmad traded with you. 24They paid with the finest clothing, blue cloth, cloth with fine needlework, rugs of many colors, and the strongest ropes. These were the things they traded with you. 25[The ships from Tarshish carried the things you sold,]

“Tyre, you are like one of those cargo ships.
You are on the sea, loaded with many riches.

26Your oarsmen rowed you far out to sea.
But a powerful east wind will destroy your ship at sea.

27All your wealth will spill into the sea.
Your wealth—the things you buy and sell—will spill into the sea.
Your whole crew—sailors, pilots, and the men who put caulkimg between the boards on your ship—will spill into the sea.
The merchants and soldiers in your city will all sink into the sea.
That will happen on the day that you are destroyed!

28“‘You send your merchants to faraway places.
Those places will shake with fear when they hear your pilots’ cry!

29Your whole crew will jump ship.
The sailors and pilots will jump ship and swim to the shore.

30They will be very sad about you.
They will cry, throw dust on their heads, and roll in ashes.

31They will shave their heads for you.
They will put on sackcloth.
They will cry for you like someone crying for someone who died.

32“‘And in their loud crying they will sing this sad song about you:

“‘No one is like Tyre!
Tyre is destroyed, in the middle of the sea!

33Your merchants sailed across the seas.
You satisfied many people with your great wealth and the things you sold.
You made the kings of the earth rich!

34But now you are broken by the seas and by the deep waters.
All the things you sell and all your people have fallen.

35All the people living on the coast are shocked about you.
Their kings are terrified.
Their faces show their shock.

36The merchants in other nations whistle about you.
What happened to you will frighten people, because you were destroyed.
You are gone forever.’”

**Tyre Thinks It Is Like a God**

28The word of the Lord came to me. He said, 2“Son of man, a say to the ruler of Tyre, ‘This is what the Lord God says:

“‘You are very proud!
And you say, “I am a god!
I sit on the seat of gods in the middle of the seas.”

“‘But you are a man and not God!
You only think you are a god.
3You think you are wiser than Daniel b and no secret is hidden from you.

4Through your wisdom and understanding you have gotten riches for yourself.
And you put gold and silver in your treasuries.

5Through your great wisdom and trade,

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a 28:2 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel. Also in verses 12, 21.

b 28:3 Daniel A wise man from ancient times. This might be Daniel from the Bible, or the Danel mentioned in the writings from Ras Shamra.
you have made your riches grow.
And now you are proud
because of those riches.

6 "So this is what the Lord GOD says:
Tyre, you thought you were like a god.
7 I will bring strangers to fight against you.
They are most terrible among the nations!
They will pull out their swords
and use them against the beautiful things your wisdom brought you.
They will ruin your glory.
8 They will bring you down to the grave.
You will be like a sailor who died at sea.
9 That person will kill you.
Will you still say, "I am a god"?
No, he will have you in his power!
You will see that you are a man, not God!
10 Strangers will treat you like a foreigner and kill you,
because I gave the command!"
This is what the Lord GOD said.
11 The word of the LORD came to me.
He said,
12 "Son of man, sing this sad song
about the king of Tyre. Say to him, 'This
is what the Lord GOD says:
'You were the perfect man—
so full of wisdom and perfectly handsome.
13 You were in Eden, the garden of God.
You had every precious stone—
rubies, topaz, and diamonds,
beryls, onyx, and jasper,
sapphires, turquoise, and emeralds.
And each of these stones was set in gold.
You were given this beauty on the day you were created.
God made you strong.
14 You were one of the chosen Cherubs
who spread your wings over my throne.
I put you on the holy mountain of God.
You walked among the jewels that sparkled like fire.
15 You were good and honest when I created you,
but then you became evil.
16 Your business brought you many riches.
But they also put cruelty inside you,
and you sinned.
So I treated you like something unclean
and threw you off the mountain of God.
You were one of the chosen Cherubs
who spread your wings over my throne.
But I forced you to leave the jewels
that sparkled like fire.
17 Your beauty made you proud.
Your glory ruined your wisdom.
So I threw you down to the ground,
and now other kings stare at you.
18 You did many wrong things.
You were a very crooked merchant.
In this way you made the holy places unclean.
So I brought fire from inside you.
It burned you!
You burned to ashes on the ground.
Now everyone can see your shame.
19 “‘All the people in other nations
were shocked about what happened to you.
What happened to you will make people very afraid.
You are finished!’"

The Message Against Sidon
20 The word of the LORD came to me.
He said,
21 "Son of man, look toward Sidon
and speak for me against that place.
22 Say,
'This is what the Lord GOD says:
'‘I am against you, Sidon!
Your people will learn to respect me.
I will punish Sidon.
Then people will know that I am the LORD.
Then they will learn that I am holy,
and they will treat me that way.
23 I will send disease and death to Sidon,
and many people inside the city

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a 28:10 foreigner Literally, "uncircumcised." This means a person who did not share in the agreement God made with Israel. See "CIRCUMCISE, CIRCUMCISION" in the Word List.
will die.
Soldiers outside the city will kill many people.
Then people will know that I am the LORD!

The Nations Will Stop Laughing at Israel
24 “Then the surrounding nations that hate Israel will no longer be like stinging nettles and painful thorns. And they will know that I am the Lord God.”

25 This is what the Lord God said: “I scattered the people of Israel among other nations, but I will gather the family of Israel together again. Then the nations will know that I am holy, and they will treat me that way. At that time the people of Israel will live in their land—I gave that land to my servant Jacob. They will live safely in the land. They will build houses and plant vineyards. I will punish the nations around them that hated them. Then the people of Israel will live in safety, and they will know that I am the LORD their God.”

The Message Against Egypt
29 On the twelfth day of the tenth month of the tenth year of exile, the word of the Lord came to me. He said,

2Son of man, look toward Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Speak for me against him and Egypt. Say, ‘This is what the Lord God says:

3 “I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt. You are the great monster lying beside the Nile River. You say, ‘This is my river! I made this river!’

4–5 “But I will put hooks in your jaws. The fish in the Nile River will stick to your scales. I will pull you and your fish up out of your rivers and onto the dry land. You will fall on the ground, and no one will pick you up or bury you. I will give you to the wild animals and birds. You will be their food.

6 Then all the people living in Egypt will know that I am the LORD!”

8 So this is what the Lord God says: “I will bring a sword against you. I will destroy all your people and animals.

9 Egypt will be empty and destroyed. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

God said, “Why will I do these things? Because you said, ‘This is my river. I made this river.’

10 So I am against you. I am against the many branches of your Nile River. I will destroy Egypt completely. The cities will be empty from Migdol to Aswan and as far as the border of Ethiopia.

11 No person or animal will pass through Egypt. Nothing will pass through or settle there for 40 years. I will destroy Egypt. The cities will be in ruins for 40 years! I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. I will make them strangers in foreign lands.”

13 This is what the Lord God says: “I will scatter the people of Egypt among many nations. But at the end of 40 years, I will gather those people together again. I will scatter them...”

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bring back the Egyptian captives. I will bring back the Egyptians to the land of Pathros, to the land where they were born. But their kingdom will not be important. It will be the least important kingdom. It will never again lift itself above the other nations. I will make them so small that they will not rule over the nations. And the family of Israel will never again depend on Egypt. The Israelites will remember their sin—they will remember that they turned to Egypt for help and not to God, and they will know that I am the Lord God.”

Babylon Will Get Egypt
17 On the first day of the first month in the twenty-seventh year of exile, the word of the Lord came to me. He said, 18 “Son of man, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon made his army fight hard against Tyre. They shaved every soldier’s head. Every shoulder was rubbed bare from carrying heavy loads. Nebuchadnezzar and his army worked hard to defeat Tyre, but they got nothing from all that hard work.” So this is what the Lord God says: “I will give Egypt to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and he will carry away the people. He will take the many valuable things in Egypt to pay his army.

20 I will give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as a reward for the hard work he did for me.” This is what the Lord God said!

21 On that day I will make the family of Israel strong. So Ezekiel, I will let you speak to them. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

The Army of Babylon Will Attack Egypt
30 The word of the Lord came to me again. He said, 2 “Son of man, speak for me. Say, ‘This is what the Lord God says:

3 That day is near! Yes, the Lord’s day for judging is near.

4 A sword will come against Egypt! People in Ethiopia will shake with fear, when Egypt falls.

5 “Many people made peace agreements with Egypt. But all those people from Ethiopia, Put, Lud, all Arabia, Libya, and the people of Israel will be destroyed!

6 “This is what the Lord says:

7 Egypt will join the other countries that were destroyed.

8 I will start a fire in Egypt, and all her helpers will be destroyed.

9 “At that time I will send out messengers. They will go in ships to carry the bad news to Ethiopia. Ethiopia now feels safe, but the people of Ethiopia will shake with fear when Egypt is punished. That time is coming!”

10 This is what the Lord God says:

11 Nebuchadnezzar and his people are the most terrible of the nations, and I will bring them to destroy Egypt.

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They will pull out their swords against Egypt.
They will fill the land with dead bodies.

12 I will make the Nile River become dry land.
Then I will sell the dry land to evil people.
I will use strangers to make that land empty.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

The Idols of Egypt Will Be Destroyed

13 This is what the Lord God says:
“14 I will make Pathros empty.
I will start a fire in Zoan.
I will punish Thebes.
I will pour out my anger against Pelusium, the fortress of Egypt!
I will destroy the people of Thebes.
I will start a fire in Egypt;
the city of Pelusium will ache with fear.
The soldiers will break into the city of Thebes,
and Memphis will have new troubles every day.

17 The young men of Heliopolis and Bubastis will die in battle,
and the women will be taken away as prisoners.

18 It will be a dark day in Tahapanes when I break Egypt’s control.
Her proud power will be finished!
A cloud will cover Egypt,
and her daughters will be taken away as prisoners.

19 So I will punish Egypt.
Then they will know that I am the LORD!”

Egypt Will Become Weak Forever

20 On the seventh day of the first month of the eleventh year of exile, the word of the LORD came to me. He said, 21 “Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. No one will wrap his arm with a bandage. It will not heal, so his arm will not be strong enough to hold a sword.”
22 This is what the Lord GOD says: “I am against Pharaoh, king of Egypt. I will break both his arms, the strong arm and the arm that is already broken. I will make the sword fall from his hand. 23 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. 24 I will make the arms of the king of Babylon strong. I will put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh will cry out in pain, the kind of cry that a dying man makes. 25 So I will make the arms of the king of Babylon strong, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall. Then they will know that I am the LORD.
“I will put my sword in the hand of the king of Babylon. Then he will stretch the sword out against the land of Egypt. 26 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD!”

Assyria Is Like a Cedar Tree

31 On the first day of the third month in the eleventh year of exile, the word of the LORD came to me. He said, 2 “Son of man, say this to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to his people:
“You are so great!
Who can I compare you to?
Assyria was a cedar tree in Lebanon with beautiful branches, with forest shade, and very tall.
Its top was among the clouds!
The water made the tree grow.
The deep river made the tree tall.
Rivers flowed around the place where the tree was planted.
Only small streams flowed from that tree.

c 30:20 eleventh year of exile This was the summer of 587 B.C. Also in 31:1.
d 31:2 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person" or "a human being." Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel.
to all the other trees of the field.
5 So that tree was taller than all the other trees of the field, and it grew many branches.
There was plenty of water, so the tree branches spread out.
6 All the birds of the sky made their nests in the branches of that tree, and all the animals of the field gave birth under the branches of that tree. All the great nations lived under the shade of that tree.
7 The tree was very beautiful. It was so large! It had such long branches. Its roots had plenty of water.
8 Even the cedar trees in God’s garden were not as big as this tree. Cypress trees did not have as many branches. Plane trees did not have such branches. No tree in God’s garden was as beautiful as this tree.
9 I gave it many branches and made it beautiful. And all the trees in Eden, God’s garden, were jealous!”
10 So this is what the Lord God says: “That tree grew tall. Its top reached up to the clouds. It grew so big that it became proud! So I let a powerful king have that tree. That ruler punished the tree for the bad things it did. I took that tree out of my garden. Strangers—the most terrible people in the world—cut it down and scattered its branches on the mountains and in the valleys. Its broken limbs drifted down the rivers flowing through that land. There was no more shadow under that tree, so all the people left. Now birds live in that fallen tree. Wild animals walk over its fallen branches.
14 Now, none of the trees by that water will be proud. They will not try to reach the clouds. None of the strong trees that drink that water will brag about being tall, because all of them must die. They will all go down into the world below, to Sheol, the place of death. They will join the other people who died and went down into that deep hole.”
15 This is what the Lord God says: “I made the people cry on the day that tree went down to Sheol. I covered him with the deep ocean. I stopped its rivers and all the water stopped flowing. I made Lebanon mourn for it. All the trees of the field became sick with sadness for that big tree. I made the tree fall—and the nations shook with fear at the sound of the falling tree. I sent the tree down to the place of death to join the other people who had gone down into that deep hole. In the past, all the trees of Eden, the best of Lebanon, drank that water. The trees were comforted in the world below. Yes, those trees also went down with the big tree to the place of death. They joined the people who were killed in battle. That big tree made the other trees strong. Those trees had lived under the big tree’s shadow among the nations.
18 “Egypt, there were many big and powerful trees in Eden. Which of those trees should I compare you to? They all went down into the world below! And you, too, will join those foreigners in that place of death. You will lie there among the people killed in battle. “Yes, that will happen to Pharaoh and to the crowds of people with him!” This is what the Lord God said.

Pharaoh: a Lion or a Dragon?
32 On the first day of the twelfth month in the twelfth year of exile, the word of the Lord came to me. He said, “Son of man, sing this sad song about Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Say to him:
4 “You thought you were like a powerful young lion walking proud among

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the nations. 
But really, you are like a dragon\textsuperscript{a} in the lakes. 
You push your way through the streams. 
You make the water muddy with your feet 
and stir up the rivers of Egypt." 

This is what the Lord God says: 
"I have gathered many people together. 
Now I will throw my net over you. 
Then those people will pull you in. 
Then I will drop you on the dry ground. 
I will throw you down in the field. 
I will let all the birds come and eat you. 
I will let wild animals from every place come and eat you until they are full. 
I will scatter your body on the mountains. 
I will fill the valleys with your dead body. 
I will pour your blood on the mountains, and it will soak down into the ground. 
The rivers will be full of you. 
I will make you disappear. 
I will cover the sky and make the stars dark. 
I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not shine. 
I will darken the lights in the sky over you. 
I will make your whole country dark." 

This is what the Lord God said. 
"I will make many people sad and upset when I bring an enemy to destroy you. Nations you don’t even know will be upset. I will make many people shocked about you. Their kings will be terrified of you, when I swing my sword before them. They will shake with fear on the day you fall. Each king will be afraid for his own life." 

That will happen because of what the Lord God said: “The sword of the king of Babylon will come to fight against you. I will use those soldiers to kill your people in battle. They come from the most terrible of the nations. They will destroy the things Egypt is proud of. The people of Egypt will be destroyed. There are many animals by the rivers in Egypt. I will also destroy all those animals. People will not make the waters muddy with their feet anymore. The hoofs of cattle will not make the water muddy anymore. So I will make the water in Egypt calm. I will cause their rivers to run slowly—they will be slick like oil.” This is what the Lord God said. "I will make the land of Egypt empty. That land will lose everything. I will punish all the people living in Egypt. Then they will know that I am the LORD!"

“This is a sad song that people will sing for Egypt. The daughters in other nations will sing this sad song. They will sing it as a sad song about Egypt and all its people.” This is what the Lord God said.

\textbf{Egypt to Be Destroyed} 

On the fifteenth day of that month in the twelfth year of exile, the word of the Lord came to me. He said, “Son of man, cry for the people of Egypt. Lead Egypt and the daughters from powerful nations to the grave. Lead them to the world below where they will be with the other people who went down into that deep hole. 

"Egypt, you are no better than anyone else! Go down to the place of death. Go lie down with those foreigners.\textsuperscript{b} 

"Egypt will go to be with all the other men who were killed in battle. The enemy has pulled her and all her people away. 

"Strong and powerful men were killed in battle. Those foreigners went down to the place of death. And from that place, those who were killed will speak to Egypt and his helpers. 

"Assyria and all its army are there in the place of death. Their graves are deep down in that deep hole. All the Assyrian soldiers were killed in battle, and their

\textsuperscript{a} 32:2 dragon\textsuperscript{a} This might be a crocodile or a giant sea creature. The giant sea creature represented the power of the sea, and the Nile River made Egypt a powerful nation. 

\textsuperscript{b} 32:19 foreigners Literally, “uncircumcised.” This means people who did not share in the agreement God made with Israel. See “circumcised, circumcision” in the Word List.
graves are all around his grave. When they were alive, they made people afraid, but they were all killed in battle.

24“Elam is there and all its army is around her grave. All of them were killed in battle. Those foreigners went deep down into the ground. When they were alive, they made people afraid. But they carried their shame with them down to that deep hole. 25They have made a bed for Elam and all its soldiers who were killed in battle. Elam’s army is all around its grave. All those foreigners were killed in battle. When they were alive, they scared people. But they carried their shame with them down into that deep hole. They were put with all the other people who were killed.

26Meshech, Tubal, and all their armies are there. Their graves are around it. All those foreigners were killed in battle. When they were alive, they made people afraid. 27But now they are lying down by the powerful men who died long, long ago! They were buried with their weapons of war. Their swords will be laid under their heads. But their sins are on their bones, because when they were alive, they scared people.

28“Egypt, you also will be destroyed, and you will lie down by those foreigners. You will lie with the other soldiers who were killed in battle.

29Edom is there also. His kings and other leaders are there with him. They were powerful soldiers, but now they lie with the other men who were killed in battle. They are lying there with those foreigners. They are there with the other people who went down into that deep hole.

30The rulers from the north are there, all of them, and there are all the soldiers from Sidon. Their strength scared people, but they are embarrassed. Those foreigners lie there with the other men who were killed in battle. They carried their shame with them down into that deep hole.

31“Yes, Pharaoh and all his army will be killed in battle. Pharaoh will be comforted when he sees his many men and all the others who went down into the place of death.” This is what the Lord GOD said.

32“People were afraid of Pharaoh when he was alive, but he will lie down next to those foreigners. Pharaoh and his army will lie down with all the other soldiers who were killed in battle.” This is what the Lord GOD said.

God Chooses Ezekiel to Be a Watchman

331The word of the LORD came to me. He said, 2“Son of man, 3a speak to your people. Say to them, ‘Whenever I bring enemy soldiers to fight against a country, the people choose someone to be a watchman. 3If this guard sees enemy soldiers coming, he blows the trumpet and warns the people. 4If people hear the warning but ignore it, the enemy will capture them and take them away as prisoners. They will be responsible for their own death. 5They heard the trumpet, but they ignored the warning. So they are responsible for their own deaths. If they had paid attention to the warning, they could have saved their own lives.

6“But what if the guard sees the enemy soldiers coming, but does not blow the trumpet? Since he doesn’t warn the people, the enemy will capture them and take them away as prisoners. They will be taken away because they sinned, but the guard will also be responsible for their deaths.’

7‘Now, son of man, I am choosing you to be a watchman for the family of Israel. If you hear a message from my mouth, you must warn the people for me. 8I might say to you, ‘These evil people will die.’ Then you must go warn them for me. If you don’t warn them and tell them to change their lives, those evil people will die because they sinned. But I will make you responsible for their deaths. 9But if you do warn the evil people to change their lives and stop sinning, and if they refuse to stop, they will die because they sinned. But you have saved your life.

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God Does Not Want to Destroy People

10“‘So, son of man, speak to the family of Israel for me. They might say, ‘We have sinned and broken the law. Our sins are too heavy to bear. We rot away because of them. What can we do to live?’

11“You must say to them, ‘The Lord God says: By my life, I swear that I don’t enjoy seeing people die—not even evil people! I don’t want them to die. I want them to come back to me. I want them to change their lives so that they can really live. So come back to me! Stop doing bad things! Why must you die, family of Israel?’

12“Son of man, tell your people: ‘The good things people did in the past will not save them if they become bad and begin to sin. In the same way the bad things people did in the past will not destroy them if they turn from their evil. So remember, the good things people did in the past will not save them if they begin to sin.’

13“Maybe I will tell good people that they will live. But maybe those good people will begin to think that the good things they did in the past will save them. So they might begin to do bad things, but I will not remember the good things they did in the past! No, they will die because of the bad things they begin to do.

14“Or maybe I will tell some evil people that they will die. But they might change their lives, stop sinning, and begin to live right. They might become good and fair. They might give back the things they took when they loaned money. They might pay for the things they stole. They might begin to follow the laws that give life and stop doing bad things. Then they will surely live. They will not die. 15I will not remember the bad things they did in the past, because now they live right and are fair. So they will live!

16“But your people say, ‘That’s not fair! The Lord cannot be like that!’

But they are the people who are not fair! They are the people who must change! 18If good people stop doing good and begin to sin, they will die because of their sins. 19And if evil people stop doing wrong and start living right and being fair, they will live. 20You still say that I am not fair, but I am telling you the truth. Family of Israel, everyone will be judged for what they do!”

Jerusalem Has Been Taken

21On the fifth day of the tenth month in the twelfth year of exile, a person who had escaped from the battle in Jerusalem came to me and said, “The city has been taken!”

22The evening before that person came to me, the power of the Lord came on me. The Lord opened my mouth. So when that person came, I could speak again. 23Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, 24“Son of man, there are Israelites who live in the ruined cities in Israel. They are saying, ‘Abraham was only one man, and God gave him all this land. Now, we are many people, so surely this land belongs to us! It is our land!’

25“You must tell them that this is what the Lord God says: ‘You eat meat with the blood still in it. You look to your idols for help. You murder people, so why should I give you this land? You depend on your own sword. Each of you does terrible things. Each of you commits sexual sins with his neighbor’s wife, so you cannot have the land!’

26“You must tell them that this is what the Lord God says: “By my life, I promise that the people living in the ruined cities will be killed with a sword! If any people are out in the country, I will let animals kill and eat them. If people are hiding in the fortresses and the caves, they will die from disease. 28I will make the land empty and a waste. That country will lose all the things it was proud of. The mountains of Israel will become empty. No one will pass through that place.

29The people have done many terrible things, so I will make that place an empty wasteland. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

30“And now about you, son of man. Your people lean against the walls and stand in their doorways talking about you.

33:21 twelfth year of exile This was the winter of 586 B.C.
They tell each other, “Come on, let’s go hear what the LORD says.” 
31 So they come to you as if they were my people. They sit in front of you as if they were my people. They hear your words, but they will not do the things you say. They only want to do what feels good. They only want to cheat people and make more money.

32 “You are nothing to these people but a singer singing love songs. You have a good voice. You play your instrument well. They listen to your words, but they will not do what you say. But the things you sing about really will happen, and then the people will know that there was a prophet living among them.”

Israel Is Like a Flock of Sheep

34 The word of the LORD came to me. He said,
2 “Son of man, speak against the shepherds of Israel for me. Speak to them for me. Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘You shepherds of Israel have only been feeding yourselves. It will be very bad for you! Why don’t you shepherds feed the flock?
3 You eat the fat sheep and use their wool to make clothes for yourselves. You kill the fat sheep, but you don’t feed the flock.
4 You have not made the weak strong. You have not cared for the sick sheep. You have not put bandages on the sheep that were hurt. Some of the sheep wandered away, and you did not go get them and bring them back. You did not go to look for the lost sheep. No, you were cruel and severe—that’s the way you tried to lead the sheep!

5 “And now the sheep are scattered because there was no shepherd. They became food for every wild animal, so they were scattered. My flock wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My flock was scattered over all the face of the earth. There was no one to search or to look for them.’”

7 So, you shepherds, listen to the word of the LORD. The Lord GOD says, “I swear that wild animals will catch my sheep, and my people will become food for all those animals because they did not have any real shepherds. My shepherds did not look out for my flock. They did not feed my flock. No, they only killed the sheep and fed themselves!”

9 So, you shepherds, listen to the word of the LORD! The Lord GOD says, “I am against the shepherds. I will demand my sheep from them. I will fire them. They will not be my shepherds anymore. Then the shepherds will not be able to feed themselves, and I will save my flock from their mouths. Then my sheep will not be food for them.”

10 The Lord GOD says, “I myself will be their Shepherd. I will search for my sheep and take care of them. If a shepherd is with his sheep when they begin to wander away, he will go searching for them. In the same way I will search for my sheep. I will save them and bring them back from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. I will bring them back from those nations. I will gather them from those countries and bring them back to their own land. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the places where people live. I will lead them to grassy fields. They will go to the place high on the mountains of Israel and lie down on good ground and eat the grass. They will eat in rich grassland on the mountains of Israel. Yes, I will feed my flock, and I will lead them to a place of rest.” This is what the Lord GOD said.

16 I will search for the lost sheep. I will bring back the sheep that were scattered and put bandages on the sheep that were hurt. I will make the weak sheep strong, but I will destroy the fat and powerful shepherds. I will feed them the punishment they deserve.”

17 This is what the Lord GOD says: “And you, my flock, I will judge between one sheep and another. I will judge between the male sheep and the male goats. You can eat the grass growing on the good land. So why do you also crush the grass that

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a 34:2 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel.
other sheep want to eat? You can drink plenty of clear water. So why do you also stir the water that other sheep want to drink? 19My flock must eat the grass you crushed with your feet, and they must drink the water you stir with your feet!

20So the Lord God says to them: “I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the thin sheep! 21You push with your side and shoulder. You knock down all the weak sheep with your horns. You push until you have forced them away, 22so I will save my flock. They will not be caught by wild animals anymore. I will judge between one sheep and another. 23Then I will put one shepherd over them, my servant David. He will feed them and be their shepherd. 24Then I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David will be the ruler living among them. I, the Lord, have spoken.

25“And I will make a peace agreement with my sheep. I will take harmful animals away from the land. Then the sheep can be safe in the desert and sleep in the woods. 26I will bless the sheep and the places around my hill. I will cause the rains to fall at the right time and will shower them with blessings. 27And the trees growing in the field will produce their fruit. The earth will give its harvest, so the sheep will be safe on their land. I will break the yokes on them and save them from the power of the people who made them slaves. Then they will know that I am the Lord. 28They will not be caught like an animal by the nations anymore. Those animals will not eat them anymore. No, they will live safely. No one will make them afraid. 29I will give them some land that will make a good garden. Then they will know that I am your God.” This is what the Lord God said.

The Message Against Edom

35'The word of the Lord came to me. He said, 36Son of man, look toward Mount Seir and speak against it for me. 37Say to it, ‘This is what the Lord God says:

“ I am against you, Mount Seir! I will punish you and make you an empty wasteland. 4I will destroy your cities, and you will become empty. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

5“Why? Because you have always been against my people. You used your sword against Israel at the time of their trouble, at the time of their final punishment.’” 6So the Lord God says, “But I promise by my own life that I will let death have you. Death will chase you. You did not hate killing people, so death will chase you. 7I will make Mount Seir an empty ruin. I will kill everyone who enters or leaves that city. 8I will cover its mountains with those who are killed. There will be dead bodies all over your hills, in your valleys, and in all your ravines. 9I will make you empty forever. No one will live in your cities. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

10You said, “These two nations and countries, Israel and Judah, will be mine. We will take them for our own.”

But the Lord is there! 11And the Lord God says, “You were jealous of my people. You were angry and hateful to them. So by my life, I swear that I will punish you the same way you hurt them! I will punish you and let my people know that I am with them. 12And then you, too, will know that I am the Lord.

“I have heard you making fun of Israel’s hill country. You said, ‘It is in ruins, just waiting for us to swallow it up.’ 14Your proud boasting is really against me. Time
after time you have insulted me, and I have heard every word.”

This is what the Lord God says: “All the earth will be happy when I destroy you. You were happy when the country of Israel was destroyed. I will treat you the same way. Mount Seir and the whole country of Edom will be destroyed. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

The Land of Israel Will Be Rebuilt

14Son of man, a speak to the mountains of Israel for me. Tell them to listen to the word of the Lord! Tell them that this is what the Lord God says: ‘The enemy said bad things against you. They said, Hurray! Now the ancient mountains b will be ours!’

3So speak to the mountains of Israel for me. Tell them that this is what the Lord God says: ‘The enemy destroyed your cities and attacked you from every direction. They did this so that you would belong to the other nations. Then people talked and whispered about you.’

4So, mountains of Israel, listen to the word of the Lord God! This is what the Lord God says to the mountains, hills, streams, valleys, empty ruins, and abandoned cities that have been looted and laughed at by the other nations around them. The Lord God says, “I swear, I will let my strong feelings speak for me! I will let Edom and the other nations feel my anger. They took my land for themselves. They really had a good time when they showed how much they hated this land. They took the land for themselves, just so they could destroy it.”

6“Son of man, the family of Israel lived in their own country, but they made that land filthy by the bad things they did. To me, they were like a woman who becomes unclean because of her monthly time of bleeding.

7The Lord God says: ‘I will let my strong feelings speak for me! I will let Edom and the other nations feel my anger. They took my land for themselves, just so they could destroy it.’

8So this is what the Lord God says: ‘I am the one making this promise! I swear that the nations around you will have to suffer for those insults.

9But mountains of Israel, you will grow new trees and produce fruit for my people Israel. My people will soon come back. I am with you, and I will help you. People will till your soil and plant seeds in you.

10There will be many people living on you. The whole family of Israel—all of them—will live there. The cities will have people living in them. The destroyed places will be rebuilt. I will give you many people and animals, and they will grow and have many children. I will bring people to live on you as in the past. I will make it better for you than before. Then you will know that I am the Lord. Yes, I will lead many people—my people, Israel—to your land. You will be their property, and you will not take away their children again.”

13This is what the Lord God says: “Land of Israel, people say bad things to you. They say you destroyed your people. They say you took the children away from your people.

14But you will not destroy people anymore or take away their children again.” This is what the Lord God said.

15“I will not let those other nations insult you anymore. You will not be hurt by them anymore. You will not take the children away from your people again.” This is what the Lord God said.

The Lord Will Protect His Name

16Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ‘Son of man, the family of Israel lived in their own country, but they made that land filthy by the bad things they did. To me, they were like a woman who becomes unclean because of her monthly time of bleeding. They spilled blood on the ground when they murdered people in the land. They made the land filthy with their idols, so I showed them how angry I was. I scattered them among the nations and spread them through all the lands. I gave them the punishment they deserved for the bad things they did.

a 36:1 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel. Also in verse 17.

b 36:2 mountains Literally, “high places;” usually a reference to places of worship. See “high place” in the Word List.
those other nations, they ruined my good name. How? Those nations said, ‘These are the LORD’s people, but they left his land.’

21“The people of Israel ruined my holy name wherever they went, and I felt sorry for my name. 22So tell the family of Israel that this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘Family of Israel, you ruined my holy name in the places where you went. I am going to do something to stop this. I will not do it for your sake, Israel. I will do it for my holy name. 23I will show the nations how holy my great name really is. You ruined my good name in those nations! But I will show you that I am holy. I will make you respect my name, and then those nations will know that I am the LORD.’” This is what the Lord GOD said.

24“I will take you out of those nations, gather you together, and bring you back to your own land. 25Then I will sprinkle pure water on you and make you pure. I will wash away all your filth, the filth from those nasty idols, and I will make you pure. 26I will also put a new spirit in you to change your way of thinking. I will take out the heart of stone from your body and give you a tender, human heart. 27I will put my Spirit inside you and change you so that you will obey my laws. You will carefully obey my commands. 28Then you will live in the land that I gave to your ancestors. You will be my people, and I will be your God. 29Also, I will save you and keep you from becoming unclean. I will command the grain to grow. I will not bring a famine against you. 30I will give you large crops of fruit from your trees and the harvest from your fields so that you will never again feel the shame of being hungry in a foreign country. 31You will remember the bad things you did. You will remember that those things were not good. Then you will hate yourselves because of your sins and the terrible things you did.”

32The Lord GOD says, “I want you to remember this: I am not doing these things for your good! I am doing them for my good name. Family of Israel, you should be ashamed and embarrassed about the way you lived!”

33This is what the Lord GOD says: “On the day that I wash away your sins, I will bring people back to your cities. The ruined cities will be rebuilt. 34People will begin again to work the land so when other people pass by they will not see ruins anymore. 35They will say, ‘In the past, this land was ruined, but now it is like the Garden of Eden. The cities were destroyed. They were ruined and empty, but now they are protected, and there are people living in them.’

36“This is what the Lord GOD says: ‘I will also let the family of Israel come to me and ask me to do these things for them. I will make them grow and become many people. They will be like flocks of sheep. 38During the special festivals, Jerusalem was filled with flocks of sheep and goats that had been made holy. In the same way the cities and ruined places will be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

The Vision of the Dry Bones

1The LORD’s power came on me. The Spirit of the LORD carried me out of the city and put me down in the middle of the valley. 2The valley was full of dead men’s bones. The Lord made me walk all around among the bones. I saw the bones were very dry. 3Then the Lord said to me, “Son of man, can these bones come to life?”

I answered, “Lord GOD, only you know the answer to that question.”

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4 Then he said to me, “Speak to these bones for me. Tell them, ‘Dry bones, listen to the word of the LORD!’ 5 This is what the Lord God says to you: I will cause breath to come into you, and you will come to life! I will put sinew and muscles on you, and I will cover you with skin. Then I will put breath in you, and you will come back to life! Then you will know that I am the LORD.’”

7 So I spoke to the bones for the LORD, as he said. I was still speaking, when I heard the loud noise. The bones began to rattle, and bone joined together with bone! 8 There before my eyes, I saw sinew and muscles begin to cover the bones. Skin began to cover them, but there was no breath in them.

9 Then the Lord said to me, “Speak to the wind for me. Son of man, speak to the wind for me. Tell the wind that this is what the Lord God says: ‘Wind, come from every direction and breathe air into these dead bodies! Breathe into them and they will come to life again!’ ”

10 So I spoke to the wind for the Lord, as he said, and the breath came into the dead bodies. They came to life and stood up. There were many men—a very large army!

11 Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are like the whole family of Israel. The people of Israel say, ‘Our bones have dried up; our hope is gone. We have been completely destroyed!’”

12 Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are like the whole family of Israel. The people of Israel say, ‘Our bones have dried up; our hope is gone. We have been completely destroyed!’”

13 Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are like the whole family of Israel. The people of Israel say, ‘Our bones have dried up; our hope is gone. We have been completely destroyed!’”

14 Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are like the whole family of Israel. The people of Israel say, ‘Our bones have dried up; our hope is gone. We have been completely destroyed!’”

15 The word of the Lord came to me again. He said, “Son of man, get one stick and write this message on it: ‘This stick belongs to Judah and his friends, the people of Israel.’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘This stick of Ephraim belongs to Joseph and his friends, the people of Israel.’ 17 Then join the two sticks together. In your hand, they will be one stick.

18 “Your people will ask you to explain what that means. 19 Tell them that this is what the Lord God says: ‘I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim and his friends, the people of Israel. Then I will put that stick with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick. In my hand, they will become one stick!’

20 “Take the sticks that you wrote on and hold them in front of you. 21 Tell the people that this is what the Lord God says: ‘I will gather the people of Israel from among the nations. I will gather them from all around and bring them back to their own land.

22 I will make them one nation in their land among the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over them all. They will no longer be two nations. They will not be split into two kingdoms anymore. 23 And they will no longer continue to make themselves filthy with their idols and horrible statues or with any of their other crimes. Instead, I will save them from all the places where they have sinned, and I will wash them and make them pure. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

24 “And my servant David will be the king over them. There will be only one shepherd over all of them. They will live by my rules and obey my laws. They will do the things I tell them. 25 They will live on the land that I gave to my servant Jacob. Your ancestors lived in that place, and my people will live there. They and

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their children and their grandchildren will live there forever. My servant David will be their leader forever. And I will make a peace agreement with them. This agreement will continue forever. I agree to give them their land. I agree to make them numerous and to put my holy place among them forever. My Holy Tent will be with them. Yes, I will be their God and they will be my people. The other nations will know that I am the LORD, and they will know that I make Israel my special people by putting my holy place there among them forever.’”

The Message Against Gog

38 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, “Son of man, a look toward Gog in the land of Magog. He is the most important leader of the nations of Meshech and Tubal. Speak for me against Gog. Tell him that this is what the Lord God says: ‘Gog, you are the most important leader of the nations of Meshech and Tubal, but I am against you. I will capture you and bring you back. I will bring back all the men in your army, all the horses, and horse soldiers. I will put hooks in your mouths, and I will bring all of you back. All the soldiers will be wearing their uniforms with all their shields and swords. Soldiers from Persia, Ethiopia, and Put will be with them. They will all be wearing their shields and helmets. There will also be Gomer with all its groups of soldiers, and there will be the nation of Togarmah b from the far north with all its groups of soldiers. There will be many people in that parade of prisoners.

Be prepared. Yes, prepare yourself and the armies that have joined with you. You must watch and be ready. After a long time you will be called for duty. In the later years you will come into the land that has been healed from war. The people in that land were gathered from many nations and brought back to the mountains of Israel.

In the past, the mountains of Israel had been destroyed again and again. But these people will have come back from those other nations. They all will have lived in safety. But you will come to attack them. You will come like a storm. You will come like a thundercloud covering the land. You and all your groups of soldiers from many nations will come to attack them.’”

This is what the Lord God says: “At that time an idea will come into your mind. You will begin to make an evil plan. You will say, ‘I will go attack the country that has towns without walls. The people there live in peace and think they are safe. There are no walls around the cities to protect them. They don’t have any locks on their gates—they don’t even have gates! I will defeat them and take all their valuable things away from them. I will fight against the places that were destroyed but now have people living in them. I will fight against the people who were gathered from the nations. Now they have cattle and property. They live at the crossroads of the world.’”

Sheba, Dedan, and merchants of Tarshish and all the cities they trade with will ask you, ‘Did you come to capture valuable things? Did you bring your groups of soldiers together to grab the good things and to carry away silver, gold, cattle, and property? Did you come to take all those valuable things?’

Son of man, speak to Gog for me. Tell him that this is what the Lord God says: ‘You will come to attack my people while they are living in peace and safety. You will come from your place out of the far north, and you will bring many people with you. All of them will ride on horses. You will be a large and a powerful army. You will come to fight against my people Israel. You will be like a thundercloud covering the land. When that time comes, I will bring you to fight against my land. Then, Gog, the nations will learn how powerful I am! They will learn to respect

a 38:2 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel. Also in verse 14.

b 38:6 nation of Togarmah Or “Beth Togarmah.”

c 38:12 They live . . . the world The powerful countries must travel through there to get to all the other powerful countries.
me and know that I am holy. They will see what I will do to you!’ ”

17 This is what the Lord God says: “At that time people will remember that I spoke about you in the past. They will remember that I used my servants, the prophets of Israel. They will remember that the prophets of Israel spoke for me in the past and said that I would bring you to fight against them.”

18 The Lord God said, “At that time Gog will come to fight against the land of Israel. I will show my anger. 

19 In my anger and strong emotions, I make this promise: I promise that there will be a strong earthquake in the land of Israel. At that time all living things will shake with fear. The fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the wild animals in the fields, and all the little creatures crawling on the ground will shake with fear. The mountains will fall down and the cliffs will break apart. Every wall will fall to the ground!”

20 The Lord God says, “On the mountains of Israel, I will call for every kind of terror against a Gog. His soldiers will be so afraid that they will attack each other and kill each other with their swords. 

21 I will punish Gog with diseases and death. I will cause hailstones, fire, and sulfur to rain down on Gog and his groups of soldiers from many nations.

22 Then I will show how great I am. I will prove that I am holy. Many nations will see me do these things, and they will learn who I am. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

The Death of Gog and His Army

39 “Son of man, b speak against Gog for me. Tell him that this is what the Lord God says: ‘Gog, you are the most important leader of the countries Meshech and Tubal, but I am against you. 

2 I will capture you and bring you back. I will bring you from the far north. I will bring you to fight against the mountains of Israel. 3 But I will knock your bow from your left hand and your arrows from your right hand. You will be killed on the mountains of Israel. You, your groups of soldiers, and all the other nations with you will be killed in the battle. I will give you as food to every kind of bird that eats meat and to all the wild animals. 5 You will not enter the city. You will be killed out in the open fields. I have spoken!” This is what the Lord God said.

6 “I will send fire against Magog and those people living along the coast. They think they are safe, but they will know that I am the Lord. 7 And I will make my holy name known among my people Israel. I will not let people ruin my holy name anymore. The nations will know that I am the Lord. They will know that I am the Holy One in Israel. 8 That time is coming! It will happen!” This is what the Lord God said. “That is the day I am talking about.

9 At that time people living in the cities of Israel will go out to the fields. They will collect the enemy’s weapons and burn them. They will burn all the shields, bows and arrows, clubs and spears. They will use the weapons as firewood for seven years. 10 They will not have to gather wood from the fields or chop firewood from the forests because they will use the weapons as firewood. They will take the valuable things from the soldiers who wanted to steal from them. They will take the good things from the soldiers who took good things from them.” This is what the Lord God said.

11 At that time I will choose a place in Israel to bury Gog. He will be buried in the Valley of the Travelers, c east of the Dead Sea. It will block the road for travelers, because Gog and all his army will be buried in that place. People will call it ‘The Valley of Gog’s Army.’ 12 It will take seven months for the family of Israel to bury them. They must do this to make the land pure. 13 The common people will bury the enemy soldiers, and the people will

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a 38:21 every kind of terror against This is from the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has “a sword against.”

b 39:1 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel. Also in verse 17.

c 39:11 Valley of the Travelers This is a wordplay on the name Arabah Valley.
become famous on the day that I bring honor to myself.” The Lord GOD said those things.

14“Workers will be given a full-time job burying the dead soldiers to make the land pure. The workers will work for seven months. They will go around looking for dead bodies. They will go around looking, and if anyone sees a bone, a marker will be put up by it. The sign will stay there until the gravediggers come and bury the bone in the Valley of Gog’s Army. 16 The city of the dead will be named Hamonah. In this way they will make the country pure.”

17This is what the Lord GOD said: “Son of man, speak to all the birds and wild animals for me. Tell them, ‘Come here! Come here! Gather around. Come eat this sacrifice I am preparing for you. There will be a very big sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. Come, eat the meat and drink the blood. 18You will eat the meat from the bodies of powerful soldiers and drink the blood from world leaders. They will be like rams, lambs, goats, and fat bulls from Bashan. 19You can eat all the fat you want and drink blood until you are full. You will eat and drink from my sacrifice, which I will kill for you. 20You will have plenty of meat to eat at my table. There will be horses and chariot drivers, powerful soldiers, and all the other fighting men.’” This is what the Lord God said.

21“I will let the other nations see what I have done, and they will begin to respect me! They will see my power that I used against the enemy. 22Then from that day on, the family of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God. And the nations will know why the family of Israel was carried away as prisoners to other countries. They will learn that my people turned against me, so I turned away from them. I let their enemies defeat them, so my people were killed in battle. 24They sinned and made themselves filthy, so I punished them for the things they did. I turned them from them and refused to help them.”

25So this is what the Lord GOD says: “Now I will bring the family of Jacob back from captivity. I will have mercy on the whole family of Israel. I will show my strong feelings for my holy name. 26The people will forget their shame and all the times they turned against me. They will live in safety on their own land. No one will make them afraid. 27I will bring my people back from other countries. I will gather them from the lands of their enemies. Then many nations will see how holy I am. 28They will know that I am the LORD their God. That is because I made them leave their homes and go as prisoners to other countries. But then I gathered them together again and brought them back to their own land. 29I will pour out my Spirit on the family of Israel, and I will never turn away from my people again.” This is what the Lord God said.

The New Temple

40 1In the twenty-fifth year after we were taken away into captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, b the LORD’s power came on me. This was fourteen years after the Babylonians took Jerusalem. On that day the Lord took me there in a vision.

2In a vision, God carried me to the land of Israel. He put me down near a very high mountain. On the mountain in front of me was a building that looked like a city. c

3He took me to that place. There was a man there who looked like polished bronze. He had a cloth tape measure and a measuring rod in his hand. He was standing by the gate. 4The man said to me, “Son of man, d use your eyes and ears. Look at these things and listen to me. Pay attention to everything that I show you, because you have been brought here so that I can show you these things. You must tell the family of Israel all that you see.”

5I saw a wall that went all the way

a 39:16 Hamonah This Hebrew word means “crowd.”

b 40:1 tenth day of the month This was the Day of Atonement, 573 B.C. See Lev. 23:26; 25:9.

c 40:2 On the mountain … city Or “On the mountain, there was a building that looked like a city with a city south of it.”

d 40:4 Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel.
around the outside of the Temple. In the man’s hand there was a ruler for measuring things. It was 6 cubits\(^d\) long using the long measurement,\(^b\) so the man measured the thickness of the wall. It was one ruler\(^c\) thick. He measured the height of the wall. It was one ruler tall.

\(^6\)Then the man went to the east gate. He walked up its steps and measured the opening for the gate. It was one ruler wide.

\(^7\)The guardrooms were one ruler long and one ruler wide. The walls between the rooms were 5 cubits\(^d\) thick. The opening by the porch at the end of the gateway that faced the Temple was also one ruler wide.\(^8\) Then he measured the porch.\(^i\) It was 8 cubits\(^e\) long. He measured the walls on either side of the gate. Each side wall was 2 cubits\(^j\) wide. The porch was at the end of the gateway that faced the Temple.\(^10\) There were three little guardrooms on each side of the gateway. All these rooms and their walls measured the same.\(^11\) The man measured the entrance to the gateway. It was 10 cubits\(^g\) wide and 13 cubits\(^h\) long.

\(^12\)There was a low wall in front of each room. That wall was 1 cubit\(^i\) tall and 1 cubit thick. The rooms were square. Each wall was 6 cubits long.

\(^13\)The man measured the gateway from the outside edge of the roof of one room to the outside edge of the roof of the opposite room. It was 25 cubits.\(^j\) Each door was directly opposite the other door.\(^14\)\(^k\) He measured the faces of all the side walls, including the side walls on either side of the porch at the courtyard. The total was 60 cubits.\(^l\)\(^15\) From the inside edge of the outer gate to the far end of the porch was 50 cubits.\(^m\)\(^16\) There were small windows\(^n\) above all the guardrooms, the side walls, and the porch. The wide part of the windows faced into the gateway. There were carvings of palm trees on the walls that were on either side of the gateway.

**The Outer Courtyard**

\(^17\)Then the man led me into the outer courtyard. I saw thirty rooms and a pavement that went all the way around the courtyard. The rooms were along the wall and faced in toward the pavement.\(^18\) The pavement was as wide as the gates were long. The pavement reached to the inside end of the gateway. This was the lower pavement.\(^19\) The man measured the distance from the inside of the lower gateway to the outside of the inner courtyard. It was 100 cubits\(^o\) on the east side as well as on the north side.

\(^20\)Then the man measured the length and width of the north gate that was in the wall surrounding the outer courtyard.\(^21\) This gateway, its three rooms on each side, and its porch all measured the same as the first gate. The gateway was 50 cubits long and 25 cubits wide.\(^22\) Its windows, its porch, and its carvings of palm trees measured the same as the east gate. On the outer side there were seven steps leading up to the gate. Its porch was at the inside end of the gateway.\(^23\) Across the courtyard from the north gate, there was a gate to the inner courtyard. It was like the gate on the east. The man measured from the gate on the inner wall to the gate on the outer wall. It was 100 cubits from gate to gate.

\(^24\)Then the man led me to the south wall. I saw a gate in the south wall. He measured its side walls and its porch. They measured the same as the other gates.

\(^25\) The gateway and its porch had windows all around like the other gates. The gateway was 50 cubits long and 25 cubits wide.

\(^d\) 40:5 6 cubits 10’ 2 7/16” (3.11 m). Also in verse 12.

\(^b\) 40:5 long measurement Literally, “a cubit and a handbreadth.” This cubit equals 20 5/8” (51.83 cm).

\(^c\) 40:5 one ruler That is, 6 cubits (10’ 2 7/16” or 3.11 m). Also in verses 6, 7.

\(^d\) 40:7 5 cubits 8’ 6” (2.6 m). Also in verses 30, 48.

\(^e\) 40:9 8 cubits 13’ 7 1/4” (4.2 m).

\(^f\) 40:9 2 cubits 3’ 4 13/16” (104 cm).

\(^g\) 40:10 15 cubits 5’ 11” (1.8 m).

\(^h\) 40:11 13 cubits 22’ 1 1/4” (6.74 m).

\(^i\) 40:12 1 cubit 20 3/8” (51.83 cm). Also in verse 42.

\(^j\) 40:13 25 cubits 42’ 6 1/8” (12.96 m). Also in verses 21, 25, 29, 33, 36.

\(^k\) 40:14 The meaning of this verse in the Hebrew text is uncertain.

\(^l\) 40:14 60 cubits 102’ 3/8” (31.1 m).
There were seven steps going up to this gate. Its porch was at the inside end of the gateway. It had carvings of palm trees on the walls that were on either side of the gateway. A gate was on the south side of the inner courtyard. The man measured from the gate on the inner wall to the gate on the outer wall. It was 100 cubits from gate to gate.

The Rooms for Preparing Sacrifices
There was also a doorway in the side walls of the gates. That doorway led into a room where the priests washed the sacrifices. There were two tables on each side of the door of this porch. The animals for the burnt offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings were killed on these tables. There were also two tables on each side of the door on the outside wall of this porch. So there were four tables on the inside wall and four tables on the outside wall—eight tables that the priests used when they killed the animals for sacrifices. There were also four tables made from cut stone for the burnt offerings. These tables were 1 1/2 cubits long, 1 1/2 cubits wide, and 1 cubit high. On these tables, the priests put their tools that they used to kill the animals for the burnt offerings and other sacrifices.

There were meat hooks three inches long on all the walls in this area. The meat of the offerings was put on the tables.

The Priests’ Rooms
There were two rooms in the inner courtyard. One was by the north gate facing south. The other room was by the south gate facing north. The man said to me, “The room that looks to the south is for the priests who are on duty and serving in the Temple area. But the room that looks to the north is for the priests who are on duty and serving at the altar. The priests are from the tribe of Levi. But the priests in this second group are the descendants of Zadok. They are the only people who can carry the sacrifices to the altar to serve the LORD.”

The man measured the inner room 30 5/8” (77.75 cm).
The courtyard. The courtyard was a perfect square. It was 100 cubits long and 100 cubits wide. The altar was in front of the Temple.

The Porch of the Temple

48 Then the man led me to the porch of the Temple and measured the walls on either side of the porch. Each side wall was 5 cubits thick and 3 cubits wide. The opening between them was 14 cubits. The porch was 20 cubits wide and 12 cubits long. Ten steps went up to the porch. There were two columns for the walls on either side of the porch—one at each wall.

The Holy Place of the Temple

41 Then the man led me into the Holy Place. He measured the walls on either side of the room. The side walls were 6 cubits thick on each side. The door was 10 cubits wide. The sides of the doorway were 5 cubits on each side. He measured that room. It was 40 cubits long and 20 cubits wide.

The Most Holy Place in the Temple

3 Then the man went into the last room. He measured the walls on either side of the doorway. Each side wall was 2 cubits thick and 7 cubits wide. The doorway was 6 cubits wide. Then he measured the length of the room. It was 20 cubits long and 20 cubits wide. He said to me, “This is the Most Holy Place.”

Other Rooms Around the Temple

5 Then the man measured the wall of the Temple. It was 6 cubits thick. There were side rooms all around the Temple. They were 4 cubits wide. The side rooms were on three different floors, one above the other. There were 30 rooms on each floor. The wall of the Temple was built with ledges. The side rooms rested on these ledges but were not connected to the Temple wall itself. Each floor of the side rooms around the Temple was wider than the floor below. The walls of the rooms around the Temple became narrower the higher they went so that the rooms on the top floors were wider. A stairway went up from the lowest floor to the highest floor through the middle floor.

8 I also saw that the Temple had a raised base all the way around it. It was the foundation for the side rooms, and it was a full ruler high. The outer wall of the side rooms was 5 cubits thick. There was an open area between the side rooms of the Temple and the priests’ rooms. It was 20 cubits wide and went all the way around the Temple. The doors of the side rooms opened onto the raised base. There was one entrance on the north side and one entrance on the south side. The raised base was 5 cubits wide all around.

12 There was a building in this restricted area west of the Temple. The building was 70 cubits wide and 90 cubits long. The wall of the building was 5 cubits thick all around. Then the man measured the Temple. The Temple was 100 cubits long. The restricted area, including the building and its walls, was also 100 cubits long. The restricted area on the east side, in front of the Temple, was 100 cubits long.

15 The man measured the length of the building in the restricted area at the rear of the Temple. It was 100 cubits from one wall to the other wall.

The Most Holy Place, the Holy Place, and the porch by the courtyard had wood paneling on all the walls. All the windows and doors had wood trim around them. By the doorway, the Temple had wood paneling from the floor up to the windows.

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and up to the part of the wall over the doorway.

On all the walls in the inner room and the outer room of the Temple were carvings of Cherub angels and palm trees. A palm tree was between each Cherub angel. Every Cherub angel had two faces. One face was a man’s face looking toward the palm tree on one side. The other face was a lion’s face looking toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved all around on the Temple. From the floor to the area above the door, Cherub angels and palm trees were carved on all walls of the Holy Place.

The walls on either side of the Holy Place were square. In front of the Most Holy Place, there was something that looked like an altar made from wood. It was 3 cubits high and 2 cubits long. Its corners, its base, and its sides were wood. The man said to me, “This is the table that is before the Lord.”

Both the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place had a double door. Each of the doors was made from two smaller doors. Each door was really two swinging doors. Also Cherub angels and palm trees were carved on the doors of the Holy Place. They were like those carved on the walls. There was a wood roof over the front of the porch. There were windows with frames around them and palm trees on the walls on both sides of the porch, on the roof over the porch, and on the rooms around the Temple.

The Priests’ Room

Then the man led me through the north gate out into the outer courtyard. He led me to a building with many rooms that was west of the restricted area and the building on the north side. This building was 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide. People entered it from the courtyard on the north side. The building was three stories tall and had balconies. The 20-cubit inner courtyard was between the building and the Temple. On the other side, the rooms faced the pavement of the outer courtyard. There was a path 10 cubits wide and 100 cubits long running along the south side of the building, even though the entrance was on the north side. Since this building was three stories tall and did not have columns like those columns of the outer courtyards, the top rooms were farther back than the rooms on the middle and bottom floors. The top floor was narrower than the middle floor, which was narrower than the bottom floor because the balconies used this space. There was a wall outside that was parallel to the rooms and ran along the outer courtyard. It ran in front of the rooms for 50 cubits. The row of rooms that ran along the outer courtyard was 50 cubits long, although the total length of the building, as on the Temple side, was 100 cubits long. The entrance was below these rooms at the east end of the building so that people could enter from the outer courtyard. The entrance was at the start of the wall beside the courtyard.

There were rooms on the south side, by the restricted area and the other building. These rooms had a path in front of them. They were like the rooms on the north side. They had the same length and width and the same kind of doors. The entrance to the lower rooms was at the east end of the building so that people could enter from the open end of the path by the wall.

The man said to me, “The north rooms and south rooms across from the restricted area are holy. These rooms are for the priests who offer the sacrifices to the Lord. That is where the priests will put the most holy offerings and eat them. That is because that place is holy. The most holy offerings are the grain offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings. The priests who enter the holy area must leave their serving clothes in that holy place before they go out into the outer

41:22 3 cubits 5' 3/16" (1.55 m).
42:2 100 cubits 170' 5/8" (51.83 m).
42:2 50 cubits 85' 5/16" (25.92 m).
42:3 20 cubit 34' 1/8" (10.37 m).
42:4 10 cubit 17' 1/16" (5.18 m).
courtyard, because these clothes are holy. If a priest wants to go to the part of the Temple where the other people are, he must go to those rooms and put on other clothes."

The Outer Courtyard

15 The man had finished measuring inside the Temple area. Then he brought me out through the east gate and measured all around that area. 16 He measured the east side with the ruler. It was 500 cubits long. 17 He measured the north side. It was 500 cubits long. 18 He measured the south side. It was 500 cubits long. 19 He went around to the west side and measured it. It was 500 cubits long. 20 He measured the four walls that went all the way around the Temple. The wall was 500 cubits long and 500 cubits wide. It separated the holy area from the area that is not holy.

The Lord Will Live Among His People

43 1 The man led me to the east gate. 2 There the Glory of the God of Israel came from the east. God’s voice was loud like the sound of the sea. The ground was bright with the light from the Glory of God. 3 The vision that I saw was like the vision I saw by the Kebar Canal. I bowed with my face to the ground. 4 The Glory of the Lord came into the Temple through the east gate. 5 Then the Spirit picked me up and brought me into the inner courtyard. The Glory of the Lord filled the Temple. 6 I heard someone speaking to me from inside the Temple. The man was still standing beside me. 7 The voice from the Temple said to me, “Son of man, this is the place with my throne and footstool. I will live in this place among the people of Israel forever. The family of Israel will not ruin my holy name again. The kings and their people will not bring shame to my name by committing sexual sins or by burying the dead bodies of their kings in this place. They will not bring shame to my name by putting their threshold next to my threshold, and their doorposts next to my doorposts. In the past, only a wall separated them from me. So they brought shame to my name every time they sinned and did those terrible things. That is why I became angry and destroyed them. 9 Now let them take their sexual sins and the dead bodies of their kings far away from me. Then I will live among them forever.

10 “Now, son of man, tell the family of Israel about the Temple. Then, when they learn about the plans for the Temple, they will be ashamed of their sins. 11 And they will be ashamed of all the bad things they have done. Let them know the design of the Temple. Let them know how it should be built, where the entrances and exits are, and all the designs on it. Teach them about all its rules and all its laws. Write these things for everyone to see so that they can obey all the laws and rules for the Temple. 12 This is the law of the Temple: The whole area surrounding it on the top of the mountain is most holy. This is the law of the Temple.

The Altar

13 “These are the measurements of the altar in cubits using the long measurement: There was a gutter all the way around the base of the altar. It was 1 cubit deep, and each side was 1 cubit wide. There was a rim around the edge 1 span high. This is how tall the altar was: From the ground to the lower ledge, the base measured 2 cubits. It was 1 cubit wide. It measured 4 cubits from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge. It was 2 cubits wide. The place for the fire on the altar was 4 cubits high. The four corners were shaped like horns. The place for the fire on the altar...
was 12 cubits\(^a\) long by 12 cubits wide. It was perfectly square. \(^b\)The ledge was also square, 14 cubits\(^b\) long by 14 cubits wide. The border around it was 1/2 cubit\(^c\) wide. (The gutter around the base was 1 cubit wide.) The steps going up to the altar were on the east side.’

Then the man said to me, “Son of man, this is what the Lord God says: ‘These are the rules for the altar: At the time you build the altar, use these rules to offer burnt offerings and to sprinkle blood on it. \(^b\)You will give a young bull as a sin offering to the men from Zadok’s family. These men are the priests from the tribe of Levi. They are the men who serve me by bringing the offerings to me.’” This is what the Lord God said. \(^d\)You will take some of the bull’s blood and put it on the altar’s four horns, on the four corners of the ledge, and on the rim around it. In this way you will make the altar pure. \(^e\)Then take the bull for the sin offering and burn it in the proper place in the Temple area, outside the Temple building.

On the second day you will offer a male goat that has nothing wrong with it. It will be for a sin offering. The priests will make the altar pure the same way they made it pure with the bull. \(^f\)When you have finished making the altar pure, you will offer a young bull that has nothing wrong with it and a ram from the flock that has nothing wrong with it. \(^g\)Then you will offer them before the Lord. The priests will sprinkle salt on them. Then they will offer the bull and ram up as a burnt offering to the Lord. \(^h\)You will prepare a goat every day for seven days for a sin offering. Also, you will prepare a young bull and a ram from the flock. These animals must have nothing wrong with them. \(^i\)For seven days, the priests will make the altar pure and ready for use in worshiping God. \(^j\)On the eighth day, and every day after that, the priests must offer your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar. Then I will accept you.” This is what the Lord God said.

The Outer Gate

Then the man brought me back to the east gate of the Temple area. We were outside the gate and the gate was shut. \(^j\)The Lord said to me, “This gate will stay shut. It will not be opened. No one will enter through it, because the Lord of Israel has entered through it. So it must stay shut. \(^k\)Only the ruler of the people may sit at this gate when he eats a meal with the Lord. He must enter through the porch of the gateway and go out the same way.”

The Holiness of the Temple

Then the man led me through the north gate to the front of the Temple. I looked and saw the Glory of the Lord filling the Lord’s Temple. I bowed with my face touching the ground. \(^l\)The Lord said to me, “Son of man,\(^d\) look very carefully! Use your eyes and ears. Look at these things, and listen very carefully to everything that I tell you about all the rules and laws about the Lord’s Temple. Look carefully at the entrances to the Temple and at all the exits from the holy place. \(^m\)Then give this message to all the people of Israel who refused to obey me. Tell them, ‘This is what the Lord God said: Family of Israel, I have had enough of the terrible things you have done! \(^n\)You brought foreigners into my Temple who are not circumcised and have not given themselves to me. \(^o\)In this way you made my Temple unclean. You broke our agreement and did terrible things, and then you gave me the offerings of bread, the fat, and the blood. But this only made my Temple unclean. \(^p\)You did not take care of my holy things. No, you let foreigners have responsibility of my holy place!’”

\(^a\) 43:16 12 cubits 20’ 4 7/8” (6.22 m).
\(^b\) 43:17 14 cubits 23’ 9 11/16” (7.26 m).
\(^c\) 43:17 1/2 cubit 10 3/16” (25.92 cm).
\(^d\) 44:5 Son of man  This was usually just a way of saying “a person” or “a human being.” Here, it is a way of addressing Ezekiel.
\(^e\) 44:7 not circumcised … to me Literally, “not circumcised in their heart or in their body.” See “CIRCUMCISE, CIRCUMCISION” in the Word List. Also in verse 9.

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foreigner who is not truly circumcised must not come into my Temple—not even a foreigner living permanently among the people of Israel. He must be circumcised, and he must give himself completely to me before he can come into my Temple. In the past, the Levites left me when Israel turned away from me. Israel left me to follow their idols. The Levites will be punished for their sin. The Levites were chosen to serve in my holy place. They guarded the gates of the Temple. They served in the Temple. They killed the animals for the sacrifices and burnt offerings for the people. They were chosen to help the people and to serve them. But the Levites helped the people sin against me! They helped the people worship their idols! So I am making this promise against them: ‘They will be punished for their sin.’ This is what the Lord God said.

So the Levites will not bring offerings to me like the priests. They will not come near any of my holy things or the things that are most holy. They must carry their shame because of the terrible things that they did. But I will let them take care of the Temple. They will work in the Temple and do the things that must be done in it.

The priests are all from the tribe of Levi. But only priests from Zadok’s family took care of my holy place when the people of Israel turned away from me. So only Zadok’s descendants will bring offerings to me. They will stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood from the animals they sacrifice.” This is what the Lord God said! “They will enter my holy place and come near my table to serve me. They will take care of the things I gave them. When they enter the gates of the inner courtyard, they will wear linen clothes. They will not wear wool while they serve at the gates of the inner courtyard and in the Temple. They will wear linen turbans on their heads, and they will wear linen underwear. They will not wear anything that makes them sweat. Before they go out into the outer courtyard to the people, they will take off the clothes they wear while serving me. They will put these clothes away in the holy rooms. Then they will put on other clothes. In this way they will not let people touch those holy clothes.

These priests will not shave their heads or let their hair grow long. The priests may only trim the hair of their heads. None of the priests may drink wine when they go into the inner courtyard. The priests must not marry a widow or a divorced woman. No, they must only marry a virgin from the family of Israel or a woman whose dead husband was a priest.

Also, the priests must teach my people the difference between things that are holy and things that are not holy. They must help my people know what is clean and what is unclean. The priests will be the judges in court. They will follow my laws when they judge people. They will obey my laws and my rules at all my special feasts. They will respect my special days of rest and keep them holy. They will not go near a dead person to make themselves unclean. But they may make themselves unclean if the dead person is their father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or a sister who is not married. After the priest has been made clean, he must wait seven days. Then he can go back into the holy place. But on the day he goes into the inner courtyard to serve in the holy place, he must offer a sin offering for himself.” This is what the Lord God said.

About the land that will belong to the Levites: I am their property. You will not give the Levites any land in Israel. I am their share in Israel. They will have the right to eat the grain offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings. Also, anything in Israel that is a special gift to God will belong to them. And the first part of the harvest from every kind of crop will be for the priests. You will also give

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the priests the first part of your flour. This will bring blessings to your house.

The priests must not eat any bird or animal that has died a natural death or has been torn to pieces by a wild animal.

The Division of the Land for Holy Use

45 1“

You will divide the land for the Israelite tribes by throwing lots. At that time you will separate out a part of the land. It will be a holy part for the LORD. The land will be 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits wide. All this land will be holy. A square area that is 500 cubits long on each side will be for the Temple. There will be an open space around the Temple that is 50 cubits wide. In the holy area you will measure 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide. The Temple will be in this area. The Temple area will be the Most Holy Place.

44“This holy part of the land will be for the priests, the servants of the Temple. This is where they approach the Lord to serve him. It will be a place for the priests’ houses and a place for the Temple. Another area, 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide, will be for the Levites who serve in the Temple. This land will also become cities for the Levites.

46“And you will give the city an area that is 5000 cubits wide and 25,000 cubits long. It will be along the side of the holy area. It will be for all the family of Israel. The ruler will have land on both sides of the holy area and the land belonging to the city. It will be next to the holy area and the area belonging to the city. It will be the same width as the land that belongs to a tribe. It will go all the way from the west border to the east border. This land will be the ruler’s property in Israel. So he will not need to make life hard for my people anymore. But they will give the land to the Israelites for their tribes.”

9This is what the Lord God said: “Enough, you rulers of Israel! Stop being cruel and stealing things from people! Be fair and do what is right! Stop forcing my people out from their homes!” This is what the Lord God said.

10“Stop cheating people. Use accurate scales and measures! 11The ephah and the bath must be the same size: A bath and an ephah must both equal 1/10 homer. Those measures will be based on the homer. 12A shekel must equal 20 gerahs. A mina must equal 60 shekels. It must be equal to 20 shekels plus 25 shekels plus 15 shekels.

13“This is a special offering that you must give:

1/6 ephah of wheat for every homer of wheat;
1/6 ephah of barley for every homer of barley;
1/10 bath of olive oil for every cor of olive oil;
(Remember: Ten baths make a homera, and ten baths make a cor.)
15and one sheep for every 200 sheep from every watering hole in Israel.

“Those special offerings are for the grain offerings, for the burnt offerings, and for the fellowship offerings. These offerings are to remove the sins of the people.” This is what the Lord God said.

16“Everyone in the country will give to this offering for the ruler of Israel. But the ruler must give the things needed for the special holy days. The ruler must provide the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the drink offerings for the feast days, for the New Moon, for the Sabbaths, and for all the other special meeting days of the family of Israel. He must give all the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt

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offerings, and fellowship offerings that are used to make the family of Israel pure.”

18 This is what the Lord God says: “In the first month, on the first day of the month, you will take a young bull that has nothing wrong with it. You must use that bull to make the Temple pure. 19 The priest will take some of the blood from the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the Temple and on the four corners of the ledge of the altar and on the posts of the gate to the inner courtyard. 20 You will do the same thing on the seventh day of that month for anyone who has sinned by mistake or without knowing it. So you will make the Temple pure.

Offerings During the Passover

21 “On the 14th day of the first month, you must celebrate the Passover. The Festival of Unleavened Bread begins at this time. It continues for seven days. 22 At that time the ruler will offer a bull for himself and for all the people of Israel. The bull will be for a sin offering. 23 During the seven days of the festival, the ruler will offer seven bulls and seven rams that have nothing wrong with them. They will be burnt offerings to the Lord. The ruler will offer one bull on every day of the seven days of the festival, and he will offer a male goat every day for a sin offering. 24 The ruler will give an ephah \(^a\) of barley as a grain offering with the ram. As for the grain offering with the lambs, the ruler can give as much as he wants. But he must give 1 hin \(^b\) of olive oil for each ephah of grain.

25 “On the day of the New Moon he must offer a young bull that has nothing wrong with it. He will also offer six lambs and a ram that have nothing wrong with them. 26 The ruler must give an ephah of grain as an offering with the bull and an ephah of grain as an offering with the ram. As for the grain offering with the lambs, he can give as much as he wants. But he must give 1 hin of olive oil for each ephah of grain.

27 “When the ruler goes in, he must enter at the porch of the east gate—and he must leave that same way.

28 “When the common people come to meet with the Lord at the special festivals, whoever enters through the north gate to worship will go out through the south gate, and whoever enters through the south gate will go out through the north gate. People must not return the same way they entered. Each person must go out straight ahead. 29 The ruler should be there among the people. When the people go in, the ruler will go in with them, and when they go out, the ruler will too.

30 “At the festivals and other special meetings, an ephah of grain as an offering must be offered with each young bull, and an ephah of grain as an offering must be offered with each ram. As for the grain
offering with the lambs, the ruler can give as much as he wants. But he must give 1 hin of olive oil for each ephah of grain.

12“When the ruler gives a freewill offering to the Lord—it might be a burnt offering, a fellowship offering, or a freewill offering—the east gate will be opened for him. Then he will offer his burnt offering and his fellowship offerings as he does on the Sabbath day. After he leaves, the gate will be shut.

The Daily Offering
13“Every day you will provide a year-old lamb that has nothing wrong with it. It will be for a burnt offering to the Lord. You will provide it every morning. 14 Also, you will offer a grain offering with the lamb every morning. You will give 1/6 ephah\(^a\) of flour and 1/3 hin\(^b\) of oil to make the fine flour moist. It will be the daily grain offering to the Lord. \(^c\) So they will give the lamb, the grain offering, and the oil every morning for a burnt offering forever.”

Laws of Inheritance for the Ruler
16 This is what the Lord God says: “If the ruler gives a gift from part of his land to any of his sons, it will belong to his sons. It is their property. 17 But if the ruler gives a gift from part of his land to one of his slaves, the gift will belong to the slave only until the year of freedom. 18 Then the gift will go back to the ruler. Only the ruler’s sons will keep a gift of land from the ruler. 19 And the ruler will not take any of the people’s land or force them to leave their land. He must give some of his own land to his sons. In that way my people will not be forced to lose their land.”

The Special Kitchens
19 The man led me through the entrance at the side of the gate. He led me to the holy rooms for the priests on the north side. There I saw a place at the west end of the path. 20 The man said to me, “This is where the priests will boil the guilt offering and the sin offering and will bake the grain offering. Why? So they will not need to bring these offerings out into the outer courtyard. So they will not bring those holy things out where the common people are.”

21 Then the man led me out to the outer courtyard. He led me to the four corners of the courtyard. I saw smaller courtyards in each corner of the large courtyard. 22 There was a small, enclosed area in each of the four corners of the courtyard. Each small courtyard was 40 cubits\(^d\) long and 30 cubits\(^e\) wide. The four areas measured the same. 23 There was a brick wall around each of the four small courtyards, and there were places built into the brick walls for cooking. 24 The man said to me, “These are the kitchens where those who serve at the Temple cook the sacrifices for the people.”

The Water Flowing From the Temple
47 The man led me back to the entrance of the Temple. I saw water coming out from under the east gate of the Temple. (The front of the Temple is on the east side.) The water flowed down from under the south end of the Temple and ran south of the altar. 2 The man led me out through the north gate and then around the outside to the outer gate on the east side. The water was flowing out on the south side of the gate.

3 The man walked east with a tape measure in his hand. He measured 1000 cubits.\(^f\) Then he told me to walk through the water at that place. The water was only ankle deep. 4 He measured another 1000 cubits. Then he told me to walk through the water at that place. There the water came up to my knees. Then he measured another 1000 cubits and told me to walk through the water at that place. There the water was waist deep. 5 He measured another 1000 cubits, but there the water was too deep to cross. It had become a

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\(^a\) 46:14 1/6 ephah 14 cups (3.67 l).
\(^b\) 46:14 1/3 hin A liquid measure (1/3 gallon or 1 l).
\(^c\) 46:17 year of freedom Or “Jubilee.” See “Jubilee” in the Word List.
\(^d\) 46:22 40 cubits 68’ 1/4” (20.73 m).
\(^e\) 46:22 30 cubits 51’ 3/16” (15.55 m).
\(^f\) 47:3 1000 cubits 1/3 mile (518.32 m).
Then the man led me back along the side of the river. 7 As I walked back along the side of the river, I saw many trees on both sides of the water. 8 He said to me, “This water flows east, down to the Arabah Valley. 9 This water flows into the Dead Sea so that the water in that sea becomes fresh and clean. There are many fish in this water, and all kinds of animals live where this river goes. 10 You can see fishermen standing by the river all the way from En Gedi to En Eglaim. You can see them throwing their fishing nets and catching many kinds of fish. There are as many kinds of fish in the Dead Sea as there are in the Mediterranean Sea.

11 But the swamps and small marshes will not become fresh. They will be left for salt. 12 All kinds of fruit trees will grow on both sides of the river. Their leaves never will become dry and fall. The fruit will never stop growing on those trees. The trees will produce fruit every month, because the water for the trees comes from the Temple. The fruit from the trees will be for food, and their leaves will be for healing.”

Division of the Land for the Tribes

13 This is what the Lord God says: “These are the borders for dividing the land among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph will have two parts. 14 You will divide the land equally. I promised to give this land to your ancestors, so I am giving this land to you.

15 “These are the borders of the land: On the north side, it goes from the Mediterranean Sea by way of Hethlon where the road turns toward Hamath and on to Zedad, 16 Berothah, Sibraim (which is on the border between Damascus and Hamath) and Hazer Hatticon, which is on the border of Hazaran. 17 So the border will go from the sea to Hazar Enan on the northern border of Damascus and Hamath. This will be on the north side.

18 “On the east side, the border will go from Hazar Enan between Hauran and Damascus and continue along the Jordan River between Gilead and the land of Israel, to the eastern sea and all the way to Tamar. This will be the eastern border.

19 “On the south side, the border will go from Tamar all the way to the oasis at Meribah-kadesh. Then it will go along the Brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. This will be the southern border.

20 “On the west side, the Mediterranean Sea will be the border all the way to the area in front of Lebo Hamath. This will be your western border.

21 “So you will divide this land among you for the tribes of Israel. 22 You will divide it as a property for yourselves and for the foreigners who live among you and who have had children among you. These foreigners will be residents—they will be like natural born Israelites. You will divide some land for them among the tribes of Israel. 23 The tribe where that resident lives must give him some land.” This is what the Lord God said!

The Land for the Tribes of Israel

48 1–7” The northern border goes east from the Mediterranean Sea to Hethlon to Hamath Pass and then all the way to Hazar Enan. This is on the border between Damascus and Hamath. The land for the tribes in this group will go from the east of these borders to the west. From north to south, the tribes in this area are Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, and Judah.

The Special Section of Land

8 “The next area of land will be for a special use. This land is south of Judah’s land. This area is 25,000 cubits long from north to south. From east to west, it will be as wide as the land that belongs to the other
The Temple will be in the middle of this section of land. You will dedicate this land to the LORD. It will be 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits wide. This special area of land will be divided among the priests and Levites.

“The priests will get one part of this area. The land will be 25,000 cubits long on the north side, 10,000 cubits wide on the west side, 10,000 cubits wide on the east side, and 25,000 cubits long on the south side. The LORD’s Temple will be in the middle of this area of land. This land is for Zadok’s descendants. These men were chosen to be my holy priests, because they continued to serve me when the other people of Israel left me. Zadok’s family did not leave me like the other people from the tribe of Levi. This share from this holy part of the land will be especially for these priests. It will be next to the land of the Levites.

“Next to the land for the priests, the Levites will have a share of the land. It will be 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide. They will get the full length and width of this land—25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits wide. The Levites will not sell or trade any of this land. They will not be able to sell any of it. They must not cut up this part of the country, because this land belongs to the LORD—it is very special. It is the best part of the land.

The Shares for the City Property

There will be an area of land 5000 cubits wide by 25,000 cubits long that is left over from the land given to the priests and Levites. This land can be for the city, for grasslands for animals, and for building houses. The common people may use this land. The city will be in the middle of it. These are the city’s measurements: The north side will be 4500 cubits. The south side will be 4500 cubits. The east side will be 4500 cubits. The west side will be 4500 cubits. The city will have grasslands. These grasslands will be 250 cubits on the north and 250 cubits on the south. They will be 250 cubits on the east and 250 cubits on the west. What is left of the length along the side of the holy area will be 10,000 cubits on the east and 10,000 cubits on the west. This land will be along the side of the holy area. This land will grow food for the city workers. The city workers from all the tribes of Israel will farm this land.

“This special area of land will be square. It will be 25,000 cubits long by 25,000 cubits wide. You must set apart this area for its special purposes. One part is for the priests, one part is for the Levites, and one part is for the city.

“Part of that special land will be for the ruler of the country. That special area of land is square. It is 25,000 cubits long by 25,000 cubits wide. Part of this special land is for the priests, part of it is for the Levites, and part of it is for the Temple. The Temple is in the middle of this area of land. The rest of the land belongs to the ruler of the country. The ruler will get the area between the land of Benjamin and the land of Judah.

South of this special area will be the land for the tribes that lived east of the Jordan River. Each tribe will get a section of land that goes from the eastern border to the Mediterranean Sea. From north to south, these tribes are Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad.

“The southern border of Gad’s land will go from Tamar to the oasis at Meribah-kadesh, then along the Brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. This is the land that you will divide among the tribes of Israel. This is what each group will get.” This is what the Lord GOD said!

The Gates of the City

These are the gates of the city. The gates will be named for the tribes of Israel.

“The north side of the city will be 4500...
cubits long. 31 There will be three gates: Reuben’s Gate, Judah’s Gate, and Levi’s Gate.

32 The east side of the city will be 4500 cubits long. There will be three gates: Joseph’s Gate, Benjamin’s Gate, and Dan’s Gate.

33 The south side of the city will be 4500 cubits long. There will be three gates: Simeon’s Gate, Issachar’s Gate, and Zebulun’s Gate.

34 The west side of the city will be 4500 cubits long. There will be three gates: Gad’s Gate, Asher’s Gate, and Naphtali’s Gate.

35 The distance around the city will be 18,000 cubits. From now on, the name of the city will be THE LORD IS THERE.\footnote{48:35 18,000 cubits 5.8 miles (9.33 km).}  In Hebrew this name sounds like Jerusalem.
Daniel

Daniel Taken to Babylon

1Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and surrounded it with his army. This happened during the third year that Jehoiakim a was king of Judah. b The Lord allowed Nebuchadnezzar to defeat Jehoiakim king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar took all the dishes and other things from God’s Temple and carried them to Babylon. b He put those things in the temple of his gods.

2Then King Nebuchadnezzar ordered Ashpenaz, the man in charge of his officials, to bring some of the boys into the palace to train them. He was to include boys from among the Israelites, c from important Judean families, and from the royal family of Judah. dKing Nebuchadnezzar wanted only healthy boys who did not have any bruises, scars, or anything wrong with their bodies. He wanted handsome, smart young men who were able to learn things quickly and easily to serve in his palace. He told Ashpenaz to teach these young men the language and writings of the Chaldeans.

3King Nebuchadnezzar gave the young men a certain amount of food and wine every day. This was the same kind of food that he ate. He wanted them to be trained for three years. After that they would become servants of the king of Babylon. eAmong those young men were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from the tribe of Judah. fAshpenaz gave them Babylonian names. Daniel’s new name was Belteshazzar, Hananiah’s was Shadrach, Mishael’s was Meshach, and Azariah’s was Abednego.

8Daniel did not want to eat the king’s rich food and wine because it would make him unclean. So he asked Ashpenaz for permission not to make himself unclean in this way.

9God caused Ashpenaz, the man in charge of the officials, to be kind and loyal to Daniel. gBut Ashpenaz told Daniel, “I am afraid of my master, the king. He ordered me to give you this food and drink. If you don’t eat this food, you will begin to look weak and sick. You will look worse than other young men your age. The king will see this, and he will become angry with me. He might cut off my head. And it would be your fault.”

10Then Daniel talked to the guard who had been put in charge of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah by Ashpenaz. hHe said, “Please give us this test for ten days: Don’t give us anything but vegetables to eat and water to drink. iThen after ten days, compare us with the other young men who eat the king’s food. See for yourself who looks healthier, and then decide how you want to treat us, your servants.”

14So the guard agreed to test Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah for ten days. iAfter ten days, Daniel and his friends looked healthier than all the young men who ate the king’s food. See for yourself who looks healthier, and then decide how you want to treat us, your servants.”

17God gave these four young men the wisdom and ability to learn many different kinds of writing and science. Daniel could also understand all kinds of visions and dreams.

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At the end of the three years of training, Ashpenaz brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked to them and found that none of the young men were as good as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So these four young men became the king’s servants. Every time the king asked them about something important, they showed great wisdom and understanding. The king found they were ten times better than all the magicians and wise men in his kingdom. So Daniel served the king until the first year that Cyrus was king.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

During Nebuchadnezzar’s second year as king, he had dreams. They bothered him, and he could not sleep. So the king called his wise men to come to him. They used magic and watched the stars. They did this to try to interpret dreams and to learn what would happen in the future. The king wanted them to tell him what he had dreamed, so they came in and stood in front of him.

Then the king said to them, “I had a dream that bothers me. I want to know what it means.”

Then the Chaldeans answered the king. They spoke Aramaic and said, “King, live forever! Please tell your dream to us, your servants, and then we will tell you what it means.”

Then King Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “No, you must tell me the dream, and then you must tell me what it means. If you don’t, I will give an order for you to be cut into pieces. And I will order your houses to be destroyed until they are nothing but piles of dust and ashes. But if you tell me my dream and explain its meaning, I will give you gifts, rewards, and great honor. So tell me about my dream and what it means.”

Again the wise men said to the king, “Please, Sir, tell us about the dream, and we will tell you what it means.”

Then King Nebuchadnezzar answered, “I know that you are trying to get more time. You know that I meant what I said. You know that you will be punished if you don’t tell me about my dream. So you have all agreed to lie to me. You are hoping for more time so that I will forget what I want you to do. Now tell me the dream. If you can tell me the dream, I will know that you can tell me what it really means.”

The Chaldeans answered the king. They said, “There is not a man on earth who can do what the king is asking! No king has ever asked the wise men, the men who do magic, or the Chaldeans to do something like this. Not even the greatest and most powerful king has ever asked his wise men to do such a thing. The king is asking something that is too hard to do. Only the gods could tell the king his dream and what it means. But the gods don’t live with people.”

When the king heard that, he became very angry. So he gave an order for all the wise men of Babylon to be killed. King Nebuchadnezzar’s order to kill all the wise men was announced. The king’s men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

Arioch was the commander of the king’s guards. He was going to kill the wise men of Babylon, but Daniel talked to him. Daniel spoke politely to Arioch and said, “Why did the king order such a severe punishment?”

Then Arioch explained the whole story about the king’s dreams, and Daniel understood. When Daniel heard the story, he went to King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel asked the king to give him some more time. Then he would tell the king what the dream meant.

So Daniel went to his house. He explained the whole story to his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Daniel asked his friends to pray to the God of heaven that God would be kind to them and help them understand this secret. Then Daniel and his friends would not be killed with the other wise men of Babylon.
During the night, God explained the secret to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. He said, “Praise God’s name forever and ever! Power and wisdom belong to him. He changes the times and seasons. He gives power to kings, and he takes their power away. He gives wisdom to people, so they become wise. He lets people learn things and become wise.

He knows hidden secrets that are hard to understand. Light lives with him, so he knows what is in the dark and secret places.

God of my ancestors, I thank you and praise you. You gave me wisdom and power. You told us what we asked for. You told us about the king’s dream.”

Daniel Tells What the Dream Means
Then Daniel went to Arioch, the man who King Nebuchadnezzar had chosen to kill the wise men of Babylon. Daniel said to Arioch, “Don’t kill the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king. I will tell him what his dream means.”

So very quickly, Arioch took Daniel to the king. Arioch said to the king, “I have found a man among the captives from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

The king asked Daniel (Belteshazzar) a question. He said, “Are you able to tell me about my dream, and what it means?”

Daniel answered, “King Nebuchadnezzar, no wise man, no man who does magic, and no Chaldean could tell the king the secret things he has asked about. But there is a God in heaven who tells secret things. God has given King Nebuchadnezzar dreams to show him what will happen later. This was your dream, and this is what you saw while lying on your bed: King, as you were lying there on your bed, you began thinking about what might happen in the future. God can tell people about secret things—he has shown you what will happen in the future. God also told this secret to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other men, but so that you, king, may know what it means. In that way you will understand what went through your mind.

King, in your dream you saw a large statue in front of you that was very large and shiny. It was very impressive. The head of the statue was made from pure gold. Its chest and the arms were made from silver. The belly and upper part of the legs were made from bronze. The lower part of the legs was made from iron. Its feet were made partly of iron and partly of clay. While you were looking at the statue, you saw a rock that was cut loose, but not by human hands. Then the rock hit the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold broke to pieces all at the same time. And all the pieces became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summertime. The wind blew them away, and there was nothing left. No one could tell that a statue had ever been there. Then the rock that hit the statue became a very large mountain and filled up the whole earth.

“That was your dream. Now we will tell the king what it means. King, you are the most important king. The God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory. He has given you control, and you rule over people and the wild animals and the birds. Wherever they live, God has made you ruler over them all. King Nebuchadnezzar, you are that head of gold on the statue.

Another kingdom will come after you, but it will not be as great as your kingdom. Next, a third kingdom will rule over the earth—that is the bronze part. Then there will be a fourth kingdom. That kingdom will be strong like iron. Just as iron breaks things and smashes them to pieces,
that fourth kingdom will break all the other kingdoms and smash them to pieces.

41“You saw that the feet and toes of the statue were partly clay and partly iron. That means the fourth kingdom will be a divided kingdom. It will have some of the strength of iron in it just as you saw the iron mixed with clay. 42The toes of the statue were partly iron and partly clay. So the fourth kingdom will be strongly like iron and partly weak like clay. 43You saw the iron mixed with clay, but iron and clay don’t completely mix together. In the same way the people of the fourth kingdom will be a mixture. They will not be united as one people.

44“During the time of the kings of the fourth kingdom, the God of heaven will set up another kingdom that will continue forever. It will never be destroyed. And it will be the kind of kingdom that cannot be passed on to another group of people. This kingdom will crush all the other kingdoms. It will bring them to an end, but that kingdom itself will continue forever.

45“King Nebuchadnezzar, you saw a rock cut from a mountain, but no one cut that rock. The rock broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold to pieces. In this way God showed you what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and you can trust that this is what it means.”

46Then King Nebuchadnezzar bowed down in front of Daniel to honor him. The king praised him. He gave an order that an offering and incense be given to honor Daniel. 47Then the king said to Daniel, “I know for sure your God is the God over all gods and the Lord over all kings. He tells people about things they cannot know. I know this is true because you were able to tell these secret things to me.”

48Then the king gave Daniel a very important job in his kingdom and gave him many expensive gifts. Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon and put him in charge of all the wise men of Babylon. 49Daniel asked the king to make Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego important officials over the province of Babylon. The king did as Daniel asked. Daniel himself became one of the important officials who was always near the king.

The Idol of Gold and the Hot Furnace

3King Nebuchadnezzar had a gold idol made that was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide. Then he set the idol up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. 2Then he called the satraps, prefects, governors, advisors, treasurers, judges, rulers, and all the other officials in his kingdom to come together. He wanted all of them to come to the dedication ceremony for the idol.

3So all the men came and stood in front of the idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4Then the man who makes announcements for the king spoke in a loud voice, “All you people from many nations and language groups, listen to me. This is what you are commanded to do: 5You must bow down as soon as you hear the sound of all the musical instruments. When you hear the horns, flutes, lyres, sambucas, harps, bagpipes, and all the other musical instruments, you must worship the gold idol. King Nebuchadnezzar has set this idol up. 6Whoever does not bow down and worship this gold idol will immediately be thrown into a very hot furnace.”

7So as soon as they heard the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres, sambucas, bagpipes, and all the other musical instruments, they bowed down and worshiped the gold idol. All the peoples, nations, and different language groups there worshiped the gold idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8Then some of the Chaldeans came up to the king and began speaking against the

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people from Judah. They said, “King, may you live forever! You gave a command. You said that everyone who hears the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres, sam- 
bucas, harps, bagpipes, and all the other musical instruments must bow down and worship the gold idol. And you also said that whoever does not bow down and worship the gold idol will be thrown into a very hot furnace.”

There are some Judeans who you made important officials in the province of Babylon that ignored your order, King. Their names are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They don’t worship your gods, and they didn’t bow down to worship the gold idol you set up.”

Nebuchadnezzar became very angry. He called for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So they were brought to him. And Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you don’t worship my gods? And is it true that you didn’t bow down and worship the gold idol I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres, sambucas, harps, bagpipes, and all the other musical instruments, you must bow down and worship the gold idol. If you are ready to worship the idol I have made, that is good. But if you don’t worship it, you will be thrown very quickly into the hot furnace. Then no god will be able to save you from my power!”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, “Nebuchadnezzar, we don’t need to explain these things to you. If you throw us into the hot furnace, the God we serve can save us. And if he wants to, he can save us from your power. But even if God does not save us, we want you to know, King, that we refuse to serve your gods. We will not worship the gold idol you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar became very angry with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He gave an order for the oven to be heated seven times hotter than it usually was. Then he commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He told the soldiers to throw them into the hot furnace.

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were tied up and thrown into the hot furnace. They were wearing their robes, pants, cloth caps, and other clothes. The king was very angry when he gave the command, so the soldiers quickly made the furnace very hot. The fire was so hot that the flames killed the strong soldiers. They were killed when they went close to the fire to throw in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell into the fire. They were tied up very tightly.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar jumped to his feet. He was very surprised and he asked his advisors, “We tied only three men, and we threw only three men into the fire. Is that right?”

His advisors said, “Yes, King.”

The king said, “Look! I see four men walking around in the fire. They are not tied up and they are not burned. The fourth man looks like an angel.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar went to the opening of the hot furnace. He shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, come out! Servants of the Most High God, come here!”

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire. When they came out, the satraps, prefects, governors, and royal advisors crowded around them. They could see that the fire had not burned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their bodies were not burned at all. Their hair was not burned, and their robes were not burned. They didn’t even smell as if they had been near fire.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their God has sent his angel and saved his servants from the fire! These three men trusted their God and refused to obey my command. They were willing to die instead of serving or worshiping any other god. So I now make this law: Anyone from any nation or language

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group who says anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be cut into pieces, and their house will be destroyed until it is a pile of dirt and ashes. No other god can save his people like this.”

Then the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego more important jobs in the province of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream About a Tree

1 King Nebuchadnezzar sent this letter to the many nations and language groups living around the world.

Greetings:

2 I am very happy to tell you about the miracles and wonderful things that the Most High God did for me.

3 God has done amazing miracles! He has done powerful miracles! His kingdom continues forever; his rule will continue for all generations.

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at my palace. I was happy and successful.

5 I had a dream that made me afraid. I was lying on my bed, and I saw pictures and visions in my mind. These things made me very afraid.

6 So I gave an order that all the wise men of Babylon be brought to me to tell me what my dream meant.

7 When the men of magic and the Chaldeans came, I told them about the dream, but they could not tell me what it meant.

8 Finally, Daniel came to me. (I gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar to honor my god. The spirit of the holy gods is in him.) I told him about my dream.

9 I said, “Belteshazzar, you are the most important of all the men of magic. I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you. I know there is no secret that is too hard for you to understand. This was what I dreamed. Tell me what it means.”

10 These are the visions I saw while I was lying in my bed: I looked, and there in front of me was a tree standing in the middle of the earth. The tree was very tall.

11 The tree grew large and strong. The top of the tree touched the sky. It could be seen from anywhere on earth.

12 The leaves of the tree were beautiful. It had much good fruit on it. And on the tree was plenty of food for everyone. The wild animals found shelter under the tree, and the birds lived in its branches. Every animal ate from the tree.

13 I was looking at those things in the vision while lying on my bed. And then I saw a holy angel coming down from heaven.

14 He spoke very loud and said, ‘Cut down the tree, and cut off its branches. Strip off its leaves. Scatter its fruit around. The animals that are under the tree will run away. The birds that are in its branches will fly away.’

15 But let the stump and roots stay in the ground. Put a band of iron and bronze around it. The stump and roots will stay in the field with the grass all around it. It will live among the wild animals and plants in the fields. It will become wet with dew.

16 He will not think like a man any longer. He will have the mind of an animal. Seven seasons will pass while he is like this.’

17 Holy angels announced this punishment so that all the people on earth may know that God Most High rules over human kingdoms. God gives those kingdoms to whoever he wants, and he chooses humble people to rule them.

18 ‘That is what I, King Nebuchadnezzar, dreamed. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means. None of the wise men in my kingdom can tell me what that dream means. But Belteshazzar—

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zar, you can interpret the dream because the spirit of the holy gods is in you."

Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) became very quiet for a while. What he was thinking bothered him. So the king said, “Belteshazzar, don’t let the dream or its meaning make you afraid.”

Then Belteshazzar answered the king, “My lord, I wish the dream were about your enemies, and I wish the meaning of the dream were about those against you. You saw a tree in your dream. The tree grew large and strong. Its top touched the sky, and it could be seen from all over the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, and it had plenty of fruit. The fruit gave plenty of food for everyone. The tree was a home for the wild animals, and its branches were nesting places for the birds. You saw that tree.

King, you are that tree! You have become great and powerful. You are like the tall tree that touched the sky—your power reaches to the far parts of the earth.

King, you saw a holy angel coming down from heaven. He said, ‘Cut the tree down and destroy it. Put a band of iron and bronze around the stump and leave the stump and its roots in the ground. Leave it in the grass in the field. It will become wet with dew. He will live like a wild animal. Seven seasons will pass while he is like this.’

King, this is the meaning of the dream. God Most High has commanded these things to happen to my lord the king: King Nebuchadnezzar, you will be forced to go away from people. You will live among the wild animals and eat grass like an ox. Seven seasons will pass before you learn your lesson. Then you will learn that God Most High rules over human kingdoms and gives them to whoever he wants.”

These things happened immediately. Nebuchadnezzar was forced to go away from people. He began eating grass like an ox. He became wet from dew. His hair grew long like the feathers of an eagle, and his nails grew long like the claws of a bird.

Then at the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up toward heaven, and I was in my right mind again. Then I gave praise to God Most High. I gave honor and glory to him who lives forever. God rules forever! His kingdom continues for all generations.

People on earth are not really important. God does what he wants with the powers of heaven and the people on earth. No one can stop his powerful hand or question what he does.

At that time God gave me my right mind again, and he gave back

\[\text{roof}\] In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used as an extra room.
my great honor and power as king. My advisors and the royal people began to ask my advice again. I became the king again—even greater and more powerful than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, give praise, honor, and glory to the King of Heaven. Everything he does is right. He is always fair, and he is able to make proud people humble!

The Writing on the Wall

King Belshazzar gave a big party for 1000 of his officials. The king was drinking wine with them. As Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he ordered his servants to bring the gold and silver cups. His grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken these cups from the Temple in Jerusalem. King Belshazzar wanted his royal people, his wives, and his slave women to drink from those cups. So they brought the gold cups that had been taken from the Temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his officials, his wives, and his women slaves drank from them. As they were drinking, they gave praise to their idol gods, which were only statues made from gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

Suddenly, a person’s hand appeared and began writing on the wall. The fingers scratched words into the plaster on the wall, near the lampstand in the king’s palace. The king was watching the hand as it wrote.

King Belshazzar was very afraid. His face became white from fear, and his knees were shaking and knocking together. He could not stand up because his legs were too weak.

Then the king’s mother came into the place where the party was. She had heard the voices of the king and his royal officials. She said, “King, may you live forever! Don’t be afraid! Don’t let your face be so white with fear!” There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the days of your father, this man showed that he could understand secrets. He showed that he was very smart and very wise. He showed that he was like the gods in these things. Your grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar, put this man in charge of all the wise men. He ruled over all the men of magic and the Chaldeans.

The man I am talking about is named Daniel. The king gave him the name Belteshazzar. He is very smart and he knows many things. He could interpret dreams, explain secrets, and find the answer to very hard problems. Call for Daniel, he will tell you what the writing on the wall means.”

So they brought Daniel to the king and he asked, “Is your name Daniel, one of the captives my father the king brought here from Judah? I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you understand secrets and are very smart and very wise. The wise men and the men of magic were brought to me to read this writing on the wall. I wanted them to explain to me what it means, but they could not explain it. I have heard that you are able to explain what things mean, and that you can find the answer to very hard problems. If you can read this writing on the wall and explain to me what it means, this is what I will do for you: I will give you purple robes to wear and will put a gold chain around his neck. I will make him the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”
will become the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

Then Daniel answered the king, “King Belshazzar, you can keep your gifts for yourself, or you can give them to someone else. But I will still read the writing on the wall for you and explain what it means.

“King, God Most High made your grandfather Nebuchadnezzar a very great and powerful king and gave him great wealth. People from many nations and language groups were very afraid of Nebuchadnezzar because God made him a very powerful king. Nebuchadnezzar killed whoever he wanted and let those who pleased him live. If he wanted to make people important, he made them important. If he wanted to bring them down, he brought them down.

But Nebuchadnezzar became proud and stubborn, so his power was taken away from him. He was taken off his royal throne and stripped of his glory.

Then Nebuchadnezzar was forced to go away from people. His mind became like the mind of an animal. He lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like an ox. He became wet with dew. These things happened to him until he learned his lesson. He learned that God Most High rules over human kingdoms, and he gives them to whoever he wants.

But Belshazzar, you already knew this. You are Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson, but still you have not made yourself humble. No, you did not become humble. Instead, you have turned against the Lord of heaven. You ordered the drinking cups from his Temple to be brought to you. Then you and your royal officials, your wives, and your slave women drank wine from those cups. You gave praise to the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone. They are not really gods; they cannot see or hear or understand anything. But you did not give honor to the God who has the power over your life and everything you do. So because of that, God sent the hand that wrote on the wall. These are the words that were written on the wall:

**Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.**

This is what these words mean:

**Mene**: God has counted the days until your kingdom will end.

**Tekel**: You have been weighed on the scales and found not good enough.

**Upharsin**: Your kingdom is being taken from you. It will be divided among the Medes and Persians.”

Then Belshazzar gave an order for Daniel to be dressed in purple clothes. A gold chain was put around his neck, and he was appointed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

That very same night, Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was killed. A man named Darius the Mede became the new king. Darius was about 62 years old.

**Daniel and the Lions**

Darius thought it would be a good idea to choose 120 satraps to rule throughout his kingdom. He chose three men to rule over the 120 satraps. Daniel was one of the three supervisors. The king put these men in this position to keep anyone from cheating him. Daniel proved himself to be a better supervisor than any of the others. He did this by his good character and great ability. The king was so impressed with Daniel that he planned to make him ruler over the whole kingdom. But when the other supervisors and the satraps heard about this, they were very jealous. They tried to find reasons to accuse Daniel. So they watched

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\[a\] 5:22 grandson Or “son.” This does not necessarily mean they were from the same family. It might only mean that Belshazzar was one of the kings of Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar was king.

\[b\] 5:26 Mene A weight, like the Hebrew word “mina.” This is like the word “to count.”

\[c\] 5:27 Tekel A weight, like the Hebrew word “shekel.” This word is like the word meaning “to weigh.”

\[d\] 5:28 Upharsin Literally, “peres,” a weight. This word is like the word meaning “to divide” or “to split.” It is also like the name of the country of Persia.

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what Daniel did as he went about doing the business of the government. But they could not find anything wrong with him, so they could not accuse him of doing anything wrong. Daniel was a man people could trust. He did not cheat the king, and he worked very hard.

5Finally, they said, “We will never find any reason to accuse Daniel of doing something wrong. So we must find something to complain about that is connected to the law of his God.”

6So the two supervisors and the satraps went as a group to the king. They said, “King Darius, live forever! The supervisors, prefects, satraps, advisors, and governors have all agreed on something. We think that the king should make this law and that everyone must obey it: For the next 30 days, whoever prays to any god or man except you, King, will be thrown into the lions’ den. 7Now, King, make the law and sign the paper it is written on so that it cannot be changed, because the laws of the Medes and Persians cannot be canceled or changed.” 8So King Darius made the law and signed it.

9Daniel always prayed to God three times every day. Three times every day, he bowed down on his knees to pray and praise God. Even though Daniel heard about the new law, he still went to his house to pray. He went up to the upper room of his house and opened the windows that faced toward Jerusalem. Then Daniel bowed down on his knees and prayed just as he always had done.

10Then the supervisors and satraps went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. 11So they went to the king and talked to him about the law he had made. They said, “King Darius, you signed a law that says, for the next 30 days anyone who prays to any god or man except you, the king, would be thrown into the lions’ den. You did sign that law, didn’t you?”

The king answered, “Yes, I signed that law, and the laws of the Medes and Persians cannot be canceled or changed.” 13Then they said to the king, “That man Daniel is not paying any attention to you. He is one of the captives from Judah, and he is not paying attention to the law you signed. Daniel still prays to his God three times every day.”

14The king became very sad and upset when he heard this. He decided to save Daniel. He worked until sunset trying to think of a way to save him. 15Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, “Remember, King, that the law of the Medes and Persians says that no law or command signed by the king can ever be canceled or changed.”

16So King Darius gave the order. They brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May the God you serve save you!” 17A big rock was brought and put over the opening of the lions’ den. Then the king used his ring and put his seal on the rock. He also used the rings of his officials and put their seals on the rock. This showed that no one could move that rock and bring Daniel out of the lion’s den. 18Then King Darius went back to his house. He did not eat that night. He did not want anyone to come and entertain him. He could not sleep all night.

19The next morning, King Darius got up just as it was getting light and ran to the lions’ den. 20He was very worried. When he got to the lions’ den, he called to Daniel. He said, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God been able to save you from the lions? You always serve your God.” 21Daniel answered, “King, live forever! My God sent his angel to save me. The angel closed the lions’ mouths. The lions have not hurt me because my God knows I am innocent. I never did anything wrong to you, King.” 22King Darius was very happy. He told his servants to lift Daniel out of the lions’ den. And when Daniel was lifted out of the den, they did not find any injury on

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his body. The lions did not hurt Daniel because he trusted in his God.

24 Then the king gave a command to bring the men who had accused Daniel to the lions’ den. The men and their wives and children were thrown into the lions’ den. The lions grabbed them before they hit the floor. The lions ate their bodies and then chewed on their bones.

25 Then King Darius wrote this letter to all the people from other nations and language groups all around the world:

Greetings:

26 I am making a new law. This law is for people in every part of my kingdom. All of you must fear and respect the God of Daniel.

Daniel’s God is the living God; he lives forever.

His kingdom will never be destroyed.

His rule will never end.

27 God helps and saves people. He does amazing miracles in heaven and on earth.

He saved Daniel from the lions.

28 So Daniel was successful during the time Darius was king and when Cyrus the Persian was king.

Daniel’s Dream About Four Animals

7 During the first year that Belshazzar a was king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream. He saw these visions while he was lying on his bed, and he wrote what he had dreamed. 2 Daniel said, “I saw my vision at night. In the vision the wind was blowing from all four directions. These winds made the sea rough. 3 I saw four big animals and each one was different from the others. These four animals came up out of the sea.

4 “The first animal looked like a lion, but it had wings like an eagle. As I watched, its wings were torn off. It was helped up from the ground, and it stood up on two feet like a human. Then it was given a human mind.

5 “Then I saw another animal there in front of me that looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up and eat all the meat you want!’

6 “After that I noticed another animal in front of me. It looked like a leopard, but it had four wings on its back. This animal had four heads. It was given authority to rule.

7 “After that, in my vision at night, I looked, and there in front of me was a fourth animal. It looked very cruel and terrifying. It looked very strong, with large iron teeth. This animal crushed and ate its victims and walked on whatever was left of them. This fourth animal was different from all the animals I saw before it. This animal had ten horns.

8 “While I was looking at the horns and thinking about them, another horn grew up among them. This was a little horn with eyes like a human. It also had a mouth that was bragging. Then the little horn pulled out three of the other horns.

Judgment of the Fourth Animal

9 “As I was looking, thrones were put in their places, and the Ancient King b sat on his throne.

His clothes were as white as snow.

His hair was as white as wool.

His throne was made from fire, c and its wheels were made from flames.

10 A river of fire flowed out from in front of the Ancient King.

 Millions of people were serving him. Hundreds of millions of people stood in front of him.

Court was ready to begin, and the books were opened.

11 “I kept on looking because the little horn was bragging. I kept watching until finally the fourth animal was killed. Its body was destroyed, and it was thrown into the burning fire. 12 The authority and

a 7:1 the first year … Belshazzar This was about 553 B.C.

b 7:9 Ancient King Literally, “Ancient of Days.” This name pictures God as a great king who has ruled since ancient times. Also in verses 10, 13, 22.

c 7:9 fire Or “light.”
rule of the other animals had been taken from them. But they were permitted to live for a certain period of time.

13“In my vision at night I looked, and there in front of me was someone who looked like a human being. He was coming on the clouds in the sky. He came up to the Ancient King, and the King’s servants brought him before the King.

14“The one who looked like a human being was given authority, glory, and complete ruling power. People from every nation and language group will serve him. His rule will last forever. His kingdom will continue forever. It will never be destroyed.

The Meaning of Daniel’s Dream

15“I, Daniel, was confused and worried. The visions that went through my mind bothered me. 16I went to someone who was standing there and asked him what all this meant. So he explained it to me.

17He said, ‘The four great animals are four kingdoms that will come from the earth. 18But God’s holy people will receive the kingdom, and they will have the kingdom forever and ever.’

19“Then I wanted to know what the fourth animal was and what it meant. The fourth animal was different from all the other animals. It was very terrible and had iron teeth and bronze claws. It was the animal that crushed and ate its victims and walked on whatever was left. 20I wanted to know about the ten horns that were on the fourth animal’s head and about the little horn that grew there. That little horn pulled out three of the other ten horns. That little horn had eyes and a mouth that kept on bragging, and it looked bigger than the other horns. 21As I was watching, this little horn began attacking and making war against God’s holy people and killing them. 22The little horn kept killing God’s holy people until the Ancient King came and judged him. The Ancient King announced his decision about the little horn. This judgment helped God’s holy people, and they received the kingdom.

23“And he explained this to me: ‘The fourth animal is a fourth kingdom that will come on the earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms. That fourth kingdom will destroy people all around the world. It will walk on and crush nations all around the world. 24The ten horns are ten kings that will come from this fourth kingdom. After those ten kings are gone, another king will come. He will be different from the kings who ruled before him. He will defeat three of the other kings. 25This special king will say things against God Most High, and he will hurt and kill God’s special people. That king will try to change the times and laws that have already been set. God’s holy people will be under that king’s power for three and one-half years. 26“But the court will decide what should happen, and that king’s power will be taken away. His kingdom will end completely. 27Then God’s holy people will rule over the kingdom and all the people from all the kingdoms of earth. This kingdom will last forever, and people from all the other kingdoms will respect and serve them.’

28“And that was the end of the dream. I, Daniel, was very afraid. My face became very white from fear, and I did not tell the other people what I saw and heard.’

Daniel’s Vision of a Ram and a Goat

8After that vision, I, Daniel, saw another vision during the third year that Belshazzar was king. 2In the vision I saw that I was in the city of Susa. 3Susa was the capital city in the province of Elam. I was standing by the Ulai River. 4I looked up and saw a ram standing at the side of the river. The ram had two long
horns. The horns were both long, but one horn was longer than the other horn. The long horn was farther back than the other horn. I watched the ram run into things with its horns. I watched the ram run to the west, to the north, and to the south. No animal could stop the ram, and no one could save the other animals. That ram did whatever it wanted, and it became very powerful.

5 I thought about the ram. While I was watching, I saw a male goat come from the west. It had one large horn that was easy to see. It ran so fast its feet barely touched the ground.

6 The goat came to the ram with the two horns. (This was the ram I had seen standing by the Ulai River.) The goat was very angry and ran at the ram. As I watched, the goat ran at the ram and broke both of the ram’s horns. The ram could not stop the goat. The goat knocked it to the ground and walked all over it. There was no one to save the ram from the goat.

7 So the goat became very powerful. But after he became strong, his big horn broke off. Then four horns grew in place of the one big horn. Those four horns were easy to see. They pointed in four different directions.

8 Then a little horn grew from one of those four horns. It grew and became very big. It grew toward the southeast, toward the Beautiful Land.

9 Then I heard two holy ones talking with each other. One of them asked the other one, who had been speaking, “How long will the things in this vision last—the stopping of the daily sacrifices, the sin that destroys, and the trampling down of the holy place and heaven’s army?”

10 The other holy one said, “This will last for 2300 days. Then the holy place will be repaired.”

The Vision Is Explained to Daniel

15 I, Daniel, saw this vision and tried to understand what it meant. While I was thinking about the vision, someone who looked like a man suddenly stood in front of me. Then I heard a man’s voice. This voice came from above the Ulai River. The voice called out, “Gabriel, explain the vision to this man.”

16 So Gabriel, the angel who looked like a man, came to me. I was very afraid and fell down to the ground. But Gabriel said to me, “Human, understand that this vision is about the time of the end.”

17 While Gabriel was speaking, I fell to the ground and went to sleep. It was a very deep sleep. Then Gabriel touched me and lifted me to my feet. He said, “Now, I will explain the vision to you. I will tell you what will happen in the future. Your vision was about the end times.

18 “You saw a ram with two horns. The horns are the countries of Media and Persia. The goat is the king of Greece. The big horn between its eyes is the first king.

21 That horn broke off and four horns grew in its place. The four horns are four kingdoms. Those four kingdoms will come from the nation of the first king, but they will not be as strong as the first king.

22 “When the end is near for those kingdoms, there will be a very bold and cruel king who will be very tricky. This will happen when many people have turned against God. This king will be very powerful, but his power does not come from himself. This king will cause

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\(8:17\) Human Literally, “Son of man.”

\(8:24\) but his power … himself Some ancient versions don’t have these words, so they may have been accidentally copied from verse 22.
terrible destruction. He will be successful in everything he does. He will destroy powerful people—even God’s holy people.

25“This king will be very smart and tricky. He will use his wisdom and lies to be successful. He will think that he is very important. He will destroy many people, when they least expect it. He will try to fight even the Prince of Princes. But that cruel king’s power will be destroyed, and it will not be a human hand that destroys him.

26“What I said and the vision about those times are true. But seal up the vision, because those things will not happen for a long, long time.”

27I, Daniel, became very weak. I was sick for several days after that vision. Then I got up and went back to work for the king, but I was very upset about the vision. I did not understand what it meant.

Daniel’s Prayer

9These things happened during the first year that Darius son of Ahasuerus\textsuperscript{a} was king. Darius was a Mede by birth, but he was appointed to be the king of Babylon.\textsuperscript{b}During his first year as king, I was studying the Scriptures\textsuperscript{b} and noticed in the Lord’s message to Jeremiah that 70 years would pass before Jerusalem would be rebuilt.

3Then I turned to the Lord God. I prayed to him and asked him for help. I did not eat any food. I put ashes on my head and put on the clothes that showed I was sad.\textsuperscript{c}I prayed to the Lord my God and told him about all my sins. I said,

“Lord, you are a great and awesome God. You keep your agreement of love and kindness with people who love you. You keep your agreement with the people who obey your commands.

5“But we have sinned. We have done wrong. We have done evil things. We turned against you. We turned away from your commands and good decisions.\textsuperscript{d}The prophets were your servants. They spoke for you to our kings, to our leaders, to our fathers, and to the common people in our country. But we did not listen to them.

6“Lord, you are innocent, and the shame belongs to us, even now. Shame belongs to the people from Judah and Jerusalem, and to all the people of Israel, to those who are near and to those you scattered among many nations. They should be ashamed of all the evil things they did against you.

7“Lord, you are innocent, and the shame belongs to us, even now. Shame belongs to the people from Judah and Jerusalem, and to all the people of Israel, to those who are near and to those you scattered among many nations. They should be ashamed of all the evil things they did against you.

8“Lord, you are innocent, and the shame belongs to us, even now. Shame belongs to the people from Judah and Jerusalem, and to all the people of Israel, to those who are near and to those you scattered among many nations. They should be ashamed of all the evil things they did against you.

9“But, Lord our God, you are kind and forgiving, even though we rebelled against you.\textsuperscript{e}We have not obeyed the Lord our God. He used his servants, the prophets, and gave us laws, but we have not obeyed his laws.\textsuperscript{f}All the people of Israel disobeyed your teachings and turned away from you. They did not listen to you. We sinned, so you did what you promised to do. All the curses and promises\textsuperscript{a} in the Law of Moses, your servant, happened to us.

12“God said those things would happen to us and our leaders, and he made them happen. He made terrible things happen to us. No other city suffered the way Jerusalem suffered.\textsuperscript{a}All those terrible things happened to us. This happened just as it is written in the Law of Moses, but we still have not asked the Lord our God for help. We still have not stopped sinning. We still do not pay attention to your truth, Lord.\textsuperscript{g}The Lord kept the terrible things ready for us—he

\textsuperscript{a}9:1 Ahasuerus Or “Xerxes.”
\textsuperscript{b}9:2 Scriptures Literally, “scrolls.”
\textsuperscript{c}9:11 curses and promises Part of the agreement that God made with the people of Israel. See, for example, Deut. 27–30.

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made them happen to us. The Lord our God did this because he is fair in everything he does. But we still have not listened to him.

15 “Lord our God, you used your power and brought us out of Egypt. We are your people. You are famous because of that, even today. We have sinned and done terrible things. 16 Lord, we and our ancestors sinned against you, so your people and your city became a disgrace to everyone around us. You do so many good things, so stop being angry at Jerusalem, your city, your holy mountain.

17 “Now, our God, hear your servant’s prayer. Listen to my prayer for mercy. For your own sake, do good things for your holy place. 18 My God, listen to me! Open your eyes and see all the terrible things that have happened to us. See what has happened to the city that is called by your name. I am not saying we are good people. That is not why I am asking these things. I am asking these things because I know you are kind.

19 Lord, listen to me! Forgive us! Lord, pay attention, and then do something! Don’t wait! Do something now! Do it for your own good! My God, do something now, for your city and your people who are called by your name.”

The Vision About the 70 Weeks

20 I was praying to the LORD my God about his holy mountain and telling about my sins and the sins of the people of Israel. 21 That was the time of the evening sacrifices. While I was still praying, Gabriel, the one I saw in the first vision, flew quickly to me and touched me. He came at the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 Gabriel helped me understand the things I wanted to know. He said, “Daniel, I have come to give you wisdom and to help you understand. 23 When you first started praying, the command was given to come speak to you. God loves you very much! You will understand this command, and you will understand the vision.

24 “God has allowed 70 weeksb for your people and your holy city, Daniel. The 70 weeks are ordered for these reasons: to stop doing bad things, to stop sinning, to make people pure, to bring the goodness that continues forever, to put a seal on visions and prophets, and to dedicate a very holy place.

25 “Learn and understand these things, Daniel. From the time that the message went out to go back and rebuild Jerusalem until the time for the chosen kingc to come will be seven weeks. Then Jerusalem will be rebuilt. There will again be places for people to meet together in Jerusalem, and there will be a ditch around the city to protect it. Jerusalem will be built for 62 weeks, but there will be many troubles during that time. 26 After the 62 weeks, the chosen one will be killed. 27 Then the people of the future leader will destroy the city and the holy place. That end will come like a flood. War will continue until the end. God has ordered that place to be completely destroyed.

28 “Then the future ruler will make an agreement with many people. That agreement will continue for one week. The offerings and sacrifices will stop for a half of a week. And a destroyer will come. He will do terrible, destructive things, but God has ordered that destroyer to be completely destroyed.”

Daniel’s Vision by the Tigris River

10 During the third year that Cyrus was the king of Persia, these things were shown to Daniel. (Daniel’s other name is Belteshazzar.) They are true, but

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*a* 9:17 do ... your holy place Literally, “let your face shine on your holy place.”

*b* 9:24 week Or “unit of seven.” The Hebrew word could mean “week” or “a period of seven years.” Also in verses 25, 27.

*c* 9:25 chosen king Literally, “anointed one.”

*d* 9:26 killed Literally, “cut off.”

*e* 9:26 He will be gone Or “He will have nothing.”

*f* 9:27 He will do ... things Or “He will come on the wings of terrible destruction.”
very hard to understand. Daniel understood them because they were explained to him in a vision.

2 At that time I, Daniel, was very sad for three weeks. During those three weeks, I didn’t eat any fancy food; I didn’t eat any meat or drink any wine. I didn’t put any oil on my head. I didn’t do any of these things for three weeks.

4 On the 24th day of the first month of the year, I was standing beside the great Tigris River. While I was standing there, I looked up and I saw a man standing in front of me. He was wearing linen clothes. He wore a belt made of pure gold around his waist. His body was like a smooth, shiny stone. His face was bright like lightning. His eyes were like flames of fire. His arms and feet were shiny like polished brass. His voice was loud like a crowd of people.

7 I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision. The men with me didn’t see the vision, but they were still afraid. They were so afraid that they ran away and hid. So I was left alone. I was watching this vision, and it made me afraid. I lost my strength. My face turned white like a dead person’s face, and I was helpless.

10 Then a hand touched me. When that happened, I got on my hands and knees. I was so afraid that I was shaking.

13 While the man was talking to me, I bowed low with my face toward the ground. I could not speak.

16 Then the one who looked like a man touched me again. When he touched me, I felt better.

19 Then he said, “Daniel, don’t be afraid. God loves you very much. Peace be with you. Be strong now, be strong.” When he spoke to me, I became stronger. Then I said, “Sir, you have given me strength. Now you can speak.”

20 So then he said, “Daniel, do you know why I have come to you? Soon I must go back to fight against the prince of Persia. When I go, the prince of Greece will come. But Daniel, before I go, I must first tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. No one stands with me against those evil angels except Michael, the prince over your people.

11 “During the first year that Darius the Mede was king, I stood up to support Michael in his fight against the prince of Persia.

24 Now then, Daniel, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will rule in Persia. Then a fourth king will come who will be much richer than all the other kings of Persia before him. He will use his riches to get power and turn everyone against the kingdom of Greece. Then a very strong and powerful king will come who will rule with much power. He will do anything
he wants. Just as he comes to power, his kingdom will be broken up and scattered in all directions. It will not be divided among his descendants. And it will not be ruled in the same way because that kingdom will be pulled up and given to other people.

5“The southern king will become strong, but then one of his commanders will defeat him. The commander will begin to rule, and he will be very powerful.

6“Then after a few years, the southern king and that commander will make an agreement. The daughter of the southern king will marry the northern king. She will do this to bring peace, but she and the southern king will not be strong enough. People will turn against her and against the one who brought her to that country. And they will turn against her child and against the one who helped her.

7“But someone from her family will come to take the southern king’s place. He will attack the armies of the northern king. He will go into that king’s strong fort. He will fight and win. He will take their gods and their metal idols and their expensive things made from silver and gold. He will take those things away to Egypt. Then he will not bother the northern king for a few years. The northern king will attack the southern kingdom. But he will lose, and then he will go back to his own country.

8“The northern king’s sons will prepare for war. They will get a large army together. It will move through the land very quickly, like a powerful flood. That army will fight all the way to the strong fort of the southern king. Then the southern king will become very angry and march out to fight against the northern king. The northern king will have a large army, but he will lose the war. The northern army will be defeated, and those soldiers will be carried away. The southern king will be very proud, and he will kill thousands of soldiers from the northern army. But he will not continue to be successful.

9“The northern king will get another army that will be larger than the first one. After several years he will attack. His army will be ready for war. It will be very large and it will have many weapons.

10“In those times many people will be against the southern king. Some of your own people who love to fight will rebel against the southern king. They will not win, but they will make the vision come true. Then the northern king will come. He will build ramps against the walls and will capture a strong city. The southern army will not have the power to fight back. Even the best soldiers from the southern army will not be strong enough to stop the northern army.

11“The northern king will do whatever he wants. No one will be able to stop him. He will gain power and control in the Beautiful Land, and he will have the power to destroy it. Then the northern king will decide to use all his power to fight against the southern king, and he will make an agreement with the southern king. The king of the north will let one of his daughters marry the southern king so that he can defeat the southern king. But those plans will not succeed. His plans will not help him.

12“Then the northern king will turn his attention to the countries along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. He will defeat many of those cities, but then a commander will put an end to the pride and rebellion of that northern king. The commander will make the northern king ashamed.

13“After that happens, the northern king will go back to the strong forts of his own country. But he will be weak and will fall. He will be finished.

14“After the northern king, there will be a new ruler who sends out tax collectors so that he can live like a king. But after a few years, he will be destroyed, although he will not die in battle.

15“That ruler will be followed by a very cruel and hated man, who will not have the honor of being from a king’s family. a

a 11:21 who ... king’s family Or “who will not have the good qualities a king should have.”
He will become a ruler by being tricky. He will attack the kingdom when the people feel safe. 22 He will defeat large and powerful armies. He will even defeat the leader with the agreement. 23 Many nations will make agreements with that cruel and hated ruler, but he will lie and trick them. He will gain much power, but only a few people will support him.

24 “When the richest countries feel safe, that cruel and hated ruler will attack them. He will attack at just the right time and will be successful where his ancestors were not successful. He will take things from the countries he defeated, and he will give them to his followers. He will plan to defeat and destroy strong cities. He will be successful—but only for a short time.

25 “That very cruel and hated ruler will have a very large army. He will use that army to show his strength and courage and attack the southern king. The southern king will get a very large and powerful army and go to war. But the people who are against him will make secret plans, and the southern king will be defeated. 26 People who were supposed to be good friends of the southern king will try to destroy him. His army will be defeated. Many of his soldiers will be killed in battle. 27 Those two kings will want to make trouble. They will sit around the table planning their lies, but it will not do either one of them any good because God has set a time for their end to come.

28 “The northern king will go back to his own country with much wealth. Then he will decide to do bad things against the holy agreement. 29 He will do the things he planned, and then he will go back to his own country.

29 “At the right time, the northern king will attack the southern king again. But this time he will not be successful as he was before. 30 Ships from Cyprus will come and fight against the northern king. He will see those ships coming and be afraid. Then he will turn back and take out his anger on the holy agreement. He will turn back and help those who stopped following the holy agreement. 31 The northern king will send his army to do terrible things to the Temple in Jerusalem. They will stop the people from offering the daily sacrifice. Then they will do something really terrible. They will set up that terrible thing that causes destruction.

32 “The northern king will use lies and smooth talking to trick those who quit following the holy agreement, so they will sin even worse. But those who know God and obey him will be strong. They will fight back.

33 “Those wise teachers will help the other people understand what is happening. But even they will have to suffer persecution. Some of them will be killed with swords. Some of them will be burned or taken prisoner. Some of them will have their homes and things taken away. 34 When those wise people are punished, they will receive some help, but many people who join them will be hypocrites. 35 Some of the wise people will stumble and make mistakes. But the persecution must come so that they can be made stronger and purer until the time of the end. Then, at the right time, that time of the end will come.

The King Who Praises Himself

36 “The northern king will do whatever he wants. He will brag about himself. He will praise himself and think that he is even better than a god. He will say things that no one has ever heard. He will say those things against the God of gods. He will be successful until all the evil things have happened. Then what God has planned to happen will happen.

37 “That northern king will not care about the gods his ancestors worshiped. He will not care about the gods women worship. He will not care about any god. Instead, he will praise himself and make himself more important than any god. 38 The northern king will not worship any
god, but he will worship power. Power and strength will be his god. His ancestors didn’t love power as he does. He will honor the god of power with gold and silver, expensive jewels, and gifts.

39“ That northern king will attack strong fortresses with the help of this foreign god. He will give much honor to the foreign rulers who join him. He will put many people under their rule. He will make the rulers pay him for the land they rule over.

40“ At the time of the end, the southern king will fight a battle against the northern king. The northern king will attack him with chariots and soldiers on horses and many large ships. The northern king will rush through the land like a flood. 41 The northern king will attack the Beautiful Land. He will defeat many countries. But Edom, Moab, and the leaders of Ammon will be saved from him. 42 The northern king will show his power in many countries. Egypt will also learn how powerful he is. 43 He will get treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt. The Libyans and Ethiopians will obey him. 44 But that northern king will hear news from the east and the north that will make him afraid and angry. He will go to completely destroy many nations. 45 He will set up his king’s tents between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain. a

But finally, that bad king will die. There will be no one to help him when his end comes.

12 "Daniel, at that time the great prince Michael will stand up. Michael is in charge of your people. There will be a time of much trouble, the worst time since nations have been on earth. But Daniel, at that time every one of your people whose name is found written in the book of life will be saved. 2 There are many who are dead and buried. b Some of them will wake up and live forever, but others will wake up to shame and disgrace forever. 3 The wise people will shine as bright as the sky. Those who teach others to live right will shine like stars forever and ever. c

4 “But you, Daniel, keep this message a secret. You must close the book and keep this secret until the time of the end. Many people will go here and there looking for true knowledge, and the true knowledge will increase.”

5 Then I, Daniel, noticed two other men. One man was standing on my side of the river, and the other was standing on the other side. 6 The man who was dressed in linen was standing over the water in the river. One of the two men said to him, “How long will it be before these amazing things come true?”

7 The man dressed in linen and standing over the water lifted his right and left hands toward heaven. And I heard him make a promise using the name of God who lives forever. He said, “It will be for three and one-half years. d The power of the holy people will be broken, and then all these things will finally come true.”

8 I heard the answer, but I really didn’t understand. So I asked, “Sir, what will happen after all this comes true?”

9 He answered, “Go on about your life Daniel. The message is hidden. It will be a secret until the time of the end. 10 Many people will be made pure—they will make themselves clean. But evil people will continue to be evil. And those wicked people will not understand these things, but the wise people will understand them. 11 "The daily sacrifice will be stopped. There will be 1290 days from that time until the time that the terrible thing that destroys is set up. 12 The one who waits for and comes to the end of the 1335 days will be very happy.

13 "As for you, Daniel, go and live your life until the end. You will get your rest. At the end you will rise from death and receive your share of the promise.”

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The Lord God’s Message Through Hosea

1This is the Lord’s message that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the time that Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, and Jeroboam son of Joash was king of Israel.

2This was the Lord’s first message to Hosea. The Lord said, “Go, marry a prostitute who has had children as a result of her prostitution. Do this because the people in this country have acted like prostitutes—they have been unfaithful to the Lord.”

The Birth of Jezreel

3So Hosea married Gomer daughter of Diblaim. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Hosea.

4The Lord said to Hosea, “Name him Jezreel, a because soon I will punish the family of Jehu for the people he killed at Jezreel Valley. b Then I will put an end to the kingdom of the nation c of Israel. d And at that time I will break Israel’s bow at Jezreel Valley.”

The Birth of Lo-Ruhamah

6Then Gomer had finished nursing Lo-Ruhamah, she became pregnant again and gave birth to a daughter. The Lord said to Hosea, “Name her Lo-Ruhamah, d because I will not show mercy to the nation of Israel anymore, nor will I forgive them. e But I will show mercy to the nation of Judah. I will save them, but I will not use bows or swords or war horses and soldiers f to save them. I will save them by my own power.” g

The Birth of Lo-Ammi

8After Gomer had finished nursing Lo-Ruhamah, she became pregnant again and gave birth to a son. h Then the Lord said, “Name him Lo-Ammi, f because you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

The Lord Speaks to the Nation of Israel

10“In the future the number of the people of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which you cannot measure or count. In the same place that God told them, ‘You are not my people,’ he will call them ‘children of the Living God.’

11Then the people of Judah and the people of Israel will be gathered together. They will choose one ruler for themselves, and their nation will be too large for the land. g Jezreel’s day will be great!

21Then you will say to your brothers, ‘You are my people,’ and you will say to your sisters, ‘He has shown mercy to you.’ h

2“Argue with your mother. i Argue with her because she is no longer my wife, and I am no longer her husband! Tell her to stop being like a prostitute. Tell her to take away her lovers j from between her breasts. k If she refuses to stop her adultery, I will strip her naked and leave her like the day she was born. I will take away her people.

a 1:4 Jezreel This name in Hebrew means “God will plant seeds.”

b 1:4 people ... at Jezreel Valley See 2 Kings 9–10 for the story of Jehu’s revolt at Jezreel Valley.

c 1:4 nation Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country. Also in verse 6.

d 1:6 Lo-Ruhamah This name in Hebrew means “She receives no mercy.” Also in verse 8.

e 1:7 by my own power Literally, “by the Lord their God.”

f 1:9 Lo-Ammi This name in Hebrew means “not my people.”

g 1:11 their nation ... land Literally, “they will go up from the land.”

h 2:1 Or “Then say to your brothers, ‘My people,’ and to your sisters, ‘You have been shown mercy.’”

i 2:2 mother This means the nation of Israel.

j 2:2 her lovers Or “adulteresses.” Adultery means breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin. God was like a husband to Israel. But Israel was worshiping false gods—this was spiritual adultery against God.
ple, and she will be like an empty, dry desert. I will kill her with thirst. I will have no pity on her children because they are the children of prostitution. Their mother has acted like a prostitute. She should be ashamed of what she did. She said, ‘I will go to my lovers, who give me food and water, wool and linen, wine and olive oil.’

6“So I, the Lord, will block Israel’s road with thorns, and I will build a wall. Then she will not be able to find her path. She will run after her lovers, but she will not be able to catch up with them. She will look for her lovers, but she will not be able to find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my husband. Life was better for me when I was with him. Life was better then than it is now.’

8“Israel didn’t know that I, the Lord, was the one who gave her grain, wine, and oil. I kept giving her more and more silver and gold, but she used this silver and gold to make statues of Baal. So I will return and take back my grain at the time it is ready to be harvested. I will take back my wine at the time the grapes are ready. I will take back my wool and linen. I gave those things to her so that she could cover her naked body. Now I will strip her. She will be naked, so all her lovers can see her. No one will be able to save her from my power.

11 I will take away all her fun. I will stop her festivals, her New Moon celebrations, and her days of rest. I will stop all her special feasts. I will destroy her vines and fig trees. She said, ‘My lovers gave these things to me.’ But I will change her gardens—they will become like a wild forest. Wild animals will come and eat from those plants.

13 “Israel served false gods, so I will punish her. She burned incense to those false gods. She dressed up—she put on her jewelry and nose ring. Then she went to her lovers and forgot me.” This is what the Lord has said.

14 “So I, the Lord, will speak romantic words to her. I will lead her into the desert and speak tender words. There I will give her vineyards. I will give her Achor Valley as a doorway of hope. Then she will answer as she did when she came out of the land of Egypt.” This is what the Lord says.

“At that time you will call me ‘My husband.’ You will not call me ‘My Baal.’ I will take the names of those false gods out of her mouth. Then people will not use those names again.

18 “At that time I will make an agreement for the Israelites with the animals of the field, the birds of the sky, and the crawling things on the ground. I will break the bow, the sword, and the weapons of war in that land. I will make the land safe, so the people of Israel can lie down in peace. And I will make you my bride forever. I will make you my bride with goodness and justice and with love and mercy. I will make you my faithful bride. Then you will really know the Lord. And at that time I will answer.” This is what the Lord says.

19 “I will speak to the skies, and they will give rain to the earth. The earth will produce grain, wine, oil, and they will meet Jezreel’s needs. I will sow her many seeds on her land. To Lo-Ruhamah, I will show mercy. To Lo-Ammi, I will say, ‘You are my people.’ And they will say to me, ‘You are our God.’ ”

Hosea Buys Gomer Back From Slavery

Then the Lord said to me again, “Gomer has many lovers, but you must continue loving her. Do this because

2 2:16 My Baal This is a wordplay. Baal was a Canaanite god, but the name also means “lord or husband.”
3 2:23 I will sow her many seeds Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, and Lo-Ammi are Hosea’s children. But the names also have special meanings. The name Jezreel means “God will plant seeds.” But Jezreel is also the name of a large valley in Israel. This probably shows that God will bring his people back to Israel.
4 2:23 Lo-Ruhamah This name in Hebrew means “She receives no mercy.”
5 2:23 Lo-Ammi This name in Hebrew means “not my people.”
6 3:1 Gomer This name in Hebrew means “a woman.”
The Lord Is Angry Against Israel

4 1People of Israel, listen to the Lord's message. The Lord has something to say against those who live in this land: “The people in this land are not honest or loyal. They don’t really know God. 2 They are always cursing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery. They murder one person after another. 3 So the country is like someone crying for the dead, and all of its people are weak. Even the animals of the field, the birds of the sky, and the fish in the sea are dying. 4 No one should argue or blame another person. Priests, my argument is with you! 5 You priests will fall in the daytime. And at night the prophet will also fall with you. I will also destroy your mother.

6 “My people are destroyed because they have no knowledge. You priests have refused to learn, so I will refuse to let you be priests for me. You have forgotten the law of your God, so I will forget your children. 7 They became proud. They sinned more and more against me, so I will change their honor to shame.

8 “The priests fed on the people’s sins. They wanted more and more of their sin offerings. 9 So the priests are no different from the people. I will punish them for the things they did. I will pay them back for the wrong things they did. 10 They will eat, but they will not be satisfied. They will commit sexual sins, but they will not have babies. 9 This is because they left the Lord and became like prostitutes.

11 “Sexual sins, strong drink, and new wine ruin a person’s ability to think straight. 12 My people are asking pieces of wood for advice. They think those sticks will answer them! They have chased after those false gods like prostitutes and have left their own God. 13 They make sacrifices on the tops of the mountains and burn incense on the hills under oak trees, popular trees, and elm trees. 14 The shade under those trees looks nice. So your daughters lie under those trees like prostitutes, and your daughters-in-law commit sexual sins.

14 “I cannot blame your daughters or your daughters-in-law for doing this, because your men go and have sex with the temple prostitutes and offer sacrifices with them. This is how foolish people destroy themselves.

The Shameful Sins of Israel

15 “Israel, just because you act like a prostitute doesn’t mean that Judah should feel guilty too. People, don’t go to Gilgal or Beth Aven. Don’t use the Lord’s name to make promises. Don’t say, ‘As the Lord lives . . . ’! 16 The Lord has given many things to Israel. He is like a shepherd who

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*a" This food was used in the feasts that honored false gods such as the "Queen of Heaven."

*b 3:2 6 ounces Literally, “15 shekels” (172.5 g).

c 3:2 9 bushels Literally, “1 homer and 1 letekh” (231 l).

d 4:3 dying Literally, “being taken away.”

e 4:4 Or “The people cannot complain or blame someone else. The people are helpless, like arguing with a priest.” Many times the priests and Levites served as judges, and their decisions were final.

f 4:8 This is a wordplay. The word “sins” also means “sin offerings.” So instead of eating sacrifices, the priests became hungry for sin itself.

g 4:10 They . . . babies A part of worshiping the false gods was having sexual relations with temple prostitutes. The people thought this would make the gods happy. And then the gods would give the people large families and good crops.

h 4:13 under . . . trees Trees and groves were an important part of worshiping the false gods.

i 4:14 temple prostitutes Women who were prostitutes at the temples of the false gods. Their sexual sins were part of worshiping those false gods.

j 4:15 Beth Aven A name meaning “House of Evil.” It is a wordplay on the name “Bethel,” a name meaning “House of God.” There was a temple in this town. Also in 5:8.
takes his sheep to a large field with plenty of grass. But Israel is stubborn like a young cow that runs away again and again.

17“Ephraim has joined his idols, so leave him alone. 18Ephraim has joined their drunkenness. Let them continue to be prostitutes. Let them be with their lovers. 19They went to those gods for safety, and they have lost their ability to think. Their altars will bring them shame.

The Leaders Cause Israel and Judah to Sin

5 1Priests, nation of Israel, and people in the king’s family, listen to me. You have been judged guilty!

“You were like a trap at Mizpah and like a net spread on the ground at Tabor. 2You have done many evil things, so I will punish you all. 3I know Ephraim. I know what Israel has done. Ephraim, right now you act like a prostitute. Israel is dirty with sin. 4The people of Israel have done many evil things, and these evil things keep them from coming back to their God. They are always thinking of ways to chase after other gods. They don’t know the LORD. 5Israel’s pride is a witness against them, so Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their sin. But Judah will also stumble with them.

6“The leaders of the people went to look for the LORD. They took their sheep and cattle with them, but they did not find the LORD because he refused to accept them. 7They have not been faithful to the LORD. Their children are from some stranger. And now, he will destroy them and their land again.

A Prophecy of Israel’s Destruction

8“Blow the horn in Gibeah.

吹角拉末，警告在必大，以法莲要成为无子的女子，在审判的日子要成为空虚的妻，我，耶和华，警告以色列家必有这事发生。

9我必像狮子，像少年人的狮子，向全国的犹大，撕裂他们，用我一只手梢他们，没有人能救他们。

10我必回到我所在之处，直到人们承认他们是罪人，直到他们来找我。是的，他们的困难中，他们必尽力找我。”

The Rewards of Coming Back to the Lord

6 1Come, let’s go back to the LORD. He hurt us, but he will heal us. He wounded us, but he will put bandages on us.

2After two days he will bring us back to life. He will raise us up on the third day.
Then we can live near him. Let’s learn about the LORD. Let’s try very hard to know him. We know he is coming, just as we know the dawn is coming. He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain that waters the ground.”

The People Are Not Faithful

4 “Ephraim, what should I do with you? Judah, what should I do with you? Your faithfulness is like a morning mist. Your faithfulness is like the dew that goes away early in the morning.

5 I used the prophets and made laws for the people. The people were killed at my command, but good things will come from those decisions.a

6 This is because I want faithful love, not sacrifice. I want people to know God, not to bring burnt offerings.

7 But the people broke the agreement as Adam did.b They were unfaithful to me in their country.

8 Gilead is a city of people who do evil—people who have tricked and killed others.

9 The priests are like gangs of robbers hiding and waiting on the road to attack someone. They murder people before they reach safety in Shechem. They do such evil things.

10 I have seen a terrible thing in the nationc of Israel. Ephraim was unfaithful to God. Israel is dirty with sin.

11 Judah, there is also a time of harvest for you.

It will happen when I bring my people back from captivity.d

7 “I will heal Israel! Then people will know that Ephraim sinned. They will know about Samaria’se lies. They will know about the thieves who come and go in that town.

2 They don’t believe that I will remember their crimes. The bad things they did are all around. I can see their sins clearly. Their evil makes their king happy. Their false gods please their leaders.

4 A baker presses dough to make bread. He puts the bread in the oven. He does not make the fire hotter while the bread is rising. But the people of Israel are not like that. They are always making their fire hotter.

5 On Our King’s Day, the leaders get so drunk that they get sick. They become crazy with wine and make agreements with people who laugh at God.

6 The people make their secret plans. Their hearts burn with excitement like an oven. Their excitement burns all night, and in the morning it is like a hot fire.

7 They are all like hot ovens. They destroyed their rulers. All their kings fell. Not one of them called to me for help.

Israel and the Nations

8 “Ephraim mixes with the nations. Ephraim is like a cake that was not cooked on both sides.

9 Strangers destroy Ephraim’s strength, but Ephraim does not know it.

a 6:5 but good things … decisions Or “I cut them with the prophets. I killed them with the words from my mouth. Light will come from your decisions.”

b 6:7 as Adam did See Gen. 3.

c 6:10 nation Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country.

d 6:11 It will … captivity Or “It will happen when I restore my people’s fortune.”

e 7:1 Samaria The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel.
Gray hairs\textsuperscript{a} are also sprinkled on Ephraim, but Ephraim does not know it. 10 Ephraim’s pride speaks against him. The people had many troubles, but they still didn’t go back to the Lord their God. They didn’t look to him for help. 11 So Ephraim has become like a silly dove without understanding. The people called to Egypt for help. They went to Assyria for help. 12 They go to those countries for help, but I will trap them. I will throw my net over them, and I will bring them down like the birds of the sky. I will punish them for their agreements.\textsuperscript{b} 13 It will be very bad for those who left me. They refused to obey me, so they will be destroyed. I saved them, but they speak lies against me. 14 They never call to me from their hearts. Yes, they cry on their beds. And they cut themselves when they ask for grain and new wine. But in their hearts, they have turned away from me. 15 I trained them and made their arms strong, but they made evil plans against me. 16 Like a boomerang, they changed directions, but they did not come back to me.\textsuperscript{c} Their leaders bragged about their strength, but they will be killed with swords. And the people in Egypt will laugh at them.

\textsuperscript{a} 7:9 Gray hairs This word might describe something that was put on the food when people cooked, something that looked like gray hairs. 
\textsuperscript{b} 7:12 for their agreements Or “for the report of their treaties.”
\textsuperscript{c} 7:16 they changed … to me Or “They turned, but not upward” or “They turned to the ‘no-gods.’” That is, the statues people worshiped as gods.

\textbf{Idol Worship Leads to Destruction} 8 1\textsuperscript{e} Put the trumpet to your lips and give the warning. Be like an eagle over the Lord’s house.\textsuperscript{d} The Israelites have broken my agreement. They have not obeyed my law. 2 They yell out at me, ‘My God, we in Israel know you!’ 3 But Israel refused the good things, so the enemy chases him.\textsuperscript{4} The Israelites chose their kings, but they didn’t come to me for advice. They chose leaders, but they didn’t choose men I knew. The Israelites used their silver and gold to make idols for themselves, so they will be destroyed.\textsuperscript{5–6} He has refused your calf, Samaria.\textsuperscript{e} God says, ‘I am very angry with the Israelites.’ The people of Israel will be punished for their sin. Some worker made those statues. They are not God. Samaria’s calf will be broken into pieces.\textsuperscript{7} The Israelites did a foolish thing—it was like trying to plant the wind. But they will get only troubles—they will harvest a whirlwind. The grain in the fields will grow, but it will give no food. Even if it grew something, strangers would eat it. 8 “Israel was destroyed; its people are scattered among the nations, like some dish that was thrown away because no one wanted it. 9 Ephraim went to his ‘lovers.’\textsuperscript{f} Like a stubborn donkey, they led him off to Assyria. 10 Yes, Israel was taken to the nations, but I will bring them back. But first, they must suffer a little by carrying the burden of that mighty king.

\textbf{Israel Forgets God and Worships Idols} 11 “Ephraim built more and more altars, and that was a sin. They have been altars of sin for

\textsuperscript{d} 8:1 Be like an eagle … Lord’s house Or “Be like a guard over the Lord’s house.”
\textsuperscript{e} 8:5–6 calf, Samaria Samaria was the capital city of Israel. The people of Israel made statues of calves and put them in the temples at Dan and Bethel. It is not clear if these statues represented the Lord or some false god. But God didn’t want them to use these statues. See 1 Kings 12:26–30.
\textsuperscript{f} 8:9 lovers This means Israel’s false gods.
Ephraim.

12 Even if I wrote 10,000 laws for Ephraim, he would treat them as if they were for some stranger.

13 The Israelites love sacrifices. They offer the meat and eat it. The Lord does not accept their sacrifices. He remembers their sins, and he will punish them. They will be carried away as prisoners to Egypt.

14 Israel has built palaces for their kings, and now Judah builds fortresses. But they have forgotten their Maker! So I will send a fire to destroy their cities and fortresses!”

The Sadness of Exile

9 Israel, don’t celebrate like the nations do. Don’t be happy. You acted like a prostitute and left your God. You committed your sexual sin on every threshing floor. But the grain from those threshing floors will not provide enough food for Israel. There will not be enough wine for Israel.

3 The Israelites will not stay in the Lord’s land. Ephraim will return to Egypt. In Assyria they will eat food that they should not eat. They will not be able to give offerings of wine to the Lord. None of their sacrifices will please him. What they offer will be like food eaten at a funeral—whomever eats it will become unclean. They can eat that food for their own hunger, but it cannot be taken into the Lord’s Temple.

8 The people of Israel left because the enemy took everything from them. But Egypt will take the people themselves. Memphis will bury them. Weeds will grow over their silver treasures, and thorns will grow where the Israelites lived.

Israel Rejected the True Prophets

7 The prophet says, “Israel, learn this: The time of punishment has come. The time has come for you to pay for the evil things you did.” But the people of Israel say, “The prophet is a fool. This man with God’s Spirit is crazy.” The prophet says, “You will be punished for your terrible sins. You will be punished for your hate.” God and the prophet are like guards watching over Ephraim, but there are many traps along his way. And people hate the prophet, even in the house of his God.

9 The Israelites have gone deep into ruin as in the time of Gibeah. God will remember the Israelites’ sins, and he will punish them.

Israel Is Ruined by Its Worship of Idols

10 “At the time I, the Lord, found Israel, they were like fresh grapes in the desert. They were like the first figs on a fig tree at the beginning of the season. But when they came to Baal Peor, they changed. So I had to cut them off like rotten fruit. They became like the terrible things that they loved.

The Israelites Will Have No Children

11 “Like a bird, Ephraim’s glory will fly away. There will be no more pregnancies, no more births, and no more babies. But even if the Israelites do raise their children, it will not help, because I will take the children away from them. I will leave them, and they will have nothing but troubles.”

13 I can see that Ephraim is leading his children into a trap. Ephraim will lead his children out to the killer. Lord, give them what you will. Give them a womb that loses babies and breasts that cannot give milk.

15 All their evil is in Gilgal; I began hating them there.
I will force them to leave my house because of the evil things they do. I will not love them anymore. Their leaders are rebels who turned against me. Ephraim will be punished. Their root is dying. They will not have any more babies. They might give birth to babies, but I will kill the precious babies who come from their bodies. Those people will not listen to my God, so he will refuse to listen to them. And they will wander among the nations without a home.

Israel’s Riches Led to Its Worship of Idols

10 Israel is like a vine that grows plenty of fruit. But as Israel got more and more things, he built more and more altars to honor false gods. His land became better and better, so he put up better and better stones to honor false gods. The people of Israel tried to trick God, but now they must accept their guilt. He will break down their altars and destroy their memorial stones. The people from Samaria worship the calves at Beth Aven. They will cry. The priests will cry, because their beautiful idol is gone. It was carried away. It was carried away as a gift to the great king of Assyria. He will keep Ephraim’s shame-ful idol. Israel will be ashamed of its idol. Samaria’s false god will be destroyed. It will be like a piece of wood floating away on the water’s surface. Israel sinned and built many high places. The high places of Aven will be destroyed. Thorns and weeds will grow on their altars. Then they will say to the mountains, “Cover us!” and to the hills, “Fall on us!”

Israel Will Pay for Sin

9“Israel, you have sinned since the time of Gibeah. (And the people have continued to sin there.) Those evil people at Gibeah will be trapped by war. I will come to punish them. Armies will come together against them and punish the Israelites for both of their sins. Ephraim is like a trained young cow that loves to walk on grain on the threshing floor. I will put a good yoke on her neck. I will put the ropes on Ephraim. Then Judah will begin plowing. Jacob will break the ground himself.”

12If you plant goodness, you will harvest faithful love. Plow your ground, and you will harvest with the Lord. He will come, and he will make goodness fall on you like rain.

13But you planted evil, and you harvested trouble. You ate the fruit of your lies, because you had trusted in your power and your soldiers. So your armies will hear the noise of battle, and all your fortresses will be destroyed. It will be like the time Shalman destroyed Beth Arbel. At that time of war, mothers were killed with their children. And this will happen to you at Bethel, because you did so many evil things. When that day begins, the king of Israel will be fully destroyed.

10:5 Beth Aven A name meaning “House of Evil.” It is a word-play on the name “Bethel,” a name meaning “House of God.” There was a temple in this town.
Israel Has Forgotten the Lord

11 The Lord said, “I loved Israel when he was a child, and I called my son out of Egypt.
But the more I called the Israelites, the more they left me. The Israelites gave sacrifices to the false gods and burned incense to the idols.

3“But I was the one who taught Ephraim to walk.
I took the Israelites in my arms. I healed them, but they don’t know that.
I led them with ropes, but they were ropes of love.
I was like a person who set them free.

5“The Israelites will not go back to Egypt. The king of Assyria will become their king, because they refused to turn back to God.

7“My people expect me to come back. They will call to God above, but he will not help them.”

The Lord Will Not Destroy Israel

8“Ephraim, I don’t want to give you up. Israel, I want to protect you.
I don’t want to make you like Admah.
I don’t want to make you like Zeboiim.
I am changing my mind.
My love for you is too strong.

9I will not let my terrible anger win.
I will not destroy Ephraim again.
I am God and not a human.
I am the Holy One.
I am with you.
I will not show my anger.

10 I, the LORD, will roar like a lion,
and my children will come and follow me.
They will come from the west, shaking with fear.

11They will come from Egypt, shaking like birds.
They will come shaking like doves from the land of Assyria, and I will take them back home.” This is what the LORD said.

12“Ephraim surrounded me with false gods.
The people of Israel turned against me.
But Judah still walks with God and is true to the Holy One.”

The Lord Is Against Israel

12 Ephraim is wasting its time; Israel “chases the wind” all day long. The people tell more and more lies and steal more and more. They have made agreements with Assyria, and they are carrying their olive oil to Egypt.

2The LORD says, “I have a complaint against Israel. Jacob must be punished for the bad things he did. While Jacob was still in his mother’s womb, he began to trick his brother. Jacob was a strong young man, and at that time he fought with God. Jacob wrestled with God’s angel and won. He cried and asked for a favor. That happened at Bethel. There he spoke to us.

5Yes, YAHWEH is the God of the armies. His name is YAHWEH. So come back to your God. Be loyal to him. Do the right thing, and always trust in your God!

7“Jacob is a tricky merchant. He even

a 11:11 This is from the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has “they.”
b 11:12 false gods Literally, “Baals.”
c 11:4 ropes The Hebrew says, “ropes of a man.”
d 11:4 set them free Literally, “lifted the yoke from their jaws.”
e 11:7 Or “My people are hanging on poles around my dwelling place. They called up to him, but he didn’t lift them up.”
f 11:8 Admah, Zeboiim Two cities that were destroyed when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. See Gen. 19; Deut. 29:23.
g 11:12 Ephraim … me Or “Ephraim surrounded me with lies. The house of Israel surrounded me with deception.”
h 11:12 God Literally, “El.” This might be one of the names of God, or it might be El, the most important god of the Canaanites. It is not clear if this means Judah was being faithful to God or if Judah was worshiping the false gods.
i 11:12 Holy One This is a plural form in the Hebrew text and may refer to God or to Canaanite false gods.
j 12:2 Israel Literally, “Judah.”
k 12:3 he … his brother Or “he grabbed his brother’s heel.” This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word is like the name “Jacob.”
m 12:5 YAHWEH is the God of the armies This is like one of the names for God. It is usually translated “Loro All-Powerful.”
n 12:7 Jacob … merchant Literally, “Cannan.”
Ephraim said, ‘I am rich! I have found true riches! No one will learn about my crimes. No one will learn about my sins.’

But I am still the LORD your God, as I was when you left the land of Egypt. I will make you live in tents, as you do during the Festival of Shelters. I spoke to the prophets and gave them many visions. I gave the prophets many ways to teach my lessons to you. But the people in Gilead have sinned. There are many terrible idols in that place. They offer sacrifices to bulls at Gilgal. They have many altars. There are rows and rows of altars—like the rows of dirt in a plowed field.

Jacob ran away to the land of Aram. There Israel worked for a wife. He kept sheep to get another wife.

But the Lord used a prophet and brought Israel out of Egypt. He used a prophet and kept Israel safe. But Ephraim made the Lord very angry. Ephraim killed many people, so he will be punished for his crimes. His Lord will make him bear his shame.”

Israel Has Ruined Itself

The tribe of Ephraim made itself very important in Israel. Ephraim spoke and people shook with fear. But Ephraim sinned by worshiping Baal, so he must die. Now the Israelites sin more and more. They make idols for themselves. Workers make those fancy statues from silver, and then they talk to their statues. They offer sacrifices to them, and they kiss those calf idols.

That is why those people will soon disappear. They will be like a fog that comes early in the morning and then quickly disappears. The Israelites will be like chaff that is blown from the threshing floor. The Israelites will be like smoke that goes out a window and disappears.

I have been the LORD your God since the time you were in the land of Egypt. You did not know any other god except me. I am the one who saved you. I knew you in the desert—I knew you in that dry land. I gave food to the Israelites, and they ate it. They became full and satisfied. They became proud, and then they forgot me.

That is why I will be like a lion to them. I will be like a leopard waiting by the road. I will attack them like a bear whose cubs were robbed from her. I will attack them and rip open their chests. I will be like a lion or other wild animal tearing and eating its prey.

Israel Cannot Be Saved From God’s Anger

Israel, I helped you, but you turned against me. So now I will destroy you.

Where is your king? Can he save you in any of your cities? Where are your judges? You asked for them, saying, ‘Give me a king and leaders.’ I was angry, and I gave you a king. And when I became very angry, I took him away.

Ephraim tried to hide his guilt. He thought his sins were a secret, but he will be punished.

His punishment will be like the pain of a woman giving birth. He will not be a wise son. The time will come for his birth, and he will not survive.

I will save them from the grave. I will rescue them from death. Death, where are your diseases? Grave, where is your power? I am not looking for revenge.

Israel grows among his brothers, but a powerful east wind will come—the Lord’s wind will blow from the desert. Then his well will dry up. His spring of water will be dry. The wind will take away anything of value.

Samaria must be punished because she turned against her God. The Israelites will be killed with swords.

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Their children will be torn to pieces, and their pregnant women will be ripped open.”

Return to the Lord

11 Israel, you fell and sinned against God. So come back to the Lord your God. 2 Think about what you will say, and come back to the Lord. Say to him, “Take away our sin, and accept these words as our sacrifice. We offer you the praise from our lips.”

3 Assyria will not save us. We will not ride on war horses. We will never again say, ‘Our God’ to something we made with our hands. This is because you are the one who shows mercy to orphans.”

The Lord Will Forgive Israel

4 The Lord says, “I will forgive them for leaving me. I will show them my love without limits, because I have stopped being angry.

5 I will be like the dew to Israel. Israel will blossom like the lily. He will grow like the cedar trees of Lebanon.

6 His branches will grow, and he will be like a beautiful olive tree. He will be like the sweet smell from the cedar trees of Lebanon.

7 The people of Israel will again live under my protection. They will grow like grain. They will bloom like a vine. They will be like the wine of Lebanon.

The Lord Warns Israel About Idols

8 “Ephraim, I will have nothing more to do with idols. I am the one who answers your prayers and watches over you. I am like a fir tree that is always green. Your fruit comes from me.”

Final Advice

9 A wise person understands these things, and a smart person should learn them. The Lord’s ways are right. Good people will live by them. Sinners will die by them.

a 14:2 praise from our lips  Literally, “the fruit of our lips.”

b 14:8 and watches over you This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word is like the name “Assyria.” God is saying that he, not some foreign country, protects Israel.

c 14:9 Good … die by them Literally, “Good people will walk on them. Sinners will stumble on them.”
Joel

Locusts Will Destroy the Crops

1 Joel son of Pethuel received this message from the Lord:

Leaders, listen to this message!

Listen to me, all you people who live in the land. Has anything like this ever happened in your life? Did anything like this happen during your fathers’ lifetime?

2 You will tell these things to your children, and your children will tell their children, and your grandchildren will tell the people of the next generation.

3 What the cutting locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten. And what the swarming locust has left, the hopping locust has eaten. And what the hopping locust has left, the destroying locust has eaten!

The Locusts—A Powerful Army

4 Drunks, wake up and cry! All of you who drink wine, cry because your sweet wine is finished. You will not taste it again.

5 A powerful nation came to attack my land. Its soldiers were too many to count. Its weapons were as sharp as a lion’s teeth and as powerful as a lion’s jaw.

6 It destroyed my grapevine. Its good vines withered and died. It destroyed my fig tree, stripped off the bark and threw it away.

7 Priests, put on sackcloth and cry loudly. Servants of the altar, cry loudly. Servants of my God, you will sleep in sackcloth, because there will be no more grain and drink offerings in God’s Temple.

The People Cry

8 Cry like a young woman crying because the man she was ready to marry has died.

9 Priests, servants of the Lord, cry because there will be no more grain and drink offerings in the Lord’s Temple.

10 The fields are ruined. Even the ground is crying because the harvest in the field is ruined.

11 Be sad, farmers! Cry loudly for the grapes, for the wheat, and for the barley, because there will be no more grain and drink offerings in God’s Temple.

12 The vines have become dry, and the fig tree is dying. All the trees in the field— the pomegranate, the palm, and the apple—have withered. And happiness among the people has died.

13 Priests, put on sackcloth and cry loudly. Servants of the altar, cry loudly. Servants of my God, you will sleep in sackcloth, because there will be no more grain and drink offerings in God’s Temple.

The Terrible Destruction of the Locusts

14 Tell the people that there will be a special time of fasting. Call them together for a special meeting. Bring the leaders and everyone living in the land together at the Temple of the Lord your God, and pray to the Lord.

15 Be sad because the Lord’s special day is near. At that time punishment will come...
like an attack from God All-Powerful. They are a powerful people, who are ready for war.

16 Our food is gone. Joy and happiness are gone from the Temple of our God. 17 We planted seeds, but the seeds became dry and dead lying in the soil. Our plants are dry and dead. Our barns are empty and falling down.

18 The animals are hungry and groaning. The herds of cattle wander around confused because they have no grass to eat. The sheep are dying. 19 LORD, I am calling to you for help. Fire has changed our green fields into a desert. Flames have burned all the trees in the field. Wild animals also need your help. The streams are dry—there is no water! Fire has changed our green fields into a desert.

The Coming Day of the Lord

1 Blow the trumpet on Zion. Shout a warning on my holy mountain.

Let all the people who live in the land shake with fear.
The LORD’s special day is coming; it is near.

2 It will be a dark, gloomy day.

It will be a dark and cloudy day.
At sunrise you will see the army spread over the mountains.
It will be a great and powerful army.
There has never been anything like it before, and there will never be anything like it again.

3 The army will destroy the land like a burning fire.

In front of them the land will be like the Garden of Eden.
Behind them the land will be like an empty desert.
Nothing will escape them.

4 They look like horses.

They run like war horses.

5 Listen to them.

It is like the noise of chariots riding over the mountains.
It is like the noise of flames burning the chaff.

a 1:18 dying Literally, “being punished.”

The Lord Tells the People to Change

12 This is the LORD’s message:

“Now come back to me with all your heart.

Cry and mourn, and don’t eat anything!

Show that you are sad for doing wrong.

13 Tear your hearts, not your clothes.”

Come back to the LORD your God.

He is kind and merciful.

He does not become angry quickly.

He has great love.
Maybe he will change his mind about the bad punishment he planned.

b 2:13 Tear your hearts, not your clothes People tore their clothes to show sadness. Here, God wants the people to feel sad for the bad things they had done.
14 Who knows, maybe he will change his mind
and leave behind a blessing for you.
Then you can give grain and drink offerings
to the LORD your God.

Pray to the Lord
15 Blow the trumpet at Zion.
Call for a special meeting.
Call for a special time of fasting.
16 Bring the people together.
Call for a special meeting.
Bring together the old men, the children, and the small babies
still at their mothers’ breasts.
Let the bride and her new husband
come from their bedroom.
17 Let the priests, the LORD’s servants,
cry between the porchabant the altar.
All of them should say this: “LORD,
have mercy on your people.
Don’t let your people be put to shame.
Don’t let other people tell jokes
about your people.
Don’t let the other nations laugh at us
and say,
‘Where is their God?’ ”

The Lord Will Restore the Land
18 Then the LORD cared very much about
his land.
He felt sorry for his people.
19 The LORD spoke to his people.
He said, “I will send you grain, wine,
and oil.
You will have plenty.
I will not shame you among the
nations anymore.
20 No, I will force the people from the
northabant leave your land
and make them go into a dry, empty
land.
Some of them will go to the eastern
sea
and some to the western sea.
They did such terrible things,
but they will be like a dead and
rotting body.
There will be such a terrible smell!”

The Land Will Be Made New Again
21 Land, don’t be afraid.
Be happy and full of joy.
The LORD will do great things.
22 Animals of the field, don’t be afraid.
The desert pastures will grow grass.
The trees will grow fruit.
The fig trees and the vines will grow
plenty of fruit.
23 So be happy, people of Zion.
Be joyful in the LORD your God.
He is good and will give you rain.
He will send the early rains and the
late rains as before.
24 The threshing floors will be filled with
wheat,
and the barrels will overflow with
wine and olive oil.
25 “I, the Lord, sent my army against you.
The swarming locusts and the
hopping locusts
and the destroying locusts and the
cutting locustsabant ate everything
you had.
But I will pay you back
for those years of trouble.
26 Then you will have plenty to eat.
You will be full.
You will praise the name of the LORD
your God.
He has done wonderful things for
you.

27 You will know that I am with Israel.
You will know that I am the LORD
your God.
There is no other God.
My people will never be ashamed
again.”

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a 2:17 porch An open area in front of the Temple.
b 2:20 north The Babylonian army came this direction
to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel
often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

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God Will Give His Spirit to All People

28 “After this, I will pour out my Spirit on all kinds of people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions.

29 In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, both men and women.

30 I will work wonders in the sky and on the earth. There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke.

31 The sun will be changed into darkness, and the moon will be as red as blood. Then the great and fearful day of the Lord will come!

32 And everyone who trusts in the Lord will be saved. There will be survivors on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, just as the Lord said. Yes, those left alive will be the ones the Lord has called.

Judah’s Enemies Will Be Punished

3 “Yes, at that time I will bring back the people of Judah and Jerusalem from captivity. I will also gather all the nations together. I will bring all these nations down into Jehoshaphat Valley. There I will judge them. Those nations scattered my people, Israel. They forced them to live in other nations, so I will punish those nations. They divided up my land.

3 They threw lots for my people. They sold boys to buy a prostitute, and they sold girls to buy wine to drink.

4 “Tyre! Sidon! All of you areas of Philistia! You are not important to me! Are you punishing me for something I did? You might think that you are punishing me, but I will soon punish you.

5 You took my silver and gold. You took my precious treasures and put them in your temples. You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks. That way you could take them far from their land.

6 You sent my people to that faraway place, but I will bring them back. And I will punish you for what you did. I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah. Then they will sell them to the faraway Sabeans.” This is what the Lord said.

Prepare for War

9 Announce this among the nations: Prepare for war! Wake up the strong men! Let all the men of war come near. Let them come up!

10 Beat your plows into swords. Make spears from your pruning hooks.

Let the weak man say, “I am a strong soldier.”

11 All you nations, hurry! Come together in that place. Lord, bring your strong soldiers.

12 Wake up, nations! Come to Jehoshaphat Valley. There I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

13 Bring the sickle, because the harvest is ripe.

Come, walk on the grapes, because the winepress is full. The barrels will be full and spilling over, because their evil is great.

14 There are many, many people in the Valley of Decision.

The Lord’s special day is near in the Valley of Decision.

15 The sun and the moon will become dark.

a 2:32 who trusts in the Lord Literally, “who calls on the name of the Lord,” meaning to show faith in him by worshiping him or praying to him for help.

b 3:2 Jehoshaphat Valley This name means “The Lord judges.”

c 3:4 You are not important to me Literally, “What are you to me?”

d 3:5 temples Here, the temples were used to worship idols.

e 3:8 Sabeans A group of people from the Arabian Desert.

f 3:10 pruning hooks These tools were used to prune (cut) branches of trees. Read Isa. 2:4.

g 3:13 harvest is ripe This time of judgment is compared to harvest time.

h 3:14 Valley of Decision This is like the name “Jehoshaphat Valley.”
The stars will stop shining.
16 The LORD God will shout from Zion. He will shout from Jerusalem, and the sky and the earth will shake. But the LORD God will be a safe place for his people. He will be a place of safety for the people of Israel.

Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.
I live on Zion, my holy mountain. Jerusalem will become holy. Strangers will never pass through that city again.

A New Life for Judah Promised
18 “On that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine. The hills will flow with milk, and water will flow through all the empty rivers of Judah.
A fountain will come from the LORD’s Temple. It will give water to Acacia Valley.

Egypt will be empty. Edom will be an empty wilderness, because they were cruel to the people of Judah. They killed innocent people in their country.

But there will always be people living in Judah. People will live in Jerusalem through many generations.

Those people killed my people, so I really will punish them!”

The LORD God will live in Zion!

3:19 killed innocent people Literally, “shed innocent blood.”
Amos

1 Introduction

This is the message of Amos, one of the shepherds from the city Tekoa. He saw visions about Israel during the time that Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Joash was king of Israel. This was two years before the earthquake.

Punishment for Aram

Amos said,

The Lord will shout like a lion in Zion.
His loud voice will roar from Jerusalem.
The green pastures of the shepherds will turn brown and die.
Even Mount Carmel will become dry.

This is what the Lord says: “I will definitely punish the people of Damascus for the many crimes they did. They crushed the people of Gilead with iron threshing tools.

So I will start a fire at Hazael’s house that will destroy the great palaces of Ben-Hadad.

I will also break open the gates of Damascus and remove the one who sits on the throne in the Valley of Aven. I will remove the symbol of power from Beth Eden, and the Arameans will be defeated and taken back to Kir.” This is what the Lord said.

Punishment for the Philistines

This is what the Lord says: “I will definitely punish the people of Gaza for the many crimes they did. They took an entire nation of people and sent them as slaves to Edom.

So I will start a fire at the wall of Gaza that will destroy the high towers in Gaza.

And I will destroy the one who sits on the throne in Ashdod. I will destroy the king who holds the scepter in Ashkelon. I will punish the people of Ekron Then the Philistines who are still left alive will die.”

This is what the Lord God said.

Punishment for Phoenicia

This is what the Lord says: “I will definitely punish the people of Tyre for the many crimes they did. They took an entire nation and sent them as slaves to Edom. They did not remember the agreement they had made with their brothers.

So I will start a fire at the walls of Tyre that will destroy the high towers in Tyre.”

Punishment for the Edomites

This is what the Lord says: “I will definitely punish the people of Edom for their many crimes. Edom chased his brother with the sword, and he showed no mercy. His anger never stopped. He kept tearing and tearing at Israel like a wild animal.

So I will start a fire at Teman that will destroy the high towers of Bozrah.”

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Punishment for the Ammonites

13 This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish the Ammonites for the many crimes they did. They killed the pregnant women in Gilead. The Ammonites did this so that they could take that land and make their country larger. So I will start a fire at the wall of Rabbah that will destroy the high towers of Rabbah. Troubles will come to them like a whirlwind into their country. Then their kings and leaders will be captured. They will all be taken together.” This is what the LORD said.

Punishment for Moab

1 This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish the people of Moab for the many crimes they did. Moab burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime. So I will start a fire in Moab that will destroy the high towers of Kerioth. There will be terrible shouting and the sounds of a trumpet, and Moab will die. So I will bring an end to the kings of Moab, and I will kill all the leaders of Moab.” This is what the LORD said.

Punishment for Judah

4 This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish Judah for the many crimes they did. They refused to obey the LORD’s teachings and they did not keep his commands. Their ancestors believed lies, and those same lies caused the people of Judah to stop following God. So I will start a fire in Judah that will destroy the high towers of Jerusalem.”

Punishment for Israel

6 This is what the LORD says: “I will definitely punish Israel for the many crimes they have done. They sold honest people for a little silver. They sold the poor for the price of a pair of sandals. They pushed their faces into the ground and walked on them. They stopped listening to suffering people. Fathers and sons had sexual relations with the same woman. They ruined my holy name. They took clothes from the poor, and then they sat on those clothes while worshiping at their altars. They loaned money to the poor, and then they took their clothes as a promise for payment. They made people pay fines and used the money to buy wine for themselves to drink in the temple of their god.

9 “But it was I who destroyed the Amorites before them. They were as tall as cedar trees and as strong as oaks, but I destroyed their fruit above and their roots below.

10 I was the one who brought you from the land of Egypt. For 40 years I led you through the desert. I helped you take the Amorites’ land. I made some of your sons to be prophets and some of your young men to be Nazirites. People of Israel, it is true.” This is what the LORD said. But you made the Nazirites drink wine. You told the prophets not to prophesy. You have become more than I can bear. I am bent low like a wagon loaded with grain. No one will escape, not even the fastest runner. Strong men will not be strong enough. Soldiers will not be able to save themselves. People with bows and arrows will not survive. Fast runners will not escape. People on horses will not escape alive. At that time even very brave soldiers will run away. They will not take the time to put their clothes on.” This is what the LORD said.

Warning to Israel

3 People of Israel, listen to this message! This is what the LORD said about you, Israel. This message is about all the families that I brought from the land as a promise for payment. See Deut. 24:12–13 for the rules about making loans to the poor. One of the nations who lived in Canaan before the Israelites came. They were the people who scared the Israelites while Moses was leading them in the desert. See Num. 13:33. This means the parents and their children.
of Egypt. 2 “There are many families on earth, but you are the only family I chose to know in a special way. And you turned against me, so I will punish you for all your sins.”

The Cause of Israel’s Punishment

3 Two people will not walk together unless they have agreed to do so.
4 A lion will roar in the forest only if it catches its prey.
A young lion roaring in his cave means he has caught something to eat.
5 A bird doesn’t fly into a trap unless there is food in it.
If a trap closes, it will catch the bird.
6 If people hear the warning blast of a trumpet,
they shake with fear.
If trouble comes to a city, the LORD caused it to happen.
7 When the Lord GOD decides to do something, he will first tell his servants, the prophets.
8 When a lion roars, people are frightened. When the Lord GOD speaks, a prophet must prophesy.
9–10 Go to the high towers in Ashdod and in Egypt and announce this message from the Lord: “Come together on the mountains of Samaria. See the great confusion there because the people don’t know how to live right. See how cruel they are to others. They take things from people to hide in their high towers. Their treasuries are filled with the things they have taken in war.”

11 So the Lord GOD says, “An enemy will surround your land. They will break down your strong walls and take the things you have hidden in your high towers.”
12 The LORD says, “A lion might attack a lamb, and a shepherd might try to save the lamb.
But the shepherd will save only a part of that lamb.
He might pull two legs

The Women Who Love Pleasure

1 Listen to me, you cows of Bashan on Samaria’s mountain. You hurt the poor and crush those in need. You tell your husbands,
2 “Bring us something to drink!”
3 The Lord God made a promise. He promised by his holiness that troubles will come to you. People will use hooks and take you away as prisoners. They will use fishhooks to take away your children.
4 Your city will be destroyed. The women will rush out through cracks in the wall and throw themselves onto the pile of dead bodies.
This is what the Lord says: 4 “Go to Bethel and sin. Go to Gilgal and sin even more. Offer your sacrifices in the morning. Bring a tenth of your crops for the three-day festival.
5 And offer a thank offering made with yeast. Tell everyone about the freewill offerings.

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those things. So go and do them.” This is what the Lord God said.

6 “I didn’t give you any food to eat. There was no food in any of your cities, but you didn’t come back to me.” This is what the Lord said.

7 I also stopped the rain, and it was three months before harvest time. So no crops grew. Then I let it rain on one city, but not on another city. Rain fell on one part of the country, but on the other part of the country, the land became very dry. So the people from two or three cities staggered to another city to get water, but there was not enough water for everyone. Still you didn’t come to me for help.” This is what the Lord said.

8 “I made your crops die from heat and disease. I destroyed your gardens and your vineyards. Locusts ate your fig trees and olive trees. But you still didn’t come to me for help.” This is what the Lord said.

9 “I sent diseases against you, as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with swords. I took away your horses. I made your camp smell very bad from all the dead bodies, but still you didn’t come back to me for help.” This is what the Lord said.

10 “I destroyed you as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. And those cities were completely destroyed. You were like a burned stick pulled from a fire, but still you didn’t come back to me for help.” This is what the Lord says.

11 “So, Israel, this is what I will do to you. You people of Israel, prepare to meet your God.”

A Sad Song for Israel

1 People of Israel, listen to this song. This funeral song is about you.

2 The virgin of Israel has fallen.

She will not get up anymore.

She was left alone, lying in the dirt.

There is no one to lift her up.

3 This is what the Lord God says:

“Officers leaving the city with 1000 men will return with only 100 men.

Officers leaving the city with 100 men will return with only ten men.”

The Lord Encourages Israel to Come Back

4 The Lord says this to the nation of Israel:

“Come looking for me and live.

But don’t look in Bethel.

Don’t go to Gilgal.

Don’t cross the border and go down to Beersheba.

The people of Gilgal will be taken away as prisoners, and Bethel will be destroyed.

Come to the Lord and live.

If you don’t go to him, a fire will start at Joseph’s house, and no one in Bethel can stop it.

7–9 You should go to the Lord for help. He is the one who made the Pleiades and Orion.

He changes darkness into the morning light.

He changes the day into the dark

priests started these new festivals and different ways of worshiping God.

\[ a \] 4:6 I didn’t give you any food to eat Literally, “I gave you clean teeth.”

\[ b \] 4:13 the wind Or “your minds.”
night. He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the earth. His name is YAHWEH! He keeps one strong city safe, and he lets another strong city be destroyed.”

**The Evil Things That the Israelites Did**

You change justice to poison. You throw away fairness like trash. You hate those prophets, who go to public places and speak against evil, even though they teach good, simple truths.

You take unfair taxes from the poor. You take loads of wheat from them. You build fancy houses with cut stone, but you will not live in them. You plant beautiful vineyards, but you will not drink the wine from them.

This is because I know about your many sins. You have done some very bad things: You hurt people who do right, you accept money to do wrong, and you keep the poor from receiving justice in court.

At that time wise teachers will be quiet, because it is a bad time.

You say that God is with you, so you should do good things, not evil. Then you will live, and the LORD God All-Powerful will be with you.

Hate evil and love goodness. Bring justice back into the courts. Maybe then the LORD God All-Powerful will be kind to the survivors from Joseph’s family.

**A Time of Great Sadness Is Coming**

The Lord, the LORD God All-Powerful says, “People will be crying in the public places. They will be crying in the streets. They will hire the professional criers.”

People will be crying in the vineyards, because I will pass through and punish you.” This is what the LORD said.

Some of you want to see the LORD’s special day of judgment. Why do you want to see that day of the LORD? His special day will bring darkness, not light.

You will be like someone who escapes from a lion only to be attacked by a bear, or like someone who goes into the safety of his house, leans against the wall, and is bitten by a snake.

The LORD’s special day will be a day of darkness, not light—a day of gloom, without a ray of light.

**The Lord Rejects Israel’s Worship**

“I hate your festivals; I will not accept them. I don’t enjoy your religious meetings.

Even if you offer me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. I will not even look at the fat animals you give as fellowship offerings.

Take your noisy songs away from here. I will not listen to the music from your harps.

But let justice flow like a river, and let goodness flow like a stream that never becomes dry.

Israel, you offered me sacrifices and offerings in the desert for 40

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*poison* Literally, “wormwood,” a type of plant with bitter leaves. It could be used as a medicine, or if strong enough, as a poison.

*take unfair taxes* The meaning of the Hebrew word here is uncertain.
years."a
26 But you also carried statues of Sakkuth, your king, and Kaiwan.b There was also that star godc that you made for yourselves.
27 So I will send you as captives, far beyond Damascus.” This is what the LORD says. His name is God All-Powerful.

Israel’s Good Times Will Be Taken Away

1 Oh, look at the people enjoying life in Zion, and those on Mount Samaria who feel so safe. They are such important leaders of a most important nation. The “House of Israel” comes to you for advice.
2 Go look at Calneh. From there, go to the large city Hamath. Go to the Philistine city of Gath.d Are you better than these kingdoms? Their countries are larger than yours.
3 You people are rushing toward the day of punishment. You bring near the rule of violence.
4 But now you lie on ivory beds and stretch out on your couches. You eat tender young lambs from the flock and young calves from the stable.
5 You play your harps, and like David, you practice one your musical instruments.
6 You drink wine in fancy cups.f You use the best perfumes.

And it doesn’t even bother you that Joseph’s family is being destroyed.
7 You people are stretched out on your couches now, but your good times will end. You will be taken away as prisoners to a foreign country, and you will be some of the first people taken. 8 The Lord God used his own name and made an oath. The Lord God All-Powerful said,
"I hate what Jacob is proud of. I hate his strong towers. So I will let an enemy take the city and everything in it."

There Will Be Few Israelites Left Alive

9 At that time ten people in one house might survive, but they too will die. 10 And when someone dies, a relative will come to get the body so that it can be taken out and burned. Relatives will come to take away the bones. They will call to anyone who might be hiding back in the house, “Are there any other dead bodies in there with you?”
That person will answer, “No, …” h But the relative will interrupt and say, “Hush! We must not mention the name of the Lord.”
11 Look, the Lord will give the command, and the large houses will be broken to pieces, and the small houses will be broken to small pieces.
12 Do horses run over loose rocks? No, and people don’t use cows for plowing. But you turned everything upside down. You changed justice and goodness to bitter poison.
13 You are so excited about defeating Lo Debar. i And you boast, “We have taken Karnaim by our own strength.”

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14 “But Israel, I will bring a nation against you that will bring troubles to your whole country from Lebo Hamath to Arábah Brook.” This is what the LORD God All-Powerful said.

The Vision of the Locusts

1 This is what the LORD God showed me: He was making locusts. This was at the time the second crop began to grow, after the king’s people had cut the first crop. 2 Before the locusts could eat all the grass in the country, I said, “LORD God, I beg you, forgive us! Jacob cannot survive! He is too small!”

3 Then the LORD changed his mind about this. The LORD said, “It will not happen.”

The Vision of the Fire

4 This is what the LORD God showed me: I saw the LORD God calling for judgment by fire. The fire destroyed the ocean and was beginning to eat up the land. 5 But I said, “LORD God, stop, I beg you! Jacob cannot survive! He is too small!”

6 Then the LORD changed his mind about this. The LORD God said, “It will not happen either.”

The Vision of the Plumb Line

7 This is what the LORD showed me: He stood by a wall with a plumb line in his hand. (The wall had been marked with a plumb line.) 8 The LORD said to me, “Amos, what do you see?”

9 I said, “A plumb line.”

Then the LORD said to me, “See, I will put a plumb line among my people Israel. I will not let their ‘crooked ways’ pass inspection anymore. 9 Isaac’s high places will be destroyed. Israel’s holy places will be made into a pile of rocks. I will attack and kill Jeroboam’s family with swords.”

Amaziah Tries to Stop Amos

10 Amaziah, a priest at Bethel, sent this message to Jeroboam, the king of Israel: “Amos is making plans against you. He is trying to make the people of Israel fight against you. He has been speaking so much that this country cannot hold all his words. 11 Amos has said, ‘Jeroboam will die by the sword, and the people of Israel will be taken as prisoners out of their country.’ ”

12 Amaziah also said to Amos, “You see, go down to Judah and eat there. Do your prophesying there. 13 But don’t prophesy anymore here at Bethel. This is Jeroboam’s holy place. This is Israel’s temple.”

14 Then Amos answered Amaziah, “I am not a professional prophet, and I am not from a prophet’s family. I raise cattle and take care of sycamore trees. 15 I was a shepherd and the LORD took me from following the sheep. The LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’ 16 So listen to the LORD’s message. You tell me, ‘Don’t prophesy against Israel. Don’t speak against Isaac’s family.’ 17 But the LORD says, ‘Your wife will become a prostitute in the city. Your sons and daughters will be killed with swords. Other people will take your land and divide it among themselves, and you will die in a foreign country. The people of Israel will definitely be taken from this country as prisoners.’ ”

The Vision of the Ripe Fruit

8 This is what the LORD God showed me: I saw a basket of summer fruit. 9 He said to me, “Amos, what do you see?”

10 I said, “A basket of summer fruit.”

Then the LORD said to me, “The end has come to my people Israel. I will not ignore their sins anymore. Their temple songs will become funeral songs.” This is what the LORD God said. “There will be dead bodies everywhere. In silence,
people will take out the dead bodies and throw them onto the pile.”

**Merchants Only Want to Make Money**

4 Listen to me, you who trample on helpless people.
You are trying to destroy the poor of this country.

5 You merchants say,
"When will the New Moon be over so that we can sell grain?
When will the Sabbath be over so that we can bring out more wheat to sell?
We can raise the price and make the measure smaller.\(^b\)
We can fix the scales and cheat the people.\(^c\)

6 The poor cannot pay their loans, so we will buy them as slaves.
We will buy those helpless people for the price of a pair of sandals.
Oh, and we can sell the wheat that was spilled on the floor."

7 The Lord made a promise. He used his name, “Pride of Jacob,” and made this promise:
"I will never forget what those people did.

8 There will be an earthquake that will shake the whole land because of what they did.
Everyone living there will cry for those who died.
The land will be tossed around.
The whole land will rise and fall like the Nile River in Egypt.”

9 The Lord God also said,
“At that time I will make the sun set at noon and make the land dark on a clear day.

10 I will change your festivals into days of crying for the dead.
All your songs will be songs of sadness for those who are dead.
I will put mourning clothes on every body and baldness on every head.\(^d\)
I will cause mourning everywhere, like that for an only son who has died.
It will be a very bitter end.”

**A Famine of God’s Word**

11 The Lord God says,
“Look, the days are coming when I will cause a famine in the land.
The people will not be hungry for bread.
They will not be thirsty for water.
No, they will be hungry for words from the Lord.

12 The people will wander around the country, from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the north part of the country to the east.
They will go back and forth looking for a message from the Lord, but they will not find it.

13 At that time the beautiful young men and women will become weak from thirst.

14 They made promises by the sin of Samaria,\(^e\)
They said, ‘Dan,\(^f\) as surely as your god lives, we promise . . .’
And they said, ‘As surely as the god of Beersheba\(^g\) lives, we promise . . .’
But they will fall and never get up again.”

**Vision of the Lord Standing by the Altar**

1 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said,
“Hit the top of the columns, and shake them to the ground.

\(^a\) 8:3 In silence . . . the pile Or “People will be saying, ’Hush!’” See Amos 6:10.
\(^b\) 8:5 We . . . smaller Literally, “We will make the ephah small and the shekel large.”
\(^c\) 8:5 We . . . people Literally, “Cheat with lying balances.”
\(^d\) 8:10 baldness . . . head People shaved their heads to show that they were very sad or upset.
\(^e\) 8:14 sin of Samaria The calf god in Samaria.
\(^f\) 8:14 Dan One of Israel’s holy places was in this city.
\(^g\) 8:14 Beersheba A town in Judah. This name means “well of the oath.”
Amos 9

Push them and they will fall on everyone’s head.
As for those who survive, I will kill them with a sword.
None of them will run away.
None of them will escape.

2 If they dig deep into the ground, I will pull them from there.
If they go up into the skies, I will bring them down from there.

3 If they hide at the top of Mount Carmel, I will find them there and take them from that place.
If they try to hide from me at the bottom of the sea, I will command the snake, and it will bite them.

4 If they are captured and taken away by their enemies, I will command the sword, and it will kill them there.
Yes, I will watch over them, but I will watch for ways to give them troubles, not for ways to do good things.”

Punishment Will Destroy the People
5 The Lord God All-Powerful will touch the land, and the land will melt.
Then all the people who live in the land will cry for the dead.
The land will rise and fall like the Nile River in Egypt.

6 He built his upper rooms above the skies.
He put his skies over the earth.
He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out as rain on the land.
YAHWEH is his name.

The Lord Promises Destruction for Israel
7 This is what the Lord says:
“Israel, you are like the Ethiopians to me.
I brought Israel out of the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Arameans from Kir.”

8 The Lord GOD is watching this sinful kingdom.
The LORD says, “I will wipe Israel off the face of the earth, but I will never completely destroy Jacob’s family.

9 I am giving the command to scatter the people of Israel among all nations.
But it will be like someone sifting flour.
A person shakes flour through a sifter. The good flour falls through, but the bad lumps are caught.

10 “Sinners among my people say, ‘Nothing bad will happen to us.’ But all of them will be killed with swords.”

God Promises to Restore the Kingdom
11 “David’s tent has fallen, but at that time I will set it up again.
I will fix its holes and repair its ruined parts.
I will set it up as it was before.

12 Then the people left alive in Edom, and all the people called by my name, will look to me for help.”
This is what the LORD said, and he will make it happen.

13 The LORD says, “A time of great blessing is coming.
Workers will still be harvesting when it is time to plow the fields again.
They will still be trampling the grapes when it is time for a new crop.

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Sweet wine will drip from the mountains and pour from the hills. I will bring my people, Israel, back from captivity. They will rebuild the ruined cities, and they will live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink the wine they produce. They will plant gardens and eat the crops they produce. I will plant my people on their land, and never again will they be pulled up out of the land that I gave them.” This is what the LORD your God said.
Obadiah

Edom Will Be Punished

This is the vision of Obadiah. This is what the Lord God says about Edom:

We heard a report from the Lord.
A messenger was sent to the nations.
He said, “Let’s go fight against Edom.”

The Lord Speaks to Edom

Edom, I will make you the smallest nation.
Everyone will hate you very much.
Your pride has fooled you.
You live in those caves high on the cliff.
Your home is high in the hills.
So you say to yourself, ‘No one can bring me to the ground.’

Edom Will Be Brought Low

Even though you fly high like the eagle
and put your nest among the stars,
I will bring you down from there.
You really will be ruined!
Thieves will come to you.
Robbers will come in the night,
and they will take all they want.
When workers gather grapes in your vineyards,
they will leave a few grapes behind.
But the enemy will search hard for Esau’s hidden treasures,
and they will find them all.
All those who are your friends will force you out of the land.
Those who were at peace with you will trick you,
and they will defeat you.
The soldiers who fought by your side are planning a trap for you.

They say, ‘He doesn’t expect a thing!’ ”

The LORD says, “On that day
I will destroy the wise people from Edom.
I will destroy the intelligent people from the mountain of Esau.a
Teman, your brave soldiers will be afraid.
Everyone will be destroyed from the mountain of Esau.
Many people will be killed.
You will be covered with shame because you were very cruel to your brother Jacob.
So you will be destroyed completely.
You joined the enemies of Israel.
Strangers carried Israel’s treasures away.
Foreigners entered Israel’s city gate.
They threw lots to decide what part of Jerusalem they would get.
And you were right there with them, waiting to get your share.
You should not have laughed at your brother’s trouble.
You should not have been happy when they destroyed Judah.
You should not have bragged at the time of their trouble.
You should not have entered the city gate of my people and laughed at their problems.
You should not have taken their treasures in the time of their trouble.
You should not have stood where the roads cross

a *mountain of Esau* That is, Mount Seir.
b *laughed* Literally, “looked.” Also in verse 13.
c *bragged* Literally, “made your mouth big.”

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and destroyed those who were trying to escape. You should not have captured those who escaped alive.

15 The Day of the Lord is coming soon to all the nations. And the evil you did to others will happen to you. The same bad things will fall down on your own head.

16 You spilled blood on my holy mountain, so other nations will spill your blood. You will be finished. It will be as if you never existed.

17 But there will be survivors on Mount Zion. They will be my special people. The nation of Jacob will take back what belongs to it.

18 The family of Jacob will be like a fire. The nation of Joseph will be like a flame. But the nation of Esau will be like ashes.

\[d\] 16 spilled Literally, "drank."

\[b\] 16 holy mountain One of the mountains Jerusalem was built on. Sometimes Zion is used to mean Jerusalem itself. Also in verses 17, 21.

\[c\] 16 spill your blood Literally, "drink and swallow."

\[d\] 17 nation of Jacob Literally, "the house of Jacob." This could mean the people of Israel or only its leaders.

\[e\] 18 nation of Esau Literally, "the house of Esau."

The people of Judah will burn Edom, and they will destroy it. Then there will be no survivors in the nation of Esau. This will happen because the Lord said it would.

19 Then people from the Negev will live on the mountain of Esau. And people from the foothills will take the Philistine lands. They will live in the land of Ephraim and Samaria. Gilead will belong to Benjamin.

20 People from Israel were forced to leave their homes, but they will take back the land of Canaan, all the way to Zarephath. People from Judah were forced to leave Jerusalem and live in Sepharad. But they will take back the cities of the Negev.

21 The winners will go up on Mount Zion to rule the people who live on Esau’s mountain. And the kingdom will belong to the Lord.

\[f\] 20 Sepharad This is probably Spain.

\[g\] 21 winners Or "saviors." Those who led their people to victory in war.
God Calls and Jonah Runs

1 The Lord spoke to Jonah son of Amittai: "Nineveh is a big city. I have heard about the many evil things the people are doing there. So go there and tell them to stop doing such evil things."

2 But Jonah tried to run away from the Lord. He went to Joppa and found a boat that was going to the faraway city of Tarshish. Jonah paid money for the trip and went on the boat. He wanted to travel with the people on this boat to Tarshish and run away from the Lord.

The Great Storm

4 But the Lord brought a great storm on the sea. The wind made the sea very rough. The storm was very strong, and the boat was ready to break apart. 5 The men wanted to make the boat lighter to stop it from sinking, so they began throwing the cargo into the sea. The sailors were very afraid. Each man began praying to his god. Jonah had gone down into the boat to lie down, and he went to sleep. 6 The captain of the boat saw Jonah and said, "Wake up! Why are you sleeping? Pray to your god! Maybe your god will hear your prayer and save us!"

What Caused This Storm?

7 Then the men said to each other, "We should throw lots to find out why this is happening to us."

So the men threw lots. The lots showed that the troubles came to them because of Jonah. 8 Then the men said to Jonah, "It is your fault that this terrible thing is happening to us. Tell us, what have you done? What is your job? Where do you come from? What is your country? Who are your people?"

9 Jonah said to them, "I am a Hebrew. I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the land and the sea."

10 Jonah told the men he was running away from the Lord. The men became very afraid when they learned this. They asked Jonah, "What terrible thing did you do against your God?"

11 The wind and the waves of the sea were becoming stronger and stronger. So the men said to Jonah, "What should we do to save ourselves? What should we do to you to make the sea calm?"

12 Jonah said to the men, "I know I did wrong—that is why the storm came on the sea. So throw me into the sea, and the sea will become calm."

13 Instead, the men tried to row the ship back to the shore, but they couldn’t do it. The wind and the waves of the sea were too strong—and they were becoming stronger and stronger.

Jonah’s Punishment

14 So the men cried to the Lord, "Lord, please don’t say we are guilty of killing an innocent man. Please don’t make us die for killing him. We know you are the Lord, and you will do whatever you want."

15 So the men threw Jonah into the sea. The storm stopped, and the sea became calm. 16 When the men saw this, they began to fear and respect the Lord. They offered a sacrifice and made special promises to the Lord.
When Jonah fell into the sea, the Lord chose a very big fish to swallow Jonah. He was in the stomach of the fish for three days and three nights.

**Jonah’s Prayer**

While Jonah was in the stomach of the fish, he prayed to the Lord his God. He said,

1. "I was in very bad trouble. I called to the Lord for help, and he answered me."
2. "I was deep in the grave. I cried to you, and you heard my voice."
3. "You threw me into the sea. Your powerful waves splashed over me. I went down, down into the deep sea. The water was all around me.
4. "Then I thought, ‘Now I must go where you cannot see me,’ but I continued looking to your holy Temple for help."
5. "The seawater closed over me. The water covered my mouth, and I could not breathe. I went down, down into the deep sea. Seaweed wrapped around my head.
6. "I was at the bottom of the sea, the place where the mountains begin. I thought I was locked in this prison forever, but the Lord my God took me out of my grave. God, you gave me life again!
7. "My soul gave up all hope, but then I remembered the Lord. I prayed to you, and you heard my prayers in your holy Temple.
8. "Some people worship useless idols, but those statues never help them."
9. "I will give sacrifices to you, and I will praise and thank you. I will make special promises to you, and I will do what I promise."
Salvation only comes from the Lord!
10. Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out of its stomach onto the dry land.

**God Calls and Jonah Obeys**

Then the Lord spoke to Jonah again and said, "Go to that big city Nineveh, and say what I tell you."
3. So Jonah obeyed the Lord and went to Nineveh. It was a very large city. A person had to walk for three days to travel through it.
4. Jonah went to the center of the city and began speaking to the people. He said, "After 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed!"
5. The people of Nineveh believed God. They decided to stop eating for a time to think about their sins. They put on special clothes to show they were sorry. All the people in the city did this, from the most important to the least important.
6. When the king of Nineveh heard about this, he left his throne, removed his robe, put on special clothes to show that he was sorry, and sat in ashes.
7. The king wrote a special message and sent it throughout the city:

A command from the king and his great rulers:

For a short time no person or animal should eat anything. No herd or flock will be allowed in the fields. Nothing living in Nineveh will eat or drink water. But every person and every animal must be covered with a special cloth to show they are sad. People must cry loudly to God. Everyone must change their life and stop doing bad things. Who knows? Maybe God will stop being angry and
change his mind, and we will not be punished.

10 God saw what the people did. He saw that they stopped doing evil. So God changed his mind and did not do what he planned. He did not punish the people.

God’s Mercy Makes Jonah Angry

4 Jonah was not happy that God saved the city. Jonah became angry. 2 He complained to the Lord and said, “Lord, I knew this would happen! I was in my own country, and you told me to come here. At that time I knew that you would forgive the people of this evil city, so I decided to run away to Tarshish. I knew that you are a kind God. I knew that you show mercy and don’t want to punish people. I knew that you are kind, and if these people stopped sinning, you would change your plans to destroy them. 3 So now, Lord, just kill me. It is better for me to die than to live.”

4 Then the Lord said, “Do you think it is right for you to be angry?”

5 Jonah went out of the city to a place near the city on the east side. He made a shelter for himself and sat there in the shade, waiting to see what would happen to the city.

The Gourd Plant and the Worm

6 The Lord made a gourd plant grow quickly over Jonah. This made a cool place for Jonah to sit and helped him to be more comfortable. He was very happy because of this plant.

7 The next morning, God sent a worm to eat part of the plant. The worm began eating the plant, and the plant died.

8 After the sun was high in the sky, God caused a hot east wind to blow. The sun became very hot on Jonah’s head, and he became very weak. He asked God to let him die. He said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

9 But God said to Jonah, “Do you think it is right for you to be angry just because this plant died?”

Jonah answered, “Yes, it is right for me to be angry! I am angry enough to die!”

10 And the Lord said, “You did nothing for that plant. You did not make it grow. It grew up in the night, and the next day it died. And now you are sad about it. 11 If you can get upset over a plant, surely I can feel sorry for a big city like Nineveh. There are many people and animals in that city. There are more than 120,000 people there who did not know they were doing wrong.”

4:11 people … wrong Literally, “people who do not know their right from their left.” This might mean “innocent children.”
Micah

Samaria and Israel to Be Punished

1 During the time that Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, the word of the LORD came to Micah. Micah was from Moresheth. He saw these visions about Samaria and Jerusalem.

2 Listen, all you people! Earth and everyone on it, listen! The Lord GOD will be a witness against you. The Lord will come from his holy temple.

3 See, the LORD is leaving his place to come down and walk on the high places of the earth.

4 The mountains will melt under him like wax in a fire. The valleys will break apart and slide like water rushing down a hill.

5 This will happen because of Jacob’s sin, because of the sins of the nation of Israel.

Samaria, the Cause of Sin

What caused Jacob to sin? It was Samaria.

Where is the high place in Judah? It is Jerusalem.

6 So I will change Samaria into a pile of rocks in the field, a place ready for planting grapes.

I will push Samaria’s stones down into the valley, leaving nothing but the foundations.

7 All her idols will be broken to pieces. And the offerings to her idols will be burned.

I will destroy all her statues of false gods, because she got them as pay for being a prostitute.

So those things will be taken away to be used again for paying prostitutes.

Micah’s Great Sadness

8 I will be very sad about what will happen.

I will go without sandals and clothes.

I will cry like a dog. I will mourn like a bird.

9 Samaria’s wound cannot be healed. Her disease has spread to Judah. It has reached the city gate of my people; it has spread all the way to Jerusalem.

10 Don’t tell it in Gath. Don’t cry in Acco. Roll yourself in the dust at Beth Ophrah.

11 You people living in Shaphir, pass on your way, naked and ashamed.

The people living in Zaanan will not come out.

The people in Beth Ezel will cry and take their support from you.

12 The people living in Maroth wait for something good to happen,

1:2 everyone on it Literally, “its fullness.”

1:3 high places Here, this might mean simply “hills,” or it might mean places of worship (see “high place” in the Word List).

1:5 nation Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country.

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even though trouble has come down from the LORD and has reached the city gate of Jerusalem.

13 You people living in Lachish, get the horses ready for your chariots.
You are guilty of the same sins Israel committed, and you brought those sins to Jerusalem.

14 So you must give goodbye gifts to Moresheth in Gath.
The houses in Aczib will trick the kings of Israel.
15 You people who live in Mareshah, I will bring someone against you who will take the things you own.
The Glory of Israel will come into Adullam.

16 So cut off your hair, make yourself bald, because you will cry for the children you love.
Make yourself bald like an eagle and show your sadness, because your children will be taken away from you.

The Evil Plans of People

Trouble will come to those who make plans to sin.
They lie on their beds making their evil plans.
Then when the morning light comes, they do what they planned, because they have the power to do what they want.

They want fields, so they take them.
They want houses, so they take them.

They cheat a man and take his house and his land.

The Lord’s Plans to Punish the People

3 That is why the LORD says:
“Look, I am planning trouble against this family.
You will not be able to save yourselves.
You will stop being proud, because bad times are coming.

4 Then people will sing songs about you. They will sing this sad song:
‘We are ruined!
The LORD took away our land and gave it to other people.
Yes, he took my land away from me. He has divided our fields among our enemies.

5 So we will not be able to measure the land and divide it among the LORD’s people.”

Micah Is Asked Not to Prophesy

6 The people say, “Don’t prophesy to us. Don’t say those bad things about us. Nothing bad will happen to us.”

7 But people of Jacob, I must say these things.
The LORD is losing his patience because of the bad things you did.
If you lived right, I could say nice words to you.

8 But you attack my people like enemies. You steal the clothes off the backs of people walking by.
They think they are safe, but you are there to treat them like prisoners of war.

9 You have taken nice houses away from the women of my people.
You have taken my wealth away from their small children forever.

10 Get up and leave!

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This will not be your place of rest, because you ruined it.
You made it unclean, so it will be destroyed!
It will be a terrible destruction!

These people don’t want to listen to me.
But if a man comes telling lies, they will accept him.
They would accept a false prophet if he comes and says,
“There will be good times in the future, with plenty of wine and beer.”

The Lord Will Bring His People Together
Yes, people of Jacob, I will bring all of you together.
I will bring together all those in Israel who are still living.
I will put them together like sheep in the sheep pen,
like a flock in its pasture.
Then the place will be filled with the noise of many people.
The “One Who Breaks Through Walls” will push through and walk to the front of his people.
They will break through the gates and leave that city.
They will leave with their king marching before them—with the LORD at the front of his people.

The Leaders of Israel Are Guilty of Evil
Then I said, “Listen, leaders of Jacob and officers of the nation of Israel!
You should know what justice is.
But you hate good and love evil.
You tear the skin off the people and tear the flesh off their bones.
You are destroying my people.
You take their skin off them and break their bones.

You chop their bones up like meat to put in the pot!
Then you will pray to the LORD, but he will not answer you.
No, he will hide his face from you, because what you do is evil.”

False Prophets
Some false prophets are telling lies to the Lord’s people. This is what the LORD says about them:
“These prophets are led by their stomachs. They promise peace for those who give them food, but they promise war to those who do not give them food.

“This is why it is like night for you and you don’t have visions. You cannot see what will happen in the future, so it is like darkness to you. The sun has gone down on the prophets. They cannot see what will happen in the future, so it is like darkness to them.
The seers are ashamed. The fortunetellers are embarrassed. None of them will say anything, because God will not speak to them.”

Micah Is an Honest Prophet of God
But the LORD’s Spirit has filled me with power, goodness, and strength. So I can tell Jacob about his crimes, and so I can tell Israel about his sins!

The Leaders of Israel Are to Blame
Leaders of Jacob and rulers of Israel, listen to me!
You hate the right way of living! If something is straight, then you make it crooked!
You build Zion by murdering people.
You build Jerusalem by cheating

a 3:1 nation Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country.
b 3:3 You are destroying my people Literally, “You, who eat the flesh of my people.”
c 3:10 murdering people Literally, “bloodshed.”
The judges in Jerusalem accept bribes to help them decide who wins in court. The priests in Jerusalem must be paid before they will teach the people. People must pay the prophets before they will look into the future. Then those leaders expect the LORD to help them. They say, “The LORD lives here with us, so nothing bad will happen to us.”

Leaders, because of you, Zion will be destroyed. It will become a plowed field. Jerusalem will become a pile of rocks. Temple Mount will be an empty hill and overgrown with bushes.

The Law Will Come From Jerusalem

In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s Temple will be on the highest of all mountains. It will be raised higher than the hills. There will be a steady stream of people going there. People from many nations will go there and say, “Come, let’s go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the Temple of the God of Jacob. Then God will teach us his way of living, and we will follow him.”

His teaching, the LORD’s message, will begin in Jerusalem on Mount Zion and will go out to all the world. Then God will act as judge to end arguments between people in many places. He will decide what is right for great nations far and near. They will stop using their weapons for war. They will hammer their swords into plows and use their spears to make tools for harvesting. All fighting between nations will end. They will never again train for war. They will sit under their own grapevine and fig tree. No one will make them afraid. That is because the LORD All-Powerful said it would happen like that.

All the people from other nations follow their own gods, but we will follow the LORD our God forever and ever!

The Kingdom to Be Brought Back

The LORD says, “Jerusalem was hurt and crippled. She was thrown away. She was hurt and punished, but I will bring her back to me.”

“The people of that ‘crippled’ city will be the only ones left alive. They were forced to leave, but I will make them into a strong nation.” The LORD will be their king. He will rule from Mount Zion forever.

And you, Tower of Flocks, your time will come. Ophel, hill of Zion, you will again have the right to rule. Yes, the kingdom will be in Jerusalem as it was in the past.

Why Must the Israelites Go to Babylon?

Now, why are you crying so loudly? Is your king gone? Have you lost your wise leader? Is that why you are suffering like a part of Jerusalem. The leaders would be like shepherds in a tower watching their sheep.

\[3:12\] empty hill Or “high place,” a term usually used for local shrines (places for worship) where people often worshiped idols.
woman in labor?

10 Cry out, you people of Jerusalem, and feel the pain, as if you were giving birth.
You must go out of the city and live in the fields.
You will go away to Babylon, but you will also be saved from that place.
The LORD will come and rescue you there.
He will take you away from your enemies.

The Lord Will Destroy the Other Nations

11 Many nations have come to fight against you.
They say, “Look, there is Zion! Let’s attack her!”

12 They have their plans, but they don’t know what the LORD is planning.
He brought them here for a special purpose.
They will be crushed like grain on a threshing floor.

Israel Will Defeat Its Enemies

13 “People of Jerusalem, get up and crush them!
I will make you very strong.
It will be as if you have horns of iron and hooves of bronze.
You will beat many people into small pieces.
You will give their wealth to the LORD.
You will give their treasure to the Lord of all the earth.”

5 Now strong city, gather your soldiers!
They are surrounding us for the attack!
They will hit the Judge of Israel on the cheek with a stick.

The Messiah to Be Born in Bethlehem

2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, are the smallest town in Judah.
Your family is almost too small to count,
but the “Ruler of Israel” will come from you to rule for me.

His beginnings are from ancient times, from long, long ago.

3 The Lord will let his people be defeated until the woman gives birth to her child, the promised king.
Then the rest of his brothers will come back to join the people of Israel.

4 He will begin to rule Israel in the power of the LORD.
Like a shepherd, he will lead his people in the wonderful name of the LORD his God.
And they will live in safety because then his greatness will be known all over the world.

5 He will bring a time of peace.

Yes, the Assyrian army will come into our country and march through our land.
But we have plenty of leaders we can send against them.

6 With swords in hand our leaders will defeat the Assyrians and rule the land of Nimrod.
They will save us from the Assyrians when they come into our land and march through our territory.

7 But those from Jacob who are still living and scattered among the nations will be like dew from the LORD that does not depend on anyone.
They will be like rain on the grass that does not wait for anyone.

8 Those from Jacob who are still living

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are scattered among the nations. But they will be like a lion among the animals in the forest. They will be like a young lion among flocks of sheep. If the lion passes through, he goes where he wants to go. If he attacks an animal, no one can save it. The survivors will be like that.

9 You will lift your hand against your enemies, and you will destroy them.

People Will Depend on God

10 The LORD says, “At that time I will take away your horses, and I will destroy your chariots. I will destroy the cities in your country. I will pull down all your fortresses. You will no longer try to do magic. You will have no more fortunetellers. I will destroy your statues of false gods. I will pull down your memorial stones. You will not worship what your hands have made. I will destroy the Asherah poles and your false gods.

13 Some nations will not listen to me, but I will show my anger and get my revenge.”

What Does God Want From Us?

6 What must I bring when I come to meet with the LORD? What must I do when I bow down to God above? Should I come to him with burnt offerings and a year-old calf?

7 Will the LORD be pleased with a thousand rams or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Should I offer him my first child to pay for my wrongs? Should I sacrifice my very own child for my sins?

8 Human, the LORD has told you what goodness is. This is what he wants from you: Be fair to other people. Love kindness and loyalty, and humbly obey your God.

What Were the Israelites Doing?

9 The LORD shouts to the city: “A wise person respects the Lord’s name. So pay attention to the punishing rod and to the one who uses it!”

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Do the wicked still hide treasures that they have stolen?
Do they still cheat people with baskets that are too small?¹
Yes, all of this is still happening!

Some people carry special weights that they use to cheat people when they weigh their goods. Should I pardon them?

The rich in that city are still cruel. The people there still tell lies. Yes, they tell their lies.

So I have begun to punish you. I will destroy you because of your sins.

You will eat, but you will not become full.
You will still be hungry and empty.²
You will try to bring people to safety, but people with swords will kill the people you rescued.

You will plant your seeds, but you will not gather food.
You will try to squeeze oil from your olives, but you will not get any oil.
You will crush your grapes, but you will not get enough juice to have wine to drink.

This is because you obey the laws of Omri.³
You do all the evil things that Ahab’s family does.
You follow their teachings, so I will let you be destroyed.
People will whistle in amazement when they see your destroyed city. Then you will bear the shame that the other nations bring to you."⁴

Micah Is Upset at the Evil People Do

I am upset because I am like fruit that has been gathered, like grapes that have already been picked.
There are no grapes left to eat.
There are none of the early figs that I love.

By this I mean that all the faithful people are gone.
There are no good people left.
Everyone is planning to kill someone.
Everyone is trying to trap their brother.

People are good at doing bad things with both hands.
Officials ask for bribes.
Judges take money to change their decisions in court.
“Important leaders” do whatever they want to do.

Even the best of them is as crooked as a tangled thornbush.

The Day of Punishment Is Coming
Your prophets said this day would come, and the day of your watchmen⁵ has come.
Now you will be punished.
Now you will be confused!

Don’t trust your neighbor or trust a friend!
Don’t even speak freely with your wife.

Your enemies will be the people in your own house.
A son will not honor his father.
A daughter will turn against her mother.
A daughter-in-law will turn against her mother-in-law.

The Lord Is the Savior
So I will look to the Lord for help.
I will wait for God to save me.
My God will hear me.
I have fallen, but enemy, don’t laugh at me!
I will get up again.
I sit in darkness now, but the Lord will be a light for me.

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The Lord Forgives

9 I sinned against the Lord, so he was angry with me. But he will argue my case for me in court. He will do what is right for me. Then he will bring me out into the light, and I will see that he is right.

10 My enemy said to me, “Where is the Lord your God?” But my enemy will see this, and she will be ashamed. At that time I will laugh at her. People will walk over her, like mud in the streets.

Israel Will Defeat Its Enemies

15 I did many miracles when I took you out of Egypt. I will let you see more miracles like that.

16 The nations will see those miracles, and they will be ashamed. They will see that their “power” is nothing compared to mine. They will be amazed and put their hands over their mouths. They will cover their ears and refuse to listen.

17 They will crawl in the dust like a snake. They will shake with fear. They will be like insects crawling from their holes in the ground and coming to the Lord our God. God, they will fear and respect you!

The Jews to Return

11 The time will come when your walls will be rebuilt. At that time the country will grow.

12 Your people will come back to your land. They will come back from Assyria and from the cities of Egypt. They will come from Egypt and from the other side of the Euphrates River. They will come from the sea in the west and from the mountains in the east.

13 The land was ruined by the people who lived there and by what they did.

14 So rule your people with your rod. Rule the flock of people who belong to you. That flock lives alone in the woods and up on Mount Carmel.

Praise for the Lord

18 There is no God like you. You take away people’s guilt. God will forgive his people who survive. He will not stay angry with them forever, because he enjoys being kind.

19 He will come back and comfort us again. He will throw all our sins into the deep sea.

20 God, please be true to Jacob. Be kind and loyal to Abraham, as you promised our ancestors long ago.

That flock lives in Bashan and Gilead as they did in the past.

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* 7:10 laugh at her * Literally, “my eyes will stare at her.”
* 7:10 enemy, laugh at her, walk over her * This probably refers to an enemy city, such as the capital of Edom.
* 7:20 Abraham * Here, Abraham is used to mean all the people of Israel. See “Abraham” in the Word List.
This book is the vision of Nahum from Elkosh. This is the sad message about the city of Nineveh.\footnote{1:1 Nineveh The capital city of the country of Assyria. Assyria destroyed Israel in 722–721 B.C.}

The Lord Is Angry at Nineveh

2 The \textsc{Lord} is a jealous God.
   The \textsc{Lord} punishes the guilty, and he is very angry.
   The \textsc{Lord} punishes his enemies, and he stays angry with them.

3 The \textsc{Lord} is patient, but he is also very powerful!
   The \textsc{Lord} will punish the guilty; he will not let them go free.
   He will use whirlwinds and storms to show his power.
   People walk on the dusty ground, but he walks on the clouds.

4 He will speak harshly to the sea, and it will become dry.
   He will dry up all the rivers.
   The rich lands of Bashan and Carmel become dry and dead.
   The flowers in Lebanon fade away.

5 The \textsc{Lord} will come, and the mountains will shake and the hills will melt away.
   He will come, and the earth will shake with fear.
   The earth and everyone on it will shake with fear.

6 No one can stand against his great anger.
   No one can endure his terrible anger.
   His anger will burn like fire.
   The rocks will shatter when he comes.

7 The \textsc{Lord} is good.
   He is a safe place to go to in times of trouble.
   He takes care of those who trust him.

8 But he will completely destroy his enemies.
   He will wash them away like a flood and chase them into the darkness.

9 Why are you making plans against the \textsc{Lord}?
   He will bring complete destruction, so you will not cause trouble again.

10 You will be destroyed completely like thornbushes burning under a pot.
   You will be destroyed like dry weeds that burn quickly.

11 Someone from Nineveh is making evil plans against the \textsc{Lord}.
   That advisor is a worthless troublemaker.

12 This is what the \textsc{Lord} said:
   “The people of Assyria are at full strength.
   They have many soldiers, but they will all be cut down.
   They will all be finished.
   My people, I made you suffer, but I will make you suffer no more.

13 Now I will set you free from the power of Assyria.
   I will take the yoke off your neck and tear away the chains holding you.”

14 King of Assyria, the \textsc{Lord} gave this command about you:
   “You will not have any descendants to wear your name.
   I will destroy your carved idols and metal statues that are in the temple of your gods.
I am preparing your grave,  
because your end is coming soon! a"

15 Judah, look!  
There, coming over the mountains,  
is a messenger bringing good news!  
He says there is peace.  
Judah, celebrate your special festivals  
and do what you promised.  
Those worthless troublemakers will  
not come through and attack you again.  
They have all been destroyed.

Nineveh Will Be Destroyed

1 An enemy is coming to attack you,  
so guard the strong places of your city.  
Watch the road.  
Get ready for war.  
Prepare for battle!
2 Yes, the LORD changed Jacob’s pride.  
He made it like Israel’s pride.  
The enemy destroyed them  
and ruined their grapevines.

3 The shields of his soldiers are red.  
Their uniforms are bright red.  
Their chariots are shining like flames of fire  
and are lined up for battle.  
Their horses are ready to go.
4 The chariots race wildly through the streets  
and rush back and forth through the square.  
They look like burning torches,  
like lightning flashing from place to place!

5 The enemy calls for his best soldiers.  
They stumble as they rush ahead.  
They run to the wall  
and set up their shield over the battering ram.
6 But the gates by the rivers are open,  
and the enemy comes flooding in

a 1:14 because your end is coming soon Or “you are not important” or “you are so hated:”

and destroys the king’s palace.
7 The enemy takes away the queen,  
and her slave girls moan sadly like doves.  
They beat their breasts to show their sadness.
8 Nineveh is like a pool whose water is draining away.  
People yell, “Stop! Stop running away!”  
But it does not do any good.
9 Take the silver!  
Take the gold!  
There are many things to take.  
There are many treasures.
10 Now Nineveh is empty.  
Everything is stolen.  
The city is ruined.  
People have lost their courage,  
their hearts melt with fear,  
their knees knock together,  
their bodies shake,  
and their faces turn pale.
11 Where is that great city now?  
It was like a den where the lions feed their young.  
It was a place where people felt safe,  
like lions in a cave with no one there to harm them.
12 The lion was able to catch plenty of food  
to feed his cubs and his mate.  
He filled his cave with the animals he killed.  
He filled his den with the meat he gathered.
13 The LORD All-Powerful says,  
“I am against you, Nineveh.  
I will burn your chariots  
and kill your ‘young lions’ in battle.  
You will not hunt anyone on earth again.  
People will never again hear bad news from your messengers.”
Bad News for Nineveh

1 It will be very bad for that city of murderers.
   Nineveh is a city full of lies.
   It is filled with things taken from other countries.
   It is filled with plenty of people that it hunted and killed.

2 You can hear the sounds of whips and the noise of wheels.
   You can hear horses galloping and chariots bouncing along!

3 Soldiers on horses are attacking, their swords are shining, their spears are gleaming!
   There are many dead people.
   Dead bodies are piled up—too many bodies to count.
   People are tripping over the dead bodies.

4 All this happened because of Nineveh.
   Nineveh is like a prostitute who could never get enough.
   She wanted more and more.
   She sold herself to many nations, and she used her magic to make them her slaves.

5 The LORD All-Powerful says,
   "I am against you, Nineveh.
   I will pull your dress up over your face.
   I will let the nations see your naked body.
   The kingdoms will see your shame.

6 I will throw dirty things on you and treat you in a hateful way.
   People will look at you and laugh.

7 Everyone who sees you will be shocked.
   They will say, 'Nineveh is destroyed. Who will cry for her?'
   I know I cannot find anyone to comfort you, Nineveh.'

8 Nineveh, are you better than Thebes?

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a 3:5 pull your dress This is a wordplay in Hebrew. The Hebrew word also means "to destroy a country and take its people away as prisoners to other nations."

b 3:8 Thebes A great city in Egypt. It was destroyed in 663 B.C. by the Assyrian army.
And now your sheep have wandered away on the mountains. There is no one to bring them back. 19 Nineveh, you have been hurt badly, and nothing can heal your wound. Everyone who hears the news of your destruction claps their hands. They are all happy, because they all felt the pain you caused again and again.
Habakkuk

Habakkuk Complains to God

1 This is the message that was given to Habakkuk the prophet.

2 Lord, I continue to ask for help. When will you listen to me? I cried to you about the violence, but you did nothing! People are stealing things and hurting others. They are arguing and fighting. Why do you make me look at these terrible things? The law is weak and not fair to people. Evil people win their fights against good people. So the law is no longer fair, and justice does not win anymore.

The Lord Answers Habakkuk

5 Look at the other nations! Watch them, and you will be amazed. I will do something in your lifetime that will amaze you. You would not believe it even if you were told about it. I will make the Babylonians a strong nation. They are cruel and powerful fighters. They will march across the earth. They will take houses and cities that don’t belong to them. The Babylonians will scare the other people. They will do what they want to do and go where they want to go. Their horses will be faster than leopards and more dangerous than wolves at sunset. Their horse soldiers will come from faraway places. They will attack their enemies quickly, like a hungry eagle swooping down from the sky. The one thing they all want to do is fight. Their armies will march fast like the wind in the desert. And the Babylonian soldiers will take many prisoners—as many as the grains of sand.

10 “The Babylonian soldiers will laugh at the kings of other nations. Foreign rulers will be like jokes to them. The Babylonian soldiers will laugh at the cities with tall, strong walls. They will simply build dirt roads up to the top of the walls and easily defeat the cities. Then they will leave like the wind and go on to fight against other places. The only thing the Babylonians worship is their own strength.”

Habakkuk’s Second Complaint

12 Lord, you are the one who lives forever! You are my holy God who never dies!

13 Your eyes are too good to look at evil. You cannot stand to see people doing wrong. So why do you permit such evil? How can you watch while the wicked destroy people who are so much better?

14 You made people like fish in the sea. They are like little sea animals without a leader.

15 The enemy catches all of them with hooks and nets. The enemy catches them in his net and drags them in, and the enemy is very happy with what he caught.

16 His net helps him live like the rich and enjoy the best food. So the enemy worships his net. He makes sacrifices and burns incense to honor his net.

a 1:6 Babylonians Literally, “Chaldeans,” a tribe of Arameans who gained control in Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar was from this tribe.

b 1:12 Lord, you are … never dies Or “Lord, you have been my holy God forever! Surely we will not die.”
17 Will he continue to take riches with his net?  
Will he continue destroying people without showing mercy?

2 I will stand like a guard and watch.  
I will wait to see what the LORD will say to me.  
I will wait and learn how he answers my questions.

God Answers Habakkuk

2 The LORD answered me, “Write down what I show you. Write it clearly on a sign so that the message will be easy to read."  
3 This message is about a special time in the future. This message is about the end, and it will come true. Just be patient and wait for it. That time will come; it will not be late. 4 This message cannot help those who refuse to listen to it, but those who are good will live because they believe it.

5 “Wine can trick a person. In the same way a strong man’s pride can fool him, but he will not find peace. He is like death—he always wants more and more. And, like death, he will never be satisfied. He will continue to defeat other nations and to make those people his prisoners. 6 But soon enough, all those people will laugh at him and tell stories about his defeat. They will laugh and say, ‘It’s too bad that the man who took so many things will not get to keep them! He made himself rich by collecting debts.’

7 “Strong man, you have taken money from people. One day they will wake up and realize what is happening, and they will stand against you. Then they will take things from you, and you will be very afraid. 8 You have stolen things from many nations, so they will take much from you. You have killed many people and destroyed lands and cities. You have killed all the people there.

9 “Look at you people! You get rich by cheating people, and it hurts your own family! You build your houses high on the cliffs to protect yourself from danger. 10 You planned shameful things, and that will bring shame to your own family. You have done wrong, and it will cost you your life. 11 The stones of the walls will cry out against you. Even the wooden rafters in your own house will prove that you are wrong.

12 “Look at them! They kill people to build their city and do wicked things to make their walled city strong. 13 But the LORD All-Powerful has decided that a fire will destroy everything that those people worked to build. All their work will be for nothing. 14 Then people everywhere will know about the Glory of the LORD. This news will spread just as water spreads out into the sea. 15 It will be very bad for those who become angry and make other people suffer. Like an angry drunk, they knock others to the ground and strip them naked, just to see their naked bodies.

16 “But they will know the Lord’s anger. It will be like a cup of poison in the LORD’s right hand. They will taste that anger, and then they will fall to the ground like drunks.

“Evil ruler, you will drink from that cup. You will get shame, not honor. 17 You hurt many people in Lebanon and stole many animals there. So you will be afraid because of the people who died and because of the bad things you did to that country. You will be afraid because of what you did to those cities and to the people who lived there.”

The Message About Idols

18 Their false god will not help them, because it is only a statue that someone covered with metal. It is only a statue, so whoever made it cannot expect it to help. That statue cannot even speak! 19 Look at them! They speak to a wooden statue and tell it, “Get up! Rescue me.” They talk to a stone that cannot speak and say, “Wake up!” Don’t you know those things cannot

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\[a\] 2:2 Write down… easy to read  
Or “Write the vision clearly on tablets so that the person who reads it can run and tell other people.”

\[b\] 2:11 rafters Boards that support the roof.

\[c\] 2:15 Like an angry drunk … bodies The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.
Habakkuk 3

3 The prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. 

1 LORD, I have heard the news about you. 
I am amazed, LORD, at the powerful things you did in the past. 
Now I pray that you will do great things in our time. 
Please make these things happen in our own days. 
But in your anger, remember to show mercy to us.

Selah

3 God is coming from Teman. 
The Holy One is coming from Mount Paran. 

Selah

His glory covers the heavens, 
and his praise fills the earth!

4 Rays of light shine from his hand, a bright, shining light. 
There is such power hiding in that hand. 

5 The sickness went before him, 
and the destroyer followed behind him.

6 He stood and judged the earth. 
He looked at the people of all the nations, 
and they shook with fear. 
For many years the mountains stood strong, 
but those mountains fell to pieces. 
Those old, old hills fell down. 
God has always been able to do that.

7 I saw that the cities of Cushan were in trouble 
and that the houses of Midian trembled with fear.

8 LORD, were you angry at the rivers? 
Were you angry at the streams? 
Were you angry at the sea? 
Were you angry when you rode your horses and chariots to victory?

9 Even then you showed your rainbow. 
It was proof of your agreement with the families of the earth. 

Selah

And the dry land split the rivers. 

10 The mountains saw you and shook. 
The water flowed off the land. 
The water from the sea made a loud noise 
as it lost its power over the land.

11 The sun and the moon lost their brightness. 
They stopped shining when they saw your bright flashes of lightning. 
That lightning was like spears and arrows shooting through the air.

12 In anger you walked on the earth and punished the nations. 

13 You came to save your people 
and to lead your chosen king to victory. 
You killed the leader in every evil family, 
from the least important person to the most important in the land.

Selah

14 You used Moses’ walking stick 
to stop the enemy soldiers. 
Those soldiers came like a powerful storm to fight against us. 
They thought they could defeat us easily, 
as robbing the poor in secret.

15 But you marched your horses through the deep water, stirring up

c 3:9 rainbow . . . earth See Gen. 9.
d 3:13 chosen king Literally, “anointed one.”
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the mud.

16 My whole body shook when I heard the story.
My lips trembled.
I felt weak deep down in my bones and stood there shaking.
But I will wait patiently for destruction to come to those who attack us.

Always Rejoice in the Lord

17 Figs might not grow on the fig trees, and grapes might not grow on the vines.
Olives might not grow on the olive trees, and food might not grow in the fields.
There might not be any sheep in the pens or cattle in the barns.
18 But I will still be glad in the LORD and rejoice in God my Savior.

19 The Lord God gives me my strength. He helps me run fast like a deer. He leads me safely on the mountains.
To the music director. On my stringed instruments.
1 This is the message that the LORD gave to Zephaniah. He received this message during the time that Josiah son of Amon was king of Judah. Zephaniah was the son of Cushi, who was the son of Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of Amariah, who was the son of Hezekiah.

The Lord's Day for Judging the People
2 The LORD says, “I will destroy everything on earth. I will destroy all the people and all the animals. I will destroy the birds in the air and the fish in the sea. I will destroy the evil people and everything that makes them sin. I will remove all people from the earth.” This is what the LORD said.

4 “I will punish Judah and the people living in Jerusalem. I will remove from this place any signs of Baal worship. No one will remember the priests who serve the idols there. And those who go up on their roofs to worship the stars will be forgotten. They worship me, the LORD, but they also use the name of the false god Milcom to make promises.

6 They have turned away from me, the LORD. They have stopped following me. They no longer ask me, the LORD, for help.”

7 Be silent before the Lord God, because the LORD’s day for judging the people is coming soon. The LORD has prepared his sacrifice, and he has told his invited guests to get ready.

8 The Lord said, “On the LORD’s day of sacrifice, I will punish the king’s sons and other leaders. I will punish all the people wearing clothes from other countries. At that time I will punish all the people who jump over the threshold and those who fill their master’s house with lies and violence.”

10 The LORD also said, “At that time people will be calling for help at Fish Gate in Jerusalem and mourning in the new part of town. They will hear the sound of destruction in the hills around the city. You people living in the lower part of town will cry, because all the traders and rich merchants will be destroyed.

12 “At that time I will take a lamp and search through Jerusalem. I will find all those who are satisfied to live their own way. They say, ‘The LORD does nothing. He does not help, and he does not hurt!’ I will find them, and I will punish them. Then others will take their wealth and destroy their houses. Those who built houses will not live in them, and those who planted vineyards will not drink the wine from the grapes.”

14 The LORD’s special day for judging is coming soon! It is near and coming fast. People will hear very sad sounds on the LORD’s special day of judgment. Even strong soldiers will cry. 

17 The Lord said, “I will make life very
hard on the people. They will walk around like the blind who don’t know where they are going. That will happen because they sinned against the LORD. Their blood will be spilled on the ground. Their dead bodies will lie like dung on the ground. Their gold and silver will not help them! At that time the Lord will become very upset and angry. The LORD will destroy the whole world! He will completely destroy everyone on earth.”

God Asks People to Change Their Lives

1 Shameless people, change your lives before you become like a dry and dying flower. In the heat of day, a flower will wilt and die. You will be like that when the LORD shows his terrible anger. So change your lives before the LORD shows his anger against you! All you humble people, come to the LORD! Obey his laws. Learn to do good things. Learn to be humble. Maybe then you will be safe when the LORD shows his anger.

The Lord Will Punish Israel’s Neighbors

4 No one will be left in Gaza. Ashkelon will be destroyed. By noon, the people will be forced to leave Ashdod. Ekron will be empty. 5 You Cretans living by the sea, this message from the LORD is about you. Canaan, land of the Philistines, you will be destroyed—no one will live there! 6 Your land by the sea will become empty fields for shepherds and their sheep. Then the land will belong to the survivors from Judah. The LORD their God will remember the people from Judah and restore their fortunes. Then they will let their sheep eat the grass in those fields. In the evenings they will lie down in the empty houses of Ashkelon.

The Lord says, “I know what the people of Moab and Ammon did. They embarrassed my people. They took their land to make their own countries larger. 9 So, as surely as I am alive, Moab and the people of Ammon will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, and I promise those countries will be destroyed completely forever. Their land will be overgrown with weeds. It will be like the land covered with salt by the Dead Sea. The survivors of my people will take that land and everything left in it.”

10 This will happen to the people of Moab and Ammon because they were so proud and cruel and humiliated the people of the LORD All-Powerful. They will be afraid of the LORD, because he will destroy their gods. Then everyone in all the faraway lands will worship the Lord. 12 People of Ethiopia, this even means you! The Lord’s sword will kill your people. 13 Then the Lord will turn north and punish Assyria. He will destroy Nineveh—that city will be like an empty, dry desert. 14 Only sheep and wild animals will live in those ruins. Owls and crows will sit on the columns that are left standing. Their calls will be heard coming through the windows. Crows will sit on the doorsteps. Black birds will make their homes in those empty houses. 15 Nineveh is so proud now. It is such a happy city. The people think they are safe. They think Nineveh is the greatest place in the world, but it will be destroyed! It will be an empty place where only wild animals go to rest. People who pass by will whistle and shake their heads when they see how badly the city was destroyed.

The Future of Jerusalem

1 Jerusalem, your people fought against God. They hurt other people, and you have been stained with sin. 2 They didn’t listen to me or accept my teachings. Jerusalem didn’t trust the LORD. Jerusalem didn’t go to her God. 3 Jerusalem’s leaders are like roaring lions. Her judges are like hungry wolves that come in the evening a 1:18 world Or “land” or “country.” b 2:4 Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron Philistine cities. In Hebrew, Zephaniah is making wordplays on the names of these cities. c 2:4 empty In Hebrew this word is like the word meaning “Philistines.” Also in verse 6. d 2:5 Cretans People from Crete. The Philistines came from that island. e 2:14 Black birds Or “cedar beams.”
to attack the sheep—and in the morning nothing is left. 4 Her prophets are always making secret plans to get more and more. Her priests have treated holy things as if they were not holy. They have done bad things to God’s teachings. 5 But the LORD is still in that city, and he continues to be good. He does not do anything wrong. He continues to help his people. Morning after morning he makes good decisions for them. Not a day passes without his justice. He never gives a decision that is crooked or is something to be ashamed of.

6 The LORD says, “I have destroyed whole nations and their defense towers. I destroyed their streets and now no one goes there anymore. Their cities are empty—no one lives there anymore. I tell you this so that you will learn a lesson. I want you to fear and respect me. If you do this, your home will not be destroyed, and I will not have to punish you the way I planned.” But those evil people only wanted to do more of the same evil things they had already done!

8 The LORD said, “So just wait! Wait for me to stand and judge you. I have the right to bring people from many nations and use them to punish you. I will use them to show my anger against you. I will use them to show how upset I am—and the whole country will be destroyed. 9 Then I will change people from other nations so that they can speak the language clearly and call out the name of the LORD. They will all worship me together, shoulder to shoulder, as one people. 10 People will come all the way from the other side of the river in Ethiopia. My scattered people will come to me. My worshipers will come and bring their gifts to me.

11 Then, Jerusalem, you will no longer be ashamed of the wrong things your people do against me. That is because I will remove all the bad people from Jerusalem. I will take away all the proud people. There will not be any of them on my holy mountain. 12 I will let only meek and humble people stay in my city, and they will trust the LORD’s name. 13 The survivors of Israel will not do bad things or tell lies. They will not try to trick people with lies. They will be like sheep that eat and lie down in peace—and no one will bother them.”

A Happy Song

14 Jerusalem, sing and be happy! Israel, shout for joy! Jerusalem, be happy and have fun!
15 The LORD stopped your punishment. He destroyed your enemies’ strong towers.
16 At that time Jerusalem will be told, “Be strong, don’t be afraid!”
17 The LORD your God is with you. He is like a powerful soldier. He will save you.
18 He will show how much he loves you and how happy he is with you. He will laugh and be happy about you, like people at a party.
19 At that time I will punish those who hurt you. I will save my hurt people and bring back those who were forced to leave.
20 I will give them praise and honor everywhere, even in places where they suffered shame.
21 At that time I will lead you back home. I will bring your people back together. I will cause people everywhere to honor and praise you. You will see me bring back all the blessings you once had.”

This is what the LORD said.

a 3:11 holy mountain Mount Zion, one of the mountains
b 3:18 The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.
It Is Time to Build the Temple

1 On the first day of the sixth month of the second year that Darius was king of Persia, Haggai received a message from the LORD. This message was for Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jehozadak. Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah and Joshua was the high priest. This is the message: 2 This is what the LORD All-Powerful said, “The people say it is not yet the right time to build the LORD’s Temple.”

3 Again Haggai received a message from the LORD. Haggai spoke this message: 4 “You people think the right time has come for you to live in nice houses. You live in houses with beautiful wooden paneling on the walls, but the LORD’s house is still in ruins. 5 Now the LORD All-Powerful says, ‘Think about what is happening. You have planted many seeds, but you have gathered only a few crops. You have food to eat, but not enough to get full. You have something to drink, but not enough to get drunk. You have some clothes to wear, but not enough to keep warm. You earn a little money, but you don’t know where it all goes. It’s as though there is a hole in your pocket!’”

6 The LORD All-Powerful said, “Think about what you are doing. Go up to the mountains, get the wood, and build the Temple. Then I will be pleased with the Temple, and I will be honored.” This is what the LORD said.

7 The LORD All-Powerful said, “You people look for a big harvest, but when you go to gather the crop, there is only a little grain. So you bring that grain home, and then I send a wind that blows it all away. Why is this happening? Because my house is still in ruins while each of you runs home to take care of your own house. 10 That is why the sky holds back its dew and why the earth holds back its crops.

11 I gave the command for the land and the mountains to be dry. The grain, the new wine, the olive oil, and everything the earth produces will be ruined. All the people and all the animals will become weak.”

Work Begins on the New Temple

12 The LORD God had sent Haggai to speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and to the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak. So these men and all the people listened to the voice of the LORD their God and to the words of Haggai the prophet. And the people showed their fear and respect for the LORD their God.

13 Then Haggai, the LORD’s messenger, delivered this message to the people: “The LORD says, ‘I am with you!’”

14 Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel was the governor of Judah. Joshua son of Jehozadak was the high priest. The LORD made them and all the people excited about working on the Temple of their God, the LORD All-Powerful. So they began this work on the 24th day of the sixth month in the second year Darius was the king.

The Lord Encourages the People

2 On the 21st day of the seventh month, this message from the LORD came to Haggai: 2 “Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest,
and to all the people. Say this: 3“How many of you people look at this Temple and try to compare it to the beautiful Temple that was destroyed? What do you think? Does this Temple seem like nothing when you compare it with the first Temple? 4But the LORD says, “Zerubbabel, don’t be discouraged!” And the LORD says, “Joshua son of Jehozadak, you are the high priest. Don’t be discouraged! And all you people who live in the land, don’t be discouraged! Continue this work, because I am with you.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

5“I made an agreement with you when you left Egypt, and I have kept my promise. My Spirit is with you, so don’t be afraid!” 6This is what the LORD All-Powerful said, ‘In just a little while, I will once again shake things up. I will shake heaven and earth, and I will shake the sea and the dry land. 7I will shake up the nations, and they will come to you with wealth from every nation. And then I will fill this Temple with glory.’ That is what the LORD All-Powerful said!

8“All their silver really belongs to me! And all the gold is mine!” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

9And the LORD All-Powerful said, ‘This last Temple will be more beautiful than the first one, and I will bring peace to this place.’ Remember, this is what the LORD All-Powerful said.”

Today Begins a Time of Blessing

10On the 24th day of the ninth month in the second year Darius was king of Persia, this message from the LORD came to Haggai the prophet: 11“The LORD All-Powerful commands you to ask the priests what the law says about these things: 12‘Suppose a man carries some meat in the fold of his clothes. This meat is part of a sacrifice, so it is holy. If his clothes touch some bread, cooked food, wine, oil, or some other food, will the thing the clothes touch become holy?’” The priests answered, “No.” 13Then Haggai said, “Whoever touches a dead body will become unclean. Now if they touch anything else, will it also become unclean?” The priests answered, “Yes, it will become unclean.” 14Then Haggai said, “This is what the LORD God said: ‘This is also true for the people of this nation. They were not pure and holy before me. So anything they did with their hands and anything they offered at the altar became unclean.

15“Think about what has happened to you. Think about how things were before you began working on the LORD’s Temple. 16People wanted 20 measures of grain, but there were only 10 measures in the pile. People wanted to get 50 jars of wine from the wine vat, but there were only 20. 17That was because I punished you. I sent the diseases that killed your plants and the hail that destroyed the things you made with your hands. I did this, but still you did not come to me.’ This is what the LORD said.

18“The LORD said, ‘Today is the 24th day of the ninth month. You have finished laying the foundation of the LORD’s Temple. So notice what happens from this day forward: 19Your seed for planting is still in the barn. And look at the vines, the fig trees, and the pomegranate and olive trees. They have not yet produced any fruit. But beginning today, I will bless you.’”

20Another message from the LORD came to Haggai on the 24th day of the month. This is the message: 21“Go to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah and tell him that I will shake heaven and earth. 22And I will overthrow many kings and kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of those other people. I will destroy their chariots and their riders. I will defeat their war horses and riders. These armies are friends now, but they will turn against each other and kill each other with swords.” 23This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: “Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, my servant, I have chosen you. I, the LORD, tell you that at that time I will use you like a signet ring to represent my authority!” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.
The Lord Wants His People to Return

1 Zechariah son of Berekiah received a message from the Lord. This was in the eighth month of the second year that Darius\(^a\) was king in Persia. (Zechariah was the son of Berekiah, who was the son of Iddo the prophet.) This is that message:

2 The Lord became very angry with your ancestors. So you must tell the people what the Lord All-Powerful says, “Come back to me, says the Lord All-Powerful, and I will come back to you.” This is what the Lord All-Powerful said.

3 “Don’t be like your ancestors. In the past the prophets spoke to them and said, ‘The Lord All-Powerful wants you to change your evil way of living. Stop doing evil things!’ But your ancestors did not listen to me.” This is what the Lord said.

4 “Your ancestors are gone, and those prophets did not live forever. The prophets were my servants. I used them to tell your ancestors about my laws and teachings. Your ancestors finally learned their lesson and said, ‘The Lord All-Powerful did what he said he would do. He punished us for the way we lived and for all the evil things we did.’ So they came back to God.”

The Four Horses

7 On the 24th day of the eleventh month (Shebat) of the second year that Darius was king of Persia, Zechariah received another message from the Lord. (This was Zechariah son of Berekiah, son of Iddo.) This is the message:

8 At night I saw a man riding a red horse. He was standing among some myrtle bushes in the valley. Behind him, there were red, brown, and white horses. I said, “Sir, what are these horses for?” Then the angel speaking to me said, “I will show you what these horses are for.”

9 Then the man standing among the myrtle bushes said, “The Lord sent these horses to go here and there on earth.”

10 Then the horses spoke to the Lord’s angel standing among the myrtle bushes and said, “We have walked here and there on the earth, and everything is calm and quiet.”

11 Then the Lord’s angel said, “Lord All-Powerful, how long before you comfort Jerusalem and the cities of Judah? You have shown your anger at these cities for 70 years now.”

12 Then the Lord answered the angel who was talking with me. He spoke good, comforting words.

13 Then the Lord told me to tell the people this: The Lord All-Powerful says: “I have a strong love for Jerusalem and Zion.

14 And I am very angry at the nations that feel so safe. I was only a little angry, and I used them to punish my people. But they caused too much damage.”

15 So the Lord says, “I will come back to Jerusalem and comfort her.” The Lord All-Powerful says, “Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and my house will be built there.”

16 The angel also said, “The Lord All-Powerful says, ‘My towns will be rich again. I will comfort Zion. I will again choose Jerusalem to be my special city.’”

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\(^a\) 1:1 the second year ... Darius That is, about 520 B.C. Also in verse 7.
The Four Horns and Four Workers

18 Then I looked up and I saw four horns. 19 So I asked the angel who was talking with me, “What do these horns mean?”

He said, “These are the horns that forced the people of Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem to go to foreign countries.”

20 The LORD showed me four workers. 21 I asked him, “What are these four workers coming to do?”

He said, “The horns represent the nations that attacked the people of Judah and forced them to go to foreign countries. The horns ‘threw’ the people of Judah to the foreign countries. The horns didn’t show mercy to anyone. But these four workers have come to frighten the horns and throw them away.”

Measuring Jerusalem

2 Then I looked up and saw a man holding a rope for measuring things. 2 I asked him, “Where are you going?”

He said to me, “I am going to measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and how long it is.”

3 Then the angel who was speaking to me left, and another angel went out to talk to him. 4 He said to him, “Run and tell that young man this: ‘Jerusalem will be a city without walls, because there will be too many people and animals living there.’

5 The LORD says, ‘I will be a wall of fire around her, to protect her, and to bring glory to that city, I will live there.’”

God Calls His People Home

The LORD says, 6 “Hurry! Leave the land in the North in a hurry. Yes, it is true that I scattered your people in every direction.

7 You people from Zion now live in Babylon. Escape! Run away from that city!”

He sent me to bring you honor. And this is what the LORD All-Powerful said:

“If anyone even touches you, it is as if they did it to the pupil of my eye.

9 Watch and see how I will punish them: Their own slaves will become their masters and take all their wealth.”

Then you will know it was the LORD All-Powerful who sent me to tell you these things.

10 The LORD says, “Zion, be happy, because I am coming, and I will live in your city.

11 At that time people from many nations will come to me. They will become my people, and I will live in your city.”

12 The LORD will again choose Jerusalem to be his special city. Judah will be his share of the holy land.

13 Everyone, be quiet! The LORD is coming out of his holy house.

The High Priest

3 The angel showed me Joshua the high priest, standing in front of the angel of the LORD and Satan was standing by Joshua’s right side. Satan was there to accuse Joshua of doing wrong. 2 Then the angel of the LORD said, “The LORD says that you are wrong, and he will continue to correct you! The LORD has chosen Jerusalem to be his special city. He saved that city—it was like a burning stick pulled from the fire.”

3 Joshua was wearing a dirty robe as he stood in front of the angel. 4 Then the angel said to the other angels standing near him, “Take those dirty clothes off Joshua.” Then the angel spoke to Joshua. He said, “Now,
I have taken away your guilt, and I am giving you a new change of clothes.”

Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put the clean turban on him and also put clean clothes on him while the Lord’s angel stood there. Then the Lord’s angel said this to Joshua:

This is what the Lord All-Powerful said:

“Live the way I tell you, and do everything I say. And you will be in charge of my Temple. You will take care of its courtyard. You will be free to go anywhere in my Temple, just as these angels standing here.

Listen, Joshua, you who are the high priest, and listen, you fellow priests seated before him. You are all examples to show what will happen when I bring my special servant. He is called, the Branch.

Look, I put a special stone in front of Joshua. There are seven sides on that stone. I will carve a special message on it. This will show that in one day, I will remove the guilt from this land.”

The Lord All-Powerful says, “At that time people will sit and talk with their friends and neighbors. They will invite each other to sit under the fig trees and grapevines.”

The Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees

Then the angel who was talking to me returned and woke me up. I was like a person waking up from sleep. Then the angel asked me, “What do you see?”

I said, “I see a solid gold lampstand. There are seven lamps on the lampstand, and there is a bowl on top of it. There are seven tubes coming from the bowl. One tube goes to each lamp. The tubes bring the oil in the bowl to each of the lamps.

There are two olive trees by the bowl, one on the right side and one on the left side. These trees produce the oil for the lamps.”

Then I asked the angel who was speaking with me, “Sir, what do these things mean?”

The angel speaking with me said, “Don’t you know what these things are?”

“No sir,” I said.

He said, “This is the message from the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Your help will not come from your own strength and power. No, your help will come from my Spirit.’ This is what the Lord All-Powerful says.

That tall mountain will be like a flat place for Zerubbabel. He will build the Temple, and when the most important stone is put in place, the people will shout, ‘Beautiful! Beautiful!’

The Lord’s message to me also said, “Zerubbabel will lay the foundations for my Temple, and he will finish building it. Then you will know that the Lord All-Powerful sent me to you people. People will not be ashamed of the small beginnings, and they will be very happy when they see Zerubbabel with the plumb line, measuring and checking the finished building. Now the seven sides of the stone you saw represent the eyes of the Lord looking in every direction. They see everything on earth.”

Then I said to him, “I saw one olive tree on the right side of the lampstand and one on the left side. What do those two olive trees mean?” I also said to him, “I saw two olive branches by the gold tubes with gold colored oil flowing from them. What do these things mean?”

Then the angel said to me, “Don’t you know what these things mean?”

I said, “No, sir.”

So he said, “They represent the two men chosen to serve the Lord of the whole world.”

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The Flying Scroll

I looked up again, and I saw a flying scroll. The angel asked me, “What do you see?”

I said, “I see a flying scroll that is 30 feet long and 15 feet wide.”

Then the angel told me, “There is a curse written on that scroll. On one side of the scroll, there is a curse against thieves and on the other side is a curse against people who lie when they make promises.

The LORD All-Powerful says, ‘I will send that scroll to the houses of thieves and people who lie when they use my name to make promises. That scroll will settle there and destroy even the stones and wooden posts of their houses.’”

The Woman and the Bucket

The angel who was talking to me went outside and said, “Look! What do you see coming?”

I said, “I don’t know. What is it?”

He said, “That is a measuring bucket.”

He also said, “That bucket is for measuring the sins of the people in this country.”

A lid made of lead was lifted off the bucket, and there was a woman in the bucket. The angel said, “The woman represents evil.” Then the angel pushed the woman down into the bucket and put the lead lid back on it.

Then I looked up and saw two women with wings like a stork. They flew out, and with the wind in their wings, they picked up the bucket. They flew through the air carrying the bucket.

Then I asked the angel who was speaking with me, “Where are they carrying the bucket?”

The angel told me, “They are going to build a house for it in Babylonia. After they build that house, they will put the bucket there.”

The Four Chariots

I turned around. I looked up and saw four chariots going between two bronze mountains. Red horses were pulling the first chariot. Black horses were pulling the second chariot. White horses were pulling the third chariot, and horses with red spots were pulling the fourth chariot.

I asked the angel who was talking with me, “Sir, what does this mean?”

The angel said, “These are the four winds. They have just come from the Lord of the whole world. The black horses will go north, the red horses will go east, the white horses will go west, and the horses with red spots will go south.”

The red spotted horses were anxious to go look at their part of the earth, so the angel told them, “Go walk through the earth.” So they went walking through their part of the earth.

Then he shouted at me and said, “Look, those horses that were going north finished their job in Babylon. They have calmed my spirit; I am not angry now!”

Joshua the Priest Gets a Crown

Then I received another message from the LORD. He said, “Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah have come from the captives in Babylon. Get silver and gold from these men and then go to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. Use the silver and gold to make a crown. Put it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak. Then tell him this is what the LORD All-Powerful says:

‘There is a man called the Branch. He will grow strong, and he will build the LORD’s Temple.

He will build the LORD’s Temple, and he will receive the honor. He will sit on his throne and be the ruler, and a priest will stand by his throne.’

prophets. This showed that these people were chosen by God.

d 5:1:2 30 feet Literally, “20 cubits” (8.88 m).

d 5:1:2 15 feet Literally, “10 cubits” (4.44 m).

d 5:6 sins The Hebrew text has “their eye,” but with a minor change of one character it becomes “their guilt.”

d 5:11 Babylonia Literally, “Shinar,” which may be a form of the name Sumer.

e 6:5 four winds Or “four spirits.” Four winds often means “winds that blow from every direction: north, south, east, and west.”

f 6:10 captives People taken away as prisoners. Here, it means the Jewish people who were taken to Babylon.
These two men will work together in peace.’

14 The crown will be kept in my Temple, so that when people see it, they will remember Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and the kindness of Zephaniah’s son Josiah.”

15 People living far away will come and build the LORD’s Temple. Then you will know for sure that the LORD All-Powerful sent me to you people. All these things will happen if you do what the LORD your God says.

The Lord Wants Kindness and Mercy

7 Zechariah received a message from the LORD in the fourth year that Darius was the king of Persia. This was on the fourth day of the ninth month (Kislev).

2 The people of Bethel sent Sharezer, Regem-Melech, and his men to ask the LORD a question. They went to the prophets and to the priests at the Temple of the LORD All-Powerful. They asked them this question: “For many years we have shown our sadness for the destruction of the Temple. In the fifth month of each year, we have had a special time of crying and fasting. Should we continue to do this?”

4 I received this message from the LORD All-Powerful: “Tell the priests and the other people in this country this: ‘For seventy years you fasted and showed your sadness in the fifth month and in the seventh month. But was that fasting really for me? And when you ate and drank, was that for me? No, it was for your own good.

6 The LORD used the earlier prophets to say the same thing long ago. That was when Jerusalem was still a rich city filled with people and there were still people living in the surrounding towns, in the Negev, and in the western foothills.’”

8 This is the LORD’s message to Zechariah:

9 “This is what the LORD All-Powerful said:

“You must do what is right and fair.

Don’t hurt widows and orphans, strangers, or poor people. Don’t even think of doing bad things to each other!’”

11 But they refused to listen and refused to do what he wanted. They closed their ears so that they could not hear what God said.

12 They were very stubborn and would not obey the law. The LORD All-Powerful used his Spirit and sent messages to his people through the prophets. But the people would not listen, so the LORD All-Powerful became very angry.

13 So the LORD All-Powerful said, “I called to them, and they did not answer. So now, if they call to me, I will not answer.

14 I will bring the other nations against them like a storm. They didn’t know those nations, but the country will be destroyed after those nations pass through. This pleasant country will be destroyed.”

The Lord Promises to Bless Jerusalem

8 This is a message from the LORD All-Powerful. The LORD All-Powerful says, “I have a very strong love for Mount Zion. I love her so much that I became angry when she was not faithful to me.”

3 The LORD says, “I have come back to Zion, and I am living in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called Faithful City. The mountain of the LORD All-Powerful will be called Holy Mountain.”

4 The LORD All-Powerful says, “Old men and women will again be seen in the public places in Jerusalem. People will live so long that they will need their walking sticks. And the city will be filled with children playing in the streets.”
The Lord All-Powerful says, “The survivors will think it is wonderful, and so will I!”

7The Lord All-Powerful says, “Look, I am rescuing my people from countries in the east and west. I will bring them back here, and they will live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their good and faithful God.”

8The Lord All-Powerful says, “Be strong! You people are hearing the same message today that the prophets gave when the Lord All-Powerful first laid the foundations to rebuild his Temple. Before that time, people didn’t have the money to hire workers or to rent animals. And it was not safe for people to come and go. There was no relief from all the troubles. I had turned everyone against their neighbor. But it is not like that now. It will not be like that for the survivors.” This is what the Lord All-Powerful said.

9“These people will plant in peace. Their grapevines will produce grapes. The land will give good crops, and the skies will give rain. I will give all these things to my people. People began using the names Israel and Judah in their curses. But I will save Israel and Judah, and their names will become a blessing. So don’t be afraid. Be strong!”

10The Lord All-Powerful says, “Your ancestors made me angry, so I decided to destroy them. I decided not to change my mind.” This is what the Lord All-Powerful said. But now I have changed my mind. And in the same way I have decided to be good to Jerusalem and to the people of Judah. So don’t be afraid. Be strong!

11The Lord All-Powerful says, “These people will plant in peace. Their grapevines will produce grapes. The land will give good crops, and the skies will give rain. I will give all these things to my people. People began using the names Israel and Judah in their curses. But I will save Israel and Judah, and their names will become a blessing. So don’t be afraid. Be strong!”

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Judgment Against Other Nations

9“This is the Lord’s message against the land of Hadrach and against the city of Damascus. The tribes of Israel are not the only people who know about the Lord. Everyone looks to him for help. This message is also against the city of Hamath near Damascus. And this message is against Tyre and Sidon, even though those people have been so wise and skillful. Tyre is built like a fort. The people there have collected so much silver that it is like dust, and gold is as common as clay. But the Lord will take it all. He will destroy her powerful navy and that city will be destroyed by fire!

5The people in Ashkelon will see this and they will be afraid. The people of Gaza will shake with fear, and the people of Ekron will lose all hope when they see this happen. There will be no king left in Gaza. No one will live in Ashkelon anymore.

6The people in Ashdod will not even know days … month. These were days when the people remembered the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. See 2 Kings 25:1–25 and Jer. 41:1–17; 52:1–12.

b 9:1 The Hebrew text here is hard to understand.
who their real fathers are. The Lord says, “I will completely destroy the proud Philistines. They will no longer eat meat with the blood still in it or any other forbidden food. Any Philistine left alive will become a part of my people; they will be just one more tribe in Judah. The people of Ekron will become a part of my people, as the Jebusites did. I will protect my country. I will not let enemy armies pass through it. I will not let them hurt my people anymore. With my own eyes I have seen how much my people have suffered.”

The Future King

People of Zion, a rejoice!
People of Jerusalem, shout with joy!
Look, your king is coming to you!
He is the good king who won the victory, but he is humble.
He is riding on a donkey, on a young donkey born from a work animal.
I will take the war chariots away from Ephraim and the horse soldiers from Jerusalem.
I will destroy the bows used in war.

Your king will bring news of peace to the nations.
He will rule from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.

The Lord Will Save His People

Jerusalem, we used blood to seal your agreement,
so I am setting your people free from that empty hole in the ground. b
Prisoners, go home!
Now you have something to hope for.
I am telling you now,

I am coming back to you.
Judah, I will use you like a bow.
Ephraim, I will use you like arrows.
Israel, I will use you like a sword to fight against the men of Greece.
The Lord will appear to them, and he will shoot his arrows like lightning.
The Lord God will blow the trumpet, and the army will rush forward like a desert dust storm.
The Lord All-Powerful will protect them.
The soldiers will use rocks and slings to defeat the enemy.
They will spill the blood of their enemies.
It will flow like wine.
It will be like the blood that is thrown on the corners of the altar!
At that time the Lord their God will save his people like a shepherd saves his sheep.
They will be very precious to him.
They will be like sparkling jewels in his land.
Everything will be good and beautiful!
There will be a wonderful crop, but it will not be just the food and wine.
It will be all the young men and women!

The Lord’s Promises

Pray to the Lord for rain in the springtime. The Lord will send the lightning and the rain will fall, and he will make the plants grow in each person’s field.
People use their little statues and magic to learn what will happen in the future, but that is useless. They see visions and tell about their dreams, but it is nothing but worthless lies. So the people are like sheep wandering here and there crying for help, but there is no shepherd to lead them.
The Lord says, “I am very angry with the shepherds. I made them responsible

a 9:9 People of Zion Literally, “Daughter Zion,” meaning the city of Jerusalem. See “Zion” in the Word List.
b 9:11 empty hole in the ground People stored water in large holes in the ground. People sometimes used those holes as prisons.

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for what happens to my sheep.” (The people of Judah are his flock, and the LORD All-Powerful really does take care of his flock. He cares for them as a soldier cares for his beautiful war horse.)

4“[The corner]stone, the tent peg, the war bow, and the advancing soldiers will all come [from Judah] together. [They will defeat their enemy]—it will be like soldiers marching through mud in the streets. They will fight, and since the LORD is with them, they will defeat even the enemy soldiers riding horses. [I will make Judah’s family strong. I will help Joseph’s family win the war. I will bring them back safely and comfort them. It will be as if I never left them. I am the LORD their God, and I will help them.] 7[The people of Ephraim will be as happy as soldiers who have too much to drink. Their children will be rejoicing and they, too, will be happy. They will all have a happy time together with the LORD.]

8“I will whistle for them and call them all together. I really will save them. There will be many people. [Yes, I have been scattering my people throughout the nations. But in those faraway places, they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and they will come back.]

9I will bring them back from Egypt and Assyria. I will bring them to the area of Gilead. And since there will not be enough room, I will also let them live in nearby Lebanon. [They will go through a sea of troubles, but the waves will be stopped. Even the deepest waters of the Nile River will dry up. I will destroy Assyria’s pride and take away Egypt’s power. 12I, the LORD, will make my people strong, and they will live for me.” This is what the LORD said.

God Will Punish the Other Nations

11Lebanon, open your gates so that the fire will come and burn your cedar trees.a 2The cypress trees will cry because the cedar trees have fallen.

a 11:1 cedar trees In this poem, the trees, bushes, and animals are symbols for the leaders of the countries around Judah.

Those powerful trees will be taken away.
Oak trees in Bashan will cry for the forest that was cut down.
3Listen to the crying shepherds.
Their powerful leaders were taken away.
Listen to the roaring of the young lions.
Their thick bushes near the Jordan River have all been taken away.

4The LORD my God says, “Care for the sheep that have been raised to be killed. [Buyers kill their sheep and are not punished. Those who sell the sheep say, ‘Praise the LORD, I am rich!’ The shepherds don’t feel sorry for their sheep.]

6And I don’t feel sorry for the people who live in this country.” This is what the LORD said: “Look, I will let everyone be under the control of their neighbor and king. I will let them destroy the country—I will not stop them!”

7So I took care of the sheep that had been raised to be killed—those poor sheep. I found two sticks. I called one stick Favor, and I called the other stick Union. Then I began caring for the sheep. [I fired the three shepherds all in one month. I got angry at the sheep, and they began to hate me.]

9Then I said, “I quit! I will not take care of you! I will let those who want to die, die. I will let those who want to be destroyed, be destroyed, and those who are left will destroy each other.” 10Then I took the stick named Favor, and I broke it. I did this to show that God’s agreement with his people was broken. 11So that day the agreement was finished, and those poor sheep watching me knew that this message was from the LORD.

12Then I said, “If you want to pay me, pay me. If not, don’t!” So they paid me 30 pieces of silver. 13Then the LORD told me, “So that’s how much they think I’m worth. Throw that large amount of moneyb into the Temple treasury.” So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them into the

b 11:13 large amount of money The Lord was making fun of the people. This was only the amount of money a person paid for a slave.
treasury at the LORD’s Temple. Then I cut the stick named Union into two pieces. I did this to show that the union between Judah and Israel had been broken.

15 Then the LORD said to me, “Now, get the things a foolish shepherd might use. This will show that I will get a new shepherd for this country. But this young man will not be able to take care of the sheep that are being destroyed. He will not be able to heal the hurt sheep or feed those that are left alive. And the healthy ones will be eaten completely—only their hoofs will be left.”

17 Too bad for you, you worthless shepherd! You abandoned my sheep. Punish him! Strike his arm and right eye with a sword. His arm will be useless. His right eye will be blind.

Visions About the Nations Around Judah

12 This is a message from the LORD about Israel. The Lord is the one who made the earth and the sky, and he put the human spirit in people. And this is what the LORD said: 2 “Look, I will make Jerusalem like a cup of poison to the nations around her. The nations will come and attack that city, and all of Judah will be caught in the trap. 3 But I will make Jerusalem like a heavy rock—those who try to take it will hurt themselves. They will be cut and scratched. All the nations on earth will come together to fight against Jerusalem. 4 But at that time I will scare the horse, and the soldier riding it will panic. I will make all the enemy horses blind, but my eyes will be open—and I will be watching over Judah’s family. 5 The leaders of Judah will encourage the people and say, ‘The LORD All-Powerful is your God. He makes us strong.’ 6 At that time I will make the leaders of Judah like a fire burning in a forest. They will destroy their enemies like fire burning straw. They will destroy the enemy all around them, and the people in Jerusalem will again be able to sit back and relax.”

7 The LORD will save the people of Judah first, so the people in Jerusalem will not be able to brag too much. David’s family and the other people who live in Jerusalem will not be able to brag that they are better than the other people in Judah. 8 But the LORD will protect the people in Jerusalem. Even the man who trips and falls will become a great soldier like David. And the men from David’s family will be like gods—like the LORD’s own angel leading the people.

9 The Lord says, “At that time I will destroy the nations that came to fight against Jerusalem. 10 I will fill David’s family and the people living in Jerusalem with a spirit of kindness and mercy. They will look to me, the one they stabbed, and they will be very sad. They will be as sad as someone crying over the death of their only son, as sad as someone crying over the death of their firstborn son. 11 There will be a time of great sadness and crying in Jerusalem. It will be like the time people cry over the death of Hadad Rimmon in Megiddo Valley. 12 Each and every family will cry by itself. The men in David’s family will cry by themselves, and their wives will cry by themselves. The men in Nathan’s family will cry by themselves, and their wives will cry by themselves. 13 The men in Levi’s family will cry by themselves, and their wives will cry by themselves. The men in Simeon’s family will cry by themselves, and their wives will cry by themselves. The men in Simeon’s family will cry by themselves, and their wives will cry by themselves. 14 And the same thing will happen in all the other tribes. The men and women will cry by themselves.”

13 But at that time a new spring of water will be opened for David’s family and for the other people living in Jerusalem. That fountain will be to wash away their sins and to make the people pure.

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No More False Prophets

2 The LORD All-Powerful says, “At that time I will remove all the idols from the earth. People will not even remember their names, and I will remove the false prophets and unclean spirits from the earth. 3 Whoever continues to prophesy will be punished. Even their parents, their own mother and father, will say to them, ‘You have spoken lies in the name of the LORD, so you must die!’ Their own mother and father will stab them for prophesying. 4 At that time the prophets will be ashamed of their visions and prophecies. They will not wear the rough cloth that shows a person is a prophet. They will not wear those clothes to trick people with the lies they call prophecies. 5 They will say, ‘I am not a prophet. I am a farmer. I have worked as a farmer since I was a little child.’ 6 But other people will say, ‘Then what are these wounds in your hands?’ He will say, ‘I was beaten in the house of my friends.’”

7 The LORD All-Powerful says, “Sword, wake up and strike the shepherd, my friend! Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will run away. And I will punish those little ones. 8 Two-thirds of the people in the land will be struck down and die,” says the LORD, “but one-third will survive. 9 Then I will test those survivors by giving them many troubles. The troubles will be like the fire a person uses to prove silver is pure. I will test them the way a person tests gold. Then they will call to me for help, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘You are my people.’ And they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”

The Day of Judgment

14 1 Look, the LORD has a special day of judgment coming, when the riches you have taken will be divided in your city. 2 I will bring all the nations together to fight against Jerusalem. They will capture the city and destroy the houses. The women will be raped, and half of the people will be taken away as prisoners. But the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. 3 Then the LORD will go to war with those nations. It will be a real battle. 4 At that time he will stand on the Mount of Olives, the hill east of Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives will split in half. Part of the mountain will move to the north, and part to the south. A deep valley will open up, from the east to the west. 5 You will try to run away as that mountain valley comes closer and closer to you. You will run away like the time you ran from the earthquake during the time of King Uzziah of Judah. But the LORD my God will come, and all his holy ones will be with him.

6–7 That will be a very special day. There will not be any light, cold, or frost. Only the LORD knows how, but there will not be any day or night. Then, when darkness usually comes, there will still be light. 8 At that time water will flow continually from Jerusalem. 9 That stream will split and part of it will flow east, and part of it will flow west to the Mediterranean Sea. And it will flow all year long, in the summer as well as in the winter. 9 And the LORD will be the King of the whole world. At that time all people will worship him as the only LORD with only one name. 10 And the whole land from Geba in the north to Rimmon in the south past Jerusalem will become a flat plain. The city of Jerusalem will stay in the same place, but it will be built high above the land around it. It will reach from the Benjamin Gate to the First Gate (that is, the Corner Gate) and from the Tower of Hananel to the king’s winepresses. 11 People will move to Jerusalem because it will be a safe place to live. It will never again be destroyed.

12 But the LORD will punish the nations that fought against Jerusalem. He will send a terrible disease against them. Their skin will begin to rot while the people are still alive. Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. 13–15 That terrible disease will be in the enemy camp, and all their horses, their chariots, and their camps will burn. And Jerusalem will return to its old name, Gibeah, the people’s stronghold. Then the LORD will rule the world for all time. He will be the only LORD, with only one name.”
mules, camels, and donkeys will catch that terrible disease.

At that time they will be afraid of the LORD. Each man will grab his neighbor’s hand, and they will fight each other. Even Judah will fight against Jerusalem. This will happen even while armies from all the nations are surrounding the city. There will be much gold, silver, and clothing. Some of the people who came to fight Jerusalem will survive. And every year they will come to worship the king, the LORD All-Powerful. They will come to celebrate the Festival of Shelters. And if people from any of the families on earth don’t go to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD All-Powerful, no rain will fall on their land. If any of the families in Egypt don’t come to celebrate the Festival of Shelters, they will get that terrible disease that the LORD caused the enemy nations to get. That will be the punishment for Egypt, and for any other nation that does not come to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

At that time even the harnesses on the horses will have the label, holy to the LORD. And all the pots used in the LORD’s Temple will be just as important as the bowls used at the altar. In fact, every dish in Jerusalem and Judah will have the label, holy to the LORD All-Powerful. All the people offering sacrifices will come, take those dishes, and cook their special meals in them.

At that time there will not be any merchants buying and selling things in the Temple of the LORD All-Powerful.

These words were written on everything that was used in the Temple. This showed that these things belonged to the Lord, and that they could be used only for special purposes. Dishes with this labels could be used only by the priests in a holy place.

Literally, “Canaanites.”
This is a message from the LORD to Israel. God used Malachi to tell this message to the people.

God Loves Israel

The LORD said, “I love you people.”

But you said, “What shows you love us?”

The LORD said, “Esau was Jacob’s brother, but I chose a Jacob. b And I did not accept c Esau. I destroyed his hill country. His country was destroyed, and now only wild dogs d live there.”

The people of Edom might say, “We were destroyed, but we will go back and rebuild our cities.”

But the LORD All-Powerful says, “If they rebuild their cities, I will destroy them again.” That is why people say Edom is an evil country—a nation the LORD hates forever.

You people saw these things, and you said, “The LORD is great, even outside of Israel!”

The People Don’t Respect God

The LORD All-Powerful said, “Children honor their fathers. Servants honor their masters. I am your Father, so why don’t you honor me? I am your master, so why don’t you respect me? You priests don’t respect my name.

“But you say, ‘What have we done that shows we don’t respect your name?’

“You bring unclean bread to my altar.

“But you ask, ‘What makes that bread unclean?’

“It is unclean because you show no respect for the altar of the LORD. You bring blind animals as sacrifices, and that is wrong. You bring sick and crippled animals for sacrifices, and that is wrong. Try giving those sick animals as a gift to your governor. Would he accept those sick animals? No, he would not accept them.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

Now try asking God to be good to you. But he will not listen to you, and it is all your fault.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

“I wish one of you would close the Temple doors to stop the lighting of useless fires on my altar. I am not pleased with you. I will not accept your gifts.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

People all around the world respect my name. All around the world they bring good gifts to me and burn good incense as a gift to me, because my name is important to all of them.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

“But you people show that you don’t respect my name. You say that the Lord’s altar is unclean. And you don’t like the food from that altar. You smell the food and refuse to eat it. You say it is bad. Then you bring sick, crippled, and hurt animals to me. You try to give sick animals to me as sacrifices, but I will not accept them.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

Some people have good, male animals that they could give as sacrifices, but don’t. Some people bring good animals and promise to give those healthy animals to me. But then they secretly exchange those good animals and give me sick animals instead. Bad things will happen to those people. I am the Great King and people all around the world respect me!” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

a 1:2 chose Or “loved.”

b 1:3 did not accept Or “hated.”

c 1:3 his hill country This means the country of Edom. Edom was another name for Esau.

d 1:3 wild dogs Literally, “jackals.”

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Rules for Priests

1 “Priests, this rule is for you. 2 Listen to me! Pay attention to what I say. Show honor to my name. If you don’t respect my name, bad things will happen to you. You will say blessings, but they will become curses. I will make bad things happen because you don’t show respect for my name.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

3 “Look, I will punish your descendants. During the festivals, you priests offer sacrifices to me. You take the dung and inside parts from the dead animals and throw them away. But I will smear the dung on your faces, and you will be thrown away with it! 4 Then you will learn why I am giving you this command. I am telling you these things so that my agreement with Levi will continue.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

5 The Lord said, “I made that agreement with Levi. I promised to give him life and peace—and I gave him those things. Levi respected me and showed honor to my name. 6 He taught the true teachings and didn’t teach lies. Levi was honest, and he loved peace. He followed me and saved many people from being punished for the evil things they did. 7 A priest should know God’s teachings. People should be able to go to a priest and learn God’s teachings. A priest should be the LORD’s messenger to the people.

8 “But you priests stopped following me! You used the teachings to make people do wrong. You ruined the agreement with Levi.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said. 9 “You don’t live the way I told you. You have not accepted my teachings. So I will cause people to hate you and think you are worth nothing.”

Judah Was Not True to God

10 We all have the same father. The same God made every one of us. So why do people cheat one another? They show that they don’t respect the agreement. They don’t respect the agreement that our ancestors made with God. 11 The people of Judah cheated other people. People in Jerusalem and Israel did terrible things. God loves the Temple, but the people in Judah didn’t respect the LORD’s holy Temple. The people of Judah began to worship a foreign goddess. 12 The LORD will remove them from Judah’s family. They might bring gifts to the LORD All-Powerful—but it will not help. 13 You can cry and cover the LORD’s altar with tears, but the LORD will not accept your gifts. He will not be pleased with the things you bring to him.

14 You ask, “Why are our gifts not accepted?” It is because the LORD saw the evil things you did—he is a witness against you. He saw you cheat on your wife. You have been married to her since you were young. She was your girlfriend. Then you made your vows to each other—and she became your wife. 15 God wants husbands and wives to become one body and one spirit. Why? So that they would have holy children and protect that spiritual unity. Don’t cheat on your wife. She has been your wife from the time you were young. 16 The LORD, the God of Israel, says, “I hate divorce, and I hate the cruel things that men do. So protect your spiritual unity. Don’t cheat on your wife.”

The Special Time of Judgment

17 You have taught wrong things, and it makes the LORD very sad. People were doing evil things, but you said that this pleased the LORD and that he accepted those things. And you taught that God does not punish people for the evil they do.

18 The LORD All-Powerful says, “I am sending my messenger to prepare the way for me. Then suddenly, the Lord you are looking for will come to his temple. Yes, the messenger you are waiting for, the one who will tell about my agreement, is really coming!

19 “No one can prepare for that time or stand against him when he comes. He will
be like a burning fire. He will be like the strong soap people use to make things clean. 3 He will make the Levites clean. He will make them pure, like silver is made pure with fire! He will make them pure like gold and silver. Then they will bring gifts to the LORD, and they will do things the right way. 4 Then the LORD will accept the gifts from Judah and Jerusalem. It will be as it was in the past—as the time long ago. 5 Then I will bring you to justice. I will be an expert witness and testify about the evil things people do. I will speak out against those who do evil magic or commit adultery. I will speak out against those who make false promises and cheat their workers and don’t pay them the money they promised. I will testify against those who don’t help strangers, or widows and orphans. And I will testify against those who don’t respect me.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

Stealing From God
6 “I am the LORD, and I don’t change. You are Jacob’s children, and you have not been completely destroyed. 7 But you never obeyed my laws. Even your ancestors stopped following me. Come back to me, and I will come back to you.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

“You say, ‘How can we come back?’
8 “People should not steal things from God, but you stole things from me.

“You say, ‘What did we steal from you?’
9 “You should have given me one-tenth of your things. You should have given me special gifts. 9 In this way your whole nation has stolen things from me, so bad things are happening to you.”

10 The LORD All-Powerful says, “Try this test. Bring one-tenth of your things to me. Put them in the treasury. Bring food to my house. Test me! If you do these things, I will surely bless you. Good things will come to you like rain falling from the sky. You will have more than enough of everything. 11 I will not let pests destroy your crops. All your grapevines will produce grapes.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

12 “People from other nations will be good to you. You will have a wonderful country.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

The Special Time of Judgment
13 The LORD says, “You said cruel things to me.”

But you ask, “What did we say about you?”
14 You said, “It is useless to worship God. We did what the LORD All-Powerful told us, but we didn’t gain anything. We cried like people at a funeral to show we were sorry for our sins, but it didn’t help. 15 We think proud people are happy. Evil people succeed. They do evil things to test God’s patience, and God does not punish them.”

16 Then the LORD’s followers spoke with each other, and the LORD listened to them. There is a book in front of him. In that book are the names of his followers. They are the people who honor the LORD’s name.

17 The LORD said, “They belong to me. I will be kind to them. Parents are very kind to their children who obey them. In the same way I will be kind to my followers. 18 You people will come back to me, and you will learn the difference between good and evil. You will learn the difference between someone who follows God and someone who does not.

1 “That time of judgment is coming. It will be like a hot furnace. All the proud people will be punished. All the evil people will burn like straw. At that time they will be like a bush burning in the fire, and there will not be a branch or root left.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

2 “But, for my followers, goodness will shine on you like the rising sun. And it will bring healing power like the sun’s rays. You will be free and happy, like calves freed from their stalls.”

4:2 stalls Small rooms or areas surrounded by a fence where people keep their animals.

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will walk on the evil people—they will be like ashes under your feet. I will make this happen at the time of judgment.” This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

4“Remember and obey the law of my servant Moses. I gave those laws and rules to him at Mount Horeb. They are for all the people of Israel.

5“Look, I will send Elijah the prophet to you. He will come before that great and terrible time of judgment from the LORD. 6Elijah will help the parents become close to their children, and he will help the children become close to their parents. This must happen, or I will come and completely destroy your country.”
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