

Easy To Read Version

Old Testament
(Genesis s.d. Job)

Genesis

1 ¹ God created the sky and the earth.
At first,

² the earth was completely empty. There was nothing on the earth. Darkness covered the ocean, and Gods Spirit moved over the water.

³ Then God said, Let there be light! And light began to shine.

⁴ He saw the light, and he knew that it was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness.

⁵ God named the light day, and he named the darkness night. There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the first day.

⁶ Then God said, Let there be a space to separate the water into two parts!

⁷ So God made the space and separated the water. Some of the water was above it, and some of the water was below it.

⁸ God named that space sky. There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the second day.

⁹Then God said, Let the water under the sky be gathered together so that the dry land will appear. And it happened.

¹⁰God named the dry land earth, and he named the water that was gathered together seas. And God saw that this was good.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²The 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.

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

¹⁴Then 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 begin and to show the days and years.

¹⁵They will be in the sky to shine light on the earth. And it happened.

¹⁶So 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.

¹⁷God put these lights in the sky to shine on the earth.

¹⁸He 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.

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

²⁰Then God said, Let the water be filled with many living things, and let there be birds to fly in the air over the earth.

²¹So 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.

²²God 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.

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

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 lets 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.

²⁹ God said, I am giving you all the grain bearing plants and all the fruit trees. 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.

2¹ 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.

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.

⁵This 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.

⁶So water came up from the earth and spread over the ground.

⁷Then the LORD God took dust from the ground and made a man. He breathed the breath of life into the mans nose, and the man became a living thing.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in the East, in a place named Eden. He put the man he made in that garden.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰A river flowed from Eden and watered the garden. The river then separated and became four smaller rivers.

¹¹The 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.)

¹³The name of the second river was Gihon. This river flowed around the whole land of Cush.

¹⁴The name of the third river was Tigris. This river flowed east of Assyria. The fourth river was the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God put the man in the Garden of Eden to work the soil and take care of the garden.

¹⁶The LORD God gave him this command: You may eat from any tree in the garden.

¹⁷But 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!

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹The 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.

²⁰The 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.

²¹So the LORD God caused the man to sleep very deeply. While he was asleep, God took one of the ribs from the mans body. Then he closed the mans skin where the rib had been.

²²The LORD God used the rib from the man to make a woman. Then he brought the woman to the man.

²³And 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.

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife. In this way two people become one.

²⁵The man and his wife were naked, but they were not ashamed.

3¹The 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?

²The woman answered the snake, No, we can eat fruit from the trees in the garden.

³But 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.

⁴But the snake said to the woman, You will not die.

⁵God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree you will learn about good and evil, and then you will be like God!

⁶The 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.

⁷Then 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.

⁸During the cool part of the day, the man and his wife heard the LORD God

walking in the garden. So they hid themselves among the trees there.

⁹The LORD God called to the man and said, Where are you?

¹⁰The man said, I heard you walking in the garden, and I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid.

¹¹God said to the man, Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat fruit from that special tree? I told you not to eat from that tree!

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

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

¹⁴So 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.

¹⁵I 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.

¹⁶Then 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.

¹⁷Then 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.

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

¹⁹You 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.

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

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

²²The 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.

²³So the LORD God forced the man out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground he was made from.

²⁴God 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.

4¹ 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!

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

³At 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. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift.

⁴ (4: 3)

⁵ But he did not accept Cain and his offering. Cain was sad because of this, and he became very angry.

⁶ The LORD asked Cain, Why are you angry? Why does your face look sad?

⁷ You know that if you do what is right, I will accept you. But if you dont, sin is ready to attack you. That sin will want to control you, but you must control it.

⁸ Cain said to his brother Abel, Lets go out to the field. So they went to the field. Then Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹ Later, the LORD said to Cain, Where is your brother Abel? Cain answered, I dont know. Is it my job to watch over my brother?

¹⁰ Then the Lord said, What have you done? The ground is wet with your brothers blood that dripped from your hands. Now his blood is crying out to me from the ground. So you will be cursed and forced away from this ground.

¹¹ (4: 10)

¹²Now when you work the soil, the ground will not produce a good crop for you. So you will not be able to stay here. You will wander from place to place.

¹³Then Cain said to the LORD, This punishment is more than I can bear!

¹⁴You 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.

¹⁵Then 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 warn anyone he met not to kill him.

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

¹⁷Cain 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.

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

¹⁹Lamech married two women. One wife was named Adah, and the other was named Zillah.

²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal. Jabal was the father of people who live in tents and earn their living by keeping cattle.

²¹Jabal was Jubal's brother. Jubal was the father of people who play the harp and flute.

²²Zillah 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.

²³Lamech 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.

²⁴The punishment for killing Cain was very bad. But the punishment for killing me will be many times worse!

²⁵Adam 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.

²⁶Seth also had a son. He named him Enosh. At that time people began to pray to the LORD.

5¹This is the history of Adams family. When God created people, he made them like himself.

²He created them male and female. And on the same day he made them, he blessed them and called them humans.

³After Adam was 130 years old, he had another son. This son looked just like Adam. Adam named his son Seth.

⁴After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters.

⁵So Adam lived a total of 930 years; then he died.

⁶After Seth was 105 years old, he had a son named Enosh.

⁷After Enosh was born, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters.

⁸So Seth lived a total of 912 years; then he died.

⁹After Enosh was 90 years old, he had a son named Kenan.

¹⁰After Kenan was born, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹¹ So Enosh lived a total of 905 years; then he died.

¹² After Kenan was 70 years old, he had a son named Mahalalel.

¹³ After Mahalalel was born, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴ So Kenan lived a total of 910 years; then he died.

¹⁵ When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he had a son named Jared.

¹⁶ After Jared was born, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁷ So Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years; then he died.

¹⁸ After Jared was 162 years old, he had a son named Enoch.

¹⁹ After Enoch was born, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰ So Jared lived a total of 962 years; then he died.

²¹ After Enoch was 65 years old, he had a son named Methuselah.

²² After Methuselah was born, Enoch walked with God for 300 years and had other sons and daughters.

²³ So Enoch lived a total of 365 years.

²⁴ One day Enoch was walking with God, and he disappeared. God took him.

²⁵ After Methuselah was 187 years old, he had a son named Lamech.

²⁶ After Lamech was born, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁷ So Methuselah lived a total of 969 years; then he died.

²⁸ When Lamech was 182 years old, he had a son.

²⁹ Lamech named his son Noah. Lamech said, We work very hard as farmers because God cursed the ground. But Noah will bring us rest.

³⁰ After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters.

³¹ So Lamech lived a total of 777 years; then he died.

³² After Noah was 500 years old, he had sons named Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

6¹ 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.

² (6: 1)

³ (6: 1)

⁴ (6: 1)

⁵The LORD saw that the people on the earth were very evil. He saw that they thought only about evil things all the time.

⁶The LORD was sorry that he had made any of these people. Just thinking about it made him sad.

⁷So 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.

⁸But Noah pleased the LORD.

⁹This is the history of Noahs family. He was a good man all his life, and he always followed God.

¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹When God looked at the earth, he saw that people had ruined it. Violence was everywhere, and it had ruined their life on earth.

¹²(6: 11)

¹³So God said to Noah, Everyone has filled the earth with anger and violence. So I have decided to destroy all living things. I will remove them from the earth.

¹⁴Use cypress wood and build a boat for yourself. Make rooms in the boat and cover it with tar inside and out.

¹⁵This is the size I want you to make the boat: 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high.

¹⁶Make 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.

¹⁷Understand 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.

¹⁸I will make a special agreement with you. You, your wife, your sons, and their wives will all go into the boat.

¹⁹Also, 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.

²⁰Two of every kind of bird, animal, and creeping thing will come to you so that you might keep them alive.

²¹Also bring every kind of food into the boat, for you and for the animals.

²²Noah did everything God commanded him.

7¹ 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.

²Get 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.

³Get 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.

⁴Seven 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.

⁵Noah did everything the LORD told him to do.

⁶Noah was 600 years old at the time the rains came.

⁷He 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.

⁸All the clean animals, all the other animals on the earth, the birds, and everything that crawls on the earth

⁹went into the boat with Noah. These animals went into the boat in groups of two, male and female, just as God commanded.

¹⁰Seven days later the flood started. The rain began to fall on the earth.

¹¹On 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.

¹²(7: 11)

¹³(7: 11)

¹⁴They 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.

¹⁵All 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.

¹⁶All these animals went into the boat in groups of two, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind Noah.

¹⁷Water flooded the earth for 40 days. The water began rising and lifted the boat off the ground.

¹⁸The water continued to rise, and the boat floated on the water high above the earth.

¹⁹The water rose so much that even the highest mountains were covered by the water.

²⁰The water continued to rise above the mountains. The water was more than 20 feet above the highest mountain.

²¹Every 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.

²²(7: 21)

²³In 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.

²⁴The water continued to cover the earth for 150 days.

8¹ 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.

²Rain stopped falling from the sky, and water stopped flowing from under the earth.

³The 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.

⁴(8: 3)

⁵The water continued to go down, and by the first day of the tenth month, the tops of the mountains were above the water.

⁶Forty days later Noah opened the window he had made in the boat.

⁷Then he sent out a raven. The raven flew from place to place until the ground was dry and the water was gone.

⁸Noah also sent out a dove. He wanted it to find dry ground. He wanted to know if water still covered the earth.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰After seven days Noah again sent out the dove.

¹¹And 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.

¹²Seven days later Noah sent the dove out again. But this time the dove didnt come back.

¹³After that Noah opened the door 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.

¹⁴By the 27th day of the second month, the ground was completely dry.

¹⁵Then God said to Noah,

¹⁶Leave the boat. You, your wife, your sons, and your sons wives should go out now.

¹⁷Bring every living animal out of the boat with youall the birds, animals, and everything that crawls on the earth. These animals will make many more animals, and they will fill the earth again.

¹⁸So Noah went out with his sons, his wife, and his sons wives.

¹⁹All the animals, everything that crawls, and every bird left the boat. All the animals came out of the boat in family groups.

²⁰Then 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.

²¹The 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.

²²As 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.

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

²Every 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.

³In 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.

⁴But I give you one command. You must not eat meat that still has its life (blood) in it.

⁵Also, 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.

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

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

⁸Then God said to Noah and his sons,

⁹I now make my promise to you and to your people who will live after you.

¹⁰I 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.

¹¹This 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.

¹²And 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.

¹³I am putting a rainbow in the clouds as proof of the agreement between me and the earth.

¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth, you will see the rainbow in the clouds.

¹⁵When 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.

¹⁶When 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.

¹⁷So God said to Noah, This rainbow is proof of the agreement that I made with all living things on earth.

¹⁸Noah's sons came out of the boat with him. Their names were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.)

¹⁹These three men were Noah's sons. And all the people on earth came from these three sons.

²⁰Noah became a farmer and planted a vineyard.

²¹One day Noah made some wine. He got drunk, went into his tent, and took off all his clothes.

²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and told his brothers who were outside the tent.

²³Shem 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.

²⁴Later, Noah woke up. (He was sleeping because of the wine.) When he learned what his youngest son Ham had done to him,

²⁵he said, May there be a curse on Canaan! May he be a slave to his brothers.

²⁶Noah also said, May the LORD, the God of Shem, be praised! May Canaan be Shems slave.

²⁷May God give more land to Japheth. May God live in Shems tents, and may Canaan be their slave.

²⁸After the flood Noah lived 350 years.

²⁹He lived a total of 950 years; then he died.

10¹This is the history of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They are Noahs sons. These men had children after the flood.

²Japheths sons were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

³Gomers sons were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴Javans sons were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

⁵All 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.

⁶Hams sons were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

⁷ Cush's sons were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtecah. Raamah's sons were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸ Cush also had a son named Nimrod who became a very powerful man on earth.

⁹ 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."

¹⁰ Nimrod's kingdom spread from Babylon to Erech, to Akkad, and then to Calneh in the land of Babylonia.

¹¹ Nimrod also went into Assyria. In Assyria, Nimrod built the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and

¹² Resen. (Resen is the city between Nineveh and Calah, the big city.)

¹³ Mizraim was the father of the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh,

¹⁴ Pathrus, Casluh, and Caphtor. (The Philistine people came from Casluh.)

¹⁵ Canaan was the father of Sidon. Sidon was Canaan's first son. Canaan was also the father of the Hittites,

¹⁶ Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites,

¹⁷ Hivites, Arkites, the Sinites,

¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The families of Canaan spread to different parts of the world.

¹⁹The 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.

²⁰All these people were descendants of Ham. They are arranged by families, languages, countries, and nations.

²¹Shem was Japheths older brother. One of Shems descendants was Eber, the father of all the Hebrew people.

²²Shems sons were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

²³Arams sons were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah. Shelah was the father of Eber.

²⁵Eber 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.

²⁶Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,

²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,

²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba,

²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these people were Joktans sons.

³⁰They lived in the area between Mesha and the hill country in the East. Mesha was toward the country of Sephar.

³¹These are the people from the family of Shem. They are arranged by families, languages, countries, and nations.

³²This is the list of the families from Noahs sons. They are arranged according to their nations. From these families came all the people who spread across the earth after the flood.

11 ¹There was a time when the whole world spoke one language. Everyone used the same words.

²Then people began to move from the East. They found a plain in the land of Babylonia and stayed there to live.

³Then they said to each other, Lets make some bricks of clay and bake them in the fire. They used the bricks like stones, and they used tar like mortar to hold the bricks together.

⁴Then the people said, Lets 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.

⁵Then the LORD came down to see the city and the tower.

⁶The 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.

⁷Lets go down and confuse their language. Then they will not understand each other.

⁸So people stopped building the city, and the LORD scattered them all over the earth.

⁹That is the place where the LORD confused the language of the whole world. That is why it is called Babel. And it was from there that the LORD caused the people to spread out to all the other places on earth.

¹⁰This is the history of Shems family. Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, his son Arphaxad was born.

¹¹After that Shem lived 500 years. He had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, his son Shelah was born.

¹³After Shelah was born, Arphaxad lived 403 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴After Shelah was 30 years old, his son Eber was born.

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

¹⁶After Eber was 34 years old, his son Peleg was born.

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

¹⁸After Peleg was 30 years old, his son Reu was born.

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

²⁰After Reu was 32 years old, his son Serug was born.

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

²²After 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.

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 (Abrams wife). They traveled to the city of Haran and decided to stay there.

³²Terah lived to be 205 years old. He died in Haran.

12¹The LORD said to Abram, Leave your country and your people. Leave your fathers family and go to the country that I will show you.

²I 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.

³I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you. I will use you to bless all the people on earth.

⁴So Abram left Haran just like the LORD said, and Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran.

⁵He 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.

⁶Abram 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.

⁷The 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.

⁸Then 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.

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

¹⁰During this time there was not enough food in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to live.

¹¹Just before they arrived in Egypt, Abram told Sarai, Look, I know that you are a very beautiful woman.

¹²When 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.

¹³So 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.

¹⁴ So when Abram went into Egypt, the Egyptian men saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman.

¹⁵ Even some of Pharaohs officials noticed her and told Pharaoh how beautiful she was. So they took her to Pharaohs house.

¹⁶ Pharaoh was kind to Abram because he thought Abram was Sarais brother. He gave Abram sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and men and women servants.

¹⁷ Pharaoh took Abrams wife, so the LORD caused Pharaoh and all the people in his house to have very bad diseases.

¹⁸ Pharaoh called Abram and said to him, You have done a very bad thing to me! Why didnt you tell me Sarai was your wife?

¹⁹ 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!

²⁰ 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.

13¹ So Abram left Egypt. He traveled through the Negev with his wife

and everything he owned. Lot was also with them.

²At this time Abram was very rich. He had many animals and much silver and gold.

³Abram 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.

⁴This was where Abram had built an altar earlier. So he worshiped the LORD there.

⁵During this time Lot was also traveling with Abram. Lot had many animals and tents.

⁶Abram 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.

⁸So Abram said to Lot, There should be no arguing between you and me or between your people and my people. We are all brothers.

⁹We 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.

¹⁰Lot 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.)

¹¹So Lot chose to live in the Jordan Valley. The two men separated, and Lot began traveling east.

¹²Abram 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.

¹³The LORD knew that the people of Sodom were very evil sinners.

¹⁴After Lot left, the LORD said to Abram, Look around you. Look north, south, east, west.

¹⁵All this land that you see I will give to you and your people who live after you. This will be your land forever.

¹⁶I 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.

¹⁷So go. Walk through your land. I now give it to you.

¹⁸So 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.

14¹Amraphel was the king of Babylonia, Arioch was the king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer was the king of Elam, and Tidal was the king of Goiim.

²All these kings fought a war against King Bera of Sodom: King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela. (Bela is also called Zoar.)

³All these kings joined their armies in the Valley of Siddim. (The Valley of Siddim is now the Salt Sea.)

⁴These kings had served Kedorlaomer for twelve years. But in the 13th year, they all rebelled against him.

⁵So 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 Emities in Shaveh Kiriathaim.

⁶And they defeated the Horites who lived in the area from the hill country of Seir to El Paran. (El Paran is near the desert.)

⁷Then King Kedorlaomer turned back, went to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and defeated the Amalekites. He also defeated the Amorites living in Hazezon Tamar.

⁸At that time the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (Zoar) joined together to fight against their enemies in the Valley of Siddim.

⁹They 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.

¹⁰There 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.

¹¹ So Kedorlaomer and his armies took everything that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah owned. They took all their food and clothing and left.

¹² Lot, the son of Abrams brother, was living in Sodom, and they captured him. They also took everything he owned and left.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ That night he and his men made a surprise attack against the enemy. They defeated them and chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus.

¹⁶ Then Abram brought back everything the enemy had stolen, as well as the

women and servants, his nephew Lot, and everything Lot owned.

¹⁷Then 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 Kings Valley.)

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

¹⁹He blessed Abram and said, Abram, may you be blessed by God Most High, the one who made heaven and earth.

²⁰And we praise God Most High, who helped you defeat your enemies. Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything he had taken during the battle.

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

²²But Abram said to the king of Sodom, I promise to the LORD, the God Most High, the one who made heaven and earth.

²³I 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.

²⁴The 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.

15¹After 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.

²But 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.

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

⁴Then 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.

⁵Then 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.

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

⁷He 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.

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

⁹God 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.

¹⁰Abram 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.

¹¹Later, large birds flew down to eat the animals, but Abram chased them away.

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

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴But then I will punish the nation that made them slaves. Your people will leave that land, and they will take many good things with them.

¹⁵You yourself will live to be very old. You will die in peace and will be buried with your family.

¹⁶After 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.

¹⁷After 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.

¹⁸So 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.

¹⁹This is the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites,

²⁰Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites,

²¹Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.

16¹ Sarai was Abrams wife, but she did not have any children. She had an Egyptian slave named Hagar.

²Sarai 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.

³So after living ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai gave her Egyptian slave to Abram as a second wife.

⁴Abram 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.

⁵Then 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.

⁶But 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.

⁷The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring of water in the desert. The spring was by the road to Shur.

⁸The angel said, Hagar, Sarais slave girl, why are you here? Where are you going? Hagar said, I am running away from Sarai.

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

¹⁰The angel of the LORD also said, From you will come many people too many people to count.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²Ishmael 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.

¹³The 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!

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

¹⁵Hagar gave birth to Abrams son, and Abram named the son Ishmael.

¹⁶Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born from Hagar.

17 ¹When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him. He said, I am God All-Powerful. Obey me and live the right way.

²If you do this, I will prepare an agreement between us. I will promise to make your people a great nation.

³Then Abram bowed down before God. God said to him,

⁴This is my part of our agreement: I will make you the father of many nations.

⁵I will change your name from Abram to Abraham, because I am making you the father of many nations.

⁶I will give you many descendants. New nations and kings will come from you.

⁷And 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.

⁸And I will give this land to you and to 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.

⁹Then God said to Abraham, Now, this is your part of the agreement: You and all your descendants will obey my agreement.

¹⁰This 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.

¹¹You will cut the skin to show that you follow the agreement between me and you.

¹²When 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.

¹³So 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.

¹⁴Abraham, 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.

¹⁵God said to Abraham, I will give Sarai, your wife, a new name. Her new name will be Sarah.

¹⁶I 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.

¹⁷Abraham 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.

¹⁸Then Abraham said to God, I hope Ishmael will live and serve you.

¹⁹God 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.

²⁰You 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.

²¹But I will make my agreement with Isaac, the son who Sarah will have. He will be born at this same time next year.

²²After God finished talking with Abraham, God went up into heaven.

²³Then 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 Abrahams house was gathered together, and they were all circumcised. Abraham circumcised them that day, just as God had told him to do.

²⁴Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised.

²⁵ And Ishmael, his son, was 13 years old when he was circumcised.

²⁶ Abraham and his son were circumcised on the same day.

²⁷ Also, on that day all the men in Abrahams house were circumcised. All the slaves born in his house and all the slaves he had bought were circumcised.

18¹ 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.

⁷Then 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.

⁸Abraham 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.

⁹Then the men said to Abraham, Where is your wife Sarah? Abraham said, She is there, in the tent.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹Abraham and Sarah were very old. Sarah was past the right age for women to have children.

¹²So she laughed to herself and said, I am old, and my husband is old. I am too old to have a baby.

¹³Then 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 was afraid, so she said, I didnt laugh! But the Lord said, Thats not true. I know that you laughed!

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ The LORD said to himself, Should I tell Abraham what I am going to do now?

¹⁸ Abraham will become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on earth will be blessed because of him.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ Then the LORD said, I have heard many times that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are very evil.

²¹ I will go and see if they are as bad as I have heard. Then I will know for sure.

²² So the men turned and started walking toward Sodom while Abraham stood there before the LORD.

²³ Then Abraham approached him and asked, Will you destroy the good people while you are destroying those who are evil?

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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!

²⁶ Then the LORD said, If I find fifty good people in the city of Sodom, I will save the whole city.

²⁷ Then Abraham said, Compared to you, Lord, I am only dust and ashes. But let me bother you again and ask you this question.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹Abraham 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.

³⁰Then Abraham said, Lord, please dont 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.

³¹Then 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.

³²Then Abraham said, Lord, please dont 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.

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

19¹ 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.

² (19: 1)

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,

⁵ 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.

⁷ He said to the men, No, my friends, I beg you, please don't do this evil thing!

⁸Look, 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.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰But the two men staying with Lot opened the door, pulled him back inside the house, and closed the door.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³We are going to destroy this city. The LORD has heard enough about how evil this city is, so he sent us to destroy it.

¹⁴So 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.

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶When 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.

¹⁷So after the two men brought Lot and his family out of the city, one of the men said, Now run to save your life! Dont look back at the city, and dont stop

anywhere in the valley. Run until you are in the mountains. If you stop, you will be destroyed with the city!

¹⁸But Lot said to the two men, Sirs, please dont force me to run so far!

¹⁹You 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!

²⁰Look, there is a very small town near here. Let me run to that town. I can run there and be safe.

²¹The angel said to Lot, Very well, Ill let you do that. I will not destroy that town.

²²But 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.)

²³Lot was entering the town as the sun came up,

²⁴and the LORD began to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. He caused fire and burning sulfur to fall from the sky.

²⁵He destroyed the whole valleyall the cities, the people living in the cities, and all the plants in the valley.

²⁶ Lots wife was following behind him and looked back at the city. When she did, she became a block of salt.

²⁷ Early the next morning, Abraham got up and went to the place where he stood before the LORD.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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.

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 lets 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. Lets 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 Lots 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.

20¹ 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.

³ But one night God spoke to Abimelech in a dream and said, You will die. The woman you took is married.

⁴ But Abimelech had not yet slept with Sarah, so he said, Lord, I am not guilty. Would you kill an innocent man?

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸So very early the next morning, Abimelech called all his servants and told them about the dream. The servants were very afraid.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰What were you afraid of? Why did you do this to me?

¹¹Then Abraham said, I thought no one in this place respected God. I thought someone would kill me to get Sarah.

¹²She is my wife, but she is also my sister. She is the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother.

¹³God 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.

¹⁴ So Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham. Abimelech also gave Abraham some sheep, cattle, and slaves.

¹⁵ And Abimelech said, Look all around you. This is my land. You may live any place you want.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ The LORD made all the women in Abimelechs family not able to have children. God did this because Abimelech had taken Sarah, Abrahams wife. But Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his servant girls.

¹⁸ (20: 17)

21 ¹ The LORD came back to visit Sarah as he said he would, and he kept his promise to her.

² At exactly the time God said it would happen, Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age.

³ Abraham named his son Isaac.

⁴ Abraham did what God commanded and circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old.

⁵ Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born.

⁶ Sarah said, God has made me happy, and everyone who hears about this will be happy with me.

⁷ No one thought that I, Sarah, would be able to have Abrahams child. But I have given Abraham a son, even though he is old.

⁸ Isaac continued to grow, and soon he was old enough to begin eating solid food. So Abraham gave a big party.

⁹ Sarah saw Hagar's son playing. (Hagar was the Egyptian slave woman who gave birth to Abrahams first son.)

¹⁰ 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 dont want that slave womans son sharing these things with my son Isaac!

¹¹ This upset Abraham very much. He was worried about his son Ishmael.

¹² But God said to Abraham, Dont worry about the boy and the slave woman. Do

what 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 Gods angel called to Hagar from heaven. He said, What is wrong, Hagar? Dont 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 desert of Paran.

²²Then Abimelech and Phicol spoke with Abraham. Phicol was the commander of Abimelechs 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 Abimelechs servants had captured a well of water.

²⁶But Abimelech said, I dont know who did this. You never told me about this before today!

²⁷ So Abraham and Abimelech made an agreement. Abraham gave Abimelech some sheep and cattle as proof of the agreement.

²⁸ Abraham also put seven female lambs in front of Abimelech.

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

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

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

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

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

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

22¹ After these things God decided to test Abrahams faith. God said to him, Abraham! And he said, Yes!

² Then 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.

³ In 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.

⁴ After they traveled three days, Abraham looked up, and in the distance he saw the place where 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 sons 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, Dont 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.

¹⁴So Abraham named that place The LORD Provides. Even today people say, On the mountain of the LORD, he will give us what we need.

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

¹⁶The 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

¹⁷I 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.

¹⁸Every nation on the earth will be blessed through your descendants. I will do this because you obeyed me.

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

²⁰After 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 Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.

²³ Bethuel was the father of Rebekah. Milcah was the mother of these eight sons, and Nahor was the father. Nahor was Abrahams brother.

²⁴ Also Nahor had four other sons from his slave woman Reumah. The sons were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

23 ¹ 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,

⁴ 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,

⁶ 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.

⁸ He said to them, If you really want to help me bury my dead wife, speak to Ephron the son of Zohar for me.

⁹ I would like to buy the cave of Machpelah, which belongs to Ephron. It is at the end 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,

¹¹ 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.

¹² Abraham bowed before the Hittites.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Ephron answered Abraham,

¹⁵ Sir, listen to me. Ten pounds of silver mean nothing to you or me. Take the land and bury your dead wife.

¹⁶Abraham 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.

¹⁷So 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.

¹⁸(23: 17)

¹⁹After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of that field near Mamre (Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

²⁰Abraham bought the field and the cave in it from the Hittites. So this became his property to be used as a burial place.

24¹Abraham lived to be a very old man. The LORD blessed him and everything he did.

²Abrahams 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.

⁴ Go back to my country, to my own people, to find a wife for my son Isaac. Bring her here to him.

⁵ 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?

⁶ Abraham said to him, No, don't take my son to that place.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹So the servant put his hand under his masters leg and made the promise.

¹⁰The servant took ten of Abrahams camels and left that place. The servant carried with him many different kinds of beautiful gifts. He went to Mesopotamia, to Nahors city.

¹¹In 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.

¹²The servant said, LORD, you are the God of my master Abraham. Please show your kindness to my master by helping me find a wife for his son Isaac.

¹³Here I am, standing by this well of water, and the young women from the city are coming out to get water.

¹⁴I will say to one of them, Please put down your jar 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.

¹⁵Before 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, Abrahams brother.) Rebekah came to the well with her water jar on her shoulder.

¹⁶She 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.

¹⁷Then the servant ran to her and said, Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.

¹⁸Rebekah quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and gave him a drink. She said, Drink this, sir.

¹⁹As soon as she finished giving him something to drink, Rebekah said, I will also pour some water for your camels.

²⁰So 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.

²¹The servant quietly watched her. He wanted to be sure that the LORD had given him an answer and had made his trip successful.

²² 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.

²³ The servant asked, Who is your father? And is there a place in your fathers house for me and my men to sleep?

²⁴ Rebekah answered, My father is Bethuel, the son of Milcah and Nahor.

²⁵ Then she said, Yes, we have straw and other food for your camels and a place for you to sleep.

²⁶ The servant bowed and worshiped the LORD.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ Then Rebekah ran and told her family about all these things.

²⁹ She had 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 sisters arms, he ran out to the well.

There the man was, standing by the camels at the well.

³⁰ (24: 29)

³¹ Laban said, Sir, you are welcome to come in! You dont have to stand outside here. I have prepared a room for you to sleep in and a place for your camels.

³² So Abrahams servant went into the house. Laban unloaded his camels and gave them straw and feed. Then he gave Abrahams servant water so that he and the men with him could wash their feet.

³³ 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.

³⁴ The servant said, I am Abrahams servant.

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ Sarah was my masters wife. When she was very old, she gave birth to a son,

and my master has given everything he owns to that son.

³⁷ 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 dont want him to marry one of the Canaanite girls.

³⁸ So you must promise to go to my fathers country. Go to my family and choose a wife for my son.

³⁹ I said to my master, Maybe the woman will not come back to this place with me.

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ But if you go to my fathers country, and they refuse to give you a wife for my son, you will be free from this promise.

⁴² Today I came to this well and said, LORD, God of my master Abraham, please make my trip successful.

⁴³ I 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 masters 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 Ill 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 masters 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 masters son. This is what the LORD wants.

⁵²When Abrahams 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.

⁵⁵Rebekahs 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, Dont make me wait. The LORD has made my

trip successful. Now let me go back to my master.

⁵⁷ Rebekah's brother and mother said, We will call Rebekah and ask her what she wants to do.

⁵⁸ They called her and asked her, Do you want to go with this man now? Rebekah said, Yes, I will go.

⁵⁹ So they allowed Rebekah to go with Abraham's servant and his men. Her nurse also went with them.

⁶⁰ While 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.

⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her nurse got on the camels and followed the servant and his men. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

⁶² Isaac had left Beer Lahai Roi and was now living in the Negev.

⁶³ One evening he went out to the field to think. He looked up and saw the camels coming from far away.

⁶⁴ Rebekah also looked and saw Isaac. Then she jumped down from the camel.

⁶⁵ She said to the servant, Who is that young man walking in the field to meet us? The servant said, That is my masters son. So Rebekah covered her face with her veil.

⁶⁶ The servant told Isaac everything that had happened.

⁶⁷ Then Isaac brought the girl into his mothers tent. Rebekah became his wife that day. Isaac loved her very much. So he was comforted after his mothers death.

25 ¹ Abraham married again. His new wife was named Keturah.

² She gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

³ Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. The people of Asshur, Leum, and Letush were descendants of Dedan.

⁴ The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these sons came from the marriage of Abraham and Keturah.

⁵ 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.

⁶ (25: 5)

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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ This is the same cave that Abraham bought from the Hittites. He was buried there with his wife Sarah.

¹¹ After Abraham died, God blessed Isaac. Isaac was living at Beer Lahai Roi.

¹² This is the list of Ishmaels family. Ishmael was Abraham and Hagar's son. (Hagar was Sarah's Egyptian maid.)

¹³ These are the names of Ishmael's sons: The first son was Nebaioth; then Kedar was born, then Adbeel, Mihsam,

¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa,

¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Ishmael lived to be 137 years old. Then he died and went to be with his people.

¹⁸ His descendants camped throughout the desert area from Havilah to Shur, near Egypt, all the way to Assyria. And they often attacked his brothers people.

¹⁹ This is the story of Isaac. Abraham had a son named Isaac.

²⁰ When Isaac was 40 years old, he married Rebekah. Rebekah was from Paddan Aram. She was Bethuels daughter and the sister of Laban the Aramean.

²¹ Isaacs wife could not have children. So Isaac prayed to the LORD for her. The LORD heard Isaacs prayer, and he allowed Rebekah to become pregnant.

²² While Rebekah was pregnant, the babies inside her struggled with each other. She prayed to the LORD and said, What is happening to me?

²³ 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.

²⁴When the right time came, Rebekah gave birth to twins.

²⁵The first baby was red. His skin was like a hairy robe. So he was named Esau.

²⁶When 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.

²⁷The 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.

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

²⁹One day Esau came back from hunting. He was tired and weak from hunger. Jacob was boiling a pot of beans.

³⁰So Esau said to Jacob, I am weak with hunger. Let me have some of that red soup. (That is why people call him Red.)

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

³²Esau 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.

³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil 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.

26 ¹ Now there was a famine. This was like the famine that happened during Abrahams life. So Isaac went to the town of Gerar, to King Abimelech of the Philistines.

² The LORD spoke to Isaac and said, Dont go down to Egypt. Live in the land that I commanded you to live in.

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.

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 every nation on earth will be blessed.

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.

⁶So Isaac settled in Gerar.

⁷His 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 each other.

⁹Abimelech 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.

¹⁰Abimelech 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.

¹¹So 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.

¹² Isaac planted fields in that place, and that year he gathered a great harvest. The LORD blessed him very much.

¹³ Isaac became rich. He gathered more and more wealth until he became a very rich man.

¹⁴ He had many flocks and herds of animals. He also had many slaves. All the Philistines were jealous of him.

¹⁵ So they destroyed all the wells that Isaac's father Abraham and his servants had dug many years before. They filled them with sand.

¹⁶ Abimelech said to Isaac, Leave our country. You have become much more powerful than we are.

¹⁷ So Isaac left that place and camped near the little river of Gerar. He stayed there and lived.

¹⁸ Long before this time, Abraham had dug many wells. After he died, the Philistines filled the wells with sand. So Isaac went back and dug those wells again. He gave them the same names his father had given them.

¹⁹ Isaac's servants also dug a well near the little river and found fresh water.

²⁰ But the men who herded sheep in the Valley of Gerar argued with Isaac's servants. They said, This water is ours. So Isaac named that well Esek. He gave it that name because it was the place where they had argued with him.

²¹ Then Isaac's servants dug another well. But there was an argument over this well too. So Isaac named that well Sitnah.

²² Isaac moved from there and dug another well. No one came to argue about this well. So Isaac named it Rehoboth. He said, Now the LORD has found a place for us. We will grow and be successful in this place.

²³ From there Isaac went to Beersheba.

²⁴ The LORD spoke to him that night and said, I am the God of your father Abraham. Don't be afraid. I am with you, and I will bless you. I will make your family great. I will do this because of my servant Abraham.

²⁵ So Isaac built an altar and worshiped the LORD in that place. He set up camp there, and his servants dug a well.

²⁶ Abimelech came from Gerar to see Isaac. He brought with him Ahuzzath,

his advisor, and Phicol, the commander of his army.

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

²⁸ They 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.

²⁹ We 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.

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

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

³² On that day Isaacs servants came and told him about the well they had dug. The servants said, We found water in that well.

³³ So Isaac named it Shibah. And that city is still called Beersheba.

³⁴ When 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.

³⁵These marriages made Isaac and Rebekah very unhappy.

27 ¹Isaac 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.

³So take your bow and arrows and go hunting. Kill an animal for me to eat.

⁴Prepare the food that I love. Bring it to me, and I will eat it. Then I will bless you before I die.

⁵So Esau went hunting. Rebekah was listening when Isaac told this to his son Esau.

⁶Rebekah said to her son Jacob, Listen, I heard your father talking to your brother Esau.

⁷Your 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.

⁸So listen, son, and do what I tell you.

⁹Go out to our goats and bring me two young ones. I will prepare them the way your father loves them.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹²If 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.

¹⁵Then Rebekah took the clothes that her older son Esau loved to wear. She put these clothes on the younger son Jacob.

¹⁶She took the skins of the goats and put them on Jacobs hands and on his neck.

¹⁷ Then she got the food she had cooked and gave it to Jacob.

¹⁸ Jacob went to his father and said, Father. His father answered, Yes, son. Who are you?

¹⁹ Jacob 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.

²⁰ But 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.

²¹ Then 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.

²² So Jacob went to Isaac his father. Isaac felt him and said, Your voice sounds like Jacobs voice, but your arms are hairy like the arms of Esau.

²³ Isaac did not know it was Jacob, because his arms were hairy like Esaus. So Isaac blessed Jacob.

²⁴ Isaac said, Are you really my son Esau? Jacob answered, Yes, I am.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ Then Isaac said to him. Son, come near and kiss me.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ May God give you plenty of rain, good crops, and wine.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ Isaac finished blessing Jacob. Then, just as Jacob left his father Isaac, Esau came in from hunting.

³¹ 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.

³² But Isaac said to him, Who are you? He answered, I am your son your first son Esau.

³³ 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.

³⁴ When Esau heard his fathers words, he became very angry and bitter. He cried out and said to his father, Then bless me also, father!

³⁵ Isaac said, Your brother tricked me! He came and took your blessing!

³⁶ 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. Then Esau said, Have you saved any blessing for me?

³⁷ Isaac answered, I have already given Jacob the power to rule over you. And I said all his brothers would be his servants. I have given him the blessing for much grain and wine. There is nothing left to give you, my son.

³⁸ But Esau continued to beg his father. Do you have only one blessing, father? Bless me also, father! Esau began to cry.

³⁹ Then Isaac said to him, You will not live on good land. You will not have much rain.

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² 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.

⁴³ So, son, do what I say. My brother Laban is living in Haran. Go to him and hide.

⁴⁴ Stay with him for a short time until your brother stops being angry.

⁴⁵ When your brother forgets what you did to him, I will send a servant to bring you back. I don't want to lose both of my sons the same day.

⁴⁶Then Rebekah said to Isaac, Your son Esau married Hittite women. I am very upset about this, because they are not our people. Ill have nothing to live for if Jacob marries one of these women!

28¹ Isaac called Jacob and blessed him. Then Isaac gave him a command and said, You must not marry a Canaanite woman.

²So leave this place and go to Paddan Aram. Go to the house of Bethuel, your mothers father. Laban, your mothers brother, lives there. Marry one of his daughters.

³I 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

⁴and 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.

⁵So Isaac sent Jacob to Rebekahs 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.

⁶Esau learned that his father Isaac blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan Aram to find a wife there. He also learned that Isaac commanded Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman.

⁷Esau learned that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and went to Paddan Aram.

⁸Esau saw from this that his father did not want his sons to marry Canaanite women.

⁹Esau already had two wives, but he went to Abrahams son Ishmael and married another woman, Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. Mahalath was Nebaioths sister.

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran.

¹¹The 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.

¹²Jacob 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.

¹³And 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.

¹⁴You 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.

¹⁵I 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.

¹⁶Then 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.

¹⁷Jacob was afraid and said, This is a very great place. This is the house of God. This is the gate to heaven.

¹⁸Jacob 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.

¹⁹The name of that place was Luz, but Jacob named it Bethel.

²⁰Then 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,

²¹and if I return in peace to my fathers house if he does all these things then the LORD will be my God.

²²I 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.

29¹ Then Jacob continued his trip. He went to the country in the East.

²He 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.

³When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll 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 fathers sheep. (It was her job to take care of the sheep.)

¹⁰ Rachel was Labans daughter. Laban was the brother of Rebekah, Jacobs 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.

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 dont 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.

³¹ The LORD saw that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, so he made it possible for 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.

³⁵Then 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.

30¹Rachel 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!

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

³Then 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.

⁴So Rachel gave Bilhah to her husband Jacob. He had sexual relations with Bilhah.

⁵She became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Jacob.

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

⁷ Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son.

⁸ Rachel said, I have fought hard to compete with my 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.

¹⁰ Then Zilpah had a son.

¹¹ Leah said, I am lucky. So she named the son Gad.

¹² Zilpah gave birth to another son.

¹³ Leah said, I am very happy! Now women will call me happy. So she named that 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 sons flowers.

¹⁵ Leah answered, You have already taken away my husband. Now you are trying to take away my sons flowers. But Rachel answered, If you will give me your sons flowers, you can sleep with Jacob tonight.

¹⁶Jacob 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 sons flowers. So Jacob slept with Leah that night.

¹⁷Then God allowed Leah to become pregnant again. She gave birth to a fifth son.

¹⁸She said, God has given me a reward because I gave my slave to my husband. So she named her son Issachar.

¹⁹Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son.

²⁰She 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.

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

²²Then God heard Rachels prayer and made it possible for Rachel to have children.

²³She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She said, God has taken away my shame.

²⁴ Rachel named the son Joseph, saying, May the Lord give me another son.

²⁵ After the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, Now let me go back to my own homeland.

²⁶ Give me my wives and my children. I have earned them by working for you. You know that I served you well.

²⁷ Laban said to him, Please, let me say something. I know that the LORD has blessed me because of you.

²⁸ Tell me what I should pay you, and I will give it to you.

²⁹ Jacob answered, You know that I have worked hard for you. Your flocks have grown and been well while I cared for them.

³⁰ When 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.

³¹ Laban asked, Then what should I give you? Jacob answered, I dont 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 your sheep.

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 isnt spotted or any sheep that isnt 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 Labans.

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 Labans. And the young animals born from the stronger animals were Jacobs.

⁴³In this way Jacob became very rich. He had large flocks, many servants, camels, and donkeys.

31¹One day Jacob heard Labans 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 seen that your father is angry with me. He was always friendly with me in the past, but now he is not.

⁶You both know that I have worked as hard as I could for your father.

⁷But he cheated me. He has changed my pay ten times. But during all this time, God protected me from all of Laban's tricks.

⁸At 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.

⁹So God has taken the animals away from your father and has given them to me.

¹⁰I 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.

¹¹The angel of God spoke to me in that dream. The angel said, Jacob! I answered, Yes!

¹²The 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.

¹³I 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.

¹⁴Rachel and Leah answered Jacob, Our father has nothing to give us when he dies.

¹⁵He treated us like strangers. He sold us to you, and then he spent all the money that should have been ours.

¹⁶God 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.

¹⁷So Jacob prepared for the trip. He put his children and his wives on camels.

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹While 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.

²⁰Jacob tricked Laban the Aramean. He did not tell Laban he was leaving.

²¹Jacob took his family and everything he owned and left quickly. They crossed the Euphrates River and traveled toward the hill country of Gilead.

²²Three 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.

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 didnt 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.

³⁰I 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?

³¹Jacob answered, I left without telling you, because I was afraid. I thought you would take your daughters away from me.

³²But 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.)

³³So 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.

³⁴Rachel had hidden the gods inside her camels saddle, and she was sitting on them. Laban looked through the whole tent, but he did not find the gods.

³⁵And 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.

³⁶Then 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?

³⁷You 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.

³⁸I 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.

³⁹Any 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.

⁴⁰In the daytime the sun took away my strength, and at night sleep was taken from my eyes by the cold.

⁴¹I 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.

⁴²But 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.

⁴³Laban 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.

⁴⁴So I am ready to make an agreement with you. We will set up a pile of stones to show that we have an agreement.

⁴⁵So Jacob found a large rock and put it there to show that he had made an agreement.

⁴⁶He 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. Jacobs father, Isaac, called

God Fear. So Jacob used that name to make the promise.

⁵⁴Then 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.

⁵⁵Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters goodbye. He blessed them and went back home.

32¹ Jacob also left that place. While he was traveling, he saw Gods angels.

²When he saw them, he said, This is Gods camp! So Jacob named that place Mahanaim.

³Jacobs brother Esau was living in the area called Seir in the hill country of Edom. Jacob sent messengers to Esau.

⁴He told them, Tell this to my master Esau: Your servant Jacob says, I have lived with Laban all these years.

⁵I have many cattle, donkeys, flocks, and servants. Sir, I am sending you this message to ask you to accept us.

⁶The 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?

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰You 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.

²¹ So Jacob sent the gifts to Esau, but he stayed that night in the camp.

²² 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.

²³ After he sent his family across the river, he sent across everything he had.

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 Jacobs 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.

²⁸Then the man said, Your name will not be Jacob. Your name will now be Israel. I give you this name because you have fought with God and with men, and you have won.

²⁹Then 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.

³⁰So Jacob named that place Peniel. He said, At this place, I saw God face to face, but my life was spared.

³¹Then the sun came up as Jacob left Peniel. He was limping because of his leg.

³²So 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.

33¹ 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.

²Jacob 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.

³Jacob himself went out before them. While he was walking toward his brother Esau, he bowed down to the ground seven times.

⁴When Esau saw Jacob, he ran to meet him. He put his arms around Jacob, hugged his neck, and kissed him. Then they both cried.

⁵Esau 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.

⁶Then the two maids and the children with them went to Esau. They bowed down before him.

⁷Then Leah and the children with her went to Esau and bowed down. And then Rachel and Joseph went to him and bowed down.

⁸Esau 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.

⁹But Esau said, You dont have to give me gifts, brother. I have enough for myself.

¹⁰Jacob 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.

¹¹So 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.

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

¹³But 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.

¹⁴So 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.

¹⁵So 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.

¹⁶So that day Esau started on his trip back to Seir.

¹⁷But 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.

¹⁸Jacob safely ended his trip from Paddan Aram when he came to the town of Shechem in Canaan. He made his camp in a field near the city.

¹⁹He bought the field where he camped from the family of Hamor, father of Shechem. He paid 100 pieces of silver for it.

²⁰He built an altar there to honor God. He named the place El, the God of Israel.

34¹One day, Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, went out to see the women of that place.

²She was seen by Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, who ruled that area. Shechem took Dinah and raped her.

³But 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 Shechems father, Hamor, came out to talk with Jacob.

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

⁸ But Hamor talked to Dinahs 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 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,

²¹ 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 Dinahs brothers, Simeon and Levi, killed Hamor and his son Shechem. Then they took Dinah out of Shechems house and left.

²⁷ Jacobs 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!

35 ¹ God said to Jacob, Go to the town of Bethel. 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, the God who appeared to you.

² 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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. Jacob chose this name because that is the place where God first appeared to him when he was running from his brother.

⁸ Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died there. They buried her under the oak tree at Bethel. They named that place Allon Bacuth.

⁹ When Jacob came back from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again. God blessed Jacob

¹⁰ 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. So God named him Israel.

¹¹ God said to him, I am God All-Powerful, 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 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.

¹⁵ (35: 14)

¹⁶ 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, Dont be afraid, Rachel. You are giving birth to another son.

¹⁸ Rachel died while giving birth to the son. Before dying, she named the boy Benoni. But Jacob called him Benjamin.

¹⁹ Rachel was buried on the road to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).

²⁰ Jacob put a special rock on Rachels grave to honor her. That special rock is still there today.

²¹ Then Israel continued his journey. He camped just south of Eder tower.

²² Israel stayed there for a short time. While he was there, Reuben slept with Israels slave woman Bilhah. Israel heard about this, and he was very angry. Jacob had twelve sons.

²³ Jacob and Leahs sons were his firstborn son Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

²⁴ Jacob and Rachels sons were Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁵ Bilhah was Rachels maid. Jacob and Bilhahs sons were Dan and Naphtali.

²⁶ Zilpah was Leahs maid. Jacob and Zilpahs sons were Gad and Asher. These are Jacobs 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.

36¹ 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, Ishmaels 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 Esaus sons who were born in the land of Canaan.

⁶ Jacob and Esaus 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. (Esau is also named Edom.)

⁷ (36: 6)

⁸ (36: 6)

⁹ Esau is the father of the people of Edom. These are the names of Esaus family living in the hill country of Seir:

¹⁰ Esau and Adahs son was Eliphaz. Esau and Basemaths 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.

¹³Reuel had four sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were Esaus grandsons from his wife Basemath.

¹⁴Esau'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.

¹⁵These are the family groups that came from Esau: Esau's first son was Eliphaz. From Eliphaz came Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz,

¹⁶Korah, Gatam, and Amalek. All these family groups came from Esau's wife Adah.

¹⁷Esau's son Reuel was the father of these families: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. All these families came from Esau's wife Basemath. They were born in the territory of Edom.

¹⁸Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, gave birth to Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These three men were the leaders of their families.

¹⁹They were all sons of Esau and leaders of the family groups of Edom.

²⁰Seir, a Horite man, lived in Edom before Esau. These are the sons of Seir: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,

²¹Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These sons were all Horite family leaders from Seir in Edom.

²²Lotan was the father of Hori and Heman. (Timna was Lotans sister.)

²³Shobal was the father of Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

²⁴Zibeon had two sons, Aiah and Anah. Anah is the man who found the springs in the desert while he was caring for his fathers donkeys.

²⁵Anah was the father of Dishon and Oholibamah.

²⁶Dishon had four sons. They were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran.

²⁷Ezer had three sons. They were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

²⁸Dishan had two sons. They were Uz and Aran.

²⁹These are the names of the leaders of the Horite families: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,

³⁰Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These men were the leaders of the families that lived in the country of Seir.

³¹ At that time there were kings in Edom. Edom had kings a long time before Israel did.

³² Bela son of Beor was a king who ruled in Edom. He ruled over the city of Dinhabah.

³³ When Bela died, Jobab became king. Jobab was the son of Zerah from Bozrah.

³⁴ When Jobab died, Husham ruled. Husham was from the land of the Temanite.

³⁵ When Husham died, Hadad ruled that area. Hadad was the son of Bedad. (He was the man who defeated Midian in the country of Moab.) Hadad was from the city of Avith.

³⁶ When Hadad died, Samlah ruled that country. Samlah was from Masrekah.

³⁷ When Samlah died, Shaul ruled that area. Shaul was from Rehoboth by the River.

³⁸ When Shaul died, Baal Hanan ruled that country. Baal Hanan was the son of Acbor.

³⁹ When Baal Hanan died, Hadad ruled that country. Hadad was from the city of Pau. His wifes name was Mehetabel,

the daughter of Matred. (Mezahab was Matreds father.)

⁴⁰ Esau was the father of the 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.

⁴¹ (36: 40)

⁴² (36: 40)

⁴³ (36: 40)

37 ¹ Jacob stayed and lived in the land of Canaan. This is the same land where his father had lived.

² This is the story of Jacobs 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 fathers wives.) Joseph told his father about the bad things that his brothers did.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ One time Joseph had a special dream. Later, he told his brothers about this dream, and after that his brothers hated him even more.

⁶ Joseph said, I had a dream.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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?

¹¹ Joseph's brothers continued to be jealous of him, but his father thought about all these things and wondered what they could mean.

¹² One day Joseph's brothers went to Shechem to care for their father's sheep.

¹³ Jacob said to Joseph, Go to Shechem. Your brothers are there with my sheep. Joseph answered, I will go.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ At Shechem, Joseph got lost. A man found him wandering in the fields. The man said, What are you looking for?

¹⁶ Joseph answered, I am looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are with their sheep?

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ Joseph's brothers saw him coming from far away. They decided to make a plan to kill him.

¹⁹ They said to each other, Here comes Joseph the dreamer.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ But Reuben wanted to save Joseph. He said, Let's not kill him.

²² We can put him into a well without hurting him. Reuben planned to save Joseph and send him back to his father.

²³ When Joseph came to his brothers, they attacked him and tore off his long and beautiful coat.

²⁴ Then they threw him into an empty well that was dry.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ So Judah said to his brothers, What profit will we get if we kill our brother and hide his death?

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ Reuben went to the brothers and said, The boy is not in the well! What will I do?

³¹ The brothers killed a goat and put the goats blood on Josephs beautiful coat.

³² Then the brothers showed the coat to their father. And the brothers said, We found this coat. Is this Josephs coat?

³³ His father saw the coat and knew that it was Josephs. He said, Yes, that is his! Maybe some wild animal has killed him. My son Joseph has been eaten by a wild animal!

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ All of Jacob's sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but Jacob was never comforted. He said, I will be sorry for my son until the day I die. So Jacob continued to be sad for his son Joseph.

³⁶ The Midianite traders later sold Joseph in Egypt. They sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the Pharaoh's guards.

38¹ About that time, Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man named Hirah from the town of Adullam.

² Judah met a Canaanite girl there and married her. The girl's father was named Shua.

³ The Canaanite girl gave birth to a son and named him Er.

⁴ Later, she gave birth to another son and named him Onan.

⁵ Then she had another son named Shelah. Judah lived in Kezib when his third son was born.

⁶Judah chose a woman named Tamar to be the wife of his first son Er.

⁷But Er did many bad things. The LORD was not happy with him, so the LORD killed him.

⁸Then 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.

⁹Onan 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.

¹⁰This made the LORD angry. So he killed Onan also.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²Later, 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.

¹³Tamar learned that Judah, her father-in-law, was going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep.

¹⁴Tamar 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.

¹⁵Judah 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.)

¹⁶So 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?

¹⁷Judah 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.

¹⁸Judah 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.

¹⁹Then Tamar went home, took off her veil that covered her face, and again put on the special clothes that showed she was a widow.

²⁰Later, 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.

²¹He 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.

²²So Judahs 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.

²³So Judah said, Let her keep the things. I dont want people to laugh at

us. I tried to give her the goat, but we could not find her. That is enough.

²⁴About 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.

²⁵The 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?

²⁶Judah recognized these things and 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.

²⁷The time came for Tamar to give birth. She was going to have twins.

²⁸While 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.

²⁹But 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.

³⁰After this, the other baby was born. This was the baby with the red string on his hand. They named him Zerah.

39¹The traders who bought Joseph took him down to Egypt. They sold him to the captain of Pharaoh's guard, Potiphar.

²The LORD helped Joseph become a successful man. Joseph lived in the house of his master, Potiphar the Egyptian.

³Potiphar saw that the LORD was with Joseph and that the LORD helped Joseph be successful in everything he did.

⁴So Potiphar was very happy with Joseph. He allowed Joseph to work for him and to help him rule the house. Joseph was the ruler over everything Potiphar owned.

⁵After Joseph was made the ruler over the house, the LORD blessed the house and everything that Potiphar owned. The LORD also blessed everything that grew in Potiphar's fields. The Lord did this because of Joseph.

⁶So Potiphar allowed Joseph to take responsibility for everything in the house. Potiphar didn't have to worry

about anything except deciding what to eat. Joseph was a very handsome, good-looking man.

⁷After some time, the wife of Joseph's master began to pay special attention to him. One day she said to him, Sleep with me.

⁸But Joseph refused. He said, My master trusts me with everything in his house. He has given me responsibility for everything here.

⁹My 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.

¹⁰The woman talked with Joseph every day, but he refused to sleep with her.

¹¹One day Joseph went into the house to do his work. He was the only man in the house at the time.

¹²His 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.

¹³The woman saw that Joseph had left his coat in her hand and had run out of the house.

¹⁴ 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, Josephs 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 Josephs master listened to what his wife said, and he became very angry.

²⁰ So Potiphar put Joseph into the prison where the kings enemies were held, and that is where Joseph remained.

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.

²³The commander of the guards trusted Joseph with everything in the prison. This happened because the LORD was with Joseph. The LORD made him successful in everything he did.

40¹ Later, two of Pharaoh's servants did something wrong to Pharaoh. These servants were the baker and the man who served wine to Pharaoh.

² Pharaoh became angry with his baker and wine server,

³ so he put them in the same prison as Joseph. Potiphar, the commander of Pharaoh's guards, was in charge of this prison.

⁴ The commander put the two prisoners under Joseph's care. The two men continued to stay in prison for some time.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Joseph went to them the next morning and saw that the two men were worried.

⁷ He asked them, Why do you look so worried today?

⁸The two men answered, We both had dreams last night, but we dont 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.

⁹So the wine server told Joseph his dream. The server said, I dreamed I saw a vine.

¹⁰On the vine there were three branches. I watched the branches grow flowers and then become grapes.

¹¹I was holding Pharaohs cup, so I took the grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup. Then I gave the cup to Pharaoh.

¹²Then Joseph said, I will explain the dream to you. The three branches mean three days.

¹³Before the end of three days, Pharaoh will forgive you and allow you to go back to your work. You will do the same work for Pharaoh as you did before.

¹⁴But 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.

¹⁵I was kidnapped and taken from the land of my people, the Hebrews. I have done nothing wrong! I should not be in prison.

¹⁶The baker saw that the other servants dream was good, so he said to Joseph, I also had a dream. I dreamed there were three baskets of bread on my head.

¹⁷In the top basket there were all kinds of baked food for the king, but birds were eating this food.

¹⁸Joseph answered, I will tell you what the dream means. The three baskets mean three days.

¹⁹Before 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.

²⁰Three days later it was Pharaohs birthday. He gave a party for all his servants. At the party Pharaoh allowed the wine server and the baker to leave the prison.

²¹He freed the wine server and gave him his job back, and once again the wine server put a cup of wine in Pharaohs hand.

²² But Pharaoh hanged the baker, and everything happened the way Joseph said it would.

²³ But the wine server did not remember to help Joseph. He said nothing about him to Pharaoh. The wine server forgot about Joseph.

41 ¹ Two years later Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile River.

² In the dream, seven cows came out of the river and stood there eating grass. They were healthy, good-looking cows.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁶ Then he saw seven more heads of grain sprouting, but they were thin and scorched by the hot wind.

⁷The thin heads of grain ate the seven good heads of grain. Then Pharaoh woke up again and realized it was only a dream.

⁸The 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.

⁹Then the wine servant remembered Joseph and said to Pharaoh, I remember something that happened to me.

¹⁰You were angry with the baker and me, and you put us in prison.

¹¹Then one night he and I had a dream. Each dream had a different meaning.

¹²There 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,

¹³and 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!

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 couldnt even tell they had eaten the healthy cows. They looked as thin and sick as they did in the beginning. Then I woke up.

²²In my next dream I saw seven heads of grain growing on one plant. They were healthy and full of grain.

²³And then seven more heads of grain grew after them, but they were thin and scorched by the hot wind.

²⁴Then 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?

²⁵Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, Both of these dreams have the same meaning. God is telling you what will happen soon.

²⁶The seven good cows and the seven good heads of grain are seven good years.

²⁷And 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.

²⁸God has shown you what will happen soon. He will make these things happen just as I told you.

²⁹For 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.

³⁷ This seemed like a very good idea to Pharaoh, and all his officials agreed.

³⁸ Then 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!

³⁹ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, God showed these things to you, so you must be the wisest man.

⁴⁰ I 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.

⁴¹ Pharaoh said to Joseph, I now make you governor over all of Egypt.

⁴² Then 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.

⁴³ Then he told Joseph to ride in his second chariot. Pharaoh's officials said, Let him be the governor over the whole land of Egypt!

⁴⁴ Then 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.

⁵¹ Joseph 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 fathers house.

⁵² Joseph 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.

⁵³ For seven years people had all the food they needed, but those years ended.

⁵⁴ Then 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.

⁵⁵ The famine began, and the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh said to the Egyptian people, Go ask Joseph what to do.

⁵⁶ There 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,

⁵⁷ but the famine was bad everywhere. So people from the countries around Egypt had to come to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain.

42¹ During 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?

² I 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!

³ So ten of Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy grain.

⁴ Jacob did not send Benjamin. (Benjamin was Joseph's only full brother.) 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 as if 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.

⁸Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not know who he was.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰But the brothers said to him, No, sir, we come as your servants. We have come only to buy food.

¹¹We are all brothers we all have the same father. We are honest men. We have come only to buy food.

¹²Then Joseph said to them, No, you have come to spy on us!

¹³And 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.

¹⁴ But Joseph said to them, No! I can see that I am right. You are spies.

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.

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!

¹⁷ Then Joseph put them all in prison for three days.

¹⁸ After three days Joseph said to them, I am a God-fearing man. Do this, and I will let you live.

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.

²⁰ 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.

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.

²²Then 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.

²³Joseph 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.

²⁴ (42: 23)

²⁵Joseph told the servants to fill the bags with grain. The brothers had given Joseph the money for the grain, but he didnt 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.

²⁶So the brothers put the grain on their donkeys and left.

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!

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 each other, What is God doing to us?

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.

³⁴Bring 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. I will give him to you, and you will be free to buy grain in our country.

³⁵Then the brothers started taking the grain out of their sacks, and every brother found his bag of money in his sack of grain. When the brothers and their father saw the money, they were afraid.

³⁶Jacob said to them, Do you want me to lose all of my children? Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone, and now you want to take Benjamin away too!

³⁷But Reuben said to his father, Father, you may kill my two sons if I don't bring Benjamin back to you. Trust me. I will bring him back to you.

³⁸But Jacob said, I will not let Benjamin go with you. His brother is dead, and he is the only son left from my wife Rachel. It would kill me if anything happened to him during the trip to Egypt. You would

send me to the grave a very sad, old man.

43¹ The famine was very bad in the land of Canaan.

² 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 dont 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.

⁶ 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 didnt know

he would ask us to bring our brother to him!

⁸Then 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 dont go, we will all dieincluding our children.

⁹I will make sure he is safe. I will be responsible for him. If I dont bring him back to you, you can blame me forever.

¹⁰If you had let us go before, we could already have made two trips for food.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²Take 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.

¹³Take Benjamin, and go back to the man.

¹⁴I 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ The servant did as he was told. He brought the men into Josephs house.

¹⁸ The brothers were afraid when they were taken to Josephs 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.

¹⁹ So the brothers went to the servant in charge of Josephs house.

²⁰ They said, Sir, I promise this is the truth. The last time we came, we came to buy food.

²¹ On the way home we opened our sacks and found our money in every

sack. We dont 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.

²² (43: 21)

²³ But the servant answered, Dont 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.

²⁴ The servant led the men into Josephs house. He gave them water, and they washed their feet. Then he fed their donkeys.

²⁵ The brothers heard that they were going to eat with Joseph, so they worked until noon preparing their gifts for him.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Joseph asked them how they were doing. He said, How is your elderly father you told me about. Is he still alive and well?

²⁸The brothers answered, Yes, sir, our father is still alive. And they again bowed before Joseph.

²⁹Then 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!

³⁰Joseph felt a strong desire to show his brother Benjamin that he loved him. He was about to cry and didnt want his brothers to see him, so he ran into his private room and cried there.

³¹Then Joseph washed his face and came out. He regained control of himself and said, Now it is time to eat.

³²The 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.

³³Josephs 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.

³⁴ Servants were taking food from Josephs 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.

44 ¹ Then Joseph gave a command to his servant. He said, Fill the mens sacks with as much grain as they can carry. Then put each mans money into his sack with the grain.

² Put the youngest brothers money in his sack too. But also put my special silver cup in his sack. So the servant obeyed Joseph.

³ Early the next morning the brothers and their donkeys were sent back to their country.

⁴ 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 masters silver cup?

⁵ My master drinks from that cup, and he uses it to learn secret things. What you did was wrong!

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

⁷But the brothers said to the servant, Why does the governor say these things? We wouldnt do anything like that!

⁸We brought back the money that we found in our sacks before. So surely we wouldnt steal silver or gold from your masters house.

⁹If you find the silver cup in any of our sacks, let that man die. You can kill him, and we will be your slaves.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹Then every brother quickly opened his sack on the ground.

¹²The servant started looking in the sacks. He started with the oldest brother and ended with the youngest. He found the cup in Benjamins sack.

¹³The 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.

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

¹⁵Joseph said to them, Why have you done this? Didnt you know that I have a special way of learning secrets? No one is better at this than I am!

¹⁶Judah 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.

¹⁷But 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.

¹⁸Then Judah went to Joseph and said, Sir, please let me speak plainly with you. Please dont be angry with me. I know that you are like Pharaoh himself.

¹⁹When we were here before, you asked us, Do you have a father or a brother?

²⁰And we answered you, We have a fatherhe 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 sons brother is dead, so he is the only son who is left from that mother. Our father loves him very much.

²¹ Then you said to us, Bring that brother to me. I want to see him.

²² 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.

²³ But you said to us, You must bring your youngest brother, or I will not sell you grain again.

²⁴ So we went back to our father and told him what you said.

²⁵ Later, our father said, Go back and buy us some more food.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Then my father said to us, You know that my wife Rachel gave me two sons.

²⁸ I let one son go away, and he was killed by a wild animal. And I havent seen him since.

²⁹ If you take my other son away from me, and something happens to him, I will be sad enough to die.

³⁰ Now, imagine what will happen when we go home without our youngest brother he is the most important thing in our fathers life!

³¹ Our father will die if he sees that the boy isnt with us and it will be our fault. We will send our father to his grave a very sad man.

³² I took responsibility for the young boy. I told my father, If I dont bring him back to you, you can blame me for the rest of my life.

³³ So now I beg you, please let the boy go back with his brothers, and I will stay and be your slave.

³⁴ I cannot go back to my father if the boy is not with me. I am very afraid of what would happen to my father.

45¹ 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 Pharaohs 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 dont be worried. Dont be angry with yourselves for what you did. It was Gods plan for me to come here. I am here to save peoples 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 Gods plan. God made me like a father to Pharaoh. I am the governor over all his house and over all the land of 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!

46¹ 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.

² During the night God spoke to Israel in a dream and said, Jacob, Jacob. Israel answered, Here I am.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ With him were his sons and his grandsons, his daughters and his granddaughters. All of his family went with him.

⁸ Here are the names of Israels sons and family that went to Egypt with him: Reuben was Jacobs first son.

⁹ Reubens sons were Hanoah, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

¹⁰ Simeons sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, and Zohar. There was also Shaul. (Shaul was born from a Canaanite woman.)

¹¹ Levis sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹² Judahs sons were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. (Er and Onan died while still in Canaan.) Perezs sons were Hezron and Hamul.

¹³ Issachars sons were Tola, Puah, Job, and Shimron.

¹⁴ Zebuluns sons were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵ Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were Jacobs sons from his wife Leah. Leah had these sons in Paddan Aram. She also had a daughter named Dinah. There were 33 people in this family.

¹⁶ Gads sons were Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

¹⁷ Ashers sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. Also there were Beriahs sons, Heber and Malkiel.

¹⁸ All these were Jacobs sons from his wifes servant, Zilpah. (Zilpah was the maid that Laban had given to his daughter Leah.) There were 16 people in this family.

¹⁹ Benjamin was also with Jacob. Benjamin was Jacob and Rachels son. (Joseph was also Rachels son, but he was already in Egypt.)

²⁰ In Egypt, Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. (Josephs wife was Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest in the city of On.)

²¹ Benjamins sons were Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

²² These were the sons of Jacob from his wife Rachel. There were 14 people in this family.

²³ Dans son was Hushim.

²⁴ Naphtalis sons were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶The total number of Jacobs direct descendants who went with him to Egypt was 66 people. (The wives of Jacobs sons were not counted in this number.)

²⁷Also, Joseph had two sons in Egypt. With these two grandsons, Jacobs family in Egypt numbered 70 people in all.

²⁸Jacob 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.

²⁹Joseph 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.

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

³¹Joseph said to his brothers and to the rest of his fathers family, I will go and tell Pharaoh that you are here. I will say to Pharaoh, My brothers and the rest of my fathers family have left the land of Canaan and have come here to me.

³²They are a family of shepherds. They have always kept sheep and cattle. They have brought all their animals and everything they own with them.

³³When Pharaoh calls you, he will ask, What work do you do?

³⁴You 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.

47 ¹Joseph 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.

²Joseph chose five of his brothers to be with him before the Pharaoh.

³Pharaoh 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.

⁴They 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.

⁵Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, Your father and your brothers have come to you.

⁶You 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.

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

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

⁹Jacob 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.

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

¹¹Joseph 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.

¹²Joseph also gave his father, his brothers, and all their people the food they needed.

¹³The famine got worse; there was no food anywhere in the land. Egypt and Canaan became very poor because of this bad time.

¹⁴People in the land bought more and more grain. Joseph saved the money and brought it to Pharaoh's house.

¹⁵After 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.

¹⁶But Joseph answered, Give me your cattle, and I will give you food.

¹⁷So 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.

¹⁸But 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 Pharaohs 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.

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

²⁶So 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.

²⁷Israel 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.

²⁸Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years, so he was 147 years old.

²⁹The 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. Promise that you will do what I say and that you will be truthful with me. When I die, dont bury me in Egypt.

³⁰Bury 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.

³¹ 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.

48¹ 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.

⁶So 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.

⁷On 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.)

⁸Then Israel saw Josephs sons. Israel said, Who are these boys?

⁹Joseph 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.

¹⁰Israel was old and his eyes were not good. So Joseph brought the boys close to his father. Israel kissed and hugged the boys.

¹¹Then Israel said to Joseph, I never thought I would see your face again. But look! God has let me see you and your children.

¹²Then Joseph took the boys off Israels lap, and they bowed down in front of his father.

¹³Joseph put Ephraim on his right side and Manasseh on his left side. (So Ephraim was on Israels left side, and Manasseh was on Israels right side.)

¹⁴But 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.

¹⁵And Israel blessed Joseph and said, My ancestors, Abraham and Isaac, worshiped our God, and that God has led me all my life.

¹⁶He 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.

¹⁷Joseph saw that his father put his right hand on Ephraims head. This didnt make Joseph happy. Joseph took his fathers hand because he wanted to

move it from Ephraim's head and put it on Manasse'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.

49¹ 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.

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 couldnt control. So you will not remain my most honored son. You climbed into your fathers bed and slept with one of his wives. You brought shame to my bed, to the bed you lay on.

⁵ Simeon and Levi are brothers. They are violent with their swords.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸Judah, your brothers will praise you. You will defeat your enemies. Your brothers will bow down to you.

⁹Judah 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.

¹⁰Men from Judah's family will be kings. The sign that his family rules will not leave his family before the real king comes. Then many people will obey and serve him.

¹¹He ties his donkeys to the best grapevines. He washes his clothes in the best wine.

¹²His eyes are red from drinking wine. His teeth are white from drinking milk.

¹³Zebulun 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.

¹⁴Issachar is like a donkey that has worked too hard. He will lie down under his heavy load.

¹⁵He 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.

¹⁶Dan will rule his people as one of the tribes of Israel.

¹⁷Dan 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 horses foot, and the rider falls to the ground.

¹⁸LORD, I am waiting for your salvation.

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

²⁰Ashers land will grow much good food. He will have food fit for a king!

²¹Naphtali is like a deer running free, a doe with beautiful young fawns.

²²Joseph is like a wild donkey, like a young donkey by a spring, like colts grazing in a pasture.

²³Men with bows attacked him, shooting their arrows and chasing him.

²⁴But he aimed his bow well, and his arms were strong. His power came from the Mighty One of Jacob, from the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel.

²⁵May the God of your father help you. May God All-Powerful bless you. May he bless you with rain from the sky above

and with springs from the earth below. May your wives have many babies to nurse and your animals produce many young ones.

²⁶My 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.

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

²⁸These 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.

²⁹Then 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.

³⁰That 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.

³¹Abraham 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.

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

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

50¹When Israel died, Joseph was very sad. He hugged his father and cried over him and kissed him.

²Joseph commanded his servants to prepare his fathers body. (These servants were doctors.) The doctors prepared Jacobs body to be buried. They prepared the body in the special way of the Egyptians.

³When 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.

⁴After the time of sadness was finished, Joseph spoke to Pharaohs officers and said, Please tell this to Pharaoh:

⁵When 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.

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

⁷So Joseph went to bury his father. All of Pharaohs officials, personal advisors, and all the older leaders of Egypt went with Joseph.

⁸All the people in Josephs family, his brothers, and all the people in his fathers family went with him. Only the children and the animals stayed in the land of Goshen.

⁹So there was a large crowd of people with him. There was even a group of soldiers riding in chariots and some on horses.

¹⁰They went to Goren Atad, east of the Jordan River. There they had a long funeral service for Israel, which continued for seven days.

¹¹When 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.

¹²So Jacobs sons did what their father told them.

¹³They 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.

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

¹⁵After Jacob died, Josephs 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.

¹⁶So the brothers sent this message to Joseph: Before your father died, he told us to give you a message.

¹⁷He 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.

¹⁸His brothers went to him and bowed down in front of him. They said, We will be your servants.

¹⁹Then Joseph said to them, Dont be afraid. I am not God! I have no right to punish you.

²⁰It is true that you planned to do something bad to me. But really, God was planning good things. Gods plan was to use me to save the lives of many people. And that is what happened.

²¹So dont 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.

²²Joseph continued to live in Egypt with his fathers family. He died when he was 110 years old.

²³During Josephs life Ephraim had children and grandchildren. And his son Manasseh had a son named Makir. Joseph lived to see Makirs children.

²⁴When 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.

²⁵Then 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.

²⁶Joseph 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

1 ¹ When Jacob (Israel) went to Egypt, his sons and their families went with him. Here are the names of those sons:

² Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah,

³ Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin,

⁴ Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

⁵ Another son, Joseph, was already in Egypt. So Jacobs whole family was with him in Egypt⁷⁰ descendants in all.

⁶ Later, Joseph, his brothers, and all the people of that generation died.

⁷ But the Israelites had many children, and their number grew until the country of Egypt was filled with them.

⁸ Then a new king began to rule Egypt. He did not know Joseph.

⁹ This king said to his people, Look at the Israelites. There are too many of them, and they are stronger than we are!

¹⁰ 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!

¹¹ 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.

¹³ 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!

¹⁵ There were two Hebrew nurses who helped the Israelite women give birth. They were named Shiphrah and Puah. The king of Egypt said to the nurses,

¹⁶ 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 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.

²¹ (1: 20)

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.

2¹ There was a man from the family of Levi who decided to marry a woman from the tribe of Levi.

² She became pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy. The mother saw how

beautiful the baby was and hid him for three months.

³She 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.

⁴The baby's sister stayed and watched to see what would happen to the baby.

⁵Just 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.

⁶The king's daughter opened the basket and saw a baby boy. The baby was crying and she felt sorry for it. Then she noticed that it was one of the Hebrew babies.

⁷The 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?

⁸The king's daughter said, Yes, please. So the girl went and brought the baby's own mother.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰The 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 because she had pulled him from the water.

¹¹Moses 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.

¹²Moses looked around and saw that no one was watching, so he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand.

¹³The 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?

¹⁴The 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 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 fathers 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. 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 because Moses was a stranger in a land that was not his own.

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 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.

3¹ Moses father-in-law was named Jethro. Jethro was a priest of Midian. Moses took care of Jethros sheep. One day, Moses led the sheep to the west side of the desert. He went to a mountain called Horeb, the mountain of God.

² On that mountain, Moses saw the angel of the LORD in a burning bush. Moses saw a bush that was burning without being destroyed.

³ So he decided to go closer to the bush and see how a bush could continue burning without being burned up.

⁴The 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.

⁵Then God said, Dont come any closer. Take off your sandals. You are standing on holy ground.

⁶I 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.

⁷Then 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. I know about their pain.

⁸Now I will go down and save my people from the Egyptians. I will take them from that land and lead them to a good land where they can be free from these troubles. It is a land filled with many good things. Many different people live in that land: the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

⁹I have heard the cries of the Israelites, and I have seen the way the Egyptians have made life hard for them.

¹⁰So now I am sending you to Pharaoh. Go! Lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

¹¹But 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?

¹²God 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.

¹³Then 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?

¹⁴Then God said to Moses, Tell them, I AM WHO I AM. When you go to the Israelites, tell them, I AM sent me to you.

¹⁵And God said, Tell the Israelites that you were sent by YAHWEH, the God of your ancestorsthe 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.

¹⁶Now go and call together the elders of the people. Tell them that YAHWEH, the God of your ancestorsthe God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacobappeared 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.

¹⁷And 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 othersthe Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. I will lead you to a land filled with many good things.

¹⁸The 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. He came to us and told us to travel three days into the desert. There we must offer sacrifices to YAHWEH our God.

¹⁹But I know that the Pharaoh will not let you go. Only a great power will force him to let you go,

²⁰so 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.

²¹And I will cause the Egyptians to be kind to the Israelites. They will give many gifts to your people when they leave Egypt.

²²All 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.

4¹Then 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.

²But the LORD said to Moses, What is that you have in your hand? Moses answered, It is my walking stick.

³Then 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,

⁴but the LORD said to him, Reach out and grab the snake by its tail. When Moses reached out and caught the snakes tail, the snake became a walking stick again.

⁵Then 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.

⁶Then 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.

⁷Then 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.

⁸Then God said, If the people dont believe you when you use your walking stick, then they will believe you when you show them this sign.

⁹If 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.

¹⁰Then 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 hasnt changed since you started talking to me. I am still not a good speaker. You know that I speak slowly and dont use the best words.

¹¹Then the LORD said to him, Who made a persons 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.

¹²So go. I will be with you when you speak. I will give you the words to say.

¹³But Moses said, My Lord, I beg you to send someone else, not me.

¹⁴Then the LORD became angry with Moses and said, All right! Ill give you someone to help you. Aaron the Levite is your brother, isnt he? He is a good speaker. In fact, Aaron is already coming

to meet you, and he will be happy to see you.

¹⁵I 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.

¹⁶So Aaron will speak for you. Like God, you will speak to him, and he will tell the people what you say.

¹⁷So go and carry your walking stick with you. Use it and the other miracles to show the people that I am with you.

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹Then, 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.

²⁰So 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.

²¹While 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.

²²Then you should say to Pharaoh, This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son.

²³And 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.

²⁴On 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.

²⁵But Zipporah took a flint knife and circumcised her son. She took the skin and touched his feet. Then she said to Moses, You are a bridegroom of blood to me.

²⁶Zipporah said this because she had to circumcise her son. So God let Moses live.

²⁷The 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. 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 together 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,

³¹ 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.

5¹ After Moses and Aaron talked to the people, they went to Pharaoh and said, The LORD, 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 has talked with us. So we beg you to let us travel three days into

the desert. There 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.

⁴But Pharaoh said to them, Moses and Aaron, you are bothering the workers. Let them do their work. Go back to your own work!

⁵There are very many workers, and you are keeping them from doing their jobs.

⁶That same day Pharaoh gave a command to the slave masters and Hebrew foremen.

⁷He 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.

⁸But 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.

⁹So make these people work harder. Keep them 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 dont 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.

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!

6¹ Then 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.

³I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They called me God All-Powerful. They did not know my name, the LORD.

⁴I 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.

⁵Now, I have heard their painful cries. I know that they are slaves in Egypt. And I remember my agreement.

⁶So 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.

⁷You 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.

⁸I 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,

¹¹Go 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.

¹⁴Here are the names of the leaders of the families of Israel: Israels first son, Reuben, had four sons. They were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

¹⁵Simeons sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul. (Shaul was the son from a Canaanite woman).

¹⁶Levi lived 137 years. His sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹⁷Gershon had two sons, Libni and Shimei.

¹⁸Kohath lived 133 years. His sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

¹⁹Meraris sons were Mahli and Mushi. All these families were from Israels son Levi.

²⁰Amram lived 137 years. He married his fathers sister, Jochebed. Amram and Jochebed gave birth to Aaron and Moses.

²¹Izhars sons were Korah, Nepheg, and Zicri.

²²Uzziels sons were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.

²³Aaron married Elisheba. (Elisheba was the daughter of Amminadab, and the sister of Nahshon.) Aaron and Elisheba

gave birth to Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

²⁴The sons of Korah (that is, the ancestors of the Korahites) were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph.

²⁵Aarons son, Eleazar, married a daughter of Putiel. She gave birth to Phinehas. All these people were from Israels son, Levi.

²⁶Aaron and Moses were from this tribe. And they are the men the LORD spoke to and said, Lead my people out of Israel in groups.

²⁷Aaron and Moses are the men who talked to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and told him to let the Israelites leave Egypt.

²⁸The LORD spoke to Moses again in the land of Egypt.

²⁹He said, I am the LORD. Tell the king of Egypt everything I tell you.

³⁰But Moses, standing there before the LORD, said, You know me. Im a very bad speaker. How will I make the king listen to me?

7¹The 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.

²You 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.

³But 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.

⁴But 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.

⁵I 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.

⁶Moses and Aaron did what the LORD told them.

⁷Moses was 80 years old at the time, and Aaron was 83.

⁸The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

⁹Pharaoh 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 Aarons walking 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.

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 in the river changed into blood.

²¹ The fish in the river died, and the river began to stink. So the Egyptians could not drink water from the river. The blood was everywhere in Egypt.

²² The magicians used their magic to do the same thing. So Pharaoh refused

to listen to Moses and Aaron. This happened just as the LORD said.

²³Pharaoh ignored what Moses and Aaron had done. He turned and went into his house.

²⁴The Egyptians could not drink the water from the river, so they dug wells around the river for water to drink.

²⁵Seven days passed after the LORD changed the Nile River.

8¹ Then the LORD told Moses, Go to Pharaoh and tell him that the LORD says, Let my people go to worship me!

²If you refuse to let my people go, then I will fill Egypt with frogs.

³The 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.

⁴The frogs will be all over you, your people, and your officials.

⁵Then 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.

⁶So Aaron raised his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs began coming out of the water and covered the land of Egypt.

⁷The magicians used their magic to do the same thing so even more frogs came out onto the land in Egypt!

⁸Pharaoh 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.

⁹Moses 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?

¹⁰Pharaoh 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.

¹¹The frogs will leave you, your house, your officials, and your people. They will remain only in the river.

¹²Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh. Moses prayed to the LORD about the frogs he had sent against Pharaoh.

¹³And the LORD did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the yards, and in the fields.

¹⁴They began to rot, and the whole country began to stink.

¹⁵But 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.

¹⁶Then 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.

¹⁷They 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.

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹So 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.

²⁰The 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!

²¹If you dont 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!

²²But 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.

²³So tomorrow I will treat my people differently from your people. This will be my proof.

²⁴So the LORD did just what he said. Millions of flies came into Egypt. The flies were in Pharaohs house, and they were in all his officials houses. They were all over Egypt. The flies were ruining the country.

²⁵So 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 Moses left Pharaoh 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.

9¹ 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!

²If you continue to hold them and refuse to let them go,

³then 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.

⁴But the LORD will treat Israels animals differently from the animals of Egypt. None of the animals that belong to the Israelites will die.

⁵The LORD has set the time for this to happen. He said, Tomorrow the LORD will make this happen in this country.

⁶The 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.

⁷Pharaoh 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹This 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.

¹⁰So 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.

¹¹The magicians could not stop Moses from doing this, because even the magicians had the sores. This happened everywhere in Egypt.

¹²But the LORD made Pharaoh stubborn, so he refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

¹³Then 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!

¹⁴This 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.

¹⁵I could use my power and cause a disease that would wipe you and your people off the earth.

¹⁶But 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!

¹⁷You are still against my people. You are not letting them go free.

¹⁸So 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.

¹⁹Now, 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.

²⁰Some of Pharaohs officials paid attention to the LORD'S message. They quickly put all of their animals and slaves into houses.

²¹But other people ignored the LORD'S message and lost all their slaves and animals that were in the fields.

²²The 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.

²³So 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.

²⁴The 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.

²⁵The 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.

²⁶The only place that did not get hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived.

²⁷Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and told them, This time I have sinned. The LORD is right, and I and my people are wrong.

²⁸We 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.

³⁵ Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go free, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

10¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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!

⁴ If you refuse to let my people go, then tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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!

⁸ 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?

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ Pharaoh quickly called for Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh said, I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you.

¹⁷ Now, forgive me for my sins this time. Ask the LORD to remove this death from me.

¹⁸ Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD.

¹⁹ 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!

²⁰ But the LORD caused Pharaoh to be stubborn again, and Pharaoh did not let the Israelites go.

²¹ 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!

²² So Moses raised his hand into the air and a cloud of darkness covered Egypt. The darkness stayed in Egypt for three days.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶Yes, 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.

²⁷The LORD made Pharaoh stubborn again, so he refused to let them go.

²⁸Then 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!

²⁹Then Moses told Pharaoh, You are right about one thing. I will not come to see you again.

11 ¹Then 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.

²You must give this message to the Israelites: Men and women, you must ask your neighbors to give you things made of silver and gold.

³The LORD caused the Egyptians to be kind to the Israelites. The Egyptians,

even Pharaohs own officials, already considered Moses to be a great man.

⁴Moses said to the king, The LORD says, At midnight tonight, I will go through Egypt,

⁵and 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.

⁶The crying in Egypt will be worse than at any time in the past or any time in the future.

⁷But 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.

⁸All 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.

⁹Then the LORD told Moses, The reason Pharaoh did not listen to you is so that I could show my great power in Egypt.

¹⁰That 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.

12¹ While Moses and Aaron were still in Egypt, the LORD spoke to them. He said,

² This month will be the first month of the year for you.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸On this night you must roast the lamb and eat all the meat. You must also eat bitter herbs and bread made without yeast.

⁹You 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.

¹⁰You must eat all the meat that night. If any of the meat is left until morning, you must burn it in the fire.

¹¹When 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.

¹²Tonight 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.

¹³But 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.

¹⁴You will always remember tonight it will be a special festival for you. Your descendants will honor the LORD with this festival forever.

¹⁵For 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.

¹⁶There 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.

¹⁷You must remember the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because on this day I took all of your people out of Egypt in groups. All of your descendants must remember this day. This is a law that will last forever.

¹⁸So on the evening of the 14th day of the first month, you will begin eating bread without yeast. You will eat this

bread until the evening of the 21st day of the same month.

¹⁹For seven days there must not be any yeast in your houses. Anyone, either a citizen of Israel or a foreigner living among you, who eats yeast at this time must be separated from the rest of Israel.

²⁰During this festival you must not eat any yeast. You must eat bread without yeast wherever you live.

²¹So Moses called all the elders together and told them, Get the lambs for your families. Kill the lambs for the Passover.

²²Take 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.

²³At 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.

²⁴You must remember this command. This law is for you and your descendants forever.

²⁵You must remember to do this even when you go to the land the LORD is giving you.

²⁶When your children ask you, Why are we doing this ceremony?

²⁷you 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.

²⁸The LORD had given this command to Moses and Aaron, so the Israelites did what the Lord commanded.

²⁹At midnight the LORD killed all the firstborn sons in Egypt, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh (who ruled Egypt) to the firstborn son of the prisoner sitting in jail. Also all the firstborn animals died.

³⁰That night someone died in every house in Egypt. Pharaoh, his officials, and all the people of Egypt began to cry loudly.

³¹ 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.

³² 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 dont 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.

³⁸A great number of people who were not Israelites went with them, along with many sheep, cattle, and other livestock.

³⁹The 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.

⁴⁰The Israelites had lived in Egypt for 430 years.

⁴¹After 430 years, to the very day, all the armies of the LORD left Egypt.

⁴²So that is a very special night when the people remember what the LORD did. All the Israelites will remember that night forever.

⁴³The LORD told Moses and Aaron, Here are the rules for Passover: No foreigner is allowed to eat the Passover.

⁴⁴A foreigner who is only a hired worker or is only staying in your country is not allowed to eat the Passover. But if someone buys a slave and circumcises him, then the slave can eat the Passover.

⁴⁵(12: 44)

⁴⁶Each 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 lambs 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.

⁴Today, in the month of Abib, you are leaving Egypt.

⁵The 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.

⁶For 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.

⁷So for seven days you must not eat any bread made with yeast. There must be no bread with yeast any place in your land.

⁸On this day you should tell your children, We are having this festival because the LORD took me out of Egypt.

⁹This festival will help you remember; it will be like a string tied on your hand. It will be like a sign before your eyes. This festival will help you remember the LORD'S teachings. It will help you

remember that the LORD used his great power to take you out of Egypt.

¹⁰So remember this festival every year at the right time.

¹¹The 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. After God gives you this land,

¹²you must remember to give him every firstborn boy. Every male animal that is the firstborn must also be given to the LORD.

¹³Every 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 must be bought back from the Lord.

¹⁴In 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.

¹⁵In Egypt, Pharaoh was stubborn and refused to let us leave. So the LORD

killed every firstborn in all the land. (The Lord killed the firstborn males animal and human.) That is why I give every firstborn male animal to the LORD, and that is why I buy back each of my firstborn sons from him.

¹⁶This is like a string tied on your hand, like a sign in front of your eyes. It helps you remember that the LORD brought us out of Egypt with his great power.

¹⁷Pharaoh 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.

¹⁸So God led them another way through the desert by the Red Sea. The Israelites were dressed for war when they left Egypt.

¹⁹Moses 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.

²⁰The Israelites left Succoth and camped at Etham. Etham was near the desert.

²¹The LORD led the way. During the day, he used a tall cloud to lead the people. And during the night, he used a tall column of fire to lead the way. This fire gave them light so that they could also travel at night.

²²The cloud was always with them during the day, and the column of fire was always with them at night.

14 ¹Then the LORD said to Moses, ²Tell the people to go back to Pi Hahiroth. Tell them to spend the night between Migdol and the Red Sea, near Baal Zephon.

³Pharaoh will think that the Israelites are lost in the desert and that the people will have no place to go.

⁴I 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.

⁵Pharaoh 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!

⁶So Pharaoh prepared his chariot and took his men with him.

⁷He took 600 of his best men and all of his chariots. There was an officer in each chariot.

⁸The 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.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰When the Israelites saw Pharaoh and his army coming toward them, they were very frightened and cried to the LORD for help.

¹¹They 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.

¹²We 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.

¹³But 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.

¹⁴You will not have to do anything but stay calm. The LORD will do the fighting for you.

¹⁵Then the LORD said to Moses, Why are you still crying to me? Tell the Israelites to start moving.

¹⁶Raise the walking stick in your hand over the Red Sea, and the sea will split. Then the people can go across on dry land.

¹⁷I have made the Egyptians brave, so they will chase you. But I will show you that I am more powerful than Pharaoh and all of his horses and chariots.

¹⁸Then Egypt will know that I am the LORD. They will honor me when I defeat

Pharaoh and his horse soldiers and chariots.

¹⁹Then the angel of God moved to the back of the people. (The angel was usually in front of the people, leading them.) So the tall cloud moved from in front of the people and went to the back of the people.

²⁰In this way the cloud stood between the Egyptians and the Israelites. 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.

²¹Moses 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.

²²The Israelites went through the sea on dry land. The water was like a wall on their right and on their left.

²³Then all of Pharaohs chariots and horse soldiers followed them into the sea.

²⁴Early that morning the LORD looked down from the tall cloud and column of

fire at the Egyptian army. Then he made them panic.

²⁵The wheels of the chariots became stuck. It was very hard to control the chariots. The Egyptians shouted, Lets get out of here! The LORD is fighting against us. He is fighting for the Israelites.

²⁶Then the LORD told Moses, Raise your hand over the sea to make the water fall and cover the Egyptian chariots and horse soldiers.

²⁷So 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.

²⁸The water returned to its normal level and covered the chariots and horse soldiers. Pharaohs army had been chasing the Israelites, but that army was destroyed. None of them survived!

²⁹But the Israelites crossed the sea on dry land. The water was like a wall on their right and on their left.

³⁰So 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.

³¹The 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.

15¹ 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.

²The LORD is my strength. He saves me, and I sing songs of praise to him. He is my God, and I praise him. He is the God of my ancestors, and I honor him.

³The LORD is a great soldier. The LORD is his name.

⁴He threw Pharaohs chariots and soldiers into the sea. Pharaohs very best soldiers drowned in the Red Sea.

⁵The deep water covered them, and they sank to the bottom like rocks.

⁶LORD, your right hand is amazingly strong. With your right hand, LORD, you broke the enemy to pieces.

⁷In your great majesty you destroyed those who stood against you. Your anger destroyed them, like fire burning straw.

⁸The wind you sent in anger piled the water high. The flowing water became a wall, solid to its deepest parts.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰But you blew on them and covered them with the sea. They sank like lead into the deep sea.

¹¹Are 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!

¹²You raised your right hand to punish the enemy, and the ground opened up to swallow them.

¹³But with your kindness you led the people you saved. And with your strength you led them to your holy land.

¹⁴The other nations will hear this story, and they will be frightened. The Philistines will shake with fear.

¹⁵The commanders of Edom will tremble. The leaders of Moab will be

afraid. The people of Canaan will lose courage.

¹⁶They 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.

¹⁷You 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.

¹⁸The LORD will rule forever and ever!

¹⁹Yes, it really happened! Pharaohs 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.

²⁰Then Aarons sister, the woman prophet Miriam, took a tambourine. She and the women began singing and dancing.

²¹Miriam repeated the words, Sing to the LORD! He has done great things. He threw horse and rider into the sea .

²²Moses led the Israelites away from the Red Sea and into the desert of Shur.

They traveled for three days in the desert. They could not find any water.

²³Then they came to Marah. There was water at Marah, but it was too bitter to drink. (That is why the place was named Marah.)

²⁴The people began complaining to Moses. They said, Now what will we drink?

²⁵So 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.

²⁶He 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.

²⁷Then 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.

16¹ 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.

² There in the desert the Israelites all began complaining to Moses and Aaron.

³ 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.

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, I will cause food to fall from the sky. This food will be for you to eat. Every day the people should go out and gather the food they need that day. I will do this to see if they will do what I tell them.

⁵ Every day the people will 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.

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to the Israelites, This evening you will see the power of the LORD, and you will know

that he is the one who brought you out of Egypt.

⁷And in the morning you will see the Glory of the LORD because he has heard your complaining against him. Yes, your complaining is against the LORD, not us. We do only what he tells us to do, so you had no reason to complain against us.

⁸Then 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.

⁹Then Moses said to Aaron, Tell the whole community of Israelites to come together before the LORD, because he has heard their complaints.

¹⁰So 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.

¹¹The LORD said to Moses,

¹²I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. So tell them, This evening 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.

¹³That evening, flocks of quail came and filled the camp, and in the morning dew lay on the ground all around it.

¹⁴After the dew was gone, something like thin flakes of frost was on the ground.

¹⁵When 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.

¹⁶The LORD says, Each of you should gather what you need, a basket of manna for everyone in your family.

¹⁷So that is what the Israelites did. Some people gathered a large amount, some people gathered a little.

¹⁸But when they measured what they had gathered, there was no shortage and there was none left over. Everyone gathered just what they needed.

¹⁹Moses told them, Dont 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 foodtwo 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.

²⁶You 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.

²⁷On Saturday, some of the people went out to gather some of the food, but they could not find any.

²⁸Then the LORD said to Moses, How long will you people refuse to obey my commands and teachings?

²⁹Look, 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.

³⁰So the people rested on the Sabbath.

³¹The people called the special food manna. It was like small white coriander seeds and tasted like thin cakes made with honey.

³²Moses 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.

³³So 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.

³⁴(Aaron did what the LORD had commanded Moses. Aaron put the jar of manna in front of the Box of the Agreement.)

³⁵The 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.

³⁶(The measure they used for the manna was an omer. An omer was about 8 cups.)

17 ¹The Israelites left the western Sinai desert. They all traveled together from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water there for the people to drink.

²So 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?

³But 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.

⁵ The 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.

⁶ I will stand before you on a rock at Horeb. Hit 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.

⁷ Moses named that place Meribah and Massah, 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.

⁸ At Rephidim the Amalekites came and fought against the Israelites.

⁹ So 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.

¹⁰ Joshua 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.

¹¹ Any 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.

¹² After 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. Aaron was on one side of Moses and Hur was on the other side. They held his hands up like this until the sun went down.

¹³ So Joshua and his men defeated the Amalekites in this battle.

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, Write about this battle. Write these things in a book so that people will remember what happened here. And be sure to tell Joshua that I will completely destroy the Amalekites from the earth.

¹⁵ Then Moses built an altar and named it, The LORD is My Flag.

¹⁶ Moses said, I lifted my hands toward the LORD'S throne. So the LORD fought

against the Amalekites, as he always has.

18¹ Jethro, 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.

² So Jethro went to Moses while Moses was camped near the mountain of God. Jethro brought Moses wife, Zipporah, with him. (Zipporah was not with Moses, because Moses had sent her home.)

³ Jethro also brought Moses two sons with him. The first son was named Gershom, because when he was born, Moses said, I am a stranger in a foreign country.

⁴ The other son was named Eliezer, because when he was born, Moses said, The God of my father helped me and saved me from the king of Egypt.

⁵ So 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.

⁶ Jethro 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.

⁷ So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. Moses bowed down before him and kissed him. The two men asked about each others health. Then they went into Moses tent to talk more.

⁸ Moses 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.

⁹ Jethro 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.

¹⁰ He said, Praise the LORD! He freed you from the power of Egypt. He saved you from Pharaoh.

¹¹ Now I know the LORD is greater than all the gods. They thought they were in control, but look what God did!

¹² Jethro 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?

¹⁵Then Moses said to his father-in-law, The people come to me and ask me to ask for Gods decision for their problem.

¹⁶If people have an argument, they come to me, and I decide which person is right. In this way I teach the people Gods laws and teachings.

¹⁷But Moses father-in-law said to him, This isnt the right way to do this.

¹⁸It 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.

¹⁹Now, 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.

²⁰You should explain Gods 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.

²¹But you should also choose some of the people to be judges and leaders. Choose good men you can trustmen 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.

²²Let 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.

²³If 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.

²⁵ Moses 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ After a short time, Moses said goodbye to his father-in-law Jethro, and Jethro went back to his own home.

19¹ In the third month of their trip from Egypt, the Israelites reached the desert of Sinai.

² They had traveled there from Rephidim. They camped in the desert near Mount Sinai.

³ 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:

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ You will be a special nation a kingdom of priests. Moses, you must tell the Israelites what I have said.

⁷ So 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ And the LORD said to Moses, Today and tomorrow you must prepare the

people for a special meeting. They must wash their clothes

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ (19: 12)

¹⁴ So Moses climbed down the mountain and went to the people. He got them ready for the special meeting and they washed their clothes.

¹⁵ Then Moses said to the people, Be ready for the meeting with God in three days. Until that time do not have sexual relations.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Then Moses led the people out of the camp to a place near the mountain to meet God.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ The noise from the trumpet became louder and louder. Every time Moses spoke to God, God answered him with a voice like thunder.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ The LORD said to him, Go down to the people. Get Aaron and bring him back with you. But dont let the priests or the people come near me. I will punish them if they come too close.

²⁵ So Moses went down to the people and told them these things.

20¹ Then God said,
² I am the LORD your God. I led you out of the land of Egypt where you were slaves. These are the commands I give you:

³ You must not worship any other gods except me.

⁴ You must not make any idols. Dont make any statues or pictures of anything up in the sky or of anything on the earth or of anything down in the water.

⁵ Dont 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.

⁶But 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.

⁷You 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.

⁸You 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 worknot 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 Sabbaththe day of rest. He made that a very special day.

¹²You 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.

¹³You must not murder anyone.

¹⁴You must not commit adultery.

¹⁵You must not steal anything.

¹⁶You must not tell lies about other people.

¹⁷You must not want to take your neighbors 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.

¹⁸During all this time, the people in the valley heard the thundering and saw the lightning on the mountain. They saw smoke 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 dont 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.

²⁴Make 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. 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.

21 ¹ Then God said to Moses, These are the other laws that you will give to the people:

² If you buy a Hebrew slave, then that slave will serve for only six years. After six years, he will be free, and he will have to pay nothing.

³ If 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.

⁴ If the slave is not married, the master can give him a wife. If that 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.

⁶ If 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.

⁷A 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.

⁸If 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.

⁹If the master promised to let the slave woman marry his son, he must treat her like a daughter, not like a slave.

¹⁰If the master marries another woman, he must not give less food or clothing to the first wife. And he must continue to give her what she has a right to have in marriage.

¹¹The man must do these three things for her. If he does not, the woman is made free, and it will cost her nothing. She owes no money to the man.

¹²Whoever hits and kills someone must be killed too.

¹³ But if an accident happens, and a person kills someone without planning it, then God allowed that thing to happen. I will choose some special places where people can run to for safety. So that person can run to one of those places.

¹⁴ But whoever plans to kill someone out of anger or hatred must be punished. Take them away from my altar and kill them.

¹⁵ Whoever hits their father or their mother must be killed.

¹⁶ Whoever steals someone to sell them as a slave or to keep them for their own slave must be killed.

¹⁷ Whoever curses their father or mother must be killed.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ If the man 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.

²⁰Sometimes people beat their slaves. If the slave dies after being beaten, the killer must be punished.

²¹But 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.

²²Two 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 womans husband will decide how much the man must pay. The judges will help the man decide how much the fine will be.

²³But 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 an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot,

²⁵a burn for a burn, a bruise for a bruise, a cut for a cut.

²⁶If 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 will be allowed to go free. The slaves tooth is payment for the slaves freedom. This is the same for a man or a woman slave.

²⁸ If a mans bull kills a man or woman, then you should kill that bull with stones. 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 someones 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 mans 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 mans bull kills another mans 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 mans 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.

22¹ 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 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.

³ (22: 2)

⁴ (22: 2)

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 neighbors crops or the grain growing on the neighbors field, the man who started the fire must pay for what he burned.

⁷Someone might give some money or tools to a neighbor for safekeeping. What should you do if someone steals those things from the neighbors house? If you find the one who stole them, then that thief must pay twice as much as the things are worth.

⁸If you dont find the thief, then the owner of the house must go before the judges who will decide if that person is guilty.

⁹What 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.

¹⁰A 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.

¹⁶If 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.

¹⁷If the father refuses to allow his daughter to marry him, then the man must still pay the full amount for her.

¹⁸You must not allow any woman to do evil magic. If she does magic, you must not let her live.

¹⁹You must not allow anyone to have sexual relations with an animal. If this happens, that person must be killed.

²⁰Whoever makes a sacrifice to a false god should be destroyed. The LORD is the only one you should make sacrifices to.

²¹Remember, 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.

²²You 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.

23¹ 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.

⁶In court, don't let anyone take advantage of a person simply because that person is poor.

⁷Be very careful if you say that 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.

⁸If 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.

⁹You 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.

¹⁰Plant 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.

¹²Work 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.

¹³Be sure that you obey all these laws. Don't worship false gods. You should not even speak their names!

¹⁴You 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.

¹⁶The 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. 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.

¹⁷ So three times each year all the men will come to the special place to be with the Lord GOD.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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.

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.

²¹ Obey 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.

²² If 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.

²⁵ You must serve the LORD your God. If you do this, I will bless you with 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.

²⁸I will send the hornet in front of you. He will force your enemies to leave. The Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites will leave your country.

²⁹But 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.

³⁰So 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.

³¹I 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.

³²You must not make any agreements with any of those people or their gods.

³³Don'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.

24¹ 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 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 fellowship offerings.

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.

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 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.

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.

25 ¹ 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;

⁴blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen; goat hair,

⁵ram skins dyed red, and fine leather; acacia wood;

⁶oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and spices for the sweet-smelling incense.

⁷Also accept onyx stones and other jewels to be put on the ephod and the judgment pouch.

⁸The people will build a holy place for me. Then I can live among them.

⁹I will show you what the Holy Tent and everything in it should look like. Build everything exactly as I show you.

¹⁰Use 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.

¹¹Use pure gold to cover the Box inside and out. Put gold trim around the edges of the Box.

¹²Make four gold rings for carrying the Box. Put the gold rings on the four corners, two rings on each side.

¹³Then 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.

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.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ Put the special bread before me on the table. It must always be there in front of me.

³¹ 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.

³² The lampstand must have six branches—three branches on one side and three branches on the other.

³³ Each branch must have three flowers. Make these flowers like almond flowers with buds and petals.

³⁴ Make four more flowers for the lampstand. These flowers must be made like almond flowers with buds and petals.

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ Then make seven lamps to go on the lampstand. These lamps will give light to the area in front of the lampstand.

³⁸ Use pure gold to make the lamp snuffers and trays.

³⁹ Use 75 pounds of pure gold to make the lampstand and the things to be used with it.

⁴⁰ Be very careful to make everything exactly the way I showed you on the mountain.

26¹ 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.

² Make each curtain the same size. Each curtain should be 28 cubits long and 4 cubits wide.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶Then make 50 gold rings to join the curtains together. This will join the Holy Tent together into one piece.

⁷Make another tent that will cover the Holy Tent. Use eleven curtains to make this tent. Make these curtains from goat hair.

⁸All these curtains must be the same size. They must be 30 cubits long and 4 cubits wide.

⁹Join 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.

¹⁰Make 50 loops down the edge of the end curtain of one group. Do the same for the end curtain of the other group.

¹¹Then make 50 bronze rings to join the curtains together. This will join the tent together into one piece.

¹²Half of the end curtain of this tent will hang down below the back edge of the Holy Tent.

¹³On 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.

¹⁴Make 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.

¹⁵Use acacia wood to make frames to support the Holy Tent.

¹⁶The frames should be 10 cubits high and 1 1/2 cubits wide.

¹⁷Two side poles should be joined together with cross pieces to make each frame. All the frames for the Holy Tent must be the same.

¹⁸Make 20 frames for the south side of the Holy Tent.

¹⁹And make 40 silver bases for the frames. Each frame should have two silver bases to go under it one base for each side pole.

²⁰Make 20 more frames for the other side (the north side) of the Holy Tent.

²¹And make 40 silver bases for these frames two bases under each frame.

²²Make 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.

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. Then put the Box of the Agreement behind the curtain. This curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

³⁴ Put the mercy-cover on the Box of the Agreement in the Most Holy Place.

³⁵ 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.

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.

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.

⁸Make the altar like an empty box with the sides made from boards. Make the altar just as I showed you on the mountain.

⁹Make 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.

¹⁰Use 20 posts and 20 bronze bases under the posts. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods should be made from silver.

¹¹The 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.

¹²On the west side of the courtyard there must be a wall of curtains 50 cubits long. There must be ten posts and ten bases.

¹³The east side of the courtyard must also be 50 cubits long.

¹⁴Here 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.

¹⁵The other side of the entrance must also have curtains 15 cubits long. There must be three posts and three bases on that side.

¹⁶Make 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.

¹⁷All 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.

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹All the tools, tent pegs, and other things used in the Holy Tent must be made from bronze. And all the pegs for the curtains around the courtyard must be made from bronze.

²⁰ Command the Israelites to bring their best olive oil for the lamp that must be lit each evening.

²¹ This 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.

28 ¹ Tell 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.

² Make special clothes for your brother Aaron. These clothes will give him honor and respect.

³ I have given special wisdom to some of the skilled men. Tell them to make the clothes for Aaron. These clothes will show that he serves me in a special way. Then he can serve me as a priest.

⁴ These 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.

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.

¹⁵Make 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.

²²Make 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 gold 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.

²⁷ Make 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.

²⁸ Use 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.

³⁰ Put the Urim and Thummim inside the judgment pouch. They will be over Aarons 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.

³¹ Make a blue robe for the ephod.

³² Make 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.

³³ Use 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.

³⁴ So around the bottom edge of the robe there should be bells and pomegranates. There should be a bell following each pomegranate.

³⁵ Aaron 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.

³⁷ Fasten 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 Aarons 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 dont 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.

29¹ 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.

²Then 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.

³Put 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.

⁴Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Wash them with water.

⁵Put 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.

⁶Put the turban on his head and the special crown around the turban.

⁷Take the anointing oil and pour it on Aarons head. This will show that he is chosen for this work.

⁸Then bring Aarons sons to that place. Put the white woven robes on them.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰Then bring the bull to that place at the front of the Meeting Tent. Aaron and his sons must put their hands on the bulls head.

¹¹Then kill the bull there in the LORD'S presence at the entrance to the Meeting Tent.

¹²Then take some of the bulls 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.

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴Then take the bulls 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.

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 special way. And it will

show that their clothes are used only at special times.

²²Then 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.

²³Then 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.

²⁴Give 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.

²⁵Then 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.

²⁶Then 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.

²⁷ Take the breast and the leg of the ram that was used to make Aaron the high priest and make these parts holy. Then give these special parts to Aaron and his sons.

²⁸ The Israelites will always give Aaron and his sons these parts. These parts will always belong to the priests when the Israelites make an offering to the LORD. When they give these parts to the priest, it will be the same as giving them to the Lord.

²⁹ Save these special clothes that were made for Aaron and his descendants. They will wear these clothes when they are chosen to be priests.

³⁰ Aarons 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.

³²Then Aaron and his sons must eat the meat at the front door of the Meeting Tent. And they must also eat the bread that is in the basket.

³³These offerings were used to take away their sins when they were made priests. Now they should eat these offerings.

³⁴If 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.

³⁵You 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 continue 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.

³⁸Every day you must make an offering 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.

⁴⁰When you kill the first lamb, also offer 8 cups of fine wheat flour. Mix that flour with 1 quart 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.

⁴¹ (29: 40)

⁴²You 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.

⁴³I will meet with the Israelites at that place, and my Glory will make that place holy.

⁴⁴So 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.

⁴⁵I will live with the Israelites. I will be their God.

⁴⁶The 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.

30¹ Make an altar from acacia wood. You will use this altar for burning incense.

²You 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.

³Cover the top, the horns, and all four sides of the altar with pure gold. Then put gold trim all around the altar.

⁴Below 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.

⁵ Make the poles from acacia wood and cover them with gold.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Aaron must burn sweet-smelling incense on the altar every morning. He will do this when he comes to care for the lamps.

⁸ 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.

⁹ Dont use this altar for offering any other kind of incense or burnt offering or for any kind of grain offering or drink offering.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹The LORD said to Moses,

¹²Count 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.

¹³Each 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.

¹⁴Every man who is at least 20 years old must be counted. And every man who is counted must give the LORD this offering.

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶Gather 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.

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁸Make a bronze bowl and put it on a bronze base. You will use this for washing. Put the bowl between the Meeting Tent and the altar. Fill the bowl with water.

¹⁹Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet with the water from this bowl.

²⁰Every 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.

²¹They must wash their hands and their feet so that they will not die. This will be a law that continues forever for Aaron and his people who will live in the future.

²²Then the LORD said to Moses,

²³Find the finest spices. Get 12 pounds of liquid myrrh, half that amount (that is, 6 pounds) of sweet-smelling cinnamon, and 12 pounds of sweet-smelling cane,

²⁴and 12 pounds of cassia. Use the official measure to measure all these things. Also get 1 gallon 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.

³³Whoever makes a perfume like that and puts it on anyone except a priest must be separated from the people.

³⁴Then 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.

³⁵Mix 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.

³⁶Grind some of the incense until it becomes a fine powder. Put the powder in front of the Holy Box that holds the Agreement 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.

³⁷You 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.

³⁸There 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.

31 ¹ 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 the Box of the Agreement the mercy-cover that is on it;

⁸ the table and everything on it; the pure gold lampstand and everything

used with it; the altar for burning incense;

⁹ the altar for burning offerings and the things used at the altar; the bowl and the base under it;

¹⁰ the special clothes for Aaron the priest; the special clothes for Aarons sons when they serve as priests;

¹¹ 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.

¹² Then the LORD said to Moses,

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶The 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.

¹⁷The 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.)

¹⁸When 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.

32¹ 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 fellowship 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.

⁸They 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.

⁹The LORD said to Moses, I have seen these people, and I know that they are very stubborn. They will always turn against me.

¹⁰So now let me destroy them in anger. Then I will make a great nation from you.

¹¹But Moses begged the LORD his God, LORD, dont let your anger destroy your people. You brought them out of Egypt with your great power and strength.

¹²But 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 dont be angry with your people. Please change your mind! Dont destroy them.

¹³Remember 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 LORD 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.

¹⁹When Moses came near the camp, he saw the gold 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, Dont 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 dont 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.

²⁶ So Moses stood at the entrance to the camp and said, Anyone who wants to follow the LORD should come to me. Everyone from the tribe of Levi ran to Moses.

²⁷ Then Moses said to them, I will tell you what the LORD, 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 Lord, even if they are your brothers, friends, or neighbors.

²⁸ The people from the tribe of Levi obeyed Moses. That day about 3000 of the people died.

²⁹ Then Moses said, Take your role today as special servants of the LORD because you were willing to fight against even your own sons and brothers. You will receive a blessing for this.

³⁰ The next morning Moses told the people, You have committed a terrible sin! But now I will go up to the LORD, and maybe I can do something so that he will forgive you for your sin.

³¹ So Moses went back to the LORD and said, Please listen! These people

committed a terrible sin and made a god from gold.

³² Now, forgive them of this sin. If you will not forgive them, then erase my name from your book.

³³ But the LORD said to Moses, The only people I erase from my book are those who sin against me.

³⁴ So 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.

³⁵ So the LORD caused a terrible sickness to come to the people. He did this because they told Aaron to make the gold calf.

33 ¹ 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.

² 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.

³So 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.

⁴The people heard this bad news and became very sad, so they stopped wearing jewelry.

⁵This 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.

⁶So the Israelites stopped wearing their jewelry at Mount Horeb.

⁷Moses 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.

⁸Any 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.

⁹Whenever 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.

¹⁰So when the people saw the cloud at the entrance of the tent, they would go to the entrance of their own tents and bow down to worship God.

¹¹In 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.

¹²Moses 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.

¹³If 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.

¹⁴The Lord answered, I myself will go with you. I will lead you.

¹⁵Then Moses said to him, If you dont go with us, then dont make us leave this place.

¹⁶Also, 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.

¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁸Then Moses said, Now, please show me your Glory.

¹⁹Then 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.

²⁰But you cannot see my face. No one can see me and continue to live.

²¹Then the LORD said, Here is a place for you to stand by me on this large rock.

²²I will put you in a large crack in that rock. Then I will cover you with my hand, and my Glory will pass by.

²³Then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back. But you will not see my face.

34¹ 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. 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.

¹²Be 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.

¹³So destroy their altars, break the stones they worship, and cut down their idols.

¹⁴Don'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.

¹⁵Be 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.

¹⁶You 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.

¹⁷Don't make idols.

¹⁸Celebrate 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.

¹⁹A womans first baby always belongs to me. Even the first animals that are born from your cattle or sheep belong to me.

²⁰If you want to keep a donkey that is the first born, then you can buy it with a lamb. But if you dont buy that donkey with a lamb, you must break the donkeys neck. You must buy back all of your firstborn sons from me. No one should come before me without a gift.

²¹You will work for six days, but on the seventh day, you must rest. You must rest even during the times of planting and harvesting.

²²Celebrate the Festival of Harvest. Use the first grain from the wheat harvest for this festival. And in the fall celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

²³Three times each year all your men must go to be with the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.

²⁴When you go into your land, I will force your enemies out of that land. I will expand your bordersyou 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.

²⁵When 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.

²⁶Give 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.

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.

³⁰ Aaron and all the people of Israel saw that Moses face was shining bright. So they were afraid to go near him.

³¹ But Moses called to them. So Aaron and all the leaders of the people went to him. Moses talked with them.

³² After that, all the Israelites came near Moses, and he gave them the commands that the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

³³ When Moses finished speaking to the people, he put a covering over his face.

³⁴ Any 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.

³⁵ The 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.

35 ¹ Moses 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.

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.

¹⁰All of you who are skilled workers should make all the things the LORD commanded:

¹¹ the Holy Tent, its outer tent, and its covering; the hooks, boards, braces, posts, and bases;

¹² the Holy Box, its poles, the mercy-cover, and the curtain that covers the area where the Box stays;

¹³ the table and its poles, all the things on the table, and the special bread on the table;

¹⁴ the lampstand that is used for light and the things used with the lampstand, the lamps, and oil for the light;

¹⁵ the 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;

¹⁶ the altar for burning offerings and its bronze grating, the poles, and all the things used at the altar; the bronze bowl and its base;

¹⁷ the curtains around the yard, their posts and bases, and the curtain that covers the entrance to the yard;

¹⁸ the 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.

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, 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.

²⁶And all 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.

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.

³³ He can cut and set stones and jewels. He can work with wood and make all kinds of things.

³⁴ The Lord has given Bezalel and Oholiab special skills to teach other people. (Oholiab was the son of Ahisamach from the tribe of Dan.)

³⁵ He 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 ¹ 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.

² 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.

³ Moses 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,

⁵The people have brought too much. We have more than we need to finish the work the LORD told us to do.

⁶Then 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.

⁸Then 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.

⁹Each curtain was the same size 28 cubits long and 4 cubits wide.

¹⁰The 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 The workers made 50 bronze rings to join the two groups of curtains together to form one tent.

¹⁹Then 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.

²⁰Then the workers made frames from acacia wood to support the Holy Tent.

²¹Each frame was 10 cubits long and 1 1/2 cubits wide.

²²There were two side poles joined together with cross pieces to make each frame. Every frame for the Holy Tent was made the same.

²³They made 20 frames for the south side of the Holy Tent.

²⁴Then they made 40 silver bases for the frames. There were two bases for each frame one base for each side pole.

²⁵They also made 20 frames for the other side (the north side) of the Holy Tent.

²⁶They made 40 silver bases for the frames two bases for each frame.

²⁷They made six more frames for the back (the west side) of the Holy Tent.

²⁸They also made two frames for the corners at the back of the Holy Tent.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ There were eight frames for the west side of the Holy Tent. And there were 16 silver bases two bases for each frame.

³¹ Then the workers used acacia wood to make the braces for the frames five braces for the first side of the Holy Tent,

³² five braces for the other side, and five braces for the back of the Holy Tent (that is, the west side).

³³ They made the middle brace so that it passed through the frames from one end to the other.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ 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 they made the five bronze bases for the posts.

37 ¹ 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.

² He covered the inside and outside of the Box with pure gold. Then he put gold trim around the Box.

³ 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.

⁴ Then he made the poles for carrying the Box. He used acacia wood and covered the poles with pure gold.

⁵ He put the poles through the rings on each side of the Box.

⁶ Then he made the mercy-cover from pure gold. It was 2 1/2 cubits long and 1 1/2 cubits wide.

⁷ Then Bezalel hammered gold to make two Cherub angels. He put the Cherub angels on each end of the mercy-cover.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Then he made the table from acacia wood. The table was 2 cubits long, 1 cubit wide, and 1 1/2 cubits high.

¹¹ He covered it with pure gold and put gold trim around it.

¹² Then he made a frame 1 handbreadth wide around the table. He put gold trim on the frame.

¹³ Then he made four gold rings and put them at the four corners of the table, where the four legs were.

¹⁴He put the rings close to the frame. The rings were to hold the poles used to carry the table.

¹⁵Then he used acacia wood to make the poles for carrying the table. He covered the poles with pure gold.

¹⁶Then 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.

¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁸The lampstand had six branches three branches on one side and three branches on the other side.

¹⁹Each branch had three flowers on it. These flowers were made like almond flowers with buds and petals.

²⁰The shaft of the lampstand had four more flowers. They were also made like almond flowers with buds and petals.

²¹There 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.

²²The whole lampstand, with the flowers and branches, was made from pure gold. All this gold was hammered and joined together into one piece.

²³He made seven lamps for this lampstand. Then he made lamp snuffers and trays from pure gold.

²⁴He used 75 pounds of pure gold to make the lampstand and the things used with it.

²⁵He 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.

²⁶He covered the top, all the sides, and the horns with pure gold. Then he put gold trim around the altar.

²⁷He 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.

²⁸He made the poles from acacia wood and covered them with gold.

²⁹Then 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.

38¹ 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 long, 5 cubits wide, and 3 cubits high.

²He 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.

³Then he used bronze to make all the tools to be used on the altar. He made the pots, shovels, bowls, forks, and pans.

⁴Then 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.

⁵Then he made bronze rings to hold the poles for carrying the altar. He put the rings at the four corners of the grating.

⁶Then he used acacia wood to make the poles and covered them with bronze.

⁷He 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.

⁸He 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.

⁹Then he made a wall of curtains around the courtyard. On the south side, he made a wall of curtains 100 cubits long. The curtains were made from fine linen.

¹⁰The 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 were made from silver.

¹¹The 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.

¹²On the west side of the courtyard, the wall of curtains was 50 cubits long.

There were 10 posts and 10 bases. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods were made from silver.

¹³The east side of the courtyard was 50 cubits wide. The entrance to the courtyard was on this side.

¹⁴On one side of the entrance, the wall of curtains was 15 cubits long. There were three posts and three bases on this side.

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶All the curtains around the courtyard were made from fine linen.

¹⁷The 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.

¹⁸The 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 long and 5 cubits high. It was

the same height as the curtains around the courtyard.

¹⁹The 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.

²⁰All the tent pegs for the Holy Tent and for the curtains around the courtyard were made from bronze.

²¹Moses 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.

²²Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, from the tribe of Judah, made everything the LORD commanded Moses.

²³Also 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.

²⁴The people gave over a ton of gold as an offering to the Lord for his holy place. (This was weighed using the official measure.)

²⁵All 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 1/2 shekel.) There were 603,550 men. So they collected about 7550 pounds of silver.

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²⁷They used 7550 pounds of that silver to make 100 bases for the holy place and its curtains. They used 75 pounds of silver for each base.

²⁸They used the remaining 44 pounds of silver to make the hooks, the curtain rods, and the silver covers for the posts.

²⁹They gave more than 2 1/2 tons of bronze.

³⁰That 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.

³¹It was also used to make the bases for the curtains around the courtyard and the bases for the curtains at the entrance. And the bronze was used to make the tent pegs for the Holy Tent and for the curtains around the courtyard.

39¹ 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 had commanded Moses.

² They made the ephod from gold thread, fine linen, and blue, purple, and red yarn.

³ (They hammered the gold into thin strips and cut the gold into long threads. They wove the gold into the blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen. This was the work of a very skilled person.)

⁴ They made the shoulder pieces for the ephod. They tied these shoulder pieces to the two corners of the ephod.

⁵ 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.

⁶ The workers put the onyx stones for the ephod in gold settings. They wrote the names of the sons of Israel on these stones.

⁷Then they put these jewels on the shoulder pieces of the ephod. These jewels were to help God to remember the Israelites. This was done as the LORD commanded Moses.

⁸Then 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.

⁹The judgment pouch was folded in half to make a square pocket. It was 1 span long and 1 span wide.

¹⁰Then the workers put four rows of beautiful jewels on the judgment pouch. The first row had a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl.

¹¹The second row had a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald.

¹²The third row had a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst.

¹³The fourth row had a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. All these jewels were set in gold.

¹⁴There 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.

¹⁵The workers made two chains from pure gold for the judgment pouch. The chains were braided like a rope.

¹⁶The workers made two gold rings and fastened them to two corners of the judgment pouch. Then they made two gold settings for the shoulder pieces.

¹⁷They fastened the gold chains to the rings at the corners of the judgment pouch.

¹⁸They fastened the other ends of the gold chains to the settings on the shoulder pieces. They fastened these to the front of the ephod.

¹⁹Then 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.

²⁰They 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.

²¹Then 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.

²²Then they made the robe for the ephod from blue cloth. It was woven by a skilled worker.

²³They 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.

²⁴Then 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.

²⁵Then they made bells from pure gold. They hung these bells around the bottom edge of the robe between the pomegranates.

²⁶Around 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.

²⁷ Skilled workers wove shirts for Aaron and his sons. These shirts were made from fine linen.

²⁸ And the workers made a turban from fine linen. They also used fine linen to make cloth caps and underclothes.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ They fastened the gold strip to a blue ribbon. Then they tied the blue ribbon around the turban like the LORD had commanded Moses.

³² 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.

³³ 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.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ They showed Moses the Box of the Agreement, the poles used for carrying it, and the mercy-cover.

³⁶ They showed him the table with everything on it and the special bread.

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ They showed Moses the golden altar, the anointing oil, the sweet-smelling incense, and the curtain that covered the entrance to the Tent.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ They showed Moses the wall of curtains around the courtyard with the posts and bases. They showed him the curtain 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.

⁴³ Moses looked closely at all the work and saw that it was done exactly as the LORD had commanded. So Moses blessed them.

40¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, ² On the first day of the first month, set up the Holy Tent, that is, the Meeting Tent.

³ Put the Box of the Agreement in the Holy Tent. Cover the Box with the curtain.

⁴ 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 ¹ on the lampstand in the right places.

⁵ 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 Holy Tent. He put it in the Holy Place, 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 curtain.

²⁷ Then he burned sweet-smelling incense on the altar. He did this as the LORD had commanded him.

²⁸ Then Moses put the curtain 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.

³⁰Then Moses put the bowl between the Meeting Tent and the altar. He put water in the bowl for washing.

³¹Moses, Aaron, and Aarons sons used this bowl to wash their hands and feet.

³²They 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.

³³Then 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.

³⁴Then the cloud covered the Meeting Tent and the Glory of the LORD filled the Holy Tent.

³⁵Moses 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.

³⁶When the cloud rose from the Holy Tent, the Israelites would begin to travel.

³⁷But when the cloud stayed on the Holy Tent, the people did not try to move. They stayed in that place until the cloud rose.

³⁸So 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.

Leviticus

1 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. Then 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 Aarons 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.

⁶You must remove the skin from that animal and then cut the animal into pieces.

⁷Aarons sons, the priests, will put the fire on the altar and arrange the wood on the fire.

⁸They will lay the pieces of the animal, including the head and fat, on top of the burning wood.

⁹You 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.

¹⁰If you offer a sheep or a goat as a burnt offering, it must be a male that has nothing wrong with it.

¹¹You must kill the animal on the north side of the altar in front of the LORD. Then Aarons sons, the priests, will splash the animals blood on all four sides of the altar.

¹²You 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.

¹³You 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.

¹⁴If you offer a bird as a burnt offering to the LORD, that bird must be a dove or a young pigeon.

¹⁵The priest will bring the offering to the altar. There the priest will remove the birds head, drain out the blood on the side of the altar, and burn the bird on the altar.

¹⁶He will remove the birds tail and inner parts and throw them onto the pile of ashes east of the altar.

¹⁷Then the priest will tear the bird open by its wings, but he must not divide it completely into two parts. So he will bring the bird to the altar to be offered as a burnt offering, a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

2¹When 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.

²Then you must bring it to Aarons 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.

³The rest of that grain offering will belong to Aaron and his sons. This gift to the LORD is very holy.

⁴If 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.

⁵If you bring a grain offering cooked in a baking pan, it must be made from fine flour without yeast and mixed with oil.

⁶You must break it into pieces and pour oil over it. It is a grain offering.

⁷If you bring a grain offering cooked in a frying pan, it must be made from fine flour mixed with oil.

⁸When 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.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰The rest of that grain offering will belong to Aaron and his sons. This gift to the LORD is very holy.

¹¹You 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.

¹²You 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.

¹³Also, you must put salt on every grain offering you bring. You must not forget to add salt, because it represents Gods agreement with you. Always put salt on these offerings.

¹⁴When you offer the first part of your grain harvest, roast the fresh grain and grind it. Then you may bring it as a grain offering to the LORD.

¹⁵You must put oil and frankincense on it. It is a grain offering.

¹⁶The 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.

3¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ If you bring a lamb as an offering to the LORD,

⁸you must put your hand on the animals head and kill it in front of the Meeting Tent. Then Aarons sons will splash the animals blood on all four sides of the altar.

⁹The 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 animals inner parts.

¹⁰He 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.

¹¹Then the priest will take that part to the altar to be burned up as food, a gift to the LORD.

¹²If the offering is a goat, you must bring it before the LORD.

¹³You must put your hand on the goats head and kill it in front of the Meeting Tent. Then Aarons sons, the priests, must splash the goats blood on all four sides of the altar.

¹⁴The 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 animals inner parts.

¹⁵He will offer the two kidneys and the fat covering them near the lower back muscle. He will also offer the fat part of the liver. He will remove it with the kidneys.

¹⁶Then the priest will burn these parts on the altar as food offered by fire. The smoke will be a sweet-smelling gift to the Lord. All the best part, the fat, belongs to the LORD.

¹⁷This rule will continue forever through all your generations. Wherever you live, you must never eat fat or blood.

4¹The LORD spoke to Moses and said, ²Tell the Israelites this: A person might sin without meaning to and do something that the LORD commanded should not be done. For example:

³The anointed priest might make a mistake while he is making an offering for the sin of the people. If that happens, the people will still be guilty for their sin. In that case, he must offer a young bull to the LORD as an offering for his own sin. The bull must have nothing wrong with it.

⁴The 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.

⁵Then the anointed priest must get some of the blood from the bull and take it into the Meeting Tent.

⁶He 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.

⁷The priest must put some of the blood on the corners of the incense altar. (This altar is in 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.)

⁸Then 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.

⁹He 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.

¹⁰The priest must lift up these things and burn them on the altar for burnt offerings, just as they do for the fellowship offering.

¹¹But the priest must carry out the bulls 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.

¹²(4:11)

¹³The 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.

¹⁴When 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.

¹⁵The elders of the people must put their hands on the bulls head in front of the LORD. Then they must kill the bull in front of the LORD.

¹⁶The anointed priest must get some of the bulls blood and take it into the Meeting Tent.

¹⁷He must put his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times in front of the curtain before the LORD.

¹⁸He 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.)

¹⁹Then he must take all the fat from the animal and bring it to the altar.

²⁰He 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.

²¹The 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.

²²A ruler might do something that the LORD his God has said must not be done. Even if he did not realize at the time that he was committing a sin, he is still guilty.

²³ As soon as he learns that he has sinned, he must bring a male goat that has nothing wrong with it as his offering.

²⁴ The ruler must put his hand on the goats 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 base of the altar.

²⁶ The priest will burn all the goats fat on the altar, just as they do 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 animals head and kill it at the place for the burnt offering.

³⁰ Then the priest will take some of the goats 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 is done 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 animals 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 lambs blood at the base of the altar.

³⁵ He will then remove all the lambs fat, just as is done 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.

5¹ 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. When you remember your promise, you must pay a fine because you did not keep it.

⁵If you are guilty of any of these things, you must confess whatever you did wrong.

⁶Then 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.

⁷If 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.

⁸Take them to the priest. First, the priest will offer one bird for the sin offering. The priest will pull the birds head from its neck but he will not pull it off completely.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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. 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.

¹⁷If 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.

¹⁸You 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.

¹⁹You are guilty, and you must pay the guilt offering to the LORD.

6¹The LORD told Moses these rules for the people:

²You 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;

³when 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.

⁴If 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,

⁵or 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.

⁶You must also bring a ram to the LORD that has nothing wrong with it (or the same amount in silver) to the priest.

⁷Then 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.

⁸The LORD said to Moses,

⁹Give 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 altars fire must be kept burning.

¹⁰The 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.

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.

¹⁷I 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.

¹⁸Any 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.

¹⁹The LORD said to Moses,

²⁰This 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.

²¹The 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 LORD.

²²In the future, when Aarons 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.

²³Every grain offering that a priest gives must be completely burned. It must not be eaten.

²⁴The LORD said to Moses,

²⁵Tell Aaron and his sons: This is the law of the sin offering. The sin offering must be killed in the place where the burnt offering is killed before the LORD. It is most holy.

²⁶The 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.

²⁷Touching the meat of the sin offering makes a person or a thing holy. If any of the sprinkled blood falls on a persons clothes, you must wash the clothes in a holy place.

²⁸If 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.

²⁹Any male in a priests 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.

7 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.

⁷The 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.

⁸He will also get the skin from the burnt offering.

⁹Every 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.

¹⁰The grain offerings will belong to Aarons sons. It doesnt make any difference if the grain offerings are dry or mixed with oil. The sons of Aaron will all share this food.

¹¹This is the law of the sacrifice of fellowship offerings that you bring to the LORD:

¹²People 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.

¹³You must also bring loaves of bread made with yeast to go with your fellowship offering.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ If any meat from this sacrifice is still left over on the third day, it must be burned in the fire.

¹⁸ If anyone eats 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 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.

²⁰ But anyone who is unclean and eats the meat from the fellowship offerings that was offered to the LORD must be separated from their people.

²¹ If you touch something that is unclean, it doesn't matter if it was made unclean by a person, an animal, or some disgusting thing, you will become unclean. And if you eat any of the meat from the fellowship offerings that was given to the LORD, you must be separated from your people.

²² The LORD said to Moses,

²³ Tell the Israelites: You must not eat any fat from your cattle, sheep, or goats.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ Whoever eats the fat from an animal that was offered as a gift to the LORD must be separated from their people.

²⁶No matter where you live, you must never eat blood from any bird or any animal.

²⁷Anyone who eats blood must be separated from their people.

²⁸The LORD said to Moses,

²⁹Tell the Israelites: If you bring a fellowship offering to the LORD, you must present that gift to the LORD yourself.

³⁰You 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.

³¹The priest will burn the fat on the altar, but the breast of the animal will belong to Aaron and his sons.

³²You must also give the right thigh from the fellowship offering as a gift to the priest.

³³That part of the fellowship offering will belong to the priest who carries the blood and fat to the altar.

³⁴I 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 Israelites to bring their offerings to the LORD in the desert of Sinai.

8¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² 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.

³ Then gather the people together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.

⁴ Moses did what the LORD commanded him. The people met together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.

⁵ Then Moses said to them, This is what the LORD has commanded must be done.

⁶ Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Moses put the judgment pouch on Aaron and put the Urim and Thummim inside its pocket.

⁹ He also put the turban on Aarons 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹²He poured some of the anointing oil on Aarons head to make him holy.

¹³Then Moses brought Aarons 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.

¹⁴Then Moses brought out the bull of the sin offering. Aaron and his sons put their hands on the bulls head.

¹⁵Then Moses killed the bull and collected its blood. He used his finger to put some of the blood on all the corners of the altar. In this way he made the altar ready for sacrifices. Then he poured out the blood at the base of the altar to make the altar ready for sacrifices to make the people pure.

¹⁶Moses took all the fat from the inner parts of the bull. He took the fat part of the liver with the two kidneys and the fat on them. Then he burned them on the altar.

¹⁷Moses took the bulls skin, its meat, and its body waste outside the camp.

He burned these things in a fire outside the camp. He did everything just as the LORD commanded him.

¹⁸Then Moses brought the ram of the burnt offering. Aaron and his sons put their hands on the rams head.

¹⁹Then Moses killed the ram. He sprinkled the blood around on the altar.

²⁰He 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.

²¹ (8: 20)

²²Then 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 rams head.

²³Then Moses killed the ram. He put some of its blood on the tip of Aarons ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.

²⁴Then Moses brought Aarons sons close to the altar. He put some of the

blood on the tip of their right ears, on the thumb of their right hands, and on the big toe of their right feet. Then he sprinkled the blood around on the altar.

²⁵He took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat on the inner parts, the fat covering of the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh.

²⁶A basket of unleavened bread is put before the LORD each day. Moses took one of those loaves of bread, one loaf of bread mixed with oil, and one unleavened wafer. He put these pieces of bread on the fat and on the right thigh of the ram.

²⁷Then he put all of it in the hands of Aaron and his sons. Moses lifted these pieces to show he was offering them before the LORD.

²⁸Then 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.

²⁹Moses 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.

³⁰Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on the altar. He sprinkled some on Aaron and on Aarons clothes. He sprinkled some on Aarons sons who were with Aaron and on their clothes. In this way Moses made Aaron, his clothes, his sons, and his sons clothes holy.

³¹Then 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 at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Eat the meat and bread at that place. Do this as I told you.

³²If any of the meat or bread is left, burn it.

³³The 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.

³⁴Everything we did today was what the LORD commanded us to do in order to make you pure.

³⁵You 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.

³⁶So Aaron and his sons did everything that the LORD had commanded Moses.

9¹On the eighth day, Moses called for Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel.

²He 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.

³Tell 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.

⁴Take 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.

⁵So all the people came to the Meeting Tent. They all brought the things that

Moses had commanded. All the people stood before the LORD.

⁶Moses said, You must do what the LORD commanded. Then the Glory of the LORD will appear to you.

⁷Then 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 peoples sacrifices and make them pure.

⁸So Aaron went to the altar. He killed the bull for the sin offering. This sin offering was for himself.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰He 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.

¹¹Then Aaron burned the meat and skin on a fire outside the camp.

¹²Next, Aaron killed the animal for the burnt offering. His sons brought the

blood to him, and he sprinkled the blood around on the altar.

¹³Aarons sons gave the pieces and head of the burnt offering to Aaron, and he burned them on the altar.

¹⁴He also washed the inner parts and the legs of the burnt offering and burned them on the altar.

¹⁵Then Aaron brought the peoples 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.

¹⁶He brought the burnt offering and offered it in the way the Lord had commanded.

¹⁷He brought the grain offering to the altar. He took a handful of the grain and put it on the altar beside that mornings 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.

¹⁹Aarons 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.

²⁰ Aarons sons put these fat parts on the breasts of the bull and the ram. Aaron burned them on the altar.

²¹ He lifted the breasts and the gift of the right thigh to show he was offering them before the LORD, just as Moses had commanded.

²² Then 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.

²³ Moses 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.

²⁴ Fire 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.

10¹ Then Aarons 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.

⁴Aarons 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, Dont show any sadness! Dont 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Then the LORD said to Aaron,

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ You 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.

¹¹ And you must teach the people about all the laws that the LORD gave them through Moses.

¹² Aaron 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. 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.

¹⁵The people must bring the gifts of fat from their animals as part of the sacrifice. 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.

¹⁶Moses looked for the goat of the sin offering, but it was already burned up. Moses became very angry with Aarons

other sons Eleazar and Ithamar. Moses said,

¹⁷Why 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.

¹⁸That goats blood was not brought into the Holy Place. So you should have eaten the meat in the holy area, just as I commanded!

¹⁹But 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?

²⁰When Moses heard this, he agreed.

11 ¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

²Tell the Israelites: These are the animals you can eat:

³If 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.

⁴Some 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.

⁵ (11: 4)

⁶ (11: 4)

⁷ 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.

⁸ Don't eat the meat from these animals. Don't even touch their dead bodies! They are unclean for you.

⁹ You may eat everything that lives in the sea or in a river that has fins and scales.

¹⁰ 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!

¹¹ (11: 10)

¹² It is a sickening thought for you to touch anything that lives in the water and does not have fins and scales.

¹³ 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,

¹⁴ kites, all kinds of falcons,

¹⁵ all kinds of black birds,

¹⁶ ostriches, nighthawks, sea gulls, all kinds of hawks,

¹⁷ owls, cormorants, great owls,

¹⁸ water hens, pelicans, carrion vultures,

¹⁹ storks, all kinds of herons, hoopoes, and bats.

²⁰ Don't eat insects that have wings and crawl. Even the thought of eating them should make you sick!

²¹ But you may eat insects if they have legs with joints above their feet so that they can jump.

²² You may also eat all kinds of locusts, all kinds of winged locusts, all kinds of crickets, and all kinds of grasshoppers.

²³ But stay away from all the other insects that have wings and crawl.

²⁴ They will make you unclean. If you touch the dead bodies of these insects, you will become unclean until evening.

²⁵If you pick up one of these dead insects, you must wash your clothes. You will be unclean until evening.

²⁶Some 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.

²⁷ (11: 26)

²⁸If 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.

²⁹These small animals are unclean for you: moles, mice, all kinds of great lizards,

³⁰geckos, crocodiles, lizards, sand reptiles, and chameleons.

³¹Whoever touches their dead bodies will be unclean until evening.

³²If 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.

³³If 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.

³⁴If water from the unclean clay dish touches any food, that food will become unclean. Any drink in the unclean dish will become unclean.

³⁵If 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.

³⁶A 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.

³⁷If any part of a dead, unclean animal falls on seed that is to be planted, that seed is still clean.

³⁸But 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.

³⁹ Also, if an animal which you use for food dies, whoever touches its dead body will be unclean until evening.

⁴⁰ If you eat meat from this animals 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 not eat anything that crawls on the ground. It is a sickening thought for you to eat such a creature.

⁴² 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. It is a sickening thought for you to eat such things!

⁴³ Dont let them make you filthy. You must not become unclean,

⁴⁴ because I am the LORD your God. I am holy, so you should keep yourselves holy. Dont make yourselves unclean with these crawling things.

⁴⁵ 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.

⁴⁶These are the rules about all the tame animals, birds, all the animals in the sea, and all the animals that crawl on the ground.

⁴⁷These rules will help the people know which animals are unclean and which animals they are allowed to eat and which ones they cannot eat.

12¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Tell 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.

³The baby boy must be circumcised on the eighth day.

⁴Because 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.

⁵But 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, another 66 days must pass before she becomes clean.

⁶After 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.

⁷If 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.

⁸(12: 7)

13¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

²Someone 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.

³The priest must look at the sore on the persons skin. If the hair in the sore has become white, and if the sore seems deeper than the persons skin, it is leprosy. When the priest has finished looking at the person, he must announce that the person is unclean.

⁴Sometimes there is a white spot on a persons 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.

⁵On 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.

⁶Seven 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ The priest must look, and if the rash has spread, he must announce that the person is unclean. The disease is leprosy.

⁹ Whoever has leprosy must be brought to the priest.

¹⁰ He 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,

¹¹ it 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.

¹² Sometimes a skin disease will spread all over a persons body, covering the skin from head to foot. The priest must look at that persons whole body.

¹³ If 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.

¹⁴ But if the skin is raw, that person is not clean.

¹⁵ When the priest sees the raw skin, he must announce that the person is unclean. The raw skin is not clean. It is leprosy.

¹⁶ If the raw skin changes and becomes white, the person must come to the priest.

¹⁷ The priest must look at the person. If the skin has become white, the person who had the infection is clean, and the priest must announce this.

¹⁸ Someone might get a boil on their skin that heals over.

¹⁹ Then that boil might become a white swelling or a bright, white spot with red streaks in it. If this happens, the person must show that spot to the priest.

²⁰ The priest must look at it. If the swelling is deeper than the skin, and the hair on it has become white, the priest must announce that the person is unclean. The spot is leprosy that has broken out from inside the boil.

²¹ But if the priest looks at the spot, and there are no white hairs in it, and the spot is not deeper than the skin but

is faded, the priest must separate the person for seven days.

²²If the spot spreads on the skin, the priest must announce that the person is unclean; it is an infection.

²³But 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.

²⁴Someone 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.

²⁵ (13: 24)

²⁶But 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.

²⁷On 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,

³³ the person must shave. But the diseased area should not be shaved. The priest must separate that person for seven more days.

³⁴ 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,

³⁶ 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,

³⁹ a priest must look at them. If the spots on that persons 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 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.

⁴⁸ (13: 47)

⁴⁹ If the mildew is green or red, it must be shown to the priest.

⁵⁰The priest must look at it and put it in a separate place for seven days.

⁵¹On 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 used for. If the mildew has spread, the object is unclean because of the infection. The priest must burn it.

⁵²(13: 51)

⁵³If 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.

⁵⁶But 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.

⁵⁷ But 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.

⁵⁸ But if the mildew did not come back after washing, that piece of leather or cloth is clean, whether the cloth was woven or knitted.

⁵⁹ These are the rules for mildew on pieces of leather or cloth, whether the cloth is woven or knitted.

14 ¹ 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. A priest must look at those who had the skin disease.

³ The priest must go to them outside the camp and look to see if the skin disease is healed.

⁴ If 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.

⁵Then the priest must order one bird to be killed in a clay bowl over running water.

⁶He must take the other bird that is still alive and the piece of cedar wood, the piece of red cloth, and the hyssop plant and dip them in the blood of the bird that was killed over the 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 live bird go free.

⁸The 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, all their hair. Then they must wash their clothes and bathe their bodies in water. Then they will be clean.

¹⁰On 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 cups of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering and 2/3 of a pint of olive oil.

¹¹ The 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.)

¹² The 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.

¹³ Then 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 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 persons right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of the persons 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.

¹⁹Then 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

²² 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.

²³ On 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.

²⁴ The 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.

²⁵ Then 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.

²⁶ He will also pour some of this oil into his own left palm.

²⁷ He 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.

²⁸ Then 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 persons right foot.

²⁹ He 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.

³⁰ Then the priest must offer one of the doves or young pigeons. (He must offer whichever the person can afford.)

³¹ He 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.

³² These 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.

³³ The LORD also said to Moses and Aaron,

³⁴ 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 someones house.

³⁵ The person who owns that house must come and tell the priest, I see something like mildew in my house.

³⁶ Then 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.

³⁷ He 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 walls surface,

³⁸ he must go out of the house and lock the house for seven days.

³⁹ On the seventh day, the priest must come back and check the house. If the mildew has spread on the walls of the house,

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² 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.

⁴⁴ 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.

⁴⁵The house must be torn down. All the stones, plaster, and pieces of wood must be taken to the special unclean place outside the city.

⁴⁶Anyone who goes into that house will be unclean until evening.

⁴⁷Anyone who eats in that house or lies down in there must wash their clothes.

⁴⁸After 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.

⁴⁹Then, 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.

⁵⁰He will kill one bird in a clay bowl over running water.

⁵¹Then he will take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the piece of red cloth, and the live 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.

⁵²In 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 live 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,

⁵⁵ for mildew on pieces of cloth or in a house.

⁵⁶ These are the rules for swellings, rashes, or bright spots on the skin.

⁵⁷ These rules teach when something is clean and when something is unclean. These are the rules about these kinds of disease.

15 ¹ The LORD also said to Moses and Aaron,

² Say to the Israelites: Whoever has a genital discharge is unclean.

³ 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.

⁵ If you touch that bed, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening.

⁶If you sit on anything that he sat on, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening.

⁷If you touch him, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening.

⁸If he spits on you, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening.

⁹If that man sits on a saddle, it will become unclean.

¹⁰If you touch or carry anything that was under him, you will be unclean until evening.

¹¹If he touches you, you must wash your clothes and bathe in water. You will be unclean until evening.

¹²If 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.

¹³When 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.

¹⁴On 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.

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶If 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.

¹⁹If 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.

²¹ Whoever touches her bed must wash their clothes and bathe in water. They will be unclean until evening.

²² Whoever touches anything she has sat on must wash their clothes and bathe in water. They will be unclean until evening.

²³ It 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.

²⁶ Any 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 womans 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.

³⁰Then 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.

³¹So you must warn the Israelites about being unclean. If you dont 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.

16¹ Two of Aarons sons died while offering incense to the LORD. After that time, the LORD spoke to Moses.

²The 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.

⁴Aaron 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.

⁵From the whole community of Israel, Aaron will accept two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering.

⁶Then he will offer the bull for the sin offering. This sin offering is for himself. He will do this to purify himself and his family.

⁷Then 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.

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. This way Aaron will not die.

¹⁴Aaron will dip his finger into the bulls 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 goats blood into the room behind the curtain. He will do with the goats blood as he did with the bulls blood. He will sprinkle the goats 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.

¹⁷No 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.

²⁰So Aaron will make the Most Holy Place, the Meeting Tent, and the altar pure. Then he will bring the live goat to the front of the tent.

²¹He will put both his hands on the head of the goat. Then he will confess the sins and crimes of the Israelites over the goat. In this way Aaron will lay the peoples sins on the goats 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 peoples sins on itself into the empty desert. The man who leads the goat will let it loose in the desert.

²³ Then 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.

²⁴ He 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 peoples burnt offering. He will make himself and the people pure.

²⁵ Then 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 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. You must not do any work. None of the travelers or foreigners living in your land can do any work either.

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

³³ and make the Most Holy Place, the Meeting Tent, and the altar pure. He will also make the priests and all the people pure.

³⁴ 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.

17 ¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Speak to Aaron and to his sons,
and to all the Israelites. Tell them this is
what the LORD has commanded:

³Any one of you Israelites might kill a
bull, a lamb, or a goat. You might be in
the camp or outside the camp.

⁴It 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!

⁵This 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.

⁶Then 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.

⁷In this way you will stop being unfaithful to me by offering sacrifices to your goat gods. This law will continue forever.

⁸Tell the people: Any citizen of Israel, traveler, or foreigner living among you might want to offer a burnt offering or some other sacrifice.

⁹They 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.

¹⁰I 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.

¹¹This 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.

¹²That is why I am telling you Israelites and the foreigners living among you that you must not eat blood.

¹³If 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.

¹⁴This 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.

¹⁵If 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.

¹⁶If you don't wash your clothes and bathe your whole body, you will be responsible for your guilt.

18¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Tell the Israelites: I am the LORD your God.

³You 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.

⁴You must obey my rules and follow my laws. Be sure to follow my rules because I am the LORD your God.

⁵You must obey my rules and my laws, because whoever obeys them will live. I am the LORD.

⁶You must never have sexual relations with your close relatives. I am the LORD.

⁷You must never have sexual relations with your father or mother. She is your mother, so you must not have sexual relations with her.

⁸You 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.

⁹You 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.

¹⁰You 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 fathers sister. She is your fathers close relative.

¹³ You must not have sexual relations with your mothers sister. She is your mothers close relative.

¹⁴ You must not have sexual relations with the wife of your fathers brother. You must not go near your uncles wife for sexual relations. She is your aunt.

¹⁵ You must not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your sons wife, so you must not have sexual relations with her.

¹⁶ You must not have sexual relations with your brothers 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 doesnt matter if this granddaughter is the daughter of this womans son or daughter. Her granddaughters are her close relatives. It is wrong to do this.

¹⁸While 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 wifes sister.

¹⁹You must not go near a woman to have sexual relations with her during her monthly time of bleeding. She is unclean during this time.

²⁰You must not have sexual relations with your neighbors wife. This will only make you filthy.

²¹You must not give any of your children through the fire to Molech. If you do this, you will show that you dont respect the name of your God. I am the LORD.

²²Men, you must not have sexual relations with another man as with a woman. That is a sickening sin!

²³Men, 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!

²⁴Dont 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.

²⁵They made the land filthy. Now the land is sick of those things, and it will vomit out the people who live there.

²⁶So you must obey my laws and rules. You must not do any of these sickening sins. These rules are for the citizens of Israel and the people living among you.

²⁷Those who lived in the land before you have done all these terrible things. So the land became filthy.

²⁸If 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.

²⁹Whoever does any of these terrible sins must be separated from their people!

³⁰Other people have done these sickening sins, but you must obey my laws. You must not do any of these sins. Do not make yourself filthy with them. I am the LORD your God.

19¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Tell 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.

⁶ 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.

¹⁰Don'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.

¹¹You must not steal. You must not cheat people. You must not lie to each other.

¹²You 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!

¹³You must not cheat or rob your neighbor. You must not hold a hired worker's salary overnight until morning.

¹⁴You 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.

¹⁵You 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.

¹⁶You 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. Then 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 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.

²²The priest will make him pure by offering the ram as a guilt offering before the LORD. The offering is for the mans sins, which will then be forgiven.

²³In 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.

²⁴In the fourth year, the fruit from that tree will be the LORD'S. It will be a holy offering of praise to the LORD.

²⁵Then, 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.

²⁶You must not eat any meat with blood still in it. You must not try to use different kinds of magic to tell the future.

²⁷You 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.

²⁸You 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.

³⁴ 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.

³⁷You must remember all my laws and rules. And you must obey them. I am the LORD.

20¹The LORD said to Moses,
²You 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.

³I 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.

⁴Maybe the common people will ignore them. Maybe they will not kill those who gave their children to Molech.

⁵But 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.

⁶I 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.

⁷Be special. Make yourselves holy, because I am the LORD your God.

⁸Remember and obey my laws. I am the LORD. And I have made you my special people.

⁹Whoever curses their father or mother must be put to death. They cursed their father or mother, so they are responsible for their own death!

¹⁰If a man has sexual relations with his neighbors wife, both the man and the woman are guilty of adultery and must be put to death!

¹¹If a man has sexual relations with his fathers 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!

¹²If 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.

¹³If a man has sexual relations with another man as with a woman, both of them have committed a sickening sin. They must be put to death. They are responsible for their own death.

¹⁴It is a terrible 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 terrible sin happen among your people.

¹⁵If a man has sexual relations with an animal, both the man and the animal must be put to death.

¹⁶If 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.

¹⁷It 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.

¹⁸If 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.

¹⁹You must not have sexual relations with your mothers sister or your fathers sister. That is a sin of incest. You must be punished for your sins.

²⁰A man must not have sexual relations with his uncles wife. It would be like having sexual relations with his uncle. That man and his uncles wife will be punished for their sins. They will die without children.

²¹It is wrong for a man to take his brothers wife. It would be like having sexual relations with his brother! They will have no children.

²²You 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.

²³I 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.

21 ¹ 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.

² 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

³ 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.)

⁴ But a priest must not make himself unclean if the dead person was only one of his slaves.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Priests must be holy for their God. They must show respect for Gods name. They offer the bread and special gifts to the LORD, so they must be holy.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹If a priest's daughter becomes a prostitute, she ruins her reputation and brings shame to her father. She must be burned to death in the fire!

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹He 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.

¹²The high priest must not leave God's holy place, because he might become unclean and then make God's holy place unclean. The anointing oil was poured on the high priest's head. This separated him from the rest of the people. I am the LORD.

¹³The high priest must marry a woman who is a virgin.

¹⁴He must not marry a woman who has had sexual relations with any man. He must not marry a prostitute, a divorced woman, or a widow. The high priest must marry a virgin from his own people.

¹⁵In this way people will show respect for his children. I, the LORD, have separated the high priest for his special work.

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁷Tell Aaron: If any of your descendants have anything wrong with them, they must not carry the special bread to God.

¹⁸Any man who has something wrong with him must not serve as priest and bring sacrifices to me. These men cannot serve as priests: blind men, crippled men, men with bad scars on their faces, men with arms or legs that are too long,

¹⁹men with broken feet or hands,

²⁰men with bent backs, men who are dwarfs, men who are cross-eyed, men with rashes or bad skin diseases, and men with crushed testicles.

²¹If one of Aarons 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.

²²He is from the family of priests, so he can eat the holy bread. He can also eat the very holy bread.

²³But 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.

²⁴So Moses told these things to Aaron, Aarons sons, and all the Israelites.

22 ¹The LORD God said to Moses, ²Tell 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 gifts. If you dont, you will show that you dont respect my holy name. I am the LORD.

³If any one of your descendants touches these things, that person will become unclean and must be separated from me. The Israelites gave these things to me. I am the LORD.

⁴If any of Aarons 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.

⁵He 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.

⁶If 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.

⁷He will be clean only after the sun goes down. Then he can eat the holy food because it is his share.

⁸A 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.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶They 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.

¹⁷The LORD God said to Moses,

¹⁸Tell 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.

¹⁹These 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.

²⁰(22: 19)

²¹You 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.

²²You 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.

²³Sometimes a bull or lamb will have a 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.

²⁴If 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.

²⁵You must not accept animals from foreigners to offer as a sacrifice 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.

²⁶The 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.

23 ¹ The LORD said to Moses,
² Tell the Israelites: You will announce the LORD'S chosen festivals as holy meetings. These are my special festivals.

³Work 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.

⁴These are the LORD'S chosen festivals. You will announce the holy meetings at the times chosen for them.

⁵The LORD'S Passover is on the 14th day of the first month just before dark.

⁶The LORD'S Festival of Unleavened Bread is on the 15th day of the same month. You will eat unleavened bread for seven days.

⁷On the first day of this festival, you will have a special meeting. You must not do any work on that day.

⁸For 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.

⁹The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁰Tell 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.

¹⁵ From that Sunday morning (the day you bring the sheaf to be presented to God), count seven weeks.

¹⁶ On the Sunday following the seventh week (that is, 50 days later), you will bring a new grain offering to the LORD.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸One bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old male lambs will be offered with the grain offerings from the people. There must be nothing wrong with these animals. They will be a burnt offering offered as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

¹⁹You will also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering.

²⁰The 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.

²¹On that same day you will call a holy meeting. You must not do any work. This law continues forever in all your homes.

²²Also, when you harvest the crops on your land, dont cut all the way to the corners of your field. Dont 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.

²³ Again the LORD said to Moses,

²⁴ Tell the Israelites: On the first day of the seventh month, you must have a special day of rest. Blow the trumpet to remind the people that this is a holy meeting.

²⁵ You must not do any work. You must bring an offering as a gift to the LORD.

²⁶ The 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.

²⁸ You 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.

³⁰ If anyone does any work on this day, I will destroy that person from among the people.

³¹ You must not do any work at all. This is a law that continues forever for you, wherever you live.

³² 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.

³³ Again 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.

³⁵ There will be a holy meeting on the first day. You must not do any work.

³⁶ You 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. They will be in addition to any special offerings you want to give to the LORD.

³⁹On 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.

⁴⁰On 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.

⁴¹You 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.

⁴²You will live in temporary shelters for seven days. All the people born in Israel will live in them.

⁴³Why? 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.

⁴⁴So Moses told the Israelites about all the special meetings to honor the LORD.

24 ¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Command the Israelites to bring to you pure oil from crushed olives. That oil is for the lamps that must burn without stopping.

³Aaron 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.

⁴Aaron must always keep the lamps burning on the lampstand of pure gold before the LORD.

⁵Take fine flour and bake twelve loaves with it. Use 16 cups of flour for each loaf.

⁶Put 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 Aarons share forever.

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 womans son began cursing, using the Lords name in a bad way, so the people brought him to Moses. (The name of the mans 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,

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵You must tell the Israelites: Anyone who curses their God must be punished.

¹⁶Anyone 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 Lords name in a bad way must be put to death.

¹⁷And whoever kills another person must be put to death.

¹⁸Whoever kills an animal that belongs to another person must give another animal to take its place.

¹⁹And whoever causes an injury to their neighbor must be given the same kind of injury:

²⁰a 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.

²¹Whoever kills an animal must pay for the animal. But whoever kills another person must be put to death.

²²The law will be the same for foreigners and for people from your own country. This is because I am the LORD your God.

²³Then 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.

25¹The LORD spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai. He said,

²Tell 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.

³You will plant seed in your field for six years. You will trim your vineyards for six years and bring in its fruits.

⁴But 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.

⁵You 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.

⁶The 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.

⁷And there will be enough food for your cattle and other animals to eat.

⁸You 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.

⁹On the Day of Atonement, you must blow a rams horn. That will be on the tenth day of the seventh month. You must blow the rams horn through the whole country.

¹⁰You 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. And each of you will go back to your own family.

¹¹The 50th year will be a special celebration for you. Dont plant seeds,

don't harvest the crops that grow by themselves, and don't gather grapes from the vines that are not trimmed.

¹²That year is Jubilee. It will be a holy time for you. You will eat the crops that come from the field.

¹³In the year of Jubilee, you will go back to your own property.

¹⁴Don't cheat your neighbors when you sell your land to them. Don't cheat each other when you buy or sell land.

¹⁵If you want to buy your neighbors 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.

¹⁶If 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. At the next Jubilee the land will again belong to that family.

¹⁷You must not cheat each other. You must honor your God. I am the LORD your God.

¹⁸Remember my laws and rules. Obey them and you will live safely in your country.

¹⁹And the land will produce good crops for you. Then you will have plenty of food, and you will live safely on the land.

²⁰But maybe you will say, If we dont plant seeds or gather our crops, we will not have anything to eat during the seventh year.

²¹I will order my blessing to come to you during the sixth year. The land will continue growing crops for three years.

²²When 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.

²³The land really belongs to me, so you cannot sell it permanently. You are only foreigners and travelers living on my land with me.

²⁴People might sell their land, but the family will always get their land back.

²⁵If someone in your country becomes very poor and must sell their property, a close relative must come and buy it back.

²⁶If there is not a close relative to buy back the land, the person might get enough money to buy it back.

²⁷Then 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.

²⁸But 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 owners family. So the property will again belong to the right family.

²⁹Anyone 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.

³⁰But 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.

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.

³⁸I 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.

³⁹If anyone from your own country becomes so poor that they must sell themselves to you, don't make them work like slaves.

⁴⁰They will be like hired workers and visitors with you until the year of Jubilee.

⁴¹Then they can leave you, take their children, and go back to their family. They can go back to the property of their ancestors,

⁴²because they are my servants. I brought them out of slavery in Egypt. They must not become slaves again.

⁴³You must not be a cruel master to them. You must respect your God.

⁴⁴About your men and women slaves: You may get men and women slaves from the other nations around you.

⁴⁵Also, 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.

⁴⁶You 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.

⁴⁷Maybe 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 foreigners family.

⁴⁸These people have the right to be bought back and become free. Someone from their own country can buy them back.

⁴⁹Or 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.

⁵⁰You 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!

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 and honor my holy place. I am the LORD.

³ Remember my laws and commands, and obey them.

⁴If 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.

⁵Your 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.

⁶I 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.

⁷You will chase your enemies and defeat them. You will kill them with your swords.

⁸Five of you will chase a hundred men, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand. You will defeat your enemies and kill them with your swords.

⁹Then I will turn to you. I will let you have many children. I will keep my agreement with you.

¹⁰You 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 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.

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.

¹⁸After these things, if you still dont obey me, I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

¹⁹And I will also destroy the great cities that make you proud. The skies will not give rain, and the earth will not produce crops.

²⁰You will work hard, but it will not help. Your land will not give any crops, and your trees will not grow their fruit.

²¹If you still turn against me and refuse to obey me, I will beat you seven times harder! The more you sin, the more you will be punished.

²²I 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.

²³If you dont learn your lesson after all this, and if you still turn against me,

²⁴then I will also turn against you. I yes, I myself will punish you seven times for your sins.

²⁵You 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.

²⁶I 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.

²⁷If you still refuse to listen to me, and if you still turn against me,

²⁸then I will really show my anger! I yes, I myself will punish you seven times for your sins.

²⁹You will become so hungry that you will eat the bodies of your sons and daughters.

³⁰I 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.

³¹I will destroy your cities. I will make your holy places empty. I will stop smelling your offerings.

³²I 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 enemys 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.

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.

⁴⁵For 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.

⁴⁶These are the laws, rules, and 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.

27 ¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Tell 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.

⁸If 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.

⁹You might promise to give an animal to the Lord. If it is a clean animalone that is acceptable as an offering to the LORDthen the animal you bring will become holy.

¹⁰You must not put any other animal in its place. Dont 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 holythey will both belong to the Lord.

¹¹The 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. The price will be whatever the priest decides, whether good or bad.

¹³If you want to buy back the animal, then you must add one-fifth to the price.

¹⁴If 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.

¹⁶You 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.

¹⁹If you want to buy the field back, you must add one-fifth to that price. Then you will get the field back.

²⁰If you dont buy the field back and the land is sold to someone else, you cannot get the land back.

²¹If you dont buy the land back by the year of Jubilee, the field will remain holy to the LORDit will belong to the priest forever. It will be treated like any other thing that was given completely to the Lord.

²²If you dedicate a field to the LORD that you had bought, and it is not a part of your familys property,

²³then 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.

²⁵You must use the official measure in paying these prices. The shekel by that measure weighs 20 gerahs.

²⁶You 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.

²⁸There is a special kind of gift 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.

³⁰A 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.

³²The priests will take every tenth animal from a persons 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 trade it for another animal. If this happens, then both animals will belong to the LORD. They cannot be bought back.

³⁴These are the commands that the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

Numbers

1 ¹The 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:

²Count all the Israelites. List the name of each man with his family and his family group.

³You 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.

⁴One man from each tribe will help you. This man will be the leader of his tribe.

⁵These are the names of the men who will stand with you and help you: from the tribe of Reuben Elizur son of Shedeur;

⁶from the tribe of Simeon Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;

⁷from the tribe of Judah Nahshon son of Amminadab;

⁸from the tribe of IssacharNethanel son of Zuar;

⁹from the tribe of ZebulunEliab son of Helon;

¹⁰from the descendants of Joseph: from the tribe of EphraimElishama son of Ammihud; from the tribe of ManassehGamaliel son of Pedahzur;

¹¹from the tribe of BenjaminAbidan son of Gideoni;

¹²from the tribe of DanAhiezer son of Ammishaddai;

¹³from the tribe of AsherPagiell son of Ocran;

¹⁴from the tribe of GadEliasaph son of Deuel;

¹⁵from the tribe of NaphtaliAhira son of Enan.

¹⁶All these men were the leaders of their families. The people also chose them to be leaders of their tribes.

¹⁷Moses and Aaron took the men who had been chosen to be leaders

¹⁸and 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.

¹⁹Moses did exactly what the LORD commanded he counted the people while they were in the desert of Sinai.

²⁰The 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.

²¹The total number of men counted from the tribe of Reuben was 46,500.

²²The 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.

²³The total number of men counted from the tribe of Simeon was 59,300.

²⁴The 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.

²⁵The total number of men counted from the tribe of Gad was 45,650.

²⁶The 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.

²⁷The total number of men counted from the tribe of Judah was 74,600.

²⁸The 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.

²⁹The total number of men counted from the tribe of Issachar was 54,400.

³⁰The 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.

³¹The total number of men counted from the tribe of Zebulun was 57,400.

³²The tribe of Ephraim was counted. (Ephraim was Josephs 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.

³³The total number of men counted from the tribe of Ephraim was 40,500.

³⁴The tribe of Manasseh was counted. (Manasseh was also Josephs 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.

³⁵The total number of men counted from the tribe of Manasseh was 32,200.

³⁶The 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.

³⁷The total number of men counted from the tribe of Benjamin was 35,400.

³⁸The 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.

³⁹The total number of men counted from the tribe of Dan was 62,700.

⁴⁰The 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.

⁴¹ The total number of men counted from the tribe of Asher was 41,500.

⁴² 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.

⁴³ The total number of men counted from the tribe of Naphtali was 53,400.

⁴⁴ Moses, Aaron, and the twelve leaders of Israel counted these men. (There was one leader from each tribe.)

⁴⁵ 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.

⁴⁶ The total number of men counted was 603,550 men.

⁴⁷ The families from the tribe of Levi were not counted with the other Israelites.

⁴⁸ The LORD had told Moses:

⁴⁹ Don't count the men from the tribe of Levi or include them with the other Israelites.

⁵⁰Tell 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.

⁵¹Whenever 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.

⁵²The Israelites will make their camps in separate divisions. Everyone must camp near their family flag.

⁵³The 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 Lords anger.

⁵⁴The LORD had given these commandments to Moses. So the Israelites did everything he commanded.

2¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron:
²The Israelites should make their camps around the Meeting Tent. Each

division will have its own special flag, and everyone will camp near their groups flag.

³The 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.

⁴There are 74,600 men in his division.

⁵The tribe of Issachar will camp next to the tribe of Judah. The leader of the tribe of Issachar is Nethanel son of Zuar.

⁶There are 54,400 men in his division.

⁷The tribe of Zebulun will also camp next to the tribe of Judah. The leader of the tribe of Zebulun is Eliab son of Helon.

⁸There are 57,400 men in his division.

⁹The total number of men in Judahs 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.

¹⁰The flag of Reubens 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.

¹¹There are 46,500 men in this division.

¹²The tribe of Simeon will camp next to the tribe of Reuben. The leader of the tribe of Simeon is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai.

¹³There are 59,300 men in this division.

¹⁴The tribe of Gad will also camp next to the tribe of Reuben. The leader of the tribe of Gad is Eliasaph son of Deuel.

¹⁵There are 45,650 men in this division.

¹⁶The total number of men in all the divisions of Reubens camp is 151,450. His camp will be the second group to move when the people travel from place to place.

¹⁷When the people travel, Levis 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.

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹There are 40,500 men in this division.

²⁰The tribe of Manasseh will camp next to Ephraims 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. The leader of the tribe of Naphtali is Ahira son of Enan.

³⁰ There are 53,400 men in this division.

³¹ 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.

³² 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.

³³ Moses obeyed the LORD and did not count the Levites with the other Israelites.

³⁴ 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.

3¹ This is the family history of Aaron and Moses at the time the LORD talked to Moses on Mount Sinai.

² Aaron had four sons. Nadab was the firstborn son. Then there were Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

³ These sons were the chosen priests. They were given the special work of serving the LORD as priests.

⁴ 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.

⁵The LORD said to Moses,

⁶Bring all the men from the tribe of Levi. Bring them to Aaron the priest. These men will be his helpers.

⁷The 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons. The Levites were chosen from all the Israelites to help Aaron and his sons.

¹⁰Appoint 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.

¹¹The LORD also said to Moses,

¹²I 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!

¹³ (3: 12)

¹⁴ The LORD again said to Moses in the desert of Sinai,

¹⁵ Count all the families and family groups in the tribe of Levi. Count every man or boy who is one month old or older.

¹⁶ So Moses obeyed the LORD. He counted them all.

¹⁷ Levi had three sons. Their names were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹⁸ Each son was the leader of several family groups. The Gershon family groups were Libni and Shimei.

¹⁹ The Kohath family groups were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

²⁰ The Merari family groups were Mahli and Mushi. These are the families that belonged to Levis family group.

²¹ The families of Libni and Shimei belonged to the family of Gershon. They were the Gershonite family groups.

²²There were 7500 men and boys over one month old in these two family groups.

²³The Gershonite family groups were told to camp in the west. They made their camp behind the Holy Tent.

²⁴The leader of the family groups of the Gershonites was Eliasaph son of Lael.

²⁵In 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 the curtain at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.

²⁶They 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.

²⁷The families of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel belonged to the family of Kohath. They were the Kohathite family groups.

²⁸In 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.

²⁹The Kohathite family groups were given the area to the south of the Holy Tent. This was the area where they camped.

³⁰The leader of the Kohathite family groups was Elizaphan son of Uzziel.

³¹Their 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.

³²The 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.

³³The 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.

³⁴ (3: 33)

³⁵The 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.

³⁶The 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.

³⁷They also cared for all the posts in the courtyard around the Holy Tent. This included all the bases, tent pegs, and ropes.

³⁸Moses, 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.

³⁹The LORD commanded Moses and Aaron to count all the men and boys one month old or older in Levis family group. The total number was 22,000.

⁴⁰The 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.

⁴¹I 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 shekels of silver for each of the 273 people. (The shekel by the official measure weighs 20 gerahs.) 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 shekels 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.

4 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 Levis 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.

⁷Then 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.

⁸Then 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.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰Then wrap everything in fine leather. Then they must put all these things on poles used for carrying them.

¹¹They 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.

¹²Then 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.

¹³They must clean the ashes out of the bronze altar and spread a purple cloth over it.

¹⁴Then 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.

¹⁵Aaron 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.

¹⁶Eleazar 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.

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

¹⁸Be careful! Don't let these Kohathite men be destroyed.

¹⁹You 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.

²⁰If 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.

²¹The LORD said to Moses,

²²Count all the people of the Gershon family. List them by family and family group.

²³Count 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.

²⁴This is what the Gershonite family must do and the things they must carry:

²⁵They 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 of the Meeting Tent.

²⁶They 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.

²⁸ 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.

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.

³²They 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.

³³This 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.

³⁴Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the Israelites counted the Kohathites. They counted them by families and family groups.

³⁵They 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.

³⁶There were 2750 men in the Kohath family group who were qualified to do this work.

³⁷So 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 Levis 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.

5 ¹ 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 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 Gods command. They sent those people

outside the camp. They did what the LORD had told Moses.

⁵The LORD said to Moses,

⁶Tell 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.

⁷You 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.

⁸But 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.

⁹If any of you Israelites gives a special gift to God, the priest who accepts that gift can keep it. It is his.

¹⁰You dont have to give these special gifts, but if you do, the gifts belong to the priest.

¹¹Then the LORD said to Moses,

¹²Tell the Israelites this: A mans wife might be unfaithful to him.

¹³She 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.

¹⁴But 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.

¹⁵If 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.

¹⁶The priest will take the woman before the LORD and make her stand there.

¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁸He 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.

¹⁹Then 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.

²⁰But 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.

²¹If 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. 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.

²²The 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.

²³The priest should write these warnings on a scroll. Then he should wash the words off into the water.

²⁴Then 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.

²⁵Then 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.

²⁶The 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 bring her trouble. 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.

6 ¹ 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:

³They 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.

⁴During 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.

⁵The 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.

⁶They must not go near someone who is dying at any time during the period for which they have given themselves fully to the LORD.

⁷They must not let themselves be made unclean in this way, even if it is their own father, mother, brother, or sister who is dying. This is because they have the hair that they dedicated to God on their head!

⁸They are holy because they have given themselves fully to the LORD for the full time of that dedication.

⁹So if they are with someone when they suddenly die, they will be unclean and will have to shave the hair from their head. They must do that on the seventh day of their purification ceremony when they are made clean.

¹⁰Then on the eighth day, they must bring two doves or two young pigeons and give them to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.

¹¹Then 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 the special time of dedication. Then they must again promise to give the hair on their head as a gift to God.

¹²This means they must again give themselves to the LORD for another time of dedication. They must bring a one-year-old male lamb to offer as a guilt offering. They must start over from the beginning with a new time of

dedication because they touched a dead body during their time of dedication.

¹³After their time of dedication is ended, Nazirites must go to the entrance of the Meeting Tent

¹⁴and 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; a one-year-old female lamb that has nothing wrong with it for a sin offering; a ram that has nothing wrong with it for a fellowship offering;

¹⁵a basket of bread made without yeastbread 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.

¹⁶The priest will give these things to the LORD, and then the priest will make the sin offering and the burnt offering.

¹⁷He 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.

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹After 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.

²⁰Then 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 rams breast and thigh that were lifted up and presented belong to the priest. After that the Nazirites can drink wine.

²¹These 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.

²²The LORD said to Moses,

²³Tell 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 safe.

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.

7 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.

³ 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,

⁵Accept 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.

⁶So Moses accepted the wagons and the oxen and gave them to the Levites.

⁷He gave two wagons and four oxen to the men in Gershons group. They needed the wagons and the oxen for their work.

⁸Then Moses gave four wagons and eight oxen to the men in Meraris 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.

⁹Moses did not give any oxen or wagons to the men in Kohaths group, because their job was to carry the holy things on their shoulders.

¹⁰When Moses anointed the altar, the leaders brought offerings for its dedication. They gave their offerings to the Lord at the altar.

¹¹The LORD told Moses, Each day one leader must bring his gift for the dedication of the altar.

¹²Each of the twelve leaders brought these gifts: Each leader brought one silver plate that weighed 3 1/4 pounds. Each leader brought one silver bowl that weighed 1 3/4 pounds. 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. 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 brought 2 cattle, 5 rams, 5 male goats, and 5 male lambs a year old. All of them were sacrificed for a fellowship 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 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.

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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, 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.

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.

⁸⁸The 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.

⁸⁹When 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.

8¹ The LORD said to Moses,
²Tell Aaron to put the seven lamps in the place I showed you. These lamps will light the area in front of the lampstand.

³Aaron 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.

⁴This 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.

⁵The LORD said to Moses,

⁶Separate the Levites from the other Israelites. Make these Levites clean.

⁷This 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.

⁸They 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.

⁹Bring the Levites to the area in front of the Meeting Tent. Then bring all the Israelites together at that place.

¹⁰Bring the Levites before the LORD. The Israelites will put their hands on them.

¹¹Aaron 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.

¹²Tell 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.

¹³Tell the Levites to stand in front of Aaron and his sons. Then give the Levites to the LORD. They will be like an offering.

¹⁴This will make the Levites holy. They will be different from the other Israelites. The Levites will belong to me.

¹⁵So 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.

¹⁶The Israelites will give me the Levites. They will belong to me. In the past I told every Israelite family to give me their firstborn son. But now I am taking the Levites in place of these firstborn sons from the other families in Israel.

¹⁷Every firstborn in Israelman or animalis mine, because I killed all the firstborn children and animals in Egypt. And I chose to take the firstborn sons to belong to me.

¹⁸But now I will take the Levites in their place. I will take the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons from the other families in Israel.

¹⁹I 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.

²⁰So Moses, Aaron, and all the Israelites obeyed the LORD. They did with the Levites everything that the Lord commanded Moses.

²¹The Levites washed themselves and their clothes. Then Aaron gave them to the LORD as special offerings. Aaron gave the offerings that covered their sins and made them pure.

²²After that the Levites came to the Meeting Tent to do 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.

9¹ 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,

² Tell the Israelites to celebrate Passover at the chosen time.

³ 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.

⁴ So Moses told the Israelites to celebrate Passover.

⁵ 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.

⁶But 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

⁷and 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?

⁸Moses said to them, I will ask the LORD what he says about this.

⁹Then the LORD said to Moses,

¹⁰Tell 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.

¹¹They 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.

¹²They 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.

¹³But 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.

¹⁴A 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.

¹⁵On 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.

¹⁶The cloud stayed over the Holy Tent all the time. And at night the cloud looked like fire.

¹⁷When 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.

¹⁸This 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.

¹⁹Sometimes the cloud would stay over the Holy Tent for a long time. The Israelites obeyed the LORD and did not move.

²⁰Sometimes 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.

²¹Sometimes 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.

²²If 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.

²³So 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.

10¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Make 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.

³If you blow long blasts on both trumpets, all the people must meet together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.

⁴But 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.)

⁵Short 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.

⁶The 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.

⁷But if you want to gather the people together for a special meeting, blow the trumpets in a different wayblow a long steady blast on the trumpets.

⁸Only Aarons sons, the priests, should blow the trumpets. This is a law for you that will continue forever, for generations to come.

⁹If 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.

¹⁰Also 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.

¹¹On 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.

¹²So the Israelites began their journey. They left the desert of Sinai and traveled until the cloud stopped in the desert of Paran.

¹³This was the first time the people moved their camp. They moved it the way the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵Next came the tribe of Issachar. Nethanel son of Zuar was the commander of that group.

¹⁶And then came the tribe of Zebulun. Eliab son of Helon was the commander of that group.

¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹Next came the tribe of Simeon. Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai was the commander of that group.

²⁰And then came the tribe of Gad. Eliasaph son of Deuel was the commander of that group.

²¹Then 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.

²²Next came the three groups from Ephraim's camp. They traveled under their flag. The first group was the tribe of Ephraim. Elishama son of Ammihud was the commander of that group.

²³Next came the tribe of Manasseh. Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was the commander of that group.

²⁴Then came the tribe of Benjamin. Abidan son of Gideoni was the commander of that group.

²⁵The last three tribes in the line were the rear guard for all the other tribes.

These were the groups from Dans camp. They traveled under their flag. The first group was the tribe of Dan. Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai was their commander.

²⁶Next came the tribe of Asher. Pagiel son of Ocran was the commander of that group.

²⁷Then came the tribe of Naphtali. Ahira son of Enan was the commander of that group.

²⁸That was the way the Israelites marched when they moved from place to place.

²⁹Hobab 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.

³⁰But Hobab answered, No, I will not go with you. I will go back to my homeland and to my own people.

³¹Then Moses said, Please dont leave us. You know more about the desert than we do. You can be our guide.

³²If you come with us, we will share with you all the good things that the LORD gives us.

³³So 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.

³⁴The LORD'S cloud was over them every day. And when they left their camp every morning, the cloud was there to lead them.

³⁵When 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.

³⁶And when the Holy Box was put in its place, Moses always said, Come back, LORD, to the millions of Israelites.

11 ¹The 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.

²So the people cried to Moses for help. He prayed to the LORD and the fire stopped burning.

³So that place was called Taberah. The people gave the place that name because the LORD caused a fire to burn in their camp.

⁴The 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!

⁵We remember the fish we ate in Egypt. That fish cost us nothing. We also had good vegetables like cucumbers, melons, chives, onions, and garlic.

⁶But 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹The manna fell on the ground each night when the ground became wet with dew.)

¹⁰Moses 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.

¹¹He 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?

¹²You 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?

¹³I don't have enough meat for all these people! And they continue complaining to me. They say, Give us meat to eat!

¹⁴I cannot take care of all these people alone. The burden is too heavy for me.

¹⁵If 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!

¹⁶The 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.

¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁸Tell 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.

¹⁹You will eat it for more than one, or two, or five, or ten, or even twenty days!

²⁰You 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?

²¹ Moses said, There are 600,000 soldiers here, and you say, I will give them enough meat to eat for a whole month!

²² 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!

²³ But the LORD said to Moses, Dont limit my power! You will see that I can do what I say I can do.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ A young man ran and told Moses. The man said, Eldad and Medad are prophesying in camp.

²⁸ Joshua son of Nun said to Moses, Moses, sir, you must stop them! (Joshua had been Moses helper since Joshua was a boy.)

²⁹ 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!

³⁰ Then Moses and the leaders of Israel went back to the camp.

³¹ 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.

³²They 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 bushels. Then the people spread the quail meat all around the camp to dry in the sun.

³³People 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.

³⁴So the people named that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried those who had the strong desire for meat.

³⁵From Kibroth Hattaavah the people traveled to Hazeroth and stayed there.

12¹ Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses. They criticized him because he married an Ethiopian woman.

²They 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.

¹⁰The cloud rose from the Tent. Aaron turned and looked at Miriam. Her skin was white like snow she had a terrible skin disease!

¹¹Then Aaron said to Moses, Please, sir, forgive us for the foolish sin that we did.

¹²Dont 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.)

¹³So Moses prayed to the LORD, God, please heal her from this sickness!

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵So they took Miriam outside the camp for seven days. And the people did not move from that place until she was brought in again.

¹⁶After that the people left Hazeroth and traveled to the desert of Paran where they set up camp.

13 ¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Send 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.

³So Moses obeyed the LORD'S command and sent out the Israelite leaders while the people were camped in the desert of Paran.

⁴These are their names: from the tribe of Reuben Shammua son of Zaccur;

⁵from the tribe of Simeon Shaphat son of Hori;

⁶from the tribe of Judah Caleb son of Jephunneh;

⁷from the tribe of Issachar Igal son of Joseph;

⁸from the tribe of Ephraim Hoshea son of Nun;

⁹from the tribe of Benjamin Palti son of Raphu;

¹⁰from the tribe of Zebulun Gaddiel son of Sodi;

¹¹from the tribe of Manasseh (a tribe from Joseph) Gaddi son of Susi;

¹²from the tribe of Dan Ammiel son of Gemalli;

¹³from the tribe of Asher Sethur son of Michael;

¹⁴from the tribe of Naphtali Nahbi son of Vophsi;

¹⁵from the tribe of Gad Geuel son of Maki.

¹⁶These 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.)

¹⁷When Moses was sending them out to explore Canaan, he said, Go through the Negev and then into the hill country.

¹⁸See 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?

¹⁹Learn 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?

²⁰And 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.)

²¹So they went to explore the country. They explored the area from the desert of Zin to Rehob and Lebo Hamath.

²²They 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.

²³Then 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.

²⁴That place is called the Eshcol Valley, because there the men of Israel cut off the bunch of grapes.

²⁵The men explored that country for 40 days, and then they went back to the camp.

²⁶The 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.

²⁷The 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.

²⁸But the people living there are very powerful. The cities are very large and strongly defended. We even saw some Anakites there.

²⁹The 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.

³⁰Caleb 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.

³¹But the men who had gone with him said, We cannot fight those people! They are much stronger than we are.

³²So 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.

³³We 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!

14¹ That night all the people in the camp began shouting loudly.

² 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.

³ Did the LORD bring us to this new land to be killed in war? The enemy will kill us and take our wives and children! It would be better for us to go back to Egypt.

⁴ Then the people said to each other, Lets choose another leader and go back to Egypt.

⁵ Moses and Aaron bowed low to the ground in front of all the people gathered there.

⁶ Joshua and Caleb became very upset. (Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were two of the men who explored the land.)

⁷ These two men said to all the Israelites gathered there, The land that we saw is very good.

⁸ 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.

⁹So dont turn against the LORD! Dont 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 dont be afraid!

¹⁰All 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.

¹¹The LORD spoke to Moses and said, How long will these people continue to turn against me? They show that they dont trust me or believe in my power, in spite of the many miracles I have done among them.

¹²I 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.

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴The Egyptians have already told the people in Canaan about it. They already 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.

¹⁵So you must not kill these people now. If you kill them, all the nations who have heard about your power will say,

¹⁶The LORD was not able to bring them into the land he promised them. So he killed them in the desert.

¹⁷So now, Lord, show your strength! Show it the way you said you would.

¹⁸You said, The LORD is slow to become angry. He is full of great love. He forgives those who are guilty and break the law. But he always punishes those who are guilty. He punishes them, and he also punishes their children, their grandchildren, and even their great-grandchildren for those bad things.

¹⁹Now, 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.

²⁰The LORD answered, Yes, I will forgive the people as you asked.

²¹But 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:

²²None 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.

²³I promised their ancestors that I would give them that land. But none of those people who turned against me will ever enter that land!

²⁴But 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.

²⁵The 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.

²⁶The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

²⁷ How long will these evil people continue to complain against me? I have heard their complaints and their griping.

²⁸ 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:

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ You were afraid and complained that your enemies in that new land would take your children away from 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.

³⁴For 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.

³⁵I 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.

³⁶The 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.

³⁷The men were responsible for spreading the trouble among the Israelites. So the LORD caused a sickness to kill all those men.

³⁸But 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.

³⁹When Moses told the Israelites this, they were very sad.

⁴⁰Early 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.

⁴¹But Moses said, Why are you not obeying the LORD'S command? You will not be successful!

⁴²Dont go into that land. The LORD is not with you, so your enemies will easily defeat you.

⁴³The 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.

⁴⁴But 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.

⁴⁵The 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.

15 ¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Speak to the Israelites and tell them this: I am giving you a land to be your home. When you enter that land,
³you 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.

⁴At 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.

⁵Each time you offer a lamb as a burnt offering or sacrifice, you must also prepare a quart of wine as a drink offering.

⁶If 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.

⁷And you must prepare 1 1/4 quarts of wine as a drink offering. Its smell will please the LORD.

⁸You might prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, a sacrifice, a fellowship

offering, or to keep a special promise to the LORD.

⁹At that time you must also bring a grain offering with the bull. That grain offering should be 24 cups of fine flour mixed with 2 quarts of olive oil.

¹⁰Also bring 2 quarts of wine as a drink offering as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

¹¹Each bull or ram, or lamb or young goat that you give must be prepared in this way.

¹²Do this for every one of these animals that you give.

¹³This is the way every citizen of Israel must give gifts to please the LORD.

¹⁴Foreigners will live among you. If they give gifts to please the LORD, they must offer them the same way you do.

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶This 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,

¹⁸Tell the Israelites this: I am taking you to another land.

¹⁹When you eat the food that grows in that land, you must give part of that food as an offering to the LORD.

²⁰You 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.

²¹You and all your descendants must give part of the first dough you make from that flour as a gift to the LORD.

²²As you try to obey all the commands that the LORD gave Moses, you might fail and make a mistake.

²³The LORD gave you those commands through Moses, and they have been in effect from the day they were given throughout the generations until today.

²⁴If 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 purification for the whole community of Israel, 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁸ The priest will make purification before the LORD for the one who sinned, and that person will be forgiven.

²⁹ 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 insulting the LORD. They must be separated from their people. The same law applies to

citizens of Israel and to foreigners living among you.

³¹ 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.

³² While the Israelites were in the desert, some of them saw a man gathering firewood on the Sabbath day.

³³ The people who saw him gathering the wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole community of Israel.

³⁴ They guarded the man carefully because they did not know how they should punish him.

³⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses, The man must die. All the people must throw stones at him outside the camp.

³⁶ So the people took him outside the camp and killed him with stones. They did this just as the LORD commanded Moses.

³⁷ The LORD said to Moses,

³⁸ 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.

³⁹You 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 Gods 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.

16¹ Korah, 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.

¹⁵ So 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!

¹⁶ Then 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.

¹⁷ Each 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.

¹⁸ So 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.

¹⁹ Korah also gathered all the people together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Then the Glory of the LORD appeared to everyone there.

²⁰ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

²¹ Move away from these men! I want to destroy them now!

²² But Moses and Aaron bowed to the ground and cried out, God, you know what people are thinking. Please don't be

angry with all these people. Only one man really sinned.

²³ Then the LORD said to Moses,

²⁴ Tell the people to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

²⁵ 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 The LORD said to Moses,

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ (16: 37)

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.

⁴¹ 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,

⁴⁵ Move away from these people so that I can destroy them now. So Moses and Aaron bowed with their faces to the ground.

⁴⁶ 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 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.

⁴⁸ (16: 47)

⁴⁹But 14,700 people died from that sickness and that is not counting the people who died because of Korah.

⁵⁰So the terrible sickness was stopped, and Aaron went back to Moses at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.

17 ¹The LORD said to Moses,
²Speak 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.

³On the stick from Levi, write Aarons name. There must be one stick for the head of each of the twelve tribes.

⁴Put these walking sticks in the Meeting Tent in front of the Box of the Agreement. This is the place where I meet with you.

⁵I 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.

⁶So 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 Aarons 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 Aarons walking stick back in front of the Box that holds the Agreement. 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.

¹¹ So Moses did what the LORD commanded him.

¹² The Israelites said to Moses, We know that we will die! We are lost! We will all be destroyed!

¹³ Anyone who even comes near the LORD'S holy place will die. Is it true that we will all die?

18¹ The LORD said to Aaron, You, your sons, and all the people in your fathers 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.

⁵You are responsible for caring for the holy place and the altar. I don't want to become angry with the Israelites again.

⁶I 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.

⁷But, 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.

⁸Then 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.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰Eat these things only in a very holy place. Every male in your family may eat them, but you must remember that these offerings are holy.

¹¹The 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.

¹²And 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.

¹³When 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.

¹⁴Anything in Israel that is a special gift to God belongs to you.

¹⁵A womans first baby and an animals 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.

¹⁶They 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.

¹⁷But 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.

¹⁸But 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.

¹⁹I, 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.

²⁰The 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.

²² But the other Israelites must never go near that Meeting Tent. If they do, they must be put to death!

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ The 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.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ In 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.

19¹ 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.

⁸The man who burns that cow must wash himself and his clothes in water. He will be unclean until evening.

⁹Then 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 persons sins.

¹⁰The man who collected the cows 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.

¹¹Those who touch a dead body will be unclean for seven days.

¹²They must wash themselves with the special water on the third day and again on the seventh day. If they dont do this, they will remain unclean.

¹³Those 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.

¹⁴This 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.

¹⁵And every jar or pot without a lid becomes unclean.

¹⁶If 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.

¹⁷If you have become unclean, someone must use the ashes from the burned cow to make you clean again. He must pour fresh water over the ashes into a jar.

¹⁸And then someone who is clean must take a hyssop branch and dip it into the water. He must sprinkle it over the tent, the dishes, and any people who were in the tent. The same must be done for anyone who touches a dead body, its bones, or even a grave.

¹⁹The one who is clean must sprinkle this water on you on the third day and again on the seventh day to make you

clean. Then you must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and that evening you will be clean.

²⁰Whoever becomes unclean and does not make themselves clean again must be separated from the community. If they are not sprinkled with the special water for cleansing, they remain unclean and will be guilty of making the LORD'S Holy Tent unclean.

²¹This rule will never change. And whoever sprinkled the special water must also wash his clothes. And anyone else who touches that water will be unclean until evening.

²²And if an unclean person touches anything, it becomes unclean, and anyone else who touches it will be unclean until evening.

20¹The 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.

²There was not enough water for the people at that place. So the people met together to complain against Moses and Aaron.

³The people argued with Moses and said, Maybe we should have died in front of the LORD like our brothers did.

⁴Why did you bring the LORD'S people into this desert? Do you want us and our animals to die here?

⁵Why 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.

⁶So 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.

⁷The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

⁸Get 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.

⁹The 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.

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.

¹⁶But 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.

¹⁷Please 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 Kings 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.

¹⁸But 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.

¹⁹The 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 dont want to take it for ourselves.

²⁰But 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.

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 Aarons 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 Aarons special clothes and put them on Aarons 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.

21 ¹ 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.

² 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.

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.

⁵They 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!

⁶So the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people. The snakes bit the people, and many of the Israelites died.

⁷The 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰The Israelites left that place and camped at Oboth.

¹¹Then they left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim in the desert east of Moab.

¹²They left that place and camped in Zered Valley.

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴That is why these words are written in the Book of the Wars of the LORD: and Waheb in Suphah, and the Valleys of the Arnon,

¹⁵and the hills by the valleys that lead to the town of Ar. These places are at the border of Moab.

¹⁶The 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.

¹⁷Then the Israelites sang this song: Well, flow with water! Sing about it!

¹⁸This is the well that princes dug. It was opened up by our great leaders, using their staffs and walking sticks. From the desert the Israelites traveled to the town of Mattanah.

¹⁹And from Mattanah they went to Nahaliel. Then from Nahaliel they went to Bamoth.

²⁰From Bamoth they travelled to the Valley of Moab. In this place the top of the Pisgah Mountain looks over the desert.

²¹The Israelites sent some men to King Sihon of the Amorites. The men said to the king,

²²Allow 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 Kings Road. We will stay on that road until we have traveled through your country.

²³But 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 kings army fought against the Israelites at Jahaz.

²⁴But 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ That is why the singers sing this song: Go in and rebuild Heshbon! Make Sihons city strong.

²⁸ A fire began in Heshbon. That fire began in Sihons city. The fire destroyed Ar in Moab. It burned the hills above Arnon River.

²⁹ It is bad for you, Moab. You lost Chemoshs 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.

22¹ Then the Israelites traveled to the Jordan Valley in Moab. They camped near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

² 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.

³ (22: 2)

⁴ 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.

⁵ He sent some men to Balaam son of Beor. Balaam was at Pethor, near the Euphrates River. This was where Balaams people lived. This was Balaks 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸Balaam 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.

⁹God came to Balaam and asked, Who are these men with you?

¹⁰Balaam said to God, The king of Moab, Balak son of Zippor, sent them to give me a message.

¹¹This 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.

¹²But God said to Balaam, Dont go with them. You must not curse those people. They are my people.

¹³The 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.

¹⁴So the leaders of Moab went back to Balak and told him this. They said, Balaam refused to come with us.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ They went to Balaam and said, This is what Balak son of Zippor says to you: Please dont let anything stop you from coming.

¹⁷ I will pay you very much, and I will do whatever you ask. Come and curse these people for me.

¹⁸ Balaam gave Balaks 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 offers to give me his beautiful home filled with silver and gold, I will not do anything against the Lords command.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ The next morning, Balaam got up, put a saddle on his donkey, and went with the Moabite leaders.

²² Balaam was riding on his donkey. Two of his servants were with him. While Balaam was traveling, God became angry. So the angel of the LORD stood in the road in front of Balaam to stop him.

²³ When Balaam's donkey saw the angel of the LORD 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 angel of the LORD 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 angel of the LORD. 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 angel of the LORD 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.

²⁷The donkey saw the angel of the LORD. 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.

²⁸Then 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!

²⁹Balaam answered the donkey, You have made me look foolish. If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now!

³⁰But 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! That is true, Balaam said.

³¹Then 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.

³²Then the angel of the LORD asked Balaam, Why did you hit your donkey

three times? I am the one who came to stop you. But just in time,

³³ 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 angel of the LORD, 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 angel of the LORD 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 didnt 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.

³⁹Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth.

⁴⁰Balak 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.

⁴¹The next morning Balak took Balaam to the town of Bamoth Baal. From there they could see part of the Israelite camp.

23¹ Balaam said, Build seven altars here. And prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me.

²Balak did what Balaam asked. Then Balak and Balaam killed a ram and a bull on each of the altars.

³Then Balaam said to Balak, Stay here near this altar. I will go to another place. Then the LORD will come to me, and he will tell me what I must say. Then Balaam went away to a higher place.

⁴God came to Balaam at that place, and Balaam said, I have prepared seven altars. And I have killed a bull and a ram as a sacrifice on each altar.

⁵Then 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.

⁶So Balaam went back to Balak. Balak was still standing near the altar, and all the leaders of Moab were standing there with them.

⁷Then 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.

⁸But 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.

⁹I see these people from the mountain. I see them from the high hills. They live alone. They are not part of another nation.

¹⁰Who can count Jacobs 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 Balak 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?

¹⁸Then Balaam said this: Stand up, Balak, and listen to me. Hear me, Balak son of Zippor.

¹⁹God 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.

²⁰He told me to bless them. He blessed them, so I cannot change that.

²¹God saw no wrong in Jacobs people. He saw no sin in the Israelites. The LORD is their God, and he is with them. The Great King is with them!

²²God brought them out of Egypt. They are as strong as a wild ox.

²³There 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!

²⁴The 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 didnt ask for good things to happen to these people, but you didnt ask for bad things to happen to them either!

²⁶ Balaam answered, I told you before that I can only say what the LORD tells me to say.

²⁷ 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.

²⁹ 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.

24¹ 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 saw all the Israelites with each tribe in a separate camp. Then the Spirit of God came on him,

³and he gave this message: This message is from Balaam son of Beor. I am speaking about things I see clearly.

⁴These are the words I heard from God. I saw what God All-Powerful showed me. I humbly tell what I clearly see.

⁵People of Jacob, your tents are beautiful! Israelites, your homes are beautiful!

⁶You 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.

⁷You 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.

⁸God 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.

⁹Israel 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.

¹⁰When 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.

¹¹Now 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.

¹²Balaam said to Balak, You sent men to ask me to come. Dont you remember what I told them? I said,

¹³Even 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.

¹⁴Now 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.

¹⁵Then Balaam gave this message: This message is from Balaam son of Beor. I am speaking about things I see clearly.

¹⁶I heard this message from God. I learned what God Most High taught me. I saw what God All-Powerful showed me. I humbly tell what I clearly see.

¹⁷I 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.

¹⁸Israel will grow strong! He will get the land of Edom. He will get the land of Seir, his enemy.

¹⁹A new ruler will come from the family of Jacob. That ruler will destroy the people left alive in that city.

²⁰Then Balaam saw the Amalekites and said this: Amalek is the strongest of all nations, but even Amalek will be destroyed!

²¹Then Balaam saw the Kenites and said this: You believe that your country is safe, like a birds nest high on a mountain.

²²But 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, but those ships will also be destroyed.

²⁵ Then Balaam got up and went back home, and Balak went his own way.

25 ¹ While the Israelites were camped near Acacia, the men committed sexual sins with Moabite women.

² The Moabite women invited the men to come and join in their sacrifices to their false gods. So the Israelites joined in worshiping these false gods they ate the sacrifices and worshiped these gods. There the Israelites began worshiping the false god, Baal of Peor. And the LORD became very angry with them.

³ (25: 2)

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.

⁶At 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.

⁷Phinehas 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.

⁸He 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.

⁹A total of 24,000 people died from that sickness.

¹⁰The LORD said to Moses,

¹¹I 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.

¹²Tell Phinehas that I am making a peace agreement with him.

¹³This 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.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵And 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.

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses,

¹⁷The Midianites are your enemies. You must kill them.

¹⁸They 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 a Midianite leader, but she was killed when the sickness came to the Israelites. That

sickness was caused because the people were tricked into worshipping the false god Baal of Peor.

26¹ After the great sickness, the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron the priest.

² 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.

³ 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,

⁴ 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:

⁵ 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;

⁶ Hezron the Hezronite family group;
Carmi the Carmite family group.

⁷The total number of men in these family groups from the tribe of Reuben was 43,730.

⁸Pallus son was Eliab.

⁹Eliab 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.

¹⁰That 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.

¹¹But the other people who were from the family of Korah did not die.

¹²These are the family groups from the tribe of Simeon: Nemuel the Nemuelite family group; Jamin the Jaminite family group; Jakin the Jakinite family group;

¹³Zerah the Zerahite family group; Shaul the Shaulite family group.

¹⁴The total number of men in these family groups from the tribe of Simeon was 22,200.

¹⁵These are the family groups in the tribe of Gad: Zephon the Zephonite

family group; Haggithe Haggite family group; Shunithe Shunite family group;

¹⁶Oznithe Oznite family group; Erithe Erite family group;

¹⁷Arodithe Arodite family group; Arelithe Arelite family group.

¹⁸The total number of men in these family groups from the tribe of Gad was 40,500.

¹⁹These are the family groups from the tribe of Judah: Shelahthe Shelanite family group; Perezthe Perezite family group; Zerahthe Zerahite family group. (Two of Judahs sons, Er and Onan, died in Canaan.)

²⁰(26: 19)

²¹These are the family groups from Perez: Hezronthe Hezronite family group; Hamulthe Hamulite family group.

²²These were the family groups from the tribe of Judah. The total number of men was 76,500.

²³The family groups from the tribe of Issachar were Tolathe Tolaite family group; Puahthe Puite family group;

²⁴Jashubthe Jashubite family group; Shimronthe Shimronite family group.

²⁵ These were the family groups from the tribe of Issachar. The total number of men was 64,300.

²⁶ The family groups from the tribe of Zebulun were Seredthe Seredite family group; Elonthe Elonite family group; Jahleelthe Jahleelite family group.

²⁷ These were the family groups from the tribe of Zebulun. The total number of men was 60,500.

²⁸ Josephs two sons were Manasseh and Ephraim. Each son became a tribe with its own family groups.

²⁹ Manassehs family groups were Makirthe Makirite family groups. (Makir was the father of Gilead.) Gileadthe Gileadite family groups.

³⁰ The family groups from Gilead were Iezerthe Iezerite family group; Helekthe Helekite family group;

³¹ Asrielthe Asrielite family group; Shechemthe Shechemite family group;

³² Shemidathe Shemidaite family group; Hephherthe Hephherite family group.

³³ Zelophehad was the son of Hephher. But he had no sononly daughters. His

daughters names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

³⁴These are all the family groups from the tribe of Manasseh. The total number of men was 52,700.

³⁵The family groups from the tribe of Ephraim were Shuthelahthe Shuthelahite family group; Bekerthe Bekerite family group; Tahanthe Tahanite family group.

³⁶Eran was from Shuthelahs family group; Eranthe Eranite family group.

³⁷These 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.

³⁸The family groups from the tribe of Benjamin were Belathe Belaite family group; Ashbelthe Ashbelite family group; Ahiramthe Ahiramite family group;

³⁹Shuphamthe Shuphamite family group; Huphamthe Huphamite family group;

⁴⁰The family groups from Bela were Ardthe Ardite family group; Naamanthe Naamanite family group.

⁴¹ These were all the family groups from the tribe of Benjamin. The total number of men was 45,600.

⁴² The family groups from the tribe of Dan were Shuham the Shuhamite family group. That was the family group from the tribe of Dan.

⁴³ There were many family groups in the Shuhamite tribe. The total number of men was 64,400.

⁴⁴ The family groups from the tribe of Asher were Imnah the Imnite family group; Ishvithe 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; Gunithe Gunitite 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.

⁵⁹Amrams wife was named Jochebed. She was also from the tribe of Levi. She was born in Egypt. Amram and Jochebed had two sons, Aaron and Moses. They also had a daughter, Miriam.

⁶⁰Aaron was the father of Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

⁶¹But Nadab and Abihu died. They died because they made an offering to the LORD with fire that was not allowed.

⁶²The 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 people.

⁶³Moses and Eleazar the priest counted all these people. They counted the Israelites while they were in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

⁶⁴Many 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,

⁶⁵because the LORD told them that they would all die in the desert. The only two men who were left alive were Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

27 ¹Zelophehad was the son of Hopher. Hopher was the son of Gilead. Gilead 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.

²These five women went to the Meeting Tent and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders, and all the Israelites. The five daughters said,

³Our 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 LORD.) But our father had no sons.

⁴This 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 fathers brothers will get.

⁵So Moses asked the LORD what he should do.

⁶The LORD said to him,

⁷The daughters of Zelophehad are right. They should share the land with their fathers brothers. So give them the land that you would have given to their father.

⁸So tell the Israelites, If a man has no son, when he dies everything he owns will be given to his daughter.

⁹If he has no daughter, everything he owns will be given to his brothers.

¹⁰If he has no brothers, everything he owns will be given to his fathers brothers.

¹¹If 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.

¹²Then 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.

¹³After you have seen this land, you will die like your brother Aaron.

¹⁴Remember 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.)

¹⁵Moses said to the LORD,

¹⁶LORD, you are the God who knows what people are thinking. I pray that you will choose a leader for these people.

¹⁷I 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.

¹⁸So 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.

¹⁹Tell him to stand in front of Eleazar the priest and all the people. Then make him the new leader.

²⁰Show the people that you are making him leader, then all the people will obey him.

²¹ 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.

²² Moses obeyed the LORD. Moses told Joshua to stand before Eleazar the priest and all the Israelites.

²³ 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.

28 ¹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said,

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ Offer one of the lambs in the morning and the other lamb just before dark.

⁵ Also give a grain offering of 8 cups of fine flour mixed with 1 quart of olive oil.

⁶(They started giving the daily offerings at Mount Sinai as sweet-smelling gifts to the LORD.)

⁷The 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.

⁸Offer 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.

⁹On 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.

¹⁰This is a special offering for the day of rest. This offering is in addition to the regular daily offering and drink offering.

¹¹On 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.

¹²With 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.

¹³Also 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.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵In 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.

¹⁶The LORD'S Passover will be on the 14th day of the first month.

¹⁷The 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.

¹⁸You must have a special meeting on the first day of this festival. You will not do any work on that day.

¹⁹You 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.

²⁰You 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.

²¹ (28: 20)

²²You must also give a male goat as a sin offering to make you pure.

²³You must give these offerings in addition to the morning burnt offerings that you give every day.

²⁴In 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.

²⁵Then, on the seventh day of this festival, you will have another special

meeting. You will not do any work on that day.

²⁶The 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.

²⁷You 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.

²⁸You must also give 24 cups of fine flour mixed with oil with each bull, and 16 cups with each ram,

²⁹and 8 cups with each lamb.

³⁰You must also sacrifice a male goat to make you pure.

³¹You 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.

29¹ 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.

²You 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.

³You will also offer 24 cups of fine flour mixed with oil with the bull, 16 cups with the ram,

⁴and 8 cups with each of the 7 lambs.

⁵Also offer a male goat as a sin offering to make you pure.

⁶These 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.

⁷There will be a special meeting on the tenth day of the seventh month. During that day you must not eat any food, and you must not do any work.

⁸You 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.

⁹You must also offer 24 cups of fine flour mixed with olive oil with the bull, 16 cups with the ram,

¹⁰and 8 cups with each of the 7 lambs.

¹¹You 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.

¹²There will be a special meeting on the 15th day of the seventh month. You must not do any work on that day. You must celebrate a special festival for the LORD for seven days.

¹³You 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.

¹⁴You 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,

¹⁵and 8 cups with each of the 14 lambs.

¹⁶You must also offer 1 male goat. This must be in addition to the daily

sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

¹⁷On 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.

¹⁸You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs.

¹⁹You 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.

²⁰On 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.

²¹You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs.

²²You 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.

²³On 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.

²⁴You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs.

²⁵You 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.

²⁶On 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.

²⁷You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs.

²⁸You 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.

²⁹On 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.

³⁰You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs.

³¹You 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.

³²On 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.

³⁵The 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.

³⁹At 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.

30¹Moses spoke with all the leaders of the Israelite tribes and told them about these commands from the LORD:

²If a man makes a vow 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.

³A young woman might still be living in her father's house. She might make a vow to the LORD or promise something with an oath.

⁴If her father hears about the vow or promise and says nothing against it, the young woman must do what she promised.

⁵But if her father hears about it and does not agree for her to do it, she is

free from her vow or any promise she made. She does not have to do what she said. Her father stopped her, so the LORD will forgive her.

⁶A woman might make a vow, or she might make a promise with an oath without thinking enough about it. If she then gets married,

⁷and her husband hears about her vow or promise and says nothing against it, the woman must keep it. She must do whatever she said she would do.

⁸But if the husband hears about her vow or promise and does not agree for her to do it, the wife does not have to keep her vow or the careless promise she made with an oath. If her husband is against it, this ends her duty to keep it. So the LORD will forgive her.

⁹But a woman who is a widow or divorced must keep any vow or promise she makes. She must do everything she said she would do.

¹⁰A married woman living with her husband might make a vow or a promise with an oath.

¹¹If her husband hears about it and says nothing against it, she must keep

any vow or promise she made. She must do everything she said she would do.

¹²But if her husband hears about her vows or promises and refuses to let her keep them, she does not have to keep them. 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.

¹³When a married woman makes a vow or promises to do without something, her husband can allow her to keep her vows or promises, or he can stop her from keeping them.

¹⁴If he hears about them and does not stop them, he is allowing her to keep them. She must then do everything she said she would do. By saying nothing against her vows or promises the husband agreed for her to keep them.

¹⁵But if the husband says nothing when he hears about them, but then later stops her from keeping them, he is the one responsible for breaking her promises.

¹⁶These are the commands the 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 fathers house.

31 ¹The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

²Moses, tell the Israelites to go and attack the Midianites and do to them what they did to you. After that, you will die.

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 Phineas son of Eleazar with them as the priest. Phineas 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 Rebathe

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

¹²and 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.

¹³Then Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the people went out of the camp to meet with the soldiers.

¹⁴Moses 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.

¹⁵Moses said to them, Why did you let the women live?

¹⁶These 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.

¹⁷ Now, kill all the Midianite boys, and kill all the Midianite women who have had sexual relations with a man.

¹⁸ You can let all the young girls live but only if they never had sexual relations with any man.

¹⁹ And 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.

²⁰ You must wash all of your clothes. You must wash anything made with leather, wool, or wood. You must purify yourselves.

²¹ 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.

²² You 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.

²³ (31: 22)

²⁴ On the seventh day, you must wash all your clothes. Then you will be pure. After that you can come into camp.

²⁵ Then the LORD said to Moses,

²⁶ You, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders should count all the prisoners, animals, and everything the soldiers took in war.

²⁷ Then divide these things between the soldiers who went to war and the rest of the Israelites.

²⁸ Take 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.

²⁹ Take 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.

³⁰ And then, from the peoples 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.

³¹ So Moses and Eleazar did what the LORD commanded Moses.

³² The soldiers had taken 675,000 sheep,

³³ 72,000 cattle,

³⁴ 61,000 donkeys,

³⁵ and 32,000 women. (These are only the women who had not had sexual relations with any man.)

³⁶ The soldiers who went to war got 337,500 sheep.

³⁷ They gave 675 sheep to the LORD.

³⁸ The soldiers got 36,000 cattle. They gave 72 cattle to the LORD.

³⁹ The soldiers got 30,500 donkeys. They gave 61 donkeys to the LORD.

⁴⁰ The soldiers got 16,000 women. They gave 32 women to the LORD.

⁴¹ Moses gave all these gifts for the LORD to Eleazar the priest, as the LORD had commanded him.

⁴² Then Moses counted the peoples half. This was their share that Moses had taken from the soldiers who had gone to war.

⁴³The people got 337,500 sheep,

⁴⁴36,000 cattle,

⁴⁵30,500 donkeys,

⁴⁶and 16,000 women.

⁴⁷Moses 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.

⁴⁸Then the leaders of the army (the leaders over 1000 men and the leaders over 100 men) came to Moses.

⁴⁹They told Moses, We, your servants, have counted our soldiers. We have not missed any of them.

⁵⁰So we are bringing the LORD'S gift from every soldier. We are bringing things that are made of gold arm bands, bracelets, rings, earrings, and necklaces. This gift to the LORD is to make us pure.

⁵¹So Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted all these gold items from them.

⁵²The gold that the commanders and captains gave to the LORD weighed about 424 pounds.

⁵³The soldiers kept the rest of their share of the things they took in war.

⁵⁴ Moses and Eleazar the priest took 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.

32¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ (32: 3)

⁵ 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.

⁶ Moses told the people from the tribes of Reuben and Gad, Will you let your

brothers go and fight while you settle here?

⁷Why 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!

⁸Your fathers did the same thing to me. In Kadesh Barnea I sent spies to look at the land.

⁹These 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.

¹⁰The LORD became very angry with the people. He made this promise:

¹¹None 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.

¹²Only Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun really followed the LORD!

¹³The 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.

¹⁴And 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?

¹⁵If you stop following the Lord, he will make Israel stay even longer in the desert. Then you will destroy all these people!

¹⁶But 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.

¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁸We will not come back home until everyone in Israel has taken his part of the land.

¹⁹We will not take any of the land west of the Jordan River. No, our part of the land is east of the Jordan River.

²⁰So 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.

²¹Your soldiers must cross the Jordan River and be ready to fight for the LORD until he forces the enemy to leave.

²²After 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.

²³But 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.

²⁴Build cities for your children and barns for your animals. But then, you must do what you promised.

²⁵Then 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.

²⁶Our wives, children, and all our animals will stay in the cities of Gilead.

²⁷But we, your servants, will cross the Jordan River. We will march before the LORD into battle, as our master says.

²⁸So 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 be given 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 Josephs 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. (Makir was Manasseh's son.) They defeated the city. They defeated the Amorites who lived there.

⁴⁰ So Moses gave Gilead to Makir from the tribe of Manasseh, and his family settled 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.

33¹ 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.

²Following 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:

³On 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.

⁴The 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.

⁵The Israelites left Rameses and traveled to Succoth.

⁶From Succoth they traveled to Etham. They camped there at the edge of the desert.

⁷They left Etham and went to Pi Hahiroth. This was near Baal Zephon. They camped near Migdol.

⁸They 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.

⁹They left Marah and went to Elim and camped there. There were 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees there.

¹⁰They left Elim and camped near the Red Sea.

¹¹They left the Red Sea and camped in the western Sinai desert.

¹²They left there and camped at Dophkah.

¹³They left Dophkah and camped at Alush.

¹⁴They left Alush and camped at Rephidim. There was no water for the people to drink at that place.

¹⁵They left Rephidim and camped in the desert of Sinai.

¹⁶They left the desert of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah.

¹⁷They left Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazereth.

¹⁸They left Hazereth and camped at Rithmah.

¹⁹They left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez.

²⁰They left Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah.

²¹ They left Libnah and camped at Rissah.

²² They left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.

²³ They left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.

²⁴ They left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.

²⁵ They left Haradah and camped at Makheloth.

²⁶ They left Makheloth and camped at Tahath.

²⁷ They left Tahath and camped at Terah.

²⁸ They left Terah and camped at Mithcah.

²⁹ They left Mithcah and camped at Hashmonah.

³⁰ They left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.

³¹ They left Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan.

³² They left Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Haggidgad.

³³ They left Hor Haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

³⁴ They left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.

³⁵ They left Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber.

³⁶ They left Ezion Geber and camped at Kadesh, in the desert of Zin.

³⁷ They left Kadesh and camped at Hor. This was the mountain at the border of the country of 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.

⁴⁵They left Iyim (Iye Abarim) and camped at Dibon Gad.

⁴⁶They left Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim.

⁴⁷They left Almon Diblathaim and camped on the mountains of Abarim near Nebo.

⁴⁸They left the mountains of Abarim and camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

⁴⁹They camped by the Jordan River in the Jordan Valley in Moab. Their camp went from Beth Jeshimoth to Acacia Field.

⁵⁰There, the LORD spoke to Moses and said,

⁵¹Speak to the Israelites and tell them this: You will cross the Jordan River. You will go into the land of Canaan.

⁵²You will take the land from the people you find there. You must destroy all of their carved statues and idols. You must destroy all of their high places.

⁵³You will take the land and you will settle there, because I am giving this land to you. It will belong to your family groups.

⁵⁴ Each of your family groups will get part of the land. You will throw lots to decide which family group gets each part of the country. Large family groups will get large parts of 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!

34¹ 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.

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

among the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh, as the LORD commanded.

¹⁴The tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have already taken their land.

¹⁵These two and a half tribes took the land near Jericho they took the land east of the Jordan River.

¹⁶Then the LORD spoke to Moses. He said,

¹⁷These are the men who will help you divide the land: Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun,

¹⁸and the leaders of all the tribes. There will be one leader from each tribe. These men will divide the land.

¹⁹These are the names of the leaders: from the tribe of Judah Caleb son of Jephunneh;

²⁰from the tribe of Simeon Shemuel son of Ammihud;

²¹from the tribe of Benjamin Elidad son of Kislou;

²²from the tribe of Dan Bukki son of Jogli;

²³from the descendants of Joseph; from the tribe of Manasseh Hanniel son of Ephod;

²⁴ from the tribe of Ephraim Kemuel son of Shiphtan;

²⁵ from the tribe of Zebulun Elizaphan son of Parnach;

²⁶ from the tribe of Issachar Paltiel son of Azzan;

²⁷ from the tribe of Asher Ahihud son of Shelomi;

²⁸ from the tribe of Naphtali Pedahel son of Ammihud.

²⁹ The LORD chose these men to divide the land of Canaan among the Israelites.

35 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ So you will give a total of 48 cities to the Levites. You will also give them the land around those cities.

⁸ 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 mans family who wants to punish the killer until that person is judged in court.

¹³ There will be six cities of safety.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁷ If you use a rock large enough to kill someone and you kill another person, you are a murderer, and you must die.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹A member of the dead persons family can chase you and kill you.

²⁰You 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 persons family can chase you and kill you.

²¹ (35: 20)

²²You might accidentally kill someone, maybe by pushing or by accidentally hitting them with a tool or weapon.

²³Perhaps you threw a rock that was large enough to kill, but it hit someone you didnt see and killed them. You didnt plan to kill anyone. You didnt hate the person you killedit was only an accident.

²⁴If that happens, the community must decide what to do. The court must decide if a member of the dead persons family can kill you.

²⁵If the community decides to protect you from the dead persons family, the community must take you back to your city of safety. You must stay there until the official high priest dies.

²⁶You must never go outside the limits of your city of safety. If you do and if a member of the dead persons family catches you and kills you, that family member will not be guilty of murder.

²⁷ (35: 26)

²⁸Whoever 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.

²⁹These rules will be the law forever in all the towns of your people.

³⁰A 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.

³¹A murderer must be put to death. Dont take money to change the punishment. That murderer must be killed.

³²If a person killed someone and then ran to one of the cities of safety, dont take money to let that person go home. That person must stay in that city until the high priest dies.

³³Dont 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.

³⁴I 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.

36¹Manasseh 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 tribes of Israel.

²They 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.

³Maybe 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?

⁴People 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 Zelophehads daughters? Will our tribe lose that land forever?

⁵Moses gave this command from the LORD to the Israelites: The men from this tribe of Josephs people are right.

⁶This is the LORD'S command to Zelophehads daughters: If you want to marry someone, you must marry someone from your own tribe.

⁷In 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.

⁸And if a woman gets her fathers land, she must marry someone from her own tribe. That way everyone will keep the land that belonged to his ancestors.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰So Zelophehads daughters obeyed the LORD'S command to Moses.

¹¹Zelophehads daughtersMalah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noahmarried their cousins on their fathers side of the family.

¹²Their husbands were from Manassehs family groups, so their land remained within their fathers family group and tribe.

¹³So 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

1 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, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

² The trip from Mount Horeb through the mountains of Seir to Kadesh Barnea takes only eleven days.

³ 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.

⁴ 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 Ashtaroth and in Edrei.

⁵ The Israelites were in Moab on the east side of the Jordan River when

Moses began to explain what God had commanded:

⁶At Mount Horeb the LORD our God spoke to us. He said, You have stayed at this mountain long enough.

⁷Go 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.

⁸Look, 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.

⁹At that time I told you, I cant take care of you by myself.

¹⁰And 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.

¹¹May the LORD, the God of your ancestors, give you 1000 times more people than you are now! May he bless you as he promised.

¹²But I cannot take care of you and solve all your arguments by myself.

¹³So choose some men from each tribe, and I will make them leaders over you. Choose wise men with experience who understand people.

¹⁴And you said, That is a good thing to do.

¹⁵So 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.

¹⁶At 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.

¹⁷You 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.

¹⁸At that same time I also told you everything you must do.

¹⁹So 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.

²⁰Then 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.

²³I thought that was a good idea. So I chose twelve men from among you, one man from each tribe.

²⁴ Then they left and went up to the hill country. They came to the Valley of Eshcol and explored it.

²⁵ They 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.

²⁷ You 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.

²⁸ Where 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, Dont be upset or afraid of those people.

³⁰ The LORD your God is in front, leading you. He will fight for you just as he did in Egypt.

³¹ You 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 didnt trust the LORD your God then either.

³³ But 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.

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.

³⁶ Only 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.

³⁸ But 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.

³⁹ You 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.

⁴¹Then 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. Then each of you put on your weapons. You thought it would be easy to go and take the hill country.

⁴²But 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!

⁴³I 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.

⁴⁴The Amorites who lived there came out like a swarm of bees and chased you all the way from Seir to Hormah.

⁴⁵Then 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.

2¹Then 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,

³You have traveled around these mountains long enough. Turn north.

⁴Tell 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.

⁵Dont fight them. I will not give you any of their landnot even a foot of it, because I gave the hill country of Seir to Esau to keep as his own.

⁶You must pay the people of Esau for any food you eat or water you drink there.

⁷Remember 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.

⁸So 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.

⁹The 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, and I gave them the city of Ar.

¹⁰(In the past, the Emmites lived in Ar. They were strong people, and there were many of them. They were very tall, like the Anakites.

¹¹The Anakites were part of the Rephaites. People thought the Emmites were also Rephaites, but the people of Moab called them Emmites.

¹²The 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.)

¹³The Lord said to me, Now go to the other side of Zered Valley. So we crossed Zered Valley.

¹⁴It was 38 years from the time we left Kadesh Barnea until the time we crossed Zered Valley. As the LORD had vowed, all the fighting men in our camp from that generation had died.

¹⁵The LORD had opposed those men until they were all dead and gone from our camp.

¹⁶After all the fighting men were dead and gone,

¹⁷the LORD said to me,

¹⁸Today you must cross the border at Ar and go into Moab.

¹⁹You will be just across from the Ammonites. Dont 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 Esaus people. In the past the Horites lived in Seir. But Esaus people destroyed the Horites, and Esaus descendants still live there today.

²³ 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.)

²⁴ The Lord said to 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.

²⁵ Today I will make all people everywhere afraid of you. They will hear the news about you, and they will be afraid and shake with fear.

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 go 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.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ The LORD said to me, I am giving King Sihon and his country to you. Now, go take his land!

³² Then King Sihon and all his people came out to fight against us at Jahaz.

³³ But the LORD our God gave him to us. We defeated King Sihon, his sons, and all his people.

³⁴ 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!

³⁵ We took only the cattle and the valuable things from those cities.

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ 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.

3¹ 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.

² 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.

³So the LORD our God let us defeat King Og of Bashan. We destroyed him and all his men. Not one of them was left.

⁴Then we took all the cities that belonged to Og at that time. We took all the cities from Ogs people 60 cities in the area of Argob, Ogs kingdom in Bashan.

⁵All 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.

⁶We 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.

⁷But we kept all the cattle and the valuable things from the cities for ourselves.

⁸In 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.

⁹(The people from Sidon call Mount Hermon, Sirion, but the Amorites called it Senir.)

¹⁰We 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 Ogs kingdom of Bashan.

¹¹(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.)

¹²So 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.

¹³I gave the other half of Gilead and the whole area of Bashan to half the tribe of Manasseh. (Bashan was Ogs kingdom. Part of Bashan was called Argob. It was also called the Land of Rephaim.

¹⁴Jair, 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 named for Jair, and even today people call Bashan the Towns of Jair.)

¹⁵I 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.

¹⁸At 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 Then I 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.

²² Don't fear the kings of these lands, because the LORD your God will fight for you.

²³ Then I 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.

²⁵ Please 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.

²⁷ Go 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.

²⁸ You 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.

4¹ 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.

² You 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.

³You 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.

⁵I 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.

⁷The 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 the teachings I give you today.

⁹But 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.

¹⁰Remember 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.

¹¹You 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.

¹²Then 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.

¹³The 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.

¹⁴At 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.

¹⁵On the day the LORD spoke to you from the fire at Mount Horeb, you did not see him there was no shape for God.

¹⁶So be careful! Dont sin and destroy yourselves by making false gods or statues in the shape of any living thing. Dont make an idol that looks like a man or a woman,

¹⁷or like an animal on the earth, or like a bird that flies in the sky.

¹⁸And dont make an idol that looks like anything that crawls on the ground or like a fish in the sea.

¹⁹And be careful when you look up and see the sun, the moon, and the starsall 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.

²⁰But 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.

²¹The 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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,

²⁴ because the LORD your God hates for his people to worship other gods. And he can be like a fire that destroys!

²⁵ 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!

²⁶ 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!

²⁷The 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.

²⁸There you will serve gods made by menthings made of wood and stone that cannot see or hear or eat or smell!

²⁹But 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.

³⁰When you are in troublewhen all these things happen to youthen you will come back to the LORD your God and obey him.

³¹The 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.

³²Has 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.

³⁷He 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.

³⁹So 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.

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.

⁴⁴Moses gave Gods law to the Israelites.

⁴⁵ Moses gave these teachings, laws, and rules to the people after they came out of Egypt.

⁴⁶ He 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.

⁴⁷ They 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.

⁴⁸ This land goes from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley all the way to Mount Sirion, that is, Mount Hermon.

⁴⁹ This 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.

5¹ Moses 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, 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,

⁶I am the LORD your God. I led you out of Egypt where you were slaves.

⁷You must not worship any other gods except me.

⁸You 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.

⁹Don'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.

¹⁰But 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!

¹¹You 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.

¹²You must keep the Sabbath a special day like the LORD your God commanded.

¹³Work six days a week and do your job,

¹⁴but 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.

¹⁵Dont 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.

¹⁶You 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.

¹⁷You must not murder anyone.

¹⁸You must not commit the sin of adultery.

¹⁹You must not steal.

²⁰You must not tell lies about other people.

²¹You must not want another mans 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.

²²Moses 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 didnt say any more. He wrote his words on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

²³You heard the voice from the darkness while the mountain was burning with fire. Then all the elders and the other leaders of your tribes came to me.

²⁴They said, The LORD our God has shown us his Glory and his greatness! We heard him speak from the fire. We have seen today that it is possible to continue living even after God speaks to us.

²⁵But if we hear the LORD our God speak to us again, surely we will die! That terrible fire will destroy us. We dont want to die.

²⁶We heard the living God speak from the fire! Has anyone ever done that and lived through it?

²⁷Moses, you go near and listen to everything the LORD our God says. Then tell us what the LORD tells you. We will listen and do everything he says.

²⁸The LORD heard what you said and told me, I heard what the people said. And that is fine.

²⁹I only wanted to change their way of thinkingI 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.

³⁰Go and tell the people to go back to their tents,

³¹but 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.

³²So you people must be careful to do everything the LORD commanded you. Do not stop following God!

³³You 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.

6¹ 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.

²You 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 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! 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.

¹⁶ You must not test the LORD your God like you tested him at Massah.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸You 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.

¹⁹And you will force out all your enemies, just as the LORD said.

²⁰In the future your children might ask you, The LORD our God gave you teachings, laws, and rules. What do they mean?

²¹Then you will say to them, We were Pharaohs slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with his great power.

²²The LORD did great and amazing things. We saw him do these things to the Egyptian people, to Pharaoh, and to the people in Pharaohs house.

²³He brought us out of Egypt so that he could give us the land that he promised our ancestors.

²⁴The 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.

²⁵If 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.

7¹The 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!

⁵This 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 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.

⁹So 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,

¹⁰but the LORD punishes people who hate him. He will destroy them. He will

not be slow to punish those who hate him.

¹¹ So 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.

¹³ He 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.

¹⁵ The 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.

¹⁷Don'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.

²⁰The 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.

²³ But the LORD your God will let you defeat those nations. He will confuse them in battle, until they are destroyed.

²⁴ He 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. Don't even think about wanting or keeping the silver or gold on those statues for yourselves. That's like walking into a trap—it will ruin your life. The LORD your God hates those idols.

²⁶ You 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.

8¹ You must obey all the commands that I give you today, because then you will live and grow to become a great nation. You will get the land that the LORD promised to your ancestors.

²And you must remember the entire trip that the LORD your God has led you through these 40 years in the desert. He was testing you. He wanted to make you humble. He wanted to know what is in your heart. He wanted to know if you would obey his commands.

³He humbled you and let you be hungry. Then he fed you with manna something you did not know about before. 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. Peoples 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.

⁶You 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 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.

¹¹Be 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.

¹⁷Dont ever say to yourself, I got all this wealth by my own power and ability.

¹⁸Remember the LORD your God is the one who gives you power to do these things. He does this because he wants to keep the agreement that he made with your ancestors, as he is doing today!

¹⁹Dont ever forget the LORD your God. Dont ever follow other gods or worship and serve them. If you do that, I warn you today: You will surely be destroyed!

²⁰The LORD is destroying other nations for you. But if you stop listening to the LORD your God, you will be destroyed just like them!

9¹Listen, you Israelites! You will go across the Jordan River today. You will go into that land to force out nations greater and stronger than you. Their

cities are big and have walls as high as the sky!

²The people there are tall and strong. They are the Anakites. You know about them. You heard our spies say, No one can win against the Anakites.

³But you can be sure that it is the LORD your God who goes across the river before you and God is like a fire that destroys! He will destroy those nations and make them fall before you. You will force those nations out and quickly destroy them. The LORD has promised you that this will happen.

⁴The LORD your God will force those nations out for you. But don't say to yourselves, The LORD brought us to live in this land because we are such good people. No, the LORD forced those nations out because they were evil, not because you were good.

⁵You are going in to take their land, but not because you are good and live right. You are going in, and the LORD your God is forcing those people out because of the evil way they lived. And the LORD wants to keep the promise he made to

your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

⁶The LORD your God is giving you that good land to live in, but you should know that it is not because you are good. The truth is that you are very stubborn people!

⁷Remember 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.

⁸You made the LORD angry at Mount Horeb. The LORD was angry enough to destroy you!

⁹I 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.

¹⁰The 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.

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 what the LORD considers evil, and you made him angry.

¹⁹ I was afraid of the LORD'S terrible anger. He was angry enough to destroy you, but the LORD listened to me again.

²⁰ The LORD was very angry with Aaron enough to destroy him! So I also prayed for Aaron at that time.

²¹ I 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.

²² Also, at Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth Hattaavah you made the LORD angry.

²³ And 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.

²⁵So 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, dont 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. Dont 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.

10¹At 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.

²I 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.

³So 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. Aarons son Eleazar served in Aarons place as priest.

⁷ Then the Israelites went from Moserah to Gudgodah. And they went from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of rivers.

⁸ At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi from the other tribes for his special work. They had the work of carrying the Box of the LORD'S 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.

⁹ That 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.

¹¹ The 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.

¹² Now, Israelites, listen! What does 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.

¹³So obey the laws and commands of the LORD that I am giving you today. These laws and commands are for your own good.

¹⁴Everything belongs to the LORD your God. The heavens, even the highest heavens, belong to him. The earth and everything on it belong to him.

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶Stop being stubborn. Give your hearts to God.

¹⁷The 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.

¹⁸He defends widows and orphans. He loves even the strangers living among us. He gives them food and clothes.

¹⁹ So you must also love them, because you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt.

²⁰ You must respect the LORD your God and worship only him. Never leave him. When you make promises, you must use his name only.

²¹ He 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.

²² When 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.

11 ¹ So you must love the LORD your God. You must do what he tells you to do and always obey his laws, rules, and commands.

² 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.

³ You, 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.

⁴You, 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.

⁵It was you, not your children, who saw everything he did for you in the desert until you came to this place.

⁶You saw what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab from Reubens 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.

⁷It was you, not your children, who saw all the great things the LORD did.

⁸So 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.

¹³The 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 autumn rain and the spring rain. Then you can gather your grain, your new wine, and your oil.

¹⁵And I will make grass grow in your fields for your cattle. You will have plenty to eat.

¹⁶He says, Be careful! Don't be fooled. Don't turn away from me to serve other gods and to bow down to them.

¹⁷If you do that, the 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 LORD is giving you.

¹⁸Remember 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.

¹⁹Teach 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.

²⁰Write these commands on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

²¹Then both you and your children will live a long time in the land that the LORD promised to give to your ancestors. You

will live there as long as the skies are above the earth.

²²Be careful to obey every command I have told you to follow: Love the LORD your God, follow all his ways, and be faithful to him.

²³Then, when you go into the land, the LORD will force all those other nations out. You will take the land from nations that are larger and more powerful than you.

²⁴Wherever you go, the land will be yours from the desert in the south all the way to Lebanon in the north and from the Euphrates River in the east all the way to the Mediterranean Sea.

²⁵No one will be able to stand against you. The LORD your God will make the people fear you wherever you go in that land. That is what he promised you before.

²⁶Today I am giving you a choice. You may choose the blessing or the curse.

²⁷You will get the blessing if you listen and obey the commands of the LORD your God that I have told you today.

²⁸But you will get the curse if you refuse to listen and obey the commands

of the 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.

²⁹The 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.

³⁰These 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.

³¹You will go across the Jordan River. You will take the land that the LORD your God is giving you. This land will belong to you. When you are living in this land,

³²you must carefully obey all the laws and rules I give you today.

12¹These are the laws and rules that you must obey in your new land. You must carefully obey them as long as you live in that land. The LORD

is the God of your ancestors, and he is giving that land to you.

²You will take that land from the nations that live there now. You must completely destroy all the places where the people of those nations worship their gods. Those places are on high mountains, on hills, and under green trees.

³You 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.

⁴You must not worship the LORD your God in the same way those people worship their gods.

⁵The 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.

⁶There 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.

⁷ 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 everyone has been worshiping God any way they wanted.

⁹ That's because you have not yet entered the peaceful land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ Be sure you don't offer your burnt offerings in just any place you see.

¹⁴ The LORD will choose his special place among your tribes. Offer your burnt offerings and do everything else I told you only in that place.

¹⁵ Whenever you want to eat meat, you can enjoy that blessing from the LORD your God wherever you live. You can butcher the animal just as you do gazelles and deer, and anyone, clean or unclean, can eat it.

¹⁶ But you must not eat the blood. You must pour the blood on the ground like water.

¹⁷ Also, the things you are offering to God must not be eaten where you live. These include the part of your grain that belongs to God, the part of your new wine and oil that belongs to God, the first animals born in your herd or flock, any gift that you promised to God, any

special gifts you want to give, or any other gifts for God.

¹⁸You must eat these offerings only in his presence at the special place that the LORD your God will choose. You must go there and eat together with your sons, your daughters, all your servants, and the Levites living in your towns. Enjoy yourselves there with the LORD your God. Enjoy what you have worked for.

¹⁹But be sure that you always share these meals with the Levites. Do this as long as you live in your land.

²⁰The 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 there where you live any time you want.

²¹ (12: 20)

²²You 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.

²⁸ Carefully 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.

²⁹You 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!

³²You must be careful to do everything I command you. Don't add anything to what I tell you, and don't take anything away.

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 serve these gods!

³ Don'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.

⁴ You 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.

⁵ Also, 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. They tried to pull you away from the life he commanded you to live, so you must kill them to remove this evil from your people.

⁶ Someone close to you might secretly persuade you to worship other gods. It might be your own brother, your son, your daughter, the wife you love, or your closest friend. They might say, Let's go and serve other gods. (These are gods that you and your ancestors never knew.

⁷They are the gods of the people who live in the other lands around you, some near and some far away.)

⁸You must not agree with them. Don't listen to them or feel sorry for them. Don't let them go free or protect them.

⁹No, you must kill them with stones. You be the first one to pick up stones and throw at them. Then everyone must throw stones to kill them, because they tried to pull you away from the LORD your God. And it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where you were slaves.

¹⁰(13: 9)

¹¹Then all the Israelites will hear about it and be afraid. And they will not do those evil things any more.

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

¹³some 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,

¹⁵then you must kill all the people of that city and their animals too. You must destroy that city completely.

¹⁶You 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.

¹⁷Everything 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.

¹⁸This 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.

14¹ 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.

³ Don't eat anything that the Lord hates.

⁴ You may eat these animals: cattle, sheep, goats,

⁵ deer, gazelles, roe deer, wild sheep, wild goats, antelopes, and mountain sheep.

⁶ You may eat any animal that has hooves divided into two parts and that chews the cud.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹You may eat any kind of fish that has fins and scales.

¹⁰But dont eat anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales. It is not a clean food for you.

¹¹You may eat any clean bird.

¹²But dont eat any of these birds: eagles, vultures, buzzards,

¹³red kites, falcons, any kind of kite,

¹⁴any kind of raven,

¹⁵horned owls, screech owls, sea gulls, any kind of hawk,

¹⁶little owls, great owls, white owls,

¹⁷desert owls, ospreys, cormorants,

¹⁸storks, any kind of heron, hoopoes, or bats.

¹⁹All insects with wings are unclean, so dont eat them.

²⁰But you may eat any clean bird.

²¹Dont 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. Dont cook a baby goat in its mothers milk.

²²Every year you must be sure to save one-tenth of all the crops that grow in your fields.

²³Then 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 cropsone-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.

²⁴But 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,

²⁵sell that part of your crops and take the money with you to the special place the LORD has chosen.

²⁶Use the money to buy anything you wantcattle, 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.

²⁷But dont forget the Levites living in your town. Share your food with them

because they don't get a share of the land the way you do.

²⁸At the end of every three years, you must gather one-tenth of your harvest for that year. Store this food in your towns.

²⁹Keep 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.

15 ¹At the end of every seven years, you must cancel debts.

²This 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.

³You may require a foreigner to repay you, but you must cancel any debt another Israelite owes you.

⁴There 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.

⁵But 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.

⁶Then 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.

⁷When 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.

⁸You must be willing to share with them. You must lend them whatever they need.

⁹Dont ever refuse to help someone simply because the seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near. Dont 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 dont help the

poor, they might complain to the LORD, and he will judge you guilty of sin.

¹⁰So 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.

¹¹There 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.

¹²You 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.

¹³But when you let your slave go free, don't send him away with nothing.

¹⁴You 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.

¹⁵Remember, you were slaves in Egypt. And the LORD your God set you free. So that is why I am giving you this command today.

¹⁶But 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.

¹⁷Make 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.

¹⁸Dont 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.

¹⁹All the first male animals born in your herd and flock are special. You must give them to the LORD. Dont use any of these animals for your work and dont cut wool from any of these sheep.

²⁰Every 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.

²¹But 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.

²²But 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.

²³But you must not eat the blood from the animal. You must pour the blood out on the ground like water.

16¹Remember, 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.

²You 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.

³Don'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.

⁴There must be no yeast in anyones 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.

⁵You must not sacrifice the Passover animal in any of the towns that the LORD your God gives you.

⁶You 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.

⁷You must cook the meal and eat it at the place the LORD your God will choose. The next morning you may go back home.

⁸You 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.

⁹You must count seven weeks from the time you begin to harvest the grain.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹Go 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.

¹²Remember, you were slaves in Egypt. So be sure to obey these laws.

¹³Seven days after you have gathered your harvest in from your threshing floor and from your winepress, you should celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

¹⁴Enjoy yourselves at this festival you, your sons, your daughters, all your servants, and the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows living in your towns.

¹⁵Celebrate 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!

¹⁶Three 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.

¹⁷Each 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.

¹⁸Choose 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.

¹⁹You 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.

²⁰ 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.

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 worshiping false gods. The LORD your God hates them.

17 ¹ 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.

² 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

³ that they have worshiped other gods or maybe the sun, the moon or the stars. I never told you to do that!

⁴If 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,

⁵you 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.

⁶But no one should be punished with death if only one witness says that person did this evil thing. But if two or three witnesses say it is true, the person must be killed.

⁷The 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.

⁸There 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.

⁹You 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.

¹⁰There 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.

¹¹You must accept their decision and follow their instructions exactly dont change anything!

¹²You 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.

¹³All the people will hear about this punishment and be afraid. Then they will not be stubborn anymore.

¹⁴You 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.

¹⁵When 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.

¹⁶The 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.

¹⁷Also, 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.

¹⁸When 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.

¹⁹He 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.

²⁰Then 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.

18¹ 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.

⁹ When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, dont learn to do the terrible things the people of the other nations there do.

¹⁰ Dont sacrifice your sons or daughters in the fires on your altars. Dont try to learn what will happen in the future by talking to a fortuneteller or by going to a magician, a witch, or a sorcerer.

¹¹ Dont let anyone try to put magic spells on other people. Dont 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.

¹³You must be faithful to the LORD your God, never doing anything he considers wrong.

¹⁴You 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.

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶God 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!

¹⁷The LORD said to me, What they ask for is good.

¹⁸I 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.

¹⁹This prophet will speak for me, and I will punish anyone who refuses to listen to my commands.

²⁰But 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.

²¹You might be thinking, How can we know if something a prophet says is not from the LORD?

²²If 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.

19¹The 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,
²you 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.

³(19:2)

⁴This 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.

⁵Here 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.

⁶But 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.

⁷That is why I commanded you to choose three special cities.

⁸The 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.

⁹He 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.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹But 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,

¹²the 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.

¹⁴ You must not move the stones that mark your neighbors property. People put them there in the past to mark each persons property. These stones mark the land that the LORD your God gave you.

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.

²⁰Other people will hear about this and be afraid, and people will not do evil things like that again.

²¹Dont 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 footthe punishment must equal the crime.

20¹When 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 youand he brought you out of Egypt.

²When 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. Dont lose your courage. Dont be troubled or upset. Dont 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!

⁵The 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 mans 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.

⁸These 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.

¹⁰When 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.

¹⁶But 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.

¹⁹When 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.

21 ¹In 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. It must be a cow that never had a calf and that has never been used for work.

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.)

⁶All the leaders of the town nearest the dead body must wash their hands over the cow that had its neck broken in the valley.

⁷These leaders must say, We did not kill this person, and we did not see it happen.

⁸LORD, 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.

⁹In this way you will remove that guilt from your group by doing what the LORD said.

¹⁰You might fight against your enemies, and the LORD your God might let you defeat them and take them as captives.

¹¹You might see a beautiful woman among the captives who you want to be your wife.

¹²You must then bring her into your house where she will shave her head and cut her nails.

¹³She 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.

¹⁴If 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.

¹⁵A 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.

¹⁶When the man divides his property among his children, he cannot give the rights of the firstborn to the son of his favorite wife.

¹⁷The 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.

¹⁸A 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.

¹⁹His father and mother must then take him to the leaders of the town at the town meeting place.

²⁰They 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.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

22¹ If you see that your neighbors ox or sheep is loose, you must not ignore it. Be sure to take it back to its owner.

² 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.

³You 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.

⁴If 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.

⁵A woman must not wear men's clothes, and a man must not wear women's clothes. That is disgusting to the LORD your God.

⁶You 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.

⁷You 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.

⁸When 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.

⁹You 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.

¹⁰You must not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

¹¹You must not wear clothes made by weaving together wool and linen.

¹²Tie several pieces of thread together. Then put these tassels on the four corners of the robes you wear.

¹³A 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.

¹⁶The 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 girls father because her husband brought shame to an Israelite girl. And the girl will continue to be the mans wife. He cannot divorce her for the rest of his life.

²⁰But what the husband said about his wife might be true. The wifes parents might not have the proof that she was a virgin. If this happens,

²¹the town leaders must bring the girl to the door of her fathers house. Then the men of the town must kill her with stones. She has done a shameful thing in Israel by having sexual relations before she was married. You must remove this evil from your group.

²²If a man is found having sexual relations with another mans wife, both of them must die the woman and the man who had sexual relations with her. You must remove this evil from Israel.

²³A man might meet a virgin girl engaged to another man. He might have sexual relations with her. If this happens in the city,

²⁴you 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 mans 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.

²⁵But 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.

²⁶You 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.

²⁷The man found the engaged girl out in the field and attacked her. Maybe she called for help, but there was no one to help her.

²⁸A 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 girls father 20 ounces of silver. And the girl will become the mans wife, because he used her for sexual sin. He cannot divorce her all his life.

³⁰A man must not bring shame to his father by marrying his fathers wife.

23 ¹A 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 mans 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.

³An 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.

⁷You 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.

⁹When 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.

¹²You 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.

¹⁵If slaves run away and come to you, dont 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.

¹⁷An 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.

¹⁹When you loan something to another Israelite, you must not charge interest. Dont 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.

²¹When you make a promise to the LORD your God, dont be slow to pay everything you promised. The LORD your God will demand that you pay it. You will sin if you dont pay what you promised.

²²If you dont make a promise, you are not sinning.

²³But you must do what you say you will do. If you make a special promise to God, you chose to make that promise. God did not force you to make that promise. So you must do what you promised!

²⁴When you go through another persons 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 persons field of grain, you may eat all the grain you can pick with your hands. But you cannot use a sickle to cut that persons grain and take it with you.

24¹ 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 mans 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.

⁴ (24: 3)

⁵When 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.

⁶When 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.

⁷Someone 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.

⁸When 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.

¹⁰When you give someone any kind of loan, you can keep something they own until they pay you back. But you must not go into their house to get what you will keep as the security.

¹¹ You must wait outside for the person to bring the security to you.

¹² If he is poor and gives you his only coat as security, you must not keep it overnight.

¹³ You must give that security back to him every evening. Then he will have a coat 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.

¹⁵ Give 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. That is why I tell you to do these things for the poor.

¹⁹You 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.

²⁰When 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.

²¹When 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.

²²Remember you were poor slaves in Egypt. That is why I tell you to do these things for the poor.

25¹ 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 Dont 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.

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!

26¹ You will soon enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You will take that land and live there.

²You 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.

³Go 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.

⁴Then the priest will take the basket from you. He will put it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God.

⁵Then 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.

⁶The Egyptians treated us badly. They made us slaves. They hurt us and forced us to work very hard.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Then the LORD brought us out of Egypt with his great power and strength. He used great miracles and wonders and did amazing things.

⁹ So he brought us to this place. He gave us this land filled with many good things.

¹⁰ Now, LORD, I bring you the first harvest from the land that you gave me. Then you must put the harvest down before the LORD your God and bow down to worship him.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³You 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.

¹⁴I 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.

¹⁵Look 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 filled with many good things.

¹⁶Today the LORD your God commands you to obey all these laws and rules. Be careful to follow them with all your heart and soul.

¹⁷Today 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.

¹⁸And 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.

¹⁹The 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.

27 ¹Moses and the elders of Israel spoke to the people. Moses said, Obey all the commands that I give you today.

²You 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.

³Then write on the stones all 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. The LORD, the

God of your ancestors, promised to give you this land.

⁴After 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.

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.

¹¹ That day Moses also told the people,

¹² 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.

¹³ And these tribes will stand on Mount Ebal to read the curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

¹⁴ And the Levites will say to all the Israelites in a loud voice:

¹⁵ 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 neighbors landmark! 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!

¹⁹The 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!

²⁰The Levites will say, Cursed is the one who shames his father by having sexual relations with his fathers wife. Then all the people will say, Amen!

²¹The Levites will say, Cursed is the one who has sexual relations with any kind of animal! Then all the people will say, Amen!

²²The Levites will say, Cursed is the one who has sexual relations with his sister or half sister! Then all the people will say, Amen!

²³The Levites will say, Cursed is the one who has sexual relations with his mother-in-law! Then all the people will say, Amen!

²⁴The Levites will say, Cursed is the one who kills anyone, even if he is not caught! Then all the people will say, Amen!

²⁵The Levites will say, Cursed is the one who takes money to kill an innocent

person! Then all the people will say, Amen!

²⁶The 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!

28¹ 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.

²If you will obey the LORD your God, all these blessings will come to you and be yours:

³He will bless you in the city and in the field.

⁴He 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.

⁵He will bless your baskets and pans and fill them with food.

⁶He will bless you at all times in everything you do.

⁷The 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!

⁸The 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.

⁹The LORD will make you his own special people, as he promised. The Lord will do this if you follow the LORD your God and obey his commands.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹And 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³The 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.

¹⁴You 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.

¹⁵But 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:

¹⁶The Lord will curse you in the city and in the field.

¹⁷He will curse you with empty baskets and pans.

¹⁸He 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.

¹⁹He will curse you at all times in everything you do.

²⁰If 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.

²⁶Your dead bodies will be food for the wild birds and animals. There will be no one to scare them away from your dead bodies.

²⁷The 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.

²⁸The LORD will punish you by making you crazy. He will make you blind and confused.

²⁹In 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.

³⁰You 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.

³¹People 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.

³² 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.

³³ 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.

³⁴ The things you see will make you go crazy.

³⁵ The LORD will punish you with sore boils 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.

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ 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.

³⁸Your fields will produce plenty of grain. But your harvest will be small, because the locusts will eat your harvest.

³⁹You 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.

⁴⁰You 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.

⁴¹You will have sons and daughters. But you will not be able to keep them, because they will be captured and taken away.

⁴²Locusts will destroy all your trees and the crops in your fields.

⁴³The foreigners living among you will get more and more power, and you will lose the power you had.

⁴⁴The 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.

⁴⁵All 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.

⁴⁶These curses will show people that God judged you and your descendants forever. People will be amazed at the terrible things that happen to you.

⁴⁷The LORD your God gave you many blessings. But you did not serve him with joy and a glad heart.

⁴⁸So 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.

⁴⁹The 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.

⁵⁰These people will be cruel. They will not care about old people or show mercy to young children.

⁵¹They 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.

⁵²That 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.

⁵³You 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.

⁵⁴Even 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.

⁵⁵He 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 entering that land to make it yours. But you will be forced to leave it!

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, gods that you or your ancestors never worshiped before.

⁶⁵ Among those nations you will find no peace. You will have no place to rest. The LORD will fill your mind with worry. Your eyes will feel tired. You will lose all hope.

⁶⁶You will live in constant danger. You will be full of fear day and night, never sure if you will live or not.

⁶⁷In 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.

29¹The 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 Pharaohs officers, and to his whole country.

³You saw the great troubles he gave them. You saw the miracles and amazing things he did.

⁴ But even today, you still don't understand what happened. The LORD has not let you really understand what you saw and heard.

⁵ He led you through the desert for 40 years, and in all that time, your clothes and sandals did not wear out.

⁶ You did not have any food with you. You did not have any wine or anything else to drink. But the Lord 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.

⁸ Then we took their land and gave it to the people in the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to half the tribe of Manasseh.

⁹ If 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.

¹¹ Your 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.

¹⁹Some 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.

²⁰The 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.

²¹ (29: 20)

²²In the future your descendants and foreigners from faraway countries will see how the land has been ruined. They will see the diseases that the LORD has brought to it.

²³All the land will be uselessdestroyed by burning sulfur and covered with salt. The land will have nothing planted in it.

Nothing will be growing not even weeds. The land will be destroyed like Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, the cities the LORD destroyed when he was very angry.

²⁴All the other nations will ask, Why did the LORD do this to this land? Why was he so angry?

²⁵The answer will be, This happened because the Israelites left the agreement of the LORD, the God of their ancestors. They stopped following the agreement he made with them when he brought them out of Egypt.

²⁶They started serving other gods. They began worshiping gods they had never worshiped before, gods that the Lord never allowed them to worship.

²⁷That is why the LORD became very angry with the people of this land. So he brought to them all the curses that are written in this book.

²⁸The LORD became very angry and upset with them. So he took them out of their land. He put them in another land, where they are today.

²⁹There are some things that the LORD our God has kept secret. Only he knows

these things. But he told us about some things. And these teachings are for us and our descendants forever. And we must obey all the commands in that law.

30¹ Everything that I have mentioned will happen to you both the blessings and the curses. And you will remember these words when the LORD your God sends you away to other nations.

² Then you and your descendants will turn back to the LORD your God. You will follow him with all your heart and completely obey all his commands that I have given you today.

³ Then the LORD your God will be kind to you. The LORD your God will make you free again! He will bring you back from the nations where he sent you.

⁴ Even if you were sent to the farthest parts of the earth, the LORD your God will gather you from there and bring you back.

⁵ The 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.

⁶The LORD your God will make you and your descendants want to obey him. Then you will love the LORD your God with all your heart. And you will live!

⁷Then 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 cowsthey will have many calves. He will bless your fieldsthey 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.

¹¹This command that I give you today is not too hard for you. It is not a secret hidden in some far away land.

¹²This 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?

¹³This 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?

¹⁴No, the word is very near to you. It is in your mouth and in your heart. So you can obey it.

¹⁵Today I have given you a choice between life and death, success and disaster.

¹⁶I 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.

¹⁷ But if you turn away from your God and refuse to listen, if you are led away to worship and serve other gods,

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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.

31 ¹ Then Moses went and spoke these words to all the Israelites.

² 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.

³But the LORD your God will lead you people into that land. He will destroy these nations for you. You will take their land away from them. The LORD said that Joshua must lead you.

⁴The LORD destroyed Sihon and Og. He destroyed those Amorite kings, and he will do the same for you!

⁵The LORD will help you defeat these nations. But you must do to them everything I told you to do.

⁶Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid of those people, because the LORD your God is with you. He will not fail you or leave you.

⁷Then 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.

⁸The LORD will lead you. He himself is with you. He will not fail you or leave you. Don't worry. Don't be afraid!

⁹Then Moses wrote down these teachings in a book and gave it to the priests and the elders of Israel. The

priests, who were from the tribe of Levi, carried the Box of the LORD'S Agreement.

¹⁰Then Moses spoke to these leaders. He said, At the end of every seven years, in the Year of Freedom, read these teachings at the Festival of Shelters.

¹¹At 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.

¹²Bring 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.

¹³If 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.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵The LORD appeared at the Tent in a tall cloud. The tall cloud stood over the entrance of the Tent.

¹⁶The 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 godsthe false gods of the land where they are going.

¹⁷At 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.

¹⁸And I will refuse to help them, because they have done evil and worshiped other gods.

¹⁹So 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.

²⁰I 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.

²¹Then 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.

²²So that same day Moses wrote down the song and taught it to the Israelites.

²³Then 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.

²⁴Moses carefully wrote all these teachings in a book. When he finished,

²⁵ he gave this command to the Levites in charge of the Box of the LORD'S Agreement:

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ All the Israelites were gathered together, and Moses sang this whole song for them:

32¹ Skies, listen and I will speak.
Earth, hear the words of my mouth.

² 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.

³ Praise God as I speak the LORD'S name!

⁴ 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.

⁵ And you are not really his children. You are completely unfaithful to him. You are crooked liars.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Remember the days of the past. 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.

⁹The LORD chose his people to be his own. The people of Jacob belong to him.

¹⁰The 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,

¹¹like 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.

¹²The LORD alone led his people. They had no help from any foreign god.

¹³The 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.

¹⁴He 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.

¹⁵But Jeshurun 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.

¹⁶They made him jealous by worshiping other gods. They made him angry with those disgusting idols.

¹⁷They offered sacrifices to demonsgods that are not God. These were new gods they had not known before, gods their ancestors never knew.

¹⁸You people left the Rock who made you; you forgot the God who gave you life.

¹⁹The LORD saw this and became upset. His sons and daughters made him angry!

²⁰So he said, I will turn away from them; then lets see what happens! They are a rebellious people. They are like children who will not learn their lessons.

²¹They 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.

²²My 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.

²³I will bring troubles to the Israelites. I will shoot all my arrows at them.

²⁴They will become thin from hunger. Terrible diseases will destroy them. I will send wild animals against them. Poisonous snakes and lizards will bite them.

²⁵In the streets, soldiers will kill them. In their houses, terrible things will happen. Soldiers will kill young men and women. They will kill babies and old people.

²⁶I thought about destroying the Israelites so that people would forget them completely!

²⁷But 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!

²⁸They are foolish. They dont understand.

²⁹If they were wise, they would understand; they would know what would happen to them.

³⁰ Can one man chase away a thousand? Can two men cause ten thousand to run away? This will happen only if the LORD gives them to their enemy. It 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 full of bitter poison.

³³ Their wine is as deadly as the poison of snakes.

³⁴ The Lord says, I am saving that punishment. I have it locked up in my storehouse!

³⁵ I will punish those who do wrong. They will get what they deserve. One day they will slip and fall. Their time of trouble is near. Their punishment will come quickly.

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ Then the Lord will say, Where are the false gods? Where is the rock you ran to for protection?

³⁸ Those 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!

³⁹ 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!

⁴⁰ I raise my hand toward heaven and make this promise. As surely as I live forever, these things will happen!

⁴¹ I swear, I will sharpen my flashing sword. I will use it to punish my enemies. I will give them the punishment they deserve.

⁴² 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.

⁴³ 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.

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,

⁴⁶ 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.

⁴⁷ 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.

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.

33 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. Gods 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 Jacobs people.

⁵ At that time the Israelites and their leaders met together, and the Lord became Israels king!

⁶ Let Reuben live, and not die! But let there be only a few people in his tribe!

⁷ Moses said this about Judah and his people: 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!

⁸ Moses said this about Levi and his people: 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.

¹⁰ 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! Defeat his enemies so that they will never attack again.

¹² Moses said this about Benjamin and his people: 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 mothers back.

¹³Moses said this about Joseph and his people: May the LORD bless Josephs land with rain from the skies above and water from the ground below.

¹⁴Let the sun give them good fruit. Let each month bring its best fruit.

¹⁵Let the hills and ancient mountains produce their best fruit.

¹⁶Let 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.

¹⁷Joseph is like a powerful bull. His two sons are like bulls 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.

¹⁸Moses said this about Zebulun and his people: Zebulun, be happy when you go out. And you, Issachar, be happy in your tents at home.

¹⁹They 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.

²⁰ Moses said this about Gad and his people: 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.

²¹ He chose the best part for himself. He took the kings 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.

²² Moses said this about Dan and his people: Dan is a lions cub that jumps out from Bashan.

²³ Moses said this about Naphtali and his people: Naphtali, you will get all you want. The LORD will really bless you. You will get the land by Lake Galilee.

²⁴ Moses said this about Asher and his people: 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.

²⁵ Your gates will have locks made from iron and bronze. You will be strong all your life.

²⁶There 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.

²⁷God 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!

²⁸So Israel will live in safety. Jacobs well belongs to them. They will get a land of grain and wine. And that land will get plenty of rain.

²⁹Israel, you are blessed. No other nation is like you. The LORD 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!

34¹Moses 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 LORD 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 LORD 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 the LORD'S servant Moses died there in the land of Moab. The LORD 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 mourning was finished.

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 LORD had commanded Moses.

¹⁰Israel never had another prophet like Moses: The LORD knew Moses face to face.

¹¹The LORD 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.

Joshua

1 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.

⁷ But you must be strong and brave about obeying the commands my servant Moses gave you. If you follow his teachings exactly, you will be successful in everything you do.

⁸ Always remember what is written in that book of law. Speak about that book and study it day and night. Then you can be sure to obey what is written there. If you do this, you will be wise and successful in everything you do.

⁹ Remember, I commanded you to be strong and brave. Don't be afraid, because the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

¹⁰ So Joshua gave orders to the leaders of the people:

¹¹ Go through the camp and tell the people, Get some food ready. Three days from now we will go across the Jordan River and take the land that the LORD our God is giving us.

¹² Then Joshua said to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh,

¹³Remember what the LORD'S servant Moses told you. He said that the LORD your God would give you a place to live. 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.

¹⁴(1:13)

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶Then the people answered Joshua, We will do whatever you command us to do. We will go wherever you tell us to go.

¹⁷We 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.

¹⁸Then anyone who refuses to obey your commands or turns against you will be killed. Just be strong and brave!

2¹ Joshua son of Nun and all the people were camped at Acacia. 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 didnt know where they came from.

⁵In the evening, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I dont know where they went. But if you go quickly, maybe you can catch them.

⁶(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.)

⁷ So the kings men went out of the city, and the people closed the city gates. The kings 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.

⁸ The two men were ready to sleep for the night, but Rahab went to the roof to talk to them.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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!

¹²So 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.

¹³Tell 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.

¹⁶Then 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.

¹⁸When 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.

¹⁹We 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.

²⁰We 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.

²³Then 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.

²⁴They said to him, The LORD really has given us all the land. All the people in that country are afraid of us.

3¹Early 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.

²After three days the leaders went through the camp.

³They gave orders to the people: When you see the Levite priests carrying the Box of the Agreement of the LORD your God, follow them.

⁴But 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.

⁵Then Joshua told the people, Make yourselves pure. Tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among us.

⁶Then 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.

⁷Then 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹Then Joshua said to the Israelites, Come and listen to the words of the LORD your God.

¹⁰Here 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, Gergashites, Amorites, and Jebusites; he will force them to leave their land.

¹¹The Box of the Agreement of the Lord of the whole world will go before you as you cross the Jordan River.

¹²Now choose twelve men, one from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

¹³The 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. When they enter the water, the water of the Jordan River will stop flowing and fill behind that place like at a dam.

¹⁴The priests carried the Box of the Agreement, and the people left the place they had camped. The people started going across the Jordan River.

¹⁵(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,

¹⁶immediately 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.

¹⁷The ground at that place became dry, and the priests carried the Box of the LORD'S Agreement to the middle of the river and stopped. They waited there while all the Israelites walked across the Jordan River on dry land.

4¹After all the people had crossed the Jordan River, the LORD said to Joshua,

² Choose twelve men, one from each tribe.

³ 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.

⁴ So Joshua chose one man from each tribe. Then he called the twelve men together.

⁵ 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.

⁶ These rocks will be a sign for you. In the future your children will ask you, What do these rocks mean?

⁷ You will tell them that the Lord stopped the water from flowing in the Jordan River. When the Box of the LORD'S Agreement crossed the river, the water stopped flowing. These rocks will help the Israelites remember this forever.

⁸ 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 the way 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ After the people finished crossing the river, the priests carried the LORD'S Holy Box to the front of the people.

¹² 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.

¹³About 40,000 soldiers, prepared for war, passed before the LORD. They were marching toward the plains of Jericho.

¹⁴That day the LORD made Joshua a great man to all the Israelites. From that time on, they respected Joshua just as they had Moses.

¹⁵Then the LORD said to Joshua,

¹⁶Command the priests carrying the Box that holds the Agreement to come out of the river.

¹⁷So Joshua commanded the priests, Come out of the Jordan River.

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹The people crossed the Jordan River on the tenth day of the first month and camped at Gilgal, east of Jericho.

²⁰They carried with them the twelve rocks that they had taken from the

Jordan River, and Joshua set them up at Gilgal.

²¹ Then Joshua told the Israelites, In the future your children will ask you, What do these rocks mean?

²² Tell them, These rocks help us remember the way the people of Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry land.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

5¹ 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.

²At that time the LORD said to Joshua, Make knives from flint rocks and circumcise the men of Israel.

³So Joshua made knives from flint rocks and circumcised the men of Israel at Gibeath Haaraloth.

⁴This 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 vowed that they would not see the land where much food grows. The LORD had promised our ancestors that he would give us that land. But because of those men, he forced the people to wander in the desert for 40 years. During that time 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.

⁵ (5: 4)

⁶ (5: 4)

⁷ (5: 4)

⁸Joshua finished circumcising all the men. The people camped at that place until all the men were healed.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹The day after Passover, the people ate food that grew in that land. They ate bread made without yeast and roasted grain.

¹²The 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.

¹³When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him. The man had a sword in his hand. Joshua went to the man and

asked, Are you a friend to our people or are you one of our enemies?

¹⁴The man answered, I am not an enemy. I am the commander of the LORD'S army. I have just now come to you. Then Joshua bowed his face to the ground to show respect and said, I am your servant. Does my master have a command for me?

¹⁵The commander of the LORD'S army answered, Take off your sandals. The place where you are standing is holy. So Joshua obeyed him.

6¹The gates of the city of Jericho were closed. The people in the city were afraid because the Israelites were near. No one went into the city, and no one came out.

²Then the LORD said to Joshua, Look, I will let you defeat the city of Jericho. You will defeat the king and all the fighting men in the city.

³March around the city with your army once every day for six days.

⁴Tell seven of the priests to carry trumpets made from the horns of male sheep and to march in front of the priests who are carrying the Holy Box.

On the seventh day, march around the city seven times and tell the priests to blow the trumpets while they march.

⁵They will make one loud noise from the trumpets. When you hear that noise, tell all the people to begin shouting. When you do this, the walls of the city will fall down and your people will be able to go straight into the city.

⁶So 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.

⁷Then 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.

⁸After 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 Box of the LORD'S Agreement followed them.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰Joshua 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.

¹¹So 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.

¹²Early the next morning Joshua got up, and the priests carried the LORD'S Holy Box again.

¹³The 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.

¹⁴On 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.

¹⁵On 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.

¹⁶The 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!

¹⁷The 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.

¹⁸Remember, 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.

¹⁹All the things made from silver, gold, bronze, and iron belong to the LORD. They must be put in the LORD'S treasury.

²⁰So 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.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶At 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.

²⁷So the LORD was with Joshua, and Joshua became famous throughout the whole country.

7¹ 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 Zerach. Achan kept some of the things that should have been destroyed. So the LORD became very angry with the Israelites.

²After they defeated Jericho, Joshua sent some men to Ai. Ai was near Beth Aven, east of Bethel. He told them, Go to Ai and look for weaknesses in that area. So the men went to spy on that land.

³Later, 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.

⁴So 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 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.

⁵(7:4)

⁶When 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.

⁷Joshua 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.

⁸I promise by my life, Lord! There is nothing I can say now. Israel has surrendered to the enemy.

⁹The 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?

¹⁰The LORD said to Joshua, Why are you down there with your face on the ground? Stand up!

¹¹The 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.

¹²That 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.

¹³Now 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.

¹⁴Tomorrow 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.

¹⁵The 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!

¹⁶Early the next morning, Joshua led all the Israelites before the LORD. All the tribes stood before the Lord. He chose the tribe of Judah.

¹⁷So all the family groups of Judah stood before the Lord. He chose the Zerah family group. Then all the families

of the Zerah group stood before the LORD. The family of Zimri was chosen.

¹⁸Then 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.)

¹⁹Then 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.

²⁰Achan answered, It is true! I sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I did:

²¹In Jericho, I saw a beautiful coat from Babylon, 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.

²²So Joshua sent some men to the tent. They ran to the tent and found the things hidden there. The silver was under the coat.

²³The men brought the things out of the tent and took them to Joshua and all

the Israelites. They threw them on the ground before the LORD.

²⁴Then Joshua and all the people led Achan son of Zerah to the Valley of Achor. They also took the silver, the coat, the gold, Achans 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.

²⁵Then 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.

²⁶After 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.

8¹Then the LORD said to Joshua, Dont be afraid; dont 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.

²You 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.

⁵ 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.

⁸You 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.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰Early the next morning Joshua gathered the men together. Then Joshua and the leaders of Israel led the men to Ai.

¹¹All 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.

¹²Then Joshua chose about 5000 men. He sent these men to hide in the area west of the city, between Bethel and Ai.

¹³So 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.

¹⁴Later, 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.

²¹ When Joshua and his men saw that his army had taken control of the city and that smoke was rising from it, they stopped running away and turned to fight the men of Ai.

²² 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.

²³ But the king of Ai was left alive. Joshua's men brought him to Joshua.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ All the people of Ai died that day; there were 12,000 men and women.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ Then Joshua burned the city of Ai. That city became an empty pile of rocks. It is still like that today.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ Then Joshua built an altar for the LORD, the God of Israel. He built the altar on Mount Ebal.

³¹ 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.

³²There Joshua copied onto the stones the law Moses had written down. This was for all the people of Israel to see.

³³The 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.

³⁴Then 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.

³⁵All 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.

9¹ 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.

² All these kings came together and made plans to fight against Joshua and the Israelites.

³ The people from the city of Gibeon heard about the way Joshua had defeated Jericho and Ai.

⁴ 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.

⁵ The men put old sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. They found some old bread that was dry and moldy.

⁶ 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.

⁷The 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.

⁸The Hivite men said to Joshua, We are your servants. But Joshua asked, Who are you? Where do you come from?

⁹The 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.

¹⁰And 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.

¹¹So 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.

¹²Look at our bread. When we left home, it was warm and fresh. But now you can see that it is dry and old.

¹³Look 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.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵Joshua agreed to make peace with them. He agreed to let them live. The leaders of Israel agreed by making a promise with an oath.

¹⁶Three days later the Israelites learned that these men lived very near their camp.

¹⁷So 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.

¹⁸But 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.

¹⁹But the leaders answered, We have given our promise with an oath before the LORD, the God of Israel. We cannot fight against them now.

²⁰This 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.

²¹So 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.

²²Joshua 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.

²³Now, 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.

²⁴The 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.

²⁵ Now we are your servants. You can do whatever you think is right.

²⁶ So the Gibeonites became slaves, but Joshua let them live. He did not allow the Israelites to kill them.

²⁷ 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.

10¹ 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.

² 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.

³King 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,

⁴Come with me and help me attack Gibeon. Gibeon has made a peace agreement with Joshua and the Israelites.

⁵So 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.

⁶The people in the city of Gibeon sent a message to Joshua at his camp at Gilgal: We are your servants! Dont 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.

⁸ 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹³So 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.

¹⁴That 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!

¹⁵After this, Joshua and his army went back to the camp at Gilgal.

¹⁶But during the fight, the five kings ran away. They hid in a cave near Makkedah,

¹⁷but someone found them hiding in that cave. Joshua learned about this.

¹⁸He said, Cover the entrance to the cave with large rocks. Put some men there to guard the cave.

¹⁹But dont stay there yourselves. Continue chasing the enemy and attacking them from behind. Dont 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.

²¹ After 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.

²² Joshua said, Move the rocks that are covering the entrance to the cave. Bring the five kings to me.

²³ So Joshua's men brought the five kings out of the cave: the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon.

²⁴ When 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.

²⁵ Then 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.

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 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.

⁴⁰ So 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.

⁴¹ Joshua captured all the cities from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza. He captured all the cities from Goshen to Gibeon.

⁴² Joshua 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.

⁴³ Then Joshua and all the Israelites returned to their camp at Gilgal.

11 ¹ King Jabin of Hazor heard about everything that had happened. So he decided to call together the armies of several kings. He sent a message to King Jobab of Madon to the king of Shimron, to the king of Acshaph,

² 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.

³Jabin 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.

⁴So 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.

⁵All 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.

⁶Then 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.

⁷ So Joshua and his whole army surprised the enemy and attacked them at the river of Merom.

⁸ 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.

⁹ Joshua did what the LORD said to do; he cut the legs of their horses and burned their chariots.

¹⁰ 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.)

¹¹ 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.

¹² Joshua captured all these cities and killed all their kings. He completely destroyed everything in these cities just as the LORD'S servant Moses had commanded.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵Long 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.

¹⁶So 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.

¹⁷Joshua 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.

¹⁸Joshua fought against them for many years.

¹⁹Only 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.

²⁰The 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.

²¹The 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.

²²There were no Anakites left living in the land of Israel. The only Anakites who were left alive were in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

²³Joshua 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.

12¹The 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:

²They 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.

³He 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.

⁴They also defeated King Og of Bashan. Og was from the Rephaites. He ruled the land in Ashtaroth and Edrei.

⁵Og ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, and all of 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.

⁶The 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 These are the kings of the land west of the Jordan River who were defeated by Joshua and the Israelites. 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,

¹⁰ the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron,

¹¹ the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish,

¹² the king of Eglon, the king of Gezer,

¹³ the king of Debir, the king of Geder,

¹⁴ the king of Hormah, the king of Arad,

¹⁵ the king of Libnah, the king of Adullam,

¹⁶ the king of Makkedah, the king of Bethel,

¹⁷ the king of Tappuah, the king of Hopher,

¹⁸ the king of Aphek, the king of Sharon,

¹⁹ the king of Madon, the king of Hazor,

²⁰ the king of Shimron Meron, the king of Acshaph,

²¹ the king of Taanach, the king of Megiddo,

²² the king of Kedesh, the king of Jokneam in Carmel,

²³ the king of Dor at Mount Dor, the king of Goyim in Gilgal,

²⁴ and the king of Tirzah. The total number of kings was 31.

13¹ 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

⁴who 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.

⁵You have not yet defeated the area of the Gebalites. And also there is the area of Lebanon east of Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

⁶The 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.

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 Salecah was in that land.

¹²The whole kingdom of King Og of Bashan was in that land. Og, one of the last Rephaites, had once ruled in Ashtaroth and Edrei. Moses had defeated those people and had taken their land.

¹³But the Israelites did not force the people of Geshur and Maacah to leave the land. So 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.

¹⁵ Moses had given each family group from the tribe of Reuben some land. This is the land they received:

¹⁶ It 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.

¹⁷ The land continued to Heshbon. It included all the towns on the plain. Those towns were Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon,

¹⁸ Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath,

¹⁹ Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shajar on the hill in the valley,

²⁰ Beth Peor, the hills of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth.

²¹ So 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.

²² The 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 Betonim, 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.

14¹ Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of all the tribes of Israel decided what land to give to the people.

²The 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.

³Moses 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.

⁴The 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.

⁵The 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.

⁶One 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.

⁷The LORD'S servant Moses 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰Now 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.

¹¹I am still as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. I am as ready to fight as I was then.

¹²So 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.

¹³Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh. Joshua gave him the city of Hebron as his own.

¹⁴And 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.

¹⁵In 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.

15¹The 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.

²The southern border of Judah's land started at the south end of the Dead Sea.

³The border went south to Scorpion Pass and continued on to Zin. Then the border continued south to Kadesh Barnea. It continued past Hebron to

Addar. From Addar the border turned and continued to Karka.

⁴The border continued to Azmon, the brook of Egypt, and then to the Mediterranean Sea. All that land was on their southern border.

⁵Their 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.

⁶Then 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).

⁷Then 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.

⁸Then 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.

⁹From 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.)

¹⁰At 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.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²The Mediterranean Sea was the western border. So the land of Judah was inside these four borders. The families of Judah lived in this area.

¹³The 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.)

¹⁴Caleb 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.

¹⁵Then Caleb fought against the people living in Debir. (In the past, Debir was also called Kiriath Sepher.)

¹⁶Caleb said, I will give my daughter in marriage to the man who attacks and conquers Kiriath Sepher.

¹⁷Othniel was the son of Calebs brother Kenaz. Othniel defeated that city, so Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to Othniel to be his wife.

¹⁸Acsah 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?

¹⁹Acsah 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.

²⁰The tribe of Judah got the land that God promised them. Each family group got part of the land.

²¹The 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,

²²Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah,

²³Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan,

²⁴Ziph, Telem, Bealoth,

²⁵Hazor Hadattah, Keriioth Hezron (Hazor),

²⁶Amam, Shema, Moladah,

²⁷Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet,

²⁸Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah,

²⁹Baalath, Iim, Ezem,

³⁰Eitolad, Kesil, Hormah,

³¹Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah,

³²Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon.

In all, there were 29 towns and all their fields.

³³The tribe of Judah also got these towns in the western foothills: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah,

³⁴Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam,

³⁵Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah,

³⁶Shaaraim, Adithaim, and Gederah (Gederothaim). In all, there were 14 towns and all their fields.

³⁷The tribe of Judah was also given these towns: Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad,

³⁸Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel,

³⁹Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon,

⁴⁰Cabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish,

⁴¹Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah. In all, there were 16 towns and all the fields around them.

⁴²The people of Judah also got these towns: Libnah, Ether, Ashan,

⁴³Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib,

⁴⁴Keilah, Aczib, and Mareshah. In all, there were nine towns and all the fields around them.

⁴⁵The people of Judah also got the town of Ekron and all the small towns and fields near it.

⁴⁶They also got the area west of Ekron and all the fields and towns near Ashdod.

⁴⁷ 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.

⁴⁸ The people of Judah were also given these towns in the hill country: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh,

⁴⁹ Dannah, Kiriath Sannah (Debir),

⁵⁰ Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim,

⁵¹ Goshen, Holon, and Giloh. In all, there were eleven towns and all the fields around them.

⁵² The people of Judah were also given these towns: Arab, Dumah, Eshan,

⁵³ Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah,

⁵⁴ Humtah, Kiriath Arba (Hebron), and Zior. There were nine towns and all the fields around them.

⁵⁵ The people of Judah were also given these towns: Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah,

⁵⁶ Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah,

⁵⁷ Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah. In all, there were ten towns and all the fields around them.

⁵⁸ The people of Judah were also given these towns: Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor,

⁵⁹ Maarath, Beth Anoth, and Eltekon. In all, there were six towns and all the fields around them.

⁶⁰ The people of Judah were also given the two towns of Rabbah and Kiriath Baal (Kiriath Jearim).

⁶¹ The people of Judah were also given these towns in the desert: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah,

⁶² Nibshan, Salt City, and En Gedi. In all, there were six towns and all the fields around them.

⁶³ 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.

16¹ 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.

²Then the border continued from Bethel (Luz) to the Arkite border at Ataroth.

³Then 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.

⁴So the people of Manasseh and Ephraim got their land. (Manasseh and Ephraim were sons of Joseph.)

⁵This is the land that was given to the people of Ephraim: Their eastern border started at Ataroth Addar near Upper Beth Horon.

⁶And the western border started at Micmethath. The border turned to the east to Taanath Shiloh and continued east to Janoah.

⁷Then it went from Janoah down to Ataroth and to Naarah. The border continued until it touched Jericho and ended at the Jordan River.

⁸The 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.

⁹Many of the border towns of Ephraim were actually in Manasseh's borders, but the Ephraimites got the towns and the fields around them.

¹⁰But 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.

17 ¹Then 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.

²Land was also given to the other families in the tribe of Manasseh. These families were Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hopher, 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.

³Zelophehad was the son of Hopher. Hopher 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.

⁴The 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.

⁵So 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.

⁶So 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.

⁷The lands of Manasseh were in the area between Asher and Micmethath. This is near Shechem. The border went south to the En Tappuah area.

⁸The land around Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but the town itself did not. The town of Tappuah was at the border

of Manassehs land, and it belonged to the people of Ephraim.

⁹The 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. Manassehs border was on the north side of the river and it continued west to the Mediterranean Sea.

¹⁰The land to the south belonged to Ephraim. And the land to the north belonged to Manasseh. The Mediterranean Sea was the western border. The border touched Ashers land in the north and Issachars land in the east.

¹¹The people of Manasseh had towns in the area of Issachar and Asher. Beth Shean, 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.

¹²The people of Manasseh were not able to defeat those cities. So the Canaanites continued to live there.

¹³But 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.

¹⁴The descendants 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?

¹⁵Joshua 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.

¹⁶The 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.

¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁸You 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 Canaanites and force them to leave. You can defeat them, even if they are strong and have iron chariots.

18¹All 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.

²But at this time there were still seven tribes of Israel that had not yet received their land.

³So 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.

⁴So 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.

⁵They 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.

⁶But 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.

⁷The 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. The LORD'S servant Moses gave them that land.

⁸So the men who were chosen went to look at the land and write down what they saw. Joshua told them, Go through the land and describe it in writing. Then come back to me at Shiloh. I will throw lots and let the LORD decide how you will share the land.

⁹So the men went into the land. As they walked through it, they wrote down what they saw. They listed all the cities and divided the land into seven parts. Then they went back to Joshua at Shiloh.

¹⁰Joshua 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.

¹¹The 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:

¹²The 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.

¹³Then the border went south to Luz (Bethel), then down to Ataroth Addar. Ataroth Addar is on the hill south of Lower Beth Horon.

¹⁴At 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.

¹⁵The southern border started near Kiriath Jearim and went to the River of Nephtoah.

¹⁶Then 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.

¹⁷There 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.

¹⁸It continued to the northern part of Beth Arabah. Then the border went down into the Jordan Valley.

¹⁹Then 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.

²⁰The 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.

²¹Each family got its land. These are their cities: Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz,

²²Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel,

²³ Avvim, Parah, Ophrah,

²⁴ Kephrah 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. The tribe of Benjamin got all these areas.

19¹ 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.

² This is the land that was given to that tribe: Beersheba (also called Sheba), Moladah,

³ Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem,

⁴ Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah,

⁵ Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah,

⁶ Beth Lebaoth, and Sharuhem. 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.

⁸They 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.

⁹Simeons 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.

¹⁰The next tribe to get their land was Zebulun. Each family in Zebulun got the land that was promised to them. The border of Zebulun went as far as Sarid.

¹¹Then the border went west to Maralah and just touched Dabbesheth. Then it went along the ravine near Jokneam.

¹²Then the border turned to the east. It went from Sarid to Kisloth Tabor. Then it went on to Daberath and to Japhia.

¹³Then the border continued to the east to Gath Hepher and Eth Kazin. It ended at Rimmon. Then it turned and went to Neah.

¹⁴At Neah the border turned again, went north to Hannathon, and then continued to the Valley of Iphtah El.

¹⁵Inside this border were the cities of Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem. In all, there were twelve towns and all the fields around them.

¹⁶So these are the towns and fields around them that were given to Zebulun. Each family in Zebulun got its part of the land.

¹⁷The fourth part of the land was given to the tribe of Issachar. Each family in that tribe got its part of the land.

¹⁸This is the land that was given to that tribe: Jezreel, Kesulloth, Shunem,

¹⁹Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath,

²⁰Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez,

²¹Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah, and Beth Pазzez.

²²The 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.

²³These cities and towns were part of the land that was given to the tribe of Issachar. Each family got its part of the land.

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, Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah. It continued to the Greater Sidon area.

²⁹ 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,

³⁰ Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob. In all there were 22 towns and the fields around them.

³¹ 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.

³²The sixth part of land was given to the tribe of Naphtali. Each family in that tribe got its share of the land.

³³The 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.

³⁴Then 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.

³⁵There were some very strong cities inside these borders. They were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Kinnereth,

³⁶Adamah, Ramah, Hazor,

³⁷Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor,

³⁸Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath, and Beth Shemesh. In all, there were 19 towns and all the fields around them.

³⁹These cities and the fields around them were given to the tribe of Naphtali. Each family in that tribe got its land.

⁴⁰ Then land was given to the tribe of Dan. Each family in that tribe got its land.

⁴¹ This is the land that was given to them: Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh,

⁴² Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah,

⁴³ Elon, Timnah, Ekron,

⁴⁴ Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath,

⁴⁵ Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon,

⁴⁶ Me Jarkon, Rakkon, and the area near Joppa.

⁴⁷ 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.

⁴⁸ All these cities and fields around them were given to the tribe of Dan. Each family got its share of the land.

⁴⁹ 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.

⁵⁰The 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.

⁵¹All of 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.

20¹Then the LORD said to Joshua:
²Through Moses, I told you to choose some cities to be cities of safety.

³Anyone who kills someone accidentally can go to a city of safety to hide from the relatives who want to kill him.

⁴If 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.

⁵If 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.

⁶You 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.

⁷So 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;

⁸Bezer, 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.

⁹All 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.

21 ¹The 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.

²At 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.

³So the Israelites obeyed this command from the LORD and gave the Levites these towns and the land around them for their animals:

⁴The 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.

⁵The other Kohath families were given ten towns in the areas that belonged to Ephraim, Dan, and half of Manasseh.

⁶The 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.

⁷The people from the Merari family were given twelve towns. These towns came from the areas that belonged to Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

⁸So the Israelites gave the Levites these towns and the fields around them, just as the LORD had told Moses.

⁹These are the names of the towns that were in the areas that belonged to Judah and Simeon.

¹⁰The first choice of towns was given to the Levites from the Kohath family group.

¹¹They 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.

¹²But the fields and the small towns around the city of Kiriath Arba belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh.

¹³So they gave the city of Hebron to Aarons descendants. (Hebron was a

city of safety.) They also gave Aarons descendants the towns of Libnah,

¹⁴ Jattir, Eshtemoa,

¹⁵ Holon, Debir,

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ They also gave Aarons descendants cities that belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. These cities were Gibeon, Geba,

¹⁸ Anathoth, and Almon. They gave them these four towns and some of the land near the towns for their animals.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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:

²¹ the city of Shechem from the hill country of Ephraim (which was a city of safety), Gezer,

²² Kibzaim, and Beth Horon. In all, Ephraim gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

²³ The tribe of Dan gave them Eltekeh, Gibbethon,

²⁴ Aijalon, and Gath Rimmon. In all, Dan gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ In all, the rest of the people from the Kohath family groups got ten towns and some land around each town for their animals.

²⁷ 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 Eshtarah. In all, this half of Manasseh gave them two towns and some land around each town for their animals.

²⁸ The tribe of Issachar gave them Kishion, Daberath,

²⁹ Jarmuth, and En Gannim. In all, Issachar gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

³⁰ The tribe of Asher gave them Mishal, Abdon,

³¹ Helkath, and Rehob. In all, Asher gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

³² 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.

³³ In all, the Gershon family groups got 13 towns and some land around each town for their animals.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ (21: 34)

³⁶ (21: 34)

³⁷ (21: 34)

³⁸ (21: 34)

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⁴⁰ In all, the last family of Levites, the Merari family, got twelve towns.

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² Each of these towns had some land in it for their animals. That was true for every town.

⁴³ 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.

⁴⁴ 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.

⁴⁵The LORD kept every promise that he made to the Israelites. There were no promises that he failed to keep. Every promise came true.

22¹ Then Joshua called a meeting of all the people from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

² 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.

³ All this time you have supported all the other Israelites. You carefully obeyed all the commands that the LORD your God gave you.

⁴ The LORD your God promised to give the Israelites peace. And now, he has kept his promise, so now you can go home. 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶Then Joshua said goodbye to them, and they left and went home.

⁷Moses 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.

⁸He 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.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰They went to the place called Geliloth, 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 Geliloth. 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 eleven men said to them,

¹⁶ All the LORD'S people sent us to ask you this: Why did you do this thing against the God of Israel? Why did you stop following the LORD? Why did

you build an altar for yourselves? You know that this is against the LORD'S command.

¹⁷Remember 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.

¹⁸And 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.

¹⁹If 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.

²⁰Remember how Achan son of Zerah refused to obey the command about things that must be destroyed. Because that one man broke God's law, 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. We want you to know too. 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.

²⁷ The real reason we wanted our altar was to show our people that we worship the same God that 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.

²⁸ In the future, if it happens that your children say that we dont 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 dont use this altar for sacrificesthis altar is proof that we are part of Israel.

²⁹ The truth is, we dont want to be against the LORD. We dont 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.

³⁰Phinehas 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.

³¹So 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.

³²Then 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.

³³The 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.

³⁴The people of Reuben and Gad named the altar Proof That We Believe the LORD is God.

23¹The LORD gave Israel peace from their enemies around them. He made Israel safe. Many years passed, and Joshua became very old.

²At 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.

³You have seen what the LORD did to our enemies. He did this to help us. The LORD your God fought for you.

⁴Remember 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.

⁵But 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.

⁶You must be careful to obey every command written in the Book of the Law of Moses. Never turn away from that law.

⁷ There are still some people living among us who are not Israelites. They worship their own gods. Don't become friends with them. Don't serve or worship their gods.

⁸ You must continue to follow the LORD your God. You have done this in the past, and you must continue to do it.

⁹ The LORD helped you defeat many great and powerful nations. He forced them to leave. No nation has been able to defeat you.

¹⁰ With his help, one man from Israel could defeat 1000 enemy soldiers, because the LORD your God fights for you, as he promised.

¹¹ So you must continue to love the LORD your God.

¹² 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,

¹³ the LORD your God will not help you defeat your enemies. They will become like a trap for you. They will cause you painlike smoke and dust in your eyes.

And you will be forced to leave this good land. The LORD your God gave you this land. But you can lose it if you don't obey this command.

¹⁴It 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.

¹⁵Every 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.

¹⁶This 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.

24¹ 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.

²Then 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.

³But 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.

⁴And 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.

⁵Then 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.

⁶When 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.

⁷So 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. After that you lived in the desert for a long time.

⁸Then 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.

⁹Then 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,

¹⁰but I refused to listen to Balaam's prayer. So he asked me to bless you, and I saved you from the enemy.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²As your army went forward, I sent the Hornet ahead of it. I made all those other people leave the land, as I did when you fought the two Amorite kings. It was not your swords and bows that brought you victory.

¹³I, the Lord, gave you that land. You did not work for it! I gave it to you! And I gave you cities you did not build. Now you live there in those cities, and you enjoy food from vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant.

¹⁴Then Joshua said to the people, Now you have heard the Lords words. So you must respect the LORD and sincerely serve him. Throw away the false gods that your 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.

¹⁵But maybe you dont 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.

¹⁶Then the people answered, We will never stop following the LORD. We will never serve other gods!

¹⁷We 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.

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹Then 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.

²⁰If 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.

²¹Then the people said to Joshua, No, we will serve the LORD!

²²Then 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.

²³Then Joshua said, So throw away the false gods that you have among you. Love the LORD, the God of Israel, with all your heart.

²⁴Then the people said to Joshua, We will serve the LORD our God. We will obey him.

²⁵So 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.

²⁶Joshua 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.

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.

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 Josephs children.

³³Aarons son, Eleazar, died and was buried at Gibeah in the hill country of Ephraim. Gibeah had been given to Eleazars son Phinehas.

Judges

1 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.

⁵In the city of Bezek, they found the ruler of Bezek and fought him, and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

⁶The 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.

⁸The 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.

¹⁰Then 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 Talmi.

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 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. 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 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 Zephath. The men of Judah and men from the tribe of Simeon attacked them

and completely destroyed the city. So they named the city Hormah.

¹⁸The men of Judah also captured the cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron and all the small towns around them.

¹⁹The 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.

²⁰Moses had promised to give the land near Hebron to Caleb, so that land was given to Calebs family. The men of Caleb forced the three sons of Anak to leave that place.

²¹The tribe of Benjamin could not force the Jebusites to leave Jerusalem. So even today, the Jebusites live with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem.

²²The descendants of Joseph went to fight against the city of Bethel, and the LORD was with them.

²³They sent some spies to the city of Bethel (which was then called Luz).

²⁴While 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.

²⁵The 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.

²⁶He went to the land where the Hittites lived and built a city. He named it Luz, and that city is still called Luz today.

²⁷There 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.

²⁸Later, 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.

²⁹There 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.

³⁰Some 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.

³¹The people of Asher did not force the other people to leave the cities of Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Aczib, Helbah, Aphek, and Rehob.

³²The people of Asher did not force those Canaanites to leave their land, so the Canaanites continued to live with them.

³³The 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.

³⁴The 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.

³⁵The 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.

³⁶The land of the Amorites was from Scorpion Pass to Sela and up into the hill country past Sela.

2¹The 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 didnt obey me.

³Now 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. There they offered sacrifices to the LORD.

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 the LORD considered evil: 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.

¹⁷ But the Israelites did not listen to these judges and were unfaithful to God. Instead of worshiping him, they worshiped other gods. For a short time they had followed the example of their ancestors, obeying the LORD'S commands. But then they turned away from him.

¹⁸ Many times the enemies of Israel did bad things to them, 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. As long as the judges lived, the Israelites were saved from their enemies.

¹⁹ But 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.

²⁰ So 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.

²¹ So 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.

²² I will use them to test the Israelites. I will see if the Israelites can keep the LORD'S commands as their ancestors did.

²³ The LORD allowed those nations to stay in the land. He did not quickly force them to leave the country. He did not help Joshuas army defeat them.

3¹ The LORD did not force all the other nations to leave Israels 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.) Here are the names of the nations the Lord left in the land:

² (3: 1)

³ 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.

⁴He 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.

⁵The Israelites lived with the Canaanites, Hittites, the Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

⁶The 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.

⁷The Israelites did something the LORD considered evil: They forgot about the LORD their God and served the false gods Baal and Asherah.

⁸The 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 kings rule for eight years.

⁹But the Israelites cried to the LORD for help, and the LORD sent a man named Othniel to save them. He was the son of

Kenaz, who was Calebs younger brother. Othniel saved the Israelites.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹So the land was at peace for 40 years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died.

¹²Again 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.

¹³Eglon 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.

¹⁴King Eglon of Moab ruled over the Israelites for 18 years.

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶Ehud 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.

¹⁷So Ehud brought the gift to King Eglon of Moab. Eglon was a very fat man.

¹⁸After offering the gift, Ehud left the palace with the men who had carried the gift.

¹⁹When 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.

²⁰Ehud 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.

²¹As 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.

²²The sword went into Eglon's belly so far that even the handle sank in and the

fat closed around it. The point of the blade came out his back. Ehud left the sword inside Eglon.

²³Then Ehud went out of the private room, closed the doors to the upper room, and locked the king inside.

²⁴Ehud 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.

²⁵The 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 they went inside, they saw their king lying dead on the floor.

²⁶While the servants were waiting for the king, Ehud had time to escape. He passed by the statues and went toward the place named Seirah.

²⁷When 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.

²⁸He 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.

²⁹They killed about 10,000 strong and brave men from Moab. Not one Moabite man escaped.

³⁰So on that day the Israelites began to rule over the Moabites, and there was peace in the land for 80 years.

³¹After Ehud saved the Israelites, another man saved Israel. That mans name was Shamgar son of Anath. Shamgar used an ox goad to kill 600 Philistine men.

4¹ After Ehud died, the people again did what the LORD considered evil.

²So 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 Jabins army. Sisera lived in a town called Harosheth Haggoyim.

³Sisera had 900 iron chariots, and he was very cruel to the Israelites for 20

years. So they cried to the LORD for help.

⁴There was a woman prophet named Deborah. She was the wife of a man named Lappidoth. She was judge of Israel at that time.

⁵One 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.)

⁶Deborah sent a message to a man named Barak and asked him to come meet with her. Barak was the son of a man named Abinoam. 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.

⁷I will make Sisera, the commander of King Jabins army, come to you. I will make Sisera, his chariots, and his army come to the Kishon River. I will help you defeat Sisera there.

⁸Then 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.

⁹Of 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.

¹⁰At 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.

¹¹There 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 Zaananim, near the city of Kedesh.

¹²Someone told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam was at Mount Tabor.

¹³So Sisera gathered his 900 iron chariots and all the men with him, and they marched from the city of Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River.

¹⁴Then 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.

¹⁵Barak 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 Siseras army, but Sisera left his chariot and ran away on foot.

¹⁶Barak continued fighting Siseras army. He and his men chased Siseras chariots and army all the way to Harosheth Haggoyim. They used their swords to kill all of Siseras men. Not one of Siseras men was left alive.

¹⁷But 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 Jaels tent.

¹⁸Jael saw him coming, so she went out to meet him and said, Sir, come into my tent. Come in. Dont be afraid. So Sisera went into Jaels tent, and she covered him with a blanket.

¹⁹But 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.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ On that day God defeated King Jabin of Canaan for the Israelites.

²⁴ So the Israelites became stronger and stronger until they defeated King

Jabin of Canaan. The Israelites finally destroyed him.

5¹ 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. 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.

⁸ God chose new leaders to fight at the city gates. No one could find a shield or

a spear among the 40,000 soldiers of Israel.

⁹My heart is with the commanders of Israel. They volunteered to go to war. Praise the LORD!

¹⁰Pay attention you people riding on white donkeys, sitting on saddle blankets, and walking along the road.

¹¹At 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!

¹²Wake up, wake up, Deborah! Wake up, wake up, sing the song! Get up, Barak! Go capture your enemies, son of Abinoam!

¹³Now, survivors, go to the leaders. People of the LORD, come with me and the soldiers.

¹⁴The 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. Leaders from the tribe of Zebulun came with their bronze clubs.

¹⁵The leaders of Issachar were with Deborah. The family of Issachar was true to Barak. Those men marched to the valley on foot. Reuben, there are many brave soldiers in your army groups.

¹⁶So 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.

¹⁷The people of Gilead stayed 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.

¹⁸But the men of Zebulun and Naphtali risked their lives fighting on those hills.

¹⁹The kings of Canaan came to fight, but they didnt carry any treasures home. They fought at the city of Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo.

²⁰The stars fought them from heaven. From their paths across the sky, they fought against Sisera.

²¹The Kishon River, that ancient river, swept Siseras men away. My soul, march on with strength!

²²The horses hooves hammered the ground. Siseras mighty horses ran and ran.

²³The 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.

²⁴Jael was the wife of Heber the Kenite. She will be blessed above all women.

²⁵Sisera asked for water. Jael gave him milk. In a bowl fit for a ruler, she brought him cream.

²⁶Then Jael reached out and took a tent peg. Her right hand reached for a workmans hammer. She put the peg against the side of Siseras head and hit it with the hammer.

²⁷He sank down between Jaels 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!

²⁸There is Siseras mother, looking out the window, looking through the curtains and crying. Why is Siseras chariot so late? Why cant 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.

6¹ Again the Israelites did what the LORD considered evil. 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.

³ They did that because the Midianites and Amalekites from the east always came and destroyed their crops.

⁴ 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.

⁵The 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.

⁶The Israelites became very poor because of the Midianites. So the Israelites cried to the LORD for help.

⁷The Midianites did all these bad things, so the Israelites cried to the LORD for help.

⁸The 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.

⁹I 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.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹One 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 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.

¹²(6:11)

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵But 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.

¹⁶The 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.

¹⁷Then Gideon said to him, If you would, please give me some proof that you really are the Lord.

¹⁸Please wait here. Dont go away until I come back to you. Let me bring my offering and set it down before you. And the Lord said, I will wait until you come back.

¹⁹So Gideon went in and cooked a young goat in boiling water. He also took about 20 pounds 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.

²⁰The 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.

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.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ Then Joash spoke to the crowd that was standing around him. Joash said, Are you going to take Baals side? Are you going to rescue Baal? If anyone takes Baals 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.

³² Joash said, If Gideon pulled Baals altar down, let Baal argue with him. On that day Joash gave Gideon a new name. He called him Jerub Baal.

³³ 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.

³⁴ The Spirit of the LORD filled Gideon. So Gideon blew a trumpet to call the family of Abiezer to follow him.

³⁵ He sent messengers to all the people of the tribe of Manasseh and told them to get their weapons and prepare for battle. Gideon also sent messengers to the tribes of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. The messengers took the same message to them. So they also went up to meet Gideon and his men.

³⁶Then Gideon said to God, You said that you would help me save the Israelites. Give me proof.

³⁷I will put a sheepskin on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the sheepskin, while all the ground is dry, I will know that you will use me to save Israel, as you said.

³⁸And that is exactly what happened. Gideon got up early the next morning and squeezed the sheepskin. He was able to drain a bowl full of water from it.

³⁹Then Gideon said to God, Dont be angry with me. Let me ask just one more thing. Let me test you one more time with the sheepskin. This time let the sheepskin be dry, while the ground around it gets wet with dew.

⁴⁰That night God did that very thing. Just the sheepskin was dry, but the ground around it was wet with dew.

7¹Early in the morning Jerub Baal (Gideon) and all his men set up their camp at the spring of Harod. The Midianites were camped in the valley at the bottom of the hill called Moreh, north of Gideon and his men.

²Then 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.

³So 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.

⁴Then 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.

⁵So 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.

⁶There 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.

⁷The 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.

⁸So 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 Gideons camp.

⁹During the night the LORD spoke to Gideon and said, Get up. I will let you defeat the Midianite army. Go down to their camp.

¹⁰If you are afraid to go alone, take your servant Purah with you. Go into the camp of the Midianites.

¹¹Listen 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³Gideon 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.

¹⁴The mans 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.

¹⁵After 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.

¹⁶Then 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.

²²When 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.

²³Then soldiers from the tribes of Naphtali, Asher, and all of Manasseh were told to chase the Midianites.

²⁴Gideon 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.

²⁵The 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.

8¹ The men of Ephraim were angry with Gideon. When they found him, they asked, Why did you treat us this way? Why didnt you call us when you went to fight against the Midianites?

² 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! Isnt 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 Gideons answer, they were not as angry as they had been.

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.

⁶But the leaders of the city of Succoth said to Gideon, Why should we give your soldiers something to eat? You havent caught Zebah and Zalmunna yet.

⁷Then Gideon said, The LORD 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 briars from the desert.

⁸Gideon 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.

⁹So Gideon said to the men of Penuel, After I win the victory, I will come back here and pull this tower down.

¹⁰Zebah 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.

¹⁶Gideon took the elders of the city of Succoth and beat them with thorns and briars from the desert.

¹⁷Gideon also pulled down the tower in the city of Penuel and killed the men living in that city.

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹Gideon said, Those men were my brothers, my mothers sons! As the LORD lives, if you had not killed them, I would not kill you now.

²⁰Then 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.

²¹Then 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 he took the decorations shaped like a half-moon off their camels necks.

²²The 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.

²³But Gideon told the Israelites, The LORD will be your ruler. I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you.

²⁴Some 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.

²⁵The 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.

²⁶When 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, which he put in his hometown, the town called Ophrah. All the Israelites became unfaithful to God by worshiping the ephod. It became a trap that caused Gideon and his family to sin.

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 Jerub Baal (Gideon) 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 became unfaithful to God by

worshiping Baal. They made Baal Berith their god.

³⁴The Israelites did not remember the LORD their God, who had saved them from all their enemies living around them.

³⁵The Israelites were not loyal to the family of Jerub Baal, even though he had done many good things for them.

9¹ Abimelech was the son of Jerub Baal (Gideon). Abimelech went to his uncles who lived in the city of Shechem. He said to his uncles and all of his mothers family,

²Ask the leaders of the city of Shechem this question: Is it better for you to be ruled by the 70 sons of Jerub Baal or to be ruled by only one man? Remember, I am your relative.

³Abimelechs 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.

⁴So 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.

⁵Abimelech went to his fathers house at Ophrah and murdered his brothers. He killed the 70 sons of his father, Jerub Baal. He killed them all at the same time, but Jerub Baals youngest son hid from Abimelech and escaped. The youngest sons name was Jotham.

⁶Then all the leaders in Shechem and the house of Millo came together. Everyone gathered beside the big tree of the pillar in Shechem and made Abimelech their king.

⁷Jotham 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 and shouted out this story to the people: Listen to me you leaders of the city of Shechem. Then let God listen to you.

⁸One day the trees decided to choose a king to rule over them. The trees said to the olive tree, You be king over us.

⁹But 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?

¹⁰Then the trees said to the fig tree, Come and be our king.

¹¹But the fig tree answered, Should I stop making my good, sweet fruit just to go and sway over the other trees?

¹²Then the trees said to the vine, Come and be our king.

¹³But the vine answered, My wine makes men and kings happy. Should I stop making my wine just to go and sway over the trees?

¹⁴Finally all the trees said to the thornbush, Come and be our king.

¹⁵But 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 dont want to do this, let fire come out of the thornbush. Let the fire burn even the cedar trees of Lebanon.

¹⁶Now if you were completely honest when you made Abimelech king, may you be happy with him. And if you have been fair to Jerub Baal (Gideon) and his family, and if you have treated him as you should, this is also good.

¹⁷ But remember what my father did for you. He fought for you and risked his life when he saved you from the Midianites.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ So if you have been completely honest to Jerub Baal and his family today, then may you be happy with Abimelech as your king. And may he be happy with you.

²⁰ But leaders of Shechem and the house of Millo, 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.

²² Abimelech ruled the Israelites for three years.

²³ Abimelech had killed Jerub Baals (Gideon) 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.

²⁴ (9: 23)

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 Jerub Baals sons, right? And Abimelech made Zebul his officer, right? We should not obey Abimelech. We should follow our own

people, men from Hamor. (Hamor was the father of Shechem.)

²⁹If 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.

³⁰Zebul was the governor of the city of Shechem. Zebul heard what Gaal son of Ebed said, and he became very angry.

³¹Zebul sent messengers to Abimelech in the city of Arumah. This is the message: Gaal son of Ebed and Gaals brothers have come to the city of Shechem. They are making trouble for you. Gaal is turning the whole city against you.

³²So now you and your men should come tonight and hide in the fields outside the city.

³³When 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.

³⁴So 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 Lands Navel. And there! I saw someones head over by Magicians Tree.

³⁸ Zebul said to Gaal, Why arent 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. Gaals 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 the city, he jumped up and attacked them.

⁴⁴ 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.

⁴⁵ 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.

⁴⁸ 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.

⁴⁹ 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.

⁵⁰ Then Abimelech and his men went to the city of Thebez and captured that city.

⁵¹ 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 they climbed up to the roof of the tower.

⁵² Abimelech and his men came to the tower to attack it. Abimelech went up to the door of the tower to burn it.

⁵³ 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.

⁵⁴ 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.

⁵⁵ 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.

⁵⁷ 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 Jerub Baal (Gideon) came true.

10¹ 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.

²Tola was a judge for the Israelites for 23 years. Then he died and was buried in the city of Shamir.

³After 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.

⁴Jair 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.

⁵Jair died and was buried in the city of Kamon.

⁶Again the Israelites did what the LORD considered evil: 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.

⁷So the LORD became angry with the Israelites and allowed the Philistines and the Ammonites to defeat them.

⁸In 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.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰So 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.

¹¹The 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.

¹²You cried to me when the people of Sidon, the Amalekites, and the Midianites hurt you. I also saved you from those people.

¹³But you left me and started worshiping other gods, so I refuse to save you again.

¹⁴You like worshiping those gods, so go call to them for help. Let them save you when you are in trouble.

¹⁵But the Israelites said to the LORD, We have sinned. Do whatever you want to do to us, but please save us today.

¹⁶Then 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.

¹⁷The 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.

¹⁸The 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 ¹Jephthah 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.

²Gilead'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 fathers property, because you are the son of another woman.

³So 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.

⁴After a time the Ammonites fought with the Israelites.

⁵The 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.

⁶The elders said to Jephthah, Come and be our leader so that we can fight the Ammonites.

⁷But Jephthah said to the elders of the land of Gilead, You forced me to leave my fathers house. You hate me. So why are you coming to me now that you are having trouble?

⁸The 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.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹So 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.

¹²Jephthah 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?

¹³The 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 Jabbok River to the Jordan River. Now, tell the Israelites to give our land back to us without fighting for it.

¹⁴So the messengers of Jephthah took this message back to Jephthah. Then Jephthah sent the messengers to the king of the Ammonites again.

¹⁵They took this message: This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take the land of the Moabites or the land of the Ammonites.

¹⁶When 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.

¹⁷The Israelites sent messengers to the king of Edom. The messengers asked for a favor. They said, Let the Israelites cross through your land. But the king of Edom didnt 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.

¹⁸Then 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.)

¹⁹Then 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.

²⁰But 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.

²¹But 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.

²²The Israelites got all the land of the Amorites from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River. The land also went from the desert to the Jordan River.

²³It 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?

²⁴Surely 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.

²⁵Are 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?

²⁶The 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?

²⁷The 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.

²⁸The king of the Ammonites refused to listen to this message from Jephthah.

²⁹Then 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.

³⁰Jephthah made a promise to the LORD. He said, If you will let me defeat the Ammonites,

³¹I 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.

³²Then Jephthah went to the land of the Ammonites. He fought the Ammonites, and the LORD helped him defeat them.

³³He 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.

³⁴Jephthah 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.

³⁵When 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!

³⁶Then 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 vowed to do. 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.

12¹ 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 didnt you call us to help you fight the Ammonites? We will burn your house down with you in it.

²Jephthah answered them, The Ammonites have been giving us many problems. So my people and I fought against them. I called you, but you didnt come to help us.

³I 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?

⁴Then 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.

⁵The 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,

⁶they 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.

⁷Jephthah was a judge for the Israelites for six years. Then Jephthah from Gilead died and was buried in his town in Gilead.

⁸After Jephthah, a man named Ibzan was a judge for the Israelites. Ibzan was from the city of Bethlehem.

⁹Ibzan 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.

¹⁰Then Ibzan died and was buried in the city of Bethlehem.

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.

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. Abdon was a judge for the Israelites for eight years.

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.

13¹ Again the people did what the LORD considered evil. 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 Manoahs wife and said, You have not

been able to have children. But you will become pregnant and have a son.

⁴ Dont drink any wine or any other strong drink. Dont 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 Gods 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 didnt ask him where he was from, and he didnt tell me his name.

⁷ But he said to me, You are pregnant and will have a son. Dont drink any wine or other strong drink. Dont eat any food that is unclean, because the boy will be dedicated to God in a special way. The boy will be Gods 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.

⁹God 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.

¹⁰So the woman ran to tell her husband, The man is back! The man who came to me the other day is here.

¹¹Manoah 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? The angel said, I am.

¹²So Manoah said, May what you say happen. Tell me, what kind of life will the boy live? What will he do?

¹³The angel of the LORD said to Manoah, Your wife must do everything I told her.

¹⁴She 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.

¹⁵Then 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.

¹⁶The 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.)

¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁸The angel of the LORD said, Why do you ask my name? It is too amazing for you to believe.

¹⁹Then 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.

²⁰Manoah 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.

²⁵ The Spirit of the LORD began to work in Samson while he was in the city of Mahaneh Dan. That city is between the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol.

14¹ 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.

³His 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(Samsons 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.)

⁵Samson 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!

⁶The 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.

⁷So Samson went down to the city
and talked to the Philistine woman. She
pleased him.

⁸Several 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.

⁹Samson 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.

¹⁰Samson's father went down to see the Philistine woman. The custom was for the bridegroom to give a party. So Samson gave a party.

¹¹When the Philistines saw that he was having a party, they sent 30 men to be with him.

¹²Then 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.

¹³But 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.

¹⁴Samson 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 couldnt.

¹⁵On the fourth day, the men came to Samsons 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 dont get the answer for us, we will burn you and everyone in your fathers house to death.

¹⁶So Samsons wife went to him and began crying. She said, You just hate me! You dont 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?

¹⁷Samsons 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.

¹⁸So 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!

¹⁹Samson 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 fathers house.

²⁰So Samsons wife was given to his best man.

15¹ 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 wifes room. But her father would not let Samson go in.

²He 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.

³But Samson said to him, Now I have a good reason to hurt you Philistines. No one will blame me now.

⁴So 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.

⁵He 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.

⁶The 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 Samsons wife to the best man at his wedding. So the Philistines burned Samsons wife and her father to death.

⁷Then 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!

⁸Samson attacked the Philistines and killed many of them. Then he went and

stayed in a cave in a place named the Rock of Etam.

⁹The Philistines went to the land of Judah and stopped near a place named Lehi. Their army camped there.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹Then 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? Dont you know that the Philistines rule over us? Samson answered, I only punished them for what they did to me.

¹²Then 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.

¹³The 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.

¹⁴When 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.

¹⁵Samson found a jawbone of a dead donkey and killed 1000 Philistine men with it.

¹⁶Then Samson said, With a donkeys jawbone, I killed 1000 men! With a donkeys jawbone, I piled them into a tall pile.

¹⁷When Samson finished speaking, he threw the jawbone down. So that place was named Ramath Lehi.

¹⁸Samson was very thirsty. So he cried to the LORD. He said, I am your servant. You gave me this great victory. Please dont let me die from thirst now. Please dont let me be captured by men who are not even circumcised.

¹⁹There 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. It is still there in the city of Lehi today.

²⁰Samson was a judge for the Israelites for 20 years during the time of the Philistines.

16¹ One day Samson went to the city of Gaza. He saw a prostitute there and went in to stay the night with her.

²Someone 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.

³But 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.

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.

⁶ So Delilah said to Samson, Tell me why you are so strong. How could someone tie you up and make you helpless?

⁷ Samson answered, Someone would have to tie me up with seven fresh, new bowstrings. If someone did that, I would be as weak as any other man.

⁸ Then the rulers of the Philistines brought seven fresh, new bowstrings to Delilah, and she tied Samson with the bowstrings.

⁹ 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 Samsons strength.

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. 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.

¹⁵Then Delilah said to Samson, How can you say, I love you, when you dont even trust me? You refuse to tell me your secret. This is the third time you made me look foolish. You havent 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 Samsons 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!

²⁵The 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.

²⁶A 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.

²⁷The 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.

²⁸Then 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!

²⁹Then 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.

³⁰Samson 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.

³¹Samsons brothers and all the people in his fathers family went down to get his body. They brought him back and buried him in his fathers tomb, which is between the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol. Samson was a judge for the Israelites for 20 years.

17 ¹There was a man named Micah who lived in the hill country of Ephraim.

²Micah 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.

³Micah 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.

⁴But 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.

⁵Micah had a temple for worshiping idols. He made an ephod and some house idols. Then Micah chose one of his sons to be his priest.

⁶(At that time the Israelites did not have a king, so everyone did what they thought was right.)

⁷There was a young man who was a Levite from the city of Bethlehem in Judah. He had been living among the tribe of Judah.

⁸He 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.

⁹Micah 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.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹The young Levite agreed to live with Micah. He became like one of Micahs own sons.

¹²Micah chose him to be his priest. So the young man became a priest and lived in Micahs house.

¹³And 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.

18¹At 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. The five men came to the hill country of Ephraim. They came to Micahs house and spent the night there.

³When the five men came close to Micahs house, they heard the voice of the young Levite. They recognized his voice, so they stopped at Micahs 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 didnt

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. Dont wait! Lets go and take that land!

¹⁰When 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.

¹¹So 600 men from the tribe of Dan left the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol. They were ready for war.

¹²On 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.

¹³From 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.

¹⁵So they stopped at Micah's house, where the young Levite lived. They asked the young man how he was.

¹⁶The 600 men from the tribe of Dan stood at the entrance of the gate. They all had their weapons and were ready for war.

¹⁷The 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?

¹⁸(18:17)

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 Micahs house. They put their little children, their animals, and all their things in front of them.

²²The 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.

²³The men with Micah were shouting at the men of Dan. The men of Dan turned around and said to Micah, Whats the problem? Why are you shouting?

²⁴Micah 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, Whats the problem?

²⁵The 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.

²⁶Then 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.

²⁷So 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.

²⁸The 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 Aramso 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.

²⁹The 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.

³⁰The 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. Jonathan and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time when the Israelites were taken into captivity.

³¹The 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.

19¹ 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.

²But his slave woman had an argument with him. She left him and went back to her fathers house in Bethlehem in Judah. She stayed there for four months.

³Then 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 fathers house.

Her father saw the Levite and came out to greet him. The father was very happy.

⁴The womans father led the Levite into his house. The Levites father-in-law invited him to stay. So he stayed for three days. He ate, drank, and slept in his father-in-laws house.

⁵On the fourth day, they got up early in the morning. The Levite was getting ready to leave. But the young womans father said to his son-in-law, Eat something first. After you eat, you can go.

⁶So the Levite and his father-in-law sat down to eat and drink together. After that, the young womans father said to the Levite, Please stay tonight. Relax and enjoy yourself. So the two men ate together.

⁷The Levite got up to leave, but his father-in-law persuaded him to stay the night again.

⁸Then, on the fifth day, the Levite got up early in the morning. He was ready to leave. But the womans father said to his son-in-law, Eat something first. Relax and stay until this afternoon. So they both ate together again.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰But 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).

¹¹The 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.

¹²But 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.

¹³The Levite said, Come on. Let's try to make it to Gibeah or Ramah. We can stay the night in one of those cities.

¹⁴So 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.

¹⁵They 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.

¹⁶That 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.)

¹⁷The old man saw the traveler in the public square and asked, Where are you going? Where did you come from?

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹We 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 else.

²⁰The 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.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ The old man went outside and said to them, My friends, dont do such an evil thing! This man is a guest in my house. Dont commit this terrible sin.

²⁴ 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 dont do such a terrible sin against this man.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶At 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.

²⁷The 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.

²⁸The Levite said to her, Get up; lets go. But there was no answer. The Levite put her body on his donkey and went home.

²⁹When 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.

³⁰Everyone who saw this said, Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel before. We havent seen anything like this from the time we came out of Egypt. Discuss this and tell us what to do.

20¹ So 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.

²The leaders of all the tribes of Israel were there. They took their places in the public meeting of Gods people. There were 400,000 soldiers with swords in that place.

³The 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.

⁴So 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.

⁵But 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.

⁶So 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.

⁷ Now, all you men of Israel, speak up. Give your decision about what we should do.

⁸ Then 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ In this way we will choose men from every tribe of Israel ten men from every hundred, a hundred men from every thousand, and a thousand men from every ten thousand. These men will get supplies for the army. Then the army will go to the Benjamite city of Gibeah and punish those people for the terrible thing they did among the Israelites.

¹¹ So all the men of Israel gathered together at the city of Gibeah, united together and in agreement about what should happen.

¹² They sent men to the tribe of Benjamin with this message: What about

this terrible thing that some of your men have done?

¹³Send 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. But the people from the tribe of Benjamin would not listen to the messengers from their relatives, the other Israelites.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶There 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!

¹⁷All the tribes of Israel, except Benjamin, gathered together 400,000 fighting men with swords. Each one was a trained soldier.

¹⁸The Israelites went up to the city of Bethel. At Bethel they asked God, Which

tribe will be first to attack the tribe of Benjamin? The LORD answered, The tribe of Judah will go first.

¹⁹The next morning the Israelites got up. They made a camp near the city of Gibeah.

²⁰Then the army of Israel took their positions for battle against the army of Benjamin at the city of Gibeah.

²¹Then 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.

²²The 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.

²³ (20: 22)

²⁴Then the army of Israel came near the army of Benjamin. This was the second day of the war.

²⁵The 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 Gods Box of the Agreement was there at Bethel.

²⁸ 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 10,000 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 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.

⁴⁰ (20: 39)

⁴¹ (20: 39)

⁴² So the army of Benjamin ran away from the army of Israel. They ran toward 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.

⁴⁶On that day, 25,000 men of the army of Benjamin were killed. All of them fought bravely with their swords.

⁴⁷But 600 men from Benjamin ran into the desert to the place called the Rock of Rimmon and stayed there for four months.

⁴⁸The 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.

21 ¹At 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.

²The Israelites went to the city of Bethel. There they sat before God until evening. They cried loudly as they sat there.

³They 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?

⁴Early the next day, the Israelites built an altar. They put burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to God on that altar.

⁵Then 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 vowed that anyone who did not come together with the other tribes at the city of Mizpah would be killed.

⁶Then the Israelites felt sorry for their relatives, the people of Benjamin. They said, Today, one tribe has been separated from Israel.

⁷We 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?

⁸Then 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.

⁹The Israelites counted everyone to see who was there and who was not. They found that no one from Jabesh Gilead was there.

¹⁰So 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.

¹¹You 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴So 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.

¹⁵The Israelites felt sorry for the men of Benjamin. They felt sorry for them because the LORD had separated them from the other tribes of Israel.

¹⁶The 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?

¹⁷The 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!

¹⁸But 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.

¹⁹We 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 Lebonah.)

²⁰So the elders told the men of Benjamin about their idea. They said, Go and hide in the vineyards.

²¹Watch 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.

²²The 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.

²³So 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.

²⁴Then the Israelites went home. They went to their own land and tribe.

²⁵In those days the Israelites did not have a king, so everyone did whatever they thought was right.

Ruth

1 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 mans 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.

³ Later, Naomis husband, Elimelech, died, so only Naomi and her two sons were left.

⁴ Her sons married women from the country of Moab. One wifes name was Orpah, and the other wifes 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.

⁶While Naomi was in the country of Moab, she heard that the LORD had helped his people by giving them food. So she decided to leave the hill country of Moab and go back home. Her daughters-in-law decided to go with her.

⁷They left the place where they had been living and started walking back to the land of Judah.

⁸Then 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 the LORD will be just as kind to you.

⁹I pray that he helps each of you find a husband and a good home. Naomi kissed her daughters-in-law, and they all started crying.

¹⁰Then the daughters said, But we want to come with you and go to your family.

¹¹But Naomi said, No, daughters, go back to your own homes. Why should you go with me? I cant have any more sons to be your husbands.

¹²Go 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,

¹³you 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!

¹⁴So again they cried very much. Then Orpah kissed Naomi goodbye, but Ruth hugged her and stayed.

¹⁵Naomi said, Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her own people and her own gods. You should do the same.

¹⁶But Ruth said, Dont force me to leave you! Dont 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.

¹⁷Where you die, I will die, and that is where I will be buried. I ask the LORD to punish me if I dont keep this promise: Only death will separate us.

¹⁸Naomi saw that Ruth wanted very much to go with her. So Naomi stopped arguing with her.

¹⁹Naomi 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?

²⁰But Naomi told the people, Dont call me Naomi; call me Marah. Use this name because God All-Powerful has made my life very sad.

²¹I 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.

²²So 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.

2¹There was a rich man named Boaz living in Bethlehem. Boaz was one of Naomis close relatives from Elimelechs family.

²One 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.

³So 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 Elimelechs family.

⁴Later, 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!

⁵Then Boaz spoke to his servant who was in charge of the workers. He asked, Whose girl is that?

⁶The servant answered, She is the Moabite woman who came with Naomi from the country of Moab.

⁷She came early this morning and asked me if she could follow the workers and gather the grain that was left on the ground. And she has been working ever since. She rested only a short time in that shelter.

⁸Then 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.

⁹Watch 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.

¹⁰Then Ruth bowed very low to the ground. She said to Boaz, I am a foreigner, so I am surprised you even noticed me.

¹¹Boaz 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴At 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.

¹⁵Then Ruth got up and went back to work. Then Boaz told his servants, Let Ruth gather even around the piles of grain. Dont stop her.

¹⁶And make her work easier by dropping some full heads of grain for her. Let her gather that grain. Dont tell her to stop.

¹⁷Ruth worked in the fields until evening. Then she separated the grain from the chaff. There was about one-half bushel of barley.

¹⁸Ruth 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.

¹⁹Her 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 about the man she had worked with. She said, The man I worked with today is named Boaz.

²⁰Naomi 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.

²¹Then 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.

²²Then 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.

²³So 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.

3¹Then Naomi, Ruths 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.

²Boaz is our close relative. You worked with his women servants. Tonight he will be working at the threshing floor.

³Go 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.

⁴After 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 to do next.

⁵Then Ruth answered, I will do what you say.

⁶So Ruth went down to the threshing floor and did everything that her mother-in-law told her to do.

⁷After 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.

⁸About midnight, Boaz rolled over in his sleep and woke up. He was very surprised to see a woman lying near his feet.

⁹Boaz said, Who are you? She said, I am Ruth, your servant girl. You are our familys protector. So spread your cover over me.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹Now, young woman, dont be afraid. I will do what you ask. All the people in our town know that you are a very good woman.

¹²And it is true that I am a close relative. But there is a man who is a closer relative to you than I am.

¹³Stay here tonight. In the morning we will see if he will help you. If he decides to help you, that is fine. If he refuses to help, I promise, as surely as the LORD lives, I will marry you and buy back Elimelechs land for you. So lie here until morning.

¹⁴So Ruth lay near Boazs feet until morning. She got up while it was still dark, before it was light enough for

people to recognize each other. Boaz said to her, We will keep it a secret that you came here to me last night.

¹⁵Then he said, Bring that cloak you are wearing and hold it out. So Ruth held it out, and Boaz poured six measures of barley into it. He lifted it up for her to carry. Then he returned to the city.

¹⁶When Ruth came back to her mother-in-laws house, Naomi asked her what happened. Ruth told Naomi everything Boaz had done for her.

¹⁷She said, Boaz gave me this barley and said, You must not go home without taking this as a gift for your mother-in-law.

¹⁸Naomi said, My daughter, be patient until we see what happens next. Boaz will not rest until he has done all that he should do. We will know something before the end of the day.

4¹Boaz went to the place where people gather near the city gates. He sat there until the close relative Boaz had mentioned passed by. Boaz called to him, Come here, friend. Sit here.

²Boaz gathered ten of the elders of the city. He told them, Sit here! So they sat down.

³Then Boaz spoke to the close relative. He said, Naomi came back from the hill country of Moab. She is selling the land that belonged to our relative Elimelech.

⁴I decided to tell you about this in front of the people living here and in front of the elders of my people. If you want to buy back the land, buy it. If you dont want to redeem the land, tell me. I know that I am the next one after you who can redeem the land. If you dont buy the land back, I will.

⁵Then Boaz said, If you buy the land from Naomi, you also get the dead mans wife, Ruth, the Moabite woman, and the first child will get the land. That way, the land will stay in the dead mans family.

⁶The close relative answered, I cannot buy back the land. That land should belong to me, but I cannot buy it. If I do, I might lose my own land. So you can buy the land.

⁷(Long ago in Israel, when people bought or redeemed property, one person took off a sandal and gave it to

the other person. This was their proof of purchase.)

⁸So the close relative said to Boaz, Buy the land. And then the close relative took off his sandal and gave it to Boaz.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰I am also taking Ruth to be my wife. I am doing this so that the dead mans property will stay with his family. This way, the dead mans name will not be separated from his family and his land. You are witnesses this day.

¹¹So all the people and elders that were near the city gates were witnesses. They said, May the LORD make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah who built the house of Israel. Become powerful in Ephrathah! Be famous in Bethlehem!

¹²Tamar gave birth to Judahs son Perez. And his family became great. In the same way, may the LORD give you many children through Ruth, and may your family be great like his.

¹³ So Boaz married Ruth. The LORD allowed Ruth to become pregnant, and she had a son.

¹⁴ The women told Naomi, Praise the LORD who gave you this child. He will become famous in Israel.

¹⁵ He will make you alive again and will care for you in your old age. Your daughter-in-law made it happen. 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.

¹⁸ This is the family history of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron.

¹⁹ Hezron was the father of Ram. Ram was the father of Amminadab.

²⁰ Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

²¹ Salmon was the father of Boaz. Boaz was the father of Obed.

²²Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David.

1 Samuel

1 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 Elkanah'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.

⁵ 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.

⁶Peninnah always upset Hannah and made her feel bad because the LORD had not made her able to have children.

⁷This 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,

⁸her 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?

⁹After 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.

¹⁰Hannah was so sad that she cried the whole time she was praying to the LORD.

¹¹She 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.

¹²Hannah prayed to the LORD a long time. Eli was watching her mouth while she was praying.

¹³Hannah was praying in her heart. Her lips were moving, but since she did not say the words out loud, Eli thought she was drunk.

¹⁴He said to her, You have had too much to drink. It is time to put away the wine.

¹⁵Hannah answered, Sir, I have not drunk any wine or beer. I am deeply troubled, and I was telling the LORD about all my problems.

¹⁶Dont think I am a bad woman. I have been praying so long because I have so many troubles and am very sad.

¹⁷Eli answered, Go in peace. May the God of Israel give you what you asked for.

¹⁸Hannah said, May you be happy with me. Then she left and ate something. She was not sad anymore.

¹⁹Early the next morning Elkanah's family got up. They worshiped the LORD and then went back home to Ramah. Elkanah had sexual relations with his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered Hannah.

²⁰By 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.

²¹Elkanah 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.

²²But 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.

²³Hannah'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.

²⁴When 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.

²⁵They 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.

²⁶She 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.

²⁷I prayed for this child, and the LORD answered my prayer. He gave me this child.

²⁸And 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.

2¹Hannah 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.

²There is no holy God like the LORD. There is no God but you. There is no Rock like our God.

³ Don't continue bragging. Don't speak proud words, because the LORD God knows everything. He leads and judges people.

⁴ The bows of strong soldiers break, and weak people become strong.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ The LORD makes some poor, and he makes others rich. He humbles some people, and he honors others.

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.

⁹He protects his holy people. He keeps them from stumbling. But evil people will be destroyed. They will fall in the darkness. Their power won't help them win.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹Elkanah and his family went home to Ramah, but the boy stayed in Shiloh and served the LORD under Eli the priest.

¹²Eli's sons were evil men who did not care about the LORD.

¹³They 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

¹⁴and 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.

¹⁵But 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 wont accept boiled meat from you.

¹⁶Maybe 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 dont give it to me, Ill take it from you!

¹⁷In 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.

¹⁸But Samuel served the LORD. He was a helper who wore the linen ephod.

¹⁹Every year Samuels mother made a robe for Samuel. She took the little robe to Samuel when she went up to Shiloh with her husband for the sacrifice every year.

²⁰Eli 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. Elkanah and Hannah went home.

²¹ 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.

²² Eli was very old. He heard about the bad things his sons were doing to the Israelites at Shiloh and how his sons were having sexual relations with the women who served at the door of the Meeting Tent.

²³ Eli said to his sons, The people here told me about the evil things you have done. Why are you doing such things?

²⁴ Sons, stop that! The LORD'S people are saying bad things about you.

²⁵ If you sin against other people, God might protect you. But who can help you if you sin against the LORD? Eli's sons refused to listen to him, so the LORD decided to kill them.

²⁶ The boy Samuel kept growing. He was pleasing to the LORD and to the people.

²⁷ A 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 dont 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.

³⁰The LORD, the God of Israel, promised that your fathers 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. No one in your family will live to be an old man.

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.

3¹The boy Samuel was Elis 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.

²Elis 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 didnt 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 didnt 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.

¹⁴That is why I swore an oath that sacrifices and offerings will never take away the sins of the people in Elis family.

¹⁵Samuel 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.

¹⁶But Eli said to Samuel, Samuel, my son. Samuel answered, Yes, sir.

¹⁷Eli asked, What did God say to you? Dont hide it from me. God will punish you if you hide anything from the message he spoke to you.

¹⁸So 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.

¹⁹The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up. He made everything happen just as Samuel said it would.

²⁰Then all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was a true prophet of the LORD.

²¹And the LORD continued to appear to Samuel at Shiloh. He revealed himself to Samuel as the word of the LORD.

4¹News about Samuel spread throughout Israel. Eli was very old, and his sons kept doing bad things before the Lord. 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.

²The 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.

³The rest of the Israelite soldiers went back to their camp. The elders of

Israel asked, Why did the LORD let the Philistines defeat us? Lets bring the Box of the LORD'S Agreement from Shiloh. God will go with us into battle and save us from our enemies.

⁴So the people sent men to Shiloh. The men brought back the Box of the Agreement of the LORD All-Powerful. On top of the Box are the Cherub angels. They are like a throne where the Lord sits. Elis two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, came with the Box.

⁵When the Box of the LORD'S Agreement came into the camp, all the Israelites gave a great shout loud enough to make the ground shake.

⁶The Philistines heard Israels shout and asked, Why are the people so excited in the Hebrew camp? Then the Philistines learned that the LORD'S Holy Box had been brought into Israels camp.

⁷They became afraid and said, Gods have come to their camp! Were in trouble. This has never happened before.

⁸We 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.

⁹Be brave, Philistines. Fight like men. In the past they were our slaves, so fight like men or you will become their slaves.

¹⁰So the Philistines fought very hard and defeated the Israelites. The Israelite soldiers ran away and went home. It was a terrible defeat for Israel. Thirty thousand Israelite soldiers were killed.

¹¹The Philistines took Gods Holy Box and killed Elis two sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

¹²One 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.

¹³Eli 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.

¹⁴Eli 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. Eli asked, Why are the people making this loud noise? The

Benjamite man ran to Eli and told him what happened.

¹⁵(4: 14)

¹⁶He said, I am the man who just came from the battle. I ran away from the battle today. Eli asked, What happened, son?

¹⁷The 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 Gods Holy Box.

¹⁸When the Benjamite man mentioned Gods 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.

¹⁹Elis daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant. It was nearly time for her baby to be born. She heard the news that Gods 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.

²⁰She was about to die when the women who were helping her said, Dont

worry, you have given birth to a son. But she did not answer or pay attention.

²¹ She named the baby Ichabod, that is to say, Israels glory has been taken away. She did this because Gods Holy Box was taken away and because both her father-in-law and her husband were dead.

²² She said, Israels glory has been taken away because the Philistines had taken Gods Holy Box.

5¹ The Philistines carried Gods Holy Box, from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

² They carried Gods Holy Box into the temple of Dagon and put it next to the statue of Dagon.

³ The next morning, the people of 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.

⁵That is why, even today, the priests or other people refuse to step on the threshold when they enter Dagon's temple at Ashdod.

⁶The 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.

⁷They 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹But 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.

¹⁰So the Philistines sent Gods Holy Box to Ekron. But when Gods 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?

¹¹The 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.

¹²Many people died, and those who did not, had tumors. The people of Ekron cried loudly to heaven.

6¹ The Philistines kept the LORD'S Holy Box in their land for seven months.

²The 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.

³The priests and magicians answered, If you send back the Holy Box of the God of Israel, dont 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.

⁴The Philistines asked, What kind of gifts should we send for Israels 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.

⁵So 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, your gods, and your land.

⁶Dont be stubborn like Pharaoh and the Egyptians. God punished the Egyptians. That is why the Egyptians let the Israelites leave Egypt.

⁷You 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.

⁸Put the LORD'S Holy Box on the wagon. You must put the gold models in the bag beside the Box. They are your gifts for God to forgive your sins. Send the wagon straight on its way.

⁹Watch 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.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹Then the Philistines put the LORD'S Holy Box on the wagon along with the bag that held the gold models of the tumors and mice.

¹²The cows went straight to Beth Shemesh. The cows stayed on the road,

mooring 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.

¹³The 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.

¹⁴The 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 gold 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.

¹⁵(6:14)

¹⁶The five Philistine rulers watched the people of Beth Shemesh do this and then went back to Ekron that same day.

¹⁷In this way the Philistines sent gold models of tumors as gifts for their sins to the LORD. They sent one gold model of a tumor for each of the Philistine towns

of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron.

¹⁸The Philistines also sent gold models of mice. The number of these gold 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 LORD'S Holy Box was put on a large rock. That rock is still in the field of Joshua from Beth Shemesh.

¹⁹When the men of Beth Shemesh first saw the LORD'S Holy Box coming, they began to celebrate. But there were no priests there to take charge. So the LORD killed 70 of the men there. The people of Beth Shemesh cried loudly because of this hard punishment.

²⁰They said, Where can we find a priest who can take care of the Holy Box? Where should it go from here?

²¹There was a priest at Kiriath Jearim, so the people of Beth Shemesh sent messengers there. They said, The Philistines have brought back the LORD'S Holy Box. Come down and take it to your city.

7 ¹The 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.

²The Box stayed there at Kiriath Jearim for a long time. Twenty years passed while the Holy Box was in Kiriath Jearim, and the Israelites began to follow the LORD again.

³Samuel 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.

⁴So the Israelites threw away their statues of Baal and Ashtoreth. The Israelites served only the LORD.

⁵Samuel said, All Israel must meet at Mizpah. I will pray to the LORD for you.

⁶The 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.

⁷When 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

⁸and said to Samuel, Dont stop praying to the LORD our God for us. Ask him to save us from the Philistines.

⁹Samuel 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.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹The 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.

¹²After 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. Samuel said, The LORD helped us all the way to this place.

¹³The Philistines were defeated and did not enter the land of Israel again. The LORD was against the Philistines during the rest of Samuels life.

¹⁴The Philistines had taken some cities from Israel, but the Israelites won them back. They recovered those cities throughout the Philistine area, from Ekron to Gath. There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites.

¹⁵Samuel led Israel all his life.

¹⁶He 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.

¹⁷But Samuel always went back to his home in Ramah. There he built an altar to the LORD and judged Israel.

8¹When Samuel was old, he appointed his sons to be judges for Israel.

²Samuels first son was named Joel. His second son was named Abijah. Joel and Abijah were judges in Beersheba.

³But Samuels 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.

⁴So all the elders of Israel met together and went to Ramah to meet with Samuel.

⁵The elders said to Samuel, Youre old, and your sons dont live right. They are not like you. Now, give us a king to rule us like all the other nations.

⁶So the elders asked for a king to lead them. Samuel thought this was a bad idea, so he prayed to the LORD.

⁷The LORD told Samuel, Do what the people tell you. They have not rejected you. They have rejected me. They dont want me to be their king.

⁸They 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.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰Those people asked for a king. So Samuel told them everything the LORD said.

¹¹Samuel 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.

¹²A 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.

¹³A king will take your daughters and force some of them to make perfume for him and some to cook and bake for him.

¹⁴A king will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves. He will take them from you and give them to his officers.

¹⁵He will take one-tenth of your grain and grapes, and he will give them to his officers and servants.

¹⁶A 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.

¹⁷He will take one-tenth of your flocks. And you yourselves will become slaves of this king.

¹⁸When that time comes, you will cry because of the king you chose. But the LORD won't answer you at that time.

¹⁹But the people would not listen to Samuel. They said, No, we want a king to rule over us.

²⁰Then we will be the same as all the other nations. Our king will lead us. He will go before us and fight our battles.

²¹Samuel listened to the people and then repeated their words to the LORD.

²²The LORD answered, Listen to them and give them a king. Then Samuel told the Israelites, You will have a king. Now go home.

9¹Kish 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.

²Kish 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.

³One day, Kish's donkeys got lost. So he said to his son Saul, Take one of the servants and go look for the donkeys.

⁴Saul 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.

⁵Finally, 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.

⁶But 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.

⁷ 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?

⁸ Again the servant answered Saul. Look, I have a little bit of money. Lets give it to the man of God. Then he will tell us where we should go.

⁹ Saul said to his servant, That is a good idea. Lets 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, Lets go to the seer.)

¹⁰ (9: 9)

¹¹ (9: 9)

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ The day before, the LORD had told Samuel,

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to Samuel, This is the man I told you about. He will rule my people.

¹⁸Saul 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 seers house is?

¹⁹Samuel 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.

²⁰And dont 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.

²¹Saul 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?

²²Then Samuel took Saul and his servant to the eating area. About 30 people 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,

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.

10¹ 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:

²After you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachels 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 his donkeys. Now he is worrying about you. He is saying: What will I do about my son?

³Samuel 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.

⁴These three men will say hello to you. They will offer you two loaves of bread, and you will accept the two loaves.

⁵Then you will go to Gibeath 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.

⁶Then 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.

⁷After that happens, you can do whatever you choose to do, because God will be with you.

⁸Go 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.

⁹Just as Saul turned to leave Samuel, God turned Saul's life around. All these things happened that day.

¹⁰When Saul and his servant came to Gibeath 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?

¹² 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?

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.

¹⁷ Samuel told all the Israelites to meet together with the LORD at Mizpah.

¹⁸Samuel 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.

¹⁹But 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.

²⁰Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near. Then Samuel began to choose the new king. First, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen.

²¹Samuel told each family in the tribe of Benjamin to pass by. Matris family was chosen. Then Samuel told each man in Matris family to walk by. Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when the people looked for Saul, they could not find him.

²²Then they asked the LORD, Has Saul come here yet? The LORD said, Saul is hiding behind the supplies.

²³The 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. 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 Israelite man living in the area east of the Jordan River. But 7000 Israelite men ran away from the Ammonites and came to Jabesh Gilead.

11 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.

²But 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.

³The 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.

⁴The messengers came to Gibeah where Saul lived. They told the news to the people. The people cried loudly.

⁵Saul had been out in the field with his oxen. When he came in from the field he heard the people crying and asked, Whats wrong with the people? Why are they crying? Then the people told Saul what the messengers from Jabesh said.

⁶Saul listened to their story. Then Gods Spirit came on him with great power. Saul became very angry.

⁷He 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.

⁸Saul gathered the men together at Bezek. There were 300,000 men from Israel and 30,000 men from Judah.

⁹Saul 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.

¹⁰Then the people of Jabesh said to Nahash the Ammonite, Tomorrow we will come to you, and you can do whatever you want to us.

¹¹The 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.

¹²Then the people said to Samuel, Where are the people who said they didnt want Saul to rule as king? Bring them here, and we will kill them.

¹³But Saul said, No, dont kill anyone today! The LORD saved Israel today.

¹⁴Then Samuel said to the people, Come, lets go to Gilgal. At Gilgal we will again make Saul the king.

¹⁵All 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.

12¹Samuel said to all Israel: I have done everything you wanted me to do. I have put a king over you.

²Now 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.

³Here I am. If I have done anything wrong, you must tell these things to the LORD and his chosen king. Did I steal anyones cow 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.

⁴The Israelites answered, No, you never did anything bad to us. You never cheated us or took things from us.

⁵Samuel 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!

⁶Then 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.

⁷So now you take your place and I will present my arguments against you before the LORD. I will tell about all the great things the LORD has done to save you and your ancestors.

⁸Jacob 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.

⁹But 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 become the slaves of the Philistines and the king of Moab. They all fought against your ancestors.

¹⁰But 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.

¹¹So the LORD sent Jerub Baal (Gideon), Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel. He saved you from your enemies around you, and you lived in safety.

¹²But 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.

¹³Now, here is the king you chose. The LORD put this king over you.

¹⁴You 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.

¹⁵But if you dont 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.

¹⁶Now stand still and see the great thing the LORD will do before your eyes.

¹⁷Now is the time of the wheat harvest. 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.

¹⁸So 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.

¹⁹All the people said to Samuel, Pray to the LORD your God for us, your servants. Dont let us die! We have sinned many times. And now we have added to these sinswe have asked for a king.

²⁰Samuel answered, Dont be afraid. It is true that you did all these bad things, but dont stop following the LORD. Serve the LORD with all your heart.

²¹ Idols are only statues they can't help you. So don't worship them. Idols can't help you or save you. They are nothing!

²² But the LORD won't leave his people. No, the LORD was pleased to make you his own people. So for his own good name, he won't leave you.

²³ And as for me, I would never stop praying for you. If I stopped praying for you, I would be sinning against the LORD. I will continue to teach you the right way to live a good life.

²⁴ But you must honor the LORD. You must serve him sincerely with all your heart. Remember the wonderful things he has done for you.

²⁵ But if you are stubborn and do evil, God will throw you and your king away, like dirt swept out with a broom.

13¹ Saul was 30 years old when he became king. He ruled over Israel 42 years.

² 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.

³Jonathan defeated the Philistines at their camp in Geba. The Philistines heard about this. They said, The Hebrews have rebelled. Saul said, Let the Hebrew people hear what happened. So Saul told the men to blow trumpets through all the land of Israel.

⁴All 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.

⁵The Philistines gathered to fight 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.

⁶The 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.

⁷Some 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.

⁸Samuel 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.

⁹So Saul said, Bring me the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings. Then Saul offered the burnt offering.

¹⁰As soon as Saul finished offering that sacrifice, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet him.

¹¹Samuel 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.

¹²I thought to myself, The Philistines will come here and attack me at Gilgal, and I havent asked the LORD to help us yet. So I forced myself to offer the burnt offering.

¹³Samuel 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.

¹⁴But now your kingdom wont 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.

¹⁵Then Samuel got up and left Gilgal. 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.

¹⁶Saul, his son Jonathan, and the soldiers went to Geba in Benjamin. The Philistines were camped at Micmash.

¹⁷So their best soldiers began the attack. The Philistine army split into three groups. One group went north on the road to Ophrah, near Shual.

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹There were no blacksmiths in Israel. The Philistines would not allow them because they were afraid the Israelites would make iron swords and spears.

²⁰Only 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.

14¹ 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. Saul had about 600 men with him.

³ One of the men was named Ahijah. Ahijah was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub. Ahitub was the son of Phinehas. Phinehas 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ One of the rocks faced north toward Micmash, and the other faced south toward Geba.

⁶ Jonathan said to his young helper who carried his weapons, Come on, lets go to the camp of those foreigners. Maybe the LORD will use us to defeat them. Nothing can stop the LORD it doesnt matter if we have many soldiers or just a few soldiers.

⁷ The young man who carried Jonathans weapons said to him, Do what you think is best. Whatever you decide, I am with you all the way.

⁸ Jonathan said, Lets go! Well cross the valley and go to the Philistine guards. Well let them see us.

⁹If they say to us, Stay there until we come to you, we will stay where we are. We won't go up to them.

¹⁰But 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.

¹¹So 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³So 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.

¹⁴ (14: 13)

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ Saul's guards at Gibeah in the land of Benjamin saw the Philistine soldiers running away in different ways.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ Saul said to Ahijah, Bring Gods Holy Box! (At that time Gods Holy Box was there with the Israelites.)

¹⁹ 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, Thats enough. Put your hand down and stop praying.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ (14: 25)

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ 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.

³²They had taken sheep, cows, 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.

³³Someone said to Saul, Look, the men are sinning against the LORD. Theyre eating meat that still has blood in it! Saul said, You have sinned. Roll a large stone over here now!

³⁴Then Saul said, 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. Dont sin against the LORD! Dont eat meat that still has blood in it. That night everyone brought their animals and killed them there.

³⁵Then Saul built an altar for the LORD. Saul himself began building that altar for the LORD.

³⁶Saul said, Lets 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, Lets ask God.

³⁷So Saul asked God, Should I go chase the Philistines? Will you let us defeat the

Philistines? But God did not answer Saul that day.

³⁸ So Saul said, Bring all the leaders to me! Let's find who committed the sin today.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² Saul said, Throw them again to show the guilty one or my son Jonathan. Jonathan was shown to be the one.

⁴³ 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?

⁴⁴ Saul said, I made an oath and asked God to punish me if I didnt keep it. Jonathan, you must die.

⁴⁵ 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 Jonathans head will fall to the ground! God helped Jonathan fight against the Philistines today. So the people saved Jonathan from death.

⁴⁶ Saul did not chase the Philistines. The Philistines went back to their place.

⁴⁷ Saul 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 Israels enemies wherever he went.

⁴⁸ Saul was very brave. He saved Israel from all the enemies who tried to take things from the Israelites. He even defeated the Amalekites.

⁴⁹ Sauls sons were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malki Shua. Sauls older daughter was named Merab. Sauls younger daughter was named Michal.

⁵⁰Sauls wife was named Ahinoam. Ahinoam was the daughter of Ahimaaz. The commander of Sauls army was named Abner son of Ner. Ner was Sauls uncle.

⁵¹Sauls father Kish and Abners 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.

15¹One 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. Dont 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 wont 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 Agags 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 didnt want to destroy those things.

They destroyed only what was not worth keeping.

¹⁰Then Samuel received this message from the LORD:

¹¹Saul 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 didnt 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

¹⁹So why didnt 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 onetheir 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 wont 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 Samuels 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, It is true that I sinned! But please come back with me. Show me some respect in front of the leaders and the Israelites. Come 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 wont 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.

16¹ The 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.

² But Samuel said, If I go, Saul will hear the news and try to kill me. 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.

³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice. Then I will show you what to do. You must anoint the person I show you.

⁴ Samuel 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?

⁵ Samuel 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.

⁶ When Jesse and his sons arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, Surely

this is the man who the LORD has chosen.

⁷ But 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.

⁸ Then Jesse called his second son, Abinadab. Abinadab walked by Samuel. But Samuel said, No, this is not the man who the LORD chose.

⁹ Then Jesse told Shammah to walk by Samuel. But Samuel said, No, the LORD did not choose this man, either.

¹⁰ Jesse showed seven of his sons to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, The LORD has not chosen any of these men.

¹¹ Then 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.

¹² Jesse sent someone to get his youngest son. This son was a good-looking, healthy young man. He was very

handsome. 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 Jesses 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.

¹⁴The LORD'S Spirit left Saul. Then the LORD sent an evil spirit to Saul that caused him much trouble.

¹⁵Sauls servants said to him, An evil spirit from God is bothering you.

¹⁶Give 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 Jesses 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.

¹⁹ So Saul sent messengers to Jesse. They told Jesse, You have a son named David. He takes care of your sheep. Send him to me.

²⁰ So 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.

²¹ So David went to Saul and stood in front of him. Saul loved David very much. David became the helper who carried Saul's weapons.

²² Saul sent a message to Jesse. Let David stay and serve me. I like him very much.

²³ Any 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.

17 ¹ The 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.

³The Philistines were on one hill. The Israelites were on the other hill. The valley was between them.

⁴The Philistines had a champion fighter named Goliath, who was from Gath. He was over 9 feet tall. Goliath came out of the Philistine camp.

⁵He 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.

⁶Goliath wore bronze protectors on his legs. He had a bronze javelin tied on his back.

⁷The 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.

⁸Each 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.

⁹If 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.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹Saul and the Israelite soldiers heard what Goliath said, and they were very afraid.

¹²David was the son of Jesse. Jesse was from the Ephrathah family in Bethlehem, Judah. Jesse had eight sons. In Sauls time Jesse was an old man.

¹³Jesses three oldest sons went with Saul to the war. The first son was Eliab, the second was Abinadab, and the third was Shammah.

¹⁴David was the youngest son. The three oldest sons were in Sauls army,

¹⁵but David left Saul from time to time to take care of his fathers sheep at Bethlehem.

¹⁶The Philistine came out every morning and evening and stood before the Israelite army. Goliath insulted Israel like this for 40 days.

¹⁷One 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.

¹⁸Also 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.

¹⁹Your brothers are with Saul and all the Israelite soldiers in the Valley of Elah. They are there to fight against the Philistines.

²⁰Early 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.

²¹The 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.

²³ 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.

²⁵ One of the Israelite men said, Did you see that man? Look at him! He comes out 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 mans family free from taxes in Israel.

²⁶ David 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, nothing but a Philistine. Why does he think he can speak against the army of the living God?

²⁷ So the Israelite told David about the reward for killing Goliath.

²⁸ Davids 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 didnt want to do what you were told to do. You just wanted to come down here to watch the battle.

²⁹ David said, What did I do now? I didnt do anything wrong! I was only talking.

³⁰ He turned to some other people and asked them the same questions. They gave him the same answers as before.

³¹ Some men heard David talking. They took David to Saul and told him what David had said.

³² David said to Saul, People shouldnt let Goliath discourage them. I am your servant. I will go fight this Philistine.

³³ Saul answered, You cant go out and fight against this Philistine. Youre not even a soldier! Goliath has been fighting in wars since he was a boy.

³⁴ But David said to Saul, There were times when I was taking care of my fathers sheep that wild animals came to take some sheep from the flock. Once there was a lion and another time, a bear.

³⁵ I 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.

³⁶ I 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.

³⁷ The 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.

³⁸ Saul put his own clothes on David. He put a bronze helmet on Davids head and armor on his body.

³⁹ David put on the sword and tried to walk around. He tried to wear Sauls uniform, but David was not used to all those heavy things. David said to Saul, I

cant fight in these things. Im 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 shepherds bag and held his sling in his hand. Then he went out to meet the Philistine.

⁴¹The Philistine slowly walked closer and closer to David. Goliaths 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 Ill 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.

⁴⁶Today 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 all the other Philistines too. Then all the world will know there is a God in Israel.

⁴⁷All 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.

⁴⁸Goliath the Philistine started to attack David. He slowly walked closer and closer toward David, but David ran out to meet Goliath.

⁴⁹David 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.

⁵⁰So David defeated the Philistine with only a sling and one stone! He hit the Philistine and killed him. David didn't have a sword,

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² 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.

⁵³ After chasing the Philistines, the Israelites came back to the Philistine camp and took many things from that camp.

⁵⁴ David took the Philistines' head to Jerusalem, but he kept the Philistines' weapons at home.

⁵⁵ 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.

⁵⁶ King Saul said, Find out who his father is.

⁵⁷ When David came back after killing Goliath, Abner brought him to Saul. David was still holding the Philistines head.

⁵⁸ Saul asked him, Young man, who is your father? David answered, I am the son of your servant Jesse, from Bethlehem.

18¹ 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.

² (18:1)

³ Jonathan loved David as much as himself, so they made a special agreement.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶David 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!

⁷The women sang, Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed tens of thousands.

⁸This 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!

⁹So from that time on, Saul watched David very closely.

¹⁰The next day, an evil spirit from God took control of Saul and he went wild in his house. David played the harp to calm him as he usually did,

¹¹but Saul had a spear in his hand. He thought, Ill pin David to the wall. Saul

threw the spear twice, but David jumped out of the way both times.

¹²The LORD had left Saul and was now with David, so Saul was afraid of David.

¹³Saul 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.

¹⁴The LORD was with David, so he was successful in everything.

¹⁵Saul saw how successful David was and became even more afraid of him.

¹⁶But all the people in Israel and Judah loved David because he was out among them and led them into battle.

¹⁷One 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 wont have to kill David. I will let the Philistines kill him for me.

¹⁸But David said, I am not an important man from an important family. I cant marry the kings 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.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ Saul's officers said 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.

²⁵ 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

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ He saw that the LORD was with David and he also saw that his daughter, Michal, loved David.

²⁹ 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.

19 ¹ Saul told his son Jonathan and his officers to kill David. But Jonathan liked David very much,

² 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.

³(19:2)

⁴Jonathan talked to his father Saul. Jonathan said good things about David. He said, You are the king. David is your servant. David hasnt done anything wrong to you, so dont do anything wrong to him. He has always been good to you.

⁵He 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? Hes innocent. There is no reason to kill him.

⁶Saul listened to Jonathan and made a promise. He said, As surely as the LORD lives, David wont be put to death.

⁷So Jonathan called David and told him everything that was said. Then Jonathan brought David to Saul, and David was with Saul as before.

⁸Once again there was war with the Philistines, and David went out to fight. He defeated them badly, and they ran away.

⁹Later, in Sauls 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.

¹⁰Saul 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.

¹¹Saul sent men to watch Davids house. They stayed there all night. They were waiting to kill David in the morning, but Davids wife Michal warned him. She said, You must run away tonight and save your life. If you dont, you will be killed tomorrow.

¹²Then Michal let David down out of a window, and he escaped and ran away.

¹³Michal took the household god, put clothes on it, and put goats hair on its head. Then she put the statue in the bed.

¹⁴Saul sent messengers to take David prisoner. But Michal said, David is sick.

¹⁵The 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.

¹⁶The messengers went to Davids house. They went inside to get him, but they saw it was only a statue and that its hair was only goats hair.

¹⁷Saul 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 didnt help him escape.

¹⁸David 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.

¹⁹Saul heard that David was there in the camps near Ramah.

²⁰So he sent some men to arrest David. But when they came to the camps, there was a group of prophets prophesying. Samuel was standing there leading the group. The Spirit of God came on Sauls messengers and they began prophesying.

²¹Saul heard about this, so he sent other messengers, but they also began

prophesying. So Saul sent messengers a third time, and they also began prophesying.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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?

20¹ 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 cant be true! My father isnt trying to kill you. My father doesnt do anything without first telling me. It doesnt 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 dont take me to your father.

⁹Jonathan answered, No, never! If I learn that my father plans to hurt you, I will warn you.

¹⁰David said, Who will warn me if your father says bad things to you?

¹¹Then Jonathan said, Come, lets 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 dont do this. May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father.

¹⁴As 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.

¹⁵ (20: 14)

¹⁶ So Jonathan made this agreement with David and his family, and he asked the LORD to hold them responsible for keeping it.

¹⁷ Jonathan loved David as himself, and because of this love, he asked David to repeat this agreement for himself.

¹⁸ Jonathan said to David, Tomorrow is the New Moon celebration. Your seat will be empty, so my father will see that you are gone.

¹⁹ On the third day, go to the same place you hid when this trouble began. Wait by that hill.

²⁰ On the third day, I will go to that hill and shoot three arrows as if I am shooting at a target.

²¹ Then 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.

²² But 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. 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 Davids 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, Davids place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, Why didnt Jesses son come to the New Moon celebration yesterday or today?

²⁸Jonathan answered, David asked me to let him go to Bethlehem.

²⁹He said, Let 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 kings 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 Jesseit will bring shame to you and to your mother.

³¹As long as Jesses son lives, you will never be king and have a kingdom. Now, bring David to me! He is a dead man.

³²Jonathan asked his father, Why should David be killed? What did he do wrong?

³³But Saul threw his spear at Jonathan and tried to kill him. So Jonathan knew that his father wanted very much to kill David.

³⁴Jonathan 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.

³⁵The next morning Jonathan went out to the field to meet David as they had agreed. Jonathan brought a little boy with him.

³⁶He said to the boy, Run. Go find the arrows I shoot. The boy began to run, and Jonathan shot the arrows over his head.

³⁷The boy ran to the place where the arrows fell, but Jonathan called, The arrows are farther away.

³⁸Then he shouted, Hurry! Go get them. Dont just stand there. The boy picked up the arrows and brought them back to his master.

³⁹The boy knew nothing about what went on. Only Jonathan and David knew.

⁴⁰Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to the boy and told him to go back to town.

⁴¹When 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.

21 ¹ Then 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 isnt anyone with you?

² David answered him, The king gave me a special order. He told me, Dont let anyone know about this mission. No one must know what I told you to do. I told my men where to meet me.

³ Now, what food do you have with you? Give me five loaves of bread or whatever you have to eat.

⁴ The priest said to David, I dont 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.

⁵ David 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.

⁶ There 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 Sauls officers was there that day. He was Doeg the Edomite, the leader of Sauls shepherds. He had been kept there before the LORD.

⁸David asked Ahimelech, Do you have a spear or sword here? The kings business is very important. I had to leave quickly, and I didnt bring my sword or any other weapon.

⁹The 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, Goliaths sword theres not another one like it. Give it to me.

¹⁰That day David ran away from Saul and went to King Achish of Gath.

¹¹Achishs officers said, Isnt 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.

¹²David paid close attention to what they said. He was afraid of King Achish of Gath,

¹³so he pretended to be crazy in front of Achish and his officers. He scratched marks on the doors of the city gate, and he let spit run down his beard.

¹⁴Achish said to his officers, Look at the man! He is crazy. Why did you bring him to me?

¹⁵I 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.

22¹David 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.

²Many 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.

³David 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.

⁴So David left his parents with the king of Moab. They stayed with the king of Moab as long as David was at the fort.

⁵But 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.

⁶Saul 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.

⁷Saul said to his officers who were standing around him, Listen, men of Benjamin. Do you think the son of Jesse (David) will give you fields and vineyards? Do you think he will promote you and make you officers over 1000 men and officers over 100 men?

⁸No, 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.

⁹Doeg 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.

¹⁰Ahimelech prayed to the LORD for David and gave him some food. He even gave David the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²Saul said to Ahimelech, Listen now, son of Ahitub. Ahimelech answered, Yes, sir.

¹³Saul 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.

¹⁴Ahimelech 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.

¹⁵That was not the first time I prayed to God for David. Not at all! Dont blame me or any of my relatives. We are your servants. I know nothing about what is happening.

¹⁶But the king said, Ahimelech, you and all your relatives must die.

¹⁷Then the king told the guards at his side, Go and kill the priests of the LORD because they are on Davids side too. They knew he was running away, but they didnt tell me. The kings officers refused to hurt the priests of the LORD.

¹⁸So 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.

¹⁹Nob was the city of the priests. Doeg killed all the people of Nob. He used his sword and killed men, women, children, and babies. He even killed their cattle, donkeys, and sheep.

²⁰But 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 fathers family.

²³ Stay with me. Dont be afraid, because the man (Saul) who tried to kill you is the same man who wants to kill me. I will protect you if you stay with me.

23 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 Davids 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 Abiathar son of Ahimelech was the man who had run away from Saul and was now in Keilah with David. Abiathar had brought 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.

¹²Again David asked, Will the people of Keilah give me and my men to Saul? The LORD answered, They will.

¹³So David and his men left Keilah. There were about 600 men who went with David. They kept moving from place to place. Saul learned that David had escaped from Keilah, so he did not go to that city.

¹⁴David went into the desert of Ziph and stayed in the mountains and fortresses there. Saul looked for David the whole time, but the Lord didnt let Saul catch him.

¹⁵David was at Horesh in the desert of Ziph. He was afraid because Saul was coming to kill him.

¹⁶But Sauls son Jonathan went to see David at Horesh and encouraged him to have a stronger faith in God.

¹⁷Jonathan told David, Dont be afraid. My father Saul wont hurt you. You will become the king of Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father knows this.

¹⁸Jonathan and David both made an agreement before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, and David stayed at Horesh.

¹⁹Some 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.

²⁰Now, King, come down any time you want. It is our duty to give David to you.

²¹Saul answered, May the LORD bless you for helping me.

²²Go 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.

²³Find 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.

²⁴So those people went back to Ziph before Saul. David and his men were in the desert of Maon, south of Jeshimon.

²⁵Saul 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Then a messenger arrived and told Saul, Come quickly! The Philistines are attacking.

²⁸ So Saul stopped chasing David and went to fight the Philistines. That is why people call this place Slippery Rock.

²⁹ David left the desert of Maon and went to the fortresses near En Gedi.

24¹ After Saul had chased the Philistines away, people told him, David is in the desert area near En Gedi.

² So Saul chose 3000 men from all over Israel and began searching for David and his men. They looked near Wild Goat Rocks.

³ 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.

⁴David's men told him, This is 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.

⁵Later, David felt bad about what he did.

⁶He 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.

⁷David said these things to stop his men. He would not let his men hurt Saul. Saul left the cave and went on his way.

⁸Later, 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.

⁹David said to Saul, Why do you listen when people say, David plans to hurt you?

¹⁰You 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 wont hurt my master. Saul is the LORD'S chosen king.

¹¹Look at this piece of cloth in my hand. I cut off the corner of your robe. I could have killed you, but I didnt. 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.

¹²Let the LORD be the judge. I hope the LORD will punish you for the wrong you did to me, but I wont fight you myself.

¹³There is an old saying: Bad things come from bad people. I havent done anything bad, and I wont hurt you.

¹⁴Why are you chasing me anyway? Should the king of Israel be out chasing someone no more important than a dying dog or a little flea?

¹⁵Let 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.

¹⁶When David finished speaking, Saul asked, Is that your voice, David my son? Then Saul lifted his voice and began to cry.

¹⁷He said, You are right, and I am wrong. You were good to me, even though I have been bad to you.

¹⁸You 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.

¹⁹This shows that you are not my enemy. A man doesnt catch his enemy and then just let him go. He doesnt do good things for his enemy. May the LORD reward you for being good to me today.

²⁰Now I know that you will become the new king. You will rule the kingdom of Israel.

²¹Now 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 fathers family.

²²So David made this promise to Saul with an oath. Then Saul went home. But

David and his men went back up to the fort.

25 ¹ 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.

² 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.

³ This mans name was Nabal. He was from Calebs family. Nabals wife was named Abigail. She was a wise and beautiful woman, but Nabal was a mean and cruel man.

⁴ David was in the desert when he heard that Nabal was cutting the wool from his sheep.

⁵ David sent ten young men to talk to Nabal. He told them, Go to Carmel. Find Nabal and tell him Hello for me.

⁶ David gave them this message for Nabal: May you and your family be well and all that you own be well.

⁷ 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.

⁸Ask 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.

⁹David's men went to Nabal. They gave his message to Nabal,

¹⁰but Nabal said, Who is David? Who is this son of Jesse? There are many slaves who have run away from their masters these days.

¹¹I 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.

¹²David's men went back and told him everything that Nabal had said.

¹³David told them, 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.

¹⁴One 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.

¹⁵These men were very good to us while we were out in the fields with the sheep. Davids men were with us the whole time, and they never did anything wrong to us. They did not take anything from us.

¹⁶His 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.

¹⁷Nabal 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.

¹⁸Abigail 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.

¹⁹Then Abigail told her servants, Go on. Ill follow you. But she did not tell her husband.

²⁰Abigail 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 Nabals 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.

²² I swear, I wont let even one man in Nabals 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.

²⁴ Abigail fell at his feet and said, Sir, please let me talk to you. Listen to what I say. Blame me for what happened.

²⁵ I didnt see the men you sent. Sir, dont pay any attention to that worthless man, Nabal. His name means Foolish, and that is what he is.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Now, I am bringing this gift to you. Please give these things to your men.

²⁸Please 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.

²⁹If 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.

³⁰The LORD promised to do many good things for you, and he will keep his promises. He will make you leader over Israel.

³¹So dont do anything that would make you guilty of killing innocent people. Please dont fall into that trap. Please remember me when the LORD blesses you.

³²David answered Abigail, Praise the LORD, the God of Israel. Praise God for sending you to meet me.

³³God bless you for your good judgment. You kept me from killing innocent people today.

³⁴As surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, if you hadnt come quickly to meet me, not one man in Nabals family would have lived until tomorrow

morning. But the Lord prevented me from hurting you.

³⁵Then 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.

³⁶Abigail 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.

³⁷The next morning, Nabal was sober, so his wife told him everything. He had a heart attack and became as stiff as a rock.

³⁸About ten days later, the LORD gave him a stroke and Nabal died.

³⁹When David heard that Nabal was 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.

⁴⁰His servants went to Carmel with this message, David sent us to get you. He wants you to be his wife.

⁴¹ 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 masters servants.

⁴² Abigail quickly got on a donkey and brought five of her maids with her. They followed Davids messengers. So Abigail became Davids wife.

⁴³ David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Both Ahinoam and Abigail were Davids wives.

⁴⁴ David was also married to Sauls daughter Michal, but Saul had taken her away from him and had given her to a man named Palti, son of Laish. Palti was from the town named Gallim.

26 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.

³ 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.

⁴ So David sent out spies to know for certain that Saul had come after him again.

⁵ 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.

⁸ 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.

¹⁰As surely as the LORD lives, the LORD himself will punish Saul. Maybe Saul will die naturally or maybe he will be killed in battle.

¹¹But 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.

¹²So 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.

¹³David 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.

¹⁴David shouted to the army and to Abner son of Ner, Answer me, Abner! Abner answered, Who are you? Why are you calling the king?

¹⁵David 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.

¹⁶You made a big mistake. As surely as the LORD is alive, you and your men should die, because you didnt protect your master, the LORD'S chosen king. Look for the kings spear and the water jug that was near Sauls head. Where are they?

¹⁷Saul knew Davids voice and said, Is that your voice, David my son? David answered, Yes, it is my voice, my lord the king.

¹⁸Sir, why are you chasing me? What wrong have I done? What am I guilty of?

¹⁹My 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.

²⁰Now dont 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.

27 ¹ 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 Maach. Achish was king of Gath.

³ David, his men, and their families lived in Gath with Achish. David had his two wives with him Ahinoam 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.

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. Davids 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 didnt let any of those people live.

¹⁰David 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.

¹¹David 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.

¹²Achish began to trust David and said to himself, Now Davids own people hate him. The Israelites hate him very much. Now he will serve me forever.

28¹ 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?

²David answered, Certainly, then you can see for yourself what I can do. Achish said, Fine, I will make you my permanent bodyguard.

³After Samuel died, all the Israelites mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his hometown. Saul had removed the mediums and fortunetellers from Israel.

⁴The 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.

⁵Saul saw the Philistine army, and he was afraid. His heart pounded with fear.

⁶He 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.

⁷Finally, 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.

⁸That 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.

⁹But 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.

¹⁰Saul used the LORD'S name to make a promise to the woman. He said, As surely as the LORD lives, you wont be punished for doing this.

¹¹The woman asked, Who do you want me to bring up for you? Saul answered, Bring up Samuel.

¹²And it happenedthe woman saw Samuel and screamed. She said to Saul, You tricked me! You are Saul.

¹³The king said to the woman, Dont be afraid! What do you see? The woman said, I see a spirit coming up out of the ground.

¹⁴Saul 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.

¹⁵Samuel 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 wont answer me anymore. He wont use prophets or dreams to answer me, so I called you. I want you to tell me what to do.

¹⁶Samuel said, The LORD left you and is now your enemy, so why are you asking me for advice?

¹⁷The 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.

¹⁸The LORD was angry with the Amalekites and told you to destroy them. But you did not obey him. Thats why the LORD is doing this to you today.

¹⁹The LORD will let the Philistines defeat you and the army of Israel today. Tomorrow, you and your sons will be here with me.

²⁰Saul 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.

²¹The woman came over to Saul and saw how afraid he was. She said, Look,

I am your servant. I have obeyed you. I 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.

²³But Saul refused. He said, I wont eat. Sauls 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.

29¹Meanwhile, 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 Sauls 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.

⁴But the Philistine captains were angry with Achish. They said, Send him back. Let him go back to the city you gave him, but he cant 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.

⁵Isnt 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 havent 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. Dont do anything against the Philistine rulers.

⁸David 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?

⁹Achish 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.

¹¹So 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.

30¹As 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.

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.

⁹David 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.

¹⁰(30: 9)

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.

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. David brought everything back.

²⁰He took all the sheep and cattle. His men led these animals to the front of the group and said, This is Davids prize.

²¹ David 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.

²² There were some troublemakers in the group who went with David who started complaining, These 200 men didnt go with us, so we why should we give them any of the things we took. These men get nothing but their own wives and children.

²³ David answered, No, my brothers. Dont do that! Think about what the LORD gave us. He let us defeat the enemy that attacked us.

²⁴ No 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.

²⁵ David made this an order and rule for Israel. This rule continues even today.

²⁶ When 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.

²⁷ David 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.

31 ¹ Meanwhile, the Philistines fought against the Israelites, and the Israelites ran from them. There were many dead bodies that fell at Mount Gilboa.

² The Philistines fought hard against Saul and his sons. They killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki Shua.

³ The battle grew even more intense around Saul. The archers closed in on Saul and wounded him with many arrows.

⁴ Saul told the helper who carried his armor, Take your sword and kill me or else these foreigners will do it and

torment me as well! But Sauls helper was afraid and refused to kill him. So Saul used his own sword to kill himself by falling on it.

⁵When the helper saw that Saul was dead, he took out his own sword, fell on it, and died there with Saul.

⁶So Saul, his three sons, and the helper who carried his armor all died together that day.

⁷The 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.

⁸The next day, the Philistines went back to take things from the dead bodies. They found Saul and his three sons dead on Mount Gilboa.

⁹The Philistines cut off Sauls head and took all his armor. They carried the news to the Philistines and to all the temples of their idols.

¹⁰They put Sauls armor in the temple of Ashtoreth. The Philistines also hung Sauls body on the wall of Beth Shan.

¹¹ The people living in Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines did to Saul.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

2 Samuel

1 ¹After David defeated the Amalekites, he went back to Ziklag. This was just after Saul had been killed. David had been there two days.

²Then, 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.

³David asked him, Where have you come from? The man answered, I just came from the Israelite camp.

⁴David 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.

⁵David said to the young soldier, How do you know Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?

⁶The 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.

⁷ Saul looked back and saw me. He called to me and I answered him.

⁸ Then Saul asked me who I was. I told him that I was an Amalekite.

⁹ Then Saul said, Please kill me. I am hurt badly. And I am about to die anyway.

¹⁰ He was hurt so badly that I knew he wouldnt 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.

¹² They were very sad and cried. They did not eat until evening. They cried because Saul and his son Jonathan were dead. David and his men cried for the LORD'S people, and they cried for Israel. They cried because Saul, his son Jonathan, and many Israelites had been killed in battle.

¹³ Then David talked with the young soldier who had told him about Sauls death. David asked, Where are you

from? The young soldier answered, I am the son of a foreigner. I am an Amalekite.

¹⁴David said to the young soldier, Why were you not afraid to kill the LORD'S chosen king?

¹⁵Then 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.

¹⁶(1:15)

¹⁷David sang a sad song about Saul and his son Jonathan.

¹⁸David 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.

¹⁹Israel, your beauty was ruined on your hills. Oh, how those heroes fell!

²⁰Dont tell the news in Gath. Dont announce it in the streets of Ashkelon. Those Philistine cities would be happy! 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. Sauls shield was not rubbed with oil.

²² Jonathans bow killed its share of enemies, and Sauls 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 Gilboas 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.

2¹ 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.

²So 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.)

³David also brought his men and their families. All of them made their homes in Hebron and the towns nearby.

⁴The 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.

⁵David 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.

⁶The LORD will be kind and true to you, and so will I.

⁷Now be strong and brave. Your lord, Saul, is dead, but the tribe of Judah has anointed me to be their king.

⁸Abner son of Ner was the captain of Sauls army. Abner took Ish Bosheth son of Saul to Mahanaim

⁹and made him king of Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and all Israel.

¹⁰Ish 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.

¹¹David ruled over the tribe of Judah from Hebron for seven years and six months.

¹²Abner son of Ner and the officers of Ish Bosheth son of Saul left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon.

¹³Joab, Zeruiahs son, and the officers of David also went to Gibeon. They met Abner and Ish Bosheths officers at the pool of Gibeon. Abners group sat on one side of the pool. Joabs group sat on the other side.

¹⁴Abner said to Joab, Lets have the young soldiers get up and have a contest here. Joab said, Yes, lets have a contest.

¹⁵So the young soldiers got up to be counted. Twelve were chosen from the tribe of Benjamin to fight for Ish Bosheth son of Saul against twelve of Davids men.

¹⁶Each man grabbed his enemys head and stuck his sword into the other mans side, and they both fell down dead. That is why this place in Gibeon is called Field of Swords.

¹⁷This contest started a terrible battle, and Davids officers defeated Abner and the Israelites that day.

¹⁸Zeruiah had three sons there that dayJoab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was a fast runner, as fast as a wild deer.

¹⁹Asahel ran straight toward Abner and began chasing him.

²⁰Abner looked back and asked, Is that you, Asahel? Asahel said, Yes, its me.

²¹Abner didnt want to hurt Asahel, so he said to Asahel, Stop chasing mego after one of the young soldiers. You could easily take his armor for yourself. But Asahel refused to stop chasing Abner.

²²Abner 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.

²³But Asahel refused to stop chasing Abner. So Abner used the back end of his spear and pushed it into Asahels stomach. The spear went deep into

Asahels stomach and came out of his back. Asahel died right there. Asahels body lay on the ground. Everyone who came that way stopped to look at Asahel,²⁴ 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.)

²⁵The men from the tribe of Benjamin gathered around Abner at the top of the hill.

²⁶Abner 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.

²⁷Then Joab said, As surely as God is alive, if you had not said something, people would still be chasing their brothers in the morning.

²⁸So Joab blew a trumpet, and his people stopped chasing the Israelites. They did not try to fight the Israelites anymore.

²⁹Abner 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.

³⁰Joab stopped chasing Abner and turned back. Joab had gathered his men and learned that 19 of Davids officers were missing, including Asahel.

³¹But Davids officers had killed 360 of Abners men from the tribe of Benjamin.

³²Davids 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.

3¹There was war for a long time between Sauls family and Davids family. David became stronger and stronger, but Sauls family became weaker and weaker.

²Several of Davids sons were born at Hebron. The first son was Amnon. Amnons mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel.

³The second son was Kileab. His mother was Abigail, who had been the wife of Nabal from Carmel. The third son was Absalom. Absaloms mother was Maacah daughter of King Talmai of Geshur.

⁴The fourth son was Adonijah. Adonijah's mother was Haggith. The fifth son was Shephatiah. Shephatiah's mother was Abital.

⁵The sixth son was Ithream. Ithream's mother was David's wife Eglah. These sons were all born at Hebron.

⁶As the families of Saul and David fought each other, Abner became more and more powerful in Saul's army.

⁷Saul 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?

⁸This 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. But now you are saying that I did this bad thing.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰(3: 9)

¹¹Ish Bosheth was too afraid of Abner to say anything in response.

¹²Abner 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.

¹³David 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 Sauls daughter Michal to me.

¹⁴David sent messengers to Sauls son Ish Bosheth. David said, Give me my wife Michal. She was promised to me. I killed 100 Philistines to get her.

¹⁵Then Ish Bosheth told the men to go and take Michal from a man named Paltiel son of Laish.

¹⁶Michals husband, Paltiel, followed them, crying all the way to Bahurim. Finally Abner said to him, Go back home. So Paltiel went back home.

¹⁷Abner sent this message to the leaders of Israel. He said, For a long time you have wanted to make David your king.

¹⁸Now 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.

¹⁹Abner 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.

²⁰Then 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.

²¹Abner 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.

²²Joab and Davids 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.

²³Joab 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.

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.

²⁹ 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 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 Abners grave.

³² (3: 31)

³³ King David sang this sad song at Abners funeral: Did Abner die like some foolish criminal?

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ All day long people came to encourage David to eat food. But David had made a special promise. He said, May God punish me and give me many troubles if I eat bread or any other food before the sun goes down.

³⁶ All the people saw what happened, and they were pleased with what King David had done.

³⁷ All the people of Judah and Israel understood that King David had not killed Abner son of Ner.

³⁸ King David said to his officers, You know that a very important leader died today in Israel.

³⁹ And it was on the very same day that I was anointed to be the king. These sons of Zeruiah have caused me a lot of trouble. May the LORD give them the punishment they deserve.

4¹ Sauls son Ish Bosheth heard that Abner had died at Hebron. Ish Bosheth and all his people became very afraid.

² Two men went to see to Sauls 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.)

³ But all the people in Beeroth ran away to Gittaim, and they are still living there today.)

⁴ Sauls 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.

⁵Recab and Baanah, sons of Rimmon from Beeroth, went to Ish Bosheths house at noon. Ish Bosheth was resting because it was hot.

⁶Recab 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.

⁷(4: 6)

⁸When they arrived at Hebron, they gave Ish Bosheths 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.

⁹But 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!

¹⁰Once 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.

¹¹I 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.

¹²So 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 Bosheth and buried it where Abner was buried at Hebron.

5¹All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron. They said to David, Look, we are one family!

²Even 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.

³So 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.

⁴David was 30 years old when he began to rule. He was king for 40 years.

⁵In Hebron he ruled over Judah for 7 years and 6 months, and in Jerusalem he ruled over all Israel and Judah for 33 years.

⁶The 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.

⁷But David did take the fort of Zion. This fort became the City of David.)

⁸That day David said to his men, Whenever you strike at the Jebusites, aim for the throat and kill them. 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.

⁹David lived in the fort and called it The City of David. David built up the city from the Millo inward.

¹⁰He became stronger and stronger because the LORD All-Powerful was with him.

¹¹King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David. He also sent cedar trees, carpenters, and stonemasons. They built a house for David.

¹²Then 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.

¹³David moved from Hebron to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, he got more slave women and wives. So David had more children who were born in Jerusalem.

¹⁴David's sons who were born in Jerusalem are Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,

¹⁵Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia,

¹⁶Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

¹⁷When 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.

¹⁸The Philistines came and camped in Rephaim Valley.

¹⁹David 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.

²⁰Then 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.

²¹The Philistines left the statues of their gods behind at Baal Perazim. David and his men took them away.

²²Again the Philistines came up and camped in Rephaim Valley.

²³David prayed to the LORD again and got this answer: Dont go up the valley. Go around them to the other side of their army. Attack them from the other side of the balsam trees.

²⁴When 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.

²⁵ 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.

6¹ David again gathered all the best soldiers in Israel. There were 30,000 men.

² Then David and all his men went to Baalah in Judah to take Gods Holy Box there. The Holy Box is like Gods 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.

³ Davids men brought the Holy Box out of Abinadabs house on the hill. Then they put Gods Holy Box on a new wagon. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were driving the new wagon.

⁴ So they carried the Holy Box out of Abinadabs house on the hill. The sons of Abinadab, Uzzah and Ahio, drove the new wagon. Ahio was walking in front of the Holy Box.

⁵David and all the Israelites were dancing in front of the LORD and playing all kinds of musical instruments. There were lyres, harps, drums, rattles, instruments made from cypress wood, and cymbals.

⁶When Davids men came to the threshing floor of Nacon, the cows stumbled, and Gods Holy Box began to fall off the wagon. Uzzah caught the Holy Box.

⁷But 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 Gods Holy Box.

⁸David was upset because the LORD had killed Uzzah. David called that place Perez Uzzah. It is still called Perez Uzzah today.

⁹David became afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, How can I bring Gods Holy Box here now?

¹⁰So 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.

¹¹ The LORD'S Holy Box stayed in Obed Edoms house for three months. The LORD blessed Obed Edom and all his family.

¹² Later people told David, The LORD has blessed the family of Obed Edom and everything he owns, because Gods Holy Box is there. So David went and brought Gods Holy Box from Obed Edoms house. David was very happy and excited.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ David was dancing in front of the LORD. He was wearing a linen ephod.

¹⁵ David and all the Israelites were excited they shouted and blew the trumpet as they brought the LORD'S Holy Box into the city.

¹⁶ Sauls 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.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸After David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁹He 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.

²⁰David went back to bless his house, but Sauls 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 were like a fool who takes off his clothes without shame!

²¹Then 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.

²²I 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!

²³Saul's daughter Michal never had a child. She died without having any children.

7¹After King David moved into his new house the LORD gave him some relief from all of his enemies around him.

²King 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!

³Nathan said to King David, Do whatever you want to do. The LORD will be with you.

⁴But that night, the LORD'S word came to Nathan:

⁵Go 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.

⁶I 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.

⁷I never told any of the tribes of Israel to build me a fancy house made from cedar wood.

⁸You must tell 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.

⁹I 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.

¹⁰And 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.

¹¹ (7: 10)

¹²When 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.

¹³He will build a house for my name, and I will make his kingdom strong forever.

¹⁴I will be his father, and he will be my son. 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 last forever! Your throne will stand forever!

¹⁷ Nathan told David about that vision. He told David everything God had said.

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, 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.

²²Lord 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.

²³And 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.

²⁴You made the people of Israel your very own people forever, and LORD, you became their God.

²⁵Now, 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!

²⁶Then 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.

²⁷You, 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.

²⁸Lord GOD, you are God, and I can trust what you say. And you said that these good things would happen to me, your servant.

²⁹Now, 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.

8¹ Later David defeated the Philistines and took control of a large area of land around Gath.

²He 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.

³David went to an area near the Euphrates to set up a monument for

himself. There he defeated the king of Zobah, Hadadezer son of Rehob.

⁴David took 1000 chariots, 7000 horse soldiers, and 20,000 foot soldiers from Hadadezer. He crippled all but 100 of the chariot horses.

⁵Arameans from Damascus came to help King Hadadezer of Zobah, but David defeated those 22,000 Arameans.

⁶Then David put his soldiers in Damascus, Aram. The Arameans became Davids servants and brought tribute. The LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.

⁷David took the gold shields that had belonged to Hadadezers servants and brought them to Jerusalem.

⁸David also took many things made of bronze from Tebah and Berothai. (Tebah and Berothai were cities that had belonged to Hadadezer.)

⁹King Toi of Hamath heard that David had defeated Hadadezers whole army.

¹⁰Hadadezer 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.

¹¹ David took these things and dedicated them to the LORD, as he had done with all the 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 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.

¹⁵ David ruled over all Israel, and he made good and fair decisions for all of his people.

¹⁶ Joab son of Zeruah 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, and Davids sons were priests.

9¹ David asked, Is there anyone still left in Sauls family? I want to show kindness to this person. I want to do it for Jonathan.

² There was a servant named Ziba from Sauls family. Davids servants called Ziba to David. King David said to Ziba, Are you Ziba? Ziba said, Yes, I am your servant Ziba.

³ The king said, Is there anyone left in Sauls family? I want to show Gods kindness to this person. Ziba said to King David, Jonathan has a son still living. He is crippled in both feet.

⁴ 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 Jonathans son from the house of Makir son of Ammiel.

⁶ Jonathans 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹²Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. All the people in Zibas family became Mephibosheths servants.

¹³Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem. He was crippled in both feet, and every day he ate at the kings table.

10¹ Later King Nahash of the Ammonites died. His son Hanun became the new king after him.

²David 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 fathers death. Davids officers went to the land of the Ammonites.

³But the Ammonite 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.

⁴So Hanun took Davids officers and shaved off one half of their beards. He cut off their clothes at the hips. Then he sent them away.

⁵When 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.

⁶The Ammonites saw that they had become Davids 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.

⁷David heard about this, so he sent Joab and the whole army of powerful men.

⁸The 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.

⁹Joab 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.

¹⁰Then Joab gave the other men to his brother Abishai to lead against the Ammonites.

¹¹Joab said to Abishai, If the Arameans are too strong for me, you will help me.

If the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will come and help you.

¹²Be 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.

¹³Then Joab and his men attacked the Arameans. The Arameans ran away from Joab and his men.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵When the Arameans saw that the Israelites had defeated them, they came together into one big army.

¹⁶Hadadezer 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 Hadadezers army.

¹⁷When 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,

¹⁸but 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.

¹⁹The 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.

11 ¹In 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.

²One 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,

³so 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.

⁵ Later, Bathsheba became pregnant. She sent word to him saying, I am pregnant.

⁶ David sent a message to Joab. Send Uriah the Hittite to me. So Joab sent Uriah to David.

⁷ When Uriah came, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were, and how the war was going.

⁸ Then David said to Uriah, Go home and relax. So Uriah left the kings palace. The king also sent a gift to Uriah.

⁹ But Uriah did not go home. He slept outside the door of the kings palace, as the rest of the kings servants did.

¹⁰ 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?

¹¹ Uriah said to David, The Holy Box and the soldiers of Israel and Judah are staying in tents. My lord Joab and my

lords 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.

¹²David said to Uriah, Stay here today. Tomorrow I will send you back to the battle. Uriah stayed in Jerusalem until the next morning.

¹³Then 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 kings servants.

¹⁴The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and made Uriah carry the letter.

¹⁵In the letter David wrote: Put Uriah on the front lines where the fighting is the hardest. Then leave him there alone, and let him be killed in battle.

¹⁶Joab watched the city and saw where the bravest Ammonites were. He chose Uriah to go to that place.

¹⁷The men of the city came out to fight against Joab. Some of Davids men were killed. Uriah the Hittite was one of them.

¹⁸Then Joab sent a report to David about what happened in the battle.

¹⁹Joab told the messenger to tell King David what had happened in the battle.

²⁰The 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?

²¹Surely he remembers that at Thebez a woman killed Abimelech son of Jerub Besheth when he 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.

²²The messenger went in and told David everything Joab told him to say.

²³The 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.

²⁴Then the men on the city wall shot arrows at your officers. Some of your officers were killed, including Uriah the Hittite.

²⁵ David said to the messenger, Give this message to Joab: Dont 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.

²⁶ Bathsheba heard that her husband Uriah had died, so she mourned for him.

²⁷ After her time of sadness, David sent servants to bring her to his house. She became Davids wife and gave birth to a son for David. But the LORD did not like what David had done.

12¹ 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.

² The rich man had lots of sheep and cattle.

³ 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 mans food and drank from his cup. The lamb slept on the poor mans chest. The lamb was like a daughter to the poor man.

⁴Then 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!

⁶He must pay four times the price of the lamb because he did this terrible thing and because he had no mercy.

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.

⁸I 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.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰So your family will never have peace! When you took Uriah's wife, you showed that you did not respect me.

¹¹This is what the LORD says: I am bringing trouble against you. This trouble will come from your own family. I will take your wives from you and give them to someone who is very close to you. He will have sexual relations with your wives, and everyone will know it!

¹²You had sexual relations with Bathsheba in secret, but I will punish you so that all the people of Israel can see it.

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴But you did things that made the LORD'S enemies lose their respect for him, so your new baby son will die.

¹⁵Then Nathan went home. And the LORD caused the baby boy who was born to David and Uriah's wife to become very sick.

¹⁶David 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.

¹⁷The leaders of Davids family came and tried to pull David up from the ground, but he refused to get up. He refused to eat with these leaders.

¹⁸On the seventh day, the baby died. Davids 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.

¹⁹David 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.

²⁰Then 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.

²¹Davids 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.

²²David said, While the baby was still 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.

²³But 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.

²⁴Then 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

²⁵and sent word for Nathan the prophet to give Solomon the name Jedidiah. So Nathan did this for the LORD.

²⁶Rabbah was the capital city of the Ammonites. Joab fought against Rabbah and captured it.

²⁷Joab sent messengers to David and said, I have fought against Rabbah and have captured its water supply.

²⁸Now 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 kings head. The crown was gold and weighed about 75 pounds. This crown had precious stones in it. They put the crown on Davids 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.

13¹ David had a son named Absalom. Absalom had a very beautiful sister named Tamar. Another one of Davids sons, Amnon, 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.

³Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah. (Shimeah was Davids brother.) Jonadab was a very clever man.

⁴He said to Amnon, Every day you look thinner and thinner. You are the kings son. You have plenty to eat, so why are you losing weight? Tell me! Amnon told Jonadab, I love Tamar. But she is the sister of my half-brother Absalom.

⁵Jonadab 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.

⁶So 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.

⁷David sent messengers to Tamars house. They told her, Go to your brother Amnons house and make some food for him.

⁸So 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.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰Then Amnon said to Tamar, Bring the food into the bedroom and feed me by hand. So Tamar took the cakes she had made and went into her brothers bedroom.

¹¹She started to feed Amnon, but he grabbed her hand. He said to her, Sister, come and sleep with me.

¹²Tamar said to Amnon, No, brother! Dont force me to do this. Dont do this shameful thing! Terrible things like this should never be done in Israel!

¹³I 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.

¹⁴But Amnon refused to listen to Tamar. He was stronger than she was, so he

forced her to have sexual relations with him.

¹⁵Then 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!

¹⁶Tamar said to Amnon, No! Dont send me away like this. That would be even worse than what you did before! But Amnon refused to listen to Tamar.

¹⁷He called his servant and said, Get this girl out of this room, now! And lock the door after her.

¹⁸So Amnons servant led Tamar out of the room and locked the door. Tamar was wearing a long robe with many colors. The kings virgin daughters wore robes like this.

¹⁹Tamar tore her robe of many colors and put ashes on her head. Then she put her hand on her head and began crying.

²⁰Then Tamars brother Absalom said to her, 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. Dont let it upset you too much. So Tamar did not say

anything. She quietly went to live at Absalom's house.

²¹ King 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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?

²⁷ Absalom kept begging David. Finally, David let Amnon and all the kings other sons go with Absalom.

²⁸ 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. Dont be afraid of being punished. After all, you will only be obeying my command. Now, be strong and brave.

²⁹ So Absaloms young soldiers did what he said. They killed Amnon. But all of Davids other sons escaped. Each son got on his mule and escaped.

³⁰ The kings 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 kings sons! Not one of the sons was left alive.

³¹ King David tore his clothes and lay on the ground. All of Davids officers standing near him also tore their clothes.

³² But then Jonadab, the son of Davids brother Shimeah, said, Dont think that all the kings sons were killed! Only

Amnon is dead. Absalom has been planning this from the day that Amnon raped his sister Tamar.

³³ My lord and king, don't think that all of your sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead.

³⁴ 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 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.

14¹ Joab son of Zeruah 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.

⁸Then the king said to the woman, Go home. I will take care of things for you.

⁹The woman of Tekoa said to the king, Let the blame be on me, my lord and king. You and your kingdom are innocent.

¹⁰King David said, If anyone is saying bad things to you, bring them to me. They will not bother you again.

¹¹The 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 sons head will fall to the ground.

¹²The woman said, My lord and king, please let me say something else to you. The king said, Speak.

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴We 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!

¹⁵My 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.

¹⁶The 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.

¹⁷I 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.

¹⁸King David answered the woman, You must answer the question I will ask you. The woman said, My lord and king, please ask your question.

¹⁹The 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.

²⁰Joab did this so that you would see things differently. My lord, you are as wise as Gods angel. You know everything that happens on earth.

²¹The king said to Joab, Look, I will do what I promised. Now please bring back the young man Absalom.

²²Joab 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.

²³Then Joab got up and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

²⁴But 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.

²⁵People 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.

²⁶At the end of every year, Absalom cut the hair from his head and weighed it. The hair weighed about five pounds.

²⁷Absalom had three sons and one daughter. Her name was Tamar, and she was a beautiful woman.

²⁸Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two full years without being allowed to visit King David.

²⁹Absalom 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.

³⁰Then 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.

³¹Joab got up and came to Absalom's house. He said to him, Why did your servants burn my field?

³²Absalom 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!

³³Then 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.

15¹After this, Absalom got a chariot and horses for himself. He had 50 men run in front of him while he drove the chariot.

²Absalom would get up early and stand near the gate. 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.

³Then Absalom would say, Look, you are right, but King David will not listen to you.

⁴Absalom 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.

⁵And 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.

⁶Absalom 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.

⁷After four years, Absalom said to King David, Please let me go to Hebron to complete a special promise that I made to the LORD.

⁸I 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.

⁹King David said, Go in peace. Absalom went to Hebron.

¹⁰But 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!

¹¹Absalom invited 200 men to go with him. They left Jerusalem with him, but they did not know what he was planning.

¹²Ahithophel was one of Davids advisors. He was from the town of Giloh. While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he invited Ahithophel to join. Absaloms plans were working very well and more and more people began to support him.

¹³A man came in to tell the news to David. The man said, The people of Israel are beginning to follow Absalom.

¹⁴Then 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.

¹⁵The kings officers told him, We will do whatever you tell us.

¹⁶King David left with everyone in his family, except ten of his slave women. He left them to take care of the house.

¹⁷The king left with everyone in his house following him on foot. They stopped at the last house.

¹⁸All the kings officers passed by him. And all the Kerethites, all the Pelethites, and the Gittites (600 men from Gath) passed by the king.

¹⁹The 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.

²⁰You came to join me only yesterday. You dont need to wander from place to place with me. Take your brothers and go back. Go with my faithful, loving kindness.

²¹ But Ittai answered the king, As the LORD lives, and as long as you live, I will stay with you, in life or death!

²² David said to Ittai, Then come, lets go cross Kidron Brook. So Ittai from Gath and all of his people and their children crossed over Kidron Brook.

²³ All the people were crying loudly. Then King David crossed over Kidron Brook, and all of the people went out to the desert.

²⁴ Zadok and all the Levites with him were carrying the Box of Gods Agreement. They set down Gods Holy Box, and Abiathar said prayers until all of the people had left Jerusalem.

²⁵ King David said to Zadok, Take Gods 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.

²⁶ But if he says he is not pleased with me, let him do whatever he wants to me.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ I will be waiting near the places where people cross the river into the desert. I will wait there until I hear from you.

²⁹ So Zadok and Abiathar took Gods Holy Box back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

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 Absaloms 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.

³³David said to Hushai, If you go with me, you will be just one more person to care for.

³⁴But 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.

³⁵The priests Zadok and Abiathar will be with you. You must tell them everything you hear in the king's palace.

³⁶Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan will be with them. You can send them to tell me everything you hear.

³⁷So David's friend Hushai went back to the city, just as Absalom arrived in Jerusalem.

16¹ 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.

²King David said to Ziba, What are these things for? Ziba answered, The donkeys are for the kings 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.

³Then the king asked, And where is Mephibosheth? Ziba answered the king, Mephibosheth is staying in Jerusalem. He said, Today the Israelites will give my fathers kingdom back to me.

⁴Then 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.

⁵As David came to Bahurim, a man from Sauls family, Shimei son of Gera, came out cursing David again and again.

⁶Shimei 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.

⁷Shimei cursed David. He said, Get out, get out, you no-good murderer!

⁸The 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.

⁹Abishai 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.

¹⁰But 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?

¹¹David 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.

¹²Maybe 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ King David and all his people came to the Jordan River. They were tired, so they rested and refreshed themselves there.

¹⁵ Meanwhile, Absalom, Ahithophel, and all the Israelites came to Jerusalem.

¹⁶ Davids 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, Davids son.

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.

²²Then 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.

²³So in those days, Ahithophel's advice was very important. Both David and Absalom accepted his advice as though it were the word of God.

17 ¹Ahithophel also said to Absalom, Now, let me choose 12,000 men to chase David tonight.

²I 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.

³Then I will bring all the people back to you. If David is dead, all the people will come back in peace.

⁴This plan seemed good to Absalom and all the leaders of Israel.

⁵But Absalom said, Now call Hushai the Arkite. I also want to hear what he says.

⁶Hushai came to Absalom. Absalom said to Hushai, This is the plan Ahithophel gave. Should we follow it? If not, tell us.

⁷Hushai said to Absalom, Ahithophels advice is not good this time.

⁸Hushai 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.

⁹He 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, Absaloms followers are losing!

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹This 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.

¹²We 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.

¹³But if David escapes into a city, all the Israelites can bring ropes to that city and pull its walls down into the 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.

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,

¹⁶Send 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 mans house in Bahurim. The man had a well in his courtyard. Jonathan and Ahimaaz went down into this well.

¹⁹The mans 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.

²⁰Absaloms servants came to the woman at the house. They asked, Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan? The woman said to Absaloms servants, They have already crossed over the brook. Absaloms servants then went to look for Jonathan and Ahimaaz, but they could not find them. So Absaloms servants went back to Jerusalem.

²¹After Absaloms 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 Davids people had crossed the Jordan River. No one was left behind.

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 fathers tomb.

²⁴David arrived at Mahanaim just as Absalom and the Israelites who were with him crossed over the Jordan River.

²⁵Absalom and the Israelites made their camp in the land of Gilead. Absalom had made Amasa the new captain of the army. He took Joabs place. Amasa was the son of Ithra the Ishmaelite. His mother was Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, the sister of Joabs mother, Zeruah.

²⁶(17: 25)

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.

²⁸These 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 seeds, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese made from cows milk.

²⁹(17: 28)

18¹David counted his men and chose captains over 1000 and captains over 100 to lead them.

²He separated the people into three groups and sent them out. Joab led a third of the men. Joabs brother, Abishai son of Zeruiah, led another third. And Ittai from Gath led the last third. King David said to the people, I will also go with you.

³But they said, No! You must not go with us. If we run away in the battle, Absaloms men will not care. No, even if only half of us are killed, Absaloms men

will not care. But you are worth 10,000 of us! It is better for you to stay in the city. Then, if we need help, you can come to help us.

⁴The king said to them, I will do what you think is best. Then the king stood by the gate as the army went out in groups of 100 and 1000.

⁵The king gave a command to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. He said, Do this for me: Be gentle with young Absalom! Everyone heard the kings orders about Absalom to the captains.

⁶ Davids army went out into the field against Absaloms Israelites. They fought in the forest of Ephraim.

⁷ Davids army defeated the Israelites. It was a great defeat because 20,000 men were killed that day.

⁸ The battle spread throughout the country, but more men died in the forest than by the sword.

⁹ It so happened that Davids officers found Absalom. Absalom jumped on his mule and tried to escape, but the mule went under the branches of a large oak tree. The branches were thick, and Absaloms head got caught in the tree.

His mule ran out from under him, so Absalom was left hanging above the ground.

¹⁰Someone saw this happen and told Joab, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree.

¹¹Joab said to the man, Why didnt you kill him and let him fall to the ground? I would have given you a belt and ten pieces of silver!

¹²The man said to Joab, I would not try to hurt the kings son even if you gave me 1000 pieces of silver. We heard the kings command to you, Abishai, and Ittai. The king said, Be careful not to hurt young Absalom.

¹³If I had killed Absalom, the king himself would find out, and you would punish me.

¹⁴Joab 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.

¹⁵Ten of Joabs young helpers gathered around Absalom and killed him.

¹⁶Joab blew the trumpet and called the people to stop chasing Israelites.

¹⁷ Then Joab's men took Absalom's body and threw it into a large hole in the forest and covered it with stones. All the Israelites ran away and went home.

¹⁸ While Absalom was alive he put up a memorial stone in Kings 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.

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. So the Ethiopian bowed to Joab and ran to tell David.

²² But 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.

²³ Ahimaaz 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.

²⁴ David 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.

²⁵ The 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.

²⁶ But 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.

²⁷ The 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.

²⁸ Ahimaaz 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 dont 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!

19¹People 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 kings 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 dont 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. The 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.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰We anointed Absalom to be the king, but he was killed in battle. So we should bring David back to be the king again.

¹¹King 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.

¹²You are my brothers, my family, so why are you the last tribe to bring the king back?

¹³Also tell Amasa, You are part of my family. I swear that I will make you captain of the army in Joabs place.

¹⁴David 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!

¹⁵King David came to the Jordan River. The people of Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and take him across the Jordan River.

¹⁶Shimei 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.

¹⁷About 1000 people from the tribe of Benjamin came with Shimei. Ziba the servant from Sauls 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.

¹⁸The people went across the Jordan River to help bring the kings 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.

¹⁹Shimei said to the king, My lord, dont think about the wrong things I did. My

lord and king, dont remember the bad things I did when you left Jerusalem.

²⁰I know that I sinned. That is why today I am the first person from Josephs family to come down and meet you, my lord and king.

²¹Abishai son of Zeruah said, Lets kill him for all the bad things he said about the LORD'S chosen king.

²²David said, What should I do with you, sons of Zeruah? 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.

²³Then the king said to Shimei, You will not die. The king made a promise to Shimei that he himself would not kill Shimei.

²⁴Sauls 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.

²⁵When he met the king at Jerusalem, the king said, Mephibosheth, why didnt 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 grandfathers family, but you did not do that. Instead, you included me among the people who eat at your own table. So I dont have a right to complain to the king about anything.

²⁹ The king said to Mephibosheth, Dont 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.

³¹ Barzillai of Gilead came down from Rogelim to cross the Jordan River with King David and send him on his way home.

³²Barzillai 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.

³³David said to Barzillai, Come across the river with me. I will take care of you if you will live in Jerusalem with me.

³⁴But Barzillai said to the king, Do you know how old I am? Do you think I can go with you to Jerusalem?

³⁵I 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?

³⁶I dont need any of the things that you want to give me. I will cross the Jordan River with you.

³⁷Then 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.

³⁸The king answered, Kimham will go back with me. I will be kind to him for you. I will do anything for you.

³⁹The king kissed Barzillai and blessed him. Barzillai went back home, and the king and all the people went across the river.

⁴⁰The 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.

⁴¹All 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?

⁴²All 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 kings expense. The king did not give us any gifts.

⁴³The 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.

20¹ 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, lets 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.

⁵ So Amasa called the people of Judah together, but he took longer than the king had told him.

⁶ 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.

⁷ So Joab took the Kerethites and Pelethites and the other soldiers with him and left Jerusalem to chase after Sheba son of Bicri.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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. Then Joab and his brother Abishai resumed the chase after Sheba son of Bicri.

¹¹ 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.

¹² Amasa was there in the middle of the 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Sheba son of Bicri passed through all the tribes of Israel on his way to Abel Beth Maacah. All the Beniaminites joined together and followed Sheba.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ Then the woman said, In the past people would say, Ask for help in Abel and you will get what you need.

¹⁹ 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?

²⁰ Joab answered, I dont want to destroy anything. I dont want to ruin your city.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ Joab was captain of the whole army of Israel. Benaiah son of Jehoiada led the Kerethites and Pelethites.

²⁴ Adoniram led the men who were forced to do hard work. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the historian.

²⁵ Sheva was the secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were the priests.

²⁶ And Ira from Jair was Davids personal priest.

21 ¹ 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.

² (The Gibeonites were not Israelites. They were a group of Amorites. The Israelites had promised with an oath 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.

³David said to the Gibeonites, What can I do for you? What can I do to take away Israels sin, so that you can bless the LORD'S people?

⁴The Gibeonites said to David, There isnt enough gold and silver for Sauls family to pay for what they did. But we dont have the right to kill anyone else in Israel. David said, Well, what can I do for you?

⁵The 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.

⁶Give us seven of Sauls 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.

⁷But the king protected Jonathans son, Mephibosheth. Jonathan was Sauls son, and David had made a promise with an oath in the LORD'S name to Jonathan. So the king did not let them hurt Mephibosheth.

⁸David 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.

⁹David 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.

¹⁰Rizpah 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.

¹¹People told David what Sauls slave woman Rizpah was doing.

¹²Then 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 Beth Shan went there and stole the bodies from that public area.)

¹³David 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.

¹⁴They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the area of Benjamin, in one of the tunnels in the grave of Sauls father Kish, as the king commanded. After that God again listened to the prayers of the people in that land.

¹⁵The Philistines started another war with Israel. David and his men went out to fight them, but David became very tired and weak.

¹⁶Ishbi-Benob was one of the soliders dedicated to the god Rapha. His spear weighed over 7 pounds. He put on new armor and thought he would be able to kill David.

¹⁷But Abishai son of Zeruah killed this giant Philistine and saved Davids life. Then Davids men made him promise that he would not go out to battle anymore. They said, If you do, Israel might lose its brightest leader.

¹⁸Later, there was another battle with the Philistines at Gob. Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, another one of the soliders dedicated to Rapha.

¹⁹Later, 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. His spear was as big as a post.

²⁰There 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 soliders dedicated to Rapha.

²¹This man challenged Israel and made fun of them, but Jonathan killed this man. (This was Jonathan, the son of Davids brother Shimei.)

²²All four of these men were giants from Gath. They were killed by David and his men.

22¹ David sang this song to the LORD when the LORD saved him from Saul and all his other enemies.

²The LORD is my Rock, my fortress, my place of safety.

³He 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, my place of safety, high in the hills. He is my savior, the one who rescues me from the cruel enemy.

⁴I called to the LORD for help, and he saved me from my enemies. He is worth of my praise!

⁵Waves of death were crashing around me. A deadly flood was carrying me away.

⁶The ropes of the grave wrapped around me. Death set its trap right there in front of me.

⁷In 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.

⁸The earth shook and shivered. The foundations of heaven trembled. They shook because he was angry!

⁹Smoke came from his nose. Burning flames came from his mouth. Red-hot coals fell from him.

¹⁰He 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. 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.

⁴²They looked for help, but there was no one to save them. They cried out to the LORD, but he did not answer them.

⁴³I beat my enemies to pieces like dust on the ground. I smashed them and walked on them like mud in the streets.

⁴⁴You saved me from those who fought against me. You made me the ruler over nations. People I never knew now serve me.

⁴⁵Foreigners fall helpless before me! As soon as they heard about me, they were ready to obey.

⁴⁶They lose all their courage and come out of their hiding places shaking with fear.

⁴⁷The LORD lives! I praise my Rock! How great is my God, the Rock who saves me!

⁴⁸He is the God who punishes my enemies for me, the one who puts people under my rule.

⁴⁹He saves me from my enemies! You help me defeat those who attack me. You save me from cruel people.

⁵⁰LORD, 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!

23¹ 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.

² The LORD'S Spirit spoke through me. His word was on my tongue.

³ The God of Israel spoke. The Rock of Israel said to me, Whoever rules people fairly, who rules with respect for God,

⁴ 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.

⁸ These are the names of Davids special soldiers: Josheb Basshebeth the Tahkemonite was captain of the kings 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,

¹⁰ but Eleazar stood and fought the Philistines until his hand became so tired that it cramped around his sword handle. The LORD won a great victory that day. The people of Israel came back, but only to take things from the dead.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³Once 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.

¹⁴Another time David was in the fortress, and a group of Philistines soldiers was stationed in Bethlehem.

¹⁵David 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.

¹⁶So 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.

¹⁷David 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.

¹⁸Abishai was the brother of Joab son of Zeruah. Abishai was the leader of the Three Heroes. He used his spear against 300 enemies and killed them. He became as famous as the Three.

¹⁹Abishai was as famous as the Three Heroes. He became their leader, even though he was not one of them.

²⁰Then 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.

²¹Benaiah also killed a big Egyptian soldier. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand, and Benaiah only had a club. He grabbed the spear in the Egyptians hands and took it away from him. Then Benaiah killed the Egyptian with his own spear.

²²Benaiah son of Jehoiada did many more brave things like that. He was as famous as the Three Heroes.

²³Benaiah was even more famous than the Thirty Heroes, but he did not become a member of the Three Heroes.

David made Benaiah the leader of his bodyguards.

²⁴The following men were among the Thirty Heroes: Asahel, the brother of Joab; Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem;

²⁵Shammah the Harodite; Elika the Harodite;

²⁶Helez the Paltite; Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa;

²⁷Abiezer from Anathoth; Mebunnai the Hushathite;

²⁸Zalmon the Ahohite; Maharai from Netophah;

²⁹Heled son of Baanah from Netophah; Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah of Benjamin;

³⁰Benaiah the Pirathonite; Hiddai from the Brooks of Gaash;

³¹Abi Albon the Arbathite; Azmaveth the Barhumite;

³²Eliabba the Shaalbonite; the sons of Jashen; Jonathan

³³the son of Shammah from Harar; Ahiam son of Sharar from Harar;

³⁴Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maacathite; Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite;

³⁵Hezro the Carmelite; Paarai the Arbite;

³⁶Igal son of Nathan of Zobah; Bani the Gadite;

³⁷Zehek the Ammonite; Naharai from Beeroth (Naharai carried the armor for Joab son of Zeruah);

³⁸Ira the Ithrite; Gareb the Ithrite;

³⁹and Uriah the Hittite. There were 37 in all.

24¹The 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.

²King 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.

³But 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?

⁴King 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.

⁵After 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.)

⁶Then they went east to Gilead, all the way to Tahtim Hodshi. Then they went north to Dan Jaan and around to Sidon.

⁷They 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.

⁸It 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.

⁹Joab 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.

¹⁰David 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.

¹¹When David got up in the morning, the LORD gave this message to Gad, Davids seer:

¹²Go and tell David, This is what the LORD says: There are three ways you can be punished. Choose the one you want.

¹³So 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.

¹⁴David 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.

¹⁵So 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.

¹⁶The 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, Thats enough! Put down your arm. The

LORD'S angel was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

¹⁷When he saw the angel who killed the people, David spoke to the LORD. David said, I sinned! I did wrong! And these 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 fathers family.

¹⁸That day Gad came to David and said, Go and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

¹⁹So David did what Gad told him to. David did what the LORD wanted and went to see Araunah.

²⁰Araunah looked and saw King David and his officers coming to him. Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground.

²¹He 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.

²²Araunah said to David, My lord and king, you can take anything you want for a sacrifice. Here are some cows for the

burnt offering, and the threshing boards and the yokes for the wood.

²³O king, I give everything to you! Araunah also said to the king, May the LORD your God be pleased with you.

²⁴But 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 cows for 50 shekels of silver.

²⁵Then 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.

1 Kings

1 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 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.

⁶(1:5)

⁷Adonijah talked with Joab son of Zeruah and Abiathar the priest. They decided to help make him the new king, ⁸but several important men did not join Adonijah. They were Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and King Davids special guard.

⁹One 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.

¹⁰But he did not invite his brother Solomon, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, or the men in the kings special guard.

¹¹When Nathan heard about this, he went to Solomons mother Bathsheba and asked her, Have you heard what Haggiths son, Adonijah, is doing? He is making himself king. And our master, King David, knows nothing about it.

¹²You and your son Solomon are in danger, but I will tell you what to do to save yourself.

¹³Go 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?

¹⁴Then 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.

¹⁵So 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.

¹⁶Bathsheba bowed down before the king. The king asked, What can I do for you?

¹⁷Bathsheba 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.

¹⁸Now, you dont know this, but Adonijah is making himself king.

¹⁹He 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.

²⁰Now, 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.

²¹If you don't decide, then after you are buried, these men will say that Solomon and I are criminals.

²²While Bathsheba was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet came to see him.

²³The servants told the king, Nathan the prophet is here. Nathan went in to speak to the king. He bowed down before the king

²⁴and 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?

²⁵Today 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!

²⁶But he did not invite me, or Zadok the priest, or Benaiah son of Jehoiada, or your son Solomon.

²⁷My lord and king, did you do this without telling us? Please tell us, who will be the next king after you?

²⁸Then King David said, Tell Bathsheba to come in! So she came in and stood before the king.

²⁹Then the king made a promise: The LORD has saved me from every danger. As surely as he lives, I make this promise to you.

³⁰Today 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!

³¹Then Bathsheba bowed down before the king and said, Long live King David!

³²Then 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.

³³Then the king said to them, Take my officers with you. Put my son Solomon on my mule and take him to Gihon Spring.

³⁴There 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!

³⁵Then 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.

³⁶Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, Amen! It is as true as if the LORD God himself had said it, my lord and king.

³⁷My lord and king, the LORD has been with you, and now I pray that he will be with Solomon! And I pray that King Solomons kingdom will grow and be even more powerful than yours, my lord and king.

³⁸So Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, and the kings officers obeyed King David. They put Solomon on Davids mule and went with him down to Gihon Spring.

³⁹ Zadok the priest carried the oil from the Holy Tent and poured it on Solomons 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 made Solomon the new king.

⁴⁴ King David sent Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and all the kings officers with Solomon out to Gihon Spring. They put Solomon on the kings mule.

⁴⁵ Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon at Gihon Spring and then went back into the city. The people followed them, and now everyone in the city is celebrating. That is the noise you hear.

⁴⁶ Solomon is sitting on the kings throne and the kings 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

⁴⁷ (1: 46)

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 Adonijahs 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.

2¹ 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 Zeruah did to me. He killed two of the commanders of Israels 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 dont 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.

⁹Now, dont leave him unpunished. You are a wise man. You will know what you must do, but dont let him die peacefully of old age.

¹⁰Then David died and was buried in the City of David.

¹¹David ruled Israel 40 years. He ruled seven years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem.

¹²Now Solomon was king. He sat on the throne of his father David and was in complete control of his kingdom.

¹³One day Adonijah, the son of Haggith, went to Solomons mother, Bathsheba. She asked him, Do you come in peace? Adonijah answered, Yes, this is a peaceful visit.

¹⁴I have something to ask you. Bathsheba said, Then speak.

¹⁵Adonijah 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.

¹⁶But now I have one thing to ask you. Please dont refuse me. 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 So 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.

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.

²⁹Someone told King Solomon that Joab was at the altar in the LORD'S Tent. So Solomon ordered Benaiah to go and kill him.

³⁰Benaiah 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.

³¹The 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 Joabs guilt from killing innocent people.

³²Joab 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 fathers knowledge. But now the LORD will punish Joab for the men he killed.

³³He 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.

³⁵ Solomon then made Benaiah son of Jehoiada the commander of the army in Joabs place. Solomon also made Zadok the new high priest in Abiathars place.

³⁶ Next, the king sent for Shimei and said to him, Build yourself a house here in Jerusalem to live in and dont leave the city.

³⁷ 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.

³⁹ But three years later, two of Shimeis slaves ran away. They went to King Achish of Gath, who was the son of Maacah. Shimei heard that his slaves were in Gath,

⁴⁰ so he saddled his donkey and went to King Achish at Gath to find them. He found them there and brought them back home.

⁴¹ But someone told Solomon that Shimei had left Jerusalem and gone to Gath and back.

⁴² 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.

⁴³ So why didnt you obey me? Why did you break your promise to the LORD?

⁴⁴ You know all the bad things you did to my father David. Now the LORD will punish you for it.

⁴⁵ But the LORD will bless me and keep Davids throne before him forever.

⁴⁶ Then the king ordered Benaiah to kill Shimei, and he did. So Solomon had full control of his kingdom.

3¹ 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.

² The Temple to honor the LORD had not yet been finished, so people were

still making animal sacrifices on altars at the high places.

³Solomon 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.

⁴King 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.

⁵While 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.

⁶Solomon 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.

⁷LORD my God, you have made me the king in my fathers place, but I am like a small child. I dont have the wisdom I need to do what I must do.

⁸I am your servant here among your chosen people. There are so many that they cannot be counted.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰The LORD was happy that Solomon asked for wisdom.

¹¹So 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.

¹²So 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.

¹³And 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.

¹⁴And I will give you a long life if you follow me and obey my laws and commands as your father David did.

¹⁵Solomon 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.

¹⁶One day two prostitutes came to Solomon and stood before the king.

¹⁷One 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.

¹⁸Three days later she also gave birth to her baby. There was no one else in the house with us, just the two of us.

¹⁹One night while this woman was asleep with her baby, the baby died.

²⁰That 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.

²¹In 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ Then King Solomon sent his servant to get a sword.

²⁵ He told the servant, Cut the living baby in two and give one half of the baby to each woman.

²⁶ 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, dont kill the baby! Give him to her.

²⁷ Then King Solomon said, Stop, dont kill the baby. Give him to this woman. She is the real mother.

²⁸ 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.

4 ¹ King Solomon ruled over all Israel. ² These are the names of his leading officials: Azariah son of Zadok was the priest;

³ 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;

⁴ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the commander of the army; Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

⁵ Azariah son of Nathan was in charge of the district governors; Zabud son of Nathan was a priest and an advisor to King Solomon;

⁶ Ahishar was responsible for everything in the king's palace; Adoniram son of Abda was in charge of the slaves.

⁷ 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.

⁸These are the names of the twelve governors: Ben Hur was governor of the hill country of Ephraim.

⁹Ben Deker was governor of Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Bethhanan.

¹⁰Ben Heseb was governor of Arubboth, Socoh, and Hepher.

¹¹Ben Abinadab was governor of Naphoth Dor. He was married to Taphath, daughter of Solomon.

¹²Baana 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.

¹³Ben 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.

¹⁴Ahinadab son of Iddo was governor of Mahanaim.

¹⁵ Ahimaaz was governor of Naphtali. He was married to Basemath the daughter of Solomon.

¹⁶ Baana son of Hushai was governor of Asher and Aloth.

¹⁷ Jehoshaphat son of Paruah was governor of Issachar.

¹⁸ Shimei son of Ela was governor of Benjamin.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.

²² This is the amount of food that Solomon needed each day for himself and for everyone who ate at his table:

150 bushels of fine flour, 300 bushels 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, and game birds.

²³ (4: 22)

²⁴ Solomon ruled over all the countries west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphseh to Gaza. And Solomon had peace along all the borders of his kingdom.

²⁵ During Solomons 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.

²⁶ Solomon had places to keep 4000 horses for his chariots and he had 12,000 horse soldiers.

²⁷ And each month one of the twelve district governors gave King Solomon everything he needed for all the people who ate at the kings table.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ God made Solomon very wise. Solomon could understand more than you can imagine.

³⁰ He was wiser than anyone in the East or in Egypt.

³¹ He was wiser than anyone on earth, even Ethan the Ezrahite and the sons of MaholHeman, Calcol, and Darda. King Solomon became famous in all the surrounding countries.

³² By the end of his life, he had written 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs.

³³ Solomon also knew very much about nature. He taught about many different kinds of plantseverything 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.

³⁴ People from every nation came to listen to Solomons wisdom. Kings all over the world sent their people to listen to him.

5¹ Hiram was the king of Tyre. He had always been Davids friend. So when Hiram heard that Solomon had become the new king after David, he sent his servants to Solomon.

²This is what Solomon said to King Hiram:

³You 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.

⁴But 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.

⁵The 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. So now I plan to build that temple to honor the LORD my God.

⁶And so I ask you to help me. Send your 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.

⁷Hiram was very happy when he heard what Solomon asked. He said, I praise

the LORD today for giving David a wise son to rule this great nation!

⁸Then 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.

⁹My 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.

¹⁰So Hiram gave Solomon all the cedar and fir logs that he wanted.

¹¹Solomon gave Hiram about 120,000 bushels of wheat and about 120,000 gallons of pure olive oil every year for his family.

¹²The LORD made Solomon wise as he had promised. Hiram and Solomon made a treaty between themselves and were at peace with each other.

¹³King Solomon forced 30,000 men of Israel to help in this work.

¹⁴He 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.

¹⁵Solomon also forced 80,000 men to work in the hill country cutting stone. There were also 70,000 men to carry the stones.

¹⁶There were 3300 men to supervise the workers.

¹⁷King Solomon commanded them to cut large, expensive stones for the foundation of the Temple.

¹⁸Then 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.

6¹ 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.

²The Temple was 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high.

³The 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.

⁴There were narrow windows in the Temple. These windows were smaller on the inside of the wall than on the outside.

⁵Then 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.

⁶The 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.

⁷The 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹Solomon finished building the main part of the Temple and then covered it inside with cedar boards.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹The LORD said to Solomon,

¹²If you obey all my laws and commands, I will do for you what I promised your father David.

¹³I will live among the children of Israel in this Temple that you are building, and I will never leave the people of Israel.

¹⁴When Solomon finished the stonework on the Temple,

¹⁵the stone walls inside the Temple were covered with cedar boards from floor to ceiling. Then the stone floor was covered with pine boards.

¹⁶They 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.

¹⁷In front of the Most Holy Place was the main part of the Temple. This room was 40 cubits long.

¹⁸They 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.

¹⁹Solomon finished the inner room in the back part of the Temple. This room was for the Box of the LORD'S Agreement

²⁰This room was 20 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 20 cubits high. Solomon covered it with pure gold. He also covered the cedar altar.

²¹He covered the inside of the Temple with pure gold and wrapped gold chains around it.

²²The inside of the Temple was covered with gold, and the altar in front of the Most Holy Place was covered with gold.

²³The workers made two statues of Cherub angels with wings. They made the statues from olive wood and put them in the Most Holy Place. Each angel was 10 cubits tall.

²⁴ Both Cherub angels were the same size and built the same way. 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.

²⁵ (6: 24)

²⁶ (6: 24)

²⁷ They put the Cherub angels beside each other in the Most Holy Place. Their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. The other two wings touched each side wall.

²⁸ The two Cherub angels were covered with gold.

²⁹ The walls around the main room and the inner room were carved with pictures of Cherub angels, palm trees, and flowers.

³⁰ The floor of both rooms was covered with gold.

³¹ 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.

³² 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.

³³They also made doors for the entrance to the main room. They used olive wood to make a square doorframe.

³⁴There were two doors made from pine. Each door had two parts that folded together.

³⁵They carved pictures of Cherub angels, palm trees, and flowers on the doors. Then they covered them with gold.

³⁶Then they built a wall around the inner yard. Each wall was made from three rows of cut stones and one row of cedar timbers.

³⁷They started working on the LORD'S Temple in the month of Ziv, the second month of the year. This was during Solomons fourth year as king of Israel.

³⁸The Temple was finished in the month of Bul, the eighth month of the year, in Solomons eleventh year as king. It took seven years to build the Temple. It was built exactly as planned.

7¹ King Solomon also built a palace for himself. It took 13 years to build Solomons palace.

²One building, called the Forest-of-Lebanon House, 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.

³There 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.

⁴There were three rows of windows across from each other on the side walls.

⁵There were three doors at each end. All the door openings and frames were square.

⁶Solomon also built the Hall of Columns. It was 50 cubits long and 30 cubits wide. Along the front was a porch with a covering supported by columns.

⁷He 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.

⁸Behind 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.

⁹All 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.

¹⁰The foundations were made with large, expensive stones. Some of the stones were 10 cubits long and the others were 8 cubits long.

¹¹On top of these stones there were other expensive stones and cedar beams.

¹²There 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.

¹³King Solomon sent for a man named Hiram who lived in Tyre and brought him to Jerusalem.

¹⁴Hiram's mother was an Israelite from the tribe of Naphtali. His dead father was from Tyre. Hiram made things from bronze. He was a very skilled and experienced builder. So King Solomon asked him to come, and Hiram accepted. King Solomon put him in charge of all the bronze work, and Hiram did all the work he was given to do.

¹⁵Hiram 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.

¹⁶He also made two bronze capitals that were 5 cubits tall. He put these capitals on top of the columns.

¹⁷He made two nets of chain to cover the capitals on top of the two columns.

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹The capitals on top of the columns were shaped like flowers.

²⁰The capitals were on top of the columns, above the bowl-shaped net. There were 200 pomegranates in rows all around the capitals.

²¹Huram 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.

²²They put the flower-shaped capitals on top of the columns, and the work on the two columns was finished.

²³Then Huram melted bronze and poured it into a huge mold to make a tank, which was called The Sea. The tank was about 30 cubits around. It was 10 cubits across and 5 cubits deep.

²⁴There 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.

²⁵The 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.

²⁶The 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

²⁷Then Hiram made ten bronze carts. Each cart was 4 cubits long, 4 cubits wide, and 3 cubits high.

²⁸The carts were made with square panels set in frames.

²⁹On 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.

³⁰Each 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.

³¹There 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.

³²There were four wheels under the frame. The wheels were 1 1/2 cubits in diameter. The axles between the wheels were made as one piece with the cart.

³³The wheels were like the wheels on a chariot. Everything on the wheelsthe axles, the rims, the spokes, and the hubs were made from bronze.

³⁴There were supports at each of the four corners of the carts. They were made as one piece with the cart.

³⁵There was a strip of bronze around the top of each cart. It was made as one piece with the cart.

³⁶The sides of the cart and the frames had pictures of Cherub angels, lions, and palm trees carved into the bronze. These pictures were carved all over the cartswherever there was room. And there were flowers carved on the frame around the cart.

³⁷Huram made ten carts, and they were all the same. Each cart was made from bronze. The bronze was melted and

poured into a mold. So all the carts were the same size and shape.

³⁸Huram also 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.

³⁹He 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.

⁴⁰Huram 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.

⁴¹ (7: 40)

⁴² (7: 40)

⁴³ (7: 40)

⁴⁴ (7: 40)

⁴⁵ (7: 40)

⁴⁶ 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.

⁴⁷ (7: 46)

⁴⁸ Solomon also commanded that all these things be made from gold for the Temple: the golden altar; the gold 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.

⁴⁹ (7: 48)

⁵⁰ (7: 48)

⁵¹ 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.

8¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ (8: 3)

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ The wings of the Cherub angels spread out over the Holy Box, and they covered the Holy Box and its carrying poles.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ When the priests came out of the Holy Place, the cloud filled the LORD'S Temple.

¹¹ The priests could not continue their work because the Temple was filled with the Glory of the LORD.

¹²Then Solomon said: The LORD caused the sun to shine in the sky, but he chose to live in a dark cloud.

¹³Now, Lord, I have built a beautiful Temple for you, where you may live forever.

¹⁴Then King Solomon turned toward all the Israelites who were standing there and asked God to bless them.

¹⁵He 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,

¹⁶I 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.

¹⁷My father David wanted very much to build a temple to honor the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁸But 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.

¹⁹But you are not the one to build my temple. Your son will build my temple.

²⁰So 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 promised. And I have built the Temple for the LORD, the God of Israel.

²¹I 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.

²²Then Solomon stood in front of whole assembly of Israel and faced the LORD'S altar. Solomon spread his hands and looked toward heaven

²³and 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.

²⁴You 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.

²⁵ 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.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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 innocent.

³² 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.

³³ 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.

³⁴ Please listen in heaven 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.

³⁶ 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.

³⁸ When 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 People from other places will hear about your greatness and your power.

They will come from far away to pray at this Temple.

⁴² (8: 41)

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.

⁴⁸They 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.

⁴⁹Please listen to their prayers from your home in heaven, and do what is right.

⁵⁰Forgive your sinful people for all the things they have done against you. Make their enemies be kind to them.

⁵¹Remember 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!

⁵²Please listen to my prayers and to the prayers of your people Israel. Listen to their prayers any time that they ask you for help.

⁵³You 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.

⁵⁴When 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.

⁵⁵Then, in a loud voice, he asked God to bless all the people of Israel. Solomon said:

⁵⁶Praise 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!

⁵⁷I pray that the LORD our God will be with us, as he was with our ancestors. I pray that he will never leave us.

⁵⁸I 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.

⁵⁹I 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.

⁶⁰If he will do these things, all the people of the world will know that the LORD is the only true God.

⁶¹You 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.

⁶²Then King Solomon and all the Israelites with him offered sacrifices to the LORD.

⁶³Solomon 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.

⁶⁴King 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. 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.

⁶⁶ 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.

9¹ 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.

⁴You 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.

⁵If 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.

⁶But 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.

⁷(9: 6)

⁸This 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?

⁹People 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 all these bad things to happen to them.

¹⁰It took 20 years for King Solomon to build the LORD'S Temple and the kings palace.

¹¹Hiram supplied Solomon with all the cedar, pine and gold that he wanted, so Solomon gave him 20 cities in Galilee.

¹²So Hiram traveled from Tyre to see the cities that Solomon had given him. But Hiram was not pleased when he saw them.

¹³King 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.

¹⁴Hiram had sent King Solomon about 9000 pounds of gold to use in building the Temple.

¹⁵King 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.

¹⁶In 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.

¹⁷Solomon rebuilt Gezer and the city of Lower Beth Horon.

¹⁸He also built the cities of Baalath and Tamar in the Judean desert.

¹⁹He 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.

²⁰There were people left in the land who were not Israelites. There were Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

²¹The Israelites had not been able to destroy them, but Solomon forced them to work for him as slaves. They are still slaves today.

²²Solomon did not force any Israelites to be his slaves. The Israelites were

soldiers, government officials, officers, captains, and chariot commanders and drivers.

²³There were 550 supervisors over Solomons projects. They supervised the men who did the work.

²⁴Pharaohs daughter moved from the City of David to the palace that Solomon had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

²⁵Three times each year Solomon offered burned sacrifices 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.

²⁶King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber. This town is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.

²⁷King Hiram had some skilled sailors who knew the sea well. He sent them to serve in Solomons navy and work with Solomons men.

²⁸Solomons ships went to Ophir and brought back about 16 tons of gold for him.

10¹ The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon, so she came to test him with hard questions.

² 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.

³ Solomon answered all the questions. None of her questions was too hard for him to explain.

⁴ The queen of Sheba saw that Solomon was very wise. She also saw the beautiful palace he had built.

⁵ 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!

⁶ Then she said to King Solomon, The stories I heard in my country about your great works and your wisdom are true.

⁷ 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 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.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹Hiram's ships brought gold from Ophir. They also brought jewels and a special kind of wood.

¹²Solomon 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.

¹³King 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.

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. About 15 pounds of gold was used for each shield.

¹⁷He also made 300 smaller shields of hammered gold. About 4 pounds of gold was used 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 Solomons cups and glasses were made of gold, and all of the dishes in the Forest-of-Lebanon House were made from pure gold. Nothing in the palace was made from silver. There was so much gold that in Solomons 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 4 pounds of silver. Solomon sold horses and chariots to the kings of the Hittites and the Arameans.

11 ¹King Solomon loved many foreign women, including the daughter of Pharaoh and women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and the Hittites.

²In 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.

³He 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.

⁴When Solomon was old, his wives caused him to follow other gods, so he did not follow the LORD completely as his father David did.

⁵Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of Sidon, and Milcom, the horrible god of the Ammonites.

⁶So Solomon did what the LORD said was wrong. He did not follow the LORD completely as his father David did.

⁷On 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.

⁸Solomon did the same thing for all of his other foreign wives who burned incense and gave sacrifices to their gods.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰He had told Solomon that he must not follow other gods, but Solomon did not obey the LORD'S command.

¹¹So 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 and give it to one of your servants.

¹²But I loved your father David, so I will not take your kingdom away from you while you are alive. I will wait until your son becomes king. Then I will take it from him.

¹³Still, 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.

¹⁴Then the LORD raised up Hadad the Edomite to become Solomons enemy. Hadad was from the royal family of Edom.

¹⁵This is how it happened. In the past David fought against Edom. Joab was the commander of Davids army. Joab went to Edom to bury his dead soldiers. While there Joab killed all the Edomite men who were still alive.

¹⁶Joab and the men of Israel stayed in Edom for six months until they killed all the men of Edom.

¹⁷At the time Hadad was only a young boy. He and some of his fathers servants ran away to Egypt.

¹⁸They 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.

¹⁹Pharaoh liked Hadad so much that he gave Hadad a wife. She was Pharaohs sister-in-law. (Pharaohs wife was Queen Tahpenes.)

²⁰Hadad and the sister of Tahpenes had a son named Genubath. Queen Tahpenes let Genubath grow up in Pharaohs house with his children.

²¹In 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.

²²But 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.

²³God also raised up another man to become one of Solomons enemies. This man was Rezon, son of Eliada. Rezon ran away from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah.

²⁴After David defeated the army of Zobah, Rezon gathered some men and became the leader of a small army. He went to Damascus and stayed there to rule from Damascus.

²⁵Rezon became the king of Aram. He was an enemy of Israel throughout Solomons life and added to the trouble that Hadad created for Israel.

²⁶There 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 Solomons servants, but he rebelled against the king.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ Ahijah took his new coat and tore it into twelve pieces.

³¹ 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.

³² I will let Davids family keep only one tribe. I will do this because of my servant David and because of Jerusalem, the city that I chose from among all the tribes of Israel.

³³I will take the kingdom from Solomon because he stopped following me and began worshiping Ashtoreth, the goddess of Sidon; Chemosh, the god of Moab; and Milcom, the god of the Ammonites. Solomon stopped following my ways and doing what I say is right. He does not obey my laws and commands as his father David did.

³⁴So I will take the kingdom away from Solomons family. I chose David because he obeyed all my laws and commands. So for my servant David, I will let Solomon be the king for the rest of his life.

³⁵But Jeroboam, I will take the ten tribes away from his son and give them to you.

³⁶I will let Solomons son keep 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.

³⁷But I will make you king of Israel. You will rule over everything you want.

³⁸If 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.

³⁹I will punish Davids descendants because of what Solomon did, but not forever.

⁴⁰Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam ran away to Egypt. He went to King Shishak of Egypt and stayed there until Solomon died.

⁴¹Everything else Solomon did, from the beginning to the end, is written in the book, The History of Solomon.

⁴²Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years.

⁴³Then he died and was buried in the city of David, his father. Then Solomons son, Rehoboam, became the next king after him.

12¹ Jeroboam son of Nebat was still in Egypt where he had run away from Solomon. When he heard about Solomons 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,

²(12: 1)

³(12: 1)

⁴Your 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.

⁵Rehoboam answered, Come back to me in three days, and I will answer you. So the people left.

⁶There 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?

⁷They 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.

⁸But Rehoboam did not listen to the advice from the older men. He asked the young men who were his friends.

⁹Rehoboam 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?

¹⁰Then 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 fathers 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 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.

¹⁵ 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 the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh to speak to him.

¹⁶The Israelites saw that the new king refused to listen to them, so they said to him, We are not part of Davids family are we? We dont get any of Jesses land, do we? So, people of Israel, lets go home and let Davids son rule his own people! So the Israelites went home.

¹⁷But Rehoboam still ruled over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

¹⁸A 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.

¹⁹So Israel rebelled against the family of David, and this is how things are even today.

²⁰When 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.

²¹Rehoboam 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.

²²But God spoke to a prophet named Shemaiah. He said,

²³Talk to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to men of Judah and Benjamin.

²⁴Say 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 Rehoboams army obeyed the LORD. They went home, just as the LORD had commanded.

²⁵Jeroboam 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.

²⁶Jeroboam 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.

²⁷ (12: 26)

²⁸So the king asked his advisors what to do. They gave him their advice, and

King Jeroboam made two gold calves. He said to the people, You dont have to go to Jerusalem to worship anymore. Israel, these are the gods that brought you out of Egypt.

²⁹King Jeroboam put one gold calf in Bethel and the other one in the city of Dan.

³⁰What a terrible sin this was, because the Israelites started going to the cities of Dan and Bethel to worship the calves.

³¹Jeroboam 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.)

³²Then 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.

³³So 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.

13¹ 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.

² The LORD had commanded the man of God to speak against the altar. He said, Altar, the LORD says to you: Davids 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.

⁵Then 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.

⁶Then 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.

⁷Then the king said to the man of God, Please come home with me. Come and eat with me. I will give you a gift.

⁸But 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.

⁹The LORD commanded me not to eat or drink anything here. He also commanded me not to go back the same way I came.

¹⁰So he took a different road home. He did not go back the same way he came to Bethel.

¹¹There 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³The old prophet told his sons to saddle his donkey. They put the saddle on the donkey, and the prophet left.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵So the old prophet said, Please come home and eat with me.

¹⁶But the man of God said, I cannot go home with you. I cannot eat or drink anything in this place.

¹⁷The LORD said to me, You must not eat or drink anything in that place, and you must go back on a different road.

¹⁸The 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 prophets 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 mans 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.

²⁶The 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.

²⁷Then the prophet told his sons to saddle his donkey, and they did so.

²⁸The 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.

²⁹The old prophet put the body on his donkey and carried it back to the city to cry for him and bury him.

³⁰The 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.

³¹So 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.

³²The 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.

14¹ 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.

⁶But when Ahijah heard her coming to the door, he said, Come in! I know who you are. You are Jeroboams wife. Why are you pretending to be someone else? I have some bad news for you.

⁷Go 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.

⁸ Davids 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.

⁹But 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.

¹⁰So 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.

¹⁶He will let the Israelites be defeated because Jeroboam sinned, and then he made the Israelites sin.

¹⁷Jeroboams wife went back to Tirzah. As soon as she stepped into the house, the boy died.

¹⁸They 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.

¹⁹The 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.

²⁰Jeroboam ruled as king for 22 years. Then he died and was buried with his ancestors. His son Nadab became the new king after him.

²¹Solomons 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. Rehoboams mother was Naamah. She was an Ammonite.

²²The 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.

²³They built high places, memorial stones, and sacred poles. They built them on every high hill and under every green tree.

²⁴There 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.

²⁵In the fifth year that Rehoboam was king, King Shishak of Egypt came to attack Jerusalem.

²⁶He 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.

²⁷King 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.

²⁸Every 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.

²⁹The rest of what King Rehoboam did is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

³⁰Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always fighting against each other.

³¹Rehoboam died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. (His mother was Naamah. She was an Ammonite.) Rehoboams son Abijah became the next king after him.

15¹ Abijah became the new king of Judah during the 18th year that Jeroboam son of Nebat ruled Israel.

²Abijah ruled in Jerusalem for three years. His mothers name was Maacah. She was Absaloms 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.

⁴But for Davids 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.

⁷The 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.

⁸When Abijah died, he was buried in the City of David. Abijah's son Asa became the new king after him.

⁹During Jeroboam's 20th year as king over Israel, Asa became king of Judah.

¹⁰He 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.

¹²During 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ Asa did not destroy the high places, even though he was faithful to the LORD all his life.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ The whole time that King Asa was king of Judah, he fought a war against King Baasha of Israel.

¹⁷ Once Baasha attacked Judah and then built up the city of Ramah to keep Asa from leaving Judah on any kind of military campaign.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹Asa 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.

²⁴ He died and was buried in the City of David, his ancestor. Then Asas son Jehoshaphat became the new king after him.

²⁵ During Asas second year as king of Judah, Jeroboams son Nadab became king of Israel. Nadab ruled over Israel for two years.

²⁶ 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.

²⁸ This happened during Asas third year as king of Judah. So Baasha became the next king of Israel.

²⁹ When Baasha became the new king, he killed everyone in Jeroboams family. He left no one in Jeroboams family alive. This happened just as the LORD said it would when he spoke through his servant Ahijah at Shiloh.

³⁰This 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.

³¹The other things that Nadab did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

³²All during the time that Baasha ruled over Israel, he was fighting wars against King Asa of Judah.

³³Ahijah's son Baasha became king of Israel during the third year that Asa ruled over Judah. Baasha ruled in Tirzah for 24 years,

³⁴but he did what the LORD said was wrong. He did the same sins that Jeroboam had done that caused the Israelites to sin.

16¹ Then the LORD spoke against King Baasha through the prophet, Jehu son of Hanani. He said,

²I 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.

³ So Baasha, I will destroy you and your family, just as I did Jeroboam son of Nebat and his family.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Baasha died and was buried in Tirzah. His son Elah became the new king after him.

⁷ 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 Jeroboams family made the Lord very angry.

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 Elahs officers. Zimri commanded half of Elahs chariots,

but Zimri plotted against Elah. King Elah was in Tirzah, drinking and getting drunk at Arzas home. Arza was the man in charge of the palace at Tirzah.

¹⁰Zimri 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.

¹¹After Zimri became the new king, he killed all of Baashas family and friends. He did not let any male in Baashas family live.

¹²So Zimri destroyed Baashas family just as the LORD said he would when he spoke against Baasha through the prophet Jehu.

¹³This 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.

¹⁴The rest of what that Elah did is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

¹⁵Zimri 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.

¹⁶Omri 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.

¹⁷Then Omri and all the soldiers of Israel left Gibbethon and went to Tirzah. They surrounded the city and attacked it.

¹⁸When Zimri saw the city had been captured, he ran to the palace fortress, but the soldiers burned it down with him still in it.

¹⁹So Zimri died because he sinned and did what the LORD said was wrong, just as Jeroboam did when he caused the Israelites to sin.

²⁰The 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.

²¹Then 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.

²²But Omri's followers were stronger than the followers of Tibni son of Ginath. Tibni died, and Omri became king.

²³Omri 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.

²⁴Then 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.

²⁵Omri did what the LORD said was wrong. He was worse than all the kings who were before him.

²⁶He 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.

²⁷The rest of the story about Omri and the great things he did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

²⁸Omri died and was buried in Samaria. His son Ahab became the new king after him.

²⁹Ahab 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.

³⁰He did what the LORD said was wrong. Ahab was worse than all the kings who were before him.

³¹It 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.

³²He built a temple and an altar in Samaria for worshiping Baal.

³³He also set up a sacred pole. Ahab did more to make the LORD, the God of Israel, angry than all the other kings who were before him.

³⁴During Ahabs 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.

17 ¹ 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 stay there. There is a widow there that I commanded to take care of you.

¹⁰So 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?

¹¹As she was going to get the water, Elijah said, Bring me a piece of bread too, please.

¹²The 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.

¹³Elijah said to the woman, Dont 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.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵So 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.

¹⁶The jar of flour and the jug of oil were never empty. This happened just as the LORD said through Elijah.

¹⁷Some time later the womans son became sick. He became worse and worse until he stopped breathing.

¹⁸Then 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?

¹⁹Elijah 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.

²⁰Then 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?

²¹Then Elijah lay on top of the boy three times. He prayed, LORD my God, let this boy live again!

²²The LORD answered Elijahs prayer. The boy began breathing again and was alive.

²³ Elijah carried the boy downstairs, gave him to his mother, and said, Look, your son is alive!

²⁴ The woman answered, Now I know that you really are a man from God. I know that the LORD really speaks through you!

18¹ 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.)

⁴ 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.

⁶They 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.

⁷As 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?

⁸Elijah answered, Yes, it is me. Now, go and tell your master, the king, that I am here.

⁹Obadiah 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?

¹⁰As 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.

¹¹Now you want me to go and tell him that you are here!

¹²If 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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 fathers family caused all the problems when you stopped obeying the LORD'S commands and began following the false gods.

¹⁹ 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 that Queen Jezebel supports.

²⁰ So Ahab called all the Israelites and those prophets to Mount Carmel.

²¹ 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.

²² So Elijah said, I am the only prophet of the LORD here, but there are 450 prophets of Baal.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

³⁰Then 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.

³¹Elijah 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.

³²Elijah 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.

³³Then Elijah put the wood on the altar. He cut the bull into pieces and laid the pieces on the wood.

³⁴Then 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.

³⁵The water ran down off the altar and filled the ditch.

³⁶At 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.

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ All the people saw this happen and bowed down to the ground and began saying, The LORD is God! The LORD is God!

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ Then Elijah said to King Ahab, Now go eat and drink. A heavy rain is coming.

⁴² 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.

⁴³Then 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.

⁴⁴The seventh time, the servant came back and said, I saw a small cloud the size of a mans fist that was coming in from the sea. Elijah told the servant, Go to tell King Ahab to get his chariot ready and go home now. If he does not leave now, the rain will stop him.

⁴⁵After 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.

⁴⁶The 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.

19¹ King Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah did and how

Elijah had killed all the prophets of Baal with a sword.

²So 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 dont succeed, may the gods do the same or worse to me.

³When Elijah heard this, he was afraid. So he ran away to save his life. He took his servant with him, and they went to Beersheba in Judah. Then Elijah left his servant in Beersheba

⁴and 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.

⁵Then 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!

⁶Elijah 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.

⁷Later the angel of the LORD 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.

⁸So 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.

⁹There Elijah went into a cave and spent the night. Then the LORD said to him, Elijah, why are you here?

¹⁰Elijah 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. After the fire, there was a quiet, gentle voice.

¹³When 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 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.

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.

20¹ King 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!

⁶Tomorrow 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, Dont 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-Hadads 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!

¹¹ King 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.

¹² King 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.

¹³ Then 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.

¹⁴ Ahab 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. Then the king asked, Who

should command the main army? The prophet answered, You will.

¹⁵So 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.

¹⁶King Ahab began his attack at noon, while King Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings were drinking and getting drunk in their tents.

¹⁷The young helpers went out first. King Ben-Hadad's men told him that some soldiers had come out of Samaria.

¹⁸So 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.

²³King Ben-Hadads 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, dont let the 32 kings command the armies. Put your commanders in charge of the armies.

²⁵Lets 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.

³⁰The 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.

³¹His 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.

³²They 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.

³³Ben-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.

³⁴Ben-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.

³⁵One 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.

³⁶So 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.

³⁷ The first prophet went to another man and said, Hit me! This man hit him and hurt the prophet.

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ Then the prophet quickly took the cloth from his face, and the king of Israel saw that he was one of the prophets.

⁴² 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!

⁴³ Then the king went back home to Samaria. He was worried and upset.

21 ¹ There was a vineyard near King Ahab's palace in Samaria. A man from Jezreel named Naboth owned it.

² One day Ahab said to Naboth, Give me your vineyard that is near my palace. I want to make it a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard in its place. Or, if you prefer, I will pay you for it.

³ Naboth answered, By the LORD, I will never give my land to you. This land belongs to my family.

⁴ 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.

⁵ His wife Jezebel went to him and asked him, Why are you upset? Why do you refuse to eat?

⁶ Ahab answered, I asked Naboth from Jezreel to give me his vineyard. I told him 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.

⁷ Jezebel answered, But you are the king over Israel! Get out of bed and eat

something, and you will feel better. I will get Naboths vineyard for you.

⁸Then Jezebel wrote some letters. She signed Ahabs 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:

¹⁸Go to King Ahab in Samaria. He will be at Naboths 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.

²¹ So 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.

²² I 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.

²³ The LORD also says this about your wife Jezebel: Dogs will eat the body of Jezebel by the wall of the city of Jezreel.

²⁴ As 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.

²⁵ So 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.

²⁶ Ahab 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.

²⁷ When 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.

²⁸ The 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.

22¹ For the next two years there was peace between Israel and Aram.

² Then during the third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit King Ahab of Israel.

³ 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?

⁴ 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 onemy men and my horses will be as yours.

⁵ But first lets ask the LORD for advice.

⁶So 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.

⁷But Jehoshaphat said, Doesnt the LORD have another prophet here? Lets ask him the same question.

⁸King 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 dont like. Jehoshaphat said, The king should not say that!

⁹So King Ahab told one of his officers to go and find Micaiah.

¹⁰At 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.

¹¹One 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.

¹²All 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.

¹³While 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.

¹⁴But Micaiah answered, As surely as the LORD lives, I can say only what the LORD says.

¹⁵Micaiah 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.

¹⁶But Ahab answered, How many times do I have to tell you? Tell me the truth. What does the LORD say?

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ Then Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, See, I told you! This prophet never says anything good about me. He always says something bad.

¹⁹ But Micaiah said, Listen to this message from the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne. All of heavens army was standing around him, some on his left side and some on his right side.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ Then a spirit went and stood before the LORD and said, I will fool him! The LORD asked, How will you do it?

²² The spirit answered, I will go to Ahabs prophets and cause them to tell lies. So the Lord said, Yes, that will fool Ahab. Go out and do that.

²³ 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.

²⁴Then 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?

²⁵Micaiah answered, Look, what I said will happen! And you will see it one day when you are in a secret room somewhere hiding.

²⁶Then 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.

²⁷Tell 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.

²⁸Micaiah said, Listen to me, everyone! Ahab, if you come back alive from the battle, the LORD has not spoken through me.

²⁹King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to fight the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead.

³⁰Ahab 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.

³¹ 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.

³² When the commanders saw King Jehoshaphat, they thought he was the king of Israel, and so they went to kill him. Jehoshaphat started shouting.

³³ When the commanders saw that he was not King Ahab, they stopped chasing him.

³⁴ 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!

³⁵ 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.

³⁶At sunset all the Israelites cheered when they were told to go home. So they all went back to their hometowns.

³⁷And that is how King Ahab died. Some men carried his body to Samaria and buried him there.

³⁸They took his chariot to the large pool in Samaria to clean it. The dogs licked up Ahabs blood while the prostitutes washed the chariot. This happened just as the LORD said it would.

³⁹The 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.

⁴⁰Ahab died and was buried with his ancestors. His son Ahaziah became the next king after him.

⁴¹Jehoshaphat son of Asa became the king of Judah in Ahabs fourth year as king of Israel.

⁴²Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became king, and he ruled in

Jerusalem for 25 years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.

⁴³ 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.

⁴⁴ Jehoshaphat made a peace agreement with the king of Israel.

⁴⁵ 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.

⁴⁶ 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.

⁴⁷ In those days Edom did not have a king; it was ruled by a governor who was chosen by the king of Judah.

⁴⁸ 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.

⁴⁹ 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.

⁵⁰ Jehoshaphat died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Then his son Jehoram became the next king.

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² He sinned against the LORD just as his parents, Ahab and Jezebel, did. He caused Israel to sin just as Jeroboam son of Nabat did.

⁵³ 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.

2 Kings

1 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 angel of the LORD 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?

⁴ 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!

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.

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!

¹²Elijah 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 Gods fire came down from heaven and destroyed the captain and his 50 men.

¹³Ahaziah 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.

¹⁴Fire came down from heaven and destroyed the first two captains and their 50 men. But now, have mercy and let us live!

¹⁵The LORD'S angel said to Elijah, Go with the captain. Dont be afraid of him. So Elijah went with the captain to see King Ahaziah.

¹⁶Elijah 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!

¹⁷Ahaziah 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.

¹⁸The other things that Ahaziah did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

2¹ It was near the time for the LORD 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 LORD told me to go to Bethel. But Elisha said, I promise, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you. So the two men went down to Bethel.

³The group of prophets at Bethel came to Elisha and said to him, Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today? Elisha said, Yes, I know. Dont talk about it.

⁴Elijah said to Elisha, Please stay here, because the LORD told me to go to Jericho. But Elisha said, I promise, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you! So the two men went to Jericho.

⁵The group of prophets at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today? Elisha answered, Yes, I know. Dont talk about it.

⁶Elijah said to Elisha, Please stay here, because the LORD told me to go to the Jordan River. Elisha answered, I promise, as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you! So the two men went on.

⁷There 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.

⁹After 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 dont

see me when I am taken from you, it will not happen.

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 Elijahs 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 LORD, 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.

¹⁵ When the group of prophets at Jericho saw Elisha, they said, Elijahs 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 LORD'S Spirit has taken Elijah up and dropped him on some mountain or in some valley. But Elisha answered, No, dont send men to look for Elijah!

¹⁷The group of prophets begged Elisha 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.

¹⁸So the men went to Jericho where Elisha was staying and told him. Elisha said to them, I told you not to go.

¹⁹The 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.

²⁰Elisha said, Bring me a new bowl and put salt in it. They brought the bowl to Elisha.

²¹Then 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.

²²The water became pure and is still good today. It happened just as Elisha had said.

²³Elisha 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 baldheaded man! Go away, you baldheaded man!

²⁴Elisha 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.

²⁵Elisha left Bethel and went to Mount Carmel and from there he went back to Samaria.

3¹Joram 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.

²He 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 the sins of Jeroboam.

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.

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.

¹⁰Finally the king of Israel said, Oh, I think the LORD really brought us three kings together only to let the Moabites defeat us!

¹¹But Jehoshaphat said, Surely one of the LORD'S prophets is here. Lets 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 Elijahs servant.

¹²Jehoshaphat said, The LORD'S word is with Elisha. 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.

¹⁵ But now bring me someone who plays the harp. When the person played the harp, the LORD'S power came on Elisha.

¹⁶ Then Elisha said, This is what the LORD says: Dig holes in the valley.

¹⁷ Yes, 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 cows and other animals will have water to drink.

¹⁸ This is an easy thing for the LORD to do. He will also help you defeat the Moabites.

¹⁹ You 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.

²⁰ In the morning, at the time for the morning sacrifice, water began flowing from the direction of Edom and filled the valley.

²¹ The 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. Lets 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.

²⁷ Then 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.

4¹ A 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!

² Elisha answered, How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house? The woman said, I dont have anything in the house except a jar of olive oil.

³ Then Elisha said, Go and borrow bowls from all your neighbors. They must be empty. Borrow plenty of bowls.

⁴ Then go to your house and close the doors. Only you and your sons will be in the house. Then pour the oil into all

the bowls. Fill them, and put them in a separate place.

⁵So the woman left Elisha, went into her house, and shut the door. Only she and her sons were in the house. Her sons brought the bowls to her and she poured oil.

⁶She filled many bowls. Finally, she said to her son, Bring me another bowl. But all of the bowls were full. One of the sons said to her, There arent any more bowls. Then the oil in the jar was finished!

⁷When 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.

⁸One 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.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰Please, lets make a little room on the roof for him. Lets 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. The woman said, No, sir! Man of God, don't lie to me!

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 mothers lap until noon. Then he died.

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 womans husband said, Why would you want to go to the man of God today? It isnt the New Moon or Sabbath day. She said, Goodbye!

²⁴ Then she put a saddle on a donkey and said to her servant, Lets 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, theres 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.

²⁷ But the Shunammite woman went up the hill to the man of God. She bowed down and touched Elishas feet. Gehazi came near to pull her away. But the man of God said to Gehazi, Leave her alone! Shes very upset, and the LORD didnt tell me about it. He hid this news from me.

²⁸ Then she said, Sir, I never asked for a son. I told you, Dont trick me!

²⁹ Then Elisha said to Gehazi, Get ready to go. Take my walking stick and go! If you meet anyone along the way, dont even stop to say hello to him. If anyone says hello to you, dont answer. Put my walking stick on the childs face.

³⁰ But the childs 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.

³¹ Gehazi 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!

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.

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.

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. Then Elisha said, Give this food to the people, so that they can eat.

⁴³Elishas servant said, What? There are 100 men here. How can I give this food to all those men? But Elisha said, Give the food to the people to eat. The LORD says, They will eat and there will still be food left over.

⁴⁴Then Elishas 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.

5¹Naaman 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 was a great and powerful man, but he was also sick with leprosy.

²The 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 Naamans wife.

³She said to his wife, I wish that my master would meet the prophet who

lives in Samaria. He could heal Naaman of his leprosy.

⁴Naaman went to the king and told him what the Israelite girl said.

⁵Then 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.

⁶Naaman 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.

⁷When 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 dont 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.

⁸Elisha, 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.

⁹So Naaman came with his horses and chariots to Elishas house and stood outside the door.

¹⁰Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman who said, Go and wash in the Jordan River seven times. Then your skin will be healed, and you will be pure and clean.

¹¹Naaman 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.

¹²Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, are better than all the water in Israel. Why cant I wash in those rivers in Damascus and become clean? He was very angry and turned to leave.

¹³But Naamans servants went to him and talked to him. They said, Father, if the prophet told you to do some great thing, you would do it, isnt that right? But he said, Wash, and you will be pure and clean.

¹⁴So 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.

¹⁵Naaman 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.

¹⁶But 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.

¹⁷Then 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. 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!

¹⁸And 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.

¹⁹Then Elisha said to Naaman, Go in peace. So Naaman left Elisha and went a short way.

²⁰But 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 get something from him.

²¹So 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?

²²Gehazi 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.

²³Naaman 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.

²⁴When Gehazi came to the hill, he took these things from the servants. He sent the servants away, and they left. Then he hid those things in the house.

²⁵Gehazi came in and stood before his master. Elisha said to Gehazi, Where have you been Gehazi? Gehazi answered, I didnt go anywhere.

²⁶Elisha 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, cows, or men and women servants.

²⁷Now you and your children will catch Naamans disease. You will have leprosy forever! When Gehazi left Elisha, his skin was as white as snow! He was sick with leprosy.

6¹The group of prophets said to Elisha, We are staying in that place over there, but it is too small for us.

²Lets 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.

³One of them said, Please go with us. Elisha said, Yes, I will go with you.

⁴ So Elisha went with the group of prophets. When they arrived at the Jordan River, they began to cut down some trees.

⁵ 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!

⁶ 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.

⁷ Elisha said, So pick up the ax head. Then the man reached out and took the ax head.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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!

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹The 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.

¹²One 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!

¹³The 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.

¹⁴Then the king of Aram sent horses, chariots, and a large army to Dothan. They arrived at night and surrounded the city.

¹⁵Elisha'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?

¹⁶Elisha 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 servants 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?

²²Elisha answered, No, dont 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.

²³So 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.

²⁴After this happened, King Ben-Hadad of Aram gathered all his army and went to surround and attack the city of Samaria.

²⁵The 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 donkeys head was sold for 80 pieces of silver and one pint of doves dung sold for five pieces of silver.

²⁶The 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!

²⁷The 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.

²⁸Then 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.

²⁹So 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!

³⁰When the king heard the womans 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.

³¹The 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!

³²The 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 dont let him in. I hear

the sound of his masters feet coming behind him.

³³While Elisha was still talking with the elders, the messenger came to him. This was the message: This trouble has come from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?

7¹ 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.

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!

⁶The 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.

⁸When these lepers came to where the camp began, they went into one tent. They ate and drank. Then they carried silver, gold, and clothes out of the camp and hid them. Then they came back and entered another tent. They carried things out from this tent and went out and hid them.

⁹Then they said to each other, We are doing wrong! Today we have good news, but we are silent. If we wait until the sun

comes up, we will be punished. Now lets go and tell the people who live in the kings palace.

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 kings 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 kings 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. Lets 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 Arameans had thrown these things down when they hurried away. 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 basket of fine flour or two baskets of barley for only one shekel.

¹⁷There 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 Elishas house.

¹⁸Elisha 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.

¹⁹But 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.

²⁰It happened to the officer just that way. The people knocked him down at the gate and trampled him, and he died.

8¹Elisha 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.

²So 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.

³After 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.

⁴The 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.

⁵Gehazi 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.

⁶The 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.

⁷Elisha went to Damascus. King Ben-Hadad of Aram was sick. Someone told Ben-Hadad, The man of God has come here.

⁸Then 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.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰Then Elisha said to Hazael, Go and tell Ben-Hadad, You will live. But really the LORD told me, He will die.

¹¹Elisha began to stare. He stared for an embarrassingly long time. Then the man of God began to cry.

¹²Hazael 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.

¹³Hazael 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.

¹⁴Then Hazael left Elisha and went to his king. Ben-Hadad said to Hazael, What did Elisha say to you? He answered, Elisha told me that you will live.

¹⁵But the next day Hazael took a thick cloth and dipped it in water. Then he held it on Ben-Hadads face until he died. Then Hazael became the new king.

¹⁶Jehoram 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.

¹⁷Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to rule. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem.

¹⁸But Jehoram lived as the kings of Israel and did what the LORD saw as evil. He lived as the people from Ahabs family, because his wife was Ahabs daughter.

¹⁹But 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.

²⁰In Jehorams time Edom broke away from Judahs rule. The people of Edom chose a king for themselves.

²¹Then Jehoram and all his chariots went to Zair. The Edomite army surrounded them, but Jehoram and his officers attacked them and escaped.

Jehorams 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 Judahs 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. Jehorams son Ahaziah became the new king.

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 mothers 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 Ahabs family had done. He lived like this because his wife was from Ahabs family.

²⁸ Joram was from Ahabs family. Ahaziah went with Joram to fight against

King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth Gilead.
The Arameans wounded Joram.

²⁹King 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.

9¹ Elisha the prophet called one of the men from the group of prophets and said to him, Get ready and take this small bottle of oil in your hand. Go to Ramoth Gilead.

²When 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.

³Take the small bottle of oil and pour the oil on Jehus 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!

⁴So this young man, the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead.

⁵When 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.

⁶Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the young prophet poured the oil on Jehus head and said to him, The LORD, the God of Israel, says, I am anointing you to be the new king over the LORD'S people, Israel.

⁷You 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.

⁸So all Ahabs family will die. I will not let any male child in Ahabs family live. It doesnt matter if that male child is a slave or a free person in Israel.

⁹I will make Ahabs family like the family of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the family of Baasha son of Ahijah.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹Jehu went back to his kings 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³Then 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!

¹⁴So 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.

¹⁵King 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.

¹⁶Joram 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.

¹⁷A guard was standing on the tower in Jezreel. He saw Jehus 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.

¹⁸So 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.

¹⁹Then Joram sent out a second messenger on a horse. This man came to Jehus group and said, King Joram says, Peace. Jehu answered, You have nothing to do with peace. Come and follow me.

²⁰The 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.

²¹Joram said, Get me my chariot! So the servant got Jorams 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 Jorams body up and throw it into the field of Naboth from Jezreel. Remember when you and I rode together with Jorams father Ahab, the LORD said this 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 Jorams 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 Ahaziahs 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 Jorams eleventh year as king of Israel.

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 kings daughter.

³⁵The 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.

³⁶When 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.

³⁷Her body will be like dung on the field in the area of Jezreel. No one will be able to recognize her body!

10¹Ahab had 70 sons in Samaria. Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria to the rulers and leaders of Jezreel. He also sent the letters to the people who raised Ahabs sons saying,

²As soon as you get this letter, choose the one who is the best and most worthy among your masters 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 fathers throne. Then fight for your masters family.

³(10: 2)

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 kings 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.

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 kings sons and killed all 70 of them. Then the leaders put the heads of the kings 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 kings sons. Then Jehu said, Lay the

heads in two piles at the city gate until morning.

⁹In the morning Jehu went out and stood before the people. He said to them, You are innocent. Look, I made plans against my master. I killed him. But who killed all these sons of Ahab? You killed them.

¹⁰You should know that everything the LORD says will happen. The LORD used Elijah to say these things about Ahabs family. Now the LORD has done what he said he would do.

¹¹So Jehu killed all the people in Ahabs family living in Jezreel. He killed all the important men, close friends, and priests. None of Ahabs people were left alive.

¹²Jehu left Jezreel and went to Samaria. On the way he stopped at a place called Shepherds Camp.

¹³There 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 kings children and the queen mothers children.

¹⁴Then Jehu said, Take them alive! Jehus men captured Ahaziahs relatives alive. There were 42 of them. Jehu killed them at the well near Beth Eked. He did not leave anyone alive.

¹⁵After 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.

¹⁶Jehu said, Come with me. You can see how strong my feelings are for the LORD. So Jehonadab rode in Jehus chariot.

¹⁷Jehu came to Samaria and killed all Ahabs family who were still alive in Samaria. He killed them all. He did what the LORD had told Elijah.

¹⁸Then Jehu gathered all the people together and said to them, Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu will serve Baal much.

¹⁹Now 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.

²⁰Jehu said, Prepare a holy meeting for Baal. So the priests announced the meeting.

²¹Then 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.

²²Jehu 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.

²³Then 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.

²⁴The 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.

²⁶ They brought out the memorial stones that were in the temple of Baal and burned that temple.

²⁷ Then they smashed the memorial stones of Baal. They also smashed the temple of Baal. They made the temple of Baal into a public toilet, which is still used today.

²⁸ So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel,

²⁹ 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 gold calves in Bethel and in Dan.

³⁰The LORD said to Jehu, You have done well. You have done what I say is good. You destroyed Ahabs family the way I wanted you to, so your descendants will rule Israel for four generations.

³¹But 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.

³²At 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.

³³He 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.

³⁴All the other great things that Jehu did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

³⁵Jehu died and was buried with his ancestors. The people buried him in

Samaria. His son Jehoahaz became the new king of Israel after him.

³⁶Jehu ruled over Israel in Samaria for 28 years.

11 ¹Athaliah was Ahaziahs mother. She saw that her son was dead, so she got up and killed all the kings family.

²Jehosheba was King Jorams daughter and Ahaziahs sister. Joash was one of the kings 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.

³Then 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.

⁴In 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 kings son to them.

⁵Then 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.

⁶Another 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.

⁷Your two divisions who go off duty on the Sabbath day will stand guard at the LORD'S Temple and protect King Joash.

⁸You 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.

⁹The 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,

¹⁰and he gave spears and shields to the captains. These were the spears and shields David put in the LORD'S Temple.

¹¹These 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.

¹²These men brought out Joash. They put the crown on him and gave him a copy of the agreement. Then they anointed him and made him the new king. They clapped their hands and shouted, Long live the king!

¹³Queen Athaliah heard the noise from the guards and the people, so she went to them at the LORD'S Temple.

¹⁴Athaliah 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!

¹⁵Jehoiada 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.

¹⁶So the soldiers grabbed Athaliah and killed her as soon as she went through the horses entrance to the palace.

¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁸Then 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 Baals priest, Mattan, in front of the altars. So Jehoiada the priest put men in charge of maintaining the LORD'S Temple.

¹⁹The priest led all the people. They went from the LORD'S Temple to the kings palace. The kings special guards and the captains went with the king, and all the other people followed them. They went to the entrance to the kings palace. Then King Joash sat on the throne.

²⁰All 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.

12¹ 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.

² For as long as he lived, Joash did what the LORD considered right. He did what Jehoiada the priest taught him.

³ But he did not destroy the high places. The people still made sacrifices and burned incense at those places of worship.

⁴ 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 LORD'S Temple. Each priest should use the money he gets from the people he serves. He should use that money to repair the damage to the Temple.

⁵ (12: 4)

⁶In the 23rd year that Joash was king, the priests still had not repaired the Temple,

⁷so King Joash called for Jehoiada and the other priests. Joash said to them, Why havent you repaired the Temple? Stop taking money from the people you serve. That money must be used to repair the Temple.

⁸The priests agreed to stop taking money from the people, but they also decided not to repair the Temple.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰Whenever the kings 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.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²They 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.

¹³People 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.

¹⁴(12: 13)

¹⁵Those 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.

¹⁶People 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.

¹⁷Hazael 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.

¹⁸ Joash 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.

¹⁹ All the great things that Joash did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

²⁰ Joash's officers made plans against him. They killed Joash at the house of Millo on the road that goes down to Silla.

²¹ Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer were Joash's officers. These men killed Joash. The people buried Joash with his ancestors in the City of David. His son Amaziah became the new king after him.

13¹ 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.

²Jehoahaz 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.

³Then the LORD was angry with Israel. He let King Hazael of Aram and Hazael's son Ben-Hadad gain control of Israel.

⁴Then 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.

⁵So 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.

⁶But 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.

⁷The 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.

⁸All the great things that Jehoahaz did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

⁹Jehoahaz died and was buried with his ancestors. The people buried Jehoahaz in Samaria. His son Jehoash became the new king after him.

¹⁰Jehoash 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.

¹¹He 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.

¹²All 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.

¹³Jehoash 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.

¹⁴Elisha 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?

¹⁵Elisha said to Jehoash, Take a bow and some arrows. Jehoash took a bow and some arrows.

¹⁶Then 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.

¹⁷Elisha 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.

¹⁸Elisha 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.

¹⁹The 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.

²⁰Elisha died, and the people buried him. One time in the spring, a group of Moabite soldiers came to fight against Israel.

²¹Some 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.

²²During all the days that Jehoahaz ruled, King Hazael of Aram caused trouble to Israel.

²³But 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.

²⁴King Hazael of Aram died, and Ben-Hadad became the new king after him.

²⁵Before 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.

14¹ Amaziah son of King Joash of Judah became king in the second year that Jehoash son of Jehoahaz was king of Israel.

² Amaziah was 25 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jehoaddin from Jerusalem.

³ Amaziah did what the LORD said was right, but he did not follow God completely like David his ancestor. Amaziah did everything that Joash his father had done.

⁴ He did not destroy the high places. The people still sacrificed and burned incense at those places of worship.

⁵ At the time that Amaziah had strong control of the kingdom, he killed the officers who had killed his father.

⁶ 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 did. And children must not be put to death for something their parents did. People should be put to death only for what that they themselves did.

⁷Amaziah killed 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. In war Amaziah took Sela and called it Joktheel. It is still called Joktheel today.

⁸Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, son of King Jehu of Israel. Amaziahs message said, Come on, lets meet together face to face and fight.

⁹King 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.

¹⁰True, you have defeated Edom. But you have become proud because of your victory over Edom. But stay at home and brag! Dont 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 treasures 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah lived 15 years after the death of King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz of Israel.

¹⁸ All the great things that Amaziah did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ The people brought Amaziah's body back on horses. He was buried at Jerusalem with his ancestors in the City of David.

²¹ Then all the people of Judah made Azariah the new king. Azariah was 16 years old.

²² So King Amaziah died and was buried with his ancestors. Then Azariah rebuilt Elath and got it back for Judah.

²³ King Jeroboam son of King 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.

²⁴ 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 Hopher.

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 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.)

²⁹ Jeroboam died and was buried with his ancestors, the kings of Israel. Jeroboam's son Zechariah became the new king after him.

15 ¹King Azariah son of Amaziah of Judah became king in the 27th year that Jeroboam was king of Israel.

²Azariah was 16 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother was named Jecoliah of Jerusalem.

³Azariah did what the LORD said was right, just as his father Amaziah had done.

⁴But he did not destroy the high places. People still made sacrifices and burned incense in these places of worship.

⁵The 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 kings palace, and he judged the people.

⁶All the great things that Azariah did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

⁷Azariah died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Azariah's son Jotham became the new king after him.

⁸Zechariah son of Jeroboam ruled over Samaria in Israel for six months. This

was during the 38th year that Azariah was king of Judah.

⁹Zechariah 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.

¹⁰Shallum son of Jabesh made plans against Zechariah. Shallum killed Zechariah in Ibleam. Shallum became the new king.

¹¹All the other things that Zechariah did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

¹²In this way the LORD'S word came true. He had told Jehu that four generations of his descendants would be kings of Israel.

¹³Shallum son of Jabesh became king of Israel during the 39th year that Uzziah was king of Judah. Shallum ruled for one month in Samaria.

¹⁴Menahem son of Gadi came up from Tirzah to Samaria and killed Shallum son of Jabesh. Then Menahem became the new king after him.

¹⁵All the things Shallum did, including his plans against Zechariah, are written

in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel.

¹⁶Menahem 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.

¹⁷Menahem son of Gadi became king over Israel during the 39th year that Azariah was king of Judah. Menahem ruled ten years in Samaria.

¹⁸Menahem did what the LORD said was wrong. He did not stop committing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.

¹⁹King 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.

²⁰Menahem 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.

²² Menahem died and was buried with his ancestors. His son Pekahiah became the new king after him.

²³ Pekahiah son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria during the 50th year that Azariah was king of Judah. Pekahiah 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 Pekahiahs army was Pekah son of Remaliah. Pekah took 50 men from Gilead with him and killed Pekahiah, along with Argob and Arieih, in Samaria at the kings palace. Then Pekah became the new king.

²⁶ All the great things Pekahiah did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of 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.

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.

³⁴ Jotham did what the LORD said was right, just as his father Uzziah had done.

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ All the great things that Jotham did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

³⁷ At that time the LORD sent King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah to fight against Judah.

³⁸ 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.

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. He copied the terrible sins of the nations that the LORD had forced to leave the country when the Israelites came.

⁴Ahaz made sacrifices and burned incense at the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.

⁵King 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.

⁶At 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.

⁷Ahaz 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.

⁸Ahaz also took the silver and gold that was in the Temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the kings palace. Then Ahaz sent a gift to the king of Assyria.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰King 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.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²When the king arrived from Damascus, he saw the altar. He offered sacrifices on the altar.

¹³Ahaz 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.

¹⁴Ahaz 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.

¹⁵He 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.

¹⁶Uriah the priest did everything that King Ahaz commanded him to do.

¹⁷There 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 off the bronze bulls that stood under it. He put the large tank on a stone pavement.

¹⁸Workers 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.

¹⁹All the great things that Ahaz did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

²⁰Ahaz died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Ahaz's son Hezekiah became the new king after him.

17 ¹Hoshea 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.

²He did what the LORD said was wrong, but he was not as bad as the kings of Israel who had ruled before him.

³King Shalmaneser of Assyria came to fight against Hoshea and defeated him. So Hoshea paid tribute to Shalmaneser.

⁴Later, 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.

⁵The king of Assyria attacked many places in Israel. Then he came to Samaria and fought against it for three years.

⁶The 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.

⁷These 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.

⁸They 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.

⁹The Israelites secretly did things against 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. 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.

¹⁶They 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, just trying 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.

¹⁹But even the people of Judah did not obey the commands of the LORD their God. They lived the same way the Israelites had.

²⁰The LORD rejected all the people of Israel. He caused them many troubles. He let people destroy them. Finally, he removed them completely from his sight.

²¹He tore them out of Davids family. And then they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam led the Israelites away from following the LORD. He caused them to commit great sin.

²² So the Israelites sinned in all the ways Jeroboam did. And they did not stop committing these sins

²³ until the LORD removed Israel from his sight. Through his prophets he had warned the people that this would happen. So the Israelites were taken out of their country into Assyria. And they are still there today.

²⁴ The 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.

²⁵ When 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.

²⁶ Some people said to the king of Assyria, The people who you took away and put in the cities of Samaria dont know the law of the god of that country. So that god sent lions to attack them. The lions killed them because they dont know the law of the god of that country.

²⁷ So 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 the law of the god of that country.

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.

³⁰The 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.

³¹The 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.

³²But 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.

³³They respected the LORD but also served their own gods, just as they did in their own countries.

³⁴Even 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.

³⁵The 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.

³⁶But 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.

³⁷You 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.

³⁸You must not forget the agreement that I made with you. You must not respect other gods.

³⁹No, you must respect only the LORD your God. Then he will save you from all your enemies.

⁴⁰But the Israelites did not listen. They kept on doing the same things they did before.

⁴¹So 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.

18¹Hezekiah son of Ahaz was king of Judah. Hezekiah began to rule during the third year that Hoshea son of Elah was king of Israel.

²Hezekiah was 25 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. His mothers name was Abi, the daughter of Zechariah.

³Hezekiah did what the LORD said was right, just as David his ancestor had done.

⁴Hezekiah 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. Hezekiah broke this bronze snake into pieces.

⁵Hezekiah 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.

⁶He was very faithful to the LORD and did not stop following him. He obeyed the commands that the LORD had given to Moses.

⁷The LORD was with Hezekiah, so he was successful in everything he did. Hezekiah broke away from the king of Assyria and stopped serving him.

⁸Hezekiah 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.

⁹King 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.)

¹⁰At 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.

¹² This happened because the Israelites did not obey the LORD their God. They broke his agreement and did not obey everything that the LORD'S servant Moses had commanded. The Israelites would not listen to the Lords agreement, or do what it taught them to do.

¹³ During Hezekiahs 14th year as king, King Sennacherib of Assyria went to fight against all the strong cities of Judah. Sennacherib defeated them all.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵Hezekiah gave all the silver that was in the LORD'S Temple and in the kings treasuries.

¹⁶That 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.

¹⁷The 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 Laundrymans Field.

¹⁸These 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.

¹⁹The 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?

²⁰If 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?

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ But even then you couldnt beat one of my masters lowest ranking officers. So why do you still depend on Egypts chariots and horse soldiers?

²⁵ 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!

²⁶Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to the commander, Please speak to us in Aramaic. We understand that language. Dont speak to us in the language of Judah because the people on the wall will understand you.

²⁷But the commander said to them, My master did not send me to speak only to you and your master. I was also sent to speak to those people sitting on the wall. They, too, will not have enough food or water; they, too, will eat their own waste and drink their own urine like you!

²⁸Then the commander shouted loudly in Hebrew, Hear this message from the great king, the king of Assyria!

²⁹The king says, Dont let Hezekiah fool you, because he cannot save you from my power.

³⁰Dont let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD. Hezekiah says, The LORD will save us. The king of Assyria will not defeat this city.

³¹But dont listen to Hezekiah. The king of Assyria says this: Do this favor for me; come out to me and then everyone will be free to have grapes from their

own vines, figs from their own trees, and water from their own well.

³²You can do this until I come and take you away to a land like your own. In that new land, you will have good grain and new wine, bread, vineyards, olive oil, and honey. Then you can live and not die. But dont listen to Hezekiah. He is trying to change your mind. He is saying, The LORD will save us.

³³Did any of the gods of the other nations save their land from the king of Assyria?

³⁴Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Did they save Samaria from me?

³⁵Did any of the gods in the other countries save their land from me? No! So do you think the LORD will save Jerusalem from me?

³⁶But the people were silent. They did not say a word to the commander because King Hezekiah had commanded them, Dont say anything to him.

³⁷Then 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.

19¹ 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 mothers womb.

⁴ The commanders 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.

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 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!

¹²Did 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.

¹³Where is the king of Hamath? The king of Arpad? The king of the city of Sepharvaim? The kings of Hena and Ivvah?

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.

¹⁵Hezekiah 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.

¹⁶LORD, please listen to me. LORD, open your eyes and look at this message. Hear the words that Sennacherib sent to insult the living God.

¹⁷It is true, LORD. The kings of Assyria did destroy all those nations.

¹⁸They did throw the gods of those nations into the fire. But they were not

real gods. They were only wood and stonestatues that people made. That is why the kings of Assyria could destroy them.

¹⁹But 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.

²⁰Then 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.

²¹This 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.

²²But who is the one you have insulted and made fun of? Who is the one you have been shouting at with such a proud look on your face? All this you have done against the Holy One of Israel!

²³You 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.

²⁴I dug wells, and drank water from new places. I dried up the rivers of Egypt and walked on the land there.

²⁵That 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.

²⁶The 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 housetops, dying before it grows tall.

²⁷I 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.

²⁸Yes, 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.

²⁹Then 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 years 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.

³⁰The 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.

³¹That 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.

³²So 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.

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.

20¹ 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.

⁸Hezekiah 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?

⁹Isaiah said, Which do you want? Should the shadow go forward ten steps or go back ten steps? This is the sign for you from the LORD to show that the LORD will do what he said he would do.

¹⁰Hezekiah answered, It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten steps. No, make the shadow go back ten steps.

¹¹Then Isaiah prayed, and the LORD made the shadow move back ten steps. It went back up the steps that it had already been on.

¹²At 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.

¹³Hezekiah 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.

¹⁴Then 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.

¹⁵Isaiah said, What did they see in your palace? Hezekiah answered, They saw everything I own. I showed them all my wealth.

¹⁶Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Listen to this message from the LORD.

¹⁷The 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.

¹⁸The Babylonians will take your sons, and your sons will become officers in the palace of the king of Babylon.

¹⁹Then 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.)

²⁰All the great things that Hezekiah 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.

21 ¹ Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to rule. He ruled 55 years in Jerusalem. His mothers name was Hephzibah.

² 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.

⁶He sacrificed his own son and burned him on the altar. 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.

⁷Manasseh made a carved statue of Asherah. He put this statue in the Temple. The LORD had said to David and to Davids 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.

⁸I 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.

⁹But the people did not listen to God. Manasseh did more evil things than all the nations that lived in Canaan before Israel came. And the LORD destroyed those nations when the Israelites came to take their land.

¹⁰The LORD used his servants the prophets to say this:

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ I will stretch the measuring line of Samaria and the plumb line of Ahabs family over Jerusalem. A man wipes a dish, and then he turns it upside down. I will do that to Jerusalem.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁷All the things that Manasseh did, including the sins that he committed, are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

¹⁸Manasseh died and was buried with his ancestors. He was buried in the garden at his house. It was called the Garden of Uzza. His son Amon became the new king after him.

¹⁹Amon was 22 years old when he began to rule. He ruled two years in Jerusalem. His mothers name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz from Jotbah.

²⁰Amon did what the LORD said was wrong, just as his father Manasseh had done.

²¹Amon lived just as his father had lived. He worshiped and served the same idols his father had worshiped.

²²Amon left the LORD, the God of his ancestors, and did not live the way the LORD wanted.

²³Amons 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 Amons 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.

22¹ Josiah was eight years old when he began to rule. He ruled 31 years in Jerusalem. His mothers 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 Gods teachingshe did exactly what God wanted.

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,

⁴ 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.

⁵The 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.

⁶Use 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.

⁷Dont count the money that you give to the workers. They can be trusted.

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.

¹¹ When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes to show he was sad and upset.

¹² Then he gave a command to Hilkiyah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant.

¹³ King Josiah said, Go and ask the LORD what we should do. Ask for me, for the people, and for all Judah. 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.

¹⁴ So Hilkiyah 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.

¹⁵ Then 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!

¹⁸King 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.

¹⁹(22: 18)

²⁰I 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.

23¹ King Josiah told all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem to come and meet with him.

² Then 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 Lords Temple. Josiah read the book so that all the people could hear it.

³ The king stood by the column and made an agreement with the LORD. He agreed to follow the LORD and to obey his commands, the agreement, and his rules. He agreed to do this with all his heart and soul. He agreed to obey the agreement written in this book. All the people stood to show that they agreed to follow the agreement.

⁴ Then 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.

⁸At 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.)

⁹(23: 8)

¹⁰Topheth was a place in the Valley of Hinnoms 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 Ahabs 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 Ashtoreth, 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 mens 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.

¹⁶ 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 LORD that the man of God announced. 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.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ Josiah said, Leave the man of God alone. Dont move his bones. So they left his bones and the bones of the man of God from Samaria.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ Josiah killed all the priests of the high places that were in Samaria. He killed the priests on those altars and burned mens bones on the altars so that they could never be used again. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

²¹ Then King Josiah gave a command to all the people. He said, Celebrate Passover for the LORD your God. Do this just as it is written in the Book of the Agreement.

²² 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.

²³ They celebrated this Passover for the LORD in Jerusalem during Josiahs 18th year as king.

²⁴ 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 Hilkiyah the priest found in the LORD'S Temple.

²⁵There 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. No king had followed all the Law of Moses like Josiah. And there has never been another king like Josiah since that time.

²⁶But the LORD did not stop being angry with the people of Judah. He was still angry with them for everything that Manasseh had done.

²⁷The 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.

²⁸All the other things that Josiah did are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ 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.

³² Jehoahaz did what the LORD said was wrong. He did all the same things that his ancestors had done.

³³ Pharaoh Neco put Jehoahaz in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Jehoahaz could not rule in Jerusalem. Pharaoh Neco forced Judah to pay 7500 pounds of silver and 75 pounds of gold.

³⁴ Pharaoh Neco made Josiah's son Eliakim the new king. Eliakim took the place of Josiah his father. Pharaoh Neco

changed Eliakims name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh Neco took Jehoahaz away to Egypt where he died.

³⁵ Jehoiakim 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.

³⁶ Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled eleven years in Jerusalem. His mothers name was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah from Rumah.

³⁷ Jehoiakim did what the LORD said was wrong. He did all the same things his ancestors had done.

24¹ In 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.

² The 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.

⁸Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to rule. He ruled three months in Jerusalem. His mothers name was Nehushta 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 gold 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.

¹⁷The king of Babylon made Mattaniah the new king. Mattaniah was Jehoiachin's uncle. He changed his name to Zedekiah.

¹⁸Zedekiah 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.

¹⁹Zedekiah did what the LORD said was wrong. He did all the same things that Jehoiakim did.

²⁰The LORD became so angry with Jerusalem and Judah that he threw them away. Zedekiah rebelled and refused to obey the king of Babylon.

25¹ 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.

⁶The Babylonians took King Zedekiah to the king of Babylon at Riblah. The Babylonians decided to punish Zedekiah.

⁷They 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.

⁸Nebuchadnezzar 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.

⁹Nebuzaradan burned the LORD'S Temple, the king's palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem. He destroyed even the largest houses.

¹⁰Then the Babylonian army that was with Nebuzaradan pulled down the walls around Jerusalem.

¹¹Nebuzaradan 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.

¹²He 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.

¹³The Babylonian soldiers broke into pieces the bronze columns in the LORD'S Temple. They also broke the bronze carts and the large bronze tank that were in the LORD'S Temple. They took all of that bronze to Babylon.

¹⁴They 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.

¹⁵Nebuzaradan 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.

¹⁶So 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.

¹⁷(25:16)

¹⁸From the Temple, Nebuzaradan took Seraiah the high priest, Zephaniah the

second priest, and the three men who guarded the entrance.

¹⁹From 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.

²⁰Then 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.

²¹ (25: 20)

²²King 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.

²³The army captains were Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth from Netophah, and Jaazaniah son of the

Maachathite. 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

1 ¹The first generations of people were Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah.

²(1: 1)

³(1: 1)

⁴The sons of Noah were Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

⁵The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

⁶The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁷The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

⁸The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

⁹The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtecah. The sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

¹⁰Nimrod, 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,

¹² Pathrus, Casluh, and Caphtor. (The Philistines came from Casluh.)

¹³ Canaan was the father of Sidon. Sidon was his first child. Canaan was also the father of the Hittites,

¹⁴ Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites,

¹⁵ Hivites, Arkites, Sinites,

¹⁶ Arvadites, Zemarites, and the people from Hamath.

¹⁷ Shems sons were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. Arams sons were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech.

¹⁸ Arphaxad was the father of Shelah. Shelah was the father of Eber.

¹⁹ Eber had two sons. One son was named Peleg, because the people on the earth were divided into different languages during his lifetime. Pelegs brother was named Joktan.

²⁰ (Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,

²¹ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah,

²² Ebal, Abimael, Sheba,

²³ Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these men were Joktans sons.)

²⁴ Shems descendants were Arphaxad, Shelah,

²⁵ Eber, Peleg, Reu,

²⁶ Serug, Nahor, Terah,

²⁷ and Abram. (Abram is also called Abraham.)

²⁸ Abrahams sons were Isaac and Ishmael.

²⁹ These are their descendants: Ishmaels first son was Nebaioth. His other sons were Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,

³⁰ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema,

³¹ Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These were Ishmaels sons.

³² Abraham also had sons by Keturah, his slave woman. They were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshans sons were Sheba and Dedan.

³³ Midians sons were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. These men were the descendants of Keturah.

³⁴ Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaacs sons were Esau and Israel.

³⁵ Esaus sons were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

³⁶Eliphazs sons were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. Also Eliphaz and Timna had a son named Amalek.

³⁷Reuels sons were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

³⁸Seirs sons were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.

³⁹Lotans sons were Hori and Homam. Lotan had a sister named Timna.

⁴⁰Shobals sons were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. Zibeons sons were Aiah and Anah.

⁴¹Anahs son was Dishon. Dishons sons were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran.

⁴²Ezers sons were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. Dishans sons were Uz and Aran.

⁴³There 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 Belas city was Dinhabah.

⁴⁴When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah became the new king. Jobab came from Bozrah.

⁴⁵When Jobab died, Husham became the new king. Husham was from the country of the Temanites.

⁴⁶When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became the new king. Hadad defeated Midian in the country of Moab. Hadads city was named Avith.

⁴⁷When Hadad died, Samlah became the new king. Samlah was from Masrekah.

⁴⁸When Samlah died, Shaul became the new king. Shaul was from Rehoboth by the Euphrates River.

⁴⁹When Shaul died, Baal Hanan son of Acbor became the new king.

⁵⁰When Baal Hanan died, Hadad became the new king. Hadads city was named Pau. Hadads wife was named Mehetabel. Mehetabel was Matreds daughter. Matred was Mezahabs daughter.

⁵¹Then Hadad died. The leaders of Edom were Timna, Alvah, Jetheth,

⁵²Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon,

⁵³Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,

⁵⁴Magdiel, and Iram. This is a list of the leaders of Edom.

2¹Israels sons were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun,

²Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

³Judahs 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.

⁴Judahs daughter-in-law Tamar gave birth to Perez and Zerah. So Judah had five sons.

⁵Perezs sons were Hezron and Hamul.

⁶Zerah had five sons. They were Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Darda.

⁷Zimris son was Carmi. Carmis 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.

⁸Ethans son was Azariah.

⁹Hezrons sons were Jerahmeel, Ram, and Caleb.

¹⁰Ram was Amminadabs father, and Amminadab was Nahshons father. Nahshon was the leader of the people of Judah.

¹¹Nahshon was Salmons father. Salmon was Boazs father.

¹²Boaz was Obeds father. Obed was Jesses father.

¹³ Jesse was Eliabs father. Eliab was Jesses first son. Jesses second son was Abinadab. His third son was Shimea.

¹⁴ Nethanel was Jesses fourth son. Jesses fifth son was Raddai.

¹⁵ Ozem was Jesses sixth son, and David was his seventh son.

¹⁶ Their sisters were Zeruah and Abigail. Zeruahs three sons were Abishai, Joab, and Asahel.

¹⁷ Abigail was Amasas mother. Amasas father was Jether. Jether was from the Ishmaelites.

¹⁸ Caleb was Hezrons son. Caleb had children with his wife Azubah. Azubah was the daughter of Jerioth. Azubahs sons were Jeshur, Shobab, and Ardon.

¹⁹ When Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath. Caleb and Ephrath had a son. They named him Hur.

²⁰ Hur was Uris father. Uri was Bezalels father.

²¹ Later when Hezron was 60 years old, he married Makirs daughter. Makir was the father of Gilead. Hezron had sexual relations with Makirs daughter, and she gave birth to Segub.

²² Segub was Jairs father. Jair had 23 cities in the country of Gilead.

²³ But Geshur and Aram took Jairs 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.

²⁵ Jerahmeel was Hezrons first son. Jerahmeels sons were Ram, Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. Ram was Jerahmeels first son.

²⁶ Jerahmeel had another wife named Atarah. Onams mother was Atarah.

²⁷ Jerahmeels first son, Ram, had sons. They were Maaz, Jamin, and Eker.

²⁸ Onams sons were Shammai and Jada. Shammais sons were Nadab and Abishur.

²⁹ Abishurs wife was named Abihail. They had two sons. Their names were Ahban and Molid.

³⁰ Nadabs sons were Seled and Appaim. Seled died without having children.

³¹ Appaims son was Ishi. Ishis son was Sheshan. Sheshans son was Ahlai.

³² Jada was Shammais brother. Jadas sons were Jether and Jonathan. Jether died without having children.

³³ Jonathans sons were Peleth and Zaza. This was the list of Jerahmeels children.

³⁴ Sheshan did not have sons. He only had daughters. Sheshan had a servant from Egypt named Jarha.

³⁵ Sheshan let his daughter marry Jarha. They had a son. His name was Attai.

³⁶ Attai was Nathans father. Nathan was Zabads father.

³⁷ Zabad was Ephlals father. Ephlal was Obeds father.

³⁸ Obed was Jehus father. Jehu was Azariahs father.

³⁹ Azariah was Helezs father. Helez was Eleasahs father.

⁴⁰ Eleasah was Sismais father. Sismai was Shallums father.

⁴¹ Shallum was Jekamiahs father, and Jekamiah was Elishamas father.

⁴² Caleb was Jerahmeels brother. Caleb had some sons. His first son was Mesha.

Mesha was Ziph's father. There was also Caleb's son Mareshah. Mareshah was the father of Hebron.

⁴³Hebron'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.

⁴⁶Caleb's slave woman was named Ephah. Ephah was the mother of Haran, Moza, and Gazez. Haran was Gazez's father.

⁴⁷Jahdai's sons were Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph.

⁴⁸Maacah was another slave woman of Caleb. Maacah was the mother of Sheber and Tirhana.

⁴⁹Maacah was also the mother of Shaaph and Sheva. Shaaph was Madmannah's father. Sheva was the father of Macbenah and Gibeon. Caleb's daughter was Acsah.

⁵⁰This 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,

⁵¹ Salma, the founder of Bethlehem, and Hareph, the founder of Beth Gader.

⁵² Shobal was the founder of Kiriath Jearim. This is a list of Shobals descendants: Haroeh, half the people in Manahti,

⁵³ and the tribes from Kiriath Jearim. These are the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites, and Mishraitites. The Zorathites and the Eshtaolites came from the Mishraitites.

⁵⁴ This is a list of Salmas descendants: the people from Bethlehem, Netophah, Atroth Beth Joab, half the people from Manahti, the Zorites,

⁵⁵ and the families of scribes who lived at Jabez, Tirath, Shimeath, and Suchah. These scribes are the Kenites who came from Hammath. Hammath was the founder of Beth Recab.

3¹ Some of Davids sons were born in the town of Hebron. This is a list of Davids sons: Davids first son was Amnon. Amnons mother was Ahinoam. She was from the town of Jezreel. The second son was Daniel. His mother was Abigail from Carmel in Judah.

²The third son was Absalom. His mother was Maacah, daughter of Talmi. Talmi was the king of Geshur. The fourth son was Adonijah. His mother was Haggith.

³The fifth son was Shephatiah. His mother was Abital. The sixth son was Ithream. His mother was Eglah, Davids 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.

⁶There were nine other sons. They were Ibhar, Elishua, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

⁷(3: 6)

⁸(3: 6)

⁹They were all Davids sons. Their sister was named Tamar. David also had other sons by his slave women.

¹⁰Solomons son was Rehoboam. Rehoboams son was Abijah. Abijahs son was Asa. Asas son was Jehoshaphat.

¹¹Jehoshaphats son was Jehoram. Jehorams son was Ahaziah. Ahaziahs son was Joash.

¹²Joashs son was Amaziah. Amaziahs son was Azariah. Azariahs son was Jotham.

¹³Jothams son was Ahaz. Ahazs son was Hezekiah. Hezekiahs son was Manasseh.

¹⁴Manassehs son was Amon. Amons son was Josiah.

¹⁵This is a list of Josiahs sons: The first son was Johanan. The second son was Jehoiakim. The third son was Zedekiah. The fourth son was Shallum.

¹⁶Jehoiakims sons were Jehoiachin, his son, and Zedekiah, his son.

¹⁷This is a list of Jehoiachins children after Jehoiachin became a prisoner in Babylon: His children were Shealtiel,

¹⁸Malkiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

¹⁹Pedaiahs sons were Zerubbabel and Shimei. Zerubbabels sons were

Meshullam and Hananiah. Shelomith was their sister.

²⁰Zerubbabel had five other sons also. Their names were Hashubah, Ohel, Berekiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab Hessed.

²¹Hananiahs son was Pelatiah. His son was Jeshaiiah. His son was Rephaiah. His son was Arnan. His son was Obadiah. His son was Shecaniah.

²²This is a list of Shecaniahs descendants: Shemaiah. Shemaiah had six sons: Shemaiah, Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat.

²³Neariah had three sons. They were Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam.

²⁴Elioenai had seven sons. They were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani.

4¹ This is a list of Judahs sons: They were Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal.

²Shobals son was Reaiah. Reaiah was Jahaths father. Jahath was the father of Ahumai and Lahad. The Zorathites are descendants of Ahumai and Lahad.

³Etams sons were Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash. And they had a sister named Hazzelponi.

⁴Penuel was Gedors father, and Ezer was Hushahs father. These were Hurs sons. Hur was Ephrathahs first son, and Ephrathah was the founder of Bethlehem.

⁵Tekoas father was Ashhur. Ashhur had two wives. Their names were Helah and Naarah.

⁶Naarah had Ahuzzam, Hopher, Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were the sons Naarah had with Ashhur.

⁷The sons of Helah were Zereth, Zohar, Ethnan, and Koz.

⁸Koz was the father of Anub and Hazzobebah. Koz also was the father of the tribes of Aharhel. Aharhel was Harums son.

⁹Jabez was a very good man, who was better than his brothers. His mother said, I have named him Jabez because I was in much pain when I had him.

¹⁰Jabez prayed to the God of Israel and said, I pray that you would bless me and give me more land! Be near me and dont let anyone hurt me! Then I will not have any pain. God gave Jabez what he asked for.

¹¹ Kelub was Shuhahs brother. Kelub was Mehirs father. Mehir was Eshtons father.

¹² Eshton was the father of Beth Rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah. Tehinnah was the father of Ir Nahash. These men were from Recah.

¹³ The sons of Kenaz were Othniel and Seraiah. Othniels sons were Hathath and Meonothai.

¹⁴ Meonothai was Ophrahs father. And Seraiah was Joabs father. Joab was the founder of the Ge Harashim. The people used that name because they were skilled workers.

¹⁵ Caleb was Jephunnehs son. Calebs sons were Iru, Elah, and Naam. Elahs son was Kenaz.

¹⁶ Jehallelels sons were Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel.

¹⁷ Ezrahs 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 Gedors father. Heber was Socos father. And Jekuthiel was Zanoahs father. These were the

sons of Bithiah. Bithiah was Pharaoh's daughter. She was Mered's wife from Egypt.

¹⁸(4:17)

¹⁹Mered'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.

²⁰Shimon's sons were Amnon, Rinnah, Ben Hanan, and Tilon. Ishi's sons were Zoheth and Ben Zoheth.

²¹Shelah 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.

²²(4:21)

²³These sons of Shelah were workers who made things from clay. They lived in Netaim and Gederah and worked for the king.

²⁴ Simeons sons were Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul.

²⁵ Shauls son was Shallum. Shallums son was Mibsam. Mibsams son was Mishma.

²⁶ Mishmas son was Hammuel. Hammuels son was Zaccur. Zaccurs son was Shimei.

²⁷ Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, but Shimeis brothers did not have many children. Shimeis brothers did not have large families. Their families were not as large as the other tribes in Judah.

²⁸ Shimeis descendants lived in Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual,

²⁹ Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad,

³⁰ Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag,

³¹ Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susim, Beth Biri, and Shaaraim. They lived in these towns until David became king.

³² The five villages near these towns were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Token, and Ashan.

³³ 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 This is the list of men who were leaders of their tribes: They were Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah (Amaziah's son), Joel, Jehu son of Joshibiah, Joshibiah son of Seraiah, Seraiah son of Asiel, Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, and Ziza (Shiphi's son). Shiphi was Allon's son, and Allon was Jedaiah's son. Jedaiah was Shimri's son, and Shimri was Shemaiah's son. These men's families grew to be very large.

³⁵ (4: 34)

³⁶ (4: 34)

³⁷ (4: 34)

³⁸ (4: 34)

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ 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.

⁴²Five hundred people from the tribe of Simeon went to the hill country of Seir. Ishis sons led these men. The sons were Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel. The Simeonite men fought against the people living in that place.

⁴³There were only a few Amalekites still living, and these Simeonites killed them. Since that time until now, the Simeonites have lived in Seir.

5¹ Reuben was Israels first son. Reuben should have received the special privileges of the oldest son. But he had sexual relations with his fathers wife. So those privileges were given to Josephs sons. In the family history, Reubens name is not listed as the first son. Judah became stronger than his brothers, so the leaders came from his family. But Josephs family got the

other privileges that belong to the oldest son. Reubens sons were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

² (5: 1)

³ (5: 1)

⁴ These are the names of Joels descendants: Shemaiah was Joels son. Gog was Shemaiahs son. Shimei was Gogs son.

⁵ Micah was Shimeis son. Reaiah was Micahs son. Baal was Reaiahs son.

⁶ Beerah was Baals son. King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria forced Beerah to leave his home. So Beerah became the kings prisoner. Beerah was a leader of the tribe of Reuben.

⁷ Joels brothers and all his tribes are listed just as they are written in the family histories: Jeiel was the first son, then Zechariah,

⁸ and Bela. Bela was Azazs son. Azaz was Shemas son. Shema was Joels son. They lived in the area of Aroer all the way to Nebo and Baal Meon.

⁹ Belas 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.

¹⁰When Saul was king, Belas people fought a war against the Hagriles. They defeated the Hagriles. Belas people lived in the tents that had belonged to the Hagriles. They lived in those tents and traveled throughout the area east of Gilead.

¹¹The people of Gad lived across the river from Reuben, in the area of Bashan. They spread all the way to the town of Salecah.

¹²Joel was the first leader in Bashan. Shapham was the second leader. Then Janai became the leader.

¹³The seven brothers in their families were Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber.

¹⁴They were the descendants of Abihail. Abihail was Huris son. Huri was Jaroahs son. Jaroah was Gileads son. Gilead was Michaels son. Michael was Jeshishais son. Jeshishai was Jahdos son. Jahdo was Buzs son.

¹⁵Ahi was Abdiels son. Abdiel was Gunis son. Ahi was the leader of their family.

¹⁶The 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.

¹⁷During the time of Jotham and Jeroboam, all these peoples names were written in the family history of Gad. Jotham was the king of Judah and Jeroboam was the king of Israel.

¹⁸From 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.

¹⁹They started a war against the Hagrites and the people of Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab.

²⁰The 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.

6¹ Levis sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

² Kohaths sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

³ Amrams children were Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. Aarons sons were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

⁴ Eleazar was Phinehas father. Phinehas was Abishuas father.

⁵ Abishua was Bukkis father. Bukki was Uzzis father.

⁶ Uzzi was Zerahiahs father. Zerahiah was Meraioths father.

⁷ Meraioth was Amariahs father. Amariah was Ahitubs father.

⁸ Ahitub was Zadoks father. Zadok was Ahimaazs father.

⁹ Ahimaaz was Azariahs father. Azariah was Johanans father.

¹⁰Johanan was Azariahs father. (Azariah is the one who served as priest in the Temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem.)

¹¹Azariah was Amariahs father. Amariah was Ahitubs father.

¹²Ahitub was Zadoks father. Zadok was Shallums father.

¹³Shallum was Hilkiahs father. Hilkiah was Azariahs father.

¹⁴Azariah was Seraiahs father. Seraiah was Jehozadaks father.

¹⁵Jehozadak 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.

¹⁶Levis sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹⁷The names of Gershons sons were Libni and Shimei.

¹⁸Kohaths sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

¹⁹Meraris sons were Mahli and Mushi. This is a list of the families in the tribe of Levi. They are listed with their fathers names first:

²⁰These were Gershons descendants: Libni was Gershons son. Jahath was Libnis son. Zimmah was Jahaths son.

²¹Joah was Zimmahs son. Iddo was Joahs son. Zerah was Iddos son. Jeatherai was Zerahs son.

²²These were Kohaths descendants: Amminadab was Kohaths son. Korah was Amminadabs son. Assir was Korahs son.

²³Elkanah was Assirs son. Ebiasaph was Elkanahs son. Assir was Ebiasaphs son.

²⁴Tahath was Assirs son. Uriel was Tahaths son. Uzziah was Uriels son. Shaul was Uzziahs son.

²⁵Elkanahs sons were Amasai and Ahimoth.

²⁶Zophai was Elkanahs son. Nahath was Zophais son.

²⁷Eliab was Nahaths son. Jeroham was Eliabs son. Elkanah was Jerohams son. Samuel was Elkanahs son.

²⁸Samuels sons were his oldest son Joel, and Abijah.

²⁹These are Meraris sons: Mahli was Meraris son, Libni was Mahlis son, Shimei was Libnis son, and Uzzah was Shimeis son.

³⁰ Shimea was Uzzahs son. Haggiah was Shimeas son. Asaiah was Haggiahs son.

³¹ These are the men David chose to take care of the music at the tent of the LORD'S house after Gods 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 Jerusalem. 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 Joels son; Joel was Samuels son;

³⁴ Samuel was Elkanahs son; Elkanah was Jerohams son; Jeroham was Eliels son; Eliel was Toahs son;

³⁵ Toah was Zuphs son; Zuph was Elkanahs son; Elkanah was Mahaths son; Mahath was Amasais son;

³⁶ Amasai was Elkanahs son; Elkanah was Joels son; Joel was Azariahs son; Azariah was Zephaniahs son;

³⁷ Zephaniah was Tahaths son; Tahath was Assirs son; Assir was Ebiasaphs son; Ebiasaph was Korahs son;

³⁸ Korah was Izhars son; Izhar was Kohaths son; Kohath was Levis son; Levi was Israels son.

³⁹ Hemans relative was Asaph. Asaph served by Hemans right side. Asaph was Berekiahs son. Berekiahs was Shimeas son.

⁴⁰ Shimea was Michaels son. Michael was Baaseiahs son. Baaseiah was Malkijahs son.

⁴¹ Malkijah was Ethnis son. Ethni was Zerahs son. Zerah was Adaiahs son.

⁴² Adaiah was Ethans son. Ethan was Zimmahs son. Zimmah was Shimeis son.

⁴³ Shimei was Jahaths son. Jahath was Gershons son. Gershon was Levis son.

⁴⁴ Meraris descendants were the relatives of Heman and Asaph. They were the singing group on Hemans left side. Ethan was Kishis son. Kishi was Abdis son. Abdi was Malluchs son.

⁴⁵ Malluch was Hashabiahs son. Hashabiah was Amaziahs son. Amaziah was Hilkiahs son.

⁴⁶ Hilkiyah was Amzis son. Amzi was Banis son. Bani was Shemers son.

⁴⁷ Shemer was Mahlis son. Mahli was Mushis son. Mushi was Meraris son. Merari was Levis son.

⁴⁸ Heman and Asaphs 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 Gods house.

⁴⁹ But only Aarons descendants were permitted to burn incense on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense. Aarons descendants did all the work in the Most Holy Place in Gods house. They also did the ceremonies to make the Israelites pure. They followed all the rules and laws that Moses, Gods servant, commanded.

⁵⁰ These were Aarons sons: Eleazar was Aarons son. Phinehas was Eleazars son. Abishua was Phinehas son.

⁵¹ Bukki was Abishuas son. Uzzi was Bukkis son. Zerahiah was Uzzis son.

⁵² Meraioth was Zerahiahs son. Amaraiah was Meraioths son. Ahitub was Amariahs son.

⁵³ Zadok was Ahitubs son. Ahimaaz was Zadoks son.

⁵⁴ These are the places where Aarons 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.

⁵⁵ They were given the town of Hebron and the fields around it. This was in the area of Judah.

⁵⁶ But the fields farther from town and the villages near the town of Hebron were given to Caleb son of Jephunneh.

⁵⁷ The 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,

⁵⁸ Hilen, Debir,

⁵⁹ Ashan, Juttah, and Beth Shemesh. They got all the cities and the fields around them.

⁶⁰ From 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.

⁶¹ The rest of Kohath's descendants got ten towns from half the tribe of Manasseh.

⁶² The 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.

⁶³ The 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.

⁶⁴ So the Israelites gave those towns and fields to the Levites.

⁶⁵ All those cities came from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. They decided which Levite family got which city by throwing lots.

⁶⁶ The tribe of Ephraim gave some of the Kohath families some towns. Those towns were chosen by throwing lots.

⁶⁷ They were given the city of Shechem. Shechem is a city of safety. They were also given the towns of Gezer,

⁶⁸ Jokmeam, Beth Horon,

⁶⁹ Aijalon, and Gath Rimmon. They also got fields with those towns. Those towns were in the hill country of Ephraim.

⁷⁰ 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.

⁷¹ The 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 The 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.

⁷³ (6: 72)

⁷⁴ The Gershon families also got the towns of Mashal, Abdon, Hukok, and Rehob from the tribe of Asher. They also got the fields near those towns.

⁷⁵ (6: 74)

⁷⁶ The Gershon families also got the towns of Kedesh in Galilee, Hammon, and Kiriathaim 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.

⁷⁸The 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.

⁷⁹ (6: 78)

⁸⁰And 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.

⁸¹ (6: 80)

7¹ Issachar had four sons. Their names were Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

²Tolas sons were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, 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.

³Uzzis son was Izrahiah. Izrahiahs sons were Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Isshiah. All five of them were leaders of their families.

⁴Their family history shows they had 36,000 soldiers ready for war. They had a large family because they had many wives and children.

⁵The family history shows there were 87,000 strong soldiers in all the tribes of Issachar.

⁶Benjamin had three sons. Their names were Bela, Beker, and Jediael.

⁷Bela had five sons. Their names were Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri. They were leaders of their families. Their family history shows they had 22,034 soldiers.

⁸Bekers sons were Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. They all were Bekers children.

⁹Their family history shows who the family leaders were. And it also shows they had 20,200 soldiers.

¹⁰Jediaels son was Bilhan. Bilhans sons were Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Kenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar.

¹¹All of Jediaels sons were leaders of their families. They had 17,200 soldiers ready for war.

¹²The Shuppites and Huppites were the descendants of Ir. Hushim was the son of Aher.

¹³Naphtalis sons were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum. And these are the descendants of Bilhah.

¹⁴These are Manassehs descendants: Manassehs Aramean slave woman had a son named Asriel. She also bore Makir, the father of Gilead.

¹⁵Makir married a woman from the Huppites and Shuppites. Makirs sister was named Maacah. The name of the second was Zelophehad, who had only daughters.

¹⁶Makirs wife Maacah had a son. She named this son Peresh. His brother was named Sheresh. The sons of Sheresh were Ulam and Rakem.

¹⁷Ulams son was Bedan. These were the descendants of Gilead. Gilead was Makirs son. Makir was Manassehs son.

¹⁸Makirs sister Hammoleketh had Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah.

¹⁹Shemidas sons were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

²⁰These were the names of Ephraims descendants. Ephraims son was Shuthelah. Shuthelahs son was Bered. Bereds son was Tahath.

²¹Tahaths son was Eleadah. Eleadahs son was Tahath. Tahaths son was Zabad. Zabads son was Shuthelah. 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.

²²Ephraim was the father of Ezer and Elead. He cried for many days because Ezer and Elead were dead. Ephraims family came to comfort him.

²³Then 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.

²⁴Ephraims daughter was Sheerah. Sheerah built Lower Beth Horon and Upper Beth Horon and Lower Uzen Sheerah and Upper Uzen Sheerah.

²⁵Rephah was Ephraims son. Resheph was Rephahs son. Telah was Reshephs son. Tahan was Telahs son.

²⁶Ladan was Tahans son. Ammihud was Ladans son. Elishama was Ammihuds son.

²⁷Nun was Elishamas son. Joshua was Nuns son.

²⁸These are the cities and lands where Ephraims 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.

²⁹Along the borders of Manassehs 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.

³⁰Ashers sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. Their sister was named Serah.

³¹Beriahs sons were Heber and Malkiel. Malkiel was Birzaihs father.

³²Heber was the father of Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham, and of their sister Shua.

³³Japhlets sons were Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These were Japhlets children.

³⁴Shomers sons were Ahi, Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram.

³⁵Shomers brother was Helem. Helems sons were Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal.

³⁶Zophahs sons were Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah,

³⁷Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran, and Beera.

³⁸Jethers sons were Jephunneh, Pispah, and Ara.

³⁹Ullas sons were Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia.

⁴⁰All 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.

8¹ Benjamin was Belas father. Bela was Benjamins first son. Ashbel

was Benjamins second son. Aharah was Benjamins third son.

²Nohah was Benjamins fourth son. And Rapha was Benjamins fifth son.

³Belas sons were Addar, Gera, Abihud, Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, Gera, Shephuphan, and Hiram.

⁴(8: 3)

⁵(8: 3)

⁶These were the descendants of Ehud. They were leaders of their families in Geba. They were forced to leave their homes and move to Manahath. Ehuds descendants were Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera. Gera forced them to leave their homes. He was the father of Uzza and Ahihud.

⁷(8: 6)

⁸Shaharaim divorced his wives Hushim and Baara in Moab. After he did this he had some children with another wife.

⁹Shaharaim had Jobab, Zibia, Meshah, Malcam, Jeuz, Sakia, and Mirmah with his wife Hodesh. They were leaders of their families.

¹⁰(8: 9)

¹¹Shaharaim and Hushim had two sons named Abitub and Elpaal.

¹²Elpaals 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.

¹³(8: 12)

¹⁴Beriahs sons were Shashak and Jeremoth,

¹⁵Zebadiah, Arad, Eder,

¹⁶Michael, Ishpah, and Joha.

¹⁷Elpaals sons were Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber,

¹⁸Ishmerai, Izliah, and Jobab.

¹⁹Shimeis sons were Jakim, Zicri, Zabdi,

²⁰Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel,

²¹Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath.

²²Shashaks sons were Ishpan, Eber, Eliel,

²³Abdon, Zicri, Hanan,

²⁴Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah,

²⁵Iphdeiah, and Penuel.

²⁶Jerohams sons were Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah,

²⁷Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zicri.

²⁸All these men were leaders of their families. They were listed in their family histories as leaders. They lived in Jerusalem.

²⁹Jeiel was Gibeons father. He and his wife, Maacah, lived in the town of Gibeon.

³⁰His oldest son was Abdon. Other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab,

³¹Gedor, Ahio, Zeker, and Mikloth.

³²Mikloth was the father of Shimeah. These sons also lived near their relatives in Jerusalem.

³³Ner was Kishs father. Kish was Sauls father, and Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malki Shua, Abinadab, and Esh Baal.

³⁴Jonathans son was Merib Baal. Merib Baal was Micahs father.

³⁵Micahs sons were Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz.

³⁶Ahaz was Jehoaddahs father. Jehoaddah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri. Zimri was Mozas father.

³⁷Moza was Bineas father. Raphah was Bineas son. Eleasah was Raphahs son. And Azel was Eleasahs son.

³⁸Azel had six sons. Their names were Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All these sons were Azels children.

³⁹Azels brother was Eshek. Eshek had some sons. These were Esheks sons: Ulam was Azels oldest son. Jeush was Esheks second son. Eliphelet was Esheks third son.

⁴⁰Ulams 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.

9¹The 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 of Judah were made prisoners and forced to go to Babylon. They were taken there because they were not faithful to God.

²The 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.

³These are the people from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh who lived in Jerusalem:

⁴Uthai was Ammihuds son. Ammihud was Omris son. Omri was Imris son. Imri was Banis son. Bani was a descendant of Perez. Perez was Judahs son.

⁵The Shilonites who lived in Jerusalem were Asaiah the oldest son and his sons.

⁶The Zerahites who lived in Jerusalem were Jeuel and their relatives. There were 690 of them in all.

⁷These are the people from the tribe of Benjamin who lived in Jerusalem: Sallu was Meshullams son. Meshullam was Hodaviahs son. Hodaviah was Hassenuahs son.

⁸Ibneiah was Jerohams son. Elah was Uzzis son. Uzzi was Micris son. And Meshullam was Shephatiah's son. Shephatiah was Reuels son. Reuel was Ibnijahs son.

⁹The family history of Benjamin shows there were 956 of them living in Jerusalem. All these men were leaders in their families.

¹⁰These are the priests who lived in Jerusalem: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jakin, and

¹¹ Azariah. Azariah was Hilkiahs son. Hilkiah was Meshullams son. Meshullam was Zadoks son. Zadok was Meraioths son. Meraioth was Ahitubs son. Ahitub was the important official responsible for Gods Temple.

¹² Also there was Jerohams son, Adaiah. Jeroham was Pashurs son. Pashur was Malkijahs son. And there was Adiels son, Maasai. Adiel was Jahzerahs son. Jahzerah was Meshullams son. Meshullam was Meshillemiths son. Meshillemith was Immers son.

¹³ There were 1760 priests. They were leaders of their families. They were responsible for the work of serving in Gods Temple.

¹⁴ These are the people from the tribe of Levi who lived in Jerusalem: Hasshubs son, Shemaiah. Hasshub was Azrikams son. Azrikam was Hashabiahs son. Hashabiah was a descendant of Merari.

¹⁵ Also living in Jerusalem were Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah. Mattaniah was Micas son. Mica was Zicris son. Zicri was Asaphs son.

¹⁶Obadiah was Shemaiahs son. Shemaiah was Galals son. Galal was Jeduthuns son. Berekiah was Asas son. Asa was Elkanahs son. Berekiah lived in the small towns near the people of Netophah.

¹⁷These are the gatekeepers who lived in Jerusalem: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their relatives. Shallum was their leader.

¹⁸Now these men stand next to the Kings Gate on the east side. They were the gatekeepers from the tribe of Levi.

¹⁹Shallum was Kores son. Kore was Ebiasaphs son. Ebiasaph was Korahs 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.

²⁰In the past, Phinehas was in charge of the gatekeepers. Phinehas was Eleazars son. The LORD was with Phinehas.

²¹ 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.

²³ The gatekeepers and their descendants had the responsibility of guarding the gates of the LORD'S house, the Holy Tent.

²⁴ There were gates on the four sides: east, west, north, and south.

²⁵ 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 Gods Temple.

²⁷ They stayed up all night guarding Gods Temple, and they had the job of opening Gods Temple every morning.

²⁸Some 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.

²⁹Other 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.

³⁰But it was the priests who had the job of mixing the special oil.

³¹There was a Levite named Mattithiah who had the job of baking the bread used for the offerings. Mattithiah was Shallums oldest son. Shallum was from the Korah family.

³²Some of the gatekeepers who were in the Korah family had the job of preparing the bread put on the table every Sabbath.

³³The 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.

³⁵ Jeiel was Gibeons father. Jeiel lived in the town of Gibeon. His wife was named Maacah.

³⁶ Jeiels oldest son was Abdon. Other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab,

³⁷ Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth.

³⁸ Mikloth was Shimeams father. Jeiels family lived near their relatives in Jerusalem.

³⁹ Ner was Kishs father. Kish was Sauls father. And Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malki Shua, Abinadab, and Esh Baal.

⁴⁰ Jonathans son was Merib Baal. Merib Baal was Micahs father.

⁴¹ Micahs sons were Pithon, Melech, Tahrea, and Ahaz.

⁴² Ahaz was the father of Jadah. Jadah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri. Zimri was Mozas father.

⁴³ Moza was the father of Binea. Rephaiah was Bineas son. Eleasah was Rephaiahs son. And Azel was Eleasahs son.

⁴⁴ Azel had six sons. Their names were Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. They were Azels children.

10¹ The Philistines fought against the Israelites. The Israelites ran away from the Philistines. Many Israelites were killed on Mount Gilboa.

² The Philistines continued chasing Saul and his sons. They caught them and killed them. The Philistines killed Sauls 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.

⁶So Saul and three of his sons died. All of Saul's family died together.

⁷When 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰The Philistines put Saul's armor in the temple of their false gods. They hung Saul's head in the temple of Dagon.

¹¹All the people living in the town of Jabesh Gilead heard everything that the Philistines had done to Saul.

¹²All 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.

¹³Saul died because he was not faithful to the LORD. He did not obey the LORD'S word. Saul also went to a medium and asked her for advice

¹⁴instead of asking the LORD. That is why the Lord killed Saul and gave the kingdom to Jesses son David.

11 ¹All the Israelites came to David at the town of Hebron. They said to David, We are your own flesh and blood.

²In 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.

³All 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.

⁴David 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. They⁵ 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.

⁶David 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 Zeruiahs son. Joab became the commander of the army.

⁷Then David made his home in the fortress. That is why it is named the City of David.

⁸David 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.

⁹David continued to grow greater, and the LORD All-Powerful was with him.

¹⁰This is a list of the leaders over Davids 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 Davids special soldiers: Jashobeam the Hacmonite was the leader of the kings 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ But the Three Heroes stood there in that field and defended it. They defeated the Philistines. The LORD gave the Israelites a great victory.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ Another time David was in the fortress, and a group of Philistine soldiers was stationed in Bethlehem.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸So 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.

¹⁹David 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.

²⁰Joabs 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.

²¹Abishai was even more famous than the Three Heroes. He became their leader, even though he was not one of the Three Heroes.

²²Then 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.

²³And 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 weavers loom. Benaiah had only a club. He grabbed the spear in the Egyptians hands and took it away from him. Then Benaiah killed the Egyptian with his own spear.

²⁴Benaiah son of Jehoiada did many brave things like that. He was as famous as the Three Heroes.

²⁵Benaiah 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.

²⁶The following men were among the kings special forces: Asahel, Joabs brother; Elhanan son of Dodai from Bethlehem;

²⁷Shammoth the Harodite; Helez the Pelonite;

²⁸Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa; Abiezer from Anathoth;

²⁹Sibbecai the Hushathite; Ilai from Ahoah;

³⁰ Maharai from Netophah; Heled son of Baanah from Netophah;

³¹ Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah in Benjamin; Benaiah the Pirathonite;

³² Hurai from the Brooks of Gaash; Abiel the Arbathite;

³³ Azmaveth the Baharumite; Eliahba the Shaalbonite;

³⁴ the sons of Hashem the Gizonite; Jonathan son of Shagee the Hararite;

³⁵ Ahiam son of Sacar the Hararite; Eliphai son of Ur;

³⁶ Hopher the Mekerathite; Ahijah the Pelonite;

³⁷ Hezro the Carmelite; Naarai son of Ezbai;

³⁸ Joel, Nathans brother; Mibhar son of Hagri;

³⁹ Zelek the Ammonite; Naharai the officer from Beeroth, who carried the armor for Joab son of Zeruah;

⁴⁰ Ira the Ithrite; Gareb the Ithrite;

⁴¹ Uriah the Hittite; Zabad son of Ahlai;

⁴² Adina who was the son of Shiza from the tribe of Reuben and was the leader of the tribe of Reuben, but he was also one of the Thirty Heroes;

⁴³Hanan son of Maacah; Joshaphat the Mithnite;

⁴⁴Uzzia the Ashterathite; Shama and Jeiel sons of Hotham from Aroer;

⁴⁵Jediael son of Shimri and his brother Joha the Tizite;

⁴⁶Eliel the Mahavite; Jeribai and Joshaviah the sons of Elnaam; Ithmah the Moabite;

⁴⁷Eliel; Obed; and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

12¹This 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.

²They 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. They were Saul's relatives from the tribe of Benjamin. They were

³Ahiezer, their leader, and Joash (sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite); Jeziel and Pelet (sons of Azmaveth); Beracah and Jehu from the town of Anathoth;

⁴Ishmaiah the Gibeonite (a hero and leader of the Thirty Heroes); Jeremiah,

Jahaziel, Johanan, and Jozabad from the Gederathites;

⁵Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, and Shemariah; Shephatiah from Haripha;

⁶Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, all from the tribe of Korah;

⁷and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham from the town of Gedor.

⁸Part 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.

⁹Ezer was the leader of the army from the tribe of Gad. Obadiah was the second in command. Eliab was the third in command.

¹⁰Mishmannah was the fourth in command. Jeremiah was the fifth in command.

¹¹Attai was the sixth in command. Eliel was the seventh in command.

¹²Johanan was the eighth in command. Elzabad was the ninth in command.

¹³Jeremiah 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.

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.

¹⁹Some 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!

²⁰These were the men from Manasseh who joined David when he went to the town of Ziklag: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediahel, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai. All of them were generals from the tribe of Manasseh.

²¹They 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 Davids army.

²²More and more men came every day to help David. So he had a large and powerful army.

²³These 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 Sauls kingdom to

David. That is what the LORD said would happen. This is their number:

²⁴From the tribe of Judah there were 6800 men ready for war. They carried shields and spears.

²⁵From the tribe of Simeon there were 7100 men. They were brave soldiers ready for war.

²⁶From the tribe of Levi there were 4600 men.

²⁷Jehoiada was in that group. He was a leader from Aarons family. There were 3700 men with Jehoiada.

²⁸Zadok was also in that group. He was a brave young soldier. He came with 22 officers from his family.

²⁹From the tribe of Benjamin there were 3000 men. They were Sauls relatives. Most of them stayed faithful to Sauls family until that time.

³⁰From the tribe of Ephraim there were 20,800 men. They were brave soldiers. They were famous men in their own families.

³¹From half the tribe of Manasseh there were 18,000 men. They were called by name to come and make David king.

³²From 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.

³³From 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.

³⁴From the tribe of Naphtali there were 1000 officers. They had 37,000 men with them. These men carried shields and spears.

³⁵From the tribe of Dan there were 28,600 men ready for war.

³⁶From the tribe of Asher there were 40,000 trained soldiers ready for war.

³⁷From 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.

³⁸All 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.

³⁹The men spent three days at Hebron with David. They ate and drank, because their relatives had prepared food for them.

⁴⁰Also, 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.

13¹ David talked with all the officers of his army.

²Then 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. Lets 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.

³Lets bring our Gods Holy Box back to us in Jerusalem. We did not pay attention to it while Saul was king.

⁴So all the Israelites agreed with David. They all thought it was the right thing to do.

⁵So 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.

⁶David 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.

⁷The people moved Gods Holy Box from Abinadabs house and put it on a new wagon. Uzzah and Ahio were driving the wagon.

⁸David and all the Israelites were celebrating before God. They were praising God and singing songs. They were playing harps, lyres, drums, cymbals, and trumpets.

⁹They came to Kidons threshing floor. The oxen pulling the wagon stumbled, and the Holy Box almost fell. Uzzah reached out with his hand to catch it.

¹⁰The 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 Gods Holy Box?

¹³ So he did not take the Holy Box with him to the City of David. He left it at Obed Edoms house. Obed Edom was from the city of Gath.

¹⁴ Gods Holy Box stayed with Obed Edoms family in his house for three months. The LORD blessed Obed Edoms family and everything Obed Edom owned.

14¹ 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.

³David married more women in the city of Jerusalem and had more sons and daughters.

⁴These are the names of Davids children born in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,

⁵Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet,

⁶Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia,

⁷Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

⁸The 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.

⁹The Philistines attacked the people living in the Valley of Rephaim and stole their things.

¹⁰David 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.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²The Philistines had left their idols at Baal Perazim. David ordered his men to burn the idols.

¹³The Philistines attacked the people living in the Valley of Rephaim again.

¹⁴David 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.

¹⁵When 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.

¹⁶David 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.

¹⁷So David became famous in all the countries. The LORD made all nations afraid of him.

15¹ David built houses for himself in the City of David. Then he built a place to put Gods Holy Box. He set up a tent for it.

² Then he said, Only the Levites are permitted to carry Gods 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 Holy Box carried to the place he had made for it.

⁴ He called together the 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.

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.

¹²David 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.

¹³The 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.

¹⁴Then the priests and Levites made themselves holy so that they could carry the Holy Box of the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁵The Levites used the special poles to carry Gods Holy Box on their shoulders, the way Moses commanded. They carried the Holy Box just as the LORD had said.

¹⁶David told the Levite leaders to get their brothers, the singers. The singers were to take their lyres, harps, and cymbals and sing happy songs.

¹⁷Then the Levites got Heman and his brothers, Asaph and Ethan. Heman was Joels son. Asaph was Berekiahs son.

Ethan was Kushaiahs son. These men were from the Merari tribe.

¹⁸There 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.

¹⁹The singers Heman, Asaph, and Ethan played bronze cymbals.

²⁰Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah played the alamothe harps.

²¹Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed Edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah played the sheminith harps. This was their job forever.

²²The Levite leader Kenaniah was in charge of the singing. Kenaniah had this job because he was very skilled at singing.

²³Berekiah and Elkanah were two of the guards for the Holy Box.

²⁴The priests Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer had the job of blowing trumpets as they walked in front of Gods

Holy Box. Obed Edom and Jehiah were the other guards for the Holy Box.

²⁵David, the elders of Israel, and the generals went to get the Box of the LORD'S Agreement. They brought it out from Obed Edoms house. Everyone was very happy!

²⁶God had helped the Levites who carried the Box of the LORD'S Agreement. So they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams to him.

²⁷All 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.

²⁸So 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.

²⁹When the Box of the LORD'S Agreement arrived at the City of David, Sauls daughter Michal looked through a window. When she saw King David

dancing and playing, she lost her respect for him.

16¹ 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.

² After David had finished giving the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he used the LORD'S name to bless the people.

³ Then he gave a loaf of bread, some dates, and raisins to every Israelite man and woman.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶Benaiah and Jahaziel were the priests who always blew the trumpets before the Box of Gods Agreement.

⁷This was when David first gave Asaph and his brothers the job of singing praises to the LORD.

⁸Give thanks to the LORD and call out to him! Tell the nations what he has done!

⁹Sing to him; sing praises to him. Tell about the amazing things he has done.

¹⁰Be proud of his holy name. You followers of the LORD, be happy!

¹¹Depend on the LORD for strength. Always go to him for help.

¹²Remember the amazing things he has done. Remember his miracles and his fair decisions.

¹³The people of Israel are his servants. The descendants of Jacob are his chosen people.

¹⁴The LORD is our God. He rules the whole world.

¹⁵Remember his agreement forever, the promise he gave that will never end.

¹⁶Remember the agreement he made with Abraham Remember his promise to Isaac.

¹⁷ He gave it as a law for Jacob, as an agreement with Israel that will last forever.

¹⁸ He said, I will give you the land of Canaan. It will be your very own.

¹⁹ At the time God said this, there were only a few of his people, and they were strangers there.

²⁰ They traveled around from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another.

²¹ But the Lord did not let anyone mistreat them. He warned kings not to harm them.

²² He said, Don't hurt my chosen people. Don't hurt my prophets.

²³ Let the whole world sing to the LORD! Tell the good news every day about how he saves us.

²⁴ Tell all the nations how wonderful he is! Tell people everywhere about the amazing things he does.

²⁵ The LORD is great and worthy of praise. He is more awesome than any of the gods.

²⁶ All the gods in other nations are nothing but statues, but the LORD made the heavens!

²⁷ He lives in the presence of glory and honor. His Temple is a place of power and joy.

²⁸ Praise the LORD, all people of every nation; praise the LORD'S glory and power!

²⁹ 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.

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ Heman, Jeduthun, and all the other Levites were chosen by name to sing the songs of praise such as, Praise the

LORD Because His Faithful Love Will Last Forever.

⁴²Heman 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.

⁴³After the celebration, all the people left and went home. David also went home to bless his family.

17 ¹After 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.

²Nathan answered David, You may do what you want to do. God is with you.

³But that night the word of God came to Nathan.

⁴God 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.

⁵Since 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?

⁶(17:5)

⁷Now, 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.

⁸I 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.

⁹I 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.

¹⁰Those bad things happened, but I chose leaders to care for my people Israel. And I will also defeat all your enemies. I tell you that the LORD will build a house for you.

¹¹When 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.

¹²Your son will build a house for me. I will make your sons family rule forever.

¹³I 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.

¹⁴I will put him in charge of my house and kingdom forever. His rule will continue forever!

¹⁵Nathan told David about the vision and everything God had said.

¹⁶Then 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 dont understand why.

¹⁷Besides 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.

¹⁸What more can I say? You have done so much for me. And I am only your servant. You know that.

¹⁹LORD, you have done this wonderful thing for me and because you wanted to.

²⁰There is no one like you, LORD. There is no God except you. We have never heard of any god doing wonderful things like those!

²¹Is 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.

²²You took Israel to be your people forever, and you, LORD, became their God!

²³LORD, you made this promise to me and my family. Now, keep your promise forever. Do what you said you would.

²⁴Keep your promise so that people will honor your name forever. Then people will say, The LORD All-Powerful is Israels God! I am your servant. Please let my family be strong and continue to serve you.

²⁵My 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.

²⁶LORD, you are God, and you yourself promised to do these good things for me.

²⁷You 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.

18¹ 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 himself at the Euphrates River.

⁴ David took 1000 chariots, 7000 chariot drivers, and 20,000 soldiers from Hadadezer. David also crippled most of

Hadadezers horses that were used for pulling chariots. But David saved enough horses to pull 100 chariots.

⁵The Arameans from the city of Damascus came to help King Hadadezer of Zobah. But David defeated and killed 22,000 Aramean soldiers.

⁶Then David put fortresses in the city of Damascus in Aram. The Arameans became Davids servants and brought tribute to him. So the LORD gave victory to David everywhere he went.

⁷David took the gold shields from Hadadezers army leaders and brought them to Jerusalem.

⁸David 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, the bronze columns, and other things made from bronze for the Temple.

⁹Tou was king of the city of Hamath. Hadadezer was the king of Zobah. Tou heard that David had defeated all of Hadadezers army.

¹⁰So 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² Abishai son of Zeruiah killed 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

¹³ Abishai also put fortresses in Edom and all the Edomites became Davids servants. The LORD gave David victory everywhere he went.

¹⁴ David was king over all Israel. He did what was right and fair for everyone.

¹⁵ Joab son of Zeruiah was the commander of Davids army. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud wrote about the things David did.

¹⁶ Zadok and Abimelech were the priests. Zadok was Ahitubs son, and Abimelech was Abiathars son. Shavsha was the scribe.

¹⁷ Benaiah was responsible for leading the Kerethite and Pelethites. Benaiah

was Jehoiadas son. And Davids sons were important officials. They served at King Davids side.

19¹ Nahash was king of the Ammonites. When Nahash died, his son became the new king.

² Then David said, Nahash was kind to me, so I will be kind to Hanun, Nahashs son. So David sent messengers to comfort Hanun about the death of his father. Davids messengers went to the country of Ammon to comfort Hanun.

³ But the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun, Dont be fooled. David didnt 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!

⁴ So Hanun arrested Davids servants and cut off their beards. Hanun also cut their clothes off at the hip and sent them away.

⁵ Davids 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.

⁶The Ammonites saw they had caused themselves to become hated enemies of David. Then Hanun and the Ammonites used 75,000 pounds of silver to buy chariots and chariot drivers from Mesopotamia. They also got chariots and chariot drivers from the towns of Maacah and Zobah in Aram.

⁷The 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.

⁸David heard that the Ammonites were getting ready for war. So he sent Joab and the whole army of Israel to fight the Ammonites.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰Joab 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.

¹¹ He put the rest of the Israelite army under his brother Abishai's command. These soldiers went out to fight against the Ammonite army.

¹² 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."

¹³ "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."

¹⁴ Joab and the army with him attacked the Aramean army. The Arameans ran away from Joab and his army.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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. Shophach was the commander of Hadadezers army from Aram. Shophach also led the other Aramean soldiers.

¹⁷David 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.

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹When Hadadezers 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.

20¹In 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 army camped 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.

²David took the crown from their kings head. It was made of gold and weighed about 75 pounds. There were also valuable stones in it. The crown was put on Davids head. Then David ordered that anything of value be taken from the city.

³He forced the people who lived there to leave, and he put them to work using 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.

⁴Later, the Israelites went to war against the Philistines at the town of Gezer. At that time Sibbecai from Hushah killed Sippai, who was one of the descendants of the giant Rephaites. So those Philistines became like slaves to the Israelites.

⁵Another time when the Israelites fought against the Philistines, Elhanan

son of Jair killed Lahmi. Lahmi was Goliaths brother. Goliath was from the town of Gath. Lahmis spear was very big and heavy. It was like the large pole on a loom.

⁶Later, 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 toessix fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He was another descendant of the Rephaites.

⁷So when that man made fun of Israel, Jonathan killed him. Jonathan was Shimeas son. Shimea was Davids brother.

⁸These Philistine men were descendants of the Rephaites from the town of Gath. David and his servants killed those giants.

21 ¹Satan was against the Israelites. He encouraged David to count the Israelites.

²So David said to Joab and the leaders of the people, Go and count all the Israelites. Count everyone in the countryfrom the town of Beersheba all the way to the town of Dan. Then tell

me, so I will know how many people there are.

³But 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!

⁴But 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

⁵and 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.

⁶Joab did not count the tribes of Levi and Benjamin because he did not like King Davids order.

⁷David had done a bad thing in Gods sight, so God punished Israel.

⁸Then 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.

⁹Gad 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.

¹⁰(21:9)

¹¹Then 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 angel of the LORD will go through Israel destroying the people. David, God sent me. Now, you must decide which answer I will give to him.

¹²(21:11)

¹³David 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.

¹⁴So the LORD sent terrible sicknesses to Israel, and 70,000 people died.

¹⁵God 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.

¹⁶David looked up and saw the angel of the LORD 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.

¹⁷David said to God, I am the 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.

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹Gad told David this, and David went to Araunah's threshing floor.

²⁰Araunah was threshing the wheat. He turned around and saw the angel. His four sons ran away to hide.

²¹David 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.

²²David 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.

²³Araunah 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.

²⁴But 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 worshipping 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.)

22¹ David said, The Temple of the LORD God and the altar for burning offerings for the Israelites will be built here.

²David gave an order for all foreigners living in Israel to be gathered together. He chose stonecutters from that group of foreigners. Their job was to cut stones ready to be used for building Gods Temple.

³David got iron for making nails and hinges for the gate doors. He also got more bronze than could be weighed

⁴and more cedar logs than could be counted. The people from the cities of Sidon and Tyre brought many cedar logs to David.

⁵David 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.

⁶Then 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. And I will give Israel peace and quiet during the time that he is king.

¹⁰ 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!

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³And 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.

¹⁴Solomon, I have worked hard making plans for building the LORD'S Temple. I have given 3750 tons of gold and about 37,500 tons 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.

¹⁵You have many stonecutters and carpenters. You have men skilled in every kind of work.

¹⁶They 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.

¹⁷Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon.

¹⁸David 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.

¹⁹Now 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.

23¹ David became an old man, so he made his son Solomon the new king of Israel.

²David gathered all the leaders of Israel and also the priests and Levites.

³David counted the Levites who were 30 years old and older. All together there were 38,000 Levites.

⁴David said, 24,000 will supervise the work of building the LORD'S Temple. 6000 will be court officers and judges.

⁵4000 will be gatekeepers, and 4000 will be musicians. I made special musical instruments for them. They will use them to praise the LORD.

⁶David separated the Levites into three groups. They were the tribes of Levis three sons, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

⁷From the tribe of Gershon there were Ladan and Shimei.

⁸Ladan had three sons. His oldest son was Jehiel. His other sons were Zethan and Joel.

⁹Shimeis sons were Shelomoth, Haziël, and Haran. These three sons were leaders in Ladans families.

¹⁰Shimei had four sons. They were Jahath, Ziza, Jeush, and Beriah.

¹¹Jahath 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.

¹²Kohath had four sons. They were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

¹³Amrams 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.

¹⁴Moses was the man of God, and his sons were part of the tribe of Levi.

¹⁵Moses sons were Gershom and Eliezer.

¹⁶Gershoms oldest son was Shubael.

¹⁷Eliezers oldest son was Rehabiah. Eliezer had no other sons. But Rehabiah had very many sons.

¹⁸Izhars oldest son was Shelomith.

¹⁹Hebrons oldest son was Jeriah. Hebrons second son was Amariah. Jahaziel was the third son, and Jekameam was the fourth son.

²⁰Uzziels oldest son was Micah, and Isshiah was his second son.

²¹Meraris sons were Mahli and Mushi. Mahlis sons were Eleazar and Kish.

²²Eleazar died without having sons. He only had daughters. Eleazars daughters married their own relatives. Their relatives were Kishs sons.

²³Mushis sons were Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth. There were three sons in all.

²⁴These were Levis descendants. They were listed by their families. They were the leaders of families. Each persons name was listed. The people who were listed were 20 years old or older. They served in the LORD'S Temple.

²⁵David had said, The LORD, the God of Israel, has given peace to his people.

And he has come to live in Jerusalem forever.

²⁶So the Levites dont need to carry the Holy Tent or any of the things used in its services anymore.

²⁷ Davids 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.

²⁸The Levites had the job of helping Aarons descendants in the service of the LORD'S Temple. They also took care of 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 Gods Temple.

²⁹They were responsible for putting the special bread on the table in the Temple and for the flour, the grain offerings, and the bread made without yeast. They were also responsible for the baking pans and the mixed offerings. They did all the measuring.

³⁰The Levites stood every morning and gave thanks and praise to the LORD. They also did this every evening.

³¹ The Levites prepared all the burnt offerings to the LORD on the Sabbath days, during New Moon celebrations, and on the other special meeting days. They served before the LORD every day. There were special rules for how many Levites should serve each time.

³² So the Levites did everything that they were supposed to do. They took care of the Holy Tent and the Holy Place. And they helped their relatives, the priests, Aarons descendants, with the services at the LORD'S Temple.

24¹ These were the groups of Aarons sons: Aarons sons were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

² But Nadab and Abihu died before their father did. Nadab and Abihu had no sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar served as the priests.

³ 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.

⁴There were more leaders from Eleazars family than from Ithamars. There were 16 leaders from Eleazars family and there were eight leaders from Ithamars family.

⁵Men 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.

⁶Shemaiah was the secretary. He was Nethanels son. Shemaiah was from the 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 Abiathars son. Each time they threw the lots a man was chosen, and Shemaiah wrote down that mans name. So they divided the work among groups of men from the families of Eleazar and Ithamar.

⁷The first was Jehoiaribs group. The second was Jedaiahs group.

⁸The third was Harims group. The fourth was Seorims group.

⁹The fifth was Malkijahs group. The sixth was Mijamins group.

¹⁰The seventh was Hakkozs group. The eighth was Abijahs group.

¹¹The ninth was Jeshuas group. The tenth was Shecaniahs group.

¹²The eleventh was Eliashibs group. The twelfth was Jakims group.

¹³The thirteenth was Huppahs group. The fourteenth was Jeshebeabs group.

¹⁴The fifteenth was Bilgahs group. The sixteenth was Immers group.

¹⁵The seventeenth was Hezirs group. The eighteenth was Happizzes group.

¹⁶The nineteenth was Pethahiahs group. The twentieth was Jehezkels group.

¹⁷The twenty-first was Jakins group. The twenty-second was Gamuls group.

¹⁸The twenty-third was Delaiahs group. The twenty-fourth was Maaziahs group.

¹⁹These were the groups chosen to serve in the LORD'S Temple. They obeyed Aarons rules for serving in the Temple. The LORD, the God of Israel, had given them to Aaron.

²⁰These are the names of the rest of Levis descendants: Shubael was a descendant of Amram. Jehdeiah was a descendant of Shubael.

²¹Isshiah was the oldest son of Rehabiah.

²²From the Izhar family group there was Shelomoth. Jahath was a descendant of Shelomoth.

²³Jeriah was the oldest son of Hebron. Amariah was Hebrons second son. Jahaziel was his third son, and Jekameam was his fourth son.

²⁴Uzziels son was Micah. Micahs son was Shamir.

²⁵Isshiah was Micahs brother. Isshiahs son was Zechariah.

²⁶Meraris descendants were Mahli, Mushi, and Jaaziah his son.

²⁷Jaaziah son of Merari had sons named Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri.

²⁸Mahlis son was Eleazar, but Eleazar did not have sons.

²⁹Kishs son was Jerahmeel.

³⁰Mushis sons were Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth. These are the leaders of the Levite families. They are listed by their families.

³¹ They were chosen for special jobs by throwing lots, like their relatives, the priests. The priests were Aarons 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.

25 ¹ David and the leaders of the army separated the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun for special service. Their special service was to prophesy Gods message with harps, lyres, and cymbals. Here is a list of the men who served this way:

² From Asaphs family: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asarelah. King David chose Asaph to prophesy. And Asaph led his sons.

³ From Jeduthuns family: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, 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 Hemans sons who served were Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shubael,

and Jerimoth; Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti Ezer; Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth.

⁵All these men were Hemans sons. Heman was Davids seer. God promised to make Heman strong. So Heman had many sons. God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.

⁶Heman 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 Gods temple. King David chose these men.

⁷These 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.

⁸They 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.

⁹The first one chosen was Asaph (Joseph). Second, there were 12 men chosen from Gedaliahs sons and relatives.

¹⁰Third, there were 12 men chosen from Zaccurs sons and relatives.

¹¹Fourth, there were 12 men chosen from Izris sons and relatives.

¹²Fifth, there were 12 men chosen from Nethaniahs sons and relatives.

¹³Sixth, there were 12 men chosen from Bukkiahs sons and relatives.

¹⁴Seventh, there were 12 men chosen from Asarelahs sons and relatives.

¹⁵Eighth, there were 12 men chosen from Jeshaiahs sons and relatives.

¹⁶Ninth, there were 12 men chosen from Mattaniahs sons and relatives.

¹⁷Tenth, there were 12 men chosen from Shimeis sons and relatives.

¹⁸Eleventh, there were 12 men chosen from Azarels sons and relatives.

¹⁹Twelfth, there were 12 men chosen from Hashabiahs sons and relatives.

²⁰Thirteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Shubaels sons and relatives.

²¹Fourteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Mattithiahs sons and relatives.

²²Fifteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Jeremoths sons and relatives.

²³Sixteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Hananiahs sons and relatives.

²⁴Seventeenth, there were 12 men chosen from Joshbekashahs sons and relatives.

²⁵Eighteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Hananis sons and relatives.

²⁶Nineteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Mallothis sons and relatives.

²⁷Twentieth, there were 12 men chosen from Eliathahs sons and relatives.

²⁸Twenty-first, there were 12 men chosen from Hothirs sons and relatives.

²⁹Twenty-second, there were 12 men chosen from Giddaltis sons and relatives.

³⁰Twenty-third, there were 12 men chosen from Mahazioths sons and relatives.

³¹Twenty-fourth, there were 12 men chosen from Romamti Ezers sons and relatives.

26¹These are the groups of the gatekeepers from the Korah family: Meshelemiah was the son of Kore, who was from the family of Asaph.

²These were Meshelemiahs sons: Zechariah was the oldest son, and

Jediael was the second. Zebadiah was the third, Jathniel the fourth,

³Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, and Eliehoenai the seventh son.

⁴These were Obed Edoms sons: His oldest son was Shemaiah. Jehozabad was his second son, Joah his third, Sacar his fourth, Nethanel his fifth,

⁵Ammiel his sixth, Issachar his seventh, and Peullethai his eighth son. God really blessed Obed Edom.

⁶Obed Edoms son Shemaiah also had sons. His sons were leaders in their fathers family because they were brave soldiers.

⁷Shemaiahs sons were Othni, Rephael, Obed, Elzabad, Elihu, and Semakiah. Elzabads relatives were skilled workers.

⁸All these men were Obed Edoms descendants. With their sons and relatives there were 62 of them, all powerful men and good guards.

⁹Meshelemiahs sons and relatives were also powerful men. In all there were 18 of them.

¹⁰These 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 Hilkiyah 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.

²⁰ Ahijah was from the tribe of Levi. Ahijah was responsible for taking care of the valuable things in Gods Temple. Ahijah also was responsible for the places where the holy things were kept.

²¹ Ladan was from Gershons family. Jehieli was one of the leaders of the tribe of Ladan.

²² Jehielis sons were Zetham and Zethams 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 Gershoms son. Gershom was Moses son.

²⁵ These were Shubaels relatives: His relatives from Eliezer were Rehabiah, Eliezers son; Jeshaiiah, Rehabiahs son; Joram, Jeshaiahs son; Zicri, Jorams son; and Shelomith, Zicris 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 Zeruah.

²⁹ Kenaniah was from the Izhar family. Kenaniah and his sons had work outside the Temple. They worked as 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.

27 ¹ 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.

²Jashobeam son of Zabdiel was in charge of the first group for the first month. There were 24,000 men in this group.

³Jashobeam was a descendant of Perez and was the leader of all the army officers for the first month.

⁴Dodai, from the Ahoahites, was in charge of the army group for the second month. Mikloth was a leader in this group, which also had 24,000 men.

⁵The third commander, for the third month, was Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the leading priest. There were 24,000 men in the group Benaiah led.

⁶He was the same Benaiah who was a brave soldier from the Thirty Heroes. He was their leader. His son Ammizabad was in charge of his group.

⁷The fourth commander, for the fourth month, was Asahel the brother of Joab. Later, his son Zebadiah took his place as commander. There were 24,000 men in this group.

⁸The fifth commander, for the fifth month, was Shamhuth from Izrahs family. There were 24,000 men in this group.

⁹The sixth commander, for the sixth month, was Ira son of Ikkesh from the town of Tekoa. There were 24,000 men in this group.

¹⁰The seventh commander, for the seventh month, was Helez from the Pelonites and a descendant of Ephraim. There were 24,000 men in this group.

¹¹The eighth commander, for the eighth month, was Sibbecai from Hushah and from Zerahs family. There were 24,000 men in this group.

¹²The ninth commander, for the ninth month, was Abiezer from the town of Anathoth and the tribe of Benjamin. There were 24,000 men in this group.

¹³The tenth commander, for the tenth month, was Maharai from Netophah and from Zerahs family. There were 24,000 men in this group.

¹⁴The eleventh commander, for the eleventh month, was Benaiah from Pirathon and the tribe of Ephraim. There were 24,000 men in this group.

¹⁵The twelfth commander, for the twelfth month, was Heldai from Netophah and from Othniels family. And there were 24,000 men in this group.

¹⁶These 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;

¹⁷Hashabiah son of Kemuel, leader of the tribe of Levi; Zadok, leader of the people of Aaron;

¹⁸Elihu, one of Davids brothers, leader of the tribe of Judah; Omri son of Michael, leader of the tribe of Issachar;

¹⁹Ishmaiah son of Obadiah, leader of the tribe of Zebulun; Jeremoth son of Azriel, leader of the tribe of Naphtali;

²⁰Hoshea son of Azaziah, leader of the tribe of Ephraim; Joel son of Pedaiah, leader of West Manasseh;

²¹Iddo son of Zechariah, leader of East Manasseh; Jaasiel son of Abner, leader of the tribe of Benjamin;

²²Azarel son of Jeroham, leader of the tribe of Dan.

²³David 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.

²⁴ Joab son of Zeruah 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.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ Ezri son of Kelub was in charge of the field workers.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ Shitrai from Sharon was in charge of the cattle around Sharon. Shaphat son of Adlai was in charge of the cattle in the valleys.

³⁰ Obil the Ishmaelite was in charge of the camels. Jehdeiah the Meronothite was in charge of the donkeys.

³¹ Jaziz the Hagrite was in charge of the sheep. All these men were the leaders who took care of King Davids property.

³² Jonathan was a wise counselor and a scribe. He was Davids uncle. Jehiel son of Hacmoni took care of the kings sons.

³³ Ahithophel was the kings counselor. Hushai was the kings friend. Hushai was from the Arkites.

³⁴ Jehoiada and Abiathar later took Ahithophels place as the kings counselor. Jehoiada was Benaiahs son. Joab was the commander of the kings army.

28¹ 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 kings important officials, the powerful heroes, and all the brave soldiers.

²King 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 Box of the LORD'S Agreement. I wanted to build a place that would be Gods footstool. And I made the plans for building that house for God.

³But 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.

⁴The LORD, the God of Israel, chose the tribe of Judah to lead the twelve tribes of Israel. Then from that tribe he chose my fathers 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.

⁶He 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.

⁷ Solomon is obeying my laws and commands now. If he continues to obey my laws, I will make Solomons kingdom strong forever.

⁸ David 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 everyones 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.

¹⁰ Solomon, you must understand that the LORD has chosen you to build his holy placethe Temple. Be strong and finish the job.

¹¹ 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.

¹⁷ He 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.

¹⁸ He told him how much pure gold should be used for the altar of incense. David also gave Solomon the plans for Gods chariotthe mercy-cover with the Cherub angels spreading their wings over the Box of the LORD'S Agreement. The Cherub angels were made of gold.

¹⁹ David said, All these plans were written with the LORD guiding me. He helped me understand everything in the plans.

²⁰ David also said to his son Solomon, Be strong and brave and finish this work. Dont 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.

²¹ The groups of the priests and Levites are ready for all the work on Gods Temple. Every skilled worker is ready to

help you with all the work. The officials and all the people will obey every command you give.

29¹ 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.

²I have done my best to provide what is needed for the building of my Gods 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, mosaic tiles, all kinds of valuable stones in many different colors, and white marble stones.

³I am making a special gift of gold and silver things for my Gods 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.

⁴I have given 110 tons of pure gold from Ophir. I have given 263 tons of pure silver. The silver is for covering the walls of the buildings in the Temple.

⁵I 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?

⁶The 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.

⁷These are the things they gave for God's house: 190 tons of gold; 375 tons of silver; 675 tons of bronze; and 3750 tons of iron.

⁸People who had valuable stones gave them to the LORD'S Temple. Jehiel took care of the valuable stones. He was from the Gershon family.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰Then 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!

¹¹Greatness, 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.

¹²Riches 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!

¹³Now, our God, we thank you, and we praise your glorious name!

¹⁴All these things didnt come from me and my people. All these things come from you. We are only giving back to you things that came from you.

¹⁵We are only strangers traveling through this world like our ancestors. Our time on earth is like a passing shadow, and we cannot stop it.

¹⁶LORD 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.

¹⁷My 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.

¹⁸LORD, 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.

¹⁹And 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.

²⁰Then 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.

²¹The 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.

²²That day the people were very happy as they ate and drank there together with the LORD. And they made Davids 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.

²³Then Solomon sat on the LORD'S throne as king. Solomon took his fathers place. He was very successful. All the Israelites obeyed him.

²⁴All the leaders, soldiers, and all of King Davids sons accepted Solomon as king and obeyed him.

²⁵The 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.

²⁶David 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.

²⁷ (29: 26)

²⁸David 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.

²⁹The 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.

³⁰Those writings tell all about what David did as king of Israel. They tell about Davids power and what happened to him and to Israel and to all the kingdoms around them.

2 Chronicles

1 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 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 Gods Meeting Tent was there. The LORD'S servant Moses made this tent when he and the Israelites were in the desert.

³ (1: 2)

⁴ David had carried Gods 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.

⁶Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the LORD at the Meeting Tent and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

⁷That night God came to Solomon and said, Ask me for whatever you want me to give you.

⁸Solomon said to God, You were very kind to my father David when you allowed me to rule on his throne after him.

⁹Now, 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.

¹⁰Now 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.

¹¹God 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 the wisdom and knowledge so that you can make the right decisions.

¹²So 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.

¹³Solomon left the Meeting Tent that was at the high place in Gibeon and went back to Jerusalem to rule as the king of Israel.

¹⁴Solomon 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.

¹⁵In 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.

¹⁶Solomon imported horses from Egypt and Kue. His merchants bought the horses in Kue for a set price.

¹⁷They 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.

2¹Solomon planned to build a Temple to give honor to the LORD'S name.

He also planned to build a palace for himself.

²He got 70,000 laborers and 80,000 stonemasons to cut stones in the mountains. He chose 3600 foremen to supervise the workers.

³Then 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.

⁴I 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.

⁵I will build a great temple because our God is greater than all the other gods.

⁶No 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Also send me wood from cedar trees, pine trees, and algum trees from the country of Lebanon. I know your servants are experienced at cutting down trees from Lebanon. My servants will help your servants.

⁹ I will need lots of wood because the Temple I am building will be very large and beautiful.

¹⁰ This is what I will pay for your servants to cut down the trees for wood. I will give them 125,000 bushels of wheat for food, 125,000 bushels of barley, 115,000 gallons of wine, and 115,000 gallons of oil.

¹¹ 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.

¹²Hiram 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.

¹³I will send you a skilled craftsman named Hiram Abi.

¹⁴His mother was from the tribe of Dan, and his father was from the city of Tyre. Hiram 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. Hiram Abi can design and build anything you tell him. He will work with your craftsmen and with the craftsmen of your father King David.

¹⁵Now, sir, you offered to give us wheat, barley, oil, and wine. Give them to my servants,

¹⁶and 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.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

3¹ Solomon began building the LORD'S Temple at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared to David, Solomons father. This was the place David had prepared for the Temple. It had been the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

² 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 Gods Temple, using the old cubit. The foundation was 60 cubits long and 20 cubits wide.

⁴ The porch in front of the Temple was 20 cubits long and 20 cubits high. He

covered the inside of the porch with pure gold.

⁵He 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.

⁶He put valuable stones in the Temple for beauty. The gold he used was gold from Parvaim.

⁷He 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.

⁸Then 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.

⁹The gold nails weighed 1 1/4 pounds. He covered the upper rooms with gold.

¹⁰He made two Cherub angels to put in the Most Holy Place. The workers covered the Cherub angels with gold.

¹¹Each wing of the Cherub angels was 5 cubits 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 of the wings of the second Cherub angel.

¹²And the other wing of the second Cherub angel touched the wall on the other side of the room.

¹³So 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.

¹⁴He made the curtain from blue, purple, and red materials and expensive linen. There were Cherub angels on the curtain.

¹⁵He put two columns in front of the Temple. The columns were 35 cubits tall. The top part of the two columns was 5 cubits long.

¹⁶He made chains in a necklace and put them on the tops of the columns. He made 100 pomegranates and put them on the chains.

¹⁷Then 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. And he named the column on the left side Boaz.

4¹ He made a bronze altar that was 20 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 10 cubits tall.

² Then he made a large tank from melted bronze. It was round and it measured 10 cubits across from edge to edge. It was 5 cubits tall and about 30 cubits around.

³ There were images of bulls under the lip of the large bronze tank. They were in two rows that went 10 cubits around the tank. The bulls were molded in place when the tank was shaped.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶He 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.

⁷He 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.

⁸He 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.

⁹He also made the priests courtyard, the large courtyard, and the doors that open to them. He used bronze to cover these doors.

¹⁰Then he put the large bronze tank on the right side of the Temple on the southeast side.

¹¹ Hiram made the pots, shovels, and basins. Then he finished his work for King Solomon on Gods Temple.

¹² Hiram had made the two columns and the large bowls on the top parts of the two columns. He also made the two net decorations to cover the two large bowls on the top parts of the two columns.

¹³ Hiram made 400 pomegranates for the two net decorations. There were two rows of pomegranates for each net. The nets covered the large bowls on the top parts on the two columns.

¹⁴ He also made the stands and the bowls on the stands.

¹⁵ He made the one large bronze tank and twelve bulls under the tank.

¹⁶ Hiram made the pots, shovels, forks, and all the things for King Solomon for the LORD'S Temple. These things were made of polished bronze.

¹⁷ King Solomon first poured these things in clay molds. The molds were made in the Jordan Valley between the towns of Succoth and Zeredah.

¹⁸ Solomon made so many of them that no one tried to weigh the bronze used.

¹⁹ Solomon also made the dishes and things for Gods Temple. He made the golden altar and the tables where they put the bread of the Presence.

²⁰ He made the lamps and lampstands of pure gold. These were put inside the Holy Place in front of the Most Holy Place.

²¹ He used pure gold to make the flowers, lamps, and tongs.

²² He used pure gold to make the lamp snuffers, bowls, pans, and the censers. 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.

5¹ 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 Gods Temple.

² 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.

³All the men of Israel met together before King Solomon during the special festival in the seventh month of the year.

⁴When all the elders of Israel arrived, the Levites lifted the Box of the Agreement

⁵and carried it up to the Temple. The priests and the Levites also brought the Meeting Tent and all the holy things that were in it to the Temple in Jerusalem.

⁶Then 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.

⁷Then 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.

⁸The Cherub angels stood with their wings spread over the Box of the Agreement and the poles that were used to carry it.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹All 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³Those 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 sang the song, Praise the LORD Because He Is Good. His Faithful Love Will Last Forever. Then the LORD'S Temple was filled with a cloud.

¹⁴The priests could not continue to serve because of the cloud, because the Glory of the LORD filled the Temple.

6¹ Then Solomon said, The LORD chose to live in a dark cloud.

² But, Lord, I have built a beautiful house for you to live in forever.

³ King Solomon turned around and blessed all the Israelites gathered in front of him.

⁴ He said, Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who has done what he promised my father David. The Lord said,

⁵ 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.

⁶ But now I have chosen Jerusalem as a place for my name, and I have chosen David to lead my people Israel.

⁷ My father David wanted to build a temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

⁸ But the LORD said to my father, David, it is good that you want to build a temple for my name,

⁹ but you cannot build the Temple. Your son will build the Temple for my name.

¹⁰ Now, the LORD has done what he said he would do. I am the new king in my fathers place. David was my father. Now I am Israels king. That is what the LORD promised, and I have built the Temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹¹ I have put the Box of the Agreement in the Temple. The LORD'S Agreement with Israel is in that box.

¹² 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,

¹³ (6: 12)

¹⁴and 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.

¹⁵You 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.

¹⁶Now, 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.

¹⁷Again, LORD, God of Israel, I ask you to keep the promise you made to your servant, my father David.

¹⁸But, 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.

¹⁹But 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.

²⁰In 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.

²¹And 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.

²²Whoever 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.

²³Please 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.

²⁴Sometimes 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.

²⁵In 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.

²⁶Sometimes 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.

²⁷So 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.

²⁸The 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.

²⁹When any of these things happen, people feel the need to spread their hands in prayer toward this Temple.

³⁰ Please listen to their prayer 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.

³¹ 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.

³³ 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.

³⁵ Listen to their prayers from your home in heaven, and help them.

³⁶Your 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.

³⁷In 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.

³⁸They 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.

³⁹Please 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.

⁴⁰Now, 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.

7 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.

³ When all the Israelites saw the fire come down from heaven and the Glory of the LORD on the Temple, they bowed their faces down low to the ground on the pavement. They worshiped and thanked the LORD. They sang the song, He Is Good. His Faithful Love Will Last Forever.

⁴ Then King Solomon and all the Israelites offered sacrifices to the LORD.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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 made these instruments to use in giving thanks to the LORD. The priests and Levites sang the song, Praise the Lord Because 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. 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.

⁹On 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 worshipping the Lord. And they celebrated the festival for seven days.

¹⁰On 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.

¹¹So Solomon finished building the LORD'S Temple and the kings palace. Solomon did everything that he had planned to do in building a house for the LORD and for himself.

¹²Then 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.

¹³When I close the sky so that there is no rain, or command the locusts to

destroy the land, or send sicknesses to my people

¹⁴and 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.

¹⁵Now, my eyes are open, and my ears will pay attention to the prayers prayed in this place.

¹⁶I 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.

¹⁷You 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,

¹⁸then 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.

¹⁹But if you dont obey my laws and commands that I gave you, and if you worship other gods and serve them,

²⁰then 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.

²¹Everyone who sees it will be amazed. They will ask, Why did the LORD do this terrible thing to this land and to this temple?

²²People 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.

8¹It took 20 years for King Solomon to build the LORD'S Temple and the kings palace.

²Then Solomon rebuilt the towns that Hiram gave him and then moved Israelites into those towns to live there.

³After 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 walls, gates, and bars in the gates.

⁶ 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 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.

⁸ (8: 7)

⁹ Solomon did not force any of the Israelites to be his slaves. They were soldiers, government officials, officers, captains, and chariot commanders and drivers.

¹⁰There were 250 supervisors over Solomons projects. They supervised the men.

¹¹Solomon brought Pharaohs daughter up from the City of David to the house he built for her. He said, My wife must not live in King Davids palace because the places where the LORD'S Holy Box has been are holy places.

¹²Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the LORD'S altar. He built that altar in front of the Temple porch.

¹³Solomon 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.

¹⁴Solomon followed his father Davids 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.

¹⁵The Israelites did not change or disobey any of Solomons instructions to the priests and Levites. They did not change any of the instructions, even in the way they should keep the valuable things.

¹⁶So 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.

¹⁷King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber. This town is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.

¹⁸Hiram sent ships to Solomon. Hiram's own men sailed the ships. They were skilled at sailing on the sea. His men went with Solomons servants to Ophir and brought back 17 tons of gold to King Solomon.

9¹The 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.

²Solomon answered all the questions. None of her questions was too hard for him to explain.

³The queen of Sheba saw that Solomon was very wise. She also saw the beautiful palace he had built.

⁴She 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!

⁵Then she said to King Solomon, Everything I heard in my country about your great works and your wisdom is true.

⁶I did not believe what people told me until I came and saw it with my own eyes. But you have twice as much wisdom as what I heard. You are much greater than people told me.

⁷Your wives and officers are very fortunate! They can serve you and hear your wisdom every day.

⁸Praise 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.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰Hiram's servants brought gold from Ophir. They also brought in jewels and a special kind of wood.

¹¹King Solomon used this special wood to make steps for the LORD'S Temple and the king's palace. Solomon also used the algum wood to make lyres and harps for the singers. No one ever saw such beautiful things like those made from the algum wood in the country of Judah.

¹²King 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.

¹³Every year Solomon got almost 25 tons of gold.

¹⁴In 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.

¹⁵King Solomon made 200 large shields from hammered gold. He used about 15 pounds of gold for each shield.

¹⁶He also made 300 small 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.

¹⁷King Solomon also built a large throne with ivory decorations. It was covered with pure gold.

¹⁸There 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.

¹⁹There were also two lions on each of the six steps, one at each end. There was nothing like it in any other kingdom.

²⁰All of Solomons cups and glasses were made of gold. And all of the dishes in the Forest-of-Lebanon House were made from pure gold. Nothing in the palace was made from silver. There was so much gold that in Solomons time people did not think silver was important!

²¹The 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.

²²King Solomon became greater in riches and wisdom than any other king on earth.

²³People everywhere wanted to see King Solomon. They wanted to hear the great wisdom that God had given him.

²⁴Every 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.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ The people brought horses to Solomon from Egypt and from all the other countries.

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 Solomons son Rehoboam became the next king.

10¹ Rehoboam went to Shechem, where all the Israelites had gone to make him king.

² Jeroboam son of Nebat was still in Egypt, where he had gone to escape from Solomon. When he heard about the plans to make Rehoboam king, he returned from Egypt.

³ The people of Israel sent for Jeroboam, and together they went and spoke to Rehoboam. They said,

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 fathers 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 follow the advice of the older men. Instead, 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.

¹⁵ 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 the king, Are we part of Davids family? No. Do we get any of Jesses land? No. So Israel, lets go home and let Davids 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.

¹⁹So Israel rebelled against the family of David, and that is how things are even today.

11 ¹Rehoboam 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.

²But the LORD spoke to a man of God named Shemaiah. He said,

³Talk to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to men of Judah and Benjamin.

⁴Say 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 Rehoboams army obeyed the LORD and went home. They did not attack Jeroboam.

⁵Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built strong cities in Judah to defend against attacks.

⁶He repaired the cities of Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa,

⁷Beth Zur, Soco, Adullam,

⁸Gath, Mareshah, Ziph,

⁹Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah,

¹⁰Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These cities in Judah and Benjamin were made strong.

¹¹When Rehoboam made these cities strong, he put commanders in them. He also put supplies of food, oil, and wine in them.

¹²Also, 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.

¹³The priests and the Levites from all over Israel agreed with Rehoboam and joined him.

¹⁴The Levites left their grasslands and their own fields and came to Judah and Jerusalem. The Levites did this because Jeroboam and his sons refused to let them serve as priests to the LORD.

¹⁵Jeroboam chose his own priests to serve in the high places, where he set up the goat and calf idols he had made.

¹⁶When 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.

¹⁷These people made the kingdom of Judah strong, and they supported Solomons son Rehoboam for three years. They did this because during that time they lived the way David and Solomon had lived.

¹⁸Rehoboam married Mahalath. Her father was Jerimoth. Her mother was Abihail. Jerimoth was Davids son. Abihail was Eliabs daughter, and Eliab was Jesses son.

¹⁹Mahalath gave Rehoboam these sons: Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham.

²⁰Then Rehoboam married Maacah. Maacah was Absaloms granddaughter. And Maacah gave Rehoboam these children: Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith.

²¹Rehoboam loved Maacah more that 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.

²³ Rehoboam acted wisely and spread all his sons through all the areas of Judah and Benjamin to every strong city. And Rehoboam gave plenty of supplies to his sons. He also looked for wives for them.

12¹ 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.

³ Shishak had 12,000 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.

⁴ Shishak defeated the strong cities of Judah. Then Shishak brought his army to Jerusalem.

⁵Then 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 people of Judah have left me and refused to obey my law. So now I will leave you to face Shishak without my help.

⁶Then the leaders of Judah and King Rehoboam were sorry and humbled themselves. They said, The LORD is right.

⁷The 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.

⁸But the people of Jerusalem will become Shishaks servants. This will happen so that they may learn that serving me is different from serving the kings of other nations.

⁹Shishak took the treasures from the LORD'S Temple and from the kings palace. He also took the gold shields that Solomon had made.

¹⁰King 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.

¹¹Every 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.

¹²Rehoboam humbled himself, and the LORD stopped being angry with him. So he did not completely destroy Rehoboam. There was some good in Judah.

¹³King 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. Rehoboams mother was Naamah. She was an Ammonite.

¹⁴Rehoboam did evil because he didnt decide in his heart to obey the LORD.

¹⁵All 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.

¹⁶Rehoboam rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. Then Rehoboams son Abijah became the next king after him.

13¹Abijah became the new king of Judah. This was during the 18th year that Jeroboam son of Nebat ruled Israel.

²Abijah ruled in Jerusalem for three years. His mothers name was Maacah. She was the daughter of Uriel, from the town of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.

³Abijahs army had 400,000 brave soldiers. Abijah led that army into battle. Jeroboams 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 Davids son Solomon.

⁷ Then worthless, evil men became friends with Jeroboam. Then Jeroboam and the bad men turned against Rehoboam, Solomons 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 Davids sons. You have so many people with you and you have the gold 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.

¹⁰But 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 Aarons sons, and the Levites help the priests in their work.

¹¹They 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 gold lampstand so that it shines bright each and every evening. We very carefully serve the LORD our God, but you people have abandoned him.

¹²God himself is with us. He is our ruler, and his priests are with us. Gods priests blow his trumpets to wake you up and make you excited about coming to him. Men of Israel, dont fight against the LORD, God of your ancestors, because you will not succeed!

¹³But Jeroboam sent a group of soldiers to sneak behind Abijahs army. Jeroboams

army was in front of Abijah's army. The hidden soldiers from Jeroboam's army were behind Abijah's army.

¹⁴When 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.

¹⁵Then 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.

¹⁶The men of Israel ran away from the men of Judah. God let the army from Judah defeat the army from Israel.

¹⁷Abijah's army greatly defeated the army of Israel, and 500,000 of the best men of Israel were killed.

¹⁸So at that time the Israelites were defeated, and the people of Judah won. The army from Judah won because they depended on the LORD the God of their ancestors.

¹⁹Abijah's army chased Jeroboam's army, and they captured the towns of Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron from

Jeroboam. They captured the towns and the small villages near them.

²⁰Jeroboam never became strong again while Abijah lived. The LORD killed Jeroboam,

²¹but Abijah became strong. He married 14 women and was the father of 22 sons and 16 daughters.

²²Everything else Abijah did is written in the books of the prophet Iddo.

14¹When 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.

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. So the kingdom had peace when Asa was king.

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, Lets build these towns and make walls around them. Lets make towers, gates, and bars in the gates. Lets 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 Asas army. He had 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots in his army. His army went as far as the town of Mareshah.

¹⁰Asa went out to fight against Zerah. Asas army got ready for battle in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

¹¹Asa 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! Dont let anyone defeat you!

¹²Then the LORD used Asas army from Judah to defeat the Ethiopian army. And the army ran away.

¹³Asas 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.

¹⁴Asa 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. Asas army took those valuable things away from those towns.

¹⁵His army also attacked the camps where the shepherds lived and took many sheep and camels. Then they went back to Jerusalem.

15¹The Spirit of God came on Azariah, who was Obeds son.

²Azariah 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.

³For a long time Israel was without the true God. And they were without a teaching priest, and without the law.

⁴But when the Israelites had trouble, they turned again to the LORD, the God of Israel. They looked for him and found him.

⁵In those times of trouble, no one could travel safely. There was great trouble in all the nations.

⁶One nation would destroy another nation and one city would destroy another city. This was happening because God gave them all kinds of trouble.

⁷ 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!

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Asa and these people gathered together in Jerusalem on the third month in the 15th year of Asa's rule.

¹¹ 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.

¹²Then 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.

¹³Anyone 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.

¹⁴Then Asa and the people made an oath to the LORD. They shouted it out loudly and blew their trumpets and rams horns.

¹⁵All 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.

¹⁶King 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.

¹⁷Asa did not destroy the high places, even though he was faithful to God all his life.

¹⁸Asa and his father had given some special gifts to God. Asa put these gifts of gold, silver, and other things into the Temple.

¹⁹There was no more war until the 35th year of Asas rule.

16¹In Asas 36th year as king, Baasha attacked Judah and then built up the city of Ramah to keep Asa from leaving Judah on any kind of military campaign.

²So Asa took gold and silver from the treasuries of the LORD'S Temple and the kings 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-Hadads capital city.

³Asa 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.

⁴King 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.

⁵When Baasha heard about these attacks, he stopped building up Ramah and went back to Tirzah. He stopped all the work he was doing.

⁶Then 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.

⁷At 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.

⁸Did 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.

⁹The 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.

¹⁰Asa 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.

¹¹Everything Asa did, from the beginning to the end, is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

¹²Asa's feet became infected in his 39th year as king. Even though the infection was very serious, Asa did not go to the LORD for help. He went to the doctors instead.

¹³Asa died in the 41st year as king and rested with his ancestors.

¹⁴The 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.

17 ¹Asas son Jehoshaphat became the new king after him.

Jehoshaphat made Judah strong so that they could fight against Israel.

²He 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.

³The 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.

⁴He looked for the God his ancestors followed. He followed Gods commands and did not live the same way the Israelites lived.

⁵The LORD made Jehoshaphat a strong king over Judah. All the people of Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat. So he had much wealth and honor.

⁶His heart found 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.

¹²Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful. He built fortresses and storage towns in the country of Judah.

¹³He kept many supplies in the storage towns. And Jehoshaphat kept trained soldiers in Jerusalem.

¹⁴These 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.

¹⁵Jehohanan was the general of 280,000 soldiers.

¹⁶Amasiah was the general of 200,000 soldiers. Amasiah was Zicris son. Amasiah was happy to give himself to serve the LORD.

¹⁷From 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.

¹⁸Jehozabad had 180,000 men ready for war.

¹⁹All these soldiers served King Jehoshaphat. The king also had other men in the fortresses in all the country of Judah.

18¹ 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 onemy men will be as yours in battle.

⁴ But first lets 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, Doesnt the LORD have another prophet here? Lets 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 dont like. Jehoshaphat said, The king shouldnt 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³But Micaiah answered, As surely as the LORD lives, I can say only what my God says.

¹⁴Micaiah 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 heavens 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 Ahabs prophets they will all speak lies. So the Lord said, Yes, that will fool Ahab. Go out and do that!

²²So 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!

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Micaiah said, Listen to me, everyone! Ahab, if you come back alive from the battle, the LORD has not spoken through me.

²⁸ King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to fight the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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!

³¹ During 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.

³²When the commanders saw that he was not King Ahab, they stopped chasing him.

³³Then 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!

³⁴The 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.

19¹ King Jehoshaphat of Judah came back safely to his house in Jerusalem.

²The 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? Thats the reason the LORD is angry with you now.

³Fortunately, 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.

⁴Jehoshaphat 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.

⁵Jehoshaphat went from town to town and appointed judges in each of the fortresses of Judah.

⁶He 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.

⁷You 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.

⁸In 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.

⁹Jehoshaphat commanded them, You must serve faithfully with all your heart. You must fear the LORD.

¹⁰People 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.

¹¹Amariah is the high priest, so he will make the final decision about the peoples 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 peoples 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.

20¹ Later, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and some Meunites came to start a war with Jehoshaphat.

²Some 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.)

³Jehoshaphat became afraid, and he decided to ask the LORD what to do. He announced a time of fasting for everyone in Judah.

⁴The 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.

⁵Jehoshaphat was in the new courtyard of the LORD'S Temple. He stood up in the meeting of the people from Judah and Jerusalem

⁶and 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.

⁷You 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.

⁸His descendants lived in this land, and built a Temple for your name.

⁹They 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.

¹⁰But 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.

¹¹But 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.

¹²Our 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.

¹³All the men of Judah stood before the LORD with their wives, babies, and children.

¹⁴Then 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,

¹⁵Jahaziel said, Listen to me King Jehoshaphat and everyone living in Judah and Jerusalem! The LORD says this to you: Dont be afraid or worry about this large army, because the battle is not your battle. It is Gods battle!

¹⁶Tomorrow, 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.

¹⁷You will not have to fight this battle. Just stand there and watch the LORD save you. Judah and Jerusalem, dont be afraid. Dont worry, because the LORD is with you. So go out to stand against those people tomorrow.

¹⁸Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground. And all the people of Judah and Jerusalem bowed down before the LORD and worshiped him.

¹⁹The Levites from the Kohath family groups and the Korah family stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel. They sang very loudly.

²⁰Early 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!

²¹Jehoshaphat 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 praises. They sang the song, Praise the LORD Because His Faithful Love Will Last Forever!

²²As 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!

²³The 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.

²⁴The men from Judah arrived at the lookout point in the desert. They looked

for the enemys large army, but all they saw were dead bodies lying on the ground. There were no survivors.

²⁵ Jehoshaphat and his army came to take things from the bodies. They found many animals, riches, clothes, and other valuable things. It was more than Jehoshaphat and his men could carry away. There was so much that they spent three days taking everything from the dead bodies.

²⁶ On the fourth day Jehoshaphat and his army met in the Valley of Beracah. They praised the LORD. That 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.

³⁰That is why there was peace for Jehoshaphat's kingdom his God brought him rest from the enemies that were all around him.

³¹Jehoshaphat 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.

³²Like 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 that their ancestors worshiped.

³³(20: 32)

³⁴Everything 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.

³⁵Later on, King Jehoshaphat of Judah made an agreement with King Ahaziah of Israel. Ahaziah was very evil.

³⁶Jehoshaphat 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.

21 ¹ Then Jehoshaphat died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Then his son, Jehoram became the next king.

² Jehorams 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.

⁴ Jehoram took over his fathers kingdom and made himself strong. Then he used a sword to kill all his brothers. He also killed some of the leaders of Israel.

⁵Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to rule. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem.

⁶He lived the same way the kings of Israel lived. He lived the same way Ahabs family lived. This was because Jehoram married Ahabs daughter. And Jehoram did evil in the LORD'S sight.

⁷But the LORD would not destroy Davids family because of the agreement he made with David. He had promised to keep a lamp burning for David and his children forever.

⁸In Jehorams time, Edom broke away from under Judahs authority. The people of Edom chose their own king.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰Since 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 Jehorams 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, says, Jehoram, you have not lived the way your father Jehoshaphat lived. You have not lived the way King Asa of Judah lived.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ So now, the LORD will soon punish your people with terrible suffering. He will punish your children, your wives, and all your property.

¹⁵ You will have a painful sickness in your intestines that will get worse and worse. Your intestines will finally come out.

¹⁶The LORD caused the Philistines and the Arabs living near the Ethiopians to be angry with Jehoram.

¹⁷They attacked Judah and carried away all the riches in the kings palace. They also took Jehorams sons and wives. Only Jehorams youngest son, Ahaziah, was left.

¹⁸After this happened, the LORD made Jehoram sick with a disease in his intestines that could not be cured.

¹⁹His intestines fell out two years later because of his sickness. He died in very bad pain. The people did not make a large fire to honor Jehoram as they did for his father.

²⁰Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem. No one was sad when he died. The people buried Jehoram in the City of David, but not in the graves where the kings are buried.

22¹The people of Jerusalem chose Ahaziah to be the new king in Jehorams place. Ahaziah was Jehorams youngest son. The people who came with the Arabs to attack Jehorams camp killed

all of Jehorams older sons. So Ahaziah began to rule in Judah.

²He was 22 years old when he began to rule. He ruled one year in Jerusalem. His mothers name was Athaliah. Her father was Omri.

³Ahaziah also lived the way Ahabs family lived because his mother encouraged him to do wrong.

⁴Ahaziah did what the LORD considered to be evil. That is what Ahabs family did. And Ahabs family gave advice to Ahaziah after his father died. They gave Ahaziah bad advice that led to his death.

⁵Ahaziah followed the advice of Ahabs 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.

⁶(22: 5)

⁷God caused Ahaziahs 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 Ahabs family.

⁸Jehu was punishing Ahabs family. He found the leaders of Judah and Ahaziahs relatives who served Ahaziah. He killed the leaders of Judah and Ahaziahs relatives.

⁹Then Jehu looked for Ahaziah. Jehus 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. Ahaziahs family had no power to hold the kingdom of Judah together.

¹⁰Athaliah was Ahaziahs mother. When she saw that her son was dead, she killed all the kings children in Judah.

¹¹But Jehosheba took Ahaziahs son Joash and hid him. Jehosheba put Joash and his nurse in the inside bedroom. Jehosheba was King Jehorams daughter. She was also Jehoiadas wife. Jehoiada was a priest, and Jehosheba was Ahaziahs sister. Athaliah did not kill Joash, because Jehosheba hid him.

¹²Joash was hidden with the priests in Gods Temple for six years. During that time, Athaliah ruled over the land as queen.

23¹ 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.

²They 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.

³All the people meeting together made an agreement with the king in Gods Temple. Jehoiada said to the people, The kings son will rule. That is what the LORD promised about Davids descendants.

⁴Now, this is what you must do: One-third of you priests and Levites who go on duty on the Sabbath will guard the doors.

⁵And one-third of you will be at the kings 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.

⁶Only 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. Dont let anyone else enter. All the others must do only the work the LORD has given them.

⁷The 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹Jehoiada the priest gave the spears and the large and small shields that belonged to King David to the officers. The weapons were kept in Gods Temple.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹ 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!

¹² 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.

¹³ 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!

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵Then those men grabbed Athaliah when she came to the entrance of the Horse Gate at the kings palace. Then they killed her there.

¹⁶Then Jehoiada made an agreement with all the people and the king. They all agreed that they all would be the LORD'S people.

¹⁷All the people went into the temple of the idol Baal and tore it down. They also broke the altars and idols that were in Baals temple. They killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars of Baal.

¹⁸Then 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 Law of Moses commanded. They offered the sacrifices with much joy and singing the way David commanded.

¹⁹Jehoiada 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.

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

Gods Temple. Hurry and do this. But the Levites didnt hurry.

⁶So King Joash called Jehoiada the leading priest. The king said, Jehoiada, why havent you made the Levites bring in the tax money from Judah and Jerusalem? The LORD'S servant Moses and the Israelites used that tax money for the Tent of the Agreement.

⁷In the past, Athaliahs sons broke into Gods Temple and used the holy things in the LORD'S Temple for their worship of the Baal gods. Athaliah was a very wicked woman.

⁸King Joash gave a command for a box to be made and put outside the gate at the LORD'S Temple.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰All 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 woodcarvers 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, and the work they did went well. They rebuilt God's Temple the way it was before and made it strong.

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.

¹⁵Jehoiada became old. He had a very long life, and he died when he was 130 years old.

¹⁶The 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 Gods Temple.

¹⁷After Jehoiada died, the leaders of Judah came and bowed to King Joash. The king listened to the leaders.

¹⁸They 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.

¹⁹God sent prophets to the people to bring them back to the LORD. The prophets warned them, but they refused to listen.

²⁰The 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.

²⁵When the Arameans left Joash, he was badly wounded. His own servants made plans against him because he had killed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest. They 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.

²⁶One of the servants who agreed to kill Joash was Zabad, son of Shimeath, a woman from Ammon. The other was Jehozabad, son of Shimrith, a woman from Moab.

²⁷The 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.

25¹Amaziah 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.

²Amaziah 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 officials 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, dont let the army of

Israel go with you. The LORD is not with Israel or the people of Ephraim.

⁸Maybe you will make yourself strong and ready for war, but God can help you win or help you lose.

⁹Amaziah 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.

¹⁰So 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.

¹¹Then 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.

¹²They 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.

¹³Meanwhile, 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 didnt let them join him in the war.

¹⁴Amaziah 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.

¹⁵The 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!

¹⁶When the prophet spoke, Amaziah said to the prophet, We never made you an advisor to the king. Be quiet! If you dont be quiet, you will be killed. The prophet became quiet, but then said, God has decided to destroy you because you did this and didnt listen to my advice.

¹⁷King Amaziah of Judah talked with his advisors. Then he sent a message to King Jehoash of Israel. Amaziah said to Jehoash, Lets meet face to face. Jehoash

was Jehoahaz's son. Jehoahaz was Jehu's son.

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹You 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.

²⁰But 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.

²¹So King Jehoash of Israel met King Amaziah of Judah face to face at the town of Beth Shemesh in Judah.

²²Israel defeated Judah. Every man of Judah ran away to his home.

²³ 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.

²⁴ He took the gold and silver and all the other things in Gods Temple that Obed Edom was responsible for. Jehoash also took the treasures from the kings palace and some people as hostages. Then he went back to Samaria.

²⁵ Amaziah lived 15 years after Jehoash died. Amaziahs father was King Joash of Judah.

²⁶ Everything else Amaziah did, from beginning to end, is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸Then they carried his body on horses and buried him with his ancestors in the City of Judah.

26¹ 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.

²Uzziah rebuilt the town of Elath and gave it back to Judah. He did this after Amaziah died and was buried with his ancestors.

³Uzziah was 16 years old when he 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.

⁷ God helped Uzziah fight the Philistines, the Arabs living in the town of Gur Baal, and the Meunites.

⁸ The 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.

⁹ Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the place where the wall turned. He made them strong.

¹⁰ He 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.

¹¹ Uzziah 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 far away 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 incense.

¹⁷Azariah the priest and 80 brave priests who served the LORD followed Uzziah into the Temple.

¹⁸They told him to stop what he was doing. They said, Uzziah, it is not your job to burn incense to the LORD. It is not

right. That is only for the priests, Aarons descendants, to do. They are the ones who have been prepared for the holy work of burning incense. You have done wrong, so you must go out of the Most Holy Place. The LORD God will not honor you for this.

¹⁹Uzziah was still standing beside the incense altar holding the pan for burning the incense. He became very angry at the priests and began shouting at them. Suddenly, there in the LORD'S Temple as the priests watched, leprosy began to break out on Uzziahs forehead.

²⁰Azariah the leading priest and all the priests could see the leprosy on his forehead. They immediately forced him to leave the Temple. And Uzziah got out as fast as he could, 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 kings 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 kings burial places. This was because the people said, Uzziah has leprosy. And Uzziahs son Jotham became the new king in his place.

27 ¹Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. His mothers name was Jerusha. Jerusha was Zadoks 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.

³Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the LORD'S Temple. He did much building on the wall at the place named Ophel.

⁴He also built towns in the hill country of Judah. He built fortresses and towers in the forests.

⁵Jotham 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.

⁶Jotham became powerful because he faithfully obeyed the LORD his God.

⁷Everything else Jotham did and all his wars are written in the book, The History of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

⁸Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem.

⁹Then 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.

28¹Ahaz 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.

²He followed the bad example of the kings of Israel. He used molds to make idols to worship the Baal gods.

³He 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.

⁴Ahaz offered sacrifices and burned incense in the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

⁵Because 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.

⁶(28:5)

⁷Zicri 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.

⁸The 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.

⁹But 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.

¹⁰And 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.

¹¹Now listen to me. Send back all those you captured, your own brothers and sisters, because the LORD'S terrible anger is against you.

¹²Then 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.

¹³They said to the Israelite soldiers, Dont 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.

¹⁵ The leaders (Azariah, Berekiah, 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 something 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 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.

¹⁷ (28: 16)

¹⁸The Philistines also attacked the towns in the hills and in south Judah. The Philistines captured the towns of Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco, Timnah, and Gimzo. They also captured the villages near these towns. Then the Philistines lived in them.

¹⁹The LORD gave troubles to Judah because King Ahaz of Judah encouraged the people of Judah to sin. He was very unfaithful to the LORD.

²⁰King Tiglath Pileser of Assyria came and gave Ahaz trouble instead of helping him.

²¹Ahaz took some valuable things from the LORD'S Temple and from the kings palace and from the princes house. Ahaz gave them to the king of Assyria, but that didnt help him.

²²In Ahazs troubles, he sinned worse and became more unfaithful to the LORD.

²³He 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.

²⁴Ahaz gathered the things from Gods Temple and broke them to pieces. Then he closed the doors of the LORD'S Temple. He made altars and put them on every street corner in Jerusalem.

²⁵In every town in Judah Ahaz made high places for burning incense to worship other gods. Ahaz made the LORD, the God his ancestors obeyed, very angry.

²⁶Everything else Ahaz did, from the beginning to the end, is written in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

²⁷Ahaz died and was buried with his ancestors. The people buried him in the city of Jerusalem. But they didnt bury him in the same burial place where the kings of Israel were buried. Ahazs son Hezekiah became the new king in his place.

29¹ Hezekiah became king when he was 25 years old. He ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. His mothers

name was Abijah. Abijah was Zechariah's daughter.

²Hezekiah did what the LORD wanted him to do. He did what was right just as David his ancestor had done.

³Hezekiah 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.

⁴Hezekiah got the priests and Levites together in one assembly. 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 service. 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.

⁵ (29: 4)

⁶Our 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ So the 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.

⁹ That is why our ancestors were killed in battle. Our sons, daughters, and wives were made prisoners.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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 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 Elizaphans descendants there were Shimri and Jeiel. From Asaphs descendants there were Zechariah and Mattaniah. From Hemans descendants there were Jehiel and Shimei. From Jeduthuns descendants there were Shemaiah and Uzziel.

¹³ (29: 12)

¹⁴ (29: 12)

¹⁵ Then these Levites gathered their brothers together and made themselves ready for holy service in the Temple. They obeyed the kings command that came from the LORD. They went into the LORD'S Temple to clean it.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹During 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.

²⁰King Hezekiah gathered the city officials and went up to the Temple of the LORD early the next morning.

²¹They 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.

²² 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.

²³ Then the priests 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.

²⁴ (29: 23)

²⁵ King Hezekiah put the Levites in the LORD'S Temple with cymbals, harps, and lyres as David, Gad, the kings seer, and the prophet Nathan had commanded. This command came from the LORD through his prophets.

²⁶ So the Levites stood ready with Davids 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. So the people brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and those who

wanted to offer more also brought burnt offerings.

³²This 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.

³³There were also 600 bulls and 3000 sheep and goats that were sacrificed as holy offerings.

³⁴But 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.

³⁵There were many burnt offerings, and the fat of fellowship offerings, and drink offerings. So the service in the LORD'S Temple began again.

³⁶Hezekiah and the people were very happy about the things God prepared for his people. And they were happy he did it so quickly!

30¹ 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 Beersheba 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.

⁶So the messengers took the kings 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.

⁷Dont 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.

⁸Dont 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.

⁹If you come back and obey the LORD, your relatives and your children will find mercy from the 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.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹But, some men from the areas of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem.

¹²Also, in Judah Gods power united the people so that they would obey the king and his officials concerning the word of the LORD.

¹³Many people came together in Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the second month. It was a very large crowd.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵Then 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.

¹⁶They 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.

¹⁷There 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.

¹⁸Many 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.

¹⁹ (30: 18)

²⁰The LORD listened to King Hezekiah's prayer and forgave the people.

²¹The 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.

²²King 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.

²³All the people agreed to stay seven more days. They were joyful as they celebrated the Passover for seven more days.

²⁴King 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.

31 ¹ 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. 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.

²The 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.

³Hezekiah 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 law of the LORD commands.

⁴The 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.

⁵People 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.

⁶The 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.

⁷The people began to bring these things in the third month and they finished bringing the collection in the seventh month.

⁸When Hezekiah and the leaders came, they saw the piles of things that were collected. They praised the LORD and his people, the Israelites.

⁹Then Hezekiah asked the priests and the Levites about the piles of things.

¹⁰Azariah the high priest from Zadoks 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.

¹¹ Then Hezekiah commanded the priests to make storerooms ready in the LORD'S Temple. So this was done.

¹² 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 Conaniahs brother.

¹³ Conaniah and his brother Shimei were supervisors of these men: Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath, and Benaiah. King Hezekiah and Azariah the official in charge of Gods Temple chose these men.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵Eden, 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 more important people and to the less important.

¹⁶These 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.

¹⁷The 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.

¹⁸The Levites babies, wives, sons, and daughters also got part of the collection. This was done 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.

¹⁹Some of Aarons 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.

²⁰So King Hezekiah did those good things in all Judah. He did what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his God.

²¹He had success in every work he began the service of Gods Temple and in obeying the law and commands, and in following his God. Hezekiah did all these things with all his heart.

32¹ After all these things that Hezekiah had faithfully done happened, 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.

² Hezekiah knew that Sennacherib came to Jerusalem to attack it.

³ 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.

⁴ 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!

⁵ 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.

⁶Hezekiah 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!

⁷ (32: 6)

⁸The 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.

⁹King 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 of Judah in Jerusalem. His officers had a message for Hezekiah and all the people in Jerusalem.

¹⁰They said, King Sennacherib of Assyria says this: What do you trust in

that makes you stay under attack in Jerusalem?

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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?

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶The officers of the king of Assyria said worse things against the LORD God and against Hezekiah, Gods servant.

¹⁷The 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, Hezekiahs god will not be able to stop me from destroying his people.

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹Then they insulted the God of Jerusalem just as they had insulted all the gods of the people from other nationseven though those gods are only things people made with their hands.

²⁰Hezekiah the king and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed about this problem. They prayed very loudly to heaven.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶But Hezekiah and the people living in Jerusalem changed their hearts and lives. They became humble and stopped being proud. So the LORD'S anger didnt come on them while Hezekiah was alive.

²⁷Hezekiah had many riches and much honor. He made places to keep silver, gold, valuable jewels, spices, shields, and all kinds of things.

²⁸Hezekiah 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.

²⁹Hezekiah also built many towns, and he got many flocks of sheep and cattle. God gave him much wealth.

³⁰It 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.

³¹One 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.

³² Everything else Hezekiah did as king and the ways he served God faithfully are written in the book, The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah Son of Amoz and in the book, The History of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

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.

33¹ Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king of Judah. He was king for 55 years in Jerusalem.

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.

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 and worshiped those groups of stars.

⁴Manasseh built altars for false gods in the LORD'S Temple. The LORD said about the Temple, My name will be in Jerusalem forever.

⁵He built altars for all the groups of stars in the two yards of the LORD'S Temple.

⁶He also burned his own children for a sacrifice in the Valley of Ben Hinnom. He also used magic by doing soothsaying, divination, and sorcery. He talked with mediums and wizards. He did many things that the LORD said were evil and made him angry.

⁷Manasseh also made a statue of an idol and put it in Gods Templethe 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 Jerusalemthe city that I chose from all the cities in all the tribesand my name will be there forever!

⁸I 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.

⁹Manasseh 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.

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they refused to listen.

¹¹So 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.

¹²When these troubles came to him, Manasseh begged for help from the LORD his God. He humbled himself before the God of his ancestors.

¹³Manasseh prayed to God and begged him for help. The 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.

¹⁴After 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. He made the wall very tall. Then he put officers in all the fortresses in Judah.

¹⁵Manasseh 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.

¹⁶Then he set up the LORD'S altar and offered fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it. He gave a command for all the people of Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁷The people continued to offer sacrifices at the high places, but their sacrifices were only to the LORD their God.

¹⁸Everything 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.

¹⁹Manassehs 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.

²⁰So Manasseh died and was buried with his ancestors. The people buried Manasseh in his own palace. Manassehs son Amon became the new king in his place.

²¹Amon was 22 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king for two years in Jerusalem.

²²Amon 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.

²³Amon did not humble himself in front of the LORD like Manasseh his father humbled himself. But Amon sinned more and more.

²⁴His servants made plans against him. They killed Amon in his own house.

²⁵But the people of Judah killed all the servants who planned against King

Amon. Then the people chose Amons son Josiah to be the new king.

34¹ Josiah was eight years old when he became king. He was king for 31 years in Jerusalem.

²He 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.

³When 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.

⁴As 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Josiah did the same for the towns in the areas of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and all the way to Naphtali. He did the same for the ruins near all these towns.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰Then 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.

¹¹They 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³(34:12)

¹⁴The Levites brought out the money that was in the LORD'S Temple. At that time Hilkiyah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD that was given through Moses.

¹⁵Hilkiyah said to Shaphan the secretary, I found the Book of the Law in the LORD'S house. Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan.

¹⁶Shaphan brought the book to King Josiah. Shaphan reported to the king, Your servants are doing everything you told them to do.

¹⁷They got the money that was in the LORD'S Temple and are paying the supervisors and the workers.

¹⁸Then Shaphan said to King Josiah, Hilkiyah the priest gave a book to me. Then Shaphan read from the book in front of the king.

¹⁹When King Josiah heard the words of the law being read, he tore his clothes.

²⁰Then the king gave a command to Hilkiyah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon

son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the servant.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ Huldah said to them, This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Tell King Josiah that

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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 did. So I will pour out my anger on this place. Like a hot burning fire, my anger will not be put out!

²⁶Go back to King Josiah of Judah, who sent you to ask what the LORD wants. Tell him, This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the words you heard being read:

²⁷Josiah, you repented and humbled yourself. In your sorrow you tore your clothes and cried before me. So because your heart was tender,

²⁸I will take you to be with your ancestors. You will go to your grave in peace. You will not have to see any of the trouble that I will bring on this place and on the people living here. This was the message that Hilkiyah and the king's servants brought back to King Josiah.

²⁹Then King Josiah called for all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to come and meet with him.

³⁰The 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 with

Josiah. He read to them all the words in the Book of the Agreement. That book was found in the LORD'S Temple.

³¹ 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.

³² 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.

³³ The Israelites had idols from many different countries, but Josiah destroyed all of 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.

35 ¹ King Josiah celebrated the Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem. The Passover lamb was killed on the 14th day of the first month.

² Josiah chose the priests to do their duties. He encouraged the priests while they were serving in the LORD'S Temple.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸Josiah'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.

⁹Also Conaniah with Shemaiah 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.

¹⁰When everything was ready for the Passover service to begin, the priests and Levites went to their places. This is what the king commanded.

¹¹The 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.

¹²Then 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.

¹³The 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.

¹⁴After 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.

¹⁵The Levite singers from Asaphs family got in the places that King David had chosen for them to stand. They were Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the kings 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.

¹⁶So 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.

¹⁷The Israelites who were there celebrated Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days.

¹⁸Passover hadnt 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.

¹⁹They celebrated this Passover in Josiahs 18th year as king.

²⁰Josiah 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.

²¹But Neco sent messengers to Josiah. They said, King Josiah, this war is not your problem. I didnt come to fight against you. I came to fight my enemies. God told me to hurry. He is on my side, so dont 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. And the men and women singers still sing these sad songs today. It became something the people of Israel always do they sing a sad song for Josiah. These songs are written in the book, Funeral Songs.

²⁶ Everything else Josiah did while he was king, from the beginning to the end of his rule, is written in the book, The

History of the Kings of Israel and Judah. The book tells about the way he served God faithfully by obeying the law of the LORD.

²⁷ (35: 26)

36 ¹The people of Judah chose Jehoahaz to be the new king in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz was Josiah's son.

²He was 23 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for three months.

³Then 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.

⁴Neco 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.

⁵Jehoiakim 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.

⁶King 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.

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.

¹¹ Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for eleven years.

¹²Zedekiah did what the LORD considered evil. Jeremiah the prophet told him messages from the LORD. But Zedekiah did not humble himself and obey what Jeremiah said.

¹³Zedekiah turned against King Nebuchadnezzar. In the past Nebuchadnezzar had forced Zedekiah to make a promise with an oath in God's name to be faithful to him. But Zedekiah was stubborn and would not change his life. He refused to obey the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁴Also, all the leaders of the priests and the leaders of the people of Judah became unfaithful to the Lord, sinning more and more. They followed the evil example of the other nations. They ruined the Temple that the LORD had made holy in Jerusalem.

¹⁵The 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. He didn't want to destroy them or his Temple.

¹⁶But they made fun of God's prophets and refused to listen to them. They

hated Gods messages. Finally, the LORD could not hold his anger any longer. He became angry with his people and there was nothing that could be done to stop it.

¹⁷ So God brought the king of Babylon to attack the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The king of Babylon killed the young men even when they were in the Temple. He didnt 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 Gods Temple away to Babylon. He took all the valuable things from the LORD'S Temple, from the king, and from the kings officials.

¹⁹ Nebuchadnezzar and his army burned the Temple. They broke down Jerusalems wall and burned all the houses that belonged to the king and his officials. They took or destroyed every valuable thing in Jerusalem.

²⁰Nebuchadnezzar 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.

²¹The 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.

²²During 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 had promised through Jeremiah the prophet would really happen. Cyrus sent messengers to every place in his kingdom. They carried this message:

²³This 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.

Ezra

1 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.

³ If any of Gods 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 build the Temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem.

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 Gods Temple in Jerusalem.

⁵So 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.

⁶All their neighbors gave them many gifts. They gave them silver, gold, animals, and other expensive things. Their neighbors freely gave them all those things.

⁷Also, 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.

⁸King 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.

⁹This is what Mithredath brought out of the Lords Temple: 30 gold dishes, 1000 silver dishes, 29 knives and pans,

¹⁰ 30 gold bowls, 410 silver bowls similar to the gold bowls, and 1000 other dishes.

¹¹ 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.

2¹ 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.

² 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 Zaccai# 760

- ¹⁰ the descendants of Bani# 642
- ¹¹ the descendants of Bebai# 623
- ¹² the descendants of Azgad# 1222
- ¹³ the descendants of Adonikam# 666
- ¹⁴ the descendants of Bigvai# 2056
- ¹⁵ the descendants of Adin# 454
- ¹⁶ the descendants of Ater through the family of Hezekiah# 98
- ¹⁷ the descendants of Bezai# 323
- ¹⁸ the descendants of Jorah# 112
- ¹⁹ the descendants of Hashum# 223
- ²⁰ the descendants of Gibbar# 95
- ²¹ from the town of Bethlehem# 123
- ²² from the town of Netophah# 56
- ²³ from the town of Anathoth# 128
- ²⁴ from the town of Azmaveth# 42
- ²⁵ from the towns of Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth# 743
- ²⁶ from the towns of Ramah and Geba# 621
- ²⁷ from the town of Micmash# 122
- ²⁸ from the towns of Bethel and Ai# 223
- ²⁹ from the town of Nebo# 52
- ³⁰ from the town of Magbish# 156
- ³¹ from the other town named Elam# 1254
- ³² from the town of Harim# 320

³³ from the towns of Lod, Hadid, and Ono# 725

³⁴ from the town of Jericho# 345

³⁵ from the town of Senaah# 3630

³⁶ These are the priests: the descendants of Jedaiah through the family of Jeshua# 973

³⁷ the descendants of Immer# 1052

³⁸ the descendants of Pashhur# 1247

³⁹ the descendants of Harim# 1017

⁴⁰ These are the people from the tribe of Levi: the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel through the family of Hodaviah# 74

⁴¹ These are the singers: the descendants of Asaph# 128

⁴² These are the descendants of the Temple gatekeepers: the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai# 139

⁴³ These are the descendants of the special Temple servants: Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,

⁴⁴ Keros, Siaha, Padon,

⁴⁵ Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub,

⁴⁶ Hagab, Shalmal, Hanan,

⁴⁷ Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah,

⁴⁸ Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam,

⁴⁹ Uzza, Paseah, Besai,

⁵⁰ Asnah, Meunim, Nephussim,

⁵¹ Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,

⁵² Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha,

⁵³ Barkos, Sisera, Temah,

⁵⁴ Neziah, and Hatipha.

⁵⁵ These are the descendants of
Solomons servants: Sotai, Hassophereth,
Peruda,

⁵⁶ Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,

⁵⁷ Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth
Hazzebaim, and Ami,

⁵⁸ the Temple servants and descendants
of Solomons servants# 392

⁵⁹ 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:

⁶⁰ the descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah,
and Nekoda# 652

⁶¹ 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.)

⁶² 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.

⁶³The 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.

⁶⁴All 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.

⁶⁵ (2: 64)

⁶⁶They had 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6720 donkeys.

⁶⁷ (2: 66)

⁶⁸When 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.

⁶⁹They gave as much as they were able. These are the things they gave for building the Temple: 1100 pounds of gold, about 4 tons of silver, and 100 coats that priests wear.

⁷⁰So 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.

3¹So by the seventh month, the Israelites had moved back to their own hometowns. At that time all the people met together in Jerusalem. They were all united as one people.

²Then Jeshua son of Jozadak and the priests with him, along with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and the people with him, built the altar of the God of Israel. They built the altar of the God of Israel so that they could offer sacrifices on it. They built it just as it says in the Law of Moses. Moses was Gods special servant.

³They were afraid of the other people living near them, but that didnt stop them. They built the altar on its old foundation and offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD. They offered sacrifices in the morning and in the evening.

⁴Then they celebrated the Festival of Shelters just as the Law of Moses said.

They offered the right number of burnt offerings for each day of the festival.

⁵After that, they began offering the continual burnt offerings each day and the offerings for the New Moon and all the other festivals that were commanded by the LORD. The people also began giving any other gifts they wanted to give to the LORD.

⁶So on the first day of the seventh month, these Israelites again began offering sacrifices to the LORD. This was done, even though the LORD'S Temple had not been rebuilt.

⁷Then those who had come back from captivity gave money to the stonecutters 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.

⁸So in the second month 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.

⁹These 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.

¹⁰The 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.

¹¹They sang the response songs, Songs of Praise and Praise the LORD Because He is Good. His Faithful Love Will Last Forever. Then all the people cheered they gave a loud shout and praised the LORD because the foundation of the LORD'S Temple had been laid.

¹²But many of the older priests, Levites, and family leaders, who could remember seeing the first Temple, began to cry aloud. They cried while the others there shouted for joy.

¹³The 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.

4¹ Some people living in the area were against the people of Judah and Benjamin. They heard that these people who had returned from captivity were building a temple for the LORD, the God of Israel.

²So they came to Zerubbabel and to the family leaders and said, Let us help you build. We want to worship your God, the same as you. We have offered sacrifices to him ever since King Esarhaddon of Assyria brought us here.

³But 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.

⁴ So these people who lived near them tried to discourage them and make them afraid so that they would stop building the Temple.

⁵ They paid government officials to work against the people of Judah to keep them from completing their building plans. They did this the whole time Cyrus was the king of Persia and continued up to the time Darius became king.

⁶ The year Xerxes became the king of Persia, these enemies of Judah sent him a letter containing their complaints against the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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:

⁹From 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,

¹⁰and from the other people who the great and powerful Ashurbanipal moved to the city of Samaria and other places in the country west of the Euphrates River.

¹¹This is the copy of the letter sent to King Artaxerxes: From your servants living in the area west of the Euphrates River.

¹²King 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 refused to obey other kings. Now they have almost finished repairing the foundations and building the walls.

¹³Also, 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.

¹⁴We have a responsibility to the king. We don't want to see this happen, so we are sending this letter to inform the king.

¹⁵King Artaxerxes, we suggest that you search the writings of the kings who ruled before you. You will see in the writings that Jerusalem is a city that is difficult to rule. It has always refused to obey other kings and nations who tried to control it. It has a long history as a place where trouble begins. That is why it was destroyed.

¹⁶King 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.

¹⁷Then 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:

¹⁸The letter you sent us has been translated and read to me.

¹⁹I 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 refusing to obey their kings. Jerusalem has been a place where this kind of refusal and revolt has happened often.

²⁰ 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ So the work stopped on Gods Temple in Jerusalem. The work did not continue

until the second year that Darius was king of Persia.

5¹ 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.

² So Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak again started working on the Temple in Jerusalem. All of Gods prophets were with them and were supporting the work.

³ 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 and the people with him, Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and repair it like new?

⁴ They also asked Zerubbabel, What are the names of the men who are working on this building?

⁵ But God was watching over the Jewish leaders. The builders didnt have to stop working until a report could be sent to

King Darius. They continued working until the king sent his answer back.

⁶Tattenai the governor of the area west of the Euphrates River, Shethar Bozenai, and the important people with them sent a letter to King Darius.

⁷This is a copy of that letter: To King Darius. Greetings:

⁸King 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 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.

⁹We 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?

¹⁰We 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ But, in the first year that Cyrus was king of Babylon, King Cyrus gave a special order for Gods Temple to be rebuilt.

¹⁴ And Cyrus brought out from his false gods temple in Babylon the gold and silver things that were taken from Gods Temple in the past. Nebuchadnezzar took them from the Temple in Jerusalem and brought them to his false gods 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 Gods Temple in the same place it was in the past.

¹⁶So Sheshbazzar came and built the foundations of Gods Temple in Jerusalem. From that day until now, the work has continued, but it is not yet finished.

¹⁷Now, 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 Gods Temple in Jerusalem. And then, sir, please send us a letter to let us know what you have decided to do about this.

6¹ 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.

²A 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:

³During 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.

⁴Its 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 kings treasury.

⁵Also, the gold and silver things from Gods 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 Gods Temple.

⁶Now then, I, Darius, order you Tattenai, governor of the area west of the Euphrates River, and Shethar Bozenai, and all the officials living in that province, to stay away from Jerusalem.

⁷Dont bother the workers. Dont try to stop the work on this Temple of God. Let the Jewish governor and the Jewish leaders rebuild it. Let them rebuild Gods Temple in the same place it was in the past.

⁸Now I give this order. You must do this for the Jewish leaders building Gods Temple: The cost of the building must be fully paid from the kings 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.

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 Gods 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 Gods 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 Gods Temple in Jerusalem. They did these things as it is written in the Book of Moses.

¹⁹On 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.

²¹ So 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 Gods Temple.

7¹ 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.

²Hilkiah was the son of Shallum. Shallum was the son of Zadok. Zadok was the son of Ahitub.

³Ahitub was the son of Amariah. Amariah was the son of Azariah. Azariah was the son of Meraioth.

⁴Meraioth was the son of Zerariah. Zerariah was the son of Uzzi. Uzzi was the son of Bukki.

⁵Bukki 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.

⁶Ezra 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year that Artaxerxes was king.

⁹ Ezra left Babylon on the first day of the first month and arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month. With Gods blessing his trip went well.

¹⁰ 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.

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:

¹²From King Artaxerxes. To Ezra the priest, a teacher of the law of the God of heaven. Greetings!

¹³I 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.

¹⁴I 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.

¹⁵I 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.

¹⁶You 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.

¹⁷Use 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.

¹⁸Then 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.

¹⁹Take all these things to the God of Jerusalem. They are for the worship in the Temple of your God.

²⁰And you may get any other things that you need for the Temple of your God. Use the money in the kings treasury to buy anything you need.

²¹Now I, King Artaxerxes, give this order: I order all the men who keep the kings 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.

²²Give 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.

²³Anything 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 dont want God to be angry with my kingdom or my sons.

²⁴I want you men to know that it is against the law to make the priests,

Levites, singers, gatekeepers, Temple servants, and other workers in Gods Temple pay taxes. They dont have to pay taxes, money to honor the king, or any customs fees.

²⁵ 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 dont know those laws.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ Blessed is the LORD, the God of our ancestors. He put the idea into the kings heart to honor the LORD'S Temple in Jerusalem.

²⁸ God showed his faithful love to me in front of the king, his advisors, and the kings 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.

8¹ 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:

² from the descendants of Phinehas: Gershom; from the descendants of Ithamar: Daniel; from the descendants of David: Hattush;

³ from the descendants of Shecaniah: the descendants of Parosh, Zechariah, and 150 other men;

⁴ from the descendants of Pahath Moab: Eliehoenai son of Zerariah, and 200 other men;

⁵ from the descendants of Zattu: Shecaniah son of Jahaziel, and 300 other men;

⁶ from the descendants of Adin: Ebed son of Jonathan, and 50 other men;

⁷ from the descendants of Elam: Jeshaiiah son of Athaliah, and 70 other men;

⁸from the descendants of Shephatiah: Zebadiah son of Michael, and 80 other men;

⁹from the descendants of Joab: Obadiah son of Jehiel, and 218 other men;

¹⁰from the descendants of Bani: Shelomith son of Josiphiah, and 160 other men;

¹¹from the descendants of Bebai: Zechariah son of Bebai, and 28 other men;

¹²from the descendants of Azgad: Johanan son of Hakkatan, and 110 other men;

¹³from the last of the descendants of Adonikam: Eliphelet, Jeuel, Shemaiah, and 60 other men;

¹⁴from the descendants of Bigvai: Uthai, Zaccur, and 70 other men.

¹⁵I 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.

¹⁶So I called these leaders: Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and

Meshullam, and I called Joiarib and Elnathan. (These men were teachers.)

¹⁷I 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 Gods Temple.

¹⁸Because God was with us, they sent Sherebiah, a skilled man from the descendants of Mahli (Mahli was a son of Levi, one of Israels sons.) They also sent his sons and brothers, 18 men in all.

¹⁹They also sent Hashabiah and Jeshaiah from the descendants of Merari, along with their brothers and nephews. In all there were 20 men.

²⁰Besides 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.

²¹There near the Ahava River, I announced that all of us should fast to humble ourselves before our God. We wanted to ask God to give us a safe trip and protect us, our children, and everything we owned.

²²I didnt want to ask King Artaxerxes for protection because of what we had told him. We had said, Our God is with everyone who trusts him, but he is very angry with everyone who turns away from him. So I was embarrassed to ask the king to send soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on our trip.

²³So we fasted and prayed to our God about our trip. And he answered our prayers.

²⁴Then I chose twelve of the priests who were leaders. I chose Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brothers.

²⁵I weighed the silver, gold, and the other things that were given for Gods Temple. I gave them to the twelve priests I had chosen. King Artaxerxes, his advisors, his important officials, and all the Israelites in Babylon gave those things for Gods Temple.

²⁶I weighed all these things. There were 25 tons of silver. There were also 7500 pounds of silver dishes and things. There were 3 3/4 tons of gold.

²⁷And I gave them 20 gold bowls. The bowls weighed about 19 pounds. And I gave them two beautiful dishes

made from polished bronze that were as valuable as gold.

²⁸Then 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.

²⁹So 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.

³⁰So 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 Gods Temple in Jerusalem.

³¹On the twelfth day of the first month we left the Ahava River and started toward Jerusalem. God was with us, and he protected us from enemies and robbers along the way.

³²Then we arrived in Jerusalem. We rested there for three days.

³³On 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.

³⁴We counted and weighed everything and we wrote down the total weight.

³⁵Then the Jewish people who came 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.

³⁶Then 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.

9¹After 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.

²The 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 around them. The leaders and important officials of the Israelites have set a bad example in this thing.

³When 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.

⁴Then everyone who respected Gods 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.

⁵Then, 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.

⁶Then 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.

⁷We 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.

⁸But 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.

⁹Yes, 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.

¹⁰Now, 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.

¹⁵LORD, 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.

10¹ Ezra was praying and confessing. He was crying and bowing down in front of Gods Temple. While Ezra was doing that, a large group of the Israelitesmen, women, and childrengathered around him. They were crying.

²Then 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.

³Now 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 Gods law.

⁴Get up, Ezra. This is your responsibility, but we will support you. So be brave and do it.

⁵So Ezra got up. He made the leading priests, the Levites, and all the Israelites promise to do what he said.

⁶Then 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.

⁷Then 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.

⁸Those who did not come to Jerusalem in three days like the officials and elders said would lose their property and be removed from the group.

⁹So in three days all the men from the families of Judah and Benjamin gathered in Jerusalem. And on the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the people met together in the Temple yard. They were

very upset because of the reason for the meeting and because of the heavy rain.

¹⁰Then Ezra the priest stood and said to them, You people have not been faithful to God. You have married foreign women. You have made Israel more guilty by doing that.

¹¹Now you must confess your sins to the LORD, the God of your ancestors. You must obey his command. Separate yourselves from the people living around you and from your foreign wives.

¹²Then the whole group who met together answered Ezra. They shouted, Ezra, you are right! We must do what you say.

¹³But 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.

¹⁴Let 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.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ And by the first day of the first month, they finished discussing all the men who had married foreign women.

¹⁸ These are the names of the descendants of the priests who married foreign women: From the descendants of Jeshua son of Jozadak and Jeshuas brothers, these men: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah.

¹⁹ All of them promised to divorce their wives. And then each one of them offered a ram from the flock for a guilt offering. They did that because of their guilt.

²⁰From the descendants of Immer, these men: Hanani and Zebadiah.

²¹From the descendants of Harim, these men: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah.

²²From the descendants of Pashhur, these men: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasaah.

²³Among the Levites, these are the men who married foreign women: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (also called Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

²⁴Among 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.

²⁵Among the Israelites, these men married foreign women: From the descendants of Parosh, these men: Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malkijah, and Benaiah.

²⁶From the descendants of Elam, these men: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Elijah.

²⁷From the descendants of Zattu, these men: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza.

²⁸From the descendants of Bebai, these men: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai.

²⁹From the descendants of Bani, these men: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Jeremoth.

³⁰From the descendants of Pahath Moab, these men: Adna, Kelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh.

³¹From the descendants of Harim, these men: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

³²Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.

³³From the descendants of Hashum, these men: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.

³⁴From the descendants of Bani, these men: Maadai, Amram, Uel,

³⁵Benaiah, Bedeiah, Keluhi,

³⁶Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

³⁷Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu.

³⁸From the descendants of Binnui, these men: Shimei,

³⁹Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah,

⁴⁰Macnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

⁴¹Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah,

⁴² Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.

⁴³ From the descendants of Nebo, these men: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, and Benaiah.

⁴⁴ All these men married foreign women, and some of them had children with these wives.

Nehemiah

1 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.

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵Then 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.

⁶Please 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 fathers family have sinned against you.

⁷We Israelites have been very bad to you. We have not obeyed the commands, rules, and laws you gave your servant Moses.

⁸Please 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.

⁹But 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.

¹⁰The Israelites are your servants and your people. You used your great power and rescued them.

¹¹So, Lord, please listen to my prayer. I am your servant. Please listen to the prayers of your servants who want to show respect for your name. You know I am the king's wine servant, so please help me today. Help me as I ask the king for help. Give me success and help me to be pleasing to the king.

2¹In 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.

²So the king asked me, Are you sick? Why do you look sad? I think your heart is full of sadness. Then I was very afraid.

³But 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.

⁴Then the king said to me, What do you want me to do? Before I answered, I prayed to the God of heaven.

⁵Then 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.

⁶The 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.

⁷I also said to the king, If it would please the king to do something else for me, let me ask. Please give me some letters to show the governors of the area west of the Euphrates River. I need these letters so that the governors will give me permission to pass safely through their lands on my way to Judah.

⁸I also need lumber for the heavy wooden beams for the gates, the walls, the walls around the Temple, and my house. So I need a letter from you to Asaph, who is in charge of your forests. The king gave me the letters

and everything I asked for. The king did that because my God was kind to me.

⁹So 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.

¹⁰Sanballat from Horon and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about what I was doing. They were very upset and angry that someone had come to help the Israelites.

¹¹I 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.

¹²(2:11)

¹³While 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.

¹⁴Then I rode on toward the Fountain Gate and the Kings Pool. As I got close, I could see there was not enough room for my horse to get through.

¹⁵So I went up the valley in the dark, inspecting the wall. Finally, I turned back and went back in through the Valley Gate.

¹⁶The officials and important Israelites didnt know where I had gone. They didnt know what I was doing. I had not yet said anything to the Jews, the priests, the kings family, the officials, or any of the other people who would be doing the work.

¹⁷Then 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, lets rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Then we will not be ashamed anymore.

¹⁸I also told them that my God had been kind to me. I told them what the king had said to me. Then they answered, Lets start to work, now! So we began this good work.

¹⁹But Sanballat from Horon, 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?

²⁰But this is what I said to them: The God of heaven will help us succeed. We are Gods servants and we will rebuild this city. You cannot help us in this work because none of your family lived here in Jerusalem. You dont own any of this land, and you have no right to be in this place.

3¹The 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.

²The 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.

³The 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.

⁴Meremoth 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.

⁵The men from Tekoa repaired the next section of the wall, but the leaders from Tekoa refused to work for Nehemiah their governor.

⁶Joiada 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.

⁷The 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.

⁸Uzziel 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.

⁹Rephaiah son of Hur repaired the next section of the wall. Rephaiah was the governor of half of Jerusalem.

¹⁰Jedaiah 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.

¹¹Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-Moab repaired the next section. They also repaired Oven Tower.

¹²Shallum son of Hallohesh repaired the next section of the wall. His daughters helped him. Shallum was the governor of the other half of Jerusalem.

¹³The 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.

¹⁴Malkijah 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.

¹⁵Shallun 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 Kings Garden. He repaired the wall all the way to the steps that go down from the City of David.

¹⁶Nehemiah 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.

¹⁷The men from the tribe of Levi repaired the next section. They worked under Rehum son of Bani. Hashabiah

repaired the next section. Hashabiah was governor of half the district of Keilah. He made repairs for his own district.

¹⁸Their brothers repaired the next section. They worked under Binnui son of Henadad. Binnui was the governor of the other half of the district of Keilah.

¹⁹Ezer 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.

²⁰Baruch 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.

²¹Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired the next section of wall from the entrance to Eliashibs house to the end of that house.

²²The next section of walls was repaired by the priests who lived in that area.

²³Benjamin 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 Azariahs 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 kings upper house. That is near the courtyard of the kings guard. Pedaiiah 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 Zalaphs

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.

4¹ 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!

⁴Nehemiah 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.

⁵Don't take away their guilt or forgive the sins they have done in your sight. They have insulted and discouraged the builders.

⁶We 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.

⁷But 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.

⁸So 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.

⁹But 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.

¹⁰And 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.

¹¹And 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.

¹²Then 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.

¹³So 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.

¹⁴After looking over everything, I stood up and spoke to the important families, the officials, and the rest of the people. I said, Dont 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!

¹⁵Then 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.

¹⁶From that day on, half of my men worked on the wall. The other half of my men were on guard, ready with spears, shields, bows, and armor. The army officers stood behind all the people of Judah who were building the wall.

¹⁷The builders and their helpers had their tools in one hand and a weapon in the other hand.

¹⁸Each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. The man who blew the trumpet to warn the people stayed next to me.

¹⁹Then I spoke to the leading families, the officials, and the rest of the people. I said, This is a very big job and we are spread out along the wall. We are far from each other.

²⁰ So if you hear the trumpet, run to that place. We will all meet together there, and our God will fight for us!

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

²³ 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.

5¹ 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.

⁴And still other people were saying, We have to pay the kings tax on our fields and vineyards. But we cannot afford to pay, so we are borrowing money to pay the tax.

⁵We 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.

⁶When I heard their complaints, I was very angry.

⁷I 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! Then I called for all the people to meet together

⁸and 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! The

rich people and officials kept quiet. They could not find anything to say.

⁹So 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!

¹⁰My 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.

¹¹You 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.

¹²Then 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.

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴And 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. I was governor of Judah for twelve years.

¹⁵But 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 didnt do things like that.

¹⁶I worked hard at building the wall of Jerusalem. All my men gathered there to work on the wall. We didnt 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.

6 ¹ 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, lets 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 dont want the

work to stop just so I can come down and meet with you.

⁴Sanballat and Geshem sent the same message to me four times, and I sent the same answer back to them each time.

⁵Then, 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.

⁶This 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.

⁷And the rumor is that you 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, lets meet in Gods Temple. Lets go inside the Holy Place 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.

¹³They hired Shemaiah to scare me and make me sin by going into that part of the Temple. They were planning those

bad things against me so that they could shame me.

¹⁴My 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.

¹⁵So the wall of Jerusalem was completed on the 25th day of the month of Elul. 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.

¹⁹And 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.

7¹After we finished building the wall and put the doors in the gates, we chose the men who would guard the gates and the men to sing in the Temple and help the priests.

²Next, I put my brother Hanani in charge of Jerusalem. I chose another man named Hananiah to be the commander of the fort. I picked Hanani because he was a very honest man and he feared God more than most people do.

³Then I said to Hanani and Hananiah, Each day you must wait until the sun has been up for several hours before you open the gates of Jerusalem. You must shut and lock the gates before the sun goes down. Also choose people who live in Jerusalem as guards. Put some of them at special places to guard the city, and put the other people near their own houses.

⁴ Now 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.

⁵ So 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 Jedaiah through the family of Jeshua# 973

⁴⁰ the descendants of Immer# 1052

⁴¹ the descendants of Pashhur# 1247

⁴² the descendants of Harim# 1017

⁴³ These are the people from the tribe of Levi: the descendants of Jeshua through Kadmiel through the family of Hodeiah # 74

⁴⁴ These are the singers: the descendants of Asaph# 148

⁴⁵ These are the gatekeepers: the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai# 138

⁴⁶ These are the special Temple servants: the descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,

⁴⁷ Keros, Sia, Padon,

⁴⁸ Lebana, Hagaba, Shalmal,

⁴⁹ Hanan, Giddel, Gaher,

⁵⁰ Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda,

⁵¹ Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah,

⁵² Besai, Meunim, Nephussim,

⁵³ Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,

⁵⁴ Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha,

⁵⁵ Barkos, Sisera, Temah,

⁵⁶ Neziah, and Hatipha.

⁵⁷ These are the descendants of the servants of Solomon: Sotai, Sophereth, Perida,

⁵⁸ Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,

⁵⁹ Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth Hazzebaim, and Amon,

⁶⁰ the Temple servants and the descendants of Solomons servants# 392

⁶¹ 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:

⁶² the descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda# 642

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 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.

⁶⁷ (7: 66)

⁶⁸ They had 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6720 donkeys.

⁶⁹ (7: 68)

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.

⁷²All together the other people gave 375 pounds of gold, 2500 pounds of silver, and 67 pieces of clothing for the priests.

⁷³So the priests, the people from the tribe of Levi, the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Temple servants settled down in their own towns. And all the other Israelites settled down in their own towns. By the seventh month of the year, all the Israelites had settled down in their own towns.

8¹ 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.

²So Ezra the priest brought the law before those who had met together. This was on the first day of the month. It was the seventh month of the year. Men, women, and anyone old enough to listen and understand were at the meeting.

³Ezra 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.

⁴Ezra 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.

⁵So 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.

⁶Ezra 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.

⁷These 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 Pelaiah.

⁸They read the Book of the Law of God. They made it easy to understand, and explained what it meant. They did this so that the people could understand what was being read.

⁹Then 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.

¹⁰Nehemiah 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.

¹¹The Levites helped the people to calm down. They said, Be quiet, calm down, this is a special day. Don't be sad.

¹²Then 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 Gods law and were now able to understand it.

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴They 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.

¹⁵(8:14)

¹⁶So 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.

¹⁷The 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!

¹⁸Ezra 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.

9¹Then 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.

²Those people who were true Israelites separated themselves from foreigners. The Israelites stood and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors.

³They 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.

⁴Then 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.

⁵Then 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.

⁶You 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.

⁷You are the LORD, the God who chose Abram. You led him from Ur in Babylonia. You changed his name to Abraham.

⁸You 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, and Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Girgashites. But you promised to give that land to Abrahams descendants. And you kept your promise because you are good.

⁹You saw our ancestors suffering in Egypt and heard them call for help by the Red Sea.

¹⁰You 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.

¹¹You 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.

¹²With 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.

¹³Then 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.

¹⁴You told them about your special day of rest the Sabbath. Through your servant Moses, you gave them commands, laws, and teachings.

¹⁵They 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.

¹⁶But our ancestors became proud and stubborn. They refused to obey your commands.

¹⁷They refused to listen. They forgot the amazing things you did with them. They became stubborn. They 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 didnt leave them!

¹⁸You didnt leave them even when they made gold calves and said, These are the gods that led us out of Egypt.

¹⁹You are very kind, so you didnt leave them in the desert. You didnt take the tall cloud away from them by day. You continued to lead them. You didnt take the column of fire away from them at night. You continued to light their path and to show them which way to go.

²⁰You gave them your good Spirit to make them wise. You gave them manna for food. You gave them water for their thirst.

²¹You took care of them for 40 years. They had all they needed in the desert. Their clothes didnt wear out, and their feet didnt swell and hurt.

²²You 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.

²³You 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.

²⁴Their 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.

²⁵They 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.

²⁶And then they turned against you. They threw away your teachings. They killed your prophets. Those prophets warned the people. They tried to bring them back to you. But our ancestors said terrible things against you.

²⁷So 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.

²⁸Then 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.

²⁹You 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.

³⁰You 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 didnt listen. So you gave them to people in other countries.

³¹But you are so kind! You didnt completely destroy them. You didnt leave them. You are such a kind and merciful God!

³²Our 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!

³³ But God, you were right about everything that happened to us. You were right, and we were wrong.

³⁴ Our kings, leaders, priests, and fathers did not obey your law. They didnt listen to your commands. They ignored your warnings.

³⁵ Our ancestors didnt serve you even when they were living in their own kingdom. They didnt stop doing evil. They enjoyed all the wonderful things you gave them. They enjoyed the rich land and had plenty of room, but they didnt stop their evil ways.

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ 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.

³⁸Because 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.

10¹These are the names on the sealed agreement: Nehemiah the governor, the son of Hacaliah. Zedekiah,
²Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,
³Pashhur, Amariah, Malkijah,
⁴Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,
⁵Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,
⁶Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,
⁷Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,
⁸Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah. These were the priests who put their names on the sealed agreement.

⁹And these are the Levites who put their names on the sealed agreement: Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui from the family of Henadad, Kadmiel,

¹⁰and their brothers: Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,

¹¹Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah,

¹²Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,

¹³ Hodiah, Bani, and Beninu.

¹⁴ And these are the names of the leaders who put their names on the sealed agreement: Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,

¹⁵ Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,

¹⁶ Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,

¹⁷ Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur,

¹⁸ Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai,

¹⁹ Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,

²⁰ Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,

²¹ Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua,

²² Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,

²³ Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub,

²⁴ Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek,

²⁵ Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,

²⁶ Ahiah, Hanan, Anan,

²⁷ Malluch, Harim, and Baanah.

²⁸ 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 Gods 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 Gods law. And they accepted the curse that asks for bad things to happen to them if they dont obey Gods law.

²⁹ (10: 28)

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.

³²We will accept the responsibility for obeying the commands to take care of Gods Temple. We will give 1/3 shekel of silver each year to support the Temple service to honor our God.

³³This 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.

³⁴We, 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.

³⁵We 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.

³⁶Just 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.

³⁷And we will also bring the first part of our harvest to priests to put in the storage rooms of our Gods 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.

³⁸A 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.

³⁹The 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.

11 ¹ Now the leaders of the Israelites moved into the city of Jerusalem. The other Israelites had to decide who else would move into the city. So they threw lots, and one out of every ten people had to live in Jerusalem, the holy city. The other nine people could live in their own hometowns.

² Some people volunteered to live in Jerusalem. The other people thanked and blessed them for volunteering.

³ Here are the leaders of the provinces who lived in Jerusalem. (Some of the Israelites, priests, Levites, Temple servants, and descendants of Solomons servants lived in the towns of Judah. Everyone lived on their own land in the different towns.

⁴ And other people from the families of Judah and Benjamin lived in the city of 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 Shephatiah, who was the son of Mahalalel, who was a descendant of Perez)

⁵and 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).

⁶The number of Perezs descendants living in Jerusalem was 468. All of them were brave men.

⁷These are the descendants of Benjamin who moved into Jerusalem: Sallu son of Meshullam (the son of Joed, who was the son of Pedaiiah, who was the son of Kolaiah, who was the son of Maaseiah, who was the son of Ithiel, who was the son of Jeshaiiah),

⁸and those who followed Jeshaiiah were Gabbai and Sallai. All together there were 928 men.

⁹Joel 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.

¹⁰These are the priests who moved into Jerusalem: Jedaiah son of Joiarib, Jakin,

¹¹and Seraiah son of Hilkiah (the son of Meshullam, who was the son of Zadok, who was the son of Meraioth, who was the son of Ahitub), who was the supervisor in the Temple of God,

¹²and 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),

¹³and 242 men who were Adaias 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),

¹⁴and 128 of Amashsais brothers. (These men were brave soldiers. The officer over them was Zabdiel son of Haggadolim.)

¹⁵These 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),

¹⁶Shabbethai and Jozabad (two of the leaders of the Levites in charge of the outside work of Gods Temple),

¹⁷Mattaniah (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).

¹⁸So there were 284 Levites who moved into Jerusalem, the holy city.

¹⁹These are the gatekeepers who moved into Jerusalem: Akkub, Talmon, and 172 of their brothers. They watched and guarded the gates of the city.

²⁰The 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.

²¹The Temple servants lived on the hill of Ophel. Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of the Temple servants.

²²The 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. Asaphs descendants were the singers who were responsible for the service in Gods Temple.

²³The singers obeyed orders from the king, which told them what to do from day to day.

²⁴Pethahiah son of Meshezabel told the people what the king wanted done. (Meshezabel was one of the descendants of Zerah. Zerah was Judahs son.)

²⁵The 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,

²⁶and in Jeshua, in Moladah, in Beth Pelet,

²⁷in Hazar Shual, in Beersheba and the small towns around it,

²⁸and in Ziklag, in Meconah and the small towns around it,

²⁹and in En Rimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth,

³⁰and 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.

³¹ The descendants of the family of Benjamin from Geba lived in Micmash, Aija, Bethel, and the small towns around it,

³² in Anathoth, Nob, and Ananiah,

³³ in Hazor, Ramah, and Gittaim,

³⁴ in Hadid, Zeboim, and Neballat,

³⁵ in Lod and Ono, and in the Valley of the Craftsmen.

³⁶ Some of the groups from the family of Levi moved to the land of Benjamin.

12 ¹ 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,

² Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,

³ Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,

⁴ Iddo, Ginnethon, Abijah,

⁵ Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,

⁶ Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,

⁷ Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, and Jedaiah.

These men were the leaders of the priests and their relatives in the days of Jeshua.

⁸The Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and also Mattaniah. These men, with Mattaniahs relatives, were in charge of the songs of praise to God.

⁹Bakbukiah and Unni were the relatives of those Levites. These two men stood across from them in the services.

¹⁰Jeshua was the father of Joiakim. Joiakim was the father of Eliashib. Eliashib was the father of Joiada.

¹¹Joiada was the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan was the father of Jaddua.

¹²In the days of Joiakim, these men were the leaders of the families of priests: The leader of Seraiahs family was Meraiah. The leader of Jeremiah's family was Hananiah.

¹³The leader of Ezras family was Meshullam. The leader of Amariahs family was Jehohanan.

¹⁴The leader of Malluchs family was Jonathan. The leader of Shecaniahs family was Joseph.

¹⁵The leader of Harims family was Adna. The leader of Meremoths family was Helkai.

¹⁶The leader of Iddos family was Zechariah. The leader of Ginnethons family was Meshullam.

¹⁷The leader of Abijahs family was Zicri. The leader of Miniamin and Maadiahs families was Piltai.

¹⁸The leader of Bilgahs family was Shammua. The leader of Shemaiahs family was Jehonathan.

¹⁹The leader of Joiaribs family was Mattenai. The leader of Jedaiahs family was Uzzi.

²⁰The leader of Sallus family was Kallai. The leader of Amoks family was Eber.

²¹The leader of Hilkiahs family was Hashabiah. The leader of Jedaiahs family was Nethanel.

²²The 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.

²³The family leaders among the descendants of the Levites and up to the time of Johanan son of Eliashib were written in the history book.

²⁴And 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.

²⁵The gatekeepers who guarded the storerooms next to the gates were Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub.

²⁶They 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.

²⁷The 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.

²⁸And 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.

²⁹ (12: 28)

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.)

³⁶There 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.

³⁷They 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. They walked over the house of David and went toward the Water Gate.

³⁸The 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.

³⁹Then 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.

⁴⁰Then 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.

⁴⁵The priests and Levites 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.

⁴⁶(Long ago, in the days of David, Asaph had been the director. And he had many songs of praise and thanks to God.)

⁴⁷So 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.

13¹ 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.

²That 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.

³So when the Israelites heard that law, they obeyed it. They separated themselves from the people who were descendants of foreigners.

⁴But, before that happened, Eliashib had given a room in the Temple to Tobiah. Eliashib was the priest in charge of the storerooms in our Gods 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.

⁵(13: 4)

⁶I 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.

⁷ 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!

⁸ I was very angry about what Eliashib had done, so I threw all of Tobiahs things out of the room.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ So I told the officials that they were wrong. I asked them, Why didnt you take care of Gods Temple? Then I called all Levites together and told them to go back to their places and duties in the Temple.

¹² Then everyone in Judah brought their tenth of grain, new wine, and oil to the Temple. These things were put into the storerooms.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴My God, please remember me for these things I have done. Dont forget all I have faithfully done for the Temple of my God and for its services.

¹⁵In 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.

¹⁶There 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.

¹⁸You 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, Dont stay the night in front of the wall. If you do that again, I will arrest you. So from that time on they didnt 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 didnt 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 Gods name. I said to them, You must not marry the daughters of these foreigners. Dont let their daughters marry your sons, and dont 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.

²⁷ And now, we hear that you also are doing this terrible sin. You are not being true to our God. You are marrying foreign women.

²⁸ Joiada was the son of Eliashib the high priest. One of Joiada's sons was a son-in-law of Sanballat from Horon. I forced him to leave this place. I forced him to run away.

²⁹ My 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.

³⁰ So 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.

³¹ And 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.

Esther

1 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.

⁷Wine was served in gold cups, and every cup was different. There was plenty of the king's wine, because the king was very generous.

⁸The 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.

⁹Queen Vashti also gave a party for the women in the king's palace.

¹⁰On 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.

¹¹ (1:10)

¹² But when the eunuchs told Queen Vashti about the king's command, she refused to come. Then the king was very angry.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ (1:13)

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.

¹⁷I 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.

¹⁸Today 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.

¹⁹So 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.

²⁰Then when the kings 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.

²¹The king and his important officials were happy with this advice, so King Xerxes did as Memucan suggested.

²²King 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 persons language that every man was to be the ruler over his own family.

2¹ Later, King Xerxes stopped being angry. Then he remembered Vashti and what she had done. He remembered his commands about her.

²Then the kings personal servants had a suggestion. They said, Search for beautiful young virgins for the king.

³Let 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 kings women. They will be under the care of Hegai, the kings eunuch, who is in charge of the women. Then give beauty treatments to all of them.

⁴Then let the one who is pleasing to the king become the new queen in Vashtis place. The king liked this suggestion, so he accepted it.

⁵Now 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.

⁶Mordecai 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.

⁷Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah. She didnt 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.

⁸When the kings 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 kings palace and put into Hegais care. Hegai was in charge of the kings women.

⁹He liked Esther. She became his favorite, so he quickly gave Esther beauty treatments and special food. He chose seven slave women from the kings palace and gave them to Esther. Then he moved Esther and her seven women servants into the best place where the kings women lived.

¹⁰Esther didnt tell anyone she was a Jew. She didnt tell anyone about her family background, because Mordecai had told her not to.

¹¹Every day Mordecai walked back and forth near the area where the kings women lived. He did this because he wanted to find out how Esther was, and what was happening to her.

¹²Before a young woman could take her turn to go in before King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatmentssix months with oil of

myrrh and six months with perfumes and cosmetics.

¹³When her time came to go in to the king, she could choose to wear or take whatever she wanted from the womens living area.

¹⁴In the evening the young woman would go to the kings palace. And in the morning she would return to another area where the kings women lived. Then she would be placed under the care of a man named Shaashgaz. He was the kings 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.

¹⁵The 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 kings officer in charge of the women, suggested. Everyone who saw Esther liked her.

¹⁶So 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 Esthers 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.

¹⁹ Mordecai was sitting next to the kings 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 kings gate, this happened: Bigthana and Teresh, two of the kings officers who guarded the doorway, became angry with the king. They began to make plans to kill King Xerxes.

²² But Mordecai 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.

²³ Then the report was checked out. It was learned that Mordecais 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 kings histories in front of the king.

3¹ 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 kings leaders at the kings 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 kings leaders at the gate asked Mordecai, Why dont you obey the kings command to bow down to Haman?

⁴ Day after day, the kings 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 Mordecais 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 dont

obey the kings laws. It is not right for the king to allow them to continue to live in your kingdom.

⁹If it pleases the king, I have a suggestion: Give a command to destroy these people. And I will put 750,000 pounds of silver into the kings 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 kings secretaries were called. They wrote out all of Hamans commands in the language of each province. And they wrote them in the language of each group of people. They wrote to the kings 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 commands with the kings own ring.

¹³ Messengers carried the letters to all the kings provinces. The letters were the kings 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.

¹⁴ A 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.

¹⁵ At the kings 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.

4¹ When 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.

² But Mordecai went only as far as the kings gate. No one was allowed to enter the gate dressed in sackcloth.

³ In every province where the kings 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.

⁴ Esthers 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.

⁵ Then Esther called Hathach, one of the kings eunuchs who had been chosen to serve her. She commanded him to find out what was bothering Mordecai, and why.

⁶ So Hathach went out to where Mordecai was in the open place of the city in front of the kings gate.

⁷ Then 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 kings treasury for killing Jews.

⁸Mordecai also gave Hathach a copy of the kings 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:

¹¹Mordecai, all the kings leaders and all the people of the kings 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 persons life will be saved. And I have not been called to go see the king for 30 days.

¹²Then Esthers message was given to Mordecai. When he got her message, Mordecai sent his answer back: Esther, dont think that just because you live in

the kings palace you will be the only Jew to escape.

¹³(4:12)

¹⁴If you keep quiet now, help and freedom for the Jews will come from another place. But you and your fathers family will all die. And who knows, maybe you have been chosen to be the queen for such a time as this.

¹⁵Then Esther sent this answer to Mordecai: Mordecai, go and get all the Jews in Susa together, and fast for me. Dont 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 didnt call me, but I will do it anyway. If I die, I die.

¹⁶(4:15)

¹⁷So Mordecai went away and did everything Esther told him to do.

5¹On the third day, Esther put on her special robes. Then she stood in the inside area of the kings palace, in front of the kings hall. The king was sitting on his throne in the hall, facing the place where people enter the throne room.

²When 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 kings gold scepter.

³Then 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.

⁴Esther said, I have prepared a party for you and Haman. Will you and Haman please come to the party today?

⁵Then 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.

⁶While 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.

⁷Esther answered, This is what I want to ask for:

⁸If 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.

⁹Haman left the kings palace that day very happy and in a good mood. But when he saw Mordecai at the kings gate, he became very angry. Haman was very mad at him because Mordecai didnt show any respect when Haman walked by. Mordecai was not afraid of Haman, and this made Haman mad.

¹⁰But Haman controlled his anger and went home. Then Haman called together his friends and his wife, Zeresh.

¹¹Haman 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.

¹²And thats not all, Haman added. Im 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.

¹³But all this means nothing to me. I cannot be happy as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the kings gate.

¹⁴Then Hamans 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.

6¹That 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 kings rule.)

²The servant read the book to the king. He read about the evil plan to kill King Xerxes. That was when Mordecai had learned about Bigthana and Teresh. These two men were the kings officers who guarded the doorway. They had planned to kill the king, but Mordecai learned about the plan and told someone about it.

³Then 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.

⁴Haman had just entered the outer area of the kings 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?

⁵The kings servants said, Haman is standing in the courtyard. So the king said, Bring him in.

⁶When 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? Im sure that the king is talking about honoring me.

⁷So Haman answered the king, Do this for the man the king loves to honor:

⁸Have the servants bring a special robe the king himself has worn and a horse the king himself has ridden. Have the servants put the kings special mark on the horses head.

⁹Then put one of the kings 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!

¹⁰Go 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 kings gate. Do everything that you suggested.

¹¹So 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!

¹²After that Mordecai went back to the kings gate, but Haman hurried home with his head covered because he was embarrassed and ashamed.

¹³Then 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!

¹⁴While 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.

7¹ So the king and Haman went to eat with Queen Esther.

²Then 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.

³Then 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.

⁴I 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.

⁵Then King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, Who did this to you? Where is the man

who dared to do such a thing to your people?

⁶Esther said, The man against us, our enemy, is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was filled with terror before the king and queen.

⁷The 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.

⁸Just 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.

⁹One of the eunuchs who served the king was named Harbona. He said, A hanging post 75 feet tall has been built near Hamans 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!

¹⁰So they hanged Haman on the hanging post he had built for Mordecai. Then the king stopped being angry.

8¹That 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.

²The 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.

³Then 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 had thought up the plan to hurt the Jews.

⁴Then the king held out the gold scepter to Esther. Esther got up and stood in front of the king.

⁵Then she said, King, if you like me and if it pleases you, please do this for me. Please do this if you think it is a good

idea. If the king is happy with me, please write a command that would stop the command Haman sent out. Haman the Agagite thought of a plan to destroy the Jews in all the kings provinces, and he sent out commands for this to happen.

⁶I 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.

⁷King 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.

⁸Now 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 kings special ring. No official letter written by the authority of the king and sealed with the kings ring can be canceled.

⁹Very quickly the kings secretaries were called. This was done on the 23rd day of the third month, the month of Sivan. They wrote out all of Mordecais 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.

¹⁰Mordecai wrote commands by the authority of King Xerxes. Then he sealed the letters with the kings ring and sent them by messengers on horses. The messengers rode fast horses, which were raised especially for the king.

¹¹The kings 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.

¹²The 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.

¹³A copy of the letter with the kings 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.

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵Mordecai 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.

¹⁶It was an especially happy day for the Jews, a day of great joy and happiness.

¹⁷Wherever 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.

9¹ On the 13th day of the twelfth month (Adar), the people were supposed to obey the kings 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.

² 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.

³ And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the kings administrators helped the Jews. All the leaders helped them because they were afraid of Mordecai.

⁴ Mordecai had become a very important man in the kings palace. Everyone in the provinces knew his name and knew how important he was. And Mordecai became more and more powerful.

⁵ 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.

⁶They killed and destroyed 500 men in the capital city of Susa.

⁷They also killed these men:
Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,
⁸Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,
⁹Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and
Vaizatha.

¹⁰These 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 didnt take anything that belonged to them.

¹¹That day the king heard how many men had been killed in the capital city of Susa.

¹²So the king said to Queen Esther, The Jews have killed 500 men in Susa, including Hamans 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.

¹³Esther said, If it pleases the king, please let the Jews in Susa do the same thing again tomorrow. Also, hang the bodies of Hamans ten sons on posts.

¹⁴So the king gave the command that it should be done. So the law was given

in Susa, and they hanged Hamans ten sons.

¹⁵The Jews in Susa met together on the 14th day of the month of Adar. They killed 300 men in Susa, but they didnt take the things that belonged to them.

¹⁶At 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 didnt take anything that belonged to them.

¹⁷This 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.

¹⁸The 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.

¹⁹So 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.

²⁵Haman did this, but Esther went to talk to the king. So he sent out new commands. These commands not only ruined Hamans 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.

²⁶At 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.

²⁷ (9: 26)

²⁸They 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 Esthers letter made the rules for Purim official, and these things were written down in a book.

10¹ King Xerxes made people pay taxes. All the people in the kingdom, even the faraway cities on the seacoast, had to pay taxes.

²And 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.

³Mordecai 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.

Job

1 ¹ 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.

² Job had seven sons and three daughters.

³ He owned 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 1000 oxen, and 500 female donkeys. He had many servants. He was the richest man in the east.

⁴ Job's sons took turns having dinner parties in their homes, and they invited their sisters.

⁵ 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.

⁶ Then the day came for the angels to meet with the LORD. Even Satan was there with them.

⁷The LORD said to Satan, Where have you been? Satan answered the LORD, I have been roaming around the earth, going from place to place.

⁸Then 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.

⁹Satan answered the LORD, But Job has a good reason to respect you.

¹⁰You 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.

¹¹But if you were to destroy everything he has, I promise you that he would curse you to your face.

¹²The LORD said to Satan, All right, do whatever you want with anything that he has, but dont hurt Job himself. Then Satan left the meeting.

¹³One day Jobs sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine at the oldest brothers house.

¹⁴A messenger came to Job and said, We were plowing the fields with the oxen and the donkeys were eating grass nearby,

¹⁵when 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!

¹⁶That 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!

¹⁷That 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!

¹⁸That messenger was still speaking when another one came in and said, Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine at the oldest brothers house.

¹⁹A 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!

²⁰When 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

²¹and 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!

²²Even after all this, Job did not sin. He did not accuse God of doing anything wrong.

2¹Then another day came for the angels to meet with the LORD. Satan joined them for this meeting with the LORD.

²The LORD said to Satan, Where have you been? Satan answered the LORD, I have been roaming around the earth, going from place to place.

³Then 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.

⁴Satan answered, Skin for skin! A man will give everything he has to protect himself.

⁵I swear, if you attack his flesh and bones, he will curse you to your face!

⁶So the LORD said to Satan, All right, Job is in your hands, but you are not allowed to kill him.

⁷So 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.

⁸Job sat on the pile of ashes where he was mourning and used a piece of broken pottery to scrape his sores.

⁹His wife said to him, Are you still holding on to your faith? Why dont you just curse God and die!

¹⁰Job 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.

¹¹ Jobs 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.

¹² But his friends didnt 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.

¹³ Then they sat on the ground with Job for seven days and seven nights. They didnt say a word, because they saw he was in so much pain.

3¹ Then Job opened his mouth and cursed the day he was born.

² He said,

³ I wish the day I was born would be lost forever. I wish the night they said, Its a boy! had never happened.

⁴ I wish that day had remained dark. I wish God above had forgotten that day and not let any light shine on it.

⁵I wish that bitter day had remained as dark as death, covered with the darkest clouds.

⁶I wish the darkness had carried away that night, that it was left off the calendar and not included in any of the months.

⁷I wish that night had produced nothing and no happy shouts had been heard.

⁸Some magicians think they can wake Leviathan. So let them say their curses and curse the day I was born.

⁹Let that days 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.

¹⁰I wish it had stopped me from being born and kept me from seeing all these troubles.

¹¹Why didnt I die when I was born? Why didnt I die as I came from my mothers womb?

¹²Why did my mother hold me on her knees? Why did her breasts feed me?

¹³If I had died when I was born, I would be at peace now. I wish I were asleep and at rest

¹⁴with the kings and their advisors who built palaces that are now in ruins.

¹⁵I wish I were buried with rulers who filled their graves with gold and silver.

¹⁶Why 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.

¹⁷There the wicked stop causing trouble, and the weary find rest.

¹⁸Even prisoners find relief there; they no longer hear their guards shouting at them.

¹⁹Everyone from the greatest to the least important will be there, and even the slave is free from his master.

²⁰Why must a suffering person continue to live? Why let anyone live such a bitter life?

²¹Such people want to die, but death does not come. They search for death more than for hidden treasure.

²²They would be happy to find their grave. They would rejoice to find their tomb.

²³But God keeps their future a secret and builds a wall around them to protect them.

²⁴When it is time to eat, all I can do is sigh with sadness, not joy. My groans pour out like water.

²⁵I was afraid something terrible would happen, and what I feared most has happened.

²⁶I cannot calm down or relax. I am too upset to rest!

4¹ Eliphaz from Teman answered:

²I must say something. Would it upset you if I speak?

³Job, you have taught many people. You encouraged those who were ready to quit.

⁴Your words helped those who were ready to fall. You gave strength to those who could not stand by themselves.

⁵But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged. Trouble hits you, and you are upset.

⁶You worship God. You trust him. You are a good man, so let that be your hope.

⁷Can you think of any innocent person who was ever destroyed? Do you know of any place where good people are punished?

⁸Yes, I have seen people whose lives were cut short, but they were evil troublemakers.

⁹They lost the breath God gave them. They were cut off from his breath of life.

¹⁰They were like roaring lions, like growling lions with broken teeth

¹¹like a lioness that cannot find prey. They died, and their cubs starved to death.

¹²I happened to hear a message. My ears caught a whisper of it.

¹³Like a bad dream in the night, it ruined my sleep.

¹⁴It frightened me, and I trembled down to my bones.

¹⁵A spirit passed by my face. The hair on my body stood up!

¹⁶The 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:

¹⁷A person cannot be more right than God. People cannot be more pure than their Maker.

¹⁸Look, 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.

5¹ 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.

⁹People cannot understand the wonderful things God does. His miracles are too many to count.

¹⁰He sends rain all over the earth and waters the fields.

¹¹He raises up the humble and makes sad people happy.

¹²He spoils the plans of even the smartest people so that they will not succeed.

¹³He catches those who think they are wise in their own clever traps and brings to an end their evil plans.

¹⁴Daylight will be like darkness for them. Even at noon they will have to feel their way as in the dark.

¹⁵God saves the poor from the hurtful words of the wicked. He saves them from those who are powerful.

¹⁶So the poor have hope; God shuts the mouths of those who would cause them harm.

¹⁷You are fortunate when God corrects you. So don't complain when God All-Powerful punishes you.

¹⁸God might injure you, but he will bandage those wounds. He might hurt you, but his hands also heal.

¹⁹He will save you again and again. No evil will harm you.

²⁰God will save you from death when there is famine. He will protect you from the sword when there is war.

²¹People might say bad things about you with their sharp tongues. But God will protect you. You will not be afraid when bad things happen!

²²You will laugh at destruction and famine. You will not be afraid of wild animals!

²³It is as if you have a peace treaty with the wild animals and the rocks in the field.

²⁴You will live in peace because your tent is safe. You will count your property and find nothing missing.

²⁵You will have many children. They will be as many as the blades of grass on the earth.

²⁶You will be like the wheat that grows until harvest time. Yes, you will live to a ripe old age.

²⁷We have studied this and know it is true. So listen to us, and learn for yourself.

6¹ Then Job answered:

² I wish my suffering could be weighed and all my trouble be put on the scales.

³ They would be heavier than all the sand of the sea! That is why my words are so crazy.

⁴ God All-Powerful has shot me with his arrows. My spirit feels their poison! Gods terrible weapons are lined up against me.

⁵ Even a wild donkey does not complain when it has grass to eat. And a cow is quiet when it has food.

⁶ Food without salt does not taste good, and the white of an egg has no taste.

⁷ I refuse to touch that kind of food; it makes me sick!

⁸ I wish I could have what I ask for. I wish God would give me what I want.

⁹ I wish he would crush me just go ahead and kill me!

¹⁰ Then I would be comforted by this one thing: Even through all this pain, I never stopped obeying the Holy One.

¹¹ With my strength gone, I have no hope to go on living. With nothing to look forward to, why should I be patient?

¹²I am not strong like a rock. My body is not made from bronze.

¹³I don't have the power to help myself, because all hope of success has been taken away from me.

¹⁴Friends should be loyal to you in times of trouble, even if you turn away from God All-Powerful.

¹⁵But 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.

¹⁶In the winter, it is choked with ice and melting snow.

¹⁷But when the weather is hot and dry, the water stops flowing, and the stream disappears.

¹⁸It twists and turns along the way and then disappears into the desert.

¹⁹Traders from Tema search for it. Travelers from Sheba hope to find it.

²⁰They are sure they can find water, but they will be disappointed.

²¹Now, you are like those streams. You see my troubles and are afraid.

²²But have I ever asked you to help me or to offer a bribe for me from your wealth?

²³No, and I never said, Save me from my enemies! or Save me from those who are cruel!

²⁴So now, teach me, and I will be quiet. Show me what I have done wrong.

²⁵Honest words are powerful, but your arguments prove nothing.

²⁶Do you plan to criticize me? Will you speak more tiring words?

²⁷Are you the kind of people who would gamble for orphans and sell out your own friends?

²⁸Now, look me in the face, and see that I am telling the truth!

²⁹You need to start over and stop being so unfair! Think again, because I am innocent.

³⁰I am not lying. I know right from wrong.

7¹ People have a hard struggle on earth. Their life is like that of a hired worker.

²They are like a slave looking for cool shade or a hired worker waiting for payday.

³Month after frustrating month has gone by. I have suffered night after night.

⁴When I lie down, I think, How long before its time to get up? The night drags on. I toss and turn until the sun comes up.

⁵My skin is covered with worms and scabs. It is cracked and covered with sores.

⁶My days pass by faster than a weavers shuttle, and my life will end without hope.

⁷God, remember, my life is like a breath. I will not get a second chance to enjoy it.

⁸Those who see me now will never see me again. You watch me for a while, but then I am gone.

⁹Just as clouds that come and go, people are put in the grave, never to rise again.

¹⁰They dont come back to their old homes. The people there would not know them.

¹¹So I will not be quiet! I will let my suffering spirit speak! I will let my bitter soul complain!

¹²Am I one of your enemies? Is that why you put a guard over me?

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! 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.

8¹ Then Bildad from Shuah answered:

² How long will you talk like that? Your words are nothing but hot air!

³ God is always fair. God All-Powerful does what is right.

⁴ If your children sinned against God, he punished them. They paid for their sins.

⁵ But now, look to God and pray to the All-Powerful.

⁶ If you are pure and good, he will quickly come to help you. He will give your family back to you.

⁷ Then you will have a lot more than you had in the beginning!

⁸ Ask those who are now old. Find out what their ancestors learned.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Maybe the old people can tell you something. Maybe they will teach you what they learned.

¹¹ Can papyrus grow tall on a dry land? Can reeds grow without water?

¹² No, they will dry up before harvest. They will be too small to cut and use.

¹³ People who forget God are like that. Those who oppose him have no hope.

¹⁴ They have put their trust in something weak. It is like a spiders web.

¹⁵ When they lean against it, it will break. When they reach out for it, it will not hold them up.

¹⁶ Such people are like a vine that gets plenty of water and sunshine, and its branches spread throughout the garden.

¹⁷ Its roots spread among the rocks, searching for good soil.

¹⁸ But if you move it, it will die, and no one can tell it was ever there.

¹⁹ Everything might have been going well, but another vine will take its place.

²⁰ God does not support evil people, and he does not abandon the innocent.

²¹ So perhaps you might laugh again. Maybe shouts of joy will come from your lips.

²² Maybe your enemies will be humiliated and the homes of the wicked destroyed.

9¹ Then Job answered:

² Of course, I know that this is true. But how can a human being win an argument with God?

³ Anyone who chose to argue with him could not answer one question in a thousand!

⁴ God is so wise and powerful that no one could oppose him and survive.

⁵ When God is angry, he moves mountains before they know what happened.

⁶ He can shake the earth, and it will tremble down to its foundations.

⁷ With one command he can stop the sun from rising. He can lock up the stars and keep them from shining.

⁸ He alone made the skies, and he walks on the ocean waves.

⁹ God made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades. He made the planets that cross the southern sky.

¹⁰ He does things too marvelous for people to understand. He does too many miracles to count!

¹¹ When he passes by, I cannot see him. He goes right past me, and I don't 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 It must be God who laughs when a disaster kills innocent people.

²⁴ It must be 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.

³³I wish there were someone who could listen to both sides, someone to judge both of us in a fair way.

³⁴I wish someone could take away the threat of Gods punishment. Then he would not frighten me anymore.

³⁵Then I could say what I want without being afraid of him. But I cannot do that now.

10¹I hate my own life, so I will complain freely. I am very bitter, so now I will speak.

²I will say to God, Dont just say I am guilty! Tell me what you have against me.

³Do you enjoy hurting me? Do you enjoy ignoring me while smiling at what evil people say?

⁴Do you have human eyes? Do you see things the way people do?

⁵Is your life as short as ours? Is your life as short as a mans life?

⁶You look for my wrong and search for my sin.

⁷You know I am innocent, but no one can save me from your power!

⁸Your hands made me and shaped my body. But now they are closing around me and squeezing me to death!

⁹Remember, you molded me like clay. Will you turn me into clay again?

¹⁰You poured me out like milk. You spun me around and squeezed me like someone making cheese.

¹¹You put me together with bones and muscles, and then you clothed me with skin and flesh.

¹²You gave me life and were very kind to me. You cared for me and watched over my spirit.

¹³But this is what you hid in your heart. Now I know what you were planning for me.

¹⁴If I sinned, you would be watching me so that you could punish me for doing wrong.

¹⁵If 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.

¹⁶If I have any success and feel proud, you hunt me down like a lion and show your power over me.

¹⁷You 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.

¹⁸So why did you let me be born? I wish I had died before anyone saw me.

¹⁹I wish I had never lived. I wish they had carried me from my mothers womb straight to the grave.

²⁰My life is almost finished. So leave me alone! Let me enjoy the little time I have left.

²¹I am going soon to the land of no return, the place of death and darkness

²²that land of darkest night, of shadows and confusion, where even the light is darkness.

11 ¹Then Zophar from Naamah answered Job and said,

²This flood of words should be answered! Does all this talking make Job right?

³Do you think we dont have an answer for you? Do you think no one will warn you when you laugh at God?

⁴You say to God, My arguments are right, and you can see I am pure.

⁵I wish God would answer you and tell you that you are wrong.

⁶He 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.

⁷Do you think you really understand God? Do you completely understand God All-Powerful?

⁸That knowledge is higher than the heavens and deeper than the place of death. So what can you do? How can you learn it all?

⁹It is greater than the earth and bigger than the seas.

¹⁰If God decides to arrest you and take you to court, no one could stop him.

¹¹God knows who is worthless. When he sees evil, he remembers it.

¹²A wild donkey cannot give birth to a man, and a stupid person will never become wise.

¹³Prepare your heart to serve only God. Lift your arms and pray to him.

¹⁴Put away the sin that you still hold on to. Don't keep evil in your tent.

¹⁵If you will do that, you can look to God without shame. You can stand strong and not be afraid.

¹⁶Then you can forget your troubles, like water that has already passed by.

¹⁷Your life will be brighter than the sunshine at noon. Life's darkest hours will shine like the morning sun.

¹⁸You will feel safe because there is hope. God will protect you and give you rest.

¹⁹You will lie down without fear of anyone. Many people will come to you for help.

²⁰Evil people might look for help, but they will not escape their troubles. Their hope leads only to death.

12¹ 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.

⁵Those who have no troubles make fun of those who do. They hit a man when he is down.

⁶But robbers tents are not bothered. Those who make God angry live in peace, even though God has them in his power.

⁷But ask the animals, and they will teach you. Or ask the birds of the air, and they will tell you.

⁸Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you. Or let the fish in the sea tell you their wisdom.

⁹Everyone knows the LORD made these things.

¹⁰Every animal that lives and everyone who breathes they are all under Gods power.

¹¹But just as the tongue tastes food, the ears test the words they hear.

¹²People say, Wisdom is to be found in those who are old. Long life brings understanding.

¹³But 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.

²⁴He makes their leaders foolish. He makes them wander around in the desert.

²⁵They are like someone feeling their way in the dark. They are like drunks who don't know where they are going.

13¹I have seen all this before. I have already heard everything you say. I understand all these things.

²I know as much as you do. I am as smart as you are.

³But 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.

⁴But you men try to cover up your ignorance with lies. You are like worthless doctors who cannot heal anyone.

⁵I wish you would just be quiet. That would be the wisest thing you could do.

⁶Now, listen to my argument. Listen to what I have to say.

⁷Will you speak lies for God? Do you really believe your lies are what God wants you to say?

⁸Are you trying to defend God against me? You are not being fair. You are choosing Gods side simply because he is God.

⁹If 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?

¹⁰You know that God would criticize you if you chose someones side simply because they were important.

¹¹Gods majesty frightens you. You are afraid of him.

¹²The wise sayings you quote are worthless. Your arguments are as weak as clay.

¹³Be quiet and let me talk! I accept whatever happens to me.

¹⁴I will put myself in danger and take my life in my own hands.

¹⁵I will continue to trust God even if he kills me. But I will defend myself to his face.

¹⁶And 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. You watch every step I take. You see every move I make.

²⁸So I am becoming weaker and weaker, like a piece of wood rotting away, like a piece of cloth eaten by moths.

14¹We are all human beings. Our life is short and full of trouble.

²Our life is like a flower. It grows quickly and then dies away. Our life is like a shadow that is here for a short time and then is gone.

³God, do you need to keep an eye on something so small? Why bother to bring charges against me?

⁴No one can make something clean from something so dirty.

⁵The 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.

⁶So stop watching us; leave us alone, and let us enjoy this hard life until we have put in our time.

⁷There is always hope for a tree. If it is cut down, it can grow again. It will keep sending out new branches.

⁸Its roots might grow old in the ground and its stump die in the dirt,

⁹but with water, it will grow again. It will grow branches like a new plant.

¹⁰But when a man dies, he becomes weak and sick, and then he is gone!

¹¹Like a lake that goes dry or a river that loses its source,

¹²so 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!

¹³I 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.

¹⁴If a man dies, will he live again? If so, I would gladly suffer through this time waiting for my release.

¹⁵God, you would call me, and I would answer you. Then I, the one you made, would be important to you.

¹⁶You would still watch every step I take, but you would not remember my sins.

¹⁷It would be as if you had sealed my sins in a bag. It would be as if you had covered my guilt with plaster.

¹⁸Mountains fall and crumble away.
Large rocks break loose and fall.

¹⁹Water 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.

²⁰You defeat them completely and then they are gone. You change the way they look and send them away forever to the place of death.

²¹If their sons are honored, they will never know it. If their sons do wrong, they will never see it.

²²They only feel the pain in their bodies, and they alone cry for themselves.

15¹Then Eliphaz from Teman answered Job:

²If you were really wise, you would not answer with your worthless personal opinions! A wise man would not be so full of hot air.

³Do you think a wise man would use empty words and meaningless speeches to win his arguments?

⁴If you had your way, no one would respect God and pray to him.

⁵What you say clearly shows your sin. Job, you are trying to hide your sin by using clever words.

⁶I 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.

⁷Do you think you were the first person ever to be born? Were you born before the hills?

⁸Did you listen to God's secret plans? Do you think you are the only wise person?

⁹We know as much as you do! We understand as well as you.

¹⁰The old, gray-haired men agree with us. People older than your father are on our side.

¹¹God tries to comfort you, but that is not enough for you. We have spoken his message to you in a gentle way.

¹²Why will you not understand? Why can you not see the truth?

¹³You are expressing your anger against God when you say these things.

¹⁴People 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,

²⁸ 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 already begun to die.

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.

³⁵They are always thinking of ways to do evil and cause trouble. They are always planning how they might cheat others.

16 ¹Then Job answered:
²I have heard all these things before. You men give me trouble, not comfort.

³Your long speeches never end! Why do you continue arguing?

⁴I 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.

⁵But I would say things to encourage you and give you hope.

⁶Nothing I say makes my pain go away. But keeping quiet does not help either.

⁷God, you surely took away my strength. You destroyed my whole family.

⁸You have made me thin and weak, and people think that means I am guilty.

⁹God 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 ¹ 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.

³ God, give me some support. No one else will!

⁴ You have closed my friends minds, and they dont understand. Please dont let them win.

⁵ You know what people say: A man neglects his own children to help his friends. But my friends have turned against me.

⁶ God has made my name a bad word to everyone. People spit in my face.

⁷ My eyes are almost blind from my grief. My whole body is as thin as a shadow.

⁸Good people wonder how this could happen. The innocent are upset with anyone who is against God.

⁹But those who do right will continue to do what is right. Those who are not guilty grow stronger and stronger.

¹⁰But come on, all of you, and try to prove me wrong. I don't find any of you to be wise.

¹¹My life is passing away, and my plans are destroyed. My hope is gone.

¹²Everything is confused night is day, and evening comes when it should be dawn.

¹³I might hope for the grave to be my new home. I might hope to make my bed in the dark grave.

¹⁴I might say to the grave, You are my father, and to the worms, my mother or my sister.

¹⁵But you can't really call that hope, can you? Does anyone see any hope for me?

¹⁶Will hope go down with me to the place of death? Will we go down into the dirt together?

18¹Then Bildad from Shuah answered:

²When will you stop talking? Be sensible; let us say something.

³Why do you think we are stupid, like dumb cows?

⁴Your 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?

⁵Yes, the light of those who are evil will go out. Their fire will stop burning.

⁶The light in their houses will become dark. The lamps next to them will go out.

⁷Their steps, once strong and fast, become weak. Their own evil plans make them fall.

⁸Their own feet lead them into a net. They fall into its hidden pit and are caught.

⁹A trap catches them by the heel, and it holds them tight.

¹⁰A rope is hidden on the ground to trip them. A trap is waiting in their path.

¹¹On every side terrors frighten them. Fears follow every step they take.

¹²Disaster is hungry for them. Ruin stands close by, waiting for them to fall.

¹³Diseases will eat away their skin. Death itself will eat their arms and legs.

¹⁴They will be taken away from the safety of their tents and be led away to meet death, the king of terrors.

¹⁵Nothing will be left in their tents, which will be sprinkled with burning sulfur.

¹⁶Their roots below will dry up, and their branches above will die.

¹⁷People on earth will not remember them. Their names will be forgotten.

¹⁸They will be forced from light into darkness. They will be chased out of this world.

¹⁹They will leave behind no children, no descendants. None of their people will be left alive.

²⁰People in the west will be shocked at what happened to them. People in the east will be numb with fear.

²¹This is what will happen to the homes of those who are evil. This is the place of those who don't know God!

19¹ Then Job answered:

²How long will you hurt me and crush me with your words?

³You 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.

²² Why do you persecute me as God does? Don't you get tired of hurting me?

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.

²⁶After I leave my body and my skin has been destroyed, I know I will still see God.

²⁷I 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!

²⁸Maybe you will say, How can we push Job a little harder and make him realize that he is the source of his problems?

²⁹But 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.

20¹Then Zophar from Naamah answered:

²You upset me, so I must answer you. I must tell you what I am thinking.

³You insulted me with your answers! But I am wise and know how to answer you.

⁴You know that the joy of the wicked does not last long. That has been true a long time, ever since Adam was put on earth. Those who don't know God are happy for only a short time.

⁵ (20: 4)

⁶ Maybe an evil mans 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.

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 snakes bitter poison inside him.

¹⁵The evil man will spit out the riches he has swallowed. God will make him vomit them up.

¹⁶What he drank will be like a snakes poison; it will kill him like the bite of a deadly snake.

¹⁷He will never again enjoy so much wealth rivers flowing with honey and cream.

¹⁸He will be forced to give back his profits. He will not be allowed to enjoy what he worked for,

¹⁹because he hurt the poor and left them with nothing. He took houses he did not build.

²⁰The evil man is never satisfied. But the things he wants cannot save him.

²¹After filling himself, there is nothing left. His success will not continue.

²²Even while he has plenty, he will be pressed down with trouble. His problems will come down on him!

²³If 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 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.

21 ¹ Then Job answered:

² Listen to what I say. Let this be your way of comforting me.

³ Be patient while I speak. Then after I have finished speaking, you may make fun of me.

⁴ My complaint is not against people. There is a good reason why I am not patient.

⁵Look at me and be shocked. Put your hand over your mouth, and stare at me in shock!

⁶When I think about what happened to me, I feel afraid and my body shakes!

⁷Why do evil people live long lives? Why do they grow old and successful?

⁸They watch their children grow up and live to see their grandchildren.

⁹Their homes are safe and free from fear. God does not punish them.

¹⁰Their bulls never fail to mate. Their cows have healthy calves.

¹¹They send their children out to play like lambs. Their children dance around.

¹²They sing and dance to the sound of harps and flutes.

¹³Evil people enjoy success during their lives and then go to the grave without suffering.

¹⁴They say to God, Leave us alone! We dont care what you want us to do!

¹⁵And they say, Who is God All-Powerful? We dont need to serve him! It will not help to pray to him!

¹⁶Of course, evil people dont 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 become 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.

²¹ When their life is finished and they are dead, they will not care about the family they leave behind.

²² No one can teach God anything he doesn't already know. God judges even those in high places.

²³ One person dies after living a full and successful life, a life completely safe and comfortable,

²⁴ with a body that was well fed and bones that were still strong.

²⁵ But another person dies after a hard life that has made them bitter, never having enjoyed anything good.

²⁶ In the end, both of these people will lie together in the dirt. The worms will cover them both.

²⁷ But I know what you are thinking, and I know you want to hurt me.

²⁸ You might say, Show me a good mans house. Now, show me where evil people live.

²⁹ Surely you have talked with travelers. Surely you will accept their stories.

³⁰ Evil people are spared when disaster comes. They survive when God shows his anger.

³¹ No one criticizes them to their faces for how they lived. No one punishes them for the evil they have done.

³² When they are carried to the grave, they will have someone to watch over the place they are buried.

³³ So even the soil in the valley will be pleasant for them, and thousands of people will join their funeral procession.

³⁴ So your empty words are no comfort to me. There is no truth at all in your answers!

22¹ Then Eliphaz from Teman answered:

² Does God need our help? Even the wisest of us is not really useful to him.

³ Does your living right benefit him? Does God All-Powerful gain anything if you follow him?

⁴ Why does God blame and punish you? Is it because you worship him?

⁵ No, it is because you sin so much. You never stop sinning.

⁶ Maybe to guarantee loans you took things from people for no reason. Maybe you took a poor mans clothes to make sure he paid you back.

⁷ Maybe you failed to give water or food to people who were tired or hungry.

⁸ You have a lot of farmland, and people respect you.

⁹ But maybe you sent widows away without giving them anything. And maybe you took advantage of orphans.

¹⁰ That is why traps are all around you, and sudden trouble makes you afraid.

¹¹ That is why it is so dark you cannot see, and why a flood of water covers you.

¹²God lives in the highest part of heaven and looks down on the highest stars.

¹³But you might say, What does God know? Can he see through the dark clouds to judge us?

¹⁴Thick clouds hide us from his eyes, so he cannot see us as he walks around the edge of the sky.

¹⁵Job, you are walking on the old path that evil people walked on long ago.

¹⁶They were destroyed before it was their time to die. They were washed away by the flood.

¹⁷They told God, Leave us alone! and said, God All-Powerful cannot do anything to us!

¹⁸And it was God who filled their houses with good things. No, I would never follow the advice of evil people.

¹⁹Those who do what is right are happy to see them destroyed. The innocent laugh at them and say,

²⁰Surely our enemies are destroyed! Their wealth burned up in the fire!

²¹Now, 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.

23¹ 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 reply, 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 don't see him. When he turns to the south, I still don'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.

24¹ 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 neighbors land. People steal flocks and lead them to other grasslands.

³ They steal a donkey that belongs to an orphan. They take a widows cow until she pays what she owes them.

⁴ They force the poor to move out of their way and to get off the road.

⁵The 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.

⁶They have to work in the fields, harvesting grain. They work for the rich, gathering grapes in their vineyards.

⁷They must sleep all night without clothes. They have no covers to protect them from the cold.

⁸They are soaked with rain in the mountains. They stay close to the large rocks for shelter.

⁹They take a nursing baby from its mother. They take a poor persons child to guarantee a loan.

¹⁰They have no clothes, so they work naked. They carry piles of grain for others, but they go hungry.

¹¹They press olives for oil and trample grapes in the winepress, but they have nothing to drink.

¹²In the city you can hear the sad sounds of dying people. Those who are hurt cry out for help, but God does not listen.

¹³Some people rebel against the light. They dont know what God wants. They dont live the way he wants.

¹⁴A murderer gets up at dawn and kills poor, helpless people. And at night he becomes a thief.

¹⁵A man who commits adultery waits for the night to come. He thinks, No one will see me, but still, he covers his face.

¹⁶When 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.

¹⁷The darkest night is their morning. They are friends with the terrors of darkness.

¹⁸You 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.

¹⁹As hot, dry weather melts away the winter snows, so the grave takes away those who have sinned.

²⁰Their 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?

25¹ 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. His sun rises on all people.

⁴ How can anyone claim to be right before God? No human being can really be pure.

⁵ In God's eyes even the moon is not pure and bright; even the stars are not pure.

⁶People are much less pure. They are like maggots, as worthless as worms!

26 ¹Then Job answered:

²Bildad, what a great help you are to this tired, weary man! You have really supported me!

³You have given such wonderful advice to this foolish man! You have provided so much useful information!

⁴Who helped you say these things? Whose spirit inspired you to speak?

⁵The ghosts and their neighbors in the underworld shake with fear.

⁶But God can see clearly into that place of death. Death is not hidden from God.

⁷God stretched the northern sky over empty space. He hung the earth on nothing.

⁸He fills the thick clouds with water. But he does not let its heavy weight break the clouds open.

⁹He covers the face of the full moon. He spreads his clouds over it and hides it.

¹⁰He 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.

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 ¹ 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 never stop believing that what I have done is right! My conscience will always be clear!

⁷ May my enemies be punished like those who are evil. May those who stood

against me end up like all who have done wrong.

⁸What hope do people without God have when it is time to die, when God takes their life away?

⁹When they have troubles and cry out for help, God will not listen to them!

¹⁰It will be too late for them to enjoy talking with God All-Powerful. They should have prayed to God all the time.

¹¹I will teach you about Gods power. I will not hide anything about God All-Powerful.

¹²But you have seen it all with your own eyes. So why do you say such useless things?

¹³Here is what God has planned for those who are evil. This is what cruel people will get from God All-Powerful.

¹⁴They may have many children, but all of them will be killed in war. Or their children will not have enough to eat.

¹⁵All those who are left will die, and the widows will not even cry for them.

¹⁶Evil 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 spiders web or a guards 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.

28¹ 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.

³Miners carry lights deep into caves to search for these rocks in the deepest darkness.

⁴Far 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.

⁵Food grows on the ground above. But underground it is different, as if everything were melted by fire.

⁶In the rocks there are sapphires and grains of pure gold.

⁷Wild birds know nothing about the way to these places. No falcon has ever seen it.

⁸Wild animals have never been there. Lions have not traveled that way.

⁹Miners dig the hardest rocks. They dig away at the mountains and make them bare.

¹⁰They cut tunnels through the rocks and see all the treasures they hold.

¹¹They even find places where rivers begin. They bring to light what once was hidden.

¹²But 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 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.

29 ¹ 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 Gods light shined above me, so I could walk through the darkness.

⁴ I wish for the days when I was successful, when I enjoyed Gods 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.

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 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,

¹² 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.

¹⁶I was like a father to the poor. I helped people I didn't even know win their case in court.

¹⁷I stopped evil people from hurting others and saved innocent people from their attacks.

¹⁸I always thought I would live a long life, growing old with my family around me.

¹⁹I was like a healthy plant with roots that have plenty of water and branches that are wet with dew.

²⁰I thought each new day would bring more honor and be full of new possibilities.

²¹In the past people listened to me. They waited quietly for my advice.

²²When I finished speaking, they had nothing more to say. My words fell gently on their ears.

²³They waited for my words as they would for rain. They drank them in like rain in the springtime.

²⁴I smiled at them, and they could hardly believe it. My smile made them feel better.

²⁵I was their leader and made decisions about their future. I was like a king

among his troops, comforting those who were sad.

30¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ They guard the road so that I cannot escape. They succeed in destroying me, without help from anyone.

¹⁴ They break a hole in the wall and come rushing through it, and the crashing rocks fall on me.

¹⁵ I am shaking with fear. They chased my honor away like dust in the wind. My safety disappears like a cloud.

¹⁶ Now my life is almost gone, and soon I will die. Days of suffering have grabbed me.

¹⁷ All my bones ache at night. Pain never stops chewing on me.

¹⁸ God grabbed the collar of my coat and twisted my clothes out of shape.

¹⁹ He threw me into the mud, and I became like dust and ashes.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ You have become cruel to me; you use your power to hurt me.

²² You let the strong wind blow me away. You throw me around in the storm.

²³ I know you will lead me to my death, to that place where all the living must go.

²⁴ Surely no one would attack a man who is already ruined, when he is hurt and crying for help.

²⁵ God, you know that I cried for those who were in trouble. You know that I mourned for the poor.

²⁶ But when I hoped for good, trouble came instead. When I looked for light, darkness came.

²⁷ I constantly feel upset. And my suffering has only just begun.

²⁸ I am always sad and depressed, without any relief. I stand up in the public meeting and cry for help,

²⁹ making sad sounds like the wild dogs or ostriches in the desert.

³⁰ My skin is burned and peeling away. My body is hot with fever.

³¹ My harp is tuned to play songs of sorrow. My flute makes sad sounds like someone crying.

31 ¹ I made an agreement with my eyes not to look at a young woman in a way that would make me want her.

² What does God above have for us? How does God All-Powerful repay people from his home high in heaven?

³ He sends trouble to the wicked and disaster to those who do wrong.

⁴ God is the one who knows what I do and sees every step I take.

⁵ I have not lied to anyone. I never tried to cheat people.

⁶ If God would use accurate scales, he would know that I am innocent.

⁷ 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,

⁸ then let others eat what I planted. Let my crops be pulled up by the roots.

⁹ If I have desired another woman or waited at my neighbors door to sin with his wife,

¹⁰ then let my wife serve someone else, and let other men sleep with her.

¹¹ To do such a thing would be shameful, a sin that must be punished.

¹²Such sin is like a fire that burns until it destroys everything. It would completely ruin my lifes work.

¹³If I refused to be fair to my slaves when they had a complaint against me,

¹⁴then what will I do when I must face God? What will I say when he asks me to explain what I did?

¹⁵The one who made me in my mothers womb also made them. God shaped us all inside our mothers.

¹⁶I have never refused to help the poor. I always gave widows what they needed.

¹⁷I have never been selfish with my food. I shared what I had with orphans.

¹⁸All my life I have been like a father to orphans and have taken care of widows.

¹⁹Whenever I found people suffering because they didnt have clothes or saw a poor man with no coat,

²⁰I 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.

²¹I never threatened an orphan, even when I knew I had support in court.

²²If I ever did that, may my arm be pulled from its socket and fall from my shoulder!

²³But I didnt do any of these bad things. I fear Gods punishment too much. His majesty scares me.

²⁴I have never trusted in riches. I never said even to pure gold, You are my hope.

²⁵I have been wealthy, but that didnt make me proud. I earned a lot of money, but that is not what made me happy.

²⁶I have never worshiped the bright sun or the beautiful moon.

²⁷I was never foolish enough to worship the sun and the moon.

²⁸This is also a sin that must be punished. If I had worshiped them, I would have been unfaithful to God All-Powerful.

²⁹I have never been happy when my enemies were destroyed. I have never laughed at my enemies when bad things happened to them.

³⁰I have never let my mouth sin by cursing my enemies and wishing for them to die.

³¹The people in my house know that I have never let anyone go hungry.

³²I always invited strangers into my home so that they would not have to sleep in the streets.

³³I have not tried to hide my sins as some people do. I have never hidden my guilt.

³⁴I was never so afraid of what people might say or of making enemies that I kept my sins secret and avoided going out.

³⁵How 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.

³⁶I would wear it around my neck. I would put it on my head like a crown.

³⁷Then I could explain everything I have done. I could come to God with my head held high like a prince.

³⁸I did not use my land in a wrong way. I never caused it to suffer.

³⁹I always paid the workers for the food I got from the land. I never let any of them starve.

⁴⁰If I ever did any of these bad things, let thorns and weeds grow in my fields

instead of wheat and barley! Jobs words are finished.

32¹ Then Jobs 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 Jobs 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 Jobs three friends had nothing more to say, his anger forced him to speak.

⁶ So heres 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.

⁷I thought to myself, Older people should speak first. They have lived many years, so they have learned many things.

⁸But it is the spirit in people, the breath from God All-Powerful, that makes them understand.

⁹Old men are not the only wise people. They are not the only ones who understand what is right.

¹⁰So please listen to me, and I will tell you what I think.

¹¹I waited patiently while you men talked. I listened to the answers you gave as you searched for the right words.

¹²I listened carefully to what you said. Not one of you proved Job wrong. Not one of you answered his arguments.

¹³You men cannot say that you have found wisdom. The answer to Job's arguments must come from God, not people.

¹⁴Job was arguing with you, not me, so I will not use your arguments to answer him.

¹⁵Job, these men lost the argument. They don't have anything more to say. They don't have any more answers.

¹⁶I waited for them to answer you. But now they are quiet. They stand there with nothing more to say.

¹⁷So now I will give you my answer. Yes, I will tell you what I think.

¹⁸I have so much to say that I cannot hold it in.

¹⁹I feel like a jar of wine that has never been opened. I am like a new wineskin ready to burst.

²⁰I must speak so that I will feel better. I must answer your arguments.

²¹I will treat you the same as I would treat anyone else. I will not praise you to win your favor.

²²I cannot treat one person better than another. If I did, God my Maker would punish me!

33¹ Now, Job, listen to me. Listen carefully to what I say.

²I am ready to speak.

³My heart is honest, so my words are sincere. I will speak the truth about what I know.

⁴Gods Spirit made me. My life comes from God All-Powerful.

⁵Listen to me and answer if you can. Get your arguments ready to face me.

⁶You and I are the same before God.
He used clay to make us both.

⁷Dont be afraid of me. I will not be hard on you.

⁸But, Job, I heard what you said. These were your very words:

⁹I am pure and innocent; I did nothing wrong; I am not guilty!

¹⁰But God found an excuse to attack me. He treats me like an enemy.

¹¹He put chains on my feet and watches everything I do.

¹²But you are wrong about this, and I will prove it to you. God knows more than any of us.

¹³You are arguing with God! Why do you think he should explain everything to you?

¹⁴But maybe God does explain what he does but speaks in ways that people dont understand.

¹⁵He may speak in a dream, or in a vision at night, when people are in a deep sleep lying in their beds.

¹⁶He 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. 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 him.

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 Gods 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 persons body will become young and strong again. He will be as he was when he was young.

²⁶He will pray and God will answer. He will worship God and shout with joy. He will again stand as right before God.

²⁷He will tell everyone, I sinned. I changed good into bad, but God didn't give me the punishment I deserved!

²⁸God saved me from going down to the place of death. Now I can enjoy life again.

²⁹God does all these things for people again and again.

³⁰He wants them to be saved from death so that they can enjoy life.

³¹Job, pay attention and listen to me. Be quiet and let me talk.

³²But if you have an answer, go ahead and speak. Tell me your argument. I would be happy to know that you are innocent!

³³But if you have nothing to say, then listen to me. Be quiet, and I will teach you wisdom.

34¹ 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,

¹⁵ then everything on earth would die. We would all become dust again.

¹⁶ 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.

³⁰ And if a ruler causes people to sin, God will remove him from power.

³¹ But what if someone says to God, I am guilty; I will not sin anymore?

³² What if that person says, Show me the sins I am not able to see. If I have done wrong, I will not do it again?

³³ Job, you want God to reward you, but you refuse to change. It is your decision, not mine. Tell me what you think.

³⁴ A wise person would listen to me. A wise person would say,

³⁵ Job talks like an ignorant person. What he says doesn't make sense!

³⁶ I think Job should be punished even more because he answers us like someone who is evil!

³⁷ To his other sins he adds refusal to listen. He sits there insulting us and arguing with God!

35 ¹ Elihu continued talking and said, ² Job, it is not fair for you to say, I am more right than God,

³ 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?

⁴ Job, I want to answer you and your friends here with you.

⁵ Look up at the sky. Look at the clouds, which are so much higher than you.

⁶ If you sin, it does not hurt God. Even if your sins are too many to count, that does nothing to God.

⁷ And if you are good, that does not help God. He gets nothing from you.

⁸ Job, the good and bad things you do affect only other people like yourself.

⁹If people are being hurt, they cry out and beg for protection from those who hurt them.

¹⁰But 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.

¹¹He is the one who makes us smarter than any animal on earth and wiser than any bird.

¹²Or if evil people ask God for help, he will not answer them, because they are too proud.

¹³God will not listen to their worthless begging. God All-Powerful will not pay attention to them.

¹⁴So, 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.

¹⁵Job thinks that God does not punish evil and that he pays no attention to sin.

¹⁶So he continues his worthless talking. Everything he has said shows he does not know what he is talking about.

36 ¹ Elihu continued talking and said,
² Be patient with me a little longer. God has a few more words that he wants me to say.

³ I will share my knowledge with everyone. I will prove that my Maker is right.

⁴ Job, I am telling the truth. I know what I am talking about.

⁵ God is very powerful, but he does not hate people. He is very powerful, but he is also very wise.

⁶ 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.

²¹ Job, dont let your suffering cause you to choose evil. Be careful not to do wrong.

²² Look, Gods 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 dont 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.

³²He grabs the lightning with his hands, and commands it to strike where he wants.

³³The thunder warns that a storm is coming. So even the cattle know it is near.

37 ¹The thunder and lightning frighten me; my heart pounds in my chest.

²Listen to Gods thundering voice! Listen to the sound coming from his mouth.

³He sends his lightning to flash across the whole sky. It lights up the earth from one end to the other.

⁴After 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.

⁵Gods thundering voice is amazing! He does great things that we cannot understand.

⁶He says to the snow, Fall on the earth. And he says to the rain, Pour down on the earth.

⁷God does this to stop everyones work and to show the people he made what he can do.

⁸The animals run into their dens and stay there.

⁹Whirlwinds come from the south. The cold winds come from the north.

¹⁰Gods breath makes ice and freezes even large bodies of water.

¹¹He fills the clouds with water and scatters his lightning through them.

¹²He orders the clouds to be blown all around the earth. The clouds do whatever he commands.

¹³He causes the clouds to punish people with floods or to water his earth and show his love.

¹⁴Job, stop for a minute and listen. Think about the wonderful things God does.

¹⁵Do you know how God controls the clouds? Do you know how he makes his lightning flash?

¹⁶Do you know how the clouds hang in the sky? This is just one of the amazing works of the one who knows everything.

¹⁷All 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.

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. 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.

²⁴ That is why people fear and respect him. He shows no respect for those who think they are wise.

38 ¹ Then the LORD spoke to Job from a whirlwind and said,

² Who is this ignorant person saying these foolish things?

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? 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 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 dont 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, werent you?

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?

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? Can you unfasten the belt of Orion?

³² Can you bring out the other constellations at the right times? Can you lead out the Bear with its cubs?

³³ Do you know the laws that control the sky? Can you put each star in its place above the earth?

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?

39¹ Do you know when the mountain goats are born? Do you watch when the mother deer gives birth?

² Do you know how many months they must carry their babies? Do you know when it is the right time for them to be born?

³When these animals feel their birth pains, they lie down, and their babies are born.

⁴Their babies grow strong out in the wild. Then they leave their mothers and never come back.

⁵Who let the wild donkeys go free? Who untied their ropes and let them loose?

⁶I let the wild donkey have the desert for a home. I gave the salt lands to them for a place to live.

⁷They are happy to be away from the noise of the city. They never have to listen to their drivers shouting at them.

⁸They live in the mountains. That is their pasture. That is where they look for food to eat.

⁹Will a wild bull agree to serve you? Will he stay in your barn at night?

¹⁰Will he let you put ropes on him to plow your fields?

¹¹A wild bull is very strong, but can you trust him to do your work?

¹²Can 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 on its neck?

²⁰ Did you make it able to jump like a locust or snort 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.

²²It laughs at fear; nothing makes it afraid! It does not run away from battle.

²³The soldiers quiver shakes on the horses side. The spear and weapons its rider carries shine in the sun.

²⁴The horse gets very excited and races over the ground. When it hears the trumpet blow, it cannot stand still.

²⁵When 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.

²⁶Did you teach the hawk how to spread its wings and fly south?

²⁷Are you the one who told the eagle to fly high into the sky? Did you tell it to build its nest high in the mountains?

²⁸It lives high on a peak at the top of a cliff. That is its fortress.

²⁹From there it looks far into the distance, searching for its food.

³⁰The eagles gather around dead bodies, and their young eat the blood.

40¹ Then the LORD said to Job,
² 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:

⁴I am not worthy to speak! What can I say to you? I cannot answer you! I will put my hand over my mouth.

⁵I 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:

⁷Brace yourself and get ready to answer the questions I will ask you.

⁸Are you trying to show that I am unfair? Are you trying to look innocent by saying that I am guilty?

⁹Are your arms as strong as mine? Do you have a voice like mine that is as loud as thunder?

¹⁰If so, you can be proud and wear glory and honor like clothes.

¹¹If you are as powerful as God, then show your anger! Punish those who are proud and humble them.

¹²Yes, just look at the proud and make them humble. Crush those evil people where they stand.

¹³Bury them all in the dirt. Wrap their bodies up and put them in their graves.

¹⁴If you can do any of these things, then even I will praise you. And I will admit that you can save yourself by your own power.

¹⁵Look at the behemoth. I made the behemoth, and I made you. He eats grass like a cow.

¹⁶But he has great strength in his body. The muscles in his stomach are powerful.

¹⁷His tail stands strong like a cedar tree. His leg muscles are very strong.

¹⁸His bones are as strong as bronze. His legs are like iron bars.

¹⁹The behemoth is the most amazing animal I made, but I can defeat him.

²⁰He eats the grass that grows on the hills where the wild animals play.

²¹He lies under the lotus plants. He hides among the reeds of the swamp.

²²The lotus plants hide him in their shade. He lives under the willow trees that grow near the river.

²³If the river floods, the behemoth will not run away. He is not afraid if the Jordan River splashes on his face.

²⁴ No one can blind his eyes and capture him. No one can catch him in a trap.

41 ¹ Can you catch Leviathan with a fishhook? Can you tie his tongue with a rope?

² Can you put a rope through his nose or a hook through his jaw?

³ Will he beg you to let him go free? Will he speak to you with gentle words?

⁴ Will he make an agreement with you and promise to serve you forever?

⁵ Will you play with Leviathan as you would play with a bird? Will you put a rope on him so that your girls can play with him?

⁶ Will fishermen try to buy him from you? Will they cut him into pieces and sell him to the merchants?

⁷ Can you throw spears into his skin or head?

⁸ If you ever lay a hand on Leviathan, you will never do it again! Just think about the battle that would be!

⁹ Do you think you can defeat him? Well, forget it! There is no hope. Just looking at him will scare you!

¹⁰No one is brave enough to wake him up and make him angry. Well, no one can challenge me either!

¹¹I owe nothing to anyone. Everything under heaven belongs to me.

¹²I will tell you about Leviathans legs, his strength, and his graceful shape.

¹³No one can pierce his skin. It is like armor!

¹⁴No one can force him to open his jaws. The teeth in his mouth scare people.

¹⁵His back has rows of shields tightly sealed together.

¹⁶They are so close to each other that no air can pass between them.

¹⁷The shields are joined to each other. They hold together so tightly that they cannot be pulled apart.

¹⁸When Leviathan sneezes, it is like lightning flashing out. His eyes shine like the light of dawn.

¹⁹Burning torches come from his mouth. Sparks of fire shoot out.

²⁰Smoke pours from his nose like burning weeds under a boiling pot.

²¹His breath sets coals on fire, and flames shoot from his mouth.

²² His neck is very powerful. People are afraid and run away from him.

²³ There is no soft spot in his skin. It is as hard as iron.

²⁴ His heart is like a rock; he has no fear. It is as hard as a millstone.

²⁵ When he gets up, even the strongest people are afraid. They run away when he swings his tail.

²⁶ Swords, spears, and darts only bounce off when they hit him. These weapons don't hurt him at all!

²⁷ He breaks iron as easily as straw. He breaks bronze like rotten wood.

²⁸ Arrows don't make him run away. Rocks thrown at him seem as light as chaff.

²⁹ When a wood club hits him, it feels to him like a piece of straw. He laughs when anyone throws a spear at him.

³⁰ The skin on his belly is like sharp pieces of broken pottery. He leaves tracks in the mud like a threshing board.

³¹ He stirs up the water like a boiling pot. He makes it bubble like a pot of boiling oil.

³²When he swims, he leaves a sparkling path behind him. He stirs up the water and makes it white with foam.

³³No animal on earth is like him. He is an animal made without fear.

³⁴He looks down on the proudest of creatures. He is king over all the wild animals.

42¹ Then Job answered the LORD:
²I know you can do everything. You make plans, and nothing can change or stop them.

³You asked, Who is this ignorant person saying these foolish things? I talked about things I did not understand. I talked about things too amazing for me to know.

⁴You said to me, Listen, and I will speak. I will ask you questions, and you will answer me.

⁵In the past I heard about you, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

⁶And I am ashamed of myself. I am so sorry. As I sit in the dust and ashes, I promise to change my heart and my life.

⁷After 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.

⁸So 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.

⁹So Eliphaz from Teman, Bildad from Shuah, and Zophar from Naamah obeyed the LORD. Then the LORD answered Jobs prayer.

¹⁰Job prayed for his friends, and the LORD made Job successful again. The LORD gave him twice as much as he had before.

¹¹Then 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. Each person gave Job a piece of silver and a gold ring.

¹²The 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.

¹³He also got seven sons and three daughters.

¹⁴He named the first daughter Jemimah and the second daughter Keziah. He named the third daughter Keren Happuch.

¹⁵Jobs daughters were among the most beautiful women in all the country. And, like their brothers, they each got a share of their fathers property.

¹⁶So Job lived for 140 years more. He lived to see his children, his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, and his great-great-grandchildren.

¹⁷Job lived to be a very old man who had lived a good, long life.

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