

Easy To Read Version

Old Testament
(Psalms s.d. Malachi)

Psalms

1 ¹ Great blessings belong to those who don't listen to evil advice, who don't live like sinners, and who don't join those who make fun of God.

² Instead, they love the LORD'S teachings and think about them day and night.

³ So they grow strong, like a tree planted by a stream a tree that produces fruit when it should and has leaves that never fall. Everything they do is successful.

⁴ But the wicked are not like that. They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

⁵ When the time for judgment comes, the wicked will be found guilty. Sinners have no place among those who do what is right.

⁶ The LORD shows his people how to live, but the wicked have lost their way.

2 ¹ Why are the nations so angry? Why are the people making such foolish plans?

²Their kings and leaders join together to fight against the LORD and his chosen king.

³They say, Lets rebel against them. Lets break free from them!

⁴But the one who rules in heaven laughs at them. The Lord makes fun of them.

⁵He speaks to them in anger, and it fills them with fear.

⁶He says, I have chosen this man to be king, and he will rule on Zion, my holy mountain.

⁷Let me tell you about the LORD'S agreement: He said to me, Today I have become your father, and you are my son.

⁸If you ask, I will give you the nations. Everyone on earth will be yours.

⁹You will rule over them with great power. You will scatter your enemies like broken pieces of pottery!

¹⁰So, kings and rulers, be smart and learn this lesson.

¹¹Serve the LORD with fear and trembling.

¹²Show that you are loyal to his son, or the Lord will be angry and destroy you. He is almost angry enough to do

that now, but those who go to him for protection will be blessed.

3¹ LORD, I have so many enemies. So many people have turned against me.

²They say to themselves, God will not rescue him! Selah

³But you, LORD, protect me. You bring me honor; you give me hope.

⁴I will pray to the LORD, and he will answer me from his holy mountain. Selah

⁵I can lie down to rest and know that I will wake up, because the LORD covers and protects me.

⁶So I will not be afraid of my enemies, even if thousands of them surround me.

⁷LORD, get up! My God, come rescue me! If you hit my enemies on the cheek, you will break all their teeth.

⁸LORD, the victory is yours! You are so good to your people. Selah

4¹ God, you showed that I was innocent. You gave me relief from all my troubles. So listen to me now when I call to you for help. Be kind to me and hear my prayer.

²Men, how long will you try to dishonor me? Do you enjoy wasting your time searching for new lies against me? Selah

³You can be sure that anyone who serves the LORD faithfully is special to him. The LORD listens when I pray to him.

⁴Tremble with fear, and stop sinning. Think about this when you go to bed, and calm down. Selah

⁵Give the right sacrifices to the LORD, and put your trust in him!

⁶Many people say, I wish I could enjoy the good life. LORD, give us some of those blessings.

⁷But you have made me happier than they will ever be with all their wine and grain.

⁸When I go to bed, I sleep in peace, because, LORD, you keep me safe.

5¹ LORD, listen to me and understand what I am trying to say.

²My God and King, listen to my prayer.

³Every morning, LORD, I lay my gifts before you and look to you for help. And every morning you hear my prayers.

⁴God, you don't want evil people near you. They cannot stay in your presence.

⁵Fools cannot come near you. You hate those who do evil.

⁶You destroy those who tell lies. LORD, you hate those who make secret plans to hurt others.

⁷But by your great mercy, I can enter your house. I can worship in your holy Temple with fear and respect for you.

⁸LORD, show me your right way of living, and make it easy for me to follow. People are looking for my weaknesses, so show me how you want me to live.

⁹My enemies never tell the truth. They only want to destroy people. Their words come from mouths that are like open graves. They use their lying tongues to deceive others.

¹⁰Punish them, God! Let them be caught in their own traps. They have turned against you, so punish them for their many crimes.

¹¹But let those who trust in you be happy forever. Protect and strengthen those who love your name.

¹²LORD, when you bless good people, you surround them with your love, like a large shield that protects them.

6¹ LORD, dont punish me. Dont correct me when you are so angry.

²LORD, be kind to me. I am sick and weak. Heal me, LORD! My bones are shaking.

³I am trembling all over. LORD, how long until you heal me?

⁴LORD, come back and make me strong again. Save me because you are so loyal and kind.

⁵If I am dead, I cannot sing about you. Those in the grave dont praise you.

⁶Lord, I am so weak. I cried to you all night. My pillow is soaked; my bed is dripping wet from my tears.

⁷My enemies have caused me such sorrow that my eyes are worn out from crying.

⁸Go away, you wicked people, because the LORD has heard my cries.

⁹The LORD has heard my request for mercy. The LORD has accepted my prayer.

¹⁰All my enemies will be filled with fear and shame. They will be sorry when disgrace suddenly comes upon them.

7¹ of David that he sang to the LORD about Cush from the tribe of

Benjamin. LORD my God, I come to you for protection. Save me from those who are chasing me.

²If you don't help me, I will be torn apart like an animal caught by a lion. I will be carried away with no one to save me.

³LORD my God, I have done nothing wrong.

⁴I have done nothing to hurt a friend or to help his enemies.

⁵If that is not the truth, then punish me. Let an enemy chase me, catch me, and kill me. Let him grind me into the dirt and put me in my grave. Selah

⁶LORD, get up and show your anger! My enemy is angry, so stand and fight against him. Get me the justice that you demand.

⁷Gather the nations around you, and take your place as judge.

⁸LORD, judge the people. LORD, judge me. Prove that I am right and that I am innocent.

⁹Stop those who do evil. Support those who do good. God, you are fair. You know what people are thinking.

¹⁰God helps people who want to do right, so he will protect me.

¹¹God is a good judge. He always condemns evil.

¹²If the wicked will not change, then God is ready to punish them. He has prepared his deadly weapons. His sword is sharp. His bow is strung, drawn back, and ready to shoot its flaming arrow.

¹³(7: 12)

¹⁴The minds of the wicked are full of evil; they are pregnant with wicked plans, which give birth to lies.

¹⁵They dig a pit to trap others, but they are the ones who will fall into it.

¹⁶The trouble they cause will come back on them. They plan harm for others, but they are the ones who will be hurt.

¹⁷I praise the LORD because he is good. I praise the name of the LORD Most High.

8¹LORD our Lord, your name is the most wonderful in all the earth! It brings you praise everywhere in heaven.

²From the mouths of children and babies come songs of praise to you. They sing of your power to silence your enemies who were seeking revenge.

³ I look at the heavens you made with your hands. I see the moon and the stars you created.

⁴ And I wonder, Why are people so important to you? Why do you even think about them? Why do you care so much about humans? Why do you even notice them?

⁵ But you made them almost like gods and crowned them with glory and honor.

⁶ You put them in charge of everything you made. You put everything under their control.

⁷ People rule over the sheep and cattle and all the wild animals.

⁸ They rule over the birds in the sky and the fish that swim in the sea.

⁹ LORD our Lord, your name is the most wonderful name in all the earth!

9¹ A song of David. I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart. I will tell about the wonderful things you have done.

² You make me happy, so I will rejoice in you. God Most High, I praise your name.

³ My enemies turned to run from you, but they fell and were destroyed.

⁴You listened to me from your throne like a good judge, and you decided that I was right.

⁵You told the nations how wrong they were. You destroyed those evil people. You erased their names from our memory forever and ever.

⁶The enemy is finished! You destroyed their cities. There is nothing left to remind us of them.

⁷The LORD set up his throne to bring justice, and he will rule forever.

⁸He judges everyone on earth fairly. He judges all nations honestly.

⁹Many people are suffering crushed by the weight of their troubles. But the LORD is a refuge for them, a safe place they can run to.

¹⁰LORD, those who know your name come to you for protection. And when they come, you do not leave them without help.

¹¹Sing praises to the LORD, who sits as King in Zion. Tell the nations about the great things he has done.

¹²He punishes murderers and remembers those who are in need. When

suffering people cry for help, he does not ignore them.

¹³I said this prayer: LORD, be kind to me. See how my enemies are hurting me. Save me from the gates of death.

¹⁴Then, at the gates of Jerusalem, I can sing praises to you. I will be so happy because you saved me.

¹⁵Those other nations have fallen into the pit they dug to catch others. They have been caught in their own trap.

¹⁶The LORD showed that he judges fairly. The wicked were caught by what they did to hurt others. Higgayon Selah

¹⁷The wicked will go to the place of death, as will all the nations that forget God.

¹⁸It may seem that those who are poor and needy have been forgotten, but God will not forget them. He will not leave them without hope.

¹⁹LORD, get up and judge the nations. Dont let anyone think they can win against you.

²⁰Teach them a lesson, LORD. Let them know they are only human. Selah

10¹ LORD, why do you stay so far away? Why do you hide from people in times of trouble?

²The wicked are proud and make evil plans to hurt the poor, who are caught in their traps and made to suffer.

³Those greedy people brag about the things they want to get. They curse the LORD and show that they hate him.

⁴The wicked are too proud to ask God for help. He does not fit into their plans.

⁵They succeed in everything they do. They don't understand how you can judge them. They make fun of all their enemies.

⁶They say to themselves, Nothing bad will ever happen to us. We will have our fun and never be punished.

⁷They are always cursing, lying, and planning evil things to do.

⁸They hide just outside the villages, waiting to kill innocent people, always looking for any helpless person they can hurt.

⁹They are like lions hiding in the bushes to catch weak and helpless animals. They lay their traps for the poor, who are caught in their nets.

¹⁰Again and again they hurt people who are already weak and suffering.

¹¹They say to themselves, God has forgotten about us. He is not watching. He will never see what we are doing.

¹²LORD, get up and do something. Punish those who are wicked, God. Don't forget those who are poor and helpless.

¹³The wicked turn against God because they think he will not punish them.

¹⁴But, Lord, you do see the pain and suffering they cause. You see it, so punish them. Those who were left helpless put their trust in you. After all, you are the one who cares for orphans.

¹⁵Break the arms of those who are wicked and evil. Punish them for the evil they have done, and stop them from doing any more.

¹⁶LORD, you are King forever and ever, so I know you will remove the wicked nations from your land.

¹⁷LORD, you have heard what the poor want. Listen to their prayers, and do what they ask.

¹⁸Protect the orphans and those who have been hurt. Don't let powerful people drive us from our land!

11 ¹I trust in the LORD, so why did you tell me to run and hide? Why did you say, Fly like a bird to your mountain?

²Like hunters, the wicked hide in the dark. They get their bows ready and aim their arrows. They shoot at good, honest people.

³What would good people do if the wicked destroyed all that is good?

⁴The LORD is in his holy temple. The LORD sits on his throne in heaven. He sees everything that happens. He watches people closely.

⁵The LORD examines those who are good and those who are wicked; he hates those who enjoy hurting others.

⁶He will make hot coals and burning sulfur fall like rain on the wicked. They will get nothing but a hot, burning wind.

⁷The LORD always does what is right, and he loves seeing people do right. Those who live good lives will be with him.

12 ¹Save me, LORD! We can no longer trust anyone! All the good, loyal people are gone.

² People lie to their neighbors. They say whatever they think people want to hear.

³ The LORD should cut off their lying lips and cut out their bragging tongues.

⁴ Those people think they can win any argument. They say, We are so good with words, no one will be our master.

⁵ They took advantage of the poor and stole what little they had. But the LORD knows what they did, and he says, I will rescue those who are poor and helpless, and I will punish those who hurt them.

⁶ The LORD'S words are true and pure, like silver purified by fire, like silver melted seven times to make it perfectly pure.

⁷ LORD, take care of the helpless. Protect them forever from the wicked people in this world.

⁸ The wicked are all around us, and everyone thinks evil is something to be praised!

13 ¹ How long will you forget me, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you refuse to accept me?

² How long must I wonder if you have forgotten me? How long must I feel this

sadness in my heart? How long will my enemy win against me?

³LORD my God, look at me and give me an answer. Make me feel strong again, or I will die.

⁴Then my enemy will say, I have won! He will be so happy to see me defeated.

⁵But I trust in your faithful love, Lord. I will be happy when you save me.

⁶Then I will sing to the LORD because he was so good to me.

14¹ Only fools think there is no God. People like that are evil and do terrible things. They never do what is right.

²The LORD looks down from heaven to see if there is anyone who is wise, anyone who looks to him for help.

³But everyone has gone the wrong way. Everyone has turned bad. No one does anything good. No, not one person!

⁴Those who are evil treat my people like bread to be eaten. And they never ask for the LORD'S help. Don't they know what they are doing?

⁵They will have plenty to fear, because God is with those who do what is right.

⁶You wicked people want to spoil the hopes of the poor, but the LORD will protect them.

⁷I wish the one who lives on Mount Zion would bring victory to Israel! When the LORD makes his people successful again, the people of Jacob will be happy; the people of Israel will be glad.

15¹ LORD, who can live in your Holy Tent? Who can live on your holy mountain?

²Only those who live pure lives, do what is right, and speak the truth from their hearts.

³Such people don't say bad things about others. They don't do things to hurt their neighbors. They don't tell shameful things about those close to them.

⁴They hate those who fail to please God and honor those who respect the LORD. If they make a promise to their neighbor, they do what they promised.

⁵If they loan money to someone, they do not charge them interest. And they refuse to testify against an innocent person, even if someone offers them money to do it. Whoever lives like this will always stand strong.

16¹ Protect me, God, because I depend on you.

² Some of you have said to the LORD, You are my Lord. Every good thing I have comes from you.

³ But you have also said about the gods of this land, They are my powerful gods. They are the ones who make me happy.

⁴ But those who worship other gods will have many troubles. I will not share in the gifts of blood they offer to their idols. I will not even say their names.

⁵ LORD, you give me all that I need. You support me. You give me my share.

⁶ My share is wonderful. My inheritance is very beautiful.

⁷ I praise the LORD because he taught me well. Even at night he put his instructions deep inside my mind.

⁸ I always remember that the LORD is with me. He is here, close by my side, so nothing can defeat me.

⁹ So my heart and soul will be very happy. Even my body will live in safety,

¹⁰ because you will not leave me in the place of death. You will not let your faithful one rot in the grave.

¹¹ You will teach me the right way to live. Just being with you will bring complete happiness. Being at your right side will make me happy forever.

17 ¹ LORD, hear my prayer for justice. I am calling loudly to you. I am being honest in what I say, so please listen to my prayer.

² You will make the right decision, because you can see the truth.

³ You were with me all night and looked deep into my heart. You questioned me and found that I did not say or do anything wrong.

⁴ Unlike most people, I have obeyed your commands, so I have never been like those who are cruel and evil.

⁵ I have followed your way. My feet never left your path.

⁶ Every time I call to you, God, you answer me. So listen to me now, and hear what I say.

⁷ Show your amazing kindness and rescue those who depend on you. Use your great power and protect them from their enemies.

⁸ Protect me like the pupil of your eye. Hide me in the shadow of your wings.

⁹Save me from the wicked people who are trying to destroy me. Protect me from those who come to hurt me.

¹⁰They think only of themselves and brag about what they will do.

¹¹They have been following me, and now they are all around me. They watch me, waiting to throw me to the ground.

¹²Like hungry lions, they want to kill and eat. Like young lions, they hide, ready to attack.

¹³LORD, get up and face the enemy. Make them surrender. Use your sword and save me from these wicked people.

¹⁴Use your power, LORD, and remove them from this life. But as for the people you treasure, fill them with food. Give them plenty for their children and their grandchildren.

¹⁵I have done only what is right, so I will see your face. And seeing you, I will be fully satisfied.

18¹To the director: A song of David, the LORD'S servant. He sang this song to the LORD when the LORD saved him from Saul and all his other enemies. I love you, LORD! You are my strength.

²The LORD is my Rock, my fortress, my place of safety. He is my God, the Rock I run to for protection. He is my shield; by his power I am saved. He is my hiding place high in the hills.

³I called to the LORD for help, and he saved me from my enemies! He is worthy of my praise!

⁴Death had its ropes wrapped around me. A deadly flood was carrying me away.

⁵The ropes of the grave wrapped around me. Death set its trap right there in front of me.

⁶In 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.

⁷The earth shook and shivered. The foundations of the mountains trembled. They shook because he was angry.

⁸Smoke came from his nose. Burning flames came from his mouth. Red-hot coals fell from him.

⁹He tore open the sky and came down! He stood on a thick, dark cloud.

¹⁰He flew across the sky, riding on a Cherub angel racing on the wings of the wind.

¹¹He wrapped himself in darkness that covered him like a tent. He was hidden by dark clouds heavy with water.

¹²Out of the brightness before him, hail broke through the clouds with flashes of lightning.

¹³The LORD thundered from the sky; God Most High let his voice be heard.

¹⁴He scattered his enemies with his arrows the lightning bolts that threw them into confusion.

¹⁵LORD, you shouted your command, and a powerful wind began to blow. Then the bottom of the sea could be seen, and the earth's foundations were uncovered.

¹⁶He reached down from above and grabbed me. He pulled me from the deep water.

¹⁷He saved me from my powerful enemies, who hated me. They were too strong for me, so he saved me.

¹⁸They attacked me in my time of trouble, but the LORD was there to support me.

¹⁹He was pleased with me, so he rescued me. He took me to a safe place.

²⁰The LORD rewarded me for doing what is right. He was good to me because I am innocent.

²¹The LORD did this because I have obeyed him. I have not turned against my God.

²²I always remembered his laws. I never rejected his rules.

²³He knows I did nothing that was wrong. I have kept myself from sinning.

²⁴So the LORD rewarded me for doing what is right. He could see that I am innocent.

²⁵Lord, you are faithful to those who are faithful. You are good to those who are good.

²⁶You never do wrong to those who have done no wrong. But you outsmart the wicked, no matter how clever they are.

²⁷You help those who are humble, but you humiliate the proud.

²⁸LORD, you provide the flame for my lamp. You, God, turn the darkness around me into light.

²⁹With your help I can defeat an army.
If my God is with me, I can climb over
enemy walls.

³⁰God's way is perfect. The LORD'S
promise always proves to be true. He
protects those who trust in him.

³¹There is no God except the LORD.
There is no Rock except our God.

³²God is the one who gives me
strength. He clears the path I need to
take.

³³He makes my feet as steady as those
of a deer. Even on steep mountains he
keeps me from falling.

³⁴He trains me for war so that my arms
can bend the most powerful bow.

³⁵Lord, you have given me your shield
to protect me. You support me with your
right hand. It is your help that has made
me great.

³⁶You cleared a path for my feet so that
I could walk without stumbling.

³⁷I chased my enemies and caught
them. I did not stop until they were
destroyed.

³⁸I struck them down, and they could
not get up again. They fell under my
feet.

³⁹ God, you made me strong in battle.
You made my enemies fall before me.

⁴⁰ You made my enemies turn and run
away. I destroyed those who hated me.

⁴¹ They cried out for help, but there was
no one to save them. They cried out to
the LORD, but he did not answer them.

⁴² I beat them to pieces like dust blown
by the wind. I smashed them like mud in
the streets.

⁴³ You saved me from those who fought
against me. You made me the ruler over
nations. People I never knew now serve
me.

⁴⁴ As soon as they heard about me, they
were ready to obey. Those foreigners fall
helpless before me!

⁴⁵ They lose all their courage and come
out of their hiding places shaking with
fear.

⁴⁶ The LORD lives! I praise my Rock, the
God who saves me. How great he is!

⁴⁷ He is the God who punishes my
enemies for me, the one who puts people
under my control.

⁴⁸ He saves me from my enemies! You,
Lord, help me defeat those who attack
me. You save me from cruel people.

⁴⁹LORD, that is why I praise you among the nations. That is why I sing songs of praise to your name.

⁵⁰The Lord helps his king win battle after battle. He shows his faithful love to his chosen one, to David and his descendants forever.

19¹The heavens tell about the glory of God. The skies announce what his hands have made.

²Each new day tells more of the story, and each night reveals more and more about God's power.

³You cannot hear them say anything. They don't make any sound we can hear.

⁴But their message goes throughout the world. Their teaching reaches the ends of the earth. The sun's tent is set up in the heavens.

⁵It comes out like a happy bridegroom from his bedroom. It begins its path across the sky like an athlete eager to run a race.

⁶It starts at one end of the sky and runs all the way to the other end. Nothing can hide from its heat.

⁷The LORD'S teachings are perfect. They give strength to his people. The

LORD'S rules can be trusted. They help even the foolish become wise.

⁸The LORD'S laws are right. They make people happy. The LORD'S commands are good. They show people the right way to live.

⁹Learning respect for the LORD is good. It will last forever. The LORD'S judgments are right. They are completely fair.

¹⁰His teachings are worth more than pure gold. They are sweeter than the best honey dripping from the honeycomb.

¹¹His teachings warn his servants, and good things come to those who obey them.

¹²People cannot see their own mistakes, so dont let me commit secret sins.

¹³Dont let me do what I know is wrong. Dont let sin control me. If you help me, I can be pure and free from sin.

¹⁴May my words and thoughts please you. LORD, you are my Rock the one who rescues me.

20¹ May the LORD answer you in times of trouble. May the God of Jacob protect you.

² May he send you help from his Holy Place. May he support you from Zion.

³ May he remember all the gifts you have offered. May he accept all your sacrifices. Selah

⁴ May he give you what you really want. May he make all your plans successful.

⁵ We will celebrate when he helps you. We will praise the name of God. May the LORD give you everything you ask for.

⁶ Now I know the LORD helps his chosen king. From his holy heaven he answered. With his great power he saved him.

⁷ Some give the credit for victory to their chariots and soldiers, but we honor the LORD our God.

⁸ They fall in battle, totally defeated, but we survive and stand strong!

⁹ LORD, save the king! Answer us when we call to you for help.

21 ¹ LORD, your strength makes the king happy. He is so happy when you give him victory.

² And you gave him what he wanted. You gave him what he asked for. Selah

³ You gave the king such wonderful blessings. You put a gold crown on his head.

⁴ He asked for life, and you gave it. You gave him life that goes on forever.

⁵ You led him to victory that brought him great glory. You gave him honor and fame.

⁶ You have given him blessings that will last forever. You have given him the joy of being near you.

⁷ The king trusts in the LORD, and the faithful love of God Most High will keep him from falling.

⁸ Lord, you will show all your enemies that you are strong. Your power will defeat those who hate you.

⁹ When you appear, you will burn them up like a blazing furnace. In your anger, LORD, you will completely destroy them; they will be swallowed by flames of fire.

¹⁰ Their families will be destroyed. They will be removed from the earth.

¹¹ That is because they made evil plans against you. They wanted to do things they could not do.

¹² You will make them turn and run away when you aim your arrows at their faces.

¹³LORD, we lift you up with our songs of praise. We sing and play songs about your power!

22¹ My God, my God, why have you left me? You seem too far away to save me, too far to hear my cries for help!

² My God, I kept calling by day, and I was not silent at night. But you did not answer me.

³ God, you are the Holy One. You sit as King upon the praises of Israel.

⁴ Our ancestors trusted you. Yes, they trusted you, and you saved them.

⁵ They called to you for help and escaped their enemies. They trusted you and were not disappointed!

⁶ But I feel like a worm, less than human! People insult me and look down on me.

⁷ Everyone who sees me makes fun of me. They shake their heads and stick out their tongues at me.

⁸ They say, Call to the LORD for help. Maybe he will save you. If he likes you so much, surely he will rescue you!

⁹ God, the truth is, you are the one who brought me into this world. You

made me feel safe while I was still at my mothers breasts.

¹⁰You have been my God since the day I was born. I was thrown into your arms as I came from my mothers womb.

¹¹So dont leave me! Trouble is near, and there is no one to help me.

¹²My enemies surround me like angry bulls. They are like the powerful bulls of Bashan, and they are all around me.

¹³Their mouths are opened wide, like a lion roaring and tearing at its prey.

¹⁴My strength is gone, like water poured out on the ground. My bones have separated. My courage is gone.

¹⁵My mouth is as dry as a piece of baked pottery. My tongue is sticking to the roof of my mouth. You have left me dying in the dust.

¹⁶Evil people are all around me. They are closing in on me like a pack of dogs. They have pierced my hands and feet.

¹⁷I can see each one of my bones. My enemies are looking at me; they just keep staring.

¹⁸They divide my clothes among themselves, and they throw lots for what I am wearing.

¹⁹LORD, dont leave me! You are my strength hurry and help me!

²⁰Save me from the sword. Save my precious life from these dogs.

²¹Rescue me from the lions mouth. Protect me from the horns of the bulls.

²²I will tell my people about you. I will praise you in the great assembly.

²³Praise the LORD, all you who worship him! Honor him, you descendants of Jacob! Fear and respect him, all you people of Israel!

²⁴He does not ignore those who need help. He does not hate them. He does not turn away from them. He listens when they cry for help.

²⁵Lord, because of you I offer praise in the great assembly. In front of all these worshipers I will do all that I promised.

²⁶Poor people, come eat and be satisfied. You who have come looking for the LORD, praise him! May your hearts be happy forever.

²⁷May those in faraway countries remember the LORD and come back to him. May those in distant lands worship him,

²⁸because the LORD is the King. He rules all nations.

²⁹The people have eaten all they wanted and bowed down to worship him. Yes, everyone will bow down to him all who are on the way to the grave, unable to hold on to life.

³⁰Our descendants will serve him. Those who are not yet born will be told about him.

³¹Each generation will tell their children about the good things the Lord has done.

23¹ The LORD is my shepherd. I will always have everything I need.

²He gives me green pastures to lie in. He leads me by calm pools of water.

³He restores my strength. He leads me on right paths to show that he is good.

⁴Even if I walk through a valley as dark as the grave, I will not be afraid of any danger, because you are with me. Your rod and staff comfort me.

⁵You prepared a meal for me in front of my enemies. You welcomed me as an honored guest. My cup is full and spilling over.

⁶Your goodness and mercy will be with me all my life, and I will live in the LORD'S house a long, long time.

24 ¹The earth and everything on it belong to the LORD. The world and all its people belong to him.

²He built the earth on the water. He built it over the rivers.

³Who can go up on the LORD'S mountain? Who can stand in his holy Temple?

⁴Only those who have not done evil, who have pure hearts, who have not used my name to hide their lies, and who have not made false promises.

⁵Good people ask the LORD to bless others. They ask God, their Savior, to do good things.

⁶They try to follow God. They go to the God of Jacob for help. Selah

⁷Gates, proudly lift your heads! Open, ancient doors, and the glorious King will come in.

⁸Who is the glorious King? He is the LORD, the powerful soldier. He is the LORD, the war hero.

⁹Gates, proudly lift your heads! Open, ancient doors, and the glorious King will come in.

¹⁰Who is the glorious King? The LORD All-Powerful is the glorious King.

25 ¹LORD, I put my life in your hands.

²I trust in you, my God, and I will not be disappointed. My enemies will not laugh at me.

³No one who trusts in you will be disappointed. But disappointment will come to those who try to deceive others. They will get nothing.

⁴LORD, help me learn your ways. Show me how you want me to live.

⁵Guide me and teach me your truths. You are my God, my Savior. You are the one I have been waiting for.

⁶Remember to be kind to me, LORD. Show me the tender love that you have always had.

⁷Dont remember the sinful things I did when I was young. Because you are good, LORD, remember me with your faithful love.

⁸The LORD is good and does what is right. He shows sinners the right way to live.

⁹He teaches his ways to humble people. He leads them with fairness.

¹⁰The LORD is kind and true to those who obey what he said in his agreement.

¹¹LORD, I have done many wrong things. But I ask you to forgive them all to show your goodness.

¹²When people choose to follow the LORD, he shows them the best way to live.

¹³They will enjoy good things, and their children will get the land God promised.

¹⁴The LORD tells his secrets to his followers. He teaches them about his agreement.

¹⁵I always look to the LORD for help. Only he can free me from my troubles.

¹⁶I am hurt and lonely. Turn to me, and show me mercy.

¹⁷Free me from my troubles. Help me solve my problems.

¹⁸Look at my trials and troubles. Forgive me for all the sins I have done.

¹⁹Look at all the enemies I have. They hate me and want to hurt me.

²⁰Protect me! Save me from them! I come to you for protection, so don't let me be disappointed.

²¹You are good and do what is right. I trust you to protect me.

²²God, save the people of Israel from all their enemies.

26 ¹LORD, you be the judge and prove that I have lived a pure life. I have depended on you, LORD, to keep me from falling.

²Look closely at me, LORD, and test me. Judge my deepest thoughts and emotions.

³I always remember your faithful love. I depend on your faithfulness.

⁴I don't run around with troublemakers. I have nothing to do with hypocrites.

⁵I hate being around evil people. I refuse to join those gangs of crooks.

⁶LORD, I wash my hands to make myself pure, so that I can come to your altar.

⁷I sing a song to give you thanks, and I tell about all the wonderful things you have done.

⁸LORD, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory is.

⁹Lord, don't treat me like one of those sinners. Don't kill me with those murderers.

¹⁰They are guilty of cheating people. They take bribes to do wrong.

¹¹But I am innocent, so be kind to me and save me.

¹²I am safe from all danger as I stand here praising you, LORD, in the assembly of your people.

27 ¹LORD, you are my Light and my Savior, so why should I be afraid of anyone? The LORD is where my life is safe, so I will be afraid of no one!

²Evil people might attack me. They might try to destroy my body. Yes, my enemies might attack and try to destroy me, but they will stumble and fall.

³Even if an army surrounds me, I will not be afraid. Even if people attack me in war, I will trust in the Lord.

⁴I ask only one thing from the LORD. This is what I want most: Let me live in the LORD'S house all my life, enjoying the LORD'S beauty and spending time in his palace.

⁵ He will protect me when I am in danger. He will hide me in his tent. He will take me up to his place of safety.

⁶ If he will help me defeat the enemies around me, I will offer sacrifices in his tent with shouts of joy. I will sing and play songs to honor the LORD.

⁷ LORD, hear my voice. Be kind and answer me.

⁸ My heart told me to come to you, LORD, so I am coming to ask for your help.

⁹ Don't turn away from me. Don't be angry with your servant. You are the only one who can help me. My God, don't leave me all alone. You are my Savior.

¹⁰ Even if my mother and father leave me, the LORD will take me in.

¹¹ I have enemies, LORD, so teach me your ways. Show me the right way to live.

¹² My enemies have attacked me. They have told lies about me and have tried to hurt me.

¹³ But I really believe that I will see the LORD'S goodness before I die.

¹⁴ Wait for the LORD'S help. Be strong and brave, and wait for the LORD'S help.

28¹ LORD, you are my Rock. I am calling to you for help. Don't close your ears to my prayers. If you don't answer me, I will be counted among the dead.

² I lift my hands and pray toward your Most Holy Place. Hear me when I call to you. Show mercy to me.

³ Don't treat me like the evil people who do wicked things. They greet their neighbors like friends, but secretly plan to hurt them.

⁴ They do bad things to others, so make bad things happen to them. Give them the punishment they deserve.

⁵ They don't notice what the LORD does. They ignore all the good things he has made. So instead of building them up, he will destroy them.

⁶ Praise the LORD! He has heard my prayer for mercy.

⁷ The LORD is my strength and shield. I trusted him with all my heart. He helped me, so I am happy. I sing songs of praise to him.

⁸ The LORD protects his chosen one. He saves him and gives him strength.

⁹Save your people. Bless those who belong to you. Lead them and honor them forever.

29¹Praise the LORD, you heavenly angels! Praise the LORD'S glory and power.

²Praise the LORD and honor his name! Worship the LORD in all his holy beauty.

³The LORD'S voice can be heard over the sea. The voice of our glorious LORD God is like thunder over the great ocean.

⁴The LORD'S voice is powerful. It shows the LORD'S glory.

⁵The LORD'S voice shatters great cedar trees. The LORD breaks the great cedars of Lebanon.

⁶He makes Lebanon shake like a young calf dancing. Sirion trembles like a young bull jumping up and down.

⁷The LORD'S voice cuts the air with flashes of lightning.

⁸The LORD'S voice shakes the desert. The desert of Kadesh trembles at the LORD'S voice.

⁹The LORD'S voice frightens the deer. He destroys the forests. In his temple everyone shouts, Glory to God!

¹⁰The LORD ruled as king at the time of the flood, and the LORD will rule as king forever.

¹¹May the LORD make his people strong. May the LORD bless his people with peace.

30¹ LORD, you lifted me out of my troubles. You did not give my enemies a reason to laugh, so I will praise you.

²LORD my God, I prayed to you, and you healed me.

³LORD, you lifted me out of the grave. I was falling into the place of death, but you saved my life.

⁴Praise the LORD, you who are loyal to him! Praise his holy name!

⁵His anger lasts for a little while, but then his kindness brings life. The night may be filled with tears, but in the morning we can sing for joy!

⁶When I was safe and secure, I thought nothing could hurt me.

⁷Yes, LORD, while you were kind to me, I felt that nothing could defeat me. But when you turned away from me, I was filled with fear.

⁸So, LORD, I turned and prayed to you. I asked you, Lord, to show me mercy.

⁹I said, What good is it if I die and go down to the grave? The dead just lie in the dirt. They cannot praise you. They cannot tell anyone how faithful you are.

¹⁰LORD, hear my prayer, and be kind to me. LORD, help me!

¹¹You have changed my sorrow into dancing. You have taken away my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

¹²You wanted me to praise you and not be silent. LORD my God, I will praise you forever!

31 ¹LORD, I come to you for protection. Don't let me be disappointed. You always do what is right, so save me.

²Listen to me. Come quickly and save me. Be my Rock, my place of safety. Be my fortress and protect me!

³Yes, you are my Rock and my protection. For the good of your name, lead me and guide me.

⁴Save me from the traps my enemy has set. You are my place of safety.

⁵LORD, you are the God we can trust. I put my life in your hands. Save me!

⁶I hate those who worship false gods. I trust only in the LORD.

⁷Your kindness makes me so happy. You have seen my suffering. You know about the troubles I have.

⁸You will not let my enemies take me. You will free me from their traps.

⁹LORD, I have many troubles, so be kind to me. I have cried until my eyes hurt. My throat and stomach are aching.

¹⁰Because of my sin, my life is ending in grief; my years are passing away in sighs of pain. My life is ending in weakness. My strength is draining away.

¹¹My enemies despise me, and even my neighbors have turned away. When my friends see me in the street, they turn the other way. They are afraid to be around me.

¹²People want to forget me like someone already dead, thrown away like a broken dish.

¹³I hear them whispering about me. They have turned against me and plan to kill me.

¹⁴LORD, I trust in you. You are my God.

¹⁵My life is in your hands. Save me from those who are persecuting me.

¹⁶Please welcome and accept your servant. Be kind to me and save me.

¹⁷LORD, I am praying to you. Don't let me be disappointed. The wicked are the ones who should be disappointed. Let them go to the grave in silence.

¹⁸Those evil people brag and tell lies about those who do right. They are so proud now, but their lying lips will be silent.

¹⁹Lord, you have hidden away many wonderful things for your followers. You have done so many good things for those who trust in you. You have blessed them so that all the world can see.

²⁰Others make plans to hurt them. They say such bad things about them. But you hide your people in your shelter and protect them.

²¹Praise the LORD, because he showed me how wonderful his faithful love is when the city was surrounded by enemies.

²²I was afraid and said, I am in a place where he cannot see me. But I prayed to you, and you heard my loud cries for help.

²³ Love the LORD, all of you who are his loyal followers. The LORD protects those who are loyal to him. But he punishes those who brag about their own power. He gives them all the punishment they deserve.

²⁴ Be strong and brave, all of you who are waiting for the LORD'S help.

32¹ It is a great blessing when people are forgiven for the wrongs they have done, when their sins are erased.

² It is a great blessing when the LORD says they are not guilty, when they don't try to hide their sins.

³ Lord, I prayed to you again and again, but I did not talk about my sins. So I only became weaker and more miserable.

⁴ Every day you made life harder for me. I became like a dry land in the hot summertime. Selah

⁵ But then I decided to confess my sins to the LORD. I stopped hiding my guilt and told you about my sins. And you forgave them all! Selah

⁶ That is why your loyal followers pray to you while there is still time. Then

when trouble rises like a flood, it will not reach them.

⁷You are a hiding place for me. You protect me from my troubles. You surround me and protect me, so I sing about the way you saved me. Selah

⁸The Lord says, I will teach you and guide you in the way you should live. I will watch over you and be your guide.

⁹Dont be like a stupid horse or mule that will not come to you unless you put a bit in its mouth and pull it with reins.

¹⁰Many pains will come to the wicked, but the LORD'S faithful love will surround those who trust in him.

¹¹Good people, rejoice and be very happy in the LORD. All you who want to do right, rejoice!

33¹ Rejoice in the LORD, good people! It is only right for good people to praise him.

²Play the lyre and praise the LORD. Play the ten-stringed harp for him.

³Sing a new song to him. Play it well and sing it loud!

⁴The LORD'S word is true, and he is faithful in everything he does.

⁵ He loves goodness and justice. The LORD'S faithful love fills the earth.

⁶ The LORD spoke the command, and the world was made. The breath from his mouth created everything in the heavens.

⁷ He gathered together the water of the sea. He put the ocean in its place.

⁸ Everyone on earth should fear and respect the LORD. All the people in the world should fear him,

⁹ because when he speaks, things happen. And if he says, Stop! then it stops.

¹⁰ The LORD can ruin every decision the nations make. He can spoil all their plans.

¹¹ But the LORD'S decisions are good forever. His plans are good for generation after generation.

¹² Great blessings belong to those who have the LORD as their God! He chose them to be his own special people.

¹³ The LORD looked down from heaven and saw all the people.

¹⁴ From his high throne he looked down at all the people living on earth.

¹⁵He created every persons mind, and he knows what each one is doing.

¹⁶A king is not saved by the power of his army. A soldier does not survive by his own great strength.

¹⁷Horses dont really bring victory in war. Their strength cannot help you escape.

¹⁸The LORD watches over his followers, those who wait for him to show his faithful love.

¹⁹He saves them from death. He gives them strength when they are hungry.

²⁰So we will wait for the LORD. He helps us and protects us.

²¹He makes us happy. We trust his holy name.

²²LORD, we worship you, so show your great love for us.

34¹I will praise the LORD at all times. I will never stop singing his praises.

²Humble people, listen and be happy, while I brag about the LORD.

³Praise the LORD with me. Let us honor his name.

⁴I went to the LORD for help, and he listened. He saved me from all that I fear.

⁵If you look to him for help, he will put a smile on your face. You will have no need to be ashamed.

⁶As a poor, helpless man I prayed to the LORD, and he heard me. He saved me from all my troubles.

⁷The LORD'S angel builds a camp around his followers, and he protects them.

⁸Give the LORD a chance to show you how good he is. Great blessings belong to those who depend on him!

⁹The LORD'S holy people should fear and respect him. Those who respect him will always have what they need.

¹⁰Even strong lions get weak and hungry, but those who go to the LORD for help will have every good thing.

¹¹Children, come and listen to me; I will teach you to respect the LORD.

¹²Do you want to enjoy life? Do you want to have many happy days?

¹³Then avoid saying anything hurtful, and never let a lie come out of your mouth.

¹⁴ Stop doing anything evil, and do good. Look for peace, and do all you can to help people live peacefully.

¹⁵ The LORD watches over those who do what is right, and he hears their prayers.

¹⁶ But the LORD is against those who do evil, so they are forgotten soon after they die.

¹⁷ Pray to the LORD, and he will hear you. He will save you from all your troubles.

¹⁸ The LORD is close to those who have suffered disappointment. He saves those who are discouraged.

¹⁹ Good people might have many problems, but the LORD will take them all away.

²⁰ He will protect them completely. Not one of their bones will be broken.

²¹ But troubles will kill the wicked. The enemies of those who live right will all be punished.

²² The LORD saves his servants. All who go to him for protection will escape punishment.

35 ¹ LORD, oppose those who oppose me. Fight those who fight me.

²Pick up your shields, large and small.
Get up and help me!

³Take a spear and javelin and fight
those who are chasing me. Tell me, I will
rescue you.

⁴Some people are trying to kill me.
Disappoint them and make them
ashamed. Make them turn and run away.
They are planning to hurt me. Defeat
and embarrass them.

⁵Make them like chaff blown by the
wind. Let them be chased by the angel
of the LORD.

⁶Make their road dark and slippery. Let
the angel of the LORD chase them.

⁷I did nothing wrong, but they tried to
trap me. For no reason at all, they dug a
pit to catch me.

⁸So let them fall into their own traps.
Let them stumble into their own nets.
Let some unknown danger catch them.

⁹Then I will rejoice in the LORD. I will
be happy when he saves me.

¹⁰With my whole self I will say, LORD,
there is no one like you. You protect the
poor from those who are stronger. You
save the poor and helpless from those
who try to rob them.

¹¹ There are witnesses trying to harm me. They ask me questions that I know nothing about.

¹² They pay me back evil for the good I have done. They make me so very sad.

¹³ When they were sick, I was sad and wore sackcloth. I went without eating to show my sorrow. And when my prayers for them were not answered,

¹⁴ I mourned for them as I would for a friend or a brother. I bowed low in sadness, crying as I would for my own mother.

¹⁵ But when I had troubles, they laughed at me. They were not really friends. I was surrounded and attacked by people I didn't even know.

¹⁶ They made fun of me, using the worst language. They ground their teeth to show their anger.

¹⁷ My Lord, how long will you watch this happen? Save my life from these people who are attacking me like lions and trying to destroy me.

¹⁸ I will praise you in the great assembly. I will praise you there among the crowds.

¹⁹ Dont let my lying enemies keep on laughing at me. They have no reason to hate me. Surely they will be punished for their secret plans.

²⁰They have no friendly words for others, but plan ways to hurt those who want to live in peace.

²¹They are telling lies about me. They say, Aha! We know what you did!

²²LORD, surely you can see what is happening. So dont keep quiet. Lord, dont leave me.

²³Wake up! Get up! My God and my Lord, fight for me, and bring me justice.

²⁴LORD my God, judge me with your fairness. Dont let those people laugh at me.

²⁵Dont let them think, Aha! We got what we wanted! Dont let them say, We destroyed him!

²⁶Let my enemies be ashamed and embarrassed all those who were happy about my troubles. Proud of themselves, they treated me as worthless. So let them be covered with shame and disgrace.

²⁷To those who want the best for me, I wish them joy and happiness. May they

always say, Praise the LORD, who wants what is best for his servant.

²⁸ So, Lord, I will tell people how good you are. I will praise you all day long.

36 ¹ Deep in the hearts of the wicked a voice tells them to do wrong. They have no respect for God.

² They lie to themselves. They don't see their own faults, so they are not sorry for what they do.

³ Their words are wicked lies. They have stopped doing anything wise or good.

⁴ They make wicked plans in bed at night. They choose a way of life that does no good. And they never say no to anything evil.

⁵ LORD, your faithful love reaches to the sky. Your faithfulness is as high as the clouds.

⁶ Your goodness is higher than the highest mountains. Your fairness is deeper than the deepest ocean. LORD, you protect people and animals.

⁷ Nothing is more precious than your loving kindness. All people can find protection close to you.

⁸They get strength from all the good things in your house. You let them drink from your wonderful river.

⁹The fountain of life flows from you. Your light lets us see light.

¹⁰Continue to love those who really know you, and do good to those who are true to you.

¹¹Don't let proud people trap me. Don't let the wicked force me to run away.

¹²Put this on their grave markers: Here fell the wicked. They were crushed. They will never stand up again.

37 ¹Don't get upset about evil people. Don't be jealous of those who do wrong.

²They are like grass and other green plants that dry up quickly and then die.

³So trust in the LORD and do good. Live on your land and be dependable.

⁴Enjoy serving the LORD, and he will give you whatever you ask for.

⁵Depend on the LORD. Trust in him, and he will help you.

⁶He will make it as clear as day that you are right. Everyone will see that you are being fair.

⁷ Trust in the LORD and wait quietly for his help. Don't be angry when people make evil plans and succeed.

⁸ Don't become so angry and upset that you, too, want to do evil.

⁹ The wicked will be destroyed, but those who call to the LORD for help will get the land he promised.

¹⁰ In a short time there will be no more evil people. You can look for them all you want, but they will be gone.

¹¹ Humble people will get the land God promised, and they will enjoy peace.

¹² The wicked plan bad things for those who are good. They show their teeth in anger at them.

¹³ But our Lord will laugh at them. He will make sure they get what they deserve.

¹⁴ The wicked draw their swords to kill the poor and the helpless. They aim their arrows to murder all who live right.

¹⁵ But their bows will break, and their swords will pierce their own hearts.

¹⁶ A few good people are better than a large crowd of those who are evil.

¹⁷ The wicked will be destroyed, but the LORD cares for those who are good.

¹⁸The LORD protects pure people all their life. Their reward will last forever.

¹⁹When trouble comes, good people will not be destroyed. When times of hunger come, good people will have plenty to eat.

²⁰But evil people are the LORD'S enemies, and they will be destroyed. Their valleys will dry up and burn. They will be destroyed completely.

²¹The wicked borrow money and never pay it back. But good people are kind and generous.

²²Everyone the Lord blesses will get the land he promised. Everyone he curses will be destroyed.

²³The LORD shows us how we should live, and he is pleased when he sees people living that way.

²⁴If they stumble, they will not fall, because the LORD reaches out to steady them.

²⁵I was young, and now I am old, but I have never seen good people left with no one to help them; I have never seen their children begging for food.

²⁶They are kind and generous, and their children are a blessing.

²⁷ Stop doing anything evil and do good, and you will always have a place to live.

²⁸ The LORD loves what is right, and he will never leave his followers without help. He will always protect them, but he will destroy the families of the wicked.

²⁹ Good people will get the land God promised and will live on it forever.

³⁰ Those who do what is right give good advice. Their decisions are always fair.

³¹ They have learned God's teachings, and they will never stop living right.

³² The wicked are always looking for ways to kill good people.

³³ But the LORD will not let the wicked defeat them. He will not let good people be judged guilty.

³⁴ Do what the LORD says, and wait for his help. He will reward you and give you the land he promised. You will see the wicked being forced to leave.

³⁵ I once saw a wicked man who was powerful. He was like a strong, healthy tree.

³⁶ But then he was gone. I looked for him, but I could not find him.

³⁷ Be pure and honest. Peace loving people will have many descendants.

³⁸ But those who break the law will be destroyed completely. And their descendants will be forced to leave the land.

³⁹ The LORD saves those who are good. When they have troubles, he is their strength.

⁴⁰ The LORD helps good people and rescues them. They depend on him, so he rescues them from the wicked.

38 ¹ LORD, don't criticize me when you are angry. Don't discipline me in anger.

² You have hurt me. You punished me and hurt me deeply.

³ You punished me severely, so my whole body is sore. I sinned, and now all my bones hurt.

⁴ My guilt is like a heavy burden. I am sinking beneath its weight.

⁵ I did a foolish thing, and now I have infected sores that stink.

⁶ I am bent and bowed down. I am depressed all day long.

⁷ I am burning with fever, and my whole body hurts.

⁸ I hurt so much I cannot feel anything. My pounding heart makes me scream!

⁹My Lord, you heard my groaning. You can hear my sighs.

¹⁰My heart is pounding. My strength is gone, and I am going blind.

¹¹Because of my sickness, my friends and neighbors will not visit me; my family will not come near me.

¹²My enemies say bad things about me. They are spreading lies and rumors. They talk about me all the time.

¹³But I am like a deaf man and cannot hear. I am like someone who cannot speak.

¹⁴I am like those who cannot hear what people are saying about them. I cannot answer to prove my enemies wrong.

¹⁵LORD, you must defend me. Lord my God, you must speak for me.

¹⁶That's why I prayed, Don't let my enemies smile at my pain. Full of pride, they will laugh if I stumble and fall.

¹⁷I know I am guilty of doing wrong. I cannot forget my pain.

¹⁸Lord, I told you about the evil I have done. I am sorry for my sin.

¹⁹But my enemies are alive and healthy, and they have told many lies.

²⁰I did nothing but good, and they paid me back with evil. I try to do what is right, but that only makes them turn against me.

²¹LORD, don't leave me. My God, stay close to me.

²²Come quickly and help me. My Lord, you are the one who saves me.

39¹ I said, I will be careful about what I say. I will not let my tongue cause me to sin. I will keep my mouth closed when I am around wicked people.

²So I didn't say anything. I didn't even say anything good, but I became even more upset.

³I was very angry, and the more I thought about it, the angrier I became. So I said something.

⁴LORD, tell me, what will happen to me now? Tell me, how long will I live? Let me know how short my life really is.

⁵You gave me only a short life. Compared to you, my whole life is nothing. The life of every human is like a cloud that quickly disappears. Selah

⁶Our life is like an image in a mirror. We rush through life collecting things, but

we dont know who will get them after we die.

⁷ So, Lord, what hope do I have? You are my hope!

⁸ Save me from the bad things I did. Dont let me be treated like a fool.

⁹ I will not open my mouth. I will not say anything. You did what should have been done.

¹⁰ But please stop punishing me. You will destroy me if you do not stop.

¹¹ You punish people for doing wrong to teach them the right way to live. As a moth destroys cloth, you destroy what people love. Yes, our lives are like a small cloud that quickly disappears.

Selah

¹² LORD, hear my prayer! Listen to the words I cry to you. Look at my tears. I am only a traveler passing through this life with you. Like all my ancestors, I will live here only a short time.

¹³ Leave me alone and let me be happy before I am dead and gone.

40¹ I called to the LORD, and he heard me. He heard my cries.

² He lifted me out of the grave. He lifted me from that muddy place. He picked

me up, put me on solid ground, and kept my feet from slipping.

³He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see what he did and worship him. They will put their trust in the LORD.

⁴Great blessings belong to those who trust in the LORD, for those who do not turn to demons and false gods for help.

⁵LORD my God, you have done many amazing things! You have made great plans for us too many to list. I could talk on and on about them, because there are too many to count.

⁶Lord, you made me understand this: You don't really want sacrifices and grain offerings. You don't want burnt offerings and sin offerings.

⁷So I said, Here I am, ready to do what was written about me in the book.

⁸My God, I am happy to do whatever you want. I never stop thinking about your teachings.

⁹I told the good news of victory to the people in the great assembly. And, LORD, you know that I will never stop telling that good news.

¹⁰I told about the good things you did. I did not hide these things in my heart. I spoke of how you can be trusted to save us. I did not hide your love and loyalty from those in the great assembly.

¹¹LORD, do not hide your mercy from me. Let your love and loyalty always protect me.

¹²Troubles have surrounded me. They are too many to count! My sins have caught me, and I cannot escape them. They are more than the hairs on my head. I have lost my courage.

¹³Please, LORD, rescue me! LORD, hurry and help me!

¹⁴People are trying to kill me. Please disappoint them. Humiliate them completely! They wanted to hurt me. Make them run away in shame!

¹⁵May those who make fun of me be too embarrassed to speak!

¹⁶But may those who come to you be happy and rejoice. May those who love being saved by you always be able to say, Praise the LORD!

¹⁷My Lord, I am only a poor, helpless man, but please pay attention to me.

You are my helper, the one who can save me. My God, don't be too late.

41 ¹ Those who help the poor succeed will get many blessings. When trouble comes, the LORD will save them.

² The LORD will protect them and save their lives. He will bless them in this land. He will not let their enemies harm them.

³ When they are sick in bed, the LORD will give them strength and make them well!

⁴ I say, LORD, be kind to me. I sinned against you, but forgive me and make me well.

⁵ My enemies say bad things about me. They ask, When will he die and be forgotten?

⁶ If they come to see me, they don't say what they are really thinking. They come to gather a little gossip and then go to spread their rumors.

⁷ Those who hate me whisper about me. They think the worst about me.

⁸ They say, He did something wrong. That is why he is sick. He will never get well.

⁹My best friend, the one I trusted, the one who ate with me even he has turned against me.

¹⁰LORD, please be kind to me. Let me get up, and I will pay them back.

¹¹Don't let my enemy defeat me. Then I will know that you care for me.

¹²I was innocent and you supported me. You let me stand and serve you forever.

¹³Praise the LORD, the God of Israel. He always was, and he always will be. Amen and Amen!

42¹ Like a deer drinking from a stream, I reach out to you, my God.

²My soul thirsts for the living God. When can I go to meet with him?

³Instead of food, I have only tears day and night, as my enemies laugh at me and say, Where is your God?

⁴My heart breaks as I remember the pleasant times in the past, when I walked with the crowds as I led them up to God's Temple. I remember the happy songs of praise as they celebrated the festival.

⁵ Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset? I tell myself, Wait for Gods help! You will again be able to praise him, your God, the one who will save you. In my sadness I say, I will remember you from here on this small hill, where Mount Hermon and the Jordan River meet.

⁶ (42: 5)

⁷ I hear the roar of the water coming from deep within the earth. It shouts to the water below as it tumbles down the waterfall. God, your waves come one after another, crashing all around and over me.

⁸ By day the LORD shows his faithful love, and at night I have a song for him a prayer for the God of my life.

⁹ I say to God, my Rock, Why have you forgotten me? Why must I suffer this sadness that my enemies have brought me?

¹⁰ Their constant insults are killing me. They never stop asking, Where is your God?

¹¹ Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset? I tell myself, Wait for Gods help! You will again be able to praise him, your God, the one who will save you.

43¹ Defend me, God. Argue my case against those people who don't know you. Protect me from those evil liars.

² God, you are my place of safety. Why have you turned me away? Why must I suffer this sadness that my enemies have brought me?

³ Send your light and your truth to guide me, to lead me to your holy mountain, to your home.

⁴ I want to go to God's altar, to the God who makes me so very happy. God, my God, I want to play my harp and sing praises to you!

⁵ Why am I so sad? Why am I so upset? I tell myself, Wait for God's help! You will again have a chance to praise him, your God, the one who will save you.

44¹ God, we have heard about you. Our fathers told us what you did in their lifetime. They told us what you did long ago.

² With your great power you took this land from other people, and you gave it to us. You crushed those foreigners and forced them to leave this land.

³It was not our fathers swords that took the land. It was not their strong arms that brought them victory. It was your power. It was because you accepted them and smiled down on them.

⁴God, you are my king. Give the command and lead Jacobs people to victory.

⁵We need your help to push our enemies back. Only in your name can we trample those who attacked us.

⁶I dont put my trust in my bow. My sword cannot save me.

⁷You are the one who saved us from our enemies. You are the one who put our enemies to shame.

⁸We have praised you all day long, and we will praise your name forever. Selah

⁹But you left us and put us to shame. You did not go with us into battle.

¹⁰You let our enemies push us back. You let them take our wealth.

¹¹You gave us away like sheep to be killed and eaten. You scattered us among the nations.

¹²You sold your people for nothing. You did not even argue over the price.

¹³You made us a joke to our neighbors. They laugh and make fun of us.

¹⁴You made us one of the stories that people love to tell. People all over the world laugh at us and shake their heads.

¹⁵All I can think about is my shame. Just look at my face, and you will see it.

¹⁶All I can hear are the jokes and insults of my enemies, as I watch them take their revenge.

¹⁷We have not forgotten you. But you do all those things to us. We did not break the agreement you gave us.

¹⁸We did not turn away from you. We did not stop following you.

¹⁹But you crushed us in this home of jackals. You left us in this place as dark as death.

²⁰Did we forget the name of our God? Did we pray to foreign gods?

²¹If we did, then God knows it, because he knows our deepest secrets.

²²All day long we died for you. We are like sheep being led away to be killed.

²³Lord, wake up! Why are you sleeping? Get up! Don't ignore us forever!

²⁴Why are you hiding from us? Have you forgotten our pain and troubles?

²⁵We have been pushed down into the dirt. We are lying face down in the dust.

²⁶Get up and help us! Rescue us because of your faithful love.

45¹ Beautiful thoughts fill my mind as I speak these lines for the king. These words come from my tongue as from the pen of a skilled writer.

²You are more handsome than anyone, and you say such pleasant things. So God will always bless you.

³Put on your sword, mighty warrior, so impressive in your splendid uniform.

⁴Go out in your greatness to win the victory for what is true and right. Let us see the amazing things you can do with your powerful right arm.

⁵Your sharp arrows will go deep into the hearts of your enemies, who will fall to the ground in front of you.

⁶God, your kingdom will last forever. You use your authority for justice.

⁷You love what is right and hate what is wrong. So God, your God, chose you to be king, giving you more joy and honor than anyone like you.

⁸From your clothes comes the wonderful smell of myrrh, aloes, and

cassia. In palaces decorated with ivory, you enjoy the music of stringed instruments.

⁹Here are ladies of honor, daughters of kings. Your bride stands at your right side, wearing a gown decorated with the finest gold.

¹⁰My lady, listen to me. Listen carefully and understand me. Forget your people and your fathers family,

¹¹so that the king will be pleased with your beauty. He will be your new husband, so you must honor him.

¹²People from Tyre will bring you gifts. Their richest people will try to win your friendship.

¹³The princess is so beautiful in her gown, like a pearl set in gold.

¹⁴Clothed in beauty, she is led to the king, followed by her bridesmaids.

¹⁵Filled with joy and excitement, they enter into the kings palace.

¹⁶Your sons will be kings like their ancestors. You will make them rulers throughout the land.

¹⁷You will be famous for generations. People will praise you forever and ever.

46 ¹ God is our protection and source of strength. He is always ready to help us in times of trouble.

² So we are not afraid when the earth quakes and the mountains fall into the sea.

³ We are not afraid when the seas become rough and dark and the mountains tremble. Selah

⁴ There is a river whose streams bring happiness to God's city, to the holy city of God Most High.

⁵ God is in that city, so it will never be destroyed. He is there to help even before sunrise.

⁶ Nations will shake with fear and kingdoms will fall when God shouts and makes the earth move.

⁷ The LORD All-Powerful is with us. The God of Jacob is our place of safety. Selah

⁸ Look at the powerful things the LORD has done. See the awesome things he has done on earth.

⁹ He stops wars all over the world. He breaks the soldiers' bows, shatters their spears, and burns their shields.

¹⁰ God says, Stop fighting and know that I am God! I am the one who defeats

the nations; I am the one who controls the world.

¹¹The LORD All-Powerful is with us. The God of Jacob is our place of safety. Selah

47 ¹Everyone, clap your hands.
Shout with joy to God!

²The LORD Most High is awesome. He is the great King over all the earth.

³He helped us defeat other nations. He put those people under our control.

⁴He chose our land for us. He chose that wonderful land for Jacob, the one he loved. Selah

⁵The LORD God goes up to his throne at the sound of the trumpet and horn.

⁶Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

⁷God is the King of the whole world. Sing songs of praise!

⁸God sits on his holy throne; he rules all the nations.

⁹The leaders of the nations have come together with the people of the God of Abraham. All the rulers of the world belong to God. He is over them all!

48 ¹The LORD is great! He is praised throughout the city of our God, his holy mountain.

² His city is such a pleasant place. It brings joy to people from around the world. Mount Zion is the true mountain of God. It is the city of the great King.

³ In the palaces of that city, God is known as the fortress.

⁴ Once some kings met together and planned an attack against this city. They marched toward the city,

⁵ but when they saw it, they were amazed. They all panicked and ran away.

⁶ Fear grabbed them; they trembled like a woman giving birth.

⁷ God, with a strong east wind, you wrecked their big ships.

⁸ Yes, we heard the stories about your power. But we also saw it in the city of our God, the city of the LORD All-Powerful. God makes that city strong forever. Selah

⁹ God, in your Temple we remember your loving kindness.

¹⁰ Your name is known everywhere, God, and people throughout the earth praise you. You have shown that you do what is right.

¹¹ Mount Zion is happy, and the towns of Judah rejoice, because your decisions are fair.

¹² Walk around Jerusalem, and count its towers.

¹³ Look at the tall walls, and see the palaces. Then you can tell the next generation about them.

¹⁴ This God is our God forever and ever. He will lead us from now to the end of time!

49 ¹ Listen to this, all you nations. Pay attention, all you people on earth.

² Everyone, rich and poor, listen to me.

³ I have some very wise words for you. My thoughts will give you understanding.

⁴ I listened to these sayings. And now, with my harp, I will sing and make the hidden meaning clear.

⁵ Why should I be afraid when trouble comes? There is no need to fear when evil enemies surround me.

⁶ They think their wealth will protect them. They brag about how rich they are.

⁷ But no one has enough to buy back a life, and you cannot bribe God.

⁸You will never get enough money to pay for your own life.

⁹You will never have enough to buy the right to live forever and keep your body out of the grave.

¹⁰Look, the wise die the same as fools and stupid people. They die and leave their wealth to others.

¹¹The grave will be their new home forever. And how much land they owned will not make any difference.

¹²People might be wealthy, but they cannot stay here forever. They will die like the animals.

¹³That is what happens to all who trust in themselves and to anyone who accepts their way of life. Selah

¹⁴They are just like sheep, but the grave will be their pen. Death will be their shepherd. When morning comes, the good people will enjoy victory, as the bodies of the proud slowly rot in the grave, far away from their fancy houses.

¹⁵But God will pay the price to save me from the grave. He will take me to be with him. Selah

¹⁶Dont be afraid of people just because they are rich. Dont be afraid of people

just because they have big, fancy houses.

¹⁷They will not take anything with them when they die. They will not take their wealth with them.

¹⁸A wealthy man might tell himself how well he has done in life. And other people might praise him.

¹⁹But the time will come for him to die and go to his ancestors. And he will never again see the light of day.

²⁰Wealthy people don't seem to understand that they will die like the animals.

50¹The LORD God Most Powerful has spoken. He calls to everyone on earth, from where the sun rises to where it sets.

²God appeared from Zion, the city of perfect beauty.

³Our God is coming and will not keep quiet. Fire burns in front of him. There is a great storm around him.

⁴He tells the sky and the earth to be witnesses as he judges his people.

⁵He says, My followers, gather around me. Come, my worshipers, who made an agreement with me.

⁶God is the judge, and the skies tell how fair he is. Selah

⁷God says, My people, listen to me! People of Israel, I will show my evidence against you. I am God, your God.

⁸The problem I have with you is not your sacrifices or the burnt offerings you bring to me everyday.

⁹Why would I want more bulls from your barns or goats from your pens?

¹⁰I already own all the animals in the forest. I own all the animals on a thousand hills.

¹¹I know every bird in the mountains. Everything that moves in the fields is mine.

¹²If I were hungry, I would not ask you for food. I already own the world and everything in it.

¹³I dont eat the meat of bulls or drink the blood of goats.

¹⁴You made promises to God Most High, so give him what you promised. Bring your sacrifices and thank offerings.

¹⁵God says, Call me when trouble comes. I will help you, and you will honor me.

¹⁶But God says to the wicked, Stop quoting my laws! Stop talking about my agreement!

¹⁷You hate for me to tell you what to do. You ignore what I say.

¹⁸You see a thief and run to join him. You jump into bed with those who commit adultery.

¹⁹You say evil things and tell lies.

²⁰You sit around talking about people, finding fault with your own brothers.

²¹When you did these things, I said nothing. So you thought that I was just like you. But I will not be quiet any longer. I will correct you and make clear what I have against you.

²²You people who have forgotten God, understand what I am telling you, or I will tear you apart, and no one will be able to save you!

²³Whoever gives a thank offering shows me honor. And whoever decides to live right will see my power to save.

51 ¹God, be merciful to me because of your faithful love. Because of your great compassion, erase all the wrongs I have done.

²Scrub away my guilt. Wash me clean from my sin.

³I know I have done wrong. I remember my sin all the time.

⁴I did what you said is wrong. You are the one I have sinned against. I say this so that people will know that I am wrong and you are right. What you decided is fair.

⁵I was born to do wrong, a sinner before I left my mothers womb.

⁶You want me to be completely loyal, so put true wisdom deep inside of me.

⁷Remove my sin and make me pure. Wash me until I am whiter than snow!

⁸Let me hear sounds of joy and happiness again. Let the bones you crushed be happy again.

⁹Dont look at my sins. Erase them all.

¹⁰God, create a pure heart in me, and make my spirit strong again.

¹¹Dont push me away or take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹²Your help made me so happy. Give me that joy again. Make my spirit strong and ready to obey you.

¹³I will teach the guilty how you want them to live, and the sinners will come back to you.

¹⁴God, spare me from the punishment of death. My God, you are the one who saves me! Let me sing about all the good things you do for me!

¹⁵My Lord, I will open my mouth and sing your praises!

¹⁶You don't really want sacrifices, or I would give them to you.

¹⁷The sacrifice that God wants is a humble spirit. God, you will not turn away someone who comes with a humble heart and is willing to obey you.

¹⁸God, please be good to Zion. Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁹Then you can enjoy the kind of sacrifices you want. You will receive whole burnt offerings, and people will again offer bulls on your altar.

52¹ Great warrior, why are you bragging about the evil you did? You are a disgrace to God.

²You are nothing but a hired killer, making plans to hurt people and making up lies!

³You love evil more than goodness. You love lies more than truth. Selah

⁴You and your lying tongue love to hurt people.

⁵So God will ruin you forever! He will grab you and pull you from your home, like someone pulling up a plant by the roots!

⁶Good people will see this and learn to fear and respect God. They will laugh at you and say,

⁷Look what happened to the warrior who did not depend on God. That fool thought his wealth and lies would protect him.

⁸But I am like a green olive tree growing in Gods Temple. I will trust Gods faithful love forever and ever.

⁹God, I praise you forever for what you have done. I will speak your name before your followers because it is so good!

53¹A maskil of David. Only fools think there is no God. People like that are evil and do terrible things. They never do what is right.

²God looks down from heaven to see if there is anyone who is wise, anyone who looks to him for help.

³But everyone has turned away from him. Everyone has become evil. No one does anything good. No, not one person!

⁴Those who are evil treat my people like bread to be eaten. And they never ask for God's help. Don't they understand what they are doing?

⁵They will be filled with fear a fear like they have never felt before! People of Israel, you will defeat those who attacked you, because God has rejected them. And he will scatter their bones.

⁶I wish the one who lives on Mount Zion would bring victory to Israel! When God makes Israel successful again, the people of Jacob will be very happy; the people of Israel will be glad.

54 ¹God, use your power and save me. Use your great power to set me free.

²God, listen to my prayer. Listen to what I say.

³Strangers who don't even think about God have turned against me. Those powerful men are trying to kill me. Selah

⁴Look, my God will help me. My Lord will support me.

⁵ He will punish the people who turned against me. God, be faithful to me and destroy them.

⁶ LORD, I will give freewill offerings to you. I will praise your good name.

⁷ You saved me from all my troubles. I saw my enemies defeated.

55 ¹ God, hear my prayer. Don't ignore my cry for help.

² Please listen and answer me. Let me speak to you and tell you what upsets me.

³ My enemies shout at me and threaten me. In their anger they attack me. They bring troubles crashing down on me.

⁴ My heart is pounding inside me. I am afraid to die.

⁵ I am trembling with fear. I am terrified!

⁶ Oh, I wish I had wings like a dove. I would fly away and find a place to rest.

⁷ I would go far into the desert and stay there. Selah

⁸ I would run away. I would escape from this storm of trouble.

⁹ My Lord, confuse their words and stop their plans. I see so much cruelty and fighting in this city.

¹⁰Day and night, in every neighborhood, the city is filled with evil and trouble.

¹¹There is so much crime in the streets. People who hurt and cheat others are everywhere.

¹²If it were an enemy insulting me, I could bear it. If it were my enemies attacking me, I could hide.

¹³But it is you, the one so close to me, my companion, my good friend, who does this.

¹⁴We used to share our secrets with each other, as we walked through the crowds together in Gods Temple.

¹⁵I wish death would take my enemies by surprise! I wish the earth would open up and swallow them alive, because they plan such terrible things together.

¹⁶I will call to God for help, and the LORD will save me.

¹⁷I speak to God morning, noon, and night. I tell him what upsets me, and he listens to me!

¹⁸I have fought in many battles, but he has always rescued me and brought me back safely.

¹⁹God, who has always ruled as king, will hear me and punish my enemies.

Selah But they will never change. They don't fear and respect God.

²⁰This one who was once my friend now attacks his friends. He is breaking every promise he made.

²¹His words about peace are as smooth as butter, but he has only war on his mind. His words are as slick as oil, but they cut like a knife.

²²Give your worries to the LORD, and he will care for you. He will never let those who are good be defeated.

²³But, God, you will send those liars and murderers to the grave. They will die before their life is half finished! As for me, I will put my trust in you.

56 ¹God, people have attacked me, so be merciful to me. They have been chasing me all day, closing in to attack me.

²My enemies come at me constantly. There are too many fighters to count.

³When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

⁴I trust God, so I am not afraid of what people can do to me! I praise God for his promise to me.

⁵My enemies are always twisting my words. They are always making plans against me.

⁶They hide together and watch every move I make, hoping for some way to kill me.

⁷God, send them away because of the bad things they did. Show your anger and defeat those people.

⁸You know I am very upset. You know how much I have cried. Surely you have kept an account of all my tears.

⁹I know that when I call for help, my enemies will turn and run. I know that because God is with me!

¹⁰I praise God for his promise. I praise the LORD for his promise to me.

¹¹I trust God, so I am not afraid of what people can do to me!

¹²God, I will keep the special promises I made to you. I will give you my thank offering.

¹³You saved me from death. You kept me from being defeated. So I will serve you in the light that only the living can see.

57 ¹God, be merciful to me. Be kind because my soul trusts in you. I

have come to you for protection, while the trouble passes.

²I pray to God Most High for help, and he takes care of me completely!

³From heaven he helps me and saves me. He will punish the one who attacks me. Selah God will remain loyal to me and send his love to protect me.

⁴My life is in danger. My enemies are all around me. They are like man-eating lions, with teeth like spears or arrows and tongues like sharp swords.

⁵God, rise above the heavens! Let all the world see your glory.

⁶My enemies set a trap for my feet to bring me down. They dug a deep pit to catch me, but they fell into it. Selah

⁷God, I am ready, heart and soul, to sing songs of praise.

⁸Wake up, my soul! Harps and lyres, wake up, and let's wake the dawn!

⁹My Lord, I will praise you before all people. I will sing praises about you to every nation.

¹⁰Your faithful love is higher than the highest clouds in the sky!

¹¹Rise above the heavens, God. Let all the world see your glory.

58¹ You judges are not being fair in your decisions. You are not judging people fairly.

² No, you only think of evil things to do. You do violent crimes in this country.

³ Those wicked people started doing wrong as soon as they were born. They have been liars from birth.

⁴ Their anger is as deadly as the poison of a snake. They shut their ears like a deaf cobra

⁵ that does not listen to the music of the snake charmers, no matter how well they play.

⁶ God, they are like lions. So LORD, break their teeth.

⁷ May they disappear like water down a drain. May they be crushed like weeds on a path.

⁸ May they be like snails melting away as they move. May they be like a baby born dead, who never saw the light of day.

⁹ May they be destroyed suddenly, like the thorns that are burned to quickly heat a pot.

¹⁰ Good people will be happy when they see the wicked getting the punishment

they deserve. They will feel like soldiers walking through the blood of their enemies!

¹¹ Then people will say, Good people really are rewarded. Yes, there is a God judging the world!

59¹ God, save me from my enemies. Protect me from those who stand against me.

² Save me from those who do wrong. Save me from those murderers.

³ Look, powerful men are waiting for me. LORD, they are waiting to kill me, even though I did not sin or commit a crime.

⁴ I have done nothing wrong, but they are rushing to attack me. Come and see for yourself!

⁵ You are the LORD God All-Powerful, the God of Israel! Get up and punish them. Don't show any mercy to those traitors. Selah

⁶ Those evil men are like dogs that come into town in the evening, growling and roaming the streets.

⁷ Listen to their threats and insults. They say such cruel things, and they don't care who hears them.

⁸LORD, laugh at them. Make fun of them all.

⁹God, my strength, I look to you for help. You are my place of safety, high in the mountains.

¹⁰God loves me, and he will help me win. He will help me defeat my enemies.

¹¹Dont just kill them, or my people might forget. My Lord and Protector, scatter and defeat them with your strength.

¹²Those evil people curse and tell lies. Punish them for what they said. Let their pride trap them.

¹³Destroy them in your anger. Destroy them completely! Then people all over the world will know that God rules over the people of Jacob. Selah

¹⁴Those evil men are like dogs that come into town in the evening, growling and roaming the streets.

¹⁵They roam around looking for food, but even if they eat their fill, they still growl and complain.

¹⁶But I will sing about your strength. I will rejoice in your love every morning. You have been my place of safety, the place I can run to when troubles come.

¹⁷I will sing praises to you, my source of strength. You, God, are my place of safety. You are the God who loves me!

60¹God, you were angry with us. You rejected us and destroyed our defenses. Please make us strong again.

²You shook the earth and split it open. It is falling apart like a broken wall. Please put it back together.

³You have given your people many troubles. We are dizzy and fall down like drunks.

⁴But you have provided a flag to show your faithful followers where to gather to escape the enemys attack. Selah

⁵Use your great power and give us victory! Answer our prayer and save the people you love.

⁶God has spoken in his Temple: I will win the war and rejoice in victory! I will divide this land among my people. I will give them Shechem. I will give them Succoth Valley.

⁷Gilead and Manasseh will be mine. Ephraim will be my helmet. Judah will be my royal scepter.

⁸Moab will be the bowl for washing my feet. Edom will be the slave who carries

my sandals. I will defeat the Philistines and shout in victory!

⁹But, God, it seems that you have left us! You do not go out with our army. So who will lead me into the strong, protected city? Who will lead me into battle against Edom?

¹⁰(60: 9)

¹¹Help us defeat the enemy! No one on earth can rescue us.

¹²Only God can make us strong. Only God can defeat our enemies!

61 ¹God, hear my cry for help. Listen to my prayer.

²From a faraway land I call to you for help. I feel so weak and helpless! Carry me to a high rock where no one can reach me.

³You are my place of safety, a strong tower that protects me from my enemies.

⁴I want to live in your tent forever. I want to hide where you can protect me. Selah

⁵God, you heard what I promised to give you, but everything your worshipers have comes from you.

⁶Give the king a long life. Let him live forever!

⁷ Let him rule in your presence forever.
Protect him with your faithful love.

⁸ Then I will praise your name forever.
Every day I will do what I promised.

62 ¹ I must calm down and turn to
God; only he can rescue me.

² He is my Rock, the only one who can
save me. He is my high place of safety,
where no army can defeat me.

³ How long will you people attack me?
Do you all want to kill me? I am like a
leaning wall, like a fence ready to fall.

⁴ You want only to destroy me, to bring
me down from my important position.
It makes you happy to tell lies about
me. In public, you say nice things, but in
private, you curse me. Selah

⁵ I must calm down and turn to God; he
is my only hope.

⁶ He is my Rock, the only one who can
save me. He is my high place of safety,
where no army can defeat me.

⁷ My victory and honor come from God.
He is the mighty Rock, where I am safe.

⁸ People, always put your trust in God!
Tell him all your problems. God is our
place of safety. Selah

⁹ People cannot really help. You cannot depend on them. Compared to God, they are nothing no more than a gentle puff of air!

¹⁰ Dont trust in your power to take things by force. Dont think you will gain anything by stealing. And if you become wealthy, dont put your trust in riches.

¹¹ God says there is one thing you can really depend on, and I believe it: Strength comes from God!

¹² My Lord, your love is real. You reward all people for what they do.

63 ¹ God, you are my God. I am searching so hard to find you. Body and soul, I thirst for you in this dry and weary land without water.

² Yes, I have seen you in your Temple. I have seen your strength and glory.

³ Your faithful love is better than life, so my lips praise you.

⁴ By my life, I will praise you. In your name, I lift my hands in prayer.

⁵ When I sit down to satisfy my hunger, my joyful lips hunger to praise you!

⁶ I remember you while lying on my bed. I think about you in the middle of the night.

⁷That is because you are the one who helps me. It makes me happy to be under your protection!

⁸I stay close to you, and you hold me with your powerful arm.

⁹Those who are trying to kill me will be destroyed. They will go down to their graves.

¹⁰They will be killed with swords. Wild dogs will eat their dead bodies.

¹¹But the king will be happy with his God, and those who promised to obey him will praise him when he defeats those liars.

64 ¹God, listen to my complaint. Save me from the terrible threats of my enemies!

²Protect me from the secret plans of the wicked. Hide me from that gang of evil people.

³They sharpen their tongues to use like swords. They aim their poisonous words like arrows.

⁴Suddenly, from their hiding places, they let their arrows fly. They shoot to kill innocent people.

⁵They encourage each other to do wrong. They talk about setting traps and say, No one will see them here!

⁶No one will discover our crime. We have the perfect plan! Yes, people can be very tricky and hard to understand.

⁷But suddenly, God will shoot his arrows, and those wicked people will be hit.

⁸He will use their own words against them, and they will be destroyed. Then everyone who sees them will shake their heads in amazement.

⁹People will see what God has done. They will tell other people about him. Then everyone will learn more about God. They will learn to fear and respect him.

¹⁰Good people are happy to serve the LORD. They depend on him to protect them. All those who want to do right will praise him!

65 ¹God in Zion, we praise you and give you what we promised.

²Anyone can come to you, and you will listen to their prayers.

³When our sins become too heavy for us, you wipe them away.

⁴ Oh, how wonderful it is to be the people you chose to come and stay in your Temple. And we are so happy to have the wonderful things that are in your Temple, your holy palace.

⁵ God, you answer our prayers and do what is right. You do amazing things to save us. People all over the world know they can trust in you, even those who live across the sea.

⁶ You made the mountains. We see your power all around us.

⁷ You can calm the roughest seas or the nations raging around us.

⁸ People all around the world are amazed at the wonderful things you do. You make all people, east and west, sing with joy.

⁹ You take care of the land. You water it and make it fertile. Your streams are always filled with water. That's how you make the crops grow.

¹⁰ You pour rain on the plowed fields; you soak the fields with water. You make the ground soft with rain, and you make the young plants grow.

¹¹ You start the new year with a good harvest. You end the year with many crops.

¹² The desert and hills are covered with grass.

¹³ The pastures are covered with sheep. The valleys are filled with grain. Everything is singing and shouting for joy.

66 ¹ Everything on earth, shout with joy to God!

² Praise his glorious name! Honor him with songs of praise!

³ Tell God, Your works are wonderful! Your great power makes your enemies bow down in fear before you.

⁴ Let the whole world worship you. Let everyone sing praises to your name. Selah

⁵ Look at what God has done! These things amaze us.

⁶ He changed the sea to dry land, and his people went across the water on foot. So let's celebrate because of what he has done!

⁷ He rules the world with his great power. He watches people everywhere. No one can rebel against him. Selah

⁸ People, praise our God. Sing loud songs of praise to him.

⁹ He continues to give us life, and he keeps us from falling.

¹⁰ God, you have tested us, as people test silver with fire.

¹¹ You let us be trapped. You put heavy burdens on us.

¹² You let our enemies run over us. We went through fire and water, but you brought us to a safe place.

¹³ So I bring sacrifices to your Temple. When I was in trouble, I asked for help and made promises to you. Now I am giving you what I promised.

¹⁴ (66: 13)

¹⁵ I bring my best sheep as burnt offerings. I offer the smoke from them up to you. I give you sacrifices of bulls and goats. Selah

¹⁶ All you people who worship God, come and I will tell you what he has done for me.

¹⁷ I cried out to him for help, and I praised him. If I had been hiding sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened to me.

¹⁸ (66: 17)

¹⁹ But God did listen to me; he heard my prayer.

²⁰ Praise God! He did not turn away from me he listened to my prayer. He continues to show his love to me!

67 ¹ God, show mercy to us and bless us. Please accept us! Selah

² Let everyone on earth learn about you. Let every nation see how you save people.

³ May people praise you, God! May all people praise you.

⁴ May all nations rejoice and be happy because you judge people fairly. You rule over every nation.

⁵ May the people praise you, God! May all people praise you.

⁶ God, our God, bless us. Let our land give us a great harvest.

⁷ May God bless us, and may all people on earth fear and respect him.

68 ¹ God, get up and scatter your enemies! May all your enemies run from you.

² May your enemies be scattered like smoke blown away by the wind. May your enemies be destroyed like wax melting in a fire.

³ But let good people be happy. Let them gather before God and enjoy themselves together.

⁴ Sing to God! Sing praises to his name! Prepare the way for the one who rides on the clouds. His name is YAH. Worship before him with joy.

⁵ God, who lives in his holy palace, is a father to orphans, and he takes care of widows.

⁶ God provides homes for those who are lonely. He frees people from prison and makes them happy. But those who turn against him will live in the desert.

⁷ God, you led your people out of Egypt. You marched across the desert. Selah

⁸ The ground shook and rain poured from the sky when God, the God of Israel, came to Sinai.

⁹ God, you sent the rain to make a tired, old land strong again.

¹⁰ Your people came back to live there, and you provided good things for the poor.

¹¹ My Lord gave the command, and many people went to tell the good news:

¹²The armies of powerful kings ran away! At home, the women divide the things brought from the battle.

¹³Those who stayed home will share in the wealth metal doves with wings covered in silver and feathers sparkling with gold.

¹⁴God All-Powerful scattered the kings like snow falling on Mount Zalmon.

¹⁵Mount Bashan is a great mountain with many high peaks.

¹⁶But, Bashan, why are you jealous of Mount Zion? That is where God has chosen to live. The LORD will live there forever.

¹⁷With his millions of chariots the Lord came from Sinai into the holy place.

¹⁸You went up to your high place, leading a parade of captives. You received gifts from people, even those who turned against you. The LORD God went up there to live.

¹⁹Praise the Lord! Every day he helps us with the loads we must carry. He is the God who saves us. Selah

²⁰He is our God, the God who saves us. My Lord GOD saves us from death.

²¹ God will smash the heads of his enemies. He will punish those who fight against him.

²² My Lord said, If they run up to Bashan or down to the depths of the sea, I will bring them back.

²³ So you will march through pools of their blood, and there will be plenty left for your dogs.

²⁴ God, everyone can see your victory parade the victory march of my God and King into his holy place!

²⁵ Singers come marching in front, followed by the musicians; they are surrounded by young girls playing tambourines.

²⁶ Praise God in the meeting place. Praise the LORD, people of Israel!

²⁷ There is the smallest tribe, Benjamin, leading them. And there comes a large group of leaders from Judah. Following them are the leaders of Zebulun and Naphtali.

²⁸ God, show us your power! Show us the power you used for us in the past.

²⁹ Kings will bring their wealth to you, to your Temple in Jerusalem.

³⁰ Punish the people in Egypt. They are like cattle in the marshes, like bulls among the calves. You humiliated them. You scattered them in war. Now let them come crawling to you, bringing their pieces of silver.

³¹ Messengers from Egypt will come bearing gifts. Ethiopia will offer God their tribute.

³² Kings on earth, sing to God! Sing songs of praise to our Lord! Selah

³³ Sing to him who rides his chariot through the ancient skies. Listen to his powerful voice!

³⁴ Tell everyone how powerful he is! He rules over Israel. His power fills the skies.

³⁵ God, you are awesome in your Temple! The God of Israel is the one who gives strength and power to his people. Praise God!

69 ¹ God, save me from all my troubles! The rising water has reached my neck.

² I have nothing to stand on. I am sinking down, down into the mud. I am in deep water, and the waves are about to cover me.

³I am getting weak from calling for help. My throat is sore. I have waited and looked for your help until my eyes are hurting.

⁴I have more enemies than the hairs on my head. They hate me for no reason. They try hard to destroy me. My enemies tell lies about me. They say I stole from them and they demand that I pay for things I did not steal.

⁵God, you know my faults. I cannot hide my sins from you.

⁶My Lord GOD All-Powerful, dont let me embarrass your followers. God of Israel, dont let me bring disgrace to those who worship you.

⁷My face is covered with shame. I carry this shame for you.

⁸My own brothers treat me like a stranger. They act as if I came from a foreign land.

⁹My strong devotion to your Temple is destroying me. Those who insult you are also insulting me.

¹⁰When I spend time crying and fasting, they make fun of me.

¹¹When I wear sackcloth to show my sorrow, they tell jokes about me.

¹²They talk about me in public places. The beer drinkers make up songs about me.

¹³As for me, LORD, this is my prayer to you: Please accept me! God, I want you to answer me with love. I know I can trust you to save me.

¹⁴Pull me from the mud, and dont let me sink down deeper. Save me from those who hate me. Save me from this deep water.

¹⁵Dont let the waves drown me. Dont let the deep sea swallow me or the grave close its mouth on me.

¹⁶Answer me, LORD, from the goodness of your faithful love. Out of your great kindness turn to me and help me!

¹⁷Dont turn away from your servant. I am in trouble, so hurry and help me!

¹⁸Come save my soul. Rescue me from my enemies.

¹⁹You know the shame I have suffered. You know all my enemies. You saw how they humiliated me.

²⁰I feel the pain of their insults. The shame makes me feel like dying! I wanted some sympathy, but there was

none. I waited for someone to comfort me, but no one came.

²¹ They gave me poison, not food. They gave me vinegar, not wine.

²² Their tables are covered with food. Let their fellowship meals destroy them.

²³ Let them go blind and their backs become weak.

²⁴ Show them how angry you are. Let them feel what your anger can do.

²⁵ Make their homes empty. Don't let anyone live there.

²⁶ They try to hurt people you have already punished. They tell everyone about the suffering you gave them.

²⁷ Punish them for the bad things they have done. Don't show them how good you can be.

²⁸ Erase their names from the book of life. Don't let their names appear on the list of those who do what is right.

²⁹ I am sad and hurting. God, lift me up and save me!

³⁰ I will praise God's name in song. I will honor him by giving him thanks.

³¹ The LORD will be happier with this than with the offering of an ox or a full-grown bull as a sacrifice.

³²Poor people, you came to worship God. You will be happy to know these things.

³³The LORD listens to poor, helpless people. He does not turn away from those who are in prison.

³⁴Praise him, heaven and earth! Sea and everything in it, praise him!

³⁵God will save Zion. He will rebuild the cities of Judah. The people will settle there again and own the land.

³⁶The descendants of his servants will get that land. Those who love his name will live there.

70¹ Please, God, rescue me! LORD, hurry and help me!

² People are trying to kill me. Please disappoint them. Humiliate them! They want to hurt me. Make them run away in shame.

³ May those who make fun of me be too embarrassed to speak.

⁴ But may those who come to you be happy and rejoice. May those who love being saved by you always be able to say, Praise God!

⁵ I am only a poor, helpless man. God, please hurry to me. You are my helper,

the one who can save me. LORD, dont be too late!

71 ¹LORD, I depend on you for protection. Dont let me be disappointed.

²You always do what is right, so come and save me. Listen to me and save me.

³Be my Rock, my place of safety. Be my fortress, and protect me! You are my Rock and my protection.

⁴My God, save me from wicked people. Save me from cruel, evil people.

⁵Lord GOD, you are my hope. I have trusted you since I was a young boy.

⁶I depended on you even before I was born. I relied on you even in my mothers womb. I have always prayed to you.

⁷You are my source of strength, so I have been an example to others.

⁸I am always singing about the wonderful things you do.

⁹Dont throw me away just because I am old. Dont leave me as I lose my strength.

¹⁰My enemies make plans against me. They have met together and are making plans to kill me.

¹¹ They say, Go get him! God has left him, so there is no one to help him.

¹² God, don't leave me! My God, hurry and help me!

¹³ Defeat my enemies. Destroy them completely! They are trying to hurt me. Let them suffer shame and disgrace.

¹⁴ Then I will always trust in you and praise you more and more.

¹⁵ I will tell people how good you are. I will tell about all the times you saved me too many times to count.

¹⁶ I will tell about your greatness, my Lord GOD. I will talk only about you and your goodness.

¹⁷ God, you have taught me since I was a young boy. And to this day I have told people about the wonderful things you do.

¹⁸ Now that I am old and my hair is gray, don't leave me, God. I must tell the next generation about your power and greatness.

¹⁹ God, your goodness reaches far above the skies. You have done wonderful things. God, there is no one like you.

²⁰You have let me see troubles and hard times, but you will give me new life; you will lift me up from this pit of death!

²¹You will help me do even greater things. You will comfort me again!

²²I will play the harp and praise you. My God, I will sing about your faithfulness. I will play songs on my lyre for the Holy One of Israel.

²³I will shout for joy, singing songs of praise to you for saving me.

²⁴My tongue will sing about your goodness all the time, because those who wanted to kill me have been defeated and disgraced.

72¹ God, help the king be like you and make fair decisions. Help the king's son know what justice is.

² Help the king judge your people fairly. Help him make wise decisions for your poor people.

³ Let there be peace and justice throughout the land, known on every mountain and hill.

⁴ May the king be fair to the poor. May he help the helpless and punish those who hurt them.

⁵ May people always fear and respect you, God, as long as the sun shines and the moon is in the sky.

⁶ Help the king be like rain falling on the fields, like showers falling on the land.

⁷ Let goodness grow everywhere while he is king. Let peace continue as long as there is a moon.

⁸ Let his kingdom grow from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River to the faraway places on earth.

⁹ May all the people living in the desert bow down to him. May all his enemies bow before him with their faces in the dirt.

¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and all the faraway lands by the sea bring gifts to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring their tribute to him.

¹¹ May all kings bow down to our king. May all nations serve him.

¹² Our king helps the poor who cry out to him those in need who have no one to help them.

¹³ He feels sorry for all who are weak and poor. He protects their lives.

¹⁴He saves them from the cruel people who try to hurt them. Their lives are important to him.

¹⁵Long live the king! Let him receive gold from Sheba. Always pray for the king. Ask God to bless him every day.

¹⁶May the fields grow plenty of grain and the hills be covered with crops. May the fields be as fertile as Lebanon, and may people fill the cities as grass covers a field.

¹⁷May the king be famous forever. May people remember his name as long as the sun shines. May all nations be blessed through him, and may they all bless him.

¹⁸Praise the LORD God, the God of Israel! Only he can do such amazing things.

¹⁹Praise his glorious name forever! Let his glory fill the whole world. Amen and Amen!

²⁰(This ends the prayers of David son of Jesse.)

73¹ God is so good to Israel, to those whose hearts are pure.

²But I almost slipped and lost my balance. I almost fell into sin.

³I saw that wicked people were successful, and I became jealous of those proud people.

⁴They are healthy. They don't have to struggle to survive.

⁵They don't suffer like the rest of us. They don't have troubles like other people.

⁶So they are proud and hateful. This is as easy to see as the jewels and fancy clothes they wear.

⁷If they see something they like, they go and take it. They do whatever they want.

⁸They make fun of others and say cruel things about them. In their pride they make plans to hurt people.

⁹They think they are gods! They think they are the rulers of the earth.

¹⁰Even God's people turn to them and do what they say.

¹¹Those evil people say, God does not know what we are doing! God Most High does not know!

¹²Those proud people are wicked, but they are rich and getting richer.

¹³ Clearly, then, I gain nothing by keeping my thoughts pure! What good is it to keep myself from sin?

¹⁴ God, I suffer all day long, and you punish me every morning.

¹⁵ I wanted to tell others these things, but that would have made me a traitor to your people.

¹⁶ I tried hard to understand all this, but it was too hard for me.

¹⁷ But then, God, I went to your Temple, and I understood what will happen to the wicked.

¹⁸ Clearly, you have put them in danger. You make it easy for them to fall and be destroyed.

¹⁹ Trouble can come suddenly, and they will be ruined. Terrible things can happen to them, and they will be finished.

²⁰ Then they will be like a dream that we forget when we wake up. You will make them disappear like the monsters in our dreams.

²¹ I let thoughts about such people upset me. I was always angry.

²² I was so stupid and ignorant. I was like an animal in the way I treated you.

²³ But I am always with you. You hold my hand.

²⁴ You lead me and give me good advice, and later you will lead me to glory.

²⁵ In heaven, God, I have only you. And if I am with you, what on earth could I want?

²⁶ Maybe my mind and body will become weak, but God is my source of strength. He is mine forever!

²⁷ God, people who leave you will be lost. You will destroy all who are not faithful to you.

²⁸ As for me, all I need is to be close to God. I have made the Lord GOD my place of safety. And, God, I will tell about all that you have done.

74 ¹ God, why have you turned away from us for so long? Why are you still angry with us, your own flock?

² Remember the people you bought so long ago. You saved us, and we belong to you. And remember Mount Zion, the place where you lived.

³ God, come walk through these ancient ruins. Come back to the Holy Place that the enemy destroyed.

⁴The enemy shouted their war cries in the Temple. They put up their flags there to show they had won the war.

⁵Their soldiers attacked the doors, like workmen chopping down trees.

⁶Using axes and hatchets, they smashed the carved panels inside.

⁷They burned down your Holy Place. It was built to honor your name, but they pulled it down to the ground.

⁸The enemy decided to crush us completely. They burned every holy place in the country.

⁹We do not see any of our signs. There are no more prophets. And no one knows how long this will last.

¹⁰God, how much longer will the enemy make fun of us? Will you let them insult your name forever?

¹¹Why won't you help us? Use your power to defeat our enemies!

¹²God, you have been our King for a long time. You have saved us many times on this earth.

¹³With your great power you split open the sea and broke the heads of the sea monster.

¹⁴Yes, you smashed the heads of Leviathan and left his body for animals to eat.

¹⁵You make the springs and rivers flow, and you make the rivers dry up.

¹⁶You control the day and the night. You made the sun and the moon.

¹⁷You set the limits for everything on earth. And you created summer and winter.

¹⁸LORD, remember, the enemy insulted you! Those foolish people hate your name!

¹⁹Dont give us like a helpless dove to those wild animals. Never forget your poor, suffering people.

²⁰Remember the agreement you gave us, because violence fills every dark place in this land.

²¹Your people were treated badly. Dont let them be hurt anymore. Let your poor, helpless people praise you.

²²God, get up and defend yourself! Remember, those fools challenged you.

²³Dont forget the shouts of your enemies. They insulted you again and again.

75¹ We praise you, God! We praise you because you are near to us. We tell about the amazing things you have done.

² God says, I have chosen a time for judgment, and I will judge fairly.

³ The earth and all its people may shake, but I am the one who keeps it steady. Selah

⁴ To those who are proud I say, Stop your boasting. I warn the wicked, Don't brag about how strong you are.

⁵ Don't be so sure that you will win. Don't boast that victory is yours!

⁶ There is no power on earth that can decide what will happen.

⁷ God is the judge. He decides who will be important. He lifts one person up and brings another down.

⁸ The LORD has a cup in his hand. It is filled with the poisoned wine of his anger. He will pour out this wine, and the wicked will drink it to the last drop.

⁹ I will always tell people how great God is. I will sing praise to the God of Jacob.

¹⁰ God says, I will take away any power the wicked have and give it to those who are good.

76¹ People in Judah know God.
People in Israel respect his name.

² His Temple is in Salem. His house is on Mount Zion.

³ There he shattered the arrows, shields, swords, and other weapons of war. Selah

⁴ God, you are glorious coming back from the hills where you defeated your enemies.

⁵ They thought they were strong, but now they lie dead in the fields. Their bodies are stripped of all they owned. They could not defend themselves.

⁶ The God of Jacob shouted at them, and their army of chariots and horses fell dead.

⁷ God, you are awesome! No one can stand against you when you are angry.

⁸ You stood as judge and announced your decision. You saved the humble people of the land. From heaven you gave the decision, and the whole earth was silent and afraid.

⁹ (76: 8)

¹⁰ Even human anger can bring you honor when you use it to punish your enemies.

¹¹ People, you made promises to the LORD your God. Now give him what you promised. People everywhere fear and respect God, and they will bring gifts to him.

¹² God defeats great leaders; all the kings on earth fear him.

77 ¹ I cry out to God for help. I cry out to you, God; listen to me!

² My Lord, in my time of trouble I came to you. I reached out for you all night long. My soul refused to be comforted.

³ I thought about you, God, and tried to tell you how I felt, but I could not. Selah

⁴ You would not let me sleep. I tried to say something, but I was too upset.

⁵ I kept thinking about the past, about things that happened long ago.

⁶ During the night, I thought about my songs. I talked to myself, trying to understand what was happening.

⁷ I wondered, Has our Lord rejected us forever? Will he ever accept us again?

⁸ Is his love gone forever? Will he never again speak to us?

⁹ Has God forgotten what mercy is? Has his compassion changed to anger? Selah

¹⁰Then I said, What bothers me most is the thought that the power of God Most High is no longer there for us.

¹¹LORD, I remember what you have done. I remember the amazing things you did long ago.

¹²I think about those things. I think about them all the time.

¹³God, all that you do is holy. No god is as great as you are.

¹⁴You are the God who does amazing things. You showed the nations your great power.

¹⁵By your power you saved your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. Selah

¹⁶God, the water saw you and became afraid. The deep water shook with fear.

¹⁷The thick clouds dropped their water. Thunder roared in the sky above. Your arrows of lightning flashed through the clouds.

¹⁸There were loud claps of thunder. Lightning lit up the world. The earth shook and trembled.

¹⁹You walked through the water and crossed the deep sea, but you left no footprints.

²⁰You led your people like sheep, using Moses and Aaron to guide them.

78¹ My people, listen to my teachings. Listen to what I say.

²I will tell you a story. I will tell you about things from the past that are hard to understand.

³We have heard the story, and we know it well. Our fathers told it to us.

⁴And we will not forget it. Our people will be telling this story to the last generation. We will all praise the LORD and tell about the amazing things he did.

⁵He made an agreement with Jacob. He gave the law to Israel. He gave the commands to our ancestors. He told them to teach the law to their children.

⁶Then the next generation, even the children not yet born, would learn the law. And they would be able to teach it to their own children.

⁷So they would all trust in God, never forgetting what he had done and always obeying his commands.

⁸They would not be like their ancestors, who were stubborn and refused to obey. Their hearts were not devoted to God, and they were not faithful to him.

⁹The men from Ephraim had their weapons, but they ran from the battle.

¹⁰They did not keep their agreement with God. They refused to obey his teachings.

¹¹They forgot the great things he had done and the amazing things he had shown them.

¹²While their ancestors watched, he showed his great power at Zoan in Egypt.

¹³He split the Red Sea and led the people across. The water stood like a solid wall on both sides of them.

¹⁴Each day God led them with the tall cloud, and each night he led them with the light from the column of fire.

¹⁵He split the rocks in the desert and gave them an ocean of fresh water.

¹⁶He brought a stream of water out of the rock and made it flow like a river!

¹⁷But they continued sinning against him. They rebelled against God Most High in the desert.

¹⁸Then they decided to test God by telling him to give them the food they wanted.

¹⁹They complained about him and said,
Can God give us food in the desert?

²⁰Yes, he struck the rock and a flood
of water came out. But can he give us
bread and meat?

²¹The LORD heard what they said and
became angry with Jacobs people. He
was angry with Israel,

²²because they did not trust in him.
They did not believe that God could save
them.

²³But then God opened the clouds
above, and manna rained down on them
for food. It was as if doors in the sky
opened, and grain poured down from a
storehouse in the sky.

²⁴ (78: 23)

²⁵These people ate the food of angels.
God sent plenty of food to satisfy them.

²⁶He sent a strong wind from the east,
and by his power he made the south
wind blow.

²⁷He made quail fall like rain until they
covered the ground. There were so many
birds that they were like sand on the
seashore.

²⁸The birds fell in the middle of the
camp, all around their tents.

²⁹The people ate until they were full.
God had given them what they wanted.

³⁰But before they were fully satisfied,
while the food was still in their mouths,

³¹God became angry and killed even
the strongest of them. He brought down
Israel's best young men.

³²But the people continued to sin! They
did not trust in the amazing things God
could do.

³³So he ended their worthless lives;
he brought their years to a close with
disaster.

³⁴When he killed some of them, the
others would turn back to him. They
would come running back to God.

³⁵They would remember that God was
their Rock. They would remember that
God Most High had saved them.

³⁶But they tried to fool him with their
words; they told him lies.

³⁷Their hearts were not really with him.
They were not faithful to the agreement
he gave them.

³⁸But God was merciful. He forgave
their sins and did not destroy them.
Many times he held back his anger. He
never let it get out of control.

³⁹ He remembered that they were only people, like a wind that blows and then is gone.

⁴⁰ Oh, they caused him so much trouble in the desert! They made him so sad.

⁴¹ Again and again they tested his patience. They really hurt the Holy One of Israel.

⁴² They forgot about his power. They forgot the many times he saved them from the enemy.

⁴³ They forgot the miracles in Egypt, the miracles in the fields of Zoan.

⁴⁴ God turned the rivers into blood, and the Egyptians could not drink the water.

⁴⁵ He sent swarms of flies that bit them. He sent the frogs that ruined their lives.

⁴⁶ He gave their crops to grasshoppers and their other plants to locusts.

⁴⁷ He destroyed their vines with hail and their trees with sleet.

⁴⁸ He killed their animals with hail and their cattle with lightning.

⁴⁹ He showed the Egyptians his anger. He sent his destroying angels against them.

⁵⁰ He found a way to show his anger. He did not spare their lives. He let them die with a deadly disease.

⁵¹ He killed all the firstborn sons in Egypt. He killed every firstborn in Hams family.

⁵² Then he led Israel like a shepherd. He led his people like sheep into the desert.

⁵³ He guided them safely. They had nothing to fear. He drowned their enemies in the sea.

⁵⁴ He led his people to his holy land, to the mountain he took with his own power.

⁵⁵ He forced the other nations out before them and gave each family its share of the land. He gave each tribe of Israel a place to live.

⁵⁶ But they tested God Most High and made him very sad. They didnt obey his commands.

⁵⁷ They turned against him and were unfaithful just like their ancestors. They changed directions like a boomerang.

⁵⁸ They built high places and made God angry. They built statues of false gods and made him jealous.

⁵⁹ God heard what they were doing and became very angry. So he rejected Israel completely!

⁶⁰ He abandoned his place at Shiloh, the Holy Tent where he lived among the people.

⁶¹ He let foreigners capture the Box of the Agreement, the symbol of his power and glory.

⁶² He showed his anger against his people and let them be killed in war.

⁶³ Their young men were burned to death, and there were no wedding songs for their young women.

⁶⁴ Their priests were killed, but the widows had no time to mourn for them.

⁶⁵ Finally, our Lord got up like a man waking from his sleep, like a soldier after drinking too much wine.

⁶⁶ He forced his enemies to turn back defeated. He brought them shame that will last forever.

⁶⁷ Then he rejected Josephs family. He did not accept Ephraims family.

⁶⁸ No, he chose the tribe of Judah, and he chose Mount Zion, the place he loves.

⁶⁹He built his holy Temple high on that mountain. Like the earth, God built his Temple to last forever.

⁷⁰He chose David to be his special servant. He took him from the sheep pens.

⁷¹He took him away from the job of caring for sheep and gave him the job of caring for the descendants of Jacob Israel, his chosen people.

⁷²And David led them with a pure heart and guided them very wisely.

79¹ God, some people from other nations came to fight your people. They ruined your holy Temple. They left Jerusalem in ruins.

²They left the bodies of your servants for the wild birds to eat. They let wild animals eat the bodies of your followers.

³Blood flowed like water all over Jerusalem. No one is left to bury the bodies.

⁴The countries around us insult us. The people around us laugh at us and make fun of us.

⁵LORD, will you be angry with us forever? Will your strong feelings continue to burn like a fire?

⁶Turn your anger against the nations that do not know you, against the people who do not honor you as God.

⁷Those nations killed Jacobs family and destroyed their land.

⁸Please dont punish us for the sins of our ancestors. Hurry, show us your mercy! We need you so much!

⁹Our God and Savior, help us! That will bring glory to your name. Save us and forgive our sins for the good of your name.

¹⁰Dont give the other nations a reason to say, Where is their God? Cant he help them? Let us see you punish those people. Punish them for killing your servants.

¹¹Listen to the sad cries of the prisoners! Use your great power to free those who are sentenced to die.

¹²Punish the nations around us! Pay them back seven times for what they did to us. Punish them for insulting you.

¹³We are your people, the sheep of your flock. We will praise you forever. We will praise you forever and ever!

80¹ Shepherd of Israel, listen to us.
You lead your people like sheep.

You sit on your throne above the Cherub angels. Let us see you.

²Shepherd of Israel, show your greatness to the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. Come and save your people.

³God, accept us again. Smile down on us and save us!

⁴LORD God All-Powerful, when will you listen to our prayers? How long will you be angry with us?

⁵Instead of bread and water, you gave your people tears.

⁶You made us the target of everyones hatred. Our enemies make fun of us.

⁷God All-Powerful, accept us again. Smile down on us and save us!

⁸When you brought us out of Egypt, we were like your special vine. You forced other nations to leave this land, and you planted that vine here.

⁹You prepared the ground for it, and it sent its roots down deep and spread throughout the land.

¹⁰It covered the mountains, and its leaves shaded even the giant cedar trees.

¹¹ Its branches spread to the Mediterranean Sea, its shoots to the Euphrates River.

¹² God, why did you pull down the walls that protect your vine? Now everyone who passes by picks its grapes.

¹³ Wild pigs come and ruin it. Wild animals eat the leaves.

¹⁴ God All-Powerful, come back. Look down from heaven at your vine and protect it.

¹⁵ Look at the vine you planted with your own hands. Look at the young plant you raised.

¹⁶ Our enemies have cut it down and burned it up. Show them how angry you are and destroy them.

¹⁷ Reach out and help your chosen one. Reach out to the people you raised up.

¹⁸ Then we will never leave you. Let us live, and we will worship you.

¹⁹ LORD God All-Powerful, accept us again. Smile down on us and save us!

81 ¹ Be happy and sing to God, our strength. Shout with joy to the God of Jacob.

² Begin the music. Play the tambourines. Play the pleasant harps and lyres.

³ Blow the rams horn at the time of the new moon and at the time of the full moon, when our festival begins.

⁴ This is the law for the people of Israel. The God of Jacob gave the command.

⁵ God made this agreement with Josephs people, when he led them out of Egypt. In a language we didnt understand, God said,

⁶ I took the load from your shoulder. I let you drop the workers basket.

⁷ When you were in trouble, you called for help, and I set you free. I was hidden in the storm clouds, and I answered you. I tested you by the water at Meribah.

Selah

⁸ My people, I am warning you. Israel, listen to me!

⁹ Dont worship any of the false gods that the foreigners worship.

¹⁰ I, the LORD, am your God. I brought you out of Egypt. Israel, open your mouth, and I will feed you.

¹¹ But my people did not listen to me. Israel did not obey me.

¹² So I let them go their own stubborn way and do whatever they wanted.

¹³If my people would listen to me and would live the way I want,

¹⁴then I would defeat their enemies. I would punish those who cause them trouble.

¹⁵Those who hate the LORD would shake with fear. They would be punished forever.

¹⁶I would give the best wheat to my people. I would give them the purest honey, until they were satisfied.

82 ¹God stands in the assembly of the gods. He stands as judge among the judges.

²He says, How long will you judge unfairly and show special favors to the wicked? Selah

³Defend the poor and orphans. Protect the rights of the poor.

⁴Help those who are poor and helpless. Save them from those who are evil.

⁵They dont know what is happening. They dont understand! They dont know what they are doing. Their world is falling down around them!

⁶I, God Most High, say, You are gods, my own sons.

⁷ But you will die as all people must die. Your life will end like that of any ruler.

⁸ Get up, God! You be the judge! You be the leader over all the nations!

83 ¹ God, dont keep quiet! Dont close your ears! Please say something, God.

² Your enemies are getting ready to do something. Those who hate you will soon attack.

³ They are making secret plans against your people. Your enemies are discussing plans against the people you love.

⁴ They say, Come, let us destroy them completely. Then no one will ever again remember the name Israel.

⁵ God, they have all joined together. They have united against you.

⁶ Their army includes the Edomites, Ishmaelites, Moabites, and Hagars descendants, the people of Byblos, Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines, and the people of Tyre.

⁷ (83: 6)

⁸ Even the Assyrians have joined them. They have made Lots descendants very powerful. Selah

⁹God, defeat them just as you defeated Midian. Do what you did to Sisera and Jabin at the Kishon River.

¹⁰You destroyed the enemy at Endor, and their bodies rotted on the ground.

¹¹Punish their leaders as you did Oreb and Zeeb. Do what you did to Zebah and Zalmunna.

¹²They said, Lets make this land our own these fields of grass that belong to God!

¹³Make them like weeds blown by the wind. Scatter them the way wind scatters straw.

¹⁴Be like a fire that destroys a forest or like a flame that sets the hills on fire.

¹⁵Chase them away with your blasts of wind; frighten them with your storms.

¹⁶LORD, cover them with shame until they come to you for help.

¹⁷May they be forever ashamed and afraid. Disgrace and defeat them.

¹⁸Then they will know that your name is YAHWEH that you alone are the LORD. They will know that you are God Most High, ruler over all the earth!

84¹ LORD All-Powerful, the place where you live is so beautiful!

²LORD, I cannot wait to enter your Temple. I am so excited! Every part of me cries out to be with the Living God.

³LORD All-Powerful, my King, my God, even the birds have found a home in your Temple. They make their nests near your altar, and there they have their babies.

⁴Great blessings belong to those who live at your Temple! They continue to praise you. Selah

⁵Great blessings belong to those who depend on you for strength! Their hearts desire is to make the trip to your Temple.

⁶They travel through Baca Valley, which God has made into a place of springs. Autumn rains form pools of water there.

⁷The people travel from town to town on their way to Zion, where they will meet with God.

⁸LORD God All-Powerful, listen to my prayer. God of Jacob, listen to me. Selah

⁹God, watch over the king, our protector. Be kind to him, the one you have chosen.

¹⁰One day in your Temple is better than a thousand days anywhere else. Serving as a guard at the gate of my Gods house

is better than living in the homes of the wicked.

¹¹The LORD God is our protector and glorious king. He blesses us with kindness and honor. The LORD freely gives every good thing to those who do what is right.

¹²LORD All-Powerful, great blessings belong to those who trust in you!

85 ¹LORD, you have been so kind to your land. You have brought success again to the people of Jacob.

²You have forgiven the bad things your people did. You have taken away the guilt of their sins! Selah

³You stopped being angry with them. Your terrible anger has gone away.

⁴Our God and Savior, accept us again. Don't be angry with us anymore.

⁵Will you be angry with us forever? Will your anger reach to our children and to their children?

⁶Please, give us new life! Make your people happy to be yours.

⁷LORD, save us and show us your love.

⁸I heard what the LORD God said. He said there would be peace for his people

and his loyal followers. So they must not go back to their foolish way of living.

⁹He will soon save his faithful followers. His glory will again live in our land.

¹⁰God's love will come together with his faithful people. Goodness and peace will greet them with a kiss.

¹¹People on earth will be loyal to God, and God in heaven will be good to them.

¹²The LORD will give us many good things. The ground will grow many good crops.

¹³Goodness will go before the Lord and prepare the way for him.

86 ¹I am a poor, helpless man.
LORD, please listen to me and answer my prayer!

²I am your follower, so please protect me. I am your servant, and you are my God. I trust in you, so save me.

³My Lord, be kind to me. I have been praying to you all day.

⁴My Lord, I put my life in your hands. I am your servant, so make me happy.

⁵My Lord, you are good and merciful. You love all those who call to you for help.

⁶LORD, hear my prayer. Listen to my cry for mercy.

⁷I am praying to you in my time of trouble. I know you will answer me.

⁸My Lord, there is no God like you. No one can do what you have done.

⁹My Lord, you made everyone. I wish they all would come worship you and honor your name.

¹⁰You are great and do amazing things. You and you alone are God.

¹¹LORD, teach me your ways, and I will live and obey your truths. Help me make worshiping your name the most important thing in my life.

¹²My Lord God, I praise you with all my heart. I will honor your name forever!

¹³You have such great love for me. You save me from the place of death.

¹⁴Proud people are attacking me, God. A gang of cruel men is trying to kill me. They don't respect you.

¹⁵My Lord, you are a kind and merciful God. You are patient, loyal, and full of love.

¹⁶Show that you hear me and be kind to me. I am your servant, so give me

strength. I am your slave, as my mother was, so save me!

¹⁷LORD, show me a sign that you care for me. My enemies will see it and be disappointed, because you helped and comforted me.

87 ¹The LORD built his city on the holy hills. He loves the gates of Zion more than any other place in Israel.

²(87:1)

³Wonderful things are said about you, City of God. Selah

⁴God says, Some of my people live in Egypt and Babylon. Some of them were born in Philistia, Tyre, and even Ethiopia.

⁵But about Zion he says, I know each and every person born there. It is the city built by God Most High.

⁶The LORD keeps a list of all his people, and he knows where each of them was born. Selah

⁷At the festivals, people will dance and sing, All good things come from Zion.

88 ¹LORD God, you are my Savior. I have been praying to you day and night.

²Please pay attention to my prayers. Listen to my prayers for mercy.

³ My soul has had enough of this pain! I am ready to die.

⁴ People already treat me like a dead man, like someone too weak to live.

⁵ Look for me among the dead, like a body in the grave. I am one of those you have forgotten, cut off from you and your care.

⁶ You put me in that hole in the ground. Yes, you put me in that dark place.

⁷ Your anger presses down on me like a heavy weight. Its like one wave after another pounding against me. Selah

⁸ You made my friends leave me. They all avoid me like someone no one wants to touch. Like a prisoner in my house, I cannot go out.

⁹ My eyes hurt from crying. LORD, I pray to you constantly! I lift my arms in prayer to you.

¹⁰ Do you do miracles for the dead? Do ghosts rise up and praise you? No! Selah

¹¹ The dead in their graves cannot talk about your faithful love. People in the world of the dead cannot talk about your faithfulness.

¹² The dead who lie in darkness cannot see the amazing things you do. Those

in the world of the forgotten cannot talk about your goodness.

¹³LORD, I am asking you to help me! Early each morning I pray to you.

¹⁴LORD, why have you abandoned me? Why do you refuse to listen to me?

¹⁵I have been sick and weak since I was young. I have suffered your anger, and I am helpless.

¹⁶Your anger covers me like a flood. Your attacks are killing me.

¹⁷They surround me on every side. I feel like a drowning man.

¹⁸You caused my friends and loved ones to leave me. Now darkness is my closest friend.

89¹ I will sing forever about the LORD'S love. I will sing about his faithfulness forever and ever!

²I will say, Your faithful love will last forever. Your loyalty is like the sky there is no end to it!

³You said, I made an agreement with my chosen king. I made this promise to my servant David:

⁴There will always be someone from your family to rule. I will make your

kingdom continue forever and ever.
Selah

⁵LORD, the heavens praise you for the amazing things you do. The assembly of holy ones sings about your loyalty.

⁶No one in heaven is equal to the LORD. None of the gods can compare to the LORD.

⁷When Gods holy onesthe angels around his thronemeet together, they fear and respect him; he is more awesome than all those around him.

⁸LORD God All-Powerful, there is no one like you. You are strong, LORD, and always faithful.

⁹You rule the stormy sea. You can calm its angry waves.

¹⁰You defeated Rahab. You scattered your enemies with your own powerful arm.

¹¹Everything in heaven and earth belongs to you. You made the world and everything in it.

¹²You created everything north and south. Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon sing praises to your name.

¹³You have the power! Your power is great! Victory is yours!

¹⁴Your kingdom is built on truth and justice. Love and faithfulness are servants before your throne.

¹⁵LORD, your loyal followers are happy. They live in the light of your kindness.

¹⁶Your name always makes them happy. They praise your goodness.

¹⁷You are their amazing strength. Their power comes from you.

¹⁸The king, our protector, belongs to the LORD, who is the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁹Lord, you once spoke in a vision to your followers: I have made a young soldier strong. From among my people I chose him for an important position.

²⁰I have found my servant David and anointed him as king with my special oil.

²¹I will support him with my right hand, and my arm will make him strong.

²²So no enemy will ever control him. The wicked will never defeat him.

²³I will destroy his enemies before his eyes. I will defeat those who hate him.

²⁴I will always love and support him. I will always make him strong.

²⁵I will put him in charge of the sea. He will control the rivers.

²⁶He will say to me, You are my father.
You are my God, my Rock, my Savior.

²⁷And I will make him my firstborn son.
He will be the great king on earth.

²⁸My love will protect him forever. My
agreement with him will never end.

²⁹I will make his family continue
forever. His kingdom will last as long as
the skies.

³⁰If his descendants stop following my
law and stop obeying my commands,

³¹if they break my laws and ignore my
commands,

³²I will punish them severely for their
sins and wrongs.

³³But I will never take my love from
him. I will never stop being loyal to him.

³⁴I will not break my agreement with
David. I will never change what I said.

³⁵By my holiness, I made a promise to
him, and I would not lie to David.

³⁶His family will continue forever. His
kingdom will last as long as the sun.

³⁷Like the moon, it will last forever. The
sky is a witness to the agreement that
can be trusted. Selah

³⁸ But now, Lord, you have become angry with your chosen king, and you have left him all alone.

³⁹ You ended the agreement you made with your servant. You threw the king's crown into the dirt.

⁴⁰ You pulled down the walls of his city. You destroyed all his fortresses.

⁴¹ Everyone passing by steals from him. His neighbors laugh at him.

⁴² You made all the king's enemies happy and let his enemies win the war.

⁴³ You helped them defend themselves. You did not help your king win the battle.

⁴⁴ You did not let him win. You threw his throne to the ground.

⁴⁵ You cut his life short. You shamed him. Selah

⁴⁶ LORD, how long will this continue? Will you ignore us forever? Will your anger burn like a fire forever?

⁴⁷ Remember how short my life is. You created us to live a short life and then die.

⁴⁸ Is there anyone alive who will never die? Will anyone escape the grave? Selah

⁴⁹ Lord, where is the love you showed in the past? You promised David that you would be loyal to his family.

⁵⁰ My Lord, please remember how people insulted your servant. LORD, I had to listen to all the insults from your enemies. They insulted your chosen king wherever he went.

⁵¹ (89: 50)

⁵² Praise the LORD forever! Amen and Amen!

90¹ My Lord, you have been our home forever and ever.

² You were God before the mountains were born, before the earth and the world were made. You have always been and will always be God!

³ You bring people into this world, and you change them into dust again.

⁴ To you, a thousand years is like yesterday, like a few hours in the night.

⁵ Our life is like a dream that ends when morning comes. We are like grass

⁶ that grows and looks so fresh in the morning, but in the evening it is dry and dying.

⁷ Your anger could destroy us. Your anger frightens us!

⁸You know about all our sins. You see every one of our secret sins.

⁹Your anger can end our life. Our lives fade away like a whisper.

¹⁰We live about 70 years or, if we are strong, 80 years. But most of them are filled with hard work and pain. Then, suddenly, the years are gone, and we fly away.

¹¹No one really knows the full power of your anger, but our fear and respect for you is as great as your anger.

¹²Teach us how short our lives are so that we can become wise.

¹³LORD, come back to us. Be kind to your servants.

¹⁴Fill us with your love every morning. Let us be happy and enjoy our lives.

¹⁵For years you have made life hard for us and have given us many troubles. Now make us happy for just as long.

¹⁶Let your servants see the wonderful things you can do for them. And let their children see your glory.

¹⁷Lord, our God, be kind to us. Make everything we do successful. Yes, make it all successful.

91 ¹You can go to God Most High to hide. You can go to God All-Powerful for protection.

²I say to the LORD, You are my place of safety, my fortress. My God, I trust in you.

³God will save you from hidden dangers and from deadly diseases.

⁴You can go to him for protection. He will cover you like a bird spreading its wings over its babies. You can trust him to surround and protect you like a shield.

⁵You will have nothing to fear at night and no need to be afraid of enemy arrows during the day.

⁶You will have no fear of diseases that come in the dark or terrible suffering that comes at noon.

⁷A thousand people may fall dead at your side or ten thousand right beside you, but nothing bad will happen to you!

⁸All you will have to do is watch, and you will see that the wicked are punished.

⁹You trust in the LORD for protection. You have made God Most High your place of safety.

¹⁰ So nothing bad will happen to you.
No diseases will come near your home.

¹¹ He will command his angels to protect you wherever you go.

¹² Their hands will catch you so that you will not hit your foot on a rock.

¹³ You will have power to trample on lions and poisonous snakes.

¹⁴ The Lord says, If someone trusts me, I will save them. I will protect my followers who call to me for help.

¹⁵ When my followers call to me, I will answer them. I will be with them when they are in trouble. I will rescue them and honor them.

¹⁶ I will give my followers a long life and show them my power to save.

92 ¹ It is good to praise the LORD.
God Most High, it is good to praise your name.

² It is good to sing about your love in the morning and about your faithfulness at night.

³ It is good to play for you on the ten-stringed instrument and lyre and to add the soft sounds of the harp to my praise.

⁴LORD, you make us very happy because of what you did. I gladly sing about it.

⁵LORD, you did such great things. Your thoughts are too hard for us to understand.

⁶Stupid people dont know this. Fools dont understand.

⁷The wicked may sprout like grass, and those who do evil may blossom like flowers, but they will be destroyed, never to be seen again.

⁸But, LORD, you will be honored forever.

⁹LORD, all your enemies will be destroyed, and all who do evil will be scattered.

¹⁰But you have made me as strong as a wild ox. You have given me your blessing.

¹¹My eyes will see the defeat of those waiting to attack me. My ears will hear the cries of my evil enemies.

¹²Good people are like budding palm trees. They grow strong like the cedar trees of Lebanon.

¹³They are planted in the the LORD'S house. They grow strong there in the courtyards of our God.

¹⁴Even when they are old, they will continue producing fruit like young, healthy trees.

¹⁵They are there to show everyone that the LORD is good. He is my Rock, and he does nothing wrong.

93 ¹The LORD is King. The LORD wears majesty and strength like clothes. He is ready, so the whole world is safe. It will not be shaken.

²Your kingdom has continued forever. You have lived forever!

³LORD, the ocean roars. The mighty ocean sounds like thunder as the waves crash on the shore.

⁴The crashing waves of the sea are loud and powerful, but the LORD above is even more powerful.

⁵LORD, your laws will continue forever. Your holy Temple will stand for a long time.

94 ¹The LORD is a God who punishes people. God, come punish them.

²You are the judge of the whole earth. Give proud people the punishment they deserve.

³LORD, how long will the wicked have their fun? How much longer?

⁴How much longer will those criminals brag about the evil they did?

⁵LORD, they hurt your people and make them suffer.

⁶They kill widows and foreigners living in our country. They murder orphans.

⁷And they say the LORD does not see them doing these evil things! They say the God of Jacob does not know what is happening.

⁸You evil people are foolish. When will you learn your lesson? You are so stupid! You must try to understand.

⁹God made our ears, so surely he can hear what is happening! He made our eyes, so surely he can see you!

¹⁰The one who disciplines nations will surely correct you. He is the one who teaches us everything.

¹¹The LORD knows what people are thinking. He knows that their thoughts are like a puff of wind.

¹²LORD, great blessings belong to those you discipline, to those you teach from your law.

¹³You help them stay calm when trouble comes. You will help them until the wicked are put in their graves.

¹⁴The LORD will not leave his people. He will not leave them without help.

¹⁵Justice will return and bring fairness. And those who want to do right will be there to see it.

¹⁶No one helped me fight against the wicked. No one stood with me against those who do evil.

¹⁷And if the LORD had not helped me, I would have been silenced by death.

¹⁸I know I was ready to fall, but, LORD, your faithful love supported me.

¹⁹I was very worried and upset, but you comforted me and made me happy!

²⁰You don't help crooked judges. They use the law to make life hard for the people.

²¹They attack those who do right. They say innocent people are guilty and put them to death.

²² But the LORD is my place of safety,
high on the mountain. God, my Rock, is
my safe place!

²³ He will punish those evil judges for
the bad things they did. He will destroy
them because they sinned. The LORD
our God will destroy them.

95 ¹ Come, let us sing praise to the
LORD! Let us shout praises to the
Rock who saves us.

² Come and worship him with songs
of thanks. Let us sing happy songs of
praise to him.

³ For the LORD is a great God, the great
King ruling over all the other gods.

⁴ The deepest caves and the highest
mountains belong to him.

⁵ The ocean is his; he created it. He made
the dry land with his own hands.

⁶ Come, let us bow down and worship
him! Let us kneel before the LORD who
made us.

⁷ He is our God, and we are the people
he cares for, his sheep that walk by his
side. Listen to his voice today:

⁸ Don't be stubborn, as you were at
Meribah, as you were at Massah in the
desert.

⁹Your ancestors doubted and tested me, even after they saw what I could do!

¹⁰I was angry with them for 40 years. I said, They are not faithful to me. They refuse to do what I say.

¹¹So in my anger I made this vow: They will never enter my land of rest.

96 ¹Sing a new song to the LORD!
Let the whole world sing to the LORD!

²Sing to the LORD and praise his name! Tell the good news every day about how he saves us!

³Tell all the nations how wonderful he is! Tell people everywhere about the amazing things he does.

⁴The LORD is great and worthy of praise. He is more awesome than any of the gods.

⁵All the gods in other nations are nothing but statues, but the LORD made the heavens.

⁶He lives in the presence of glory and honor. His Temple is a place of power and beauty.

⁷Praise the LORD, all people of every nation; praise the LORD'S glory and power.

⁸Give the LORD praise worthy of his glory! Come, bring your offerings into his courtyard.

⁹Worship the LORD in all his holy beauty. Everyone on earth should tremble before him.

¹⁰Tell the nations that the LORD is King! The world stands firm and cannot be moved. He will judge all people fairly.

¹¹Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be happy! Let the sea and everything in it shout for joy!

¹²Let the fields and everything in them be happy! Let the trees in the forest sing for joy

¹³when they see the LORD coming! He is coming to judge the world. He will judge the nations with truth.

97 ¹The LORD rules, and the earth is happy. All the faraway lands are happy.

²Thick, dark clouds surround him. Goodness and justice make his kingdom strong.

³Fire goes before him and destroys his enemies.

⁴His lightning flashes in the sky. The earth sees it and trembles with fear.

⁵The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.

⁶The skies tell about his goodness, and the nations see his glory.

⁷People worship their idols. They brag about their gods. But they will be embarrassed. And all their gods will bow down before the Lord.

⁸Zion, listen and be happy! Cities of Judah, be glad! Rejoice because the LORD'S decisions are fair.

⁹LORD Most High, you really are the ruler of the earth. You are much better than the gods.

¹⁰Hate evil, you who love the LORD. He protects his followers and saves them from evil people.

¹¹Light and happiness shine on those who want to do right.

¹²Good people, be happy in the LORD! Praise his holy name!

98¹ Sing a new song to the LORD, because he has done amazing things! His powerful and holy right arm has brought him another victory.

²The LORD showed the nations his power to save. He showed them his goodness.

³He has kept his promise of love and loyalty to the people of Israel. People everywhere have seen our Gods power to save.

⁴Everyone on earth, shout with joy to the LORD. Start singing happy songs of praise!

⁵Praise the LORD with harps. Yes, praise him with music from the harps.

⁶Blow the pipes and horns, and shout for joy to the LORD our King!

⁷Let the sea and everything in it, the earth and all who live in it shout his praise!

⁸Rivers, clap your hands! All together now, mountains sing out!

⁹Sing before the LORD because he is coming to judge the world. He will judge the world fairly. He will judge the nations in a way that is right.

99¹The LORD is King, so let the nations shake with fear. He sits as King above the Cherub angels, so let the whole earth shake.

²The LORD in Zion is great! He is the great leader over all people.

³Let all the nations praise your name. Your name is great and awesome. Your name is holy.

⁴You are the powerful King who loves justice. You have made things right. You have brought goodness and fairness to Jacob.

⁵Praise the LORD our God, and bow down before his footstool, for he is holy.

⁶Moses and Aaron were some of his priests, and Samuel was one of the men who called on his name. They prayed to the LORD, and he answered them.

⁷God spoke from the tall cloud, and they obeyed his commands and the law he gave them.

⁸LORD our God, you answered their prayers. You showed them that you are a forgiving God and that you punish people for the evil they do.

⁹Praise the LORD our God. Bow down toward his holy mountain and worship him. The LORD our God is holy!

100 ¹Earth, sing to the LORD!
²Be happy as you serve the LORD! Come before him with happy songs!

³Know that the LORD is God. He made us, and we belong to him. We are his people, the sheep he takes care of.

⁴Come through the gates to his Temple giving thanks to him. Enter his courtyards with songs of praise. Honor him and bless his name.

⁵The LORD is good! There is no end to his faithful love. We can trust him forever and ever!

101 ¹I will sing about love and justice. LORD, I will sing to you.

²I will be careful to live a pure life. I will live in my house with complete honesty. When will you come to me?

³I will not even look at anything shameful. I hate all wrongdoing. I want no part of it!

⁴I will not be involved in anything dishonest. I will have nothing to do with evil.

⁵I will stop anyone who secretly says bad things about a neighbor. I will not

allow people to be proud and think they are better than others.

⁶I will look throughout the land for those who can be trusted. Only such people can live with me. Only those who live pure lives can be my servants.

⁷I will never let a dishonest person live in my house. I will not let liars stay near me.

⁸My goal each day will be to destroy the wicked living in our land. I will force all who do evil to leave the city of the LORD.

102¹ LORD, hear my prayer. Listen to my cry for help.

²Dont turn away from me when I have troubles. Listen to me, and answer me quickly when I cry for help.

³My life is passing away like smoke. My life is like a fire slowly burning out.

⁴My strength is gone I am like dry, dying grass. I even forget to eat.

⁵Because of my sadness, I am losing so much weight that my skin hangs from my bones.

⁶I am lonely, like an owl living in the desert, like an owl living among old ruined buildings.

⁷ I cannot sleep. I am like a lonely bird on the roof.

⁸ My enemies insult me all the time. They make fun of me and use me as an example in their curses.

⁹ My great sadness is my only food. My tears fall into my drink.

¹⁰ You were angry with me, so you picked me up and threw me away.

¹¹ My life is almost finished, like the long shadows at the end of the day. I am like dry and dying grass.

¹² But you, LORD, will rule as king forever! Your name will last forever and ever!

¹³ You will rise up and comfort Zion. The time has come for you to be kind to Zion.

¹⁴ Your servants love her stones. They love even the dust of that city!

¹⁵ The nations will worship the LORD'S name. All the kings on earth will honor you.

¹⁶ The LORD will rebuild Zion, and people will again see her glory.

¹⁷ He will listen to the prayers of those in poverty. He will not ignore them.

¹⁸Write these things for future generations, so that they will praise the LORD.

¹⁹The LORD will look down from his Holy Place above. He will look down at the earth from heaven.

²⁰And he will hear the prisoners prayers. He will free those who were condemned to die.

²¹Then people in Zion will tell about the LORD. They will praise his name in Jerusalem

²²when nations gather together and kingdoms come to serve the LORD.

²³My strength failed me. My life is cut short.

²⁴So I said, Dont let me die while I am still young. God, you will live forever and ever!

²⁵Long ago, you made the world. You made the sky with your own hands!

²⁶The earth and sky will end, but you will live forever! They will wear out like clothes, and like clothes, you will change them.

²⁷But you never change. You will live forever!

²⁸We are your servants today. Our children will live here, and their descendants will come here to worship you.

103¹ My soul, praise the LORD!
Every part of me, praise his holy name!

²My soul, praise the LORD and never forget how kind he is!

³He forgives all our sins and heals all our sicknesses.

⁴He saves us from the grave, and he gives us love and compassion.

⁵He gives us plenty of good things. He makes us young again, like an eagle that grows new feathers.

⁶The LORD does what is fair. He brings justice to all who have been hurt by others.

⁷He taught his laws to Moses. He let Israel see the powerful things he can do.

⁸The LORD is kind and merciful. He is patient and full of love.

⁹He does not always criticize. He does not stay angry with us forever.

¹⁰We sinned against him, but he didn't give us the punishment we deserved.

¹¹ His love for his followers is as high above us as heaven is above the earth.

¹² And he has taken our sins as far away from us as the east is from the west.

¹³ The LORD is as kind to his followers as a father is to his children.

¹⁴ He knows all about us. He knows we are made from dust.

¹⁵ He knows our lives are short, that they are like grass. He knows we are like a little wildflower that grows so quickly,

¹⁶ but when the hot wind blows, it dies. Soon, you cannot even see where the flower was.

¹⁷ But the LORD has always loved his followers, and he will continue to love them forever and ever! He will be good to all their descendants,

¹⁸ to those who are faithful to his agreement and who remember to obey his commands.

¹⁹ The LORD set his throne up in heaven, and he rules over everything.

²⁰ Angels, praise the LORD! You angels are the powerful soldiers who obey his commands. You listen to him and obey his commands.

²¹ Praise the LORD, all his armies. You are his servants, and you do what he wants.

²² Everything the LORD has made should praise him throughout the world that he rules! My soul, praise the LORD!

104 ¹ My soul, praise the LORD! LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with glory and honor.

² You wear light like a robe. You spread out the skies like a curtain.

³ You built your home above them. You use the thick clouds like a chariot and ride across the sky on the wings of the wind.

⁴ You make the winds your messengers and flames of fire your servants.

⁵ You built the earth on its foundations, so it can never be moved.

⁶ You covered it with water like a blanket. The water covered even the mountains.

⁷ But you gave the command, and the water turned back. You shouted at the water, and it rushed away.

⁸The water flowed down from the mountains into the valleys, to the places you made for it.

⁹You set the limits for the seas, and the water will never again rise to cover the earth.

¹⁰Lord, you cause water to flow from springs into the streams that flow down between the mountains.

¹¹The streams provide water for all the wild animals. Even the wild donkeys come there to drink.

¹²Wild birds come to live by the pools; they sing in the branches of nearby trees.

¹³You send rain down on the mountains. The earth gets everything it needs from what you have made.

¹⁴You make the grass grow to feed the animals. You provide plants for the crops we grow the plants that give us food from the earth.

¹⁵You give us the wine that makes us happy, the oil that makes our skin soft, and the food that makes us strong.

¹⁶The great cedar trees of Lebanon belong to the LORD. He planted them and gives them the water they need.

¹⁷ That's where the birds make their nests, and the storks live in the fir trees.

¹⁸ The high mountains are a home for wild goats. The large rocks are hiding places for rock badgers.

¹⁹ Lord, you made the moon to show us when the festivals begin. And the sun always knows when to set.

²⁰ You made darkness to be the night the time when wild animals come out and roam around.

²¹ Lions roar as they attack, as if they are asking God for the food he gives them.

²² When the sun rises, they leave and go back to their dens to rest.

²³ Then people go out to do their work, and they work until evening.

²⁴ LORD, you created so many things! With your wisdom you made them all. The earth is full of the living things you made.

²⁵ Look at the ocean, so big and wide! It is filled with all kinds of sea life. There are creatures large and small too many to count!

²⁶Ships sail over the ocean, and playing there is Leviathan, the great sea creature you made.

²⁷Lord, all living things depend on you. You give them food at the right time.

²⁸You give it, and they eat it. They are filled with good food from your open hands.

²⁹When you turn away from them, they become frightened. When you take away their breath, they die, and their bodies return to the dust.

³⁰But when you send out your life-giving breath, things come alive, and the world is like new again!

³¹May the LORD'S glory continue forever! May the LORD enjoy what he made.

³²He just looks at the earth, and it trembles. He just touches the mountains, and smoke rises from them.

³³I will sing to the LORD for the rest of my life. I will sing praises to my God as long as I live.

³⁴May my words be pleasing to him. The LORD is the one who makes me happy.

³⁵I wish sinners would disappear from the earth. I wish the wicked would be gone forever. My soul, praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

105 ¹Give thanks to the LORD and call out to him! Tell the nations what he has done!

²Sing to him; sing praises to him. Tell about the amazing things he has done.

³Be proud of his holy name. You followers of the LORD, be happy!

⁴Depend on the LORD for strength. Always go to him for help.

⁵Remember the amazing things he has done. Remember his miracles and his fair decisions.

⁶You belong to the family of his servant Abraham. You are descendants of Jacob, the people God chose.

⁷The LORD is our God. He rules the whole world.

⁸He will remember his agreement forever. He will always keep the promises he made to his people.

⁹He will keep the agreement he made with Abraham and the promise he made to Isaac.

¹⁰He gave it as a law to Jacob. He gave it to Israel as an agreement that will last forever!

¹¹He said, I will give you the land of Canaan. It will be your very own.

¹²At the time God said this, there were only a few of his people, and they were strangers there.

¹³They traveled around from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another.

¹⁴But the Lord did not let anyone mistreat them. He warned kings not to harm them.

¹⁵He said, Dont hurt my chosen people. Dont harm my prophets.

¹⁶He caused a famine in that country, and people did not have enough food.

¹⁷But he sent a man named Joseph to go ahead of them. Joseph was sold like a slave.

¹⁸They tied a rope around his feet and put an iron ring around his neck.

¹⁹Joseph was a slave until what he said had really happened. The LORD'S message proved that Joseph was right.

²⁰So the king of Egypt set him free. That nations leader let him out of jail.

²¹ He put Joseph in charge of his house. Joseph took care of everything the king owned.

²² Joseph gave instructions to the other leaders. He taught the older men.

²³ Then Israel came to Egypt. Jacob lived there in Hams country.

²⁴ Jacobs family became very large and more powerful than their enemies.

²⁵ So the Egyptians began to hate his people. They made plans against his servants.

²⁶ So the Lord sent Moses, his servant, and Aaron, his chosen priest.

²⁷ He used Moses and Aaron to do many miracles in Hams country.

²⁸ He sent darkness to cover their land, but the Egyptians did not listen to him.

²⁹ So he changed the water into blood, and all their fish died.

³⁰ Their country was filled with frogs, even in the kings bedroom.

³¹ The Lord gave the command, and the flies and gnats came. They were everywhere!

³² He made the rain become hail. Lightning struck throughout their land.

³³ He destroyed their vines and fig trees. He destroyed every tree in their country.

³⁴ He gave the command, and the locusts and grasshoppers came. There were too many to count!

³⁵ They ate all the plants in the country, including all the crops in their fields.

³⁶ Then the Lord killed every firstborn in their country. He killed their oldest sons.

³⁷ He led his people out of Egypt. They were carrying gold and silver, and none of them stumbled or fell behind.

³⁸ Egypt was happy to see his people go, because they were afraid of them.

³⁹ The Lord spread out his cloud like a blanket. He used his column of fire to give his people light at night.

⁴⁰ They asked for food, and he sent them quail. He also gave them plenty of bread from heaven.

⁴¹ He split the rock, and water came bubbling out. A river began flowing in the desert!

⁴² The Lord remembered his holy promise that he had made to his servant Abraham.

⁴³ He brought his people out of Egypt. They came out rejoicing and singing their happy songs!

⁴⁴ Then he gave his people the lands of other nations. His people got what others had worked for.

⁴⁵ He did this so that his people would obey his laws and follow his teachings. Praise the LORD!

106 ¹ Praise the LORD! Give thanks to the LORD because he is good! His faithful love will last forever!

² No one can describe how great the LORD really is. No one can praise him enough.

³ Those who obey his commands are happy. They do good things all the time.

⁴ LORD, remember me when you show kindness to your people. Remember to save me too!

⁵ Let me share in the good things that you do for your chosen people. Let me rejoice with your nation. Let me join with your people in praise.

⁶ We sinned just as our ancestors did. We were wrong; we did bad things!

⁷ Lord, our ancestors learned nothing from the miracles you did in Egypt. They

forgot your kindness at the Red Sea and rebelled against you.

⁸But the Lord saved our ancestors for the honor of his name. He saved them to show his great power.

⁹He gave the command, and the Red Sea became dry. He led them through the deep sea on land as dry as the desert.

¹⁰He saved our ancestors and rescued them from their enemies.

¹¹He covered their enemies with the sea. Not one of them escaped!

¹²Then our ancestors believed what he had said. They sang praises to him.

¹³But they quickly forgot about what he did. They did not listen to his advice.

¹⁴They became hungry in the desert, and they tested him in the wilderness.

¹⁵He gave them what they asked for, but he also gave them a terrible disease.

¹⁶The people became jealous of Moses. They became jealous of Aaron, the LORD'S holy priest.

¹⁷The ground opened up and swallowed Dathan. Then the ground closed up and covered Abirams group.

¹⁸Then a fire burned that mob of people. It burned those wicked people.

¹⁹The people made a gold calf at Mount Horeb. They worshiped a statue!

²⁰They traded their glorious God for a statue of a grass-eating bull!

²¹They forgot all about God, the one who saved them, the one who did the miracles in Egypt.

²²He did amazing things there in Hams country! He did awesome things at the Red Sea!

²³God wanted to destroy those people, but Moses, the leader he chose, stood in the way. God was very angry, but Moses begged him to stop, so God did not destroy the people.

²⁴But then they refused to go into the wonderful land of Canaan. They did not believe that God would help them defeat the people there.

²⁵Our ancestors complained in their tents and refused to obey the LORD.

²⁶So he swore that they would die in the desert.

²⁷He promised to scatter them among the nations and to let other people defeat their descendants.

²⁸At Baal Peor they joined in worshiping Baal and ate sacrifices to honor the dead.

²⁹The LORD became angry with his people, so he made them sick.

³⁰But Phinehas prayed to God, and God stopped the sickness.

³¹He considered what Phinehas did a good work, and it will be remembered forever and ever.

³²At Meribah the people made the LORD angry and created trouble for Moses.

³³They upset Moses, and he spoke without stopping to think.

³⁴The LORD told the people to destroy the other nations living in Canaan. But the Israelites did not obey him.

³⁵They mixed with the other people and did what those people were doing.

³⁶They began worshiping the false gods those people worshiped. And their idols became a trap.

³⁷They even offered their own children as sacrifices to demons.

³⁸They killed their innocent sons and daughters and offered them to the false

gods of Canaan. So the land was polluted with the sin of murder.

³⁹They were unfaithful to him, and they became dirty with the sins of other nations.

⁴⁰So the LORD became angry with his people. He rejected those who belonged to him.

⁴¹He gave his people to other nations and let their enemies rule over them.

⁴²Their enemies controlled them and made life hard for them.

⁴³He saved his people many times, but they turned against him and did what they wanted to do. His people did many bad things.

⁴⁴But whenever they were in trouble, he listened to their prayers.

⁴⁵He always remembered his agreement, and because of his faithful love, he comforted them.

⁴⁶Other nations took them as prisoners, but the Lord caused them to be kind to his people.

⁴⁷LORD our God, save us! Bring us back together from those nations. Then we will give thanks to your holy name and joyfully praise you.

⁴⁸Praise the LORD, the God of Israel!
He always was and will always be worthy
of praise. Let all the people say, Amen!
Praise the LORD!

107 ¹Praise the LORD, because he
is good! His faithful love will
last forever!

²Everyone the LORD has saved should
repeat that word of thanks. Praise him,
all who have been rescued from the
enemy.

³He gathered his people together from
many different countries. He brought
them from east and west, north and
south.

⁴Some of them wandered in the dry
desert. They were looking for a place to
live, but they could not find a city.

⁵They were hungry and thirsty and
growing weak.

⁶Then they called to the LORD for help,
and he saved them from their troubles.

⁷He led them straight to the city where
they would live.

⁸Thank the LORD for his faithful love
and for the amazing things he does for
people.

⁹He satisfies those who are thirsty. He fills those who are hungry with good things.

¹⁰Some of God's people were prisoners, locked behind bars in dark prisons.

¹¹That was because they had fought against what God said. They refused to listen to the advice of God Most High.

¹²God made life hard for those people because of what they did. They stumbled and fell, and there was no one to help them.

¹³They were in trouble, so they called to the LORD for help, and he saved them from their troubles.

¹⁴He took them out of their dark prisons. He broke the ropes that held them.

¹⁵Thank the LORD for his faithful love and for the amazing things he does for people.

¹⁶He breaks down their bronze gates. He shatters their iron bars.

¹⁷Some people became fools and turned against God, and they suffered for the evil they did.

¹⁸They became so sick that they refused to eat, so they almost died.

¹⁹They were in trouble, so they called to the LORD for help, and he saved them from their troubles.

²⁰He gave the command and healed them, so they were saved from the grave.

²¹Thank the LORD for his faithful love and for the amazing things he does for people.

²²Offer sacrifices of thanks to him. Sing with joy about all that he has done.

²³Some sailed the sea in ships. Their work carried them across the water.

²⁴They saw what the LORD can do. They saw the amazing things he did at sea.

²⁵He gave the command, and a strong wind began to blow. The waves became higher and higher.

²⁶The waves lifted them high into the sky and dropped them into the deep sea. The storm was so dangerous that the men lost their courage.

²⁷They were stumbling and falling like someone who is drunk. Their skill as sailors was useless.

²⁸They were in trouble, so they called to the LORD for help, and he saved them from their troubles.

²⁹He stopped the storm and calmed the waves.

³⁰The sailors were happy that the sea became calm, and he led them safely to where they wanted to go.

³¹Thank the LORD for his faithful love and for the amazing things he does for people.

³²Praise God in the great assembly. Praise him when the older leaders meet together.

³³He changed rivers into a desert. He stopped springs from flowing.

³⁴He made the fertile land become salty, because the people living there did such evil things.

³⁵He changed the desert into a land with pools of water. He caused springs to flow from dry ground.

³⁶He led the hungry to that good land, and they built a city to live in.

³⁷They planted seeds in their fields and grapes in their vineyards, and they had a good harvest.

³⁸ God blessed them with many children and plenty of animals.

³⁹ But because of disaster and troubles, their families became small and weak.

⁴⁰ God shames even great leaders and makes them wander through empty deserts.

⁴¹ But he rescues the poor from their misery. He makes their families large like flocks of sheep.

⁴² Good people see this and are happy. But the wicked see it and don't know what to say.

⁴³ Whoever is wise will remember these things and begin to understand the LORD'S faithful love.

108 ¹ God, I am ready, heart and soul, to sing songs of praise. Wake up, my soul!

² Harps and lyres, wake up, and let's wake the dawn!

³ LORD, I will praise you before all people. I will sing praises about you to every nation.

⁴ Your faithful love is higher than the highest clouds in the sky!

⁵ Rise above the heavens, God. Let all the world see your glory.

⁶Use your great power and help us!
Answer my prayer and save the people
you love.

⁷God has made this promise in his
Temple: I will win the war and rejoice in
victory! I will divide this land among my
people. I will give them Shechem. I will
give them Succoth Valley.

⁸Gilead and Manasseh will be mine.
Ephraim will be my helmet. Judah will be
my royal scepter.

⁹Moab will be the bowl for washing my
feet. Edom will be the slave who carries
my sandals. I will defeat the Philistines
and shout in victory!

¹⁰But, God, it seems that you have left
us! You do not go out with our army.
So who will lead me into the strong,
protected city? Who will lead me into
battle against Edom?

¹¹ (108: 10)

¹²Help us defeat the enemy! No one on
earth can rescue us.

¹³Only God can make us strong. Only
God can defeat our enemies!

109¹ God, I praise you! Hear my
prayer and do something!

²Wicked people are telling lies about me. They are saying things that are not true.

³They are saying hateful things about me. They are attacking me for no reason.

⁴I loved them, but they were against me. So I said a prayer.

⁵I did good things to them, but they are doing bad things to me. I loved them, but they hated me.

⁶They said, Choose someone evil to represent him. Let the one at his side really be his accuser.

⁷Let even his prayer be used as evidence against him, and let the court find him guilty.

⁸Let his life be cut short, and let someone else take over his work.

⁹Let his children become orphans and his wife a widow.

¹⁰Make his children wander around as beggars, forced from homes that lie in ruins.

¹¹Let the people he owes take everything he owns. Let strangers get everything he worked for.

¹²Let no one be kind to him. Let no one show mercy to his children.

¹³ May his family come to an end.
May his name be unknown to future generations.

¹⁴ May the LORD remember the sins of his father, and may his mothers sins never be erased.

¹⁵ May the LORD remember their sins forever, and may he cause people to forget his family completely.

¹⁶ He never did anything good. He never loved anyone. He made life hard for the poor and the helpless.

¹⁷ He loved to curse others, so let those bad things happen to him. He never blessed others, so dont let good things happen to him.

¹⁸ Cursing was a daily part of his life, like the clothes he wears. Cursing others became a part of him, like the water he drinks and the oil he puts on his body.

¹⁹ So let curses cover him like the robe he wears and always surround him like a belt.

²⁰ My enemies said these evil things against me. But may those curses be the way the LORD punishes them.

²¹ My Lord GOD, treat me in a way that brings honor to your name. Save me because of your faithful love.

²² I am only a poor, helpless man. I am so sad; my heart is broken.

²³ I feel my life is over, fading like a shadow at days end. I feel like a bug that someone brushed away.

²⁴ My knees are weak from fasting. I have lost weight and become thin.

²⁵ My enemies insult me. They look at me and shake their heads.

²⁶ LORD my God, help me! Show your faithful love and save me!

²⁷ Then they will know that you did it. They will know that it was your power, LORD, that helped me.

²⁸ They curse me, but you can bless me. They attacked me, so defeat them. Then I, your servant, will be happy.

²⁹ Humiliate my enemies! Let them wear their shame like a coat.

³⁰ I give thanks to the LORD. I praise him in front of everyone.

³¹ He stands by the helpless and saves them from those who try to put them to death.

110¹ The LORD said to my lord, Sit at my right side, while I put your enemies under your control.

² The LORD will cause your kingdom to grow, beginning at Zion, until you rule the lands of your enemies!

³ Your people will gladly join you when you gather your army together. You will wear your special clothes and meet together early in the morning. Your young men will be all around you like dew on the ground.

⁴ The LORD has made a promise with an oath and will not change his mind: You are a priest forever the kind of priest Melchizedek was.

⁵ My Lord is at your right side. He will defeat the other kings when he becomes angry.

⁶ He will judge the nations. The ground will be covered with dead bodies. He will punish the leaders of powerful nations all around the world.

⁷ The king will drink from a stream on the way. Then he will lift his head and become strong!

111 ¹ Praise the LORD! I thank the LORD with all my heart in the assembly of his good people.

² The LORD does wonderful things, greater than anyone could ask for.

³ The things he does are great and glorious! There is no end to his goodness.

⁴ He does amazing things so that we will remember that the LORD is kind and merciful.

⁵ He gives food to his followers. He remembers his agreement forever.

⁶ He has shown his people how powerful he is by giving them the land of other nations.

⁷ Everything he does is good and fair. All his commands can be trusted.

⁸ His commands will continue forever. They must be done with truth and honesty.

⁹ He rescued his people and made his agreement with them forever. His name is awesome and holy.

¹⁰ Wisdom begins with fear and respect for the LORD. Those who obey him are very wise. Praises will be sung to him forever.

112¹ Praise the LORD! Great blessings belong to those who fear and respect the LORD, who are happy to do what he commands.

² Their descendants will be given power on earth. Those who do right will be greatly blessed.

³ Their family will be very rich, and their goodness will last forever.

⁴ A light shines in the dark for those who are good, for those who are merciful, kind, and fair.

⁵ It is good for people to be kind and generous and to be fair in business.

⁶ Such good people will never fall. They will always be remembered.

⁷ They will not be afraid of bad news. They are confident because they trust in the LORD.

⁸ They remain confident and without fear, so they defeat their enemies.

⁹ They freely give to the poor. Their goodness will last forever. They will be honored with victory.

¹⁰ The wicked become angry when they see this. They grind their teeth in anger, but then they disappear. They will never get what they want most.

113 ¹Praise the LORD! Servants of the LORD, praise him! Praise the LORD'S name.

²May the LORD'S name be praised now and forever.

³May the LORD'S name be praised from where the sun rises to where it goes down.

⁴The LORD is higher than all nations. His glory rises to the skies.

⁵There is no one like the LORD our God. He sits on his throne high in heaven.

⁶He is so high above us that he must look down to see the sky and the earth.

⁷He lifts the poor out of the dirt and rescues beggars from the garbage dump.

⁸He puts them in important positions, giving them a place among the leaders of his people.

⁹He gives children to the woman whose home is empty. He makes her a happy mother. Praise the LORD!

114 ¹The people of Israel escaped from Egypt. Yes, Jacobs descendants left that foreign country.

²Then Judah became Gods special people, and Israel became his kingdom.

³The Red Sea saw this and ran away.
The Jordan River turned and ran.

⁴The mountains danced like rams. The hills danced like lambs.

⁵Red Sea, why did you run away?
Jordan River, why did you turn and run away?

⁶Mountains, why did you dance like rams? Hills, why did you dance like lambs?

⁷The earth shook in front of the Lord, the God of Jacob.

⁸He is the one who caused water to flow from a rock. He made a spring of water flow from that hard rock.

115 ¹LORD, you should receive the honor, not us. The honor belongs to you because of your faithful love and loyalty.

²Why should the nations wonder where our God is?

³Our God is in heaven, and he does whatever he wants.

⁴The gods of those nations are only statues that some human made from gold and silver.

⁵Those statues have mouths, but cannot talk. They have eyes, but cannot see.

⁶They have ears, but cannot hear. They have noses, but cannot smell.

⁷They have hands, but cannot feel. They have feet, but cannot walk. No sounds come from their throats.

⁸The people who make and trust in those statues will become like them!

⁹People of Israel, trust in the LORD! He is your strength and shield.

¹⁰Aarons family, trust in the LORD! He is your strength and shield.

¹¹Followers of the LORD, trust in the LORD! He is your strength and shield.

¹²The LORD remembers us, and he will bless us. He will bless the people of Israel. He will bless Aarons family.

¹³The LORD will bless his followers, great and small.

¹⁴May the LORD give more and more to you and to your children.

¹⁵May you receive blessings from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

¹⁶Heaven belongs to the LORD, but he gave the earth to people.

¹⁷The dead don't praise him. Those in the grave don't praise the LORD.

¹⁸But we will praise the LORD now and forever! Praise the LORD!

116 ¹I love the LORD for hearing me, for listening to my prayers.

²Yes, he paid attention to me, so I will always call to him whenever I need help.

³Deaths ropes were around me. The grave was closing in on me. I was worried and afraid.

⁴Then I called on the LORD'S name. I said, LORD, save me!

⁵The LORD is good and merciful; our God is so kind.

⁶The LORD takes care of helpless people. I was without help, and he saved me.

⁷My soul, relax! The LORD is caring for you.

⁸Lord, you saved my soul from death. You stopped my tears. You kept me from falling.

⁹I will continue to serve the LORD in the land of the living.

¹⁰I continued believing even when I said, I am completely ruined!

¹¹ Yes, even when I was upset and said,
There is no one I can trust!

¹² What can I give the LORD for all that
he has done for me?

¹³ He saved me, so I will give him a
drink offering, and I will call on the
LORD'S name.

¹⁴ I will give the LORD what I promised.
I will go in front of all his people now.

¹⁵ Very dear to the LORD are the lives
of his followers. He cares when they face
death.

¹⁶ LORD, I am your servant! Yes, I am
your slave, as my mother was. You set
me free from the chains of death.

¹⁷ I will give you a thank offering. I will
call on the LORD'S name.

¹⁸ I will stand before the gathering of
his people and give the LORD what I
promised.

¹⁹ I will do this in Jerusalem, in the
courtyards of the LORD'S Temple. Praise
the LORD!

117 ¹ Praise the LORD, all you
nations. Praise him, all you
people.

²He loves us very much! The LORD will be faithful to us forever! Praise the LORD!

118¹ Praise the LORD because he is good! His faithful love will last forever!

²Israel, say it: His faithful love will last forever!

³Aarons family, say it: His faithful love will last forever!

⁴You people worshiping the LORD, say it: His faithful love will last forever!

⁵I was in trouble, so I called to the LORD for help. The LORD answered and made me free.

⁶The LORD is with me, so I will not be afraid. No one on earth can do anything to harm me.

⁷The LORD is my helper. I will see my enemies defeated.

⁸It is better to trust in the LORD than to trust in people.

⁹It is better to trust in the LORD than to trust in great leaders.

¹⁰Many enemies surrounded me, but with the LORD'S power I defeated them.

¹¹ They surrounded me again and again, but I defeated them with the LORD'S power.

¹² They surrounded me like a swarm of bees, but they were quickly destroyed like a fast-burning bush. I defeated them with the LORD'S power.

¹³ My enemy attacked me and almost destroyed me, but the LORD helped me.

¹⁴ The LORD is my strength and my reason for singing. He saved me!

¹⁵ You can hear the victory celebration in the homes of those who live right. The LORD has shown his great power again!

¹⁶ The LORD'S arm is raised in victory. The LORD has shown his great power again.

¹⁷ I will live and not die, and I will tell what the LORD has done.

¹⁸ The LORD punished me, but he did not let me die.

¹⁹ Gates of goodness, open for me, and I will come in and worship the LORD.

²⁰ Those are the LORD'S gates, and only good people can go through them.

²¹ Lord, I thank you for answering my prayer. I thank you for saving me.

²²The stone that the builders rejected became the cornerstone.

²³The LORD made this happen, and we think it is wonderful!

²⁴This is the day the LORD has made. Let us rejoice and be happy today!

²⁵The people say, Praise the LORD! The LORD saved us!

²⁶Welcome to the one who comes in the name of the LORD. The priests answer, We welcome you to the LORD'S house!

²⁷The LORD is God, and he accepts us. Tie up the lamb for the sacrifice and carry it to the horns of the altar.

²⁸Lord, you are my God, and I thank you. My God, I praise you!

²⁹Praise the LORD because he is good. His faithful love will last forever.

119¹ Great blessings belong to those who live pure lives! They follow the LORD'S teachings.

²Great blessings belong to those who follow his rules! They seek him with all their heart.

³They don't do wrong. They follow his ways.

⁴Lord, you gave us your instructions and told us to always obey them.

⁵How I wish I could be more faithful in obeying your laws!

⁶Then I would never feel ashamed when I look closely at your commands.

⁷The more I understand how fair your laws are, the more sincerely I will praise you.

⁸I will obey your laws, so please don't leave me!

⁹How can a young person live a pure life? By obeying your word.

¹⁰I try with all my heart to serve you. Help me obey your commands.

¹¹I study your teachings very carefully so that I will not sin against you.

¹²LORD, you are worthy of praise! Teach me your laws.

¹³I will repeat the laws we have heard from you.

¹⁴I enjoy following your rules as much as others enjoy great riches.

¹⁵I will study your instructions. I will give thought to your way of life.

¹⁶I enjoy your laws. I will not forget your word.

¹⁷Be good to me, your servant, so that I may live to obey your word.

¹⁸Open my eyes so that I can see all the wonderful things in your teachings.

¹⁹I feel like a stranger visiting here on earth. I need to know your commands. Dont keep them hidden from me.

²⁰I constantly feel a hunger to understand your laws.

²¹You tell the proud how angry you are with them. All those who refuse to obey your word are cursed.

²²Dont let me be ashamed and embarrassed. I have obeyed your rules.

²³Even if rulers say bad things about me, I am your servant, and I continue to study your laws.

²⁴Your rules make me happy. They give me good advice.

²⁵I lie here like a dying man. Say the word, and I will live again.

²⁶I told you about my life, and you answered me. Now, teach me your laws.

²⁷Help me understand your instructions, and I will think about your wonderful teachings.

²⁸I am sad and tired. Say the word, and make me strong again.

²⁹Dont let me live a lie. Guide me with your teachings.

³⁰ I have chosen to be loyal to you. I respect your laws.

³¹ I follow your rules closely, LORD. Dont let me be put to shame.

³² I do my best to follow your commands, because you are the one who gives me the desire.

³³ LORD, teach me your laws, and I will always follow them.

³⁴ Help me understand your teachings, and I will follow them. Obeying them will be my greatest desire.

³⁵ Help me follow your commands, because that makes me happy.

³⁶ Give me the desire to follow your rules, not the desire to get rich.

³⁷ Dont let me look at worthless things. Help me live your way.

³⁸ Do what you promised me, your servant, so that people will respect you.

³⁹ Take away the shame I fear. Your laws are good.

⁴⁰ See how much I want to obey your instructions! Be good to me, and let me live.

⁴¹ LORD, show me your faithful love. Save me, as you promised.

⁴² Then I will have an answer for those who make fun of me for trusting what you say.

⁴³ Let me always say what is true. I depend on your judgment to be fair.

⁴⁴ I will follow your teachings forever and ever.

⁴⁵ So I will live in freedom, because I do my best to know your instructions.

⁴⁶ I will discuss your rules with kings, and no one will embarrass me.

⁴⁷ What joy your commands give me! How I love them!

⁴⁸ Not only do I love your commands, but I also honor them. I will study your laws.

⁴⁹ Remember your promise to me, your servant. It gives me hope.

⁵⁰ You comfort me in my suffering, because your promise gives me new life.

⁵¹ People full of pride are always making fun of me, but I have not stopped following your teachings.

⁵² I remember the laws you gave us long ago, LORD, and they bring me comfort.

⁵³I am overcome with anger when I see wicked people, who have stopped following your teachings.

⁵⁴Your laws are the songs I sing wherever I am living.

⁵⁵LORD, in the night I remembered your name, and I obeyed your teachings.

⁵⁶This happened because I carefully obey your instructions.

⁵⁷LORD, I decided that my duty is to obey your commandments.

⁵⁸I beg you with all my heart, be kind to me, as you promised.

⁵⁹I thought very carefully about my life, and I decided to follow your rules.

⁶⁰Without wasting any time, I hurried back to obey your commands.

⁶¹The wicked tried to trap me, but I have not forgotten your teachings.

⁶²In the middle of the night, I get up to thank you because your laws are so fair.

⁶³I am a friend to everyone who worships you. I am a friend to everyone who obeys your instructions.

⁶⁴LORD, your faithful love fills the earth. Teach me your laws.

⁶⁵ LORD, you did good things for me, your servant. You did what you promised to do.

⁶⁶ Give me the knowledge to make wise decisions. I trust your commands.

⁶⁷ Before I suffered, I did many wrong things. But now I carefully obey everything you say.

⁶⁸ You are good, and you do good things. Teach me your laws.

⁶⁹ People full of pride made up lies about me. But I keep obeying your instructions with all my heart.

⁷⁰ Those people are so stupid that they care for nothing, but I enjoy studying your teachings.

⁷¹ Suffering was good for me; I learned your laws.

⁷² Your teachings are worth more to me than a thousand pieces of silver and gold.

⁷³ With your hands you made me and helped me become what I am. Now help me learn and understand your commands.

⁷⁴ Your followers will see me and be happy, because I trust in your word.

⁷⁵ LORD, I know that your decisions are fair, and you were right to punish me.

⁷⁶ Now comfort me with your faithful love, as you promised.

⁷⁷ Comfort me and let me live. I enjoy your teachings.

⁷⁸ Bring shame on those proud people who lied about me. All I want to do is study your instructions.

⁷⁹ Let your followers come back to me so that they may learn your rules.

⁸⁰ Let me obey your laws perfectly so that I will not be ashamed.

⁸¹ I feel weaker and weaker as I wait for you to save me. But I put my trust in your word.

⁸² I keep looking for what you promised, but my eyes are feeling tired. When will you comfort me?

⁸³ Even when I am like a dried wineskin on the trash pile, I will not forget your laws.

⁸⁴ How long must I wait for you to punish those who persecute me?

⁸⁵ Proud people have tried to trap me and make me disobey your teachings.

⁸⁶All your commands can be trusted. Those people are wrong to persecute me. Help me!

⁸⁷They have almost destroyed me, but I have not stopped obeying your instructions.

⁸⁸Show me your faithful love and let me live. I will do whatever you say.

⁸⁹LORD, your word continues forever in heaven.

⁹⁰You are loyal forever and ever. You made the earth, and it still stands.

⁹¹All things continue today because of your laws. Like slaves, they all obey you.

⁹²If I had not found joy in your teachings, my suffering would have destroyed me.

⁹³I will never forget your commands, because through them you gave me new life.

⁹⁴I am yours, so save me! I have done my best to know your instructions.

⁹⁵The wicked tried to destroy me, but your rules made me wise.

⁹⁶Everything has its limits, except your commands.

⁹⁷Oh, how I love your teachings! I talk about them all the time.

⁹⁸Your commands are always with me, and they make me wiser than my enemies.

⁹⁹I am wiser than all my teachers, because I study your rules.

¹⁰⁰I understand more than those who are older, because I obey your instructions.

¹⁰¹I have avoided every path that leads to evil so that I could obey your word.

¹⁰²You are my teacher, so I will always do whatever you decide.

¹⁰³Your words are so sweet to me, like the taste of honey!

¹⁰⁴I gain understanding from your instructions, so I hate anything that leads people the wrong way.

¹⁰⁵Your word is like a lamp that guides my steps, a light that shows the path I should take.

¹⁰⁶Your laws are good and fair. I have promised to obey them, and I will keep my promise.

¹⁰⁷LORD, I have suffered for a long time. Say the word, and I will live again!

¹⁰⁸LORD, accept the praise I want to give you, and teach me your laws.

¹⁰⁹ My life is always in danger, but I have not forgotten your teachings.

¹¹⁰ The wicked try to trap me, but I have not disobeyed your instructions.

¹¹¹ The rules you have given me to follow will be mine forever. They give me great joy.

¹¹² More than anything, I want to obey your laws always, until the end of my life.

¹¹³ Lord, I hate those who are not completely loyal to you, but I love your teachings.

¹¹⁴ Hide me and protect me. I trust what you say.

¹¹⁵ Don't come near me, you who are evil, so that I can obey my God's commands.

¹¹⁶ Support me, Lord, as you promised, and I will live. I trust in you, so don't disappoint me.

¹¹⁷ Help me and I will be saved. And I will always give attention to your laws.

¹¹⁸ You reject all who don't obey your laws, because they are liars and did not do what they said.

¹¹⁹ You throw away the wicked of this world like trash. So I love your rules.

¹²⁰ I am shaking with fear before you. I fear and respect your judgments.

¹²¹ I have done what is right and good. Dont let me fall into the hands of those who want to hurt me.

¹²² Promise to be good to me, your servant. Dont let those proud people do harm to me.

¹²³ I have worn out my eyes looking for your help, waiting for you to save me, as you promised.

¹²⁴ Show your faithful love to me, your servant. Teach me your laws.

¹²⁵ I am your servant. Give me wisdom to understand your rules.

¹²⁶ LORD, it is time for you to do something. The people do what is against your teachings.

¹²⁷ I love your commands more than gold, more than the purest gold.

¹²⁸ I carefully obey all your commands. So I hate anything that leads people the wrong way.

¹²⁹ Lord, your rules are wonderful. That is why I follow them.

¹³⁰ As people understand your word, it brings light to their lives. Your word makes even simple people wise.

¹³¹ My desire to hear your commands is so strong that I wait with open mouth, gasping for breath.

¹³² Look at me, and be kind to me, just as you always are to those who love your name.

¹³³ Guide me, as you promised. Don't let evil rule over me.

¹³⁴ Save me from those who want to hurt me, and I will obey your instructions.

¹³⁵ Accept your servant, and teach me your laws.

¹³⁶ I have cried a river of tears because people don't obey your teachings.

¹³⁷ LORD, you do what is right, and your decisions are fair.

¹³⁸ The rules you have given us are right. We can trust them completely.

¹³⁹ Something that really upsets me is the thought that my enemies ignore your commands.

¹⁴⁰ I love your word. Time and again it has been proven true.

¹⁴¹ I am young, and people don't respect me. But I have not forgotten your instructions.

¹⁴²Your goodness is forever, and your teachings can be trusted.

¹⁴³Even though I have troubles and hard times, your commands give me joy.

¹⁴⁴Your rules are always right. Help me understand them so that I can live.

¹⁴⁵LORD, I call to you with all my heart. Answer me, and I will obey your laws.

¹⁴⁶I call to you. Save me, and I will obey your rules.

¹⁴⁷I get up early in the morning to pray to you. I trust what you say.

¹⁴⁸Late into the night I stay awake to think about your word.

¹⁴⁹I know your love is true, so listen to me. LORD, you always do what is right, so let me live.

¹⁵⁰Here come those who have evil plans to hurt me. They live far away from your teachings.

¹⁵¹But you are near me, LORD, and all your commands can be trusted.

¹⁵²Long ago I learned from your rules that you made them to last forever.

¹⁵³Look at my suffering and rescue me. I have not forgotten your teachings.

¹⁵⁴Argue my case, and set me free. Let me live, as you promised.

¹⁵⁵The wicked have no hope of being saved, because they don't follow your laws.

¹⁵⁶LORD, you are very kind. You always do what is right, so let me live.

¹⁵⁷I have many enemies trying to hurt me, but I have not stopped following your rules.

¹⁵⁸I look at those traitors and hate what I see, because they refuse to do what you say.

¹⁵⁹See how much I love your instructions! LORD, I know your love is true, so let me live.

¹⁶⁰Every word you say can be trusted. Your laws are fair and will last forever.

¹⁶¹Powerful leaders attack me for no reason, but the only thing I fear is your command.

¹⁶²Your word makes me happy, like someone who has found a great treasure.

¹⁶³I hate lies; they make me sick! But I love your teachings.

¹⁶⁴Seven times a day I praise you because your laws are fair.

¹⁶⁵ Those who love your teachings will find true peace. Nothing can make them fall.

¹⁶⁶ LORD, I am waiting for you to save me. I obey your commands.

¹⁶⁷ I follow your rules. I love them very much.

¹⁶⁸ I obey all your instructions and rules, because you know everything I do.

¹⁶⁹ LORD, listen to my cry for help. Make me wise, as you promised.

¹⁷⁰ Listen to my prayer. Save me, as you promised.

¹⁷¹ I will burst into songs of praise, because you have taught me your laws.

¹⁷² Let my voice sing about your word, because all your commands are good.

¹⁷³ I have chosen to follow your instructions, so reach out and help me!

¹⁷⁴ LORD, I want you to save me. Your teachings make me happy.

¹⁷⁵ Let me live to praise you. Let me find the help I need in your laws.

¹⁷⁶ I have wandered away like a lost sheep. Come and find me. I am your servant, and I have not forgotten your commands.

120 ¹I was in trouble. I called to the LORD for help, and he answered me!

²I said, LORD, save me from liars, from those who say things that are not true.

³Liars, do you know what the Lord has for you? Do you know what you will get?

⁴You will get a soldiers sharp arrow and hot coals to punish you.

⁵How I hate living here among these people! Its like living in Meshech or in the tents of Kedar.

⁶I have lived too long with those who hate peace.

⁷I ask for peace, but they want war.

121 ¹I look up to the hills, but where will my help really come from?

²My help will come from the LORD, the Creator of heaven and earth.

³He will not let you fall. Your Protector will not fall asleep.

⁴Israels Protector does not get tired. He never sleeps.

⁵The LORD is your Protector. The LORD stands by your side, shading and protecting you.

⁶The sun cannot harm you during the day, and the moon cannot harm you at night.

⁷The LORD will protect you from every danger. He will protect your soul.

⁸The LORD will protect you as you come and go, both now and forever!

122¹I was happy when the people said, Let us go to the LORD'S Temple.

²Here we are, standing at the gates of Jerusalem.

³This is New Jerusalem! The city has been rebuilt as one united city.

⁴This is where the tribes come, the tribes who belong to the LORD. The people of Israel come here to praise the LORD'S name.

⁵The kings from Davids family put their thrones here. They set up their thrones to judge the people.

⁶Pray for peace in Jerusalem: May those who love you find peace.

⁷May there be peace within your walls. May there be safety in your great buildings.

⁸For the good of my family and neighbors, I pray that there will be peace here.

⁹For the good of the Temple of the LORD our God, I pray that good things will happen to this city.

123¹ Lord, I look up and pray to you. You sit as King in heaven.

²A slave looks to his master to provide what he needs, and a servant girl depends on the woman she serves. So we depend on the LORD our God, waiting for him to have mercy on us.

³LORD, be merciful to us, because we have been insulted much too long.

⁴We have had enough of the hateful words of those proud people who make fun of us and show us no respect.

124¹ What would have happened to us if the LORD had not been on our side? Tell us about it, Israel.

²What would have happened to us if the LORD had not been on our side when people attacked us?

³They would have swallowed us alive when they became angry with us.

⁴Their armies would have been like a flood washing over us, like a river drowning us.

⁵Those proud people would have been like water rising up to our mouth and drowning us.

⁶Praise the LORD! He did not let our enemies tear us apart.

⁷We escaped like a bird from the net of a hunter. The net broke, and we escaped!

⁸Our help came from the LORD, the one who made heaven and earth!

125 ¹Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion. They will never be shaken. They will continue forever.

²Like the mountains that surround Jerusalem, the LORD surrounds and protects his people now and forever.

³The wicked will not always control the land of those who do right. If they did, even those who do right might start doing wrong.

⁴LORD, be good to those who are good, to those who have pure hearts.

⁵But, LORD, when you punish those who do evil, also punish those who have

stopped following your way. Let Israel always enjoy peace!

126 ¹It will be like a dream when the LORD comes back with the captives of Zion.

²We will laugh and sing happy songs! Then the other nations will say, The LORD did a great thing for Zion!

³Yes, we will be happy because the LORD did a great thing for us.

⁴So, LORD, bring back the good times, like a desert stream filled again with flowing water.

⁵Then those who were sad when they planted will be happy when they gather the harvest!

⁶Those who cried as they carried the seeds will be happy when they bring in the crops!

127 ¹If it is not the LORD who builds a house, the builders are wasting their time. If it is not the LORD who watches over the city, the guards are wasting their time.

²It is a waste of time to get up early and stay up late, trying to make a living. The Lord provides for those he loves, even while they are sleeping.

³Children are a gift from the LORD, a reward from a mothers womb.

⁴A young mans sons are like the arrows in a soldiers hand.

⁵The man who fills his quiver with sons will be very blessed. He will never be defeated when he opposes his enemy at the city gates.

128¹Great blessings belong to those who fear and respect the LORD and live the way he wants.

²You will get what you work for. You will enjoy the Lords blessings, and all will go well for you.

³At home, your wife will have many children, like a vine full of grapes. The children around your table will be like an orchard full of olive trees.

⁴Yes, the LORD will really bless those who respect him.

⁵May the LORD bless you from Mount Zion. May you enjoy the blessings of Jerusalem all your life.

⁶And may you live to see your grandchildren. Let Israel always enjoy peace!

129¹ All my life enemies have attacked me. Say it again, Israel.

² All my life enemies have attacked me, but they have never defeated me.

³ They beat me until I had deep cuts. My back looked like a freshly plowed field.

⁴ But the LORD does what is right; he cut the ropes and set me free from those wicked people.

⁵ May those who hate Zion be put to shame. May they be stopped and chased away.

⁶ They will be like grass on a flat roof that dies before it has time to grow.

⁷ The one who goes to harvest it will not find enough to cut and stack.

⁸ May no one walking by those wicked people ever say, May the LORD bless you! We bless you in the name of the LORD.

130¹ LORD, I am in deep trouble, so I am calling to you for help.

² My Lord, listen to me. Listen to my cry for help.

³ LORD, if you punished people for all their sins, no one would be left alive.

⁴ But you forgive people, so they fear and respect you.

⁵ I am waiting for the LORD to help me. My soul waits for him. I trust what he says.

⁶ I am waiting for my Lord, like a guard waiting and waiting for the morning to come.

⁷ Israel, trust in the LORD. The LORD is the one who is faithful and true. He saves us again and again,

⁸ and he is the one who will save the people of Israel from all their sins.

131 ¹ LORD, I don't feel proud. I don't see myself as better than others. I am not thinking about doing great things or reaching impossible goals.

² No, right now I am calm and quiet, like a child after nursing, content in its mother's arms.

³ Israel, trust in the LORD. Trust in him now and forever!

132 ¹ LORD, remember how David suffered.

² He made a promise to you, LORD, an oath to the Mighty God of Jacob.

³ He said, I will not go into my house or lie down on my bed.

⁴ I will not sleep or let my eyes rest,

⁵ until I find a home for the LORD, a tent for the Mighty God of Jacob!

⁶ We heard about this in Ephrathah.

We found the Box of the Agreement at Kiriath Jearim.

⁷ Now, let's go to the Lord's house. Let's worship at his throne.

⁸ LORD, get up and go to your resting place; go with the Box that shows your power.

⁹ May your priests be clothed in victory and your loyal followers be filled with joy.

¹⁰ For the sake of your servant David, don't reject your chosen king.

¹¹ The LORD made a promise to David, an oath of loyalty to him: I will always put one of your descendants on your throne.

¹² If your descendants obey my agreement and the laws I teach them, then the king will always be someone from your family.

¹³ The LORD has chosen Zion to be the place for his Temple, the place he wanted for his home.

¹⁴He said, This will always be my place of rest. This is where I want to sit on my throne.

¹⁵I will bless this city with plenty of food. Even the poor will have enough to eat.

¹⁶I will clothe the priests with salvation, and my followers will be filled with joy.

¹⁷This is where I will make Davids family strong. I will never let the lamp of my chosen king stop burning.

¹⁸I will cover his enemies with shame, and on his head will be a shining crown.

133¹ Oh, how wonderful, how pleasing it is when Gods people all come together as one!

²It is like the sweet-smelling oil that is poured over the high priests head, that runs down his beard flowing over his robes.

³It is like a gentle rain from Mount Hermon falling on Mount Zion. It is there that the LORD has promised his blessing of eternal life.

134¹ Praise the LORD, all his servants who serve in the Temple at night.

²Lift your hands toward the Temple,
and praise the LORD.

³May the LORD, who made heaven and
earth, bless you from Zion.

135¹Praise the LORD! Praise the
name of the LORD! Praise him,
you servants of the LORD,

²you who serve in the LORD'S Temple,
in the courtyard of the Temple of our
God.

³Praise the LORD, because he is good.
Praise his name, because it brings such
joy!

⁴The LORD chose Jacob to be his
own. Yes, he chose Israel to be his own
people.

⁵I know the LORD is great! Our Lord is
greater than all the gods!

⁶The LORD does whatever he wants, in
heaven and on earth, in the seas and the
deep oceans.

⁷He brings the clouds from the other
side of the earth. He sends the lightning
and the rain, and he opens the doors to
release the winds.

⁸He destroyed the firstborn males of
the people in Egypt and their animals.

⁹He did great wonders and miracles in Egypt. He used them against Pharaoh and his officials.

¹⁰He defeated many nations and killed powerful kings.

¹¹He defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites, Og, king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms in Canaan.

¹²Then he gave their land to Israel, his people.

¹³LORD, your name will be famous forever! LORD, people will remember you forever and ever.

¹⁴The LORD defends his people; he is kind to his servants.

¹⁵The gods of other nations are only gold and silver idols that people have made.

¹⁶They have mouths, but cannot speak. They have eyes, but cannot see.

¹⁷They have ears, but cannot hear. They have mouths, but no breath.

¹⁸Those who make idols and trust in them will become just like the idols they have made.

¹⁹Family of Israel, praise the LORD!
Aarons family, praise the LORD!

²⁰Levi's family, praise the LORD! All you who worship the LORD, praise the LORD!

²¹The LORD should be praised from Zion, from Jerusalem, his home. Praise the LORD!

136 ¹Praise the LORD because he is good. His faithful love will last forever.

²Praise the God of gods! His faithful love will last forever.

³Praise the Lord of lords! His faithful love will last forever.

⁴Praise him who alone does wonderful miracles! His faithful love will last forever.

⁵Praise the one who used wisdom to make the skies! His faithful love will last forever.

⁶He spread the land over the sea. His faithful love will last forever.

⁷He made the great lights. His faithful love will last forever.

⁸He made the sun to rule the day. His faithful love will last forever.

⁹He made the moon and stars to rule the night. His faithful love will last forever.

¹⁰He killed the firstborn males in Egypt, both men and animals. His faithful love will last forever.

¹¹He took Israel out of Egypt. His faithful love will last forever.

¹²He used his powerful arms and strong hands. His faithful love will last forever.

¹³He split the Red Sea into two parts. His faithful love will last forever.

¹⁴He led Israel through the sea. His faithful love will last forever.

¹⁵He drowned Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea. His faithful love will last forever.

¹⁶He led his people through the desert. His faithful love will last forever.

¹⁷He defeated powerful kings. His faithful love will last forever.

¹⁸He defeated strong kings. His faithful love will last forever.

¹⁹He defeated Sihon king of the Amorites. His faithful love will last forever.

²⁰He defeated Og king of Bashan. His faithful love will last forever.

²¹He gave their land to Israel. His faithful love will last forever.

²²He gave it as a gift to Israel, his servant. His faithful love will last forever.

²³He remembered us when we were defeated. His faithful love will last forever.

²⁴He saved us from our enemies. His faithful love will last forever.

²⁵He provides food for all living things. His faithful love will last forever.

²⁶Praise the God of heaven! His faithful love will last forever.

137 ¹We sat by the rivers in Babylon and cried as we remembered Zion.

²We hung our harps nearby, there on the willow trees.

³There in Babylon, those who captured us told us to sing. Our enemies told us to entertain them. They said, Sing us one of your songs about Zion.

⁴But we cannot sing the LORD'S songs in a foreign country!

⁵Jerusalem, if I ever forget you, may I never play a song again.

⁶If I fail to remember you, may I never sing again. I will always remember Jerusalem as my greatest joy!

⁷ LORD, be sure to punish the Edomites for what they did when Jerusalem was captured. They shouted, Destroy its buildings! Pull them down to the ground!

⁸ Babylon, you will be destroyed! Bless the one who pays you back for what you did to us.

⁹ Bless the one who grabs your babies and smashes them against a rock.

138 ¹ LORD, I praise you with all my heart. I sing songs of praise to you before the gods.

² I bow down toward your holy Temple, and I praise your name for your love and loyalty. You are famous, and doing what you promised will make you even more famous!

³ When I called to you for help, you answered me and gave me strength.

⁴ LORD, all the kings on earth will praise you when they hear what you say.

⁵ They will sing about what the LORD has done, because the glory of the LORD is very great.

⁶ The LORD has the highest place above all others, but he still cares for the humble. Even from there, so high above, he knows what the proud do.

⁷If I am in trouble, you keep me alive. If my enemies are angry, you save me from them.

⁸LORD, I know you will do what you have promised. LORD, your faithful love will last forever. You are the one who made us, so don't leave us!

139 ¹LORD, you have tested me, so you know all about me.

²You know when I sit down and when I get up. You know my thoughts from far away.

³You know where I go and where I lie down. You know everything I do.

⁴LORD, you know what I want to say, even before the words leave my mouth.

⁵You are all around me in front of me and behind me. I feel your hand on my shoulder.

⁶I am amazed at what you know; it is too much for me to understand.

⁷Your Spirit is everywhere I go. I cannot escape your presence.

⁸If I go up to heaven, you will be there. If I go down to the place of death, you will be there.

⁹If I go east where the sun rises or go to live in the west beyond the sea,

¹⁰even there you will take my hand and lead me. Your strong right hand will protect me.

¹¹Suppose I wanted to hide from you and said, Surely the darkness will hide me. The day will change to night and cover me.

¹²Even the darkness is not dark to you. The night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are the same.

¹³You formed the way I think and feel. You put me together in my mothers womb.

¹⁴I praise you because you made me in such a wonderful way. I know how amazing that was!

¹⁵You could see my bones grow as my body took shape, hidden in my mothers womb.

¹⁶You could see my body grow each passing day. You listed all my parts, and not one of them was missing.

¹⁷Your thoughts are beyond my understanding. They cannot be measured!

¹⁸If I could count them, they would be more than all the grains of sand.

But when I finished, I would have just begun.

¹⁹You murderers, get away from me!
God, kill those wicked people

²⁰those who say bad things about you.
Your enemies use your name falsely.

²¹LORD, I hate those who hate you. I
hate those who are against you.

²²I hate them completely! Your enemies
are also my enemies.

²³God, examine me and know my
mind. Test me and know all my worries.

²⁴Make sure that I am not going the
wrong way. Lead me on the path that
has always been right.

140 ¹LORD, save me from people
who are evil. Protect me from
those who are cruel,

²from those who plan to do evil and
always cause trouble.

³Their words are as harmful as the
fangs of a snake, as deadly as its venom.
Selah

⁴LORD, save me from the wicked!
Protect me from these cruel people who
plan to hurt me.

⁵These proud people are trying to trap me. They spread nets to catch me; they set traps in my path. Selah

⁶LORD, you are my God. LORD, listen to my prayer.

⁷My Lord GOD, you are the powerful one who saves me. You protect my head in battle.

⁸LORD, dont let the wicked have what they want. Dont let their plans succeed. Selah

⁹My enemies are planning trouble for me. Lord, make that trouble fall on them.

¹⁰Pour burning coals on their heads. Throw them into the fire. Throw them into pits they can never escape.

¹¹Dont let those cruel liars enjoy success here. Let disaster hunt them down.

¹²I know the LORD will provide justice for the poor and will defend the helpless.

¹³Those who do what is right will praise your name; those who are honest will live in your presence.

141 ¹LORD, I call to you for help. Listen to me as I pray. Please hurry and help me!

²Accept my prayer like a gift of burning incense, the words I lift up like an evening sacrifice.

³LORD, help me control what I say. Dont let me say anything bad.

⁴Take away any desire to do evil. Keep me from joining the wicked in doing wrong. Help me stay away from their feasts.

⁵If good people correct me, I will consider it a good thing. If they criticize me, I will accept it like a warm welcome. But my prayer will always be against the wicked and the evil they do.

⁶Let their judges be put to death. Then everyone will know that I told the truth.

⁷Like rocks in a field that a farmer has plowed, so our bones will be scattered in the grave.

⁸My Lord GOD, I look to you for help. I look to you for protection; dont let me die.

⁹Those evil people are trying to trap me. Dont let me fall into their traps.

¹⁰Let the wicked fall into their own traps, while I walk away unharmed.

142¹I cry out to the LORD. I beg the LORD to help me.

²I tell him my problems; I tell him about my troubles.

³I am ready to give up. But you, Lord, know the path I am on, and you know that my enemies have set a trap for me.

⁴I look around, and I don't see anyone I know. I have no place to run. There is no one to save me.

⁵LORD, I cry out to you for help: You are my place of safety. You are all I need in life.

⁶Listen to my prayer. I am so weak. Save me from those who are chasing me. They are stronger than I am.

⁷Help me escape this trap, so that I can praise your name. Then good people will celebrate with me, because you took care of me.

143 ¹LORD, hear my prayer. Listen to my call for help and answer my prayer. Show me how good and loyal you are.

²Don't judge me, your servant. No one alive could be judged innocent by your standards.

³My enemies are chasing me. They have crushed me into the dirt. They are

pushing me into the dark grave, like people who died long ago.

⁴I am ready to give up. I am losing my courage.

⁵But I remember what happened long ago. I am thinking about all you have done. I am talking about what you made with your hands!

⁶I lift my hands in prayer to you. I am waiting for your help, like a dry land waiting for rain. Selah

⁷Hurry and answer me, LORD! I have lost my courage. Don't turn away from me. Don't let me die and become like the people lying in the grave.

⁸Show me your faithful love this morning. I trust in you. Show me what I should do. I put my life in your hands!

⁹LORD, I come to you for protection. Save me from my enemies.

¹⁰Show me what you want me to do. You are my God. Let your good Spirit lead me over level ground.

¹¹LORD, let me live so that people will praise your name. Show me how good you are and save me from my trouble.

¹²Show me your love and defeat my enemies. Destroy those who are trying to kill me because I am your servant.

144¹Praise the LORD! He is my Rock. He prepares me for war. He trains me for battle.

²He loves me and protects me. He is my safe place high on the mountain. He rescues me. He is my shield. I trust in him. He helps me rule my people.

³LORD, why are people important to you? Why do you even notice us?

⁴Our life is like a puff of air. It is like a passing shadow.

⁵LORD, tear open the skies and come down. Touch the mountains, and smoke will rise from them.

⁶Send the lightning and make my enemies run away. Shoot your arrows and make them run away.

⁷Reach down from heaven and save me! Don't let me drown in this sea of enemies. Save me from these foreigners.

⁸They are all liars, even when they swear to tell the truth.

⁹God, I will sing a new song for you. I will play a ten-stringed harp and sing praise to you.

¹⁰You are the one who gives victory to kings. You saved your servant David from the sword of his enemy.

¹¹Save me from these foreigners. They are all liars, even when they swear to tell the truth.

¹²Save us so that our sons will be as strong as trees, and our daughters as beautiful as the carved columns of a palace.

¹³Save us so that our barns will be filled with crops, and there will be thousands of sheep in our fields.

¹⁴Then our soldiers will be safe, and no enemy will try to break in. Then we will not go to war, and people will not be screaming in our streets.

¹⁵How wonderful to have such blessings! Yes, great blessings belong to those who have the LORD as their God.

145 ¹I will tell of your greatness, my God and King. I will praise your name forever and ever.

²I will praise you every day. I will praise your name forever and ever.

³The LORD is great and deserves all our praise! No one can fully understand his greatness!

⁴ Each generation will praise you and tell the next generation about the great things you do.

⁵ Your majesty and glory are wonderful. I will tell about your miracles.

⁶ People will tell about the amazing things you do, and I will tell everyone how great you are.

⁷ They will talk about your goodness and sing about your justice.

⁸ The LORD is kind and merciful, patient and full of love.

⁹ The LORD is good to everyone. He shows his mercy to everything he made.

¹⁰ LORD, all you have made will give thanks to you. Your loyal followers will praise you.

¹¹ They will tell how great your kingdom is. They will tell how great you are.

¹² So others will learn about the mighty things you do, about the glory of your kingdom how marvelous it is!

¹³ Your kingdom will never end, and you will rule forever. The LORD can be trusted in all he says. He is loyal in all that he does.

¹⁴ The LORD lifts up people who have fallen. He helps those who are in trouble.

¹⁵All living things look to you for their food, and you give them their food at the right time.

¹⁶You open your hands and give every living thing all that it needs.

¹⁷Everything the LORD does is good. Everything he does shows how loyal he is.

¹⁸The LORD is near to everyone who sincerely calls to him for help.

¹⁹He listens to his followers and does what they want. He answers their prayers and saves them.

²⁰The LORD protects everyone who loves him, but he destroys all who do evil.

²¹I will praise the LORD! Let everyone praise his holy name forever and ever!

146 ¹Praise the LORD! My soul,
praise the LORD!

²I will praise the LORD all my life. I will sing praises to him as long as I live.

³Dont depend on your leaders for help. Dont depend on people, because they cannot save you.

⁴People die and are buried. Then all their plans to help are gone.

⁵It is a great blessing for people to have the God of Jacob to help them. They depend on the LORD their God.

⁶He made heaven and earth. He made the sea and everything in it. He can be trusted to do what he says.

⁷He does what is right for those who have been hurt. He gives food to the hungry. The LORD frees people locked up in prison.

⁸The LORD makes the blind see again. The LORD helps those who are in trouble. The LORD loves those who do right.

⁹The LORD protects strangers in our country. He cares for widows and orphans, but he destroys the wicked.

¹⁰The LORD will rule forever! Zion, your God will rule forever and ever! Praise the LORD!

147 ¹Praise the LORD because he is good. Sing praises to our God. It is good and pleasant to praise him.

²The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem. He brings back the Israelites who were taken as prisoners.

³He heals their broken hearts and bandages their wounds.

⁴ He counts the stars and knows each of them by name.

⁵ Our Lord is great and powerful. There is no limit to what he knows.

⁶ The LORD supports the humble, but he shames the wicked.

⁷ Give thanks to the LORD. Praise our God with harps.

⁸ He fills the sky with clouds. He sends rain to the earth. He makes the grass grow on the mountains.

⁹ He gives food to the animals. He feeds the young birds.

¹⁰ War horses and powerful soldiers are not what he cares about.

¹¹ The LORD enjoys people who worship him and trust in his faithful love.

¹² Jerusalem, praise the LORD! Zion, praise your God!

¹³ He makes your gates strong, and he blesses the people in your city.

¹⁴ He brought peace to your country, so you have plenty of grain for food.

¹⁵ He gives a command to the earth, and it quickly obeys.

¹⁶ He makes the snow fall until the ground is as white as wool. He makes sleet blow through the air like dust.

¹⁷ He makes hail fall like rocks from the sky. No one can stand the cold he sends.

¹⁸ Then he gives another command, and warm air begins to blow. The ice melts, and water begins to flow.

¹⁹ He gave his commands to Jacob. He gave his laws and rules to Israel.

²⁰ He did not do this for any other nation. He did not teach his laws to other people. Praise the LORD!

148¹ Praise the LORD! Angels above, praise the LORD from heaven!

² Praise him, all you angels! Praise him, all his army!

³ Sun and moon, praise him! Stars and lights in the sky, praise him!

⁴ Praise him, highest heaven! Waters above the sky, praise him!

⁵ Let them praise the LORD'S name, because he gave the command and created them all!

⁶ He made all these continue forever. He made the laws that will never end.

⁷ Everything on earth, praise him! Great sea animals and all the oceans, praise the LORD!

⁸Praise him, fire and hail, snow and clouds, and the stormy winds that obey him.

⁹Praise him, mountains and hills, fruit trees and cedar trees.

¹⁰Praise him, wild animals and cattle, reptiles and birds.

¹¹Praise him, kings of the earth and all nations, princes and all rulers on earth.

¹²Praise him, young men and women, old people and children.

¹³Praise the LORD'S name! Honor his name forever! His name is greater than any other. He is more glorious than heaven and earth.

¹⁴He made his people strong. His loyal followers praise him. Israel, his precious people, praise the LORD!

149 ¹Praise the LORD. Sing a new song to the LORD! Sing his praise in the assembly of his followers.

²Let Israel be happy with their Maker. Let the people of Zion rejoice with their King.

³Let them praise him by dancing and playing their tambourines and harps.

⁴The LORD is happy with his people.
He did a wonderful thing for his humble
people. He saved them!

⁵Let his followers rejoice in this victory!
Let them sing for joy, even in their beds!

⁶Let the people shout praise to God.
And with a sharp sword in their hand,

⁷let them take revenge on the other
nations. Let them go punish those
people.

⁸They will put their kings in chains and
their leaders in chains of iron.

⁹They will punish those nations as God
commanded. This is an honor for all his
followers. Praise the LORD!

150¹ Praise the LORD! Praise God
in his Temple! Praise him in
heaven, his strong fortress!

²Praise him for the great things he
does! Praise him for all his greatness!

³Praise him with trumpets and horns!
Praise him with harps and lyres!

⁴Praise him with tambourines and
dancing! Praise him with stringed
instruments and flutes!

⁵Praise him with loud cymbals! Praise
him with crashing cymbals!

⁶Everything that breathes, praise the
LORD! Praise the LORD!

Proverbs

1 ¹ These are the proverbs of Solomon, the son of David and king of Israel.

² Proverbs will help you learn to be wise, to accept correction, and to understand wise sayings.

³ They will teach you to develop your mind in the right way. You will learn to do what is right and to be honest and fair.

⁴ These proverbs will make even those without education smart. They will teach young people what they need to know and how to use what they have learned.

⁵ Even the wise could become wiser by listening to these proverbs. They will gain understanding and learn to solve difficult problems.

⁶ These sayings will help you understand proverbs, stories with hidden meanings, words of the wise, and other difficult sayings.

⁷ Knowledge begins with fear and respect for the LORD, but stubborn fools hate wisdom and refuse to learn.

⁸ My son, listen to your father when he corrects you, and don't ignore what your mother teaches you.

⁹ What you learn from your parents will bring you honor and respect, like a crown or a gold medal.

¹⁰ My son, those who love to do wrong will try to trick you. Don't listen to them.

¹¹ They will say, Come with us. Let's hide and beat to death anyone who happens to walk by.

¹² We will swallow them whole, as the grave swallows the dying.

¹³ We will take everything they have and fill our houses with stolen goods.

¹⁴ So join us, and you can share everything we get.

¹⁵ My son, don't follow them. Don't even take the first step along that path.

¹⁶ They run to do something evil, and they cannot wait to kill someone.

¹⁷ You cannot trap birds with a net if they see you spreading it out.

¹⁸ But evil people cannot see the trap they set for themselves.

¹⁹ This is what happens to those who are greedy. Whatever they get destroys them.

²⁰Wisdom is shouting in the streets.
She is crying out in the marketplace.

²¹She is calling out where the noisy crowd gathers:

²²Fools, how long will you love being ignorant? How long will you make fun of wisdom? How long will you hate knowledge?

²³I wanted to tell you everything I knew and give you all my knowledge, but you didnt listen to my advice and teaching.

²⁴I tried to help, but you refused to listen. I offered my hand, but you turned away from me.

²⁵You ignored my advice and refused to be corrected.

²⁶So I will laugh at your troubles and make fun of you when what you fear happens.

²⁷Disasters will strike you like a storm. Problems will pound you like a strong wind. Trouble and misery will weigh you down.

²⁸Fools will call for me, but I will not answer. They will look for me, but they will not find me.

²⁹That is because they hated knowledge. They refused to fear and respect the LORD.

³⁰They ignored my advice and refused to be corrected.

³¹They filled their lives with what they wanted. They went their own way, so they will get what they deserve.

³²Fools die because they refuse to follow wisdom. They are content to follow their foolish ways, and that will destroy them.

³³But those who listen to me will live in safety and comfort. They will have nothing to fear.

2¹ My son, pay attention to what I say. Remember my commands.

² Listen to wisdom, and do your best to understand.

³ Ask for good judgment. Cry out for understanding.

⁴ Look for wisdom like silver. Search for it like hidden treasure.

⁵ If you do this, you will understand what it means to respect the LORD, and you will come to know God.

⁶The LORD is the source of wisdom; knowledge and understanding come from his mouth.

⁷He gives good advice to honest people and shields those who do what is right.

⁸He makes sure that people are treated fairly. He watches over his loyal followers.

⁹If you listen to him, you will understand what is just and fair and how to do what is right.

¹⁰You will gain wisdom, and knowledge will bring you joy.

¹¹Planning ahead will protect you, and understanding will guard you.

¹²These will keep you from following the wrong path and will protect you from those who have evil plans.

¹³Such people have left the straight path and now walk in darkness.

¹⁴They enjoy doing evil and are happy with the confusion it brings.

¹⁵Their ways are crooked; they lie and cheat.

¹⁶Wisdom will save you from that other woman, another mans wife, who tempts you with sweet words.

¹⁷ She married when she was young,
but then she left her husband. She forgot
the marriage vows she made before
God.

¹⁸ Going into her house leads to death.
She will lead you to the grave.

¹⁹ All who enter lose their life and never
return.

²⁰ Wisdom will help you follow the
example of good people and stay on the
right path.

²¹ Honest people will live in the land,
and those who do right will remain there.

²² But the wicked will be forced to leave.
Those who lie and cheat will be thrown
out of the land.

3¹ My son, don't forget my teaching.
Remember what I tell you to do.

² What I teach will give you a good, long
life, and all will go well for you.

³ Don't ever let love and loyalty leave
you. Tie them around your neck, and
write them on your heart.

⁴ Then God will be pleased and think
well of you and so will everyone else.

⁵ Trust the LORD completely, and don't
depend on your own knowledge.

⁶With every step you take, think about what he wants, and he will help you go the right way.

⁷Dont trust in your own wisdom, but fear and respect the LORD and stay away from evil.

⁸If you do this, it will be like a refreshing drink and medicine for your body.

⁹Honor the LORD with your wealth and the first part of your harvest.

¹⁰Then your barns will be full of grain, and your barrels will be overflowing with wine.

¹¹My son, dont reject the LORD'S discipline, and dont be angry when he corrects you.

¹²The LORD corrects the one he loves, just as a father corrects a child he cares about.

¹³Those who find wisdom are fortunate; they will be blessed when they gain understanding.

¹⁴Profit that comes from wisdom is better than silver and even the finest gold.

¹⁵Wisdom is worth more than fine jewels. Nothing you desire has more value.

¹⁶With her right hand, Wisdom offers long lifewith the other hand, riches and honor.

¹⁷Wisdom will lead you to a life of joy and peace.

¹⁸Wisdom is like a life-giving tree to those who hold on to her; she is a blessing to those who keep her close.

¹⁹With wisdom and understanding, the LORD created the earth and sky.

²⁰With his knowledge, he made the oceans and the clouds that produce rain.

²¹My son, dont ever let wisdom out of your sight. Hold on to wisdom and careful planning.

²²They will bring you a long life filled with honor.

²³As you go through life, you will always be safe and never fall.

²⁴When you lie down, you will not be afraid. When you rest, your sleep will be peaceful.

²⁵You have no reason to fear a sudden disaster or the destruction that comes to the wicked.

²⁶You can trust the LORD to protect you. He will not let you fall into harm.

²⁷ Do everything you possibly can for those who need help.

²⁸ If your neighbor needs something you have, don't say, "Come back tomorrow." Give it to him immediately.

²⁹ Don't make plans to harm your neighbor, who lives near you and trusts you.

³⁰ Don't take people to court without good reason, especially when they have done nothing to harm you.

³¹ Don't envy those who are violent. Never choose to be like them.

³² Such crooked people are disgusting to the LORD. But he is a friend to those who are good and honest.

³³ The LORD curses a wicked family, but he blesses the homes of those who live right.

³⁴ He will humiliate those who make fun of others, but he is kind to those who are humble.

³⁵ The way the wise live will bring them honor, but the way fools live will bring them shame.

4¹ Children, listen to your fathers' teaching. Pay attention and you will learn how to learn.

²The advice I give is good, so don't ever forget what I teach you.

³When I was my father's little boy and my mother's dear son,

⁴my father taught me this: Pay attention to what I say. Obey my commands and you will have a good life.

⁵Try to get wisdom and understanding. Don't forget my teaching or ignore what I say.

⁶Don't turn away from wisdom, and she will protect you. Love her, and she will keep you safe.

⁷The first step to becoming wise is to look for wisdom, so use everything you have to get understanding.

⁸Love wisdom, and she will make you great. Hold on to wisdom, and she will bring you honor.

⁹Wisdom will reward you with a crown of honor and glory.

¹⁰Son, listen to me. Do what I say, and you will live a long time.

¹¹I am teaching you about wisdom and guiding you on the right path.

¹²As you walk on it, you will not step into a trap. Even if you run, you will not trip and fall.

¹³ Always remember this teaching. Don't forget it. It is the key to life, so guard it well.

¹⁴ Don't take the path of the wicked; don't follow those who do evil.

¹⁵ Stay away from that path; don't even go near it. Turn around and go another way.

¹⁶ The wicked cannot sleep until they have done something evil. They will not rest until they bring someone down.

¹⁷ Evil and violence are their food and drink.

¹⁸ The path of those who live right is like the early morning light. It gets brighter and brighter until the full light of day.

¹⁹ But the path of the wicked is like a dark night. They trip and fall over what they cannot see.

²⁰ My son, pay attention to what I say. Listen closely to my words.

²¹ Don't let them out of your sight. Never stop thinking about them.

²² These words are the secret of life and health to all who discover them.

²³ Above all, be careful what you think because your thoughts control your life.

²⁴ Don't bend the truth or say things that you know are not right.

²⁵ Keep your eyes on the path, and look straight ahead.

²⁶ Make sure you are going the right way, and nothing will make you fall.

²⁷ Don't go to the right or to the left, and you will stay away from evil.

5¹ Son, listen to this piece of wisdom from me. Pay attention to what I know to be true.

² Remember to live wisely, and what you learn will keep your lips from saying the wrong thing.

³ Now, another man's wife might be very charming, and the words from her lips so sweet and inviting.

⁴ But in the end, she will bring only bitterness and pain. It will be like bitter poison and a sharp sword.

⁵ She is on a path leading to death, and she will lead you straight to the grave.

⁶ Don't follow her. She has lost her way and does not even know it. Be careful. Stay on the road that leads to life.

⁷ Now, my sons, listen to me. Don't forget the words I say.

⁸Stay away from the woman who commits adultery. Dont even go near her house.

⁹If you do, others will get the honor you should have had. Some stranger will get everything you worked years to get.

¹⁰People you dont know will take all your wealth. Others will get what you worked for.

¹¹At the end of your life, you will be sad that you ruined your health and lost everything you had.

¹²Then you will say, Why didnt I listen to my parents? Why didnt I pay attention to my teachers? I didnt want to be disciplined. I refused to be corrected.

¹³(5: 12)

¹⁴So now I have suffered through just about every kind of trouble anyone can have, and everyone knows it.

¹⁵Now, about sex and marriage: Drink only the water that comes from your own well,

¹⁶and dont let your water flow out into the streets.

¹⁷Keep it for yourself, and dont share it with strangers.

¹⁸ Be happy with your own wife. Enjoy the woman you married while you were young.

¹⁹ She is like a beautiful deer, a lovely fawn. Let her love satisfy you completely. Stay drunk on her love,

²⁰ and don't go stumbling into the arms of another woman.

²¹ The LORD clearly sees everything you do. He watches where you go.

²² The sins of the wicked will trap them. Those sins will be like ropes holding them back.

²³ Evil people will die because they refuse to be disciplined. They will be trapped by their own desires.

6¹ My son, don't make yourself responsible for the debts of others. Don't make such deals with friends or strangers.

² If you do, your words will trap you.

³ You will be under the power of other people, so you must go and free yourself. Beg them to free you from that debt.

⁴ Don't wait to rest or sleep.

⁵ Escape from that trap like a deer running from a hunter. Free yourself like a bird flying from a trap.

⁶You lazy people, you should watch what the ants do and learn from them.

⁷Ants have no ruler, no boss, and no leader.

⁸But in the summer, ants gather all of their food and save it. So when winter comes, there is plenty to eat.

⁹You lazy people, how long are you going to lie there? When will you get up?

¹⁰You say, I need a rest. I think I'll take a short nap.

¹¹But then you sleep and sleep and become poorer and poorer. Soon you will have nothing. It will be as if a thief came and stole everything you owned.

¹²Some people are just troublemakers. They are always thinking up some crooked plan and telling lies.

¹³They use secret signals to cheat people; they wink their eyes, shuffle their feet, and point a finger.

¹⁴They are always planning to do something bad.

¹⁵But they will be punished. Disaster will strike, and they will be destroyed. There will be no one to help them.

¹⁶The LORD hates these seven things:

¹⁷ eyes that show pride, tongues that tell lies, hands that kill innocent people,
¹⁸ hearts that plan evil things to do, feet that run to do evil,

¹⁹ witnesses in court who tell lies, and anyone who causes family members to fight.

²⁰ My son, remember your fathers command, and dont forget your mothers teaching.

²¹ Remember their words always. Tie them around your neck and keep them over your heart.

²² Let this teaching lead you wherever you go. It will watch over you while you sleep. And when you wake up, it will give you good advice.

²³ Your parents give you commands and teachings that are like lights to show you the right way. This teaching corrects you and trains you to follow the path to life.

²⁴ It stops you from going to an evil woman, and it protects you from the smooth talk of another mans wife.

²⁵ Such a woman might be beautiful, but dont let that beauty tempt you. Dont let her eyes capture you.

²⁶A prostitute might cost a loaf of bread, but the wife of another man could cost you your life.

²⁷If you drop a hot coal in your lap, your clothes will be burned.

²⁸If you step on one, your feet will be burned.

²⁹If you sleep with another mans wife, you will be punished.

³⁰A hungry man might steal to fill his stomach. If he is caught, he must pay seven times more than he stole. It might cost him everything he owns, but other people understand. They dont lose all their respect for him.

³¹ (6: 30)

³²But a man who commits adultery is a fool. He brings about his own destruction.

³³He will suffer disease and disgrace and never be free from the shame.

³⁴The womans husband will be jealous and angry and do everything he can to get revenge.

³⁵No paymentno amount of moneywill stop him.

7¹ My son, remember my words. Dont forget what I have told you.

² Consider my teaching as precious as your own eyes. Obey my commands, and you will have a good life.

³ Tie them around your finger. Write them on your heart.

⁴ Treat wisdom like the woman you love and knowledge like the one dearest to you.

⁵ Wisdom will save you from that other woman, the other man's wife, who tempts you with such sweet words.

⁶ One day I was looking out my window

⁷ at some foolish teenagers and noticed one who had no sense at all.

⁸ He was walking through the marketplace and came to the corner where a certain woman lived. He then turned up the road that goes by her house.

⁹ The day was ending. The sun had set, and it was almost dark.

¹⁰ Suddenly, there she was in front of him, dressed like a prostitute. She had plans for him.

¹¹ She was a wild and rebellious woman who would not stay at home.

¹² She walked the streets, always looking for someone to trap.

¹³She grabbed the young man and kissed him. Without shame, she looked him in the eye and said,

¹⁴I offered a fellowship offering today. I gave what I promised to give,

¹⁵and I still have plenty of food left. So I came out to find you, and here you are!

¹⁶I have clean sheets on my bedspecial ones from Egypt.

¹⁷My bed smells wonderful with myrrh, aloe, and cinnamon.

¹⁸Come, let's enjoy ourselves all night. We can make love until dawn.

¹⁹My husband has gone on a business trip.

²⁰He took enough money for a long trip and won't be home for two weeks.

²¹This is what the woman said to tempt the young man, and her smooth words tricked him.

²²He followed her, like a bull being led to the slaughter. He was like a deer walking into a trap,

²³where a hunter waits to shoot an arrow through its heart. The boy was like a bird flying into a net, never seeing the danger he was in.

²⁴ Now, sons, listen to me. Pay attention to what I say.

²⁵ Don't let your heart lead you to an evil woman like that. Don't go where she wants to lead you.

²⁶ She has brought down some of the most powerful men; she has left many dead bodies in her path.

²⁷ Her house is the place of death. The road to it leads straight to the grave.

8¹ Listen, Wisdom is calling. Yes, Understanding is shouting for us.

² Wisdom stands at the top of the hill, by the road where the paths meet.

³ She is near the entrance to the city, calling from the open gates.

⁴ I am calling out to all of you. I am speaking to everyone.

⁵ You who are ignorant, learn to be wise. You who are foolish, get some common sense.

⁶ Listen, I have something important to say, and I am telling you what is right.

⁷ My words are true, and I will not say anything that is wrong.

⁸ Everything I say is right; there is nothing false or crooked about it.

⁹These things are clear to any intelligent person. They are right to anyone with knowledge.

¹⁰Choose discipline over silver and knowledge over the finest gold.

¹¹Wisdom is better than pearls, and nothing you desire compares with her.

¹²I am Wisdom. I live with Good Judgment. I am at home with Knowledge and Planning.

¹³To respect the LORD means to hate evil. I hate pride and boasting, evil lives and hurtful words.

¹⁴I have good advice and common sense to offer. I have understanding and power.

¹⁵With my help kings rule, and governors make good laws.

¹⁶With my help leaders govern, and important officials make good decisions.

¹⁷I love those who love me, and those who look for me will find me.

¹⁸With me there are riches and honor. I have lasting wealth to give to you.

¹⁹What I give is better than fine gold. What I produce is better than pure silver.

²⁰I lead people the right way along the paths of justice.

²¹ I give riches to those who love me,
and I fill their houses with treasures.

²² The LORD made me in the beginning,
long before he did anything else.

²³ I was formed a long time ago, before
the world was made.

²⁴ I was born before there was an
ocean, before the springs began to flow.

²⁵ I was born before the mountains and
hills were set into place,

²⁶ before the earth and fields were
made, before the dust of this world was
formed.

²⁷ I was there when he set up the skies,
when he drew a circle in the ocean to
make a place for the land.

²⁸ I was there when he put the clouds in
the sky and made the deep springs flow.

²⁹ I was there when he set the limits on
the sea to make it stop where he said. I
was there when he laid the foundations
of the earth.

³⁰ I grew up as a child by his side,
laughing and playing all the time.

³¹ I played in the world he made and
enjoyed the people he put there.

³² Now, children, listen to me. If you
follow my ways, you will be happy too.

³³ Listen to my teaching and be wise;
don't ignore what I say.

³⁴ Whoever waits at my door and listens
for me will be blessed.

³⁵ Those who find me find life, and the
LORD will reward them.

³⁶ But those who do not find me put
their lives in danger. Whoever hates me
loves death.

9¹ Wisdom has built her house; she
has made it strong with seven
columns.

² She has cooked meat, mixed wine,
and put food on the table.

³ She has sent her servant girls to
announce from the highest hill in the
city,

⁴ Whoever needs instruction, come. She
invites all the simple people and says,

⁵ Come, eat my food and drink the wine
I have prepared.

⁶ Leave your old, foolish ways and
live! Advance along the path of
understanding.

⁷ Criticize a person who is rude and
shows no respect, and you will only get
insults. Correct the wicked, and you will
only get hurt.

⁸ Don't correct such people, or they will hate you. But correct those who are wise, and they will love you.

⁹ Teach the wise, and they will become wiser. Instruct those who live right, and they will gain more knowledge.

¹⁰ Wisdom begins with fear and respect for the LORD. Knowledge of the Holy One leads to understanding.

¹¹ Wisdom will help you live longer; she will add years to your life.

¹² If you become wise, it will be for your own good. If you are rude and show no respect, you are the one who will suffer.

¹³ Foolishness is that other woman, who is loud, stupid, and knows nothing.

¹⁴ She sits on her chair at the door of her house, up on the highest hill of the city.

¹⁵ When people walk by, she calls out to them. They show no interest in her, but still she says,

¹⁶ Whoever needs instruction, come. She invites all the simple people and says,

¹⁷ Stolen water is sweet. Stolen bread tastes good.

¹⁸Those simple people don't realize that her house is full of ghosts and that her guests have entered the world of the dead.

10¹These are proverbs of Solomon:
A wise son makes his father happy; a foolish son makes his mother sad.

²The money you get by doing wrong is not worth it, but doing good will save your life.

³The LORD does not let good people go hungry, but he keeps the wicked from getting what they want.

⁴Laziness makes you poor, but working hard makes you rich.

⁵A smart son works hard all summer, but the son who sleeps through the harvest is a disgrace.

⁶People say things to bless those who live right, but the things the wicked say hide their violent plans.

⁷Good people leave memories that bless us, but the wicked are soon forgotten.

⁸The wise follow instruction, but the fool who won't stop talking will suffer for it.

⁹Whoever lives honestly is safe and secure, but those who lie and cheat will be caught.

¹⁰Evil secrets lead to pain and suffering, but speaking openly brings peace.

¹¹Words that bring life flow from good people, but the words of the wicked hide their violent plans.

¹²Hate stirs up arguments, but love forgives and forgets.

¹³Words of wisdom come from those who are smart; the stupid won't learn without a beating.

¹⁴Wise people are quiet and learn new things, but fools talk and bring trouble on themselves.

¹⁵Wealth protects the rich, but poverty destroys the poor.

¹⁶What good people do brings life, but wicked people produce only sin.

¹⁷Those who accept correction show others how to live. Those who reject correction lead others the wrong way.

¹⁸You might have to lie to hide your hatred, but saying something hurtful could be even more foolish.

¹⁹A person who talks too much gets into trouble. A wise person learns to be quiet.

²⁰Words from good people are like pure silver, but thoughts from the wicked are worthless.

²¹Good people say things that help others, but the wicked die from a lack of understanding.

²²It is the LORD'S blessing that brings wealth, and no hard work can add to it.

²³Fools enjoy doing wrong, but the wise enjoy wisdom.

²⁴The wicked will be defeated by what they fear, but good people will get what they want.

²⁵The wicked are destroyed when trouble comes, but good people stand strong forever.

²⁶Sending a lazy person to do anything is as irritating as vinegar on your teeth or smoke in your eyes.

²⁷Respect for the LORD will add years to your life, but the wicked will have their lives cut short.

²⁸What good people hope for brings happiness, but what the wicked hope for brings destruction.

²⁹The LORD protects those who do right, but he destroys those who do wrong.

³⁰Good people will always be safe, but the wicked will be forced out of the land.

³¹Those who live right say wise things, but people stop listening to troublemakers.

³²Good people know the right things to say, but the wicked say things to make trouble.

11 ¹The LORD hates false scales, but he loves accurate weights.

²Proud and boastful people will be shamed, but wisdom stays with those who are modest and humble.

³Good people are guided by their honesty, but crooks who lie and cheat will ruin themselves.

⁴Money is worthless when you face Gods punishment, but living right will save you from death.

⁵Doing right makes life better for those who are good, but the wicked are destroyed by their own wicked ways.

⁶Doing right sets honest people free, but people who cant be trusted are trapped by their greed.

⁷ When the wicked die, all their hopes are lost; everything they thought they could do comes to nothing.

⁸ Good people escape from trouble, but the wicked come along and are trapped by it.

⁹ With their words hypocrites can destroy their neighbors. But with what they know, good people can escape.

¹⁰ When good people are successful, the whole city is happy, and they all shout with joy when evil people are destroyed.

¹¹ Blessings from the honest people living in a city will make it great, but the things evil people say can destroy it.

¹² Stupid people say bad things about their neighbors. Wise people know to be quiet.

¹³ People who tell secrets about others cannot be trusted. Those who can be trusted keep quiet.

¹⁴ A nation without wise leaders will fall. Many good advisors make a nation safe.

¹⁵ You will be sorry if you promise to pay a stranger's debt. Refuse to make such promises and you will be safe.

¹⁶A kind and gentle woman gains respect, but violent men gain only wealth.

¹⁷People who are kind will be rewarded for their kindness, but cruel people will be rewarded with trouble.

¹⁸The work of evil people is all lies, but those who do right will receive a good reward.

¹⁹People who do what is right are on their way to life, but those who always want to do wrong are on their way to death.

²⁰The LORD hates those who love to do evil, but he is pleased with those who try to do right.

²¹The truth is, evil people will be punished, and good people will be set free.

²²A beautiful woman without good sense is like a gold ring in a pig's nose.

²³What good people want brings more good. What evil people want brings more trouble.

²⁴Some people give freely and gain more; others refuse to give and end up with less.

²⁵ Give freely, and you will profit.
Help others, and you will gain more for yourself.

²⁶ People curse a greedy man who refuses to sell his grain, but they bless a man who sells his grain to feed others.

²⁷ People are pleased with those who try to do good. Those who look for trouble will find it.

²⁸ Those who trust in their riches will fall like dead leaves, but good people will blossom.

²⁹ Those who cause trouble for their families will inherit nothing but the wind. A foolish person will end up as a servant to one who is wise.

³⁰ What good people produce is like a life-giving tree. Those who are wise give new life to others.

³¹ If good people are rewarded here on earth, then surely those who do evil will also get what they deserve.

12¹ Whoever loves discipline loves to learn; whoever hates to be corrected is stupid.

² It is good to learn what pleases the LORD, because he condemns those who plan to do wrong.

³ Evil people are never safe, but good people remain safe and secure.

⁴ A good wife is like a crown to her husband, but a shameful wife is like a cancer.

⁵ Good people are honest and fair in all they do, but those who are evil lie and cannot be trusted.

⁶ Evil people use their words to hurt others, but the words from good people can save others from danger.

⁷ When evil people are destroyed, they are gone and forgotten, but good people are remembered long after they are gone.

⁸ You praise people for their intelligence, but no one respects those who are stupid.

⁹ It is better to appear unimportant and have a servant than to pretend to be important and have no food.

¹⁰ Good people take good care of their animals, but the wicked know only how to be cruel.

¹¹ Farmers who work their land have plenty of food, but those who waste their time on worthless projects are foolish.

¹²The wicked want a share of what an evil man might catch. But like a plant with deep roots, a good man is the one who produces the most.

¹³The wicked are trapped by their foolish words, but good people escape from such trouble.

¹⁴People get good things for the words they say, and they are rewarded for the work they do.

¹⁵Fools always think their own way is best, but wise people listen to what others tell them.

¹⁶Fools are easily upset, but wise people avoid insulting others.

¹⁷Good people speak the truth and can be trusted in court, but liars make bad witnesses.

¹⁸Speak without thinking, and your words can cut like a knife. Be wise, and your words can heal.

¹⁹Lies last only a moment, but the truth lasts forever.

²⁰People who work for evil make trouble, but those who plan for peace bring happiness.

²¹The Lord will keep good people safe, but evil people will have many troubles.

²²The LORD hates people who tell lies, but he is pleased with those who tell the truth.

²³Smart people don't tell everything they know, but fools tell everything and show they are fools.

²⁴Those who work hard will be put in charge of others, but lazy people will have to work like slaves.

²⁵Worry takes away your joy, but a kind word makes you happy.

²⁶Good people are careful about choosing their friends, but evil people always choose the wrong ones.

²⁷Lazy people don't get what they want, but riches come to those who work hard.

²⁸Along the path of goodness there is life; that is the way to live forever.

13¹ A wise son listens to his father's advice, but a proud son will not listen to correction.

²People get good things for the words they say, but those who cannot be trusted say only bad things.

³People who are careful about what they say will save their lives, but those who speak without thinking will be destroyed.

⁴ Lazy people always want things but never get them. Those who work hard get plenty.

⁵ Good people hate lies, but the wicked do evil, shameful things.

⁶ Goodness protects honest people, but evil destroys those who love to sin.

⁷ Some people pretend they are rich, but they have nothing. Others pretend they are poor, but they are really rich.

⁸ The rich might have to pay a ransom to save their lives, but the poor never receive such threats.

⁹ The light of those who do right shines brighter and brighter, but the lamp of the wicked becomes darker and darker.

¹⁰ Pride causes arguments, but those who listen to others are wise.

¹¹ Money gained by cheating others will soon be gone. Money earned through hard work will grow and grow.

¹² Hope that is delayed makes you sad, but a wish that comes true fills you with joy.

¹³ Those who reject a command hurt themselves; those who respect a command will be rewarded.

¹⁴The teaching of the wise is a source of life; their words will save you from deadly traps.

¹⁵People like a person with good sense, but life is hard for someone who cannot be trusted.

¹⁶Wise people always think before they do anything, but fools show how stupid they are by what they do.

¹⁷Disaster will catch up to the wicked messenger, but a runner who can be trusted will bring peace.

¹⁸If you refuse to learn from your mistakes, you will be poor, and no one will respect you. If you listen when you are criticized, you will be honored.

¹⁹People are happy when they get what they want. But stupid people want nothing but evil, and they refuse to change.

²⁰Be friends with those who are wise, and you will become wise. Choose fools to be your friends, and you will have trouble.

²¹Trouble chases sinners wherever they go, but good things happen to good people.

²²It is good to have something to pass down to your grandchildren. But wealth hidden away by sinners will be given to those who live right.

²³The poor might have good land that produces plenty of food, but bad decisions can take it away.

²⁴If you don't correct your children, you don't love them. If you love them, you will be quick to discipline them.

²⁵Good people will have plenty to eat, but the wicked will go hungry.

14¹A wise woman makes her home what it should be, but the home of a foolish woman is destroyed by her own actions.

²Those who live right respect the LORD, but dishonest people hate him.

³Foolish words cause you trouble; wise words protect you.

⁴A barn with no cattle might be clean, but strong bulls are needed for a good harvest.

⁵A good witness is one who does not lie. A bad witness is a liar who cannot be trusted.

⁶ Anyone who makes fun of wisdom will never find it, but knowledge comes easily to those who understand its value.

⁷ Stay away from fools, there is nothing they can teach you.

⁸ Wisdom lets smart people know what they are doing, but stupid people only think they know.

⁹ Fines are needed to make fools obey the law, but good people are happy to obey it.

¹⁰ When you are sad, no one else feels the pain; and when you are happy, no one else can really feel the joy.

¹¹ An evil person's house will be destroyed, but a good person's family will do well.

¹² There is a way that people think is right, but it leads only to death.

¹³ Laughter might hide your sadness. But when the laughter is gone, the sadness remains.

¹⁴ Evil people will be paid back for the wrong they do, and good people will be rewarded for the good they do.

¹⁵ Fools believe every word they hear, but wise people think carefully about everything.

¹⁶Wise people are careful and avoid trouble; fools are too confident and careless.

¹⁷A quick-tempered person does stupid things, but it is also true that people don't like anyone who quietly plans evil.

¹⁸Fools are rewarded with more foolishness. Smart people are rewarded with knowledge.

¹⁹Good people will defeat those who are evil, and the wicked will be forced to show respect to those who live right.

²⁰The poor have no friends, not even their neighbors, but the rich have many friends.

²¹It is wrong to say bad things about your neighbors. Be kind to the poor, and you will be blessed.

²²Whoever works to do good will find love and loyalty. It is a mistake to work at doing evil.

²³If you work hard, you will have plenty. If you do nothing but talk, you will not have enough.

²⁴A wise person's reward is wealth, but a fool's reward is foolishness.

²⁵A witness who tells the truth saves lives, but one who tells lies hurts others.

²⁶ People who respect the LORD will be safe, and they will make their children feel secure.

²⁷ Respect for the LORD gives true life and will save you from death's trap.

²⁸ Kings of large nations have great honor. Rulers without a country have nothing.

²⁹ A patient person is very smart. A quick-tempered person makes stupid mistakes.

³⁰ Peace of mind makes the body healthy, but jealousy is like a cancer.

³¹ Whoever takes advantage of the poor insults their Maker, but whoever is kind to them honors him.

³² The wicked will be defeated by their evil, but good people are protected by their honesty.

³³ A wise person is always thinking wise thoughts, but a fool knows nothing about wisdom.

³⁴ Goodness makes a nation great, but sin is a shame to any people.

³⁵ Kings are pleased with intelligent officials, but they will punish shameful ones.

15¹ A gentle answer makes anger disappear, but a rough answer makes it grow.

² Listening to wise people increases your knowledge, but only nonsense comes from the mouths of fools.

³ The LORD sees what happens everywhere. He watches everyone, good and evil.

⁴ Kind words are like a life-giving tree, but lying words will crush your spirit.

⁵ Fools refuse to listen to their fathers' advice, but those who accept discipline are smart.

⁶ Good people are rich in many ways, but those who are evil get nothing but trouble.

⁷ Wise people say things that give you new knowledge, but fools say nothing worth hearing.

⁸ The LORD hates the offerings of the wicked, but he is happy to hear the prayers of those who live right.

⁹ The LORD hates the way evil people live, but he loves those who try to do good.

¹⁰Whoever stops living right will be punished. Whoever hates to be corrected will be destroyed.

¹¹The LORD knows everything, even what happens in the place of death. So surely he knows what people are thinking.

¹²Fools hate to be told they are wrong, so they refuse to ask wise people for advice.

¹³If you are happy, your face shows it. If you are sad, your spirit feels defeated.

¹⁴Intelligent people want more knowledge, but fools only want more nonsense.

¹⁵Life is always hard for the poor, but the right attitude can turn it into a party.

¹⁶It is better to be poor and respect the LORD than to be rich and have many troubles.

¹⁷It is better to eat a little where there is love than to eat a lot where there is hate.

¹⁸A quick temper causes fights, but patience brings peace and calm.

¹⁹For lazy people, life is a path overgrown with thorns and thistles. For

those who do what is right, it is a smooth highway.

²⁰Wise children make their parents happy. Foolish children bring them shame.

²¹Doing foolish things makes a fool happy, but a wise person is careful to do what is right.

²²If you don't ask for advice, your plans will fail. With many advisors, they will succeed.

²³People are happy when they give a good answer. And there is nothing better than the right word at the right time.

²⁴What wise people do leads to life here on earth and stops them from going down to the place of death.

²⁵The LORD destroys a proud man's house but protects a widow's property.

²⁶The LORD hates evil thoughts, but he is pleased with kind words.

²⁷Whoever takes money to do wrong invites disaster. Refuse such gifts, and you will live.

²⁸Good people think before they answer, but the wicked do not, and what they say causes trouble.

²⁹The LORD is far away from the wicked, but he always hears the prayers of those who do what is right.

³⁰A smile makes people happy. Good news makes them feel better.

³¹To be counted among the wise, you must learn to accept helpful criticism.

³²If you refuse to be corrected, you are only hurting yourself. Listen to criticism, and you will gain understanding.

³³Wisdom teaches you to respect the LORD. You must be humbled before you can be honored.

16¹ People might plan what they want to say, but it is the LORD who gives them the right words.

² People think that whatever they do is right, but the LORD judges their reason for doing it.

³ Turn to the LORD for help in everything you do, and you will be successful.

⁴ The LORD has a plan for everything. In his plan, the wicked will be destroyed.

⁵ The LORD hates those who are proud. You can be sure he will punish them all.

⁶ Faithful love and loyalty will remove your guilt. Respect the LORD, and you will stay far away from evil.

⁷ When people live to please the LORD, even their enemies will be at peace with them.

⁸ It is better to be poor and do right than to be rich and do wrong.

⁹ People can plan what they want to do, but it is the LORD who guides their steps.

¹⁰ When a king speaks, his words are law. So when he makes a decision, it is never a mistake.

¹¹ The LORD wants all scales and balances to be right; he wants all business agreements to be fair.

¹² Kings hate to see anyone doing wrong, because kingdoms grow strong only when everyone is honest and fair.

¹³ Kings want to hear the truth. They like those who are honest.

¹⁴ When a king gets angry, he can put someone to death. So it is wise to keep the king happy.

¹⁵ When the king is happy, life is better for everyone. When he is pleased, it is like a refreshing spring rain.

¹⁶ Wisdom is worth much more than gold. Understanding is worth much more than silver.

¹⁷ Good people try to avoid evil. They watch what they do and protect themselves.

¹⁸ Pride is the first step toward destruction. Proud thoughts will lead you to defeat.

¹⁹ It is better to be a humble person living among the poor than to share the wealth among the proud.

²⁰ Good things happen to those who learn from their experiences, and the LORD blesses those who trust him.

²¹ People will know if someone is wise. Those who choose their words carefully can be very convincing.

²² Good sense is a spring of fresh water to those who have it, but fools can offer only foolishness.

²³ Wise people always think before they speak, so what they say is worth listening to.

²⁴ Kind words are like honey; they are easy to accept and good for your health.

²⁵ There is a way that seems right to people, but that way leads only to death.

²⁶ The thought of hunger keeps the workers working so that they can eat.

²⁷ Troublemakers create disasters. Their advice destroys like a wildfire.

²⁸ Troublemakers are always causing problems. Their gossip breaks up the closest of friends.

²⁹ Cruel people trick their neighbors and make them do wrong.

³⁰ With a wink of the eye, they plan to trick someone. With a grin, they make plans to hurt their friends.

³¹ Gray hair is a crown of glory on people who have lived good lives. It is earned by living right.

³² It is better to be patient than to be a strong soldier. It is better to control your anger than to capture a city.

³³ People might throw lots to make a decision, but the answer always comes from the LORD.

17 ¹ It is better to have nothing but a dry piece of bread to eat in peace than a whole house full of food with everyone arguing.

² A smart servant will gain control over his master's foolish son. He will be treated like a son and get a share of the inheritance.

³ Fire is used to make gold and silver pure, but a persons heart is made pure by the LORD.

⁴ People who do evil listen to evil ideas. Liars listen to liars.

⁵ Whoever makes fun of beggars insults their Maker. Whoever laughs at someone elses trouble will be punished.

⁶ Grandchildren are the pride and joy of old age, and children take great pride in their parents.

⁷ You wouldnt expect to hear a fine speech from a fool, and you shouldnt expect lies from a ruler.

⁸ Some people think a bribe is like a lucky charmit seems to work wherever they go.

⁹ Forgive someone, and you will strengthen your friendship. Keep reminding them, and you will destroy it.

¹⁰ Smart people learn more from a single correction than fools learn from a hundred beatings.

¹¹ Those who are evil only want to cause trouble. In the end, punishment without mercy will be sent to them.

¹²It is better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool who is busy doing foolish things.

¹³If you do wrong to those who were good to you, you will have trouble the rest of your life.

¹⁴The start of an argument is like a small leak in a dam. Stop it before a big fight breaks out.

¹⁵The LORD hates these two things: punishing the innocent and letting the guilty go free.

¹⁶Money is wasted on fools. They cannot buy wisdom when they have no sense.

¹⁷A friend loves you all the time, but a brother was born to help in times of trouble.

¹⁸Only a fool would promise to pay for someone else's debts.

¹⁹A troublemaker loves to start arguments. Anyone who likes to brag is asking for trouble.

²⁰Crooks will not profit from their crimes, and those who plan to cause trouble will be trapped when it comes.

²¹ A man who has a fool for a son will be disappointed. A fool brings no joy to his father.

²² Happiness is good medicine, but sorrow is a disease.

²³ A wicked judge will accept a bribe, and that keeps justice from being done.

²⁴ Intelligent people think about what needs to be done here and now. Fools are always dreaming about faraway places.

²⁵ Foolish children upset their parents and make them sad.

²⁶ It is wrong to punish an innocent person or attack leaders for doing what is right.

²⁷ Intelligent people choose their words carefully. Those who know what they are doing remain calm.

²⁸ Silent fools seem wise. They say nothing and appear to be smart.

18¹ Some people like to do things their own way, and they get upset when people give them advice.

² Fools don't want to learn from others. They only want to tell their own ideas.

³ Do something evil, and people will hate you. Do something shameful, and they will have no respect for you.

⁴ Words from wise people are like water bubbling up from a deep well—the well of wisdom.

⁵ You must be fair in judging others. It is wrong to favor the guilty and rob the innocent of justice.

⁶ Fools say things to start arguments. They are just asking for a beating.

⁷ Fools hurt themselves when they speak. Their own words trap them.

⁸ People love to hear gossip. It is like tasty food on its way to the stomach.

⁹ Someone who does careless work is as bad as someone who destroys things.

¹⁰ The name of the LORD is like a strong tower. Those who do what is right can run to him for protection.

¹¹ The rich think their wealth will protect them. They think it is a strong fortress.

¹² A proud person will soon be ruined, but a humble person will be honored.

¹³ Let people finish speaking before you try to answer them. That way you will not embarrass yourself and look foolish.

¹⁴A good attitude will support you when you are sick, but if you give up, nothing can help.

¹⁵Wise people want to learn more, so they listen closely to gain knowledge.

¹⁶Gifts can open many doors and help you meet important people.

¹⁷The first person to speak always seems right until someone comes and asks the right questions.

¹⁸The best way to settle an argument between two powerful people may be to use lots.

¹⁹An insulted brother is harder to win back than a city with strong walls. Arguments separate people like the strong bars of a palace gate.

²⁰Your words can be as satisfying as fruit, as pleasing as the food that fills your stomach.

²¹The tongue can speak words that bring life or death. Those who love to talk must be ready to accept what it brings.

²²If you find a wife, you have found something good. She shows that the LORD is happy with you.

²³The poor are polite when they beg for help. The rich are rude with their answer.

²⁴Some friends are fun to be with, but a true friend can be better than a brother.

19¹ It is better to be poor and honest than to be a liar and a fool.

²Being excited about something is not enough. You must also know what you are doing. Don't rush into something, or you might do it wrong.

³People ruin their lives with the foolish things they do, and then they blame the LORD for it.

⁴Wealth will bring you many friends, but become poor and your friends will leave you.

⁵A witness who lies will be punished; that liar will not escape.

⁶Many people are nice to a generous person. Everyone wants to be friends with someone who gives gifts.

⁷If you are poor, your family will turn against you, and your friends will avoid you even more. You might beg them for help, but no one will come to help you.

⁸Be a friend to yourself; do all you can to be wise. Try hard to understand, and you will be rewarded.

⁹A witness who lies will be punished.
That liar will be destroyed.

¹⁰A fool should not be rich, and a slave
should not rule over princes.

¹¹Experience makes you more patient,
and you are most patient when you
ignore insults.

¹²The shouts of an angry king are like
a roaring lion, but his kind words are like
a gentle rain falling softly on the grass.

¹³A foolish son brings a flood of troubles
to his father, and a complaining wife is
like the constant dripping of water.

¹⁴People receive houses and money
from their parents, but a good wife is a
gift from the LORD.

¹⁵Laziness brings on sleep, and an
appetite for rest brings on hunger.

¹⁶Obey the law and live; ignore it and
die.

¹⁷Giving help to the poor is like loaning
money to the LORD. He will pay you back
for your kindness.

¹⁸Discipline your children while there is
still hope. Avoiding it can be deadly.

¹⁹People who are quick to become
angry must pay the price. Protect them

from punishment, and they become worse.

²⁰ Listen to advice and accept discipline; then you, too, will become wise.

²¹ People might make many plans, but what the LORD says is what will happen.

²² People want a friend they can trust. It is better to be poor than to be a liar.

²³ Respect the LORD and you will have a good life, one that is satisfying and free from trouble.

²⁴ Some people are too lazy to take care of themselves. They will not even lift the food from their plate to their mouth.

²⁵ Punish a rude, arrogant person, and even slow learners will become wiser. But just a little correction is enough to teach a person who has understanding.

²⁶ Those who would steal from their father and chase away their mother are disgusting, shameful people.

²⁷ My son, if you stop listening to instructions, you will keep making stupid mistakes.

²⁸ Using a criminal as a witness makes a joke of justice. People like that only want to do wrong.

²⁹ People who show no respect for anything must be brought to justice. You must punish such fools.

20¹ Wine and beer make people lose control; they get loud and stumble around. And that is foolish.

² An angry king is like a roaring lion. If you make him angry, you could lose your life.

³ People who refuse to argue deserve respect. Any fool can start an argument.

⁴ Some people are too lazy to plant seeds. So at harvest time, they look for food and find nothing.

⁵ Getting information from someone can be like getting water from a deep well. If you are smart, you will draw it out.

⁶ You might call many people your friends, but it is hard to find someone who can really be trusted.

⁷ When people live good, honest lives, their children are blessed.

⁸ When the king sits and judges people, he must look carefully to separate the evil from the good.

⁹ Can anyone say their heart is pure? Who can say, I am free from sin?

¹⁰The LORD hates for people to use the wrong weights and measures to cheat others.

¹¹Even children show what they are like by the things they do. You can see if their actions are pure and right.

¹²It was the LORD who gave us eyes for seeing and ears for hearing.

¹³If you love to sleep, you will become poor. Use your time working and you will have plenty to eat.

¹⁴When buying something, people always say, Its no good. It costs too much. Then they go away and tell others what a good deal they got.

¹⁵The right knowledge can bring you gold, pearls, and other expensive things.

¹⁶If someone promises to pay the debt of a stranger, get a coat or something from him to keep until the debt is paid.

¹⁷It may seem to be a good thing to get something by cheating, but in the end, it will be worth nothing.

¹⁸Get good advice when you make your plans. Before you start a war, find good advisors.

¹⁹You cannot trust someone who would talk about things told in private. So dont

be friends with someone who talks too much.

²⁰Those who would curse their father or mother are like a lamp that goes out on the darkest night.

²¹If your wealth was easy to get, it will not be worth much to you.

²²Dont ever say, Ill pay them back for what they did to me! Wait for the LORD. He will make things right.

²³The LORD hates for people to use the wrong weights to cheat others. It is wrong to use scales that are not accurate.

²⁴The LORD guides our steps, and we never know where he will lead us.

²⁵Think carefully before you promise to give something to God. Later, you might wish you had not made that promise.

²⁶Like a farmer who separates wheat from the chaff, a wise king will decide who is wrong and crush them.

²⁷Your spirit is like a lamp to the LORD. He is able to see into your deepest parts.

²⁸A king who is loyal and true will keep his power. Loyalty will keep his kingdom strong.

²⁹We admire a young man for his strength, but we respect an old man for his gray hair.

³⁰A beating can remove evil and make you completely clean.

21 ¹To the LORD, a king's mind is like a ditch used to water the fields. He can lead the king wherever he wants him to go.

²People think that whatever they do is right, but the LORD judges the reasons for everything they do.

³Do what is right and fair. The LORD loves that more than sacrifices.

⁴Proud looks and proud thoughts are sins. They show a person is evil.

⁵Careful planning leads to profit. Acting too quickly leads to poverty.

⁶Wealth that comes from telling lies disappears quickly and leads to death.

⁷The bad things that evil people do will destroy them, because they refuse to do what is right.

⁸Criminals cause trouble wherever they go, but good people are honest and fair.

⁹It is better to live in a small corner on the roof than to share the house with a woman who is always arguing.

¹⁰ Evil people always want to do more evil, and they show no mercy to people around them.

¹¹ When you punish a proud person who laughs at what is right, even fools will learn something. But a little instruction is enough for the wise to learn what they should.

¹² God is good. He knows what the wicked are doing, and he will punish them.

¹³ Those who refuse to help the poor will not receive help when they need it themselves.

¹⁴ If anyone is angry with you, give them a gift in private. A gift given in secret will calm even the strongest anger.

¹⁵ A decision that is fair makes good people happy, but it makes those who are evil very afraid.

¹⁶ Whoever leaves the path of wisdom will be on their way to an early death.

¹⁷ Loving pleasure leads to poverty. Wine and luxury will never make you wealthy.

¹⁸The wicked must pay for what happens to good people the cheaters will be taken in exchange for the honest.

¹⁹It is better to live alone in the desert than with a quick-tempered wife who loves to argue.

²⁰Wise people save the nice things they have. Fools use up everything as soon as they get it.

²¹People who try hard to do good and be faithful will find life, goodness, and honor.

²²A wise person can defeat a city full of warriors and tear down the defenses they trust in.

²³People who are careful about what they say will save themselves from trouble.

²⁴Proud people think they are better than others. They show they are evil by what they do.

²⁵Lazy people will cause their own destruction because they refuse to work.

²⁶Some people are greedy and never have enough. Good people are generous and have plenty.

²⁷ God hates sacrifices from the wicked, especially when their reason for offering them is evil.

²⁸ Witnesses who lie will be caught and punished. A careful listener will always be there to speak up.

²⁹ Good people know they are right, but the wicked have to pretend.

³⁰ There is no one wise enough to make a plan that can succeed if the LORD is against it.

³¹ You can prepare your horses for battle, but only the LORD can give you the victory.

22¹ It is better to be respected than to be rich. A good name is worth more than silver or gold.

² The rich and the poor are the same. The LORD made them all.

³ Wise people see trouble coming and get out of its way, but fools go straight to it and suffer for it.

⁴ Respect the LORD and be humble. Then you will have wealth, honor, and true life.

⁵ Evil people are trapped by many troubles, but those who want to live avoid them.

⁶Teach children in a way that fits their needs, and even when they are old, they will not leave the right path.

⁷The rich rule over the poor. The one who borrows is a slave to the one who lends.

⁸Those who spread trouble will harvest trouble. In the end, they will be destroyed for the trouble they caused.

⁹Generous people will be blessed, because they share their food with the poor.

¹⁰Get rid of the proud who laugh at what is right, and trouble will leave with them. All arguments and insults will end.

¹¹Love a pure heart and kind words, and the king will be your friend.

¹²The LORD watches over true knowledge, and he opposes those who try to deceive others.

¹³A person who is lazy and wants to stay home says, There is a lion outside, and I might be killed in the streets!

¹⁴The sin of adultery is a trap, and the LORD gets very angry with those who fall into it.

¹⁵Children do foolish things, but if you punish them, they will learn not to do them.

¹⁶These two things will make you poor: hurting the poor to make yourself rich and giving gifts to the rich.

¹⁷Listen carefully to these words from the wise. Pay attention to what I have learned.

¹⁸It will be good for you to remember these words and have them ready when they are needed.

¹⁹I will teach you these things now. I want you to trust the LORD.

²⁰I have written 30 sayings for you. These are words of advice and wisdom.

²¹They will teach you things that you can know for sure to be true. Then you can give good answers to the one who sent you.

²²It is easy to steal from the poor, but don't do it. And don't take advantage of them in court.

²³The LORD is on their side. He supports the poor, and he will take from those who take from them.

²⁴ Don't be friends with people who become angry easily. Don't stay around quick-tempered people.

²⁵ If you do, you may learn to be like them. Then you will have the same problems they do.

²⁶ Don't promise to pay someone else's debt.

²⁷ If you cannot pay, you will lose everything you have. So why should you lose the bed you sleep on?

²⁸ Never move an old property line that was marked long ago by your ancestors.

²⁹ Skilled workers will always serve kings. They will never have to work for less important people.

23 ¹ When you sit and eat with an important person, remember who you are with.

² Never eat too much, even if you are very hungry.

³ Don't eat too much of his fine food. It might be a trick.

⁴ Don't ruin your health trying to get rich. If you are smart, you will give it up.

⁵ In the blink of an eye, money can disappear, as if it grew wings and flew away like a bird.

⁶Don't eat with selfish people. Control any desire you have for their finest foods.

⁷They might tell you to eat and drink all you want, but they don't really mean it. They are the kind of people who are only thinking about the cost.

⁸And if you eat their food, you will get sick and be embarrassed.

⁹Don't try to teach fools. They will make fun of your wise words.

¹⁰Never move an old property line, and don't take land that belongs to orphans.

¹¹The Lord will be against you. He is powerful and protects orphans.

¹²Listen to your teacher and learn all you can.

¹³Always correct children when they need it. If you spank them, it will not kill them.

¹⁴In fact, you might save their lives.

¹⁵My son, it makes me happy when you make a wise decision.

¹⁶It makes me feel good inside when you say the right things.

¹⁷Never envy evil people, but always respect the LORD.

¹⁸This will give you something to hope for that will not disappoint you.

¹⁹So listen, my son, and be wise. Always be careful to follow the right path.

²⁰Dont make friends with people who drink too much wine and eat too much food.

²¹Those who eat and drink too much become poor. They sleep too much and end up wearing rags.

²²Listen to your father. Without him, you would never have been born. Respect your mother, even when she is old.

²³Truth, wisdom, learning, and understanding are worth paying money for. They are worth far too much to ever sell.

²⁴The father of a good person is very happy. A wise child brings him joy.

²⁵Make both of your parents happy. Give your mother that same joy.

²⁶My son, listen closely to what I am saying. Let my life be your example.

²⁷Prostitutes and bad women are a trap. They are like a deep well that you cannot escape.

²⁸A bad woman waits for you like a thief, and she causes many men to be unfaithful to their wives.

²⁹Who gets into fights and arguments? Who gets hurt for no reason and has red, bloodshot eyes? People who stay out too late drinking wine, staring into their strong drinks.

³⁰(23: 29)

³¹So be careful with wine. It is pretty and red as it sparkles in the cup. And it goes down so smoothly when you drink it.

³²But in the end, it will bite like a snake.

³³Wine will cause you to see strange things and to say things that make no sense.

³⁴When you lie down, you will think you are on a rough sea and feel like you are at the top of the mast.

³⁵You will say, They hit me, but I never felt it. They beat me, but I don't remember it. Now I can't wake up. I need another drink.

24¹ Don't be jealous of evil people. Have no desire to be around them.

²In their hearts they plan to do evil. All they talk about is making trouble.

³Good homes are built on wisdom and understanding.

⁴Knowledge fills the rooms with rare and beautiful treasures.

⁵Wisdom makes a man more powerful. Knowledge gives a man strength.

⁶Get good advice before you start a war. To win, you must have many good advisors.

⁷Fools cannot understand wisdom. They have nothing to say when people are discussing important things.

⁸If you start planning ways to do wrong, people will learn that you are a troublemaker.

⁹Such foolish plans are wrong, and people have no respect for someone who laughs at what is right.

¹⁰If you are weak in times of trouble, that is real weakness.

¹¹If you see someone on their way to death or in danger of being killed, you must do something to save them.

¹²You cannot say, Its none of my business. The Lord knows everything, and he knows why you do things. He

watches you, and he will pay you back for what you do.

¹³ My son, eat honey; it is good. Honey straight from the honeycomb is the sweetest.

¹⁴ In the same way, know that wisdom is good for you. Wisdom will give you something to hope for that will not disappoint you.

¹⁵ Don't be like a criminal who makes plans to rob those who are good or take away their homes.

¹⁶ Good people might fall again and again, but they always get up. It is the wicked who are defeated by their troubles.

¹⁷ Don't be happy when your enemy has troubles. Don't be glad when they fall.

¹⁸ The LORD will see this, and he might be upset with you and decide not to punish your enemy.

¹⁹ Don't let those who are evil upset you, and don't be jealous of them.

²⁰ They have no hope. Their light will burn out.

²¹ Son, respect the LORD and the king, and don't join with those who are against them,

²² because people like that can quickly be destroyed. You have no idea how much trouble God and the king can make for their enemies.

²³ These are also words from the wise: A judge must be fair. He must not support some people simply because he knows them.

²⁴ The people will turn against a judge who lets the guilty go free. Even the people of other nations will curse him.

²⁵ But if a judge punishes the guilty, then people will be happy with him, and he will be a blessing to them.

²⁶ An honest answer is as pleasing as a kiss on the lips.

²⁷ First get your fields ready, next plant your crops, and then build your house.

²⁸ Don't speak against someone without a good reason, or you will appear foolish.

²⁹ Don't say, You hurt me, so I will do the same to you. I will punish you for what you did to me.

³⁰ I walked past a field that belonged to a lazy man. It was a vineyard that belonged to someone who understood nothing.

³¹ Weeds were growing everywhere! Wild vines covered the ground, and the wall around the vineyard was broken and falling down.

³² I looked at this and thought about it. This is what I learned:

³³ a little sleep, a little rest, folding your arms, and taking a nap

³⁴ these things will make you poor very quickly. Soon you will have nothing, as if a thief broke in and took everything away.

25 ¹ These are some more wise sayings from Solomon. These proverbs were copied by servants of Hezekiah, the king of Judah.

² We honor God for the things he keeps secret. But we honor kings for the things they can discover.

³ We cannot discover how high the sky is above us or how deep the earth is below. The same is true with the minds of kings. We cannot understand them.

⁴ Remove the worthless things from silver to make it pure, and a worker can make something beautiful.

⁵Take the evil advisors away from a king, and goodness will make his kingdom strong.

⁶Dont brag about yourself before the king and pretend you are someone important.

⁷It is much better for the king to invite you to take a more important position than to embarrass you in front of his officials.

⁸Dont be too quick to tell a judge about something you saw. You will be embarrassed if someone else proves you wrong.

⁹If you want to tell your friends about your own problems, tell them. But dont discuss what someone told you in private.

¹⁰Whoever hears it will lose their respect for you and will never trust you again.

¹¹Saying the right thing at the right time is like a gold apple in a silver setting.

¹²Wise advice to a listening ear is like gold earrings or fine jewelry.

¹³To his master who sent him, a messenger who can be trusted is as

refreshing as a drink of cold water on a hot summer day.

¹⁴ People who promise to give gifts but never give them are like clouds and wind that bring no rain.

¹⁵ With patience, you can make anyone change their thinking, even a ruler. Gentle speech is very powerful.

¹⁶ Honey is good, but dont eat too much of it, or you will be sick.

¹⁷ And dont visit your neighbors homes too often, or they will begin to hate you.

¹⁸ A person who gives false testimony against a neighbor is as deadly as a club, a sword, or a very sharp arrow.

¹⁹ Never depend on a liar in times of trouble. Its like chewing with a bad tooth or walking with a crippled foot.

²⁰ Singing happy songs to a sad person is as foolish as taking a coat off on a cold day or mixing soda and vinegar.

²¹ If your enemies are hungry, give them something to eat. If they are thirsty, give them some water.

²² This will make them feel the burning pain of shame, and the LORD will reward you for being good to them.

²³ Just as wind blowing from the north brings rain, telling secrets brings anger.

²⁴ It is better to live in a small corner of the roof than to share the house with a woman who is always arguing.

²⁵ Good news from a faraway place is like a cool drink of water when you are hot and thirsty.

²⁶ Good people who don't stand strong against evil are like springs that have been polluted or pools that have turned dirty and muddy.

²⁷ Just as eating too much honey is not good, it is not good for people to always be looking for honor.

²⁸ People who cannot control themselves are like cities without walls to protect them.

26 ¹ Just as snow should not fall in summer, nor rain at harvest time, so people should not honor a fool.

² Don't worry when someone curses you for no reason. Nothing bad will happen. Such words are like birds that fly past and never stop.

³ You have to whip a horse, you have to put a bridle on a mule, and you have to beat a fool.

⁴There is no good way to answer fools when they say something stupid. If you answer them, then you, too, will look like a fool. If you don't answer them, they will think they are smart.

⁵(26:4)

⁶Never let a fool carry your message. If you do, it will be like cutting off your own feet. You are only asking for trouble.

⁷A fool trying to say something wise is like a crippled person trying to walk.

⁸Showing honor to a fool is as bad as tying a rock in a sling.

⁹A fool trying to say something wise is like a drunk trying to pick a thorn out of his hand.

¹⁰Hiring a fool or a stranger who is just passing by is dangerous—you don't know who might get hurt.

¹¹Like a dog that returns to its vomit, a fool does the same foolish things again and again.

¹²People who think they are wise when they are not are worse than fools.

¹³A person who is lazy and wants to stay home says, What if there is a lion out there? Really, there might be a lion in the street!

¹⁴ Like a door on its hinges, a lazy man turns back and forth on his bed.

¹⁵ Lazy people are too lazy to lift the food from their plate to their mouth.

¹⁶ Lazy people think they are seven times smarter than the people who really have good sense.

¹⁷ To step between two people arguing is as foolish as going out into the street and grabbing a stray dog by the ears.

¹⁸ Anyone who would trick someone and then say, I was only joking is like a fool who shoots flaming arrows into the air and accidentally kills someone.

¹⁹ (26: 18)

²⁰ Without wood, a fire goes out.
Without gossip, arguments stop.

²¹ Charcoal keeps the coals glowing, wood keeps the fire burning, and troublemakers keep arguments alive.

²² People love to hear gossip. It is like tasty food on its way to the stomach.

²³ Good words that hide an evil heart are like silver paint over a cheap, clay pot.

²⁴ Evil people say things to make themselves look good, but they keep their evil plans a secret.

²⁵What they say sounds good, but don't trust them. They are full of evil ideas.

²⁶They hide their evil plans with nice words, but in the end, everyone will see the evil they do.

²⁷Whoever digs a pit can fall into it. Whoever rolls a large stone can be crushed by it.

²⁸Liars hate the people they hurt, and false praise can hurt people.

27 ¹Never brag about what you will do in the future; you have no idea what tomorrow will bring.

²Never praise yourself. Let others do it.

³A stone is heavy, and sand is hard to carry, but the irritation caused by a fool is much harder to bear.

⁴Anger is cruel and can destroy like a flood, but jealousy is much worse.

⁵Open criticism is better than hidden love.

⁶You can trust what your friend says, even when it hurts. But your enemies want to hurt you, even when they act nice.

⁷When you are full, you will not even eat honey. When you are hungry, even something bitter tastes sweet.

⁸A man away from home is like a bird away from its nest.

⁹Perfume and incense make you feel good, and so does good advice from a friend.

¹⁰Dont forget your own friends or your fathers friends. If you have a problem, go to your neighbor for help. It is better to ask a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.

¹¹My son, be wise. This will make me happy. Then I will be able to answer those who criticize me.

¹²Wise people see trouble coming and get out of its way, but fools go straight to the trouble and suffer for it.

¹³When you make a deal with a stranger, get something from him and any other foreigners with him to make sure he will pay you.

¹⁴Dont wake up your neighbors early in the morning with a shout of Good morning! They will treat it like a curse, not a blessing.

¹⁵A complaining wife is like water that never stops dripping on a rainy day.

¹⁶Stopping her is like trying to stop the wind or trying to hold oil in your hand.

¹⁷ As one piece of iron sharpens another, so friends keep each other sharp.

¹⁸ People who take care of fig trees are allowed to eat the fruit. In the same way, people who take care of their masters will be rewarded.

¹⁹ Just as you can see your own face reflected in water, so your heart reflects the kind of person you are.

²⁰ Just as the place of death and destruction is never full, people always want more and more.

²¹ People use fire to purify gold and silver. In the same way, you are tested by the praise people give you.

²² Even if you pound fools to powder like grain in a bowl, you will never force the foolishness out of them.

²³ Learn all you can about your sheep. Take care of your goats the best you can.

²⁴ Neither wealth nor nations last forever.

²⁵ Cut the hay, and new grass will grow. Then gather the new plants that grow on the hills.

²⁶ Cut the wool from your lambs, and make your clothes. Sell some of your goats, and buy some land.

²⁷ Then there will be plenty of goats milk for you and your family, with enough to keep the servants healthy.

28¹ The wicked are afraid of everything, but those who live right are as brave as lions.

² A lawless nation will have many bad leaders. But a smart leader will rule for a long time in a land where people obey the law.

³ A leader who takes advantage of the poor is like a hard rain that destroys the crops.

⁴ Those who refuse to obey the law promote evil. Those who obey the law oppose evil.

⁵ The wicked don't understand justice, but those who love the LORD understand it completely.

⁶ It is better to be poor and honest than rich and evil.

⁷ A smart son obeys the laws, but a son who spends time with worthless people brings shame to his father.

⁸ If you get rich by charging high interest rates, your wealth will go to someone who is kind to the poor.

⁹When people do not listen to Gods teachings, he does not listen to their prayers.

¹⁰Those who plan to hurt good people will fall into their own traps, but good things will happen to those who are good.

¹¹The rich always think they are wise, but a poor person who is wise can see the truth.

¹²When good people become leaders, everything is great, but when the wicked rise to power, everyone hides.

¹³Whoever hides their sins will not be successful, but whoever confesses their sins and stops doing wrong will receive mercy.

¹⁴People who respect others will be blessed, but stubborn people will have plenty of troubles.

¹⁵An evil ruler over those who are helpless is like an angry lion or a charging bear.

¹⁶A foolish ruler hurts the people under him, but a ruler who hates wrong will rule for a long time.

¹⁷A murderer will never have peace. Dont support such a person.

¹⁸Honest people will be safe, but dishonest people will be ruined.

¹⁹Whoever works hard will have plenty to eat, but whoever wastes their time with dreams will always be poor.

²⁰People who can be trusted will have many blessings, but those who are just trying to get rich in a hurry will be punished.

²¹It is wrong for a judge to support someone simply because he knows them. But some judges will change their decisions for the price of a loaf of bread.

²²Selfish people only want to get rich. They do not realize that they are very close to being poor.

²³Correct someone, and later they will thank you. That is much better than just saying something to be nice.

²⁴Someone might steal from their parents and say, I did nothing wrong. But that person is as bad as an enemy who smashes everything in the house.

²⁵Greedy people might sue you in court, but those who trust the LORD are rewarded.

²⁶It is foolish to be too confident. Those who ask for advice are wise and will escape disaster.

²⁷Whoever gives to the poor will have plenty. Whoever refuses to help them will get nothing but curses.

²⁸When the wicked rise to power, everyone hides. When they are defeated, good people multiply.

29¹Some people refuse to bend when someone corrects them. Eventually they will break, and there will be no one to repair the damage.

²When the rulers are good, the people are happy. When the rulers are evil, the people complain.

³A son who loves wisdom makes his father happy. One who wastes his money on prostitutes will lose his wealth.

⁴A nation will be strong when it has a fair and just king. A nation will be weak when it has a king who is selfish and demands gifts.

⁵If you give false praise to others in order to get what you want, you are only setting a trap for yourself.

⁶Evil people are defeated by their sin, but good people will sing and be happy.

⁷ Good people want to do what is right for the poor, but the wicked don't care.

⁸ Proud people who laugh at what is right cause problems that divide whole cities, but people who are wise are able to calm those who are angry.

⁹ If someone who is wise tries to settle a problem with a fool, the fool will argue and say stupid things, and they will never agree.

¹⁰ If you always try to be honest, murderers will hate you, but those who do what is right will want you to be their friend.

¹¹ Fools are quick to express their anger, but wise people are patient and control themselves.

¹² If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials will be evil.

¹³ In one way the poor and those who steal from them are the same; the LORD made them both.

¹⁴ If a king judges the poor fairly, he will rule for a long time.

¹⁵ Punishment and discipline can make children wise, but children who are never corrected will bring shame to their mother.

¹⁶If the wicked are ruling the nation, sin will be everywhere, but those who live right will win in the end.

¹⁷Correct your children whenever they are wrong. Then you will always be proud of them. They will never make you ashamed.

¹⁸If a nation is not guided by God, the people will lose self-control, but the nation that obeys God's law will be happy.

¹⁹Servants will not learn a lesson if you only talk to them. They might understand you, but they will not obey.

²⁰There is more hope for a fool than for someone who speaks without thinking.

²¹Give your servants everything they want, and they will learn to be wasteful.

²²An angry person causes arguments, and someone who is quick-tempered is guilty of many sins.

²³Your pride can bring you down. Humility will bring you honor.

²⁴You are your own worst enemy if you take part in a crime. You will not be able to tell the truth even when people threaten you.

²⁵ Fear can be a trap, but if you trust in the LORD, you will be safe.

²⁶ Many people want the friendship of a ruler, but the LORD is the only one who judges people fairly.

²⁷ Good people think the wicked are disgusting, and the wicked feel disgust for those who are honest.

30¹ These are the wise sayings of Agur son of Jakeh from Massa. He says, God, I am tired, so tired. How can I keep going?

² I am stupid. I am not as smart as other people are.

³ I have not learned to be wise. I know nothing about the Holy One.

⁴ Who has ever gone up to heaven and come back down? Who gathered the winds in his hand? Who can gather up all the water in his lap? Who set the limits for the world? What is his name, and what is his sons name? Do you know?

⁵ You can trust this: Every word that God speaks is true. God is a safe place for those who go to him.

⁶ So dont try to change what God says. If you do, he will punish you and prove that you are a liar.

⁷ God, I ask you to do two things for me before I die.

⁸ Dont let me tell lies. And dont make me too rich or too poorgive me only enough food for each day.

⁹ If I have too much, I might deny that I need you, LORD. But if I am too poor, I might steal and bring shame to the name of my God.

¹⁰ Never say bad things about a slave to his master. If you do, he will curse you, and you will suffer for it.

¹¹ Some people curse their fathers and refuse to bless their mothers.

¹² Some people think they are pure, but they have done nothing to remove the filth of their sin.

¹³ Some people are so proud of themselves, and they look down on everyone else.

¹⁴ There are people whose teeth are like swords and their jaws like knives. They take everything they can from the poor.

¹⁵ Greedy people know only two things: Give me, and Give me. There are three other things that are never satisfiedreally, four things that never have enough:

¹⁶ the place of death, a woman with no children, dry ground that needs rain, and a fire that will never stop by itself.

¹⁷ People who make fun of their father or refuse to obey their mother should have their eyes plucked out by wild birds and be eaten by vultures.

¹⁸ There are three things that are hard for me to understand really, four things that I don't understand:

¹⁹ an eagle flying in the sky, a snake moving on a rock, a ship moving across the ocean, and a man in love with a woman.

²⁰ A woman who is not faithful to her husband acts innocent. She eats, wipes her mouth, and says she has done nothing wrong.

²¹ There are three things that make trouble on the earth really, four that the earth cannot bear:

²² a slave who becomes a king, fools who have everything they need,

²³ a woman whose husband hated her but still married her, and a servant girl who becomes ruler over the woman she serves.

²⁴ There are four things on the earth that are small but very wise:

²⁵ Ants are small and weak, but they save their food all summer;

²⁶ badgers are small animals, but they make their homes in the rocks;

²⁷ locusts have no king, but they are able to work together;

²⁸ lizards are small enough to catch with your hands, but you can find them living in kings palaces.

²⁹ There are three things that act important when they walk really, there are four:

³⁰ a lionhe is the warrior of the animals and runs from nothing,

³¹ a rooster walking proudly, a goat, and a king among his people.

³² If you have been foolish enough to become proud and make plans against other people, stop and think about what you are doing.

³³ Stirring milk causes butter to form. Hitting someones nose causes blood to flow. And making people angry causes trouble.

31 ¹ These are the wise sayings that King Lemuels mother taught him:

²I prayed for a son, and you are the son I gave birth to.

³Don't waste your strength on women. Women destroy kings, so don't waste yourself on them.

⁴Lemuel, it is not wise for kings to drink wine. It is not wise for rulers to want beer.

⁵They may drink too much and forget what the law says. Then they might take away the rights of the poor.

⁶Give beer to people without hope. Give wine to those who are in trouble.

⁷Let them drink to forget their troubles. Let them forget they are poor.

⁸Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Help people who are in trouble.

⁹Stand up for what you know is right, and judge all people fairly. Protect the rights of the poor and those who need help.

¹⁰How hard it is to find the perfect wife. She is worth far more than jewels.

¹¹Her husband depends on her. He will never be poor.

¹²She does good for her husband all her life. She never causes him trouble.

¹³ She is always gathering wool and flax and enjoys making things with her hands.

¹⁴ She is like a ship from a faraway place. She brings home food from everywhere.

¹⁵ She wakes up early in the morning, cooks food for her family, and gives the servants their share.

¹⁶ She looks at land and buys it. She uses the money she has earned and plants a vineyard.

¹⁷ She works very hard. She is strong and able to do all her work.

¹⁸ She works late into the night to make sure her business earns a profit.

¹⁹ She makes her own thread and weaves her own cloth.

²⁰ She always gives to the poor and helps those who need it.

²¹ She does not worry about her family when it snows. She has given them all good, warm clothes.

²² She makes sheets and spreads for the beds, and she wears clothes of fine linen.

²³ Her husband is a respected member of the city council, where he meets with the other leaders.

²⁴ She makes clothes and belts and sells them to the merchants.

²⁵ She is a strong person, and people respect her. She looks to the future with confidence.

²⁶ She speaks with wisdom and teaches others to be loving and kind.

²⁷ She oversees the care of her house. She is never lazy.

²⁸ Her children say good things about her. Her husband brags about her and says,

²⁹ There are many good women, but you are the best.

³⁰ Grace and beauty can fool you, but a woman who respects the LORD should be praised.

³¹ Give her the reward she deserves. Praise her in public for what she has done.

Ecclesiastes

1 ¹ These are the words from the Teacher, a son of David and king of Jerusalem.

² Everything is so meaningless. The Teacher says that it is all a waste of time!

³ Do people really gain anything from all the hard work they do in this life?

⁴ People live and people die, but the earth continues forever.

⁵ The sun rises and the sun goes down, and then it hurries to rise again in the same place.

⁶ The wind blows to the south, and the wind blows to the north. The wind blows around and around. Then it turns and blows back to the place it began.

⁷ All rivers flow again and again to the same place. They all flow to the sea, but the sea never becomes full.

⁸ Words cannot fully explain things, but people continue speaking. Words come again and again to our ears, but our ears don't become full. And our eyes don't become full of what we see.

⁹All things continue the way they have been since the beginning. The same things will be done that have always been done. There is nothing new in this life.

¹⁰Someone might say, Look, this is new, but that thing has always been here. It was here before we were.

¹¹People don't remember what happened long ago. In the future they will not remember what is happening now. And later, other people will not remember what the people before them did.

¹²I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

¹³I decided to study and to use my wisdom to learn about everything that is done in this life. I learned that it is a very hard thing that God has given us to do.

¹⁴I looked at everything done on earth, and I saw that it is all a waste of time. It is like trying to catch the wind.

¹⁵If something is crooked, you cannot say it is straight. And if something is missing, you cannot say it is there.

¹⁶I said to myself, I am very wise. I am wiser than all the kings who ruled Jerusalem before me. I know what wisdom and knowledge really are.

¹⁷I decided to learn how wisdom and knowledge are better than thinking foolish thoughts. But I learned that trying to become wise is like trying to catch the wind.

¹⁸With much wisdom comes frustration. The one who gains more wisdom also gains more sorrow.

2¹I said to myself, I should have fun! I should enjoy everything as much as I can. But I learned that this is also useless.

²It is foolish to laugh all the time. Having fun does not do any good.

³So I decided to fill my body with wine while I filled my mind with wisdom. I tried this foolishness because I wanted to find a way to be happy. I wanted to see what was good for people to do during their few days of life.

⁴Then I began doing great things. I built houses, and I planted vineyards for myself.

⁵I planted gardens, and I made parks. I planted all kinds of fruit trees.

⁶I made pools of water for myself, and I used them to water my growing trees.

⁷I bought men and women slaves, and there were slaves born in my house. I owned many great things. I had herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. I owned more things than any other person in Jerusalem did.

⁸I also gathered silver and gold for myself. I took treasures from kings and their nations. I had men and women singing for me. I had everything any man could want.

⁹I became very rich and famous. I was greater than anyone who lived in Jerusalem before me. My wisdom was always there to help me.

¹⁰Anything my eyes saw and wanted, I got for myself. My mind was pleased with everything I did. And this happiness was the reward for all my hard work.

¹¹But then I looked at everything I had done and the wealth I had gained. I decided it was all a waste of time! It was like trying to catch the wind. There

is nothing to gain from anything we do in this life.

¹²Then I decided to think about what it means to be wise or to be foolish or to do crazy things. And I thought about the one who will be the next king. The new king will do the same as the kings before him.

¹³I saw that wisdom is better than foolishness in the same way that light is better than darkness.

¹⁴Wise people use their minds like eyes to see where they are going. But for fools, it is as if they are walking in the dark. I also saw that fools and wise people both end the same way.

¹⁵I thought to myself, The same thing that happens to a fool will also happen to me. So why have I tried so hard to become wise? I said to myself, Being wise is also meaningless.

¹⁶Whether people are wise or foolish, they will still die, and no one will remember either one of them forever. In the future people will forget everything both of them did. So the two are really the same.

¹⁷ This made me hate life. It was depressing to think that everything in this life is useless, like trying to catch the wind.

¹⁸ I began to hate all the hard work I had done, because I saw that I would not be the one to enjoy all that I had worked for. Someone else will get it.

¹⁹ And I don't know if they will be wise or foolish. But they will control everything I earned by all my hard work and wisdom. This doesn't make any sense.

²⁰ So I began to feel sad about all the work I had done.

²¹ People can work hard using all their wisdom and knowledge and skill. But they will die and other people will get the things they worked for. They did not do the work, but they will get everything. That makes me very sad. It is also not fair and is senseless.

²² What do people really have after all their work and struggling in this life?

²³ Throughout their life, they have pain, frustrations, and hard work. Even at night, a person's mind does not rest. This is also senseless.

²⁴ There is no one who has tried to enjoy life more than I have. And this is what I learned: The best thing people can do is eat, drink, and enjoy the work they must do. I also saw that this comes from God.

²⁵ (2: 24)

²⁶ If people do good and please God, he will give them wisdom, knowledge, and joy. But those who sin will get only the work of gathering and carrying things. God takes from the bad person and gives to the good person. But all this work is useless. It is like trying to catch the wind.

3¹ There is a right time for everything, and everything on earth will happen at the right time.

² There is a time to be born and a time to die. There is a time to plant and a time to pull up plants.

³ There is a time to kill and a time to heal. There is a time to destroy and a time to build.

⁴ There is a time to cry and a time to laugh. There is a time to be sad and a time to dance with joy.

⁵There is a time to throw weapons down and a time to pick them up. There is a time to hug someone and a time to stop holding so tightly.

⁶There is a time to look for something and a time to consider it lost. There is a time to keep things and a time to throw things away.

⁷There is a time to tear cloth and a time to sew it. There is a time to be silent and a time to speak.

⁸There is a time to love and a time to hate. There is a time for war and a time for peace.

⁹Do people really gain anything from their hard work?

¹⁰I saw all the hard work God gave us to do.

¹¹God gave us the ability to think about his world, but we can never completely understand everything he does. And yet, he does everything at just the right time.

¹²I learned that the best thing for people to do is to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live.

¹³God wants everyone to eat, drink, and enjoy their work. These are gifts from God.

¹⁴I learned that anything God does will continue forever. People cannot add anything to the work of God, and they cannot take anything away from it. God did this so that people would respect him.

¹⁵What happened in the past has happened, and what will happen in the future will happen. But God wants to help those who have been treated badly.

¹⁶I also saw these things in this life: I saw that the courts should be filled with goodness and fairness, but there is evil there now.

¹⁷So I said to myself, God has planned a time for everything, and he has planned a time to judge everything people do. He will judge good people and bad people.

¹⁸I thought about what people do to each other. And I said to myself, God wants people to see that they are like animals.

¹⁹The same thing happens to animals and to people they die. People and animals have the same breath. Is a dead animal different from a dead person? It is all so senseless!

²⁰The bodies of people and animals end the same way. They came from the earth, and, in the end, they will go back to the earth.

²¹Who knows what happens to a persons spirit? Who knows if a humans spirit goes up to God while an animals spirit goes down into the ground?

²²So I saw that the best thing people can do is to enjoy what they do, because that is all they have. Besides, no one can help another person see what will happen in the future.

4¹ Again I saw that many people are treated badly. I saw their tears, and I saw that there was no one to comfort them. I saw that cruel people had all the power, and I saw that there was no one to comfort the people they hurt.

²I decided that it is better for those who have died than for those who are still alive.

³And it is even better for those who die at birth, because they never saw the evil that is done in this world.

⁴Then I thought, Why do people work so hard? I saw people try to succeed and be better than other people. They do

this because they are jealous. They dont want other people to have more than they have. This is senseless. It is like trying to catch the wind.

⁵Some people say, It is foolish to fold your hands and do nothing. If you dont work, you will starve to death.

⁶Maybe that is true. But I say it is better to be satisfied with the few things you have than to always be struggling to get more.

⁷Again I saw something else that didnt make sense:

⁸I saw a man who has no family, not a son or even a brother. But he continues to work very hard. He is never satisfied with what he has. And he works so hard that he never stops and asks himself, Why am I working so hard? Why dont I let myself enjoy my life? This is also a very bad and senseless thing.

⁹Two people are better than one. When two people work together, they get more work done.

¹⁰If one person falls, the other person can reach out to help. But those who are alone when they fall have no one to help them.

¹¹ If two people sleep together, they will be warm. But a person sleeping alone will not be warm.

¹² An enemy might be able to defeat one person, but two people can stand back-to-back to defend each other. And three people are even stronger. They are like a rope that has three parts wrapped together it is very hard to break.

¹³ A young leader who is poor but wise is better than a king who is old but foolish. That old king does not listen to warnings.

¹⁴ Maybe the young ruler was born a poor man in the kingdom. And maybe he came from prison to rule the country.

¹⁵ But I have watched people in this life, and I know this: People will follow that young man. He will become the new king.

¹⁶ Many people will follow this young man. But later, those same people will not like him. This is also senseless. It is like trying to catch the wind.

5¹ Be very careful when you go to worship God. It is better to listen to God than to give sacrifices like fools.

Fools often do bad things, and they don't even know it.

²Be careful when you make promises to God. Be careful about what you say to him. Don't let your feelings cause you to speak too soon. God is in heaven, and you are on the earth. So you need to say only a few things to him. This saying is true:

³Bad dreams come from too many worries, and too many words come from the mouth of a fool.

⁴If you make a vow to God, keep your vow. Don't be slow to do what you promised. God is not happy with fools. Give God what you promised to give him.

⁵It is better to promise nothing than to promise something and not be able to do it.

⁶So don't let your words cause you to sin. Don't say to the priest, I didn't mean what I said. If you do this, God might become angry with your words and destroy everything you have worked for.

⁷You should not let your useless dreams and bragging bring you trouble. You should respect God.

⁸In some country you will see poor people who are forced to work very hard. You will see that this is not fair to them. It is against their rights. But don't be surprised! The ruler who forces them to work has another ruler who forces him. And there is still another ruler who forces both of these rulers.

⁹Even the king is a slave his country owns him.

¹⁰Those who love money will never be satisfied with the money they have. Those who love wealth will not be satisfied when they get more and more. This is also senseless.

¹¹The more wealth people have, the more friends they have to help spend it. So the rich really gain nothing. They can only look at their wealth.

¹²Those who work hard all day come home and sleep in peace. It is not important if they have little or much to eat. But the rich worry about their wealth and are not able to sleep.

¹³There is a very sad thing that I have seen happen in this life. People save their money for the future.

¹⁴Then something bad happens and they lose everything. So they have nothing to give to their children.

¹⁵People come into the world with nothing. And when they die, they leave with nothing. They might work hard to get things, but they cannot take anything with them when they die.

¹⁶It is very sad that people leave the world just as they came. So what does a person gain from trying to catch the wind?

¹⁷They only get days that are filled with sadness and sorrow. In the end, they are troubled, sick, and angry.

¹⁸I have seen what is best for people to do on earth: They should eat, drink, and enjoy the work they have during their short time here. God has given them these few days, and that is all they have.

¹⁹If God gives some people wealth, property, and the power to enjoy those things, they should enjoy them. They should accept the things they have and enjoy their work that is a gift from God.

²⁰People don't have many years to live, so they must remember these things all

their life. God will keep them busy with the work they love to do.

6¹ I have seen another thing in this life that is not fair and is very hard to understand.

² God gives some people great wealth, riches, and honor. They have everything they need and everything they could ever want. But then God does not let them enjoy those things. Some stranger comes and takes everything. This is a very bad and senseless thing.

³ A man might live a long time and have 100 children. But if he is not satisfied with those good things, and if no one remembers him after his death, I say that a baby who dies at birth is better off than that man.

⁴ It is senseless when a baby is born dead. The baby is quickly buried in a dark grave, without even a name.

⁵ The baby never saw the sun and never knew anything. But the baby finds more rest than the man who never enjoyed what God gave him.

⁶ He might live 2000 years. But if he does not enjoy life, then the baby who

was born dead has found the easiest way to the same end.

⁷ People work and work to feed themselves, but they are never satisfied.

⁸ In the same way, a wise person is no better than a fool is. It is better to be a poor person who knows how to accept life as it is.

⁹ It is better to be happy with what you have than to always want more and more. Always wanting more and more is useless. It is like trying to catch the wind.

¹⁰ You are only what you were created to be a human, and it is useless to argue about it. People cannot argue with God about this because he is more powerful than they are, and a long argument will not change that fact.

¹¹ (6: 10)

¹² Who knows what is best for people during their short life on earth? Their life passes like a shadow. No one can tell them what will happen later.

7¹ A good reputation is better than expensive pleasures. The day someone dies is better than the day they were born.

²It is better to go to a funeral than to a party, because everyone must die, and the living need to remember this.

³Sorrow is even better than laughter, because when our face is sad, our heart becomes good.

⁴A wise person thinks about death, but a fool thinks only about having a good time.

⁵It is better to be criticized by the wise than praised by the foolish.

⁶The laughter of fools is such a waste. It is like thorns burning under a pot. The thorns burn so quickly that the pot does not get hot.

⁷Even the wise will forget their wisdom, if someone pays them enough. That money destroys their understanding.

⁸It is better to finish something than to start it. It is better to be gentle and patient than to be proud and impatient.

⁹Dont become angry quickly, because anger is foolish.

¹⁰Dont say, Life was better in the good old days. What happened? Wisdom does not lead us to ask that question.

¹¹ Wisdom is better if you also have property. Wise people will get more than enough wealth.

¹² Wisdom and money can protect you. But knowledge gained through wisdom is even better it can save your life.

¹³ Look at what God has made. You cannot change a thing, even if you think it is wrong.

¹⁴ When life is good, enjoy it. But when life is hard, remember that God gives us good times and hard times. And no one knows what will happen in the future.

¹⁵ In my short life, I have seen everything. I have seen good people die young, and I have seen evil people live long lives.

¹⁶ So why ruin your life? Don't be too good or too bad, and don't be too wise or too foolish. Why should you die before your time?

¹⁷ (7:16)

¹⁸ Try to be a little of this and a little of that. Even God's followers will do some good things and some bad things.

¹⁹ Surely there is no one on earth who always does good and never sins. But

wisdom can make one person stronger than ten leaders in a city.

²⁰ (7:19)

²¹ Dont listen to everything people say. You might hear your own servant saying bad things about you.

²² And you know that many times you too have said bad things about other people.

²³ I used my wisdom and thought about all these things. I wanted to be wise, but I couldnt do it.

²⁴ I cannot understand why things are as they are. It is too hard for anyone to understand.

²⁵ I studied and I tried very hard to find true wisdom. I tried to find a reason for everything. I did learn that it is foolish to be evil, and it is crazy to act like a fool.

²⁶ I also found that some women are dangerous like traps. Their hearts are like nets, and their arms are like chains. It is worse than death to be caught by these women. Gods followers should run away from them. Let the sinners be caught by them.

²⁷ The Teacher says, I added all this together to see what answer I could

find. I am still looking for answers, but I did find this: I found one good man in a thousand. But I did not find even one good woman.

²⁸ (7: 27)

²⁹ There is one other thing I have learned. God made people good, but they have found many ways to be bad.

8¹ No one can understand and explain things the way wise people can. Their wisdom makes them happy. It changes a sad face into a happy one.

² I say you should always obey the king's command. Do this because you made a promise to God.

³ Don't be afraid to give suggestions to the king, and don't support something that is wrong. But remember, the king gives the commands that please him.

⁴ He has the authority to give commands, and no one can tell him what to do.

⁵ People will be safe if they obey his command. But wise people know the right time to do this, and they also know when to do the right thing.

⁶ There is a right time and a right way to do everything. You must decide what

you should do, even when it might cause problems

⁷ and you are not sure what will happen. No one can tell you what will happen in the future.

⁸ No one has the power to keep their spirit from leaving or to stop their death. During war, no soldier has the freedom to go wherever he wants. In the same way, evil does not allow anyone who does wrong to go free.

⁹ I saw all this. I thought very hard about the things that happen in this world. I saw that people always struggle for the power to rule others, and this is bad for them.

¹⁰ I also saw great and beautiful funerals for evil people. While the people were going home after the funeral services, they said good things about the evil people who had died. This happened even in the same towns where the evil people had done many bad things. This is senseless.

¹¹ Sometimes people are not immediately punished for the bad things they do. Their punishment is slow to

come, and that makes other people want to do bad things too.

¹²A sinner might do a hundred evil things and still live a long time. But I know that it is still better to obey and respect God.

¹³Evil people don't respect God, so they will not get good things or live long lives. Their lives will not be like the shadows that become longer and longer as the sun goes down.

¹⁴There is something else that happens on earth that does not seem fair. Bad things should happen to bad people, and good things should happen to good people. But sometimes bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people. This is not fair.

¹⁵So I decided it was more important to enjoy life because the best thing people can do in this life is to eat, drink, and enjoy life. At least that will help people enjoy the hard work God gave them to do during their life on earth.

¹⁶I carefully studied the things people do in this life. I saw how busy people are. They work day and night, and they almost never sleep.

¹⁷ I also saw that no one can understand all that God does. People can try and try to understand the things that happen here on earth, but they cannot. There may be wise people who claim to understand the meaning of these things, but they are wrong. No one can understand it all.

9¹ I thought about all this very carefully. I saw that God controls what happens to the good and wise people and what they do. People don't know if they will be loved or hated, and they don't know what will happen in the future.

² But, there is one thing that happens to everyone: we all die! Death comes to good people and bad people. Death comes to those who are pure and to those who are not pure. Death comes to those who give sacrifices and to those who don't give sacrifices. Good people will die just as sinners do. Those who make promises to God will die just as those who are afraid to make those promises.

³ Of all the things that happen in this life, the worst thing is that all people end life the same way. But it is also very bad

that people always think evil and foolish thoughts. And those thoughts lead to death.

⁴There is hope for those who are still alive it does not matter who they are. But this saying is true: A living dog is better than a dead lion.

⁵The living know that they will die, but the dead don't know anything. They have no more reward. People will soon forget them.

⁶After people are dead, their love, hate, and jealousy are all gone. And they will never again share in what happens on earth.

⁷So go and eat your food now and enjoy it. Drink your wine and be happy. It is all right with God if you do these things.

⁸Wear nice clothes and make yourself look good.

⁹Enjoy life with the wife you love. Enjoy every day of your short life. God has given you this short life on earth and it is all you have. So enjoy the work you have to do in this life.

¹⁰Every time you find work to do, do it the best you can. In the grave there

is no work. There is no thinking, no knowledge, and there is no wisdom. And we are all going to the place of death.

¹¹I also saw other things in this life that were not fair. The fastest runner does not always win the race; the strongest soldier does not always win the battle; wise people don't always get the food; smart people don't always get the wealth; educated people don't always get the praise they deserve. When the time comes, bad things can happen to anyone!

¹²You never know when hard times will come. Like fish in a net or birds in a snare, people are often trapped by some disaster that suddenly falls on them.

¹³I also saw a person doing a wise thing in this life, and it seemed very important to me.

¹⁴There was a small town with a few people in it. A great king fought against that town and put his armies all around it.

¹⁵But there was a wise man in that town. He was poor, but he used his wisdom to save his town. After

everything was finished, the people forgot about the poor man.

¹⁶But I still say that wisdom is better than strength. They forgot about the poor mans wisdom, and the people stopped listening to what he said. But I still believe that wisdom is better.

¹⁷Words spoken by the wise are heard more clearly than those shouted by a leader among fools.

¹⁸Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one fool can destroy much good.

10¹A few dead flies will make even the best perfume stink. In the same way, a little foolishness can ruin much wisdom and honor.

²The thoughts of the wise lead them the right way, but the thoughts of the foolish lead them the wrong way.

³Fools show how foolish they are, just walking down the road. Their minds are empty, and everyone knows it.

⁴Dont quit your job simply because the boss is angry with you. If you remain calm and helpful, you can correct even great mistakes.

⁵ Here is something else that I have seen in this life that isn't fair. It is the kind of mistake that rulers make.

⁶ Fools are given important positions, while the rich get jobs that are not important.

⁷ I have seen servants riding on horses, while rulers were walking beside them like slaves.

⁸ If you dig a hole, you might fall into it. If you break down a wall, you might be bitten by a snake.

⁹ If you are moving large stones, you might be hurt by them. If you cut down a tree, you are in danger of it falling on you.

¹⁰ But wisdom will make any job easier. It is very hard to cut with a dull knife. But if you sharpen the knife, the job is easier.

¹¹ Someone might know how to control snakes. But that skill is useless if a snake bites when that person is not around.

¹² Words from the wise bring praise, but words from a fool bring destruction.

¹³ Fools begin by saying something foolish. But in the end, they speak nonsense.

¹⁴Fools are always talking about what they will do, but you never know what will happen. People cannot tell what will happen in the future.

¹⁵Fools aren't smart enough to find their way home, so they must work hard all their lives.

¹⁶It is very bad for a country if the king is like a child. And it is very bad for a country if its rulers use all their time eating.

¹⁷But it is very good for a country if the king comes from a good family. And it is very good for a country if the rulers control their eating and drinking. They eat and drink to become strong, not to become drunk.

¹⁸If someone is too lazy to work, their house will begin to leak, and the roof will fall in.

¹⁹People enjoy eating, and wine makes life happier. But money solves a lot of problems.

²⁰Don't say bad things about the king. Don't even think bad things about him. And don't say bad things about rich people, even if you are alone in your

home. A little bird might fly and tell them everything you said.

11 ¹ Do good wherever you go. After a while, the good you do will come back to you.

² Invest what you have in several different things. You don't know what bad things might happen on earth.

³ There are some things you can be sure of. If clouds are full of rain, they will pour water on the earth. If a tree falls to the south or to the north then it will stay where it falls.

⁴ But there are some things that you cannot be sure of. You must take a chance. If you wait for perfect weather, you will never plant your seeds. If you are afraid that every cloud will bring rain, you will never harvest your crops.

⁵ You don't know where the wind blows. And you don't know how a baby grows in its mother's womb. In the same way, you don't know what God will do and he makes everything happen.

⁶ So begin planting early in the morning, and don't stop working until evening. You don't know what might make you

rich. Maybe everything you do will be successful.

⁷It is good to be alive. It is nice to see the light from the sun.

⁸You should enjoy every day of your life, no matter how long you live. But remember that you will die, and you will be dead much longer than you were alive. And after you are dead, you cannot do anything.

⁹So young people, enjoy yourselves while you are young. Be happy. Do whatever your heart leads you to do. Do whatever you want, but remember that God will judge you for everything you do.

¹⁰Dont let your anger control you, and dont let your body lead you to sin. People do foolish things in the dawn of life while they are young.

12¹Remember your Creator while you are young, before the bad times come before the years come when you say, I have wasted my life.

²Remember your Creator while you are young, before the time comes when the sun and the moon and the stars become

dark to you before problems come again and again like one storm after another.

³At that time your arms will lose their strength. Your legs will become weak and bent. Your teeth will fall out, and you will not be able to chew your food. Your eyes will not see clearly.

⁴You will become hard of hearing. You will not hear the noise in the streets. Even the stone grinding your grain will seem quiet to you. You will not be able to hear the women singing. But even the sound of a bird singing will wake you early in the morning because you will not be able to sleep.

⁵You will be afraid of high places. You will be afraid of tripping over every small thing in your path. Your hair will become white like the flowers on an almond tree. You will drag yourself along like a grasshopper when you walk. You will lose your desire, and then you will go to your eternal home. The mourners will gather in the streets as they carry your body to the grave.

⁶Remember your Creator while you are young, before the silver rope snaps and the gold bowl is crushed like a jar broken

at the well, like a stone cover on a well that breaks and falls in.

⁷Your body came from the earth. And when you die, it will return to the earth. But your spirit came from God, and when you die, it will return to him.

⁸Everything is so meaningless. The Teacher says that it is all a waste of time!

⁹The Teacher was very wise. He used his wisdom to teach the people. He very carefully studied and arranged many wise teachings.

¹⁰The Teacher tried very hard to find the right words, and he wrote the teachings that are true and dependable.

¹¹Words from the wise are like sharp goads. When these sayings are written down and saved, they can be used to guide people, just as a shepherd uses a sharp stick to make his sheep go the right way.

¹²So, son, study these sayings, but be careful about other teachings. People are always writing books, and too much study will make you very tired.

¹³Now, what should we learn from everything that is written in this book? The most important thing a person

can do is to respect God and obey his commands, because he knows about everything people do even the secret things. He knows about all the good and all the bad, and he will judge people for everything they do.

¹⁴ (12: 13)

The Song of Songs

1 ¹ Solomons Most Wonderful Song.
² Cover me with kisses, for your love is better than wine.

³ Your perfume smells wonderful, but your name is sweeter than the best perfume. That is why the young women love you.

⁴ Take me with you. Lets run away. The king took me into his room. We will rejoice and be happy for you. Remember, your love is better than wine. With good reason, the young women love you.

⁵ Daughters of Jerusalem, I am dark and beautiful, as black as the tents of Kedar and Salma.

⁶ Dont look at how dark I am, at how dark the sun has made me. My brothers were angry with me. They forced me to take care of their vineyards, so I could not take care of myself.

⁷ I love you with all my soul! Tell me, where do you feed your sheep? Where do you lay them down at noon? I should come to be with you or I will be like a

hired woman caring for the sheep of your friends.

⁸You are such a beautiful woman. Surely you know what to do. Go, follow the sheep. Feed your young goats near the shepherds tents.

⁹My darling, you are more exciting to me than any mare among the stallions pulling Pharaohs chariots. Those horses have beautiful decorations at the side of their faces and around their necks.

¹⁰Here are the decorations made for you, a gold headband and a silver necklace. Your cheeks are so beautiful decorated with gold. Your neck is so beautiful laced with silver.

¹¹ (1: 10)

¹²The smell of my perfume reaches out to the king lying on his couch.

¹³My lover is like the small bag of myrrh around my neck, lying all night between my breasts.

¹⁴My lover is like a bunch of henna flowers near the vineyards of En Gedi.

¹⁵My darling, you are so beautiful! Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are like doves.

¹⁶You are so handsome, my lover! Yes, and so charming! Our bed is so fresh and pleasant.

¹⁷The beams of our house are cedar. The rafters are fir.

2¹I am a rose on the plain of Sharon, a lily in the valleys.

²My darling, among other women, you are like a lily among thorns!

³My lover, among other men, you are an apple tree among the wild trees in the forest! I enjoy sitting in my lovers shadow; his fruit is so sweet to my taste.

⁴My lover took me to the wine house; his intent toward me was love.

⁵Strengthen me with raisins; refresh me with apples, because I am weak with love.

⁶My lovers left arm is under my head, and his right arm holds me.

⁷Women of Jerusalem, promise me by the gazelles and wild deer, dont awaken love, dont arouse love, until I am ready.

⁸I hear my lovers voice. Here it comes, jumping over the mountains, skipping over the hills.

⁹My lover is like a gazelle or a young deer. Look at him standing behind our

wall, staring out the window, looking through the lattice.

¹⁰My lover speaks to me, Get up, my darling, my beautiful one. Lets go away!

¹¹Look, winter is past, the rains have come and gone.

¹²The flowers are blooming in the fields. Its time to sing! Listen, the doves have returned.

¹³Young figs are growing on the fig trees. Smell the vines in bloom. Get up, my darling, my beautiful one. Lets go away!

¹⁴My dove, hiding in the caves high on the cliff, hidden here on the mountain, let me see you, let me hear your voice. Your voice is so pleasant, and you are so beautiful!

¹⁵Catch the foxes for us the little foxes that spoil the vineyard. Our vineyard is now in bloom.

¹⁶My lover is mine, and I am his! My lover feeds among the lilies,

¹⁷while the day breathes its last breath and the shadows run away. Turn, my lover, be like a gazelle or a young deer on the cleft mountains!

3¹ At night on my bed, I look for the man I love. I looked for him, but I could not find him.

² I will get up now! I will go around the city. In the streets and squares, I will look for the man I love. I looked for him, but I could not find him.

³ The guards patrolling the city found me. I asked them, Have you seen the man I love?

⁴ I had just left the guards when I found the man I love! I held him. I would not let him go, while I took him to my mothers house, to the room of one who bore me.

⁵ Women of Jerusalem, promise me by the gazelles and wild deer, dont awaken love, dont arouse love, until I am ready.

⁶ Who is this woman coming from the desert with this large group of people? The dust rises behind them like clouds of smoke from burning myrrh and frankincense and other spices.

⁷ Look, Solomons traveling chair. There are 60 soldiers guarding it, strong soldiers of Israel.

⁸All of them are trained fighting men with their swords at their side, ready for any danger of the night.

⁹King Solomon made a traveling chair for himself. The wood came from Lebanon.

¹⁰The poles were made from silver, and the supports were made from gold. The seat was covered with purple cloth. It was inlaid with love by the women of Jerusalem.

¹¹Women of Zion, come out and see King Solomon. See the crown his mother put on him the day he was married, the day he was so happy!

4¹ My darling, you are so beautiful! Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are like doves under your veil. Your hair is long and flowing, like little goats dancing down the slopes of Mount Gilead.

²Your teeth are white like ewes just coming from their bath. They all give birth to twins; not one of them has lost a baby.

³Your lips are like a red silk thread. Your mouth is beautiful. Your cheeks under your veil are like two slices of pomegranate.

⁴Your neck is long and thin like Davids tower. That tower was built to be decorated with a thousand shields on its walls, with the shields of powerful soldiers.

⁵Your breasts are like twin fawns, like twins of a gazelle, feeding among the lilies.

⁶I will go to that mountain of myrrh and to that hill of frankincense while the day breathes its last breath, and the shadows run away.

⁷My darling, you are beautiful all over. Every part of you is perfect.

⁸Come with me, my bride, from Lebanon. Come with me from Lebanon. Come from the peak of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions caves, from the mountain of the leopards.

⁹My darling, my bride, you excite me! You have stolen my heart with just one quick look from your eyes, with just one of the jewels from your necklace.

¹⁰Your love is so beautiful, my darling, my bride! Your love is better than wine. The smell of your perfume is better than any kind of spice!

¹¹ My bride, your lips drip honey. Honey and milk are under your tongue. Your clothes smell as sweet as perfume.

¹² My darling, my bride, you are pure like a locked garden. You are like a locked pool, a closed fountain.

¹³ Your limbs are like a garden filled with pomegranates and other pleasant fruit, with all the best spices: henna,

¹⁴ nard, saffron, calamus, and cinnamon. Your limbs are like a garden filled with trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloe.

¹⁵ You are like a garden fountain a well of fresh water flowing down from the mountains of Lebanon.

¹⁶ Wake up, north wind. Come, south wind. Blow on my garden. Spread its sweet smell. Let my lover enter his garden and eat its pleasant fruit.

5¹ My darling my bride, I have entered my garden. I have gathered my myrrh and spice. I have eaten my honey and honeycomb. I have drunk my wine and milk. Dearest friends, eat, drink! Be drunk with love!

² I am asleep, but my heart is awake. I hear my lover knocking, saying, Open

to me, my darling, my love, my dove, my perfect one! My head is soaked with dew. My hair is wet with the mist of the night.

³I have taken off my robe. I don't want to put it on again. I have washed my feet. I don't want to get them dirty again.

⁴But my lover put his hand through the opening, and I felt sorry for him.

⁵I got up to open for my lover, myrrh dripping from my hands, myrrh scented lotion dripped from my fingers onto the handles of the lock.

⁶I opened for my lover, but my lover had turned away and was gone! I nearly died when he came and went. I looked for him, but I couldn't find him. I called for him, but he didn't answer me.

⁷The guards patrolling the city found me. They hit me. They hurt me. The guards on the wall took my robe from me.

⁸I tell you, women of Jerusalem, if you find my lover, tell him I am weak with love.

⁹Beautiful woman, how is your lover different from other lovers? Is your lover

better than other lovers? Is that why you ask us to make this promise?

¹⁰My lover is tanned and radiant. He would stand out among 10,000 men.

¹¹His head is like the purest gold. His hair is curly and as black as a raven.

¹²His eyes are like doves by a stream, like doves in a pool of milk, like a jewel in its setting.

¹³His cheeks are like a garden of spices, like flowers used for perfume. His lips are like lilies, dripping with liquid myrrh.

¹⁴His arms are like gold rods, filled with jewels. His body is like smooth ivory with sapphires set in it.

¹⁵His legs are like marble pillars on bases of fine gold. He stands tall like the finest cedar tree in Lebanon!

¹⁶Yes, women of Jerusalem, my lover is everything I desire. His mouth is the sweetest of all. This is my lover; this is my darling.

6¹ Beautiful woman, where has your lover gone? Which way did your lover go? Tell us so that we can help you look for him.

²My lover has gone down to his garden, where sweet-smelling spices grow.

There, like a sheep, he will eat the grass, and he will enjoy the lilies.

³I belong to my lover, and my lover belongs to me. He is the one feeding among the lilies.

⁴My darling, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, as pleasant as Jerusalem, as awesome as the stars in the sky.

⁵Dont look at me! Your eyes excite me too much! And your hair is long and flowing, like little goats dancing down the slopes of Mount Gilead.

⁶Your teeth are white like ewes just coming from their bath. They all give birth to twins. Not one of them has lost a baby.

⁷Your cheeks under your veil are like slices of pomegranate.

⁸There might be 60 queens and 80 slave women, and young women too many to count,

⁹but there is only one woman for me, my dove, my perfect one. She is the favorite of her mother, her mothers favorite child. The young women see her and praise her. Even the queens and slave women praise her.

¹⁰Who is that young woman? She shines out like the dawn. She is as pretty as the moon. She is as bright as the sun. She is as awesome as the stars in the sky.

¹¹I went down to the grove of walnut trees, to see the fruit of the valley, to see if the vines were in bloom, to see if the pomegranates had budded.

¹²I was so excited when she put me in the royal chariot.

¹³Come back, come back, Shulamith! Come back, come back, so we may look at you. Why are you staring at Shulamith, as she dances the Mahanaim dance?

7¹Princess, your feet are beautiful in those sandals. The curves of your thighs are like jewelry made by an artist.

²Your navel is like a round cup; may it never be without wine. Your belly is like a pile of wheat surrounded by lilies.

³Your breasts are like twin fawns of a young gazelle.

⁴Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are like the pools in Heshbon near the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose is

like the tower of Lebanon that looks toward Damascus.

⁵Your head is like Carmel, and the hair on your head is like silk. Your long flowing hair captures even a king.

⁶You are so beautiful and so pleasant, a lovely, delightful young woman!

⁷You are tall as tall as a palm tree. And your breasts are like the clusters of fruit on that tree.

⁸I would love to climb that tree and take hold of its branches. May your breasts be like clusters of grapes, your fragrance like apples,

⁹and your lips like the best wine. So let this wine flow straight to my lover, flowing gently over lips and teeth.

¹⁰I belong to my lover, and he wants me.

¹¹Come, my lover, let's go out into the field; let's spend the night in the villages.

¹²Let's get up early and go to the vineyards. Let's see if the vines are in bloom. Let's see if the blossoms have opened and if the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love.

¹³Smell the mandrakes and all the pleasant flowers by our door. I have

saved many pleasant things for you, my lover, pleasant things, new and old.

8¹ If you were a baby, like my little brother nursing at his mothers breasts, and if I found you outside, I could kiss you, and no one would say it was wrong.

² I would lead you into my mothers house, to the room of she who taught me. I would give you spiced wine squeezed from my pomegranate.

³ His left arm is under my head, and his right hand holds me.

⁴ Women of Jerusalem, promise me, dont awaken love, dont arouse love, until I am ready.

⁵ Who is this woman coming from the desert, leaning on her lover? I woke you under the apple tree, where your mother gave birth to you, where you were born.

⁶ Keep me near you like a seal you wear over your heart, like a signet ring you wear on your hand. Love is as strong as death. Passion is as strong as the grave. Its sparks become a flame, and it grows to become a great fire!

⁷ A flood cannot put out love. Rivers cannot drown love. Would people despise

a man for giving everything he owns for love?

⁸We have a little sister, and her breasts are not yet grown. What should we do for our sister when a man comes asking to marry her?

⁹If she were a wall, we would put silver trim around her. If she were a door, we would put a cedar board around her.

¹⁰I am a wall, and my breasts are my towers. And he is satisfied with me!

¹¹Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon. He put men in charge of the vineyard. Each man brought in grapes worth 1000 shekels of silver.

¹²Solomon, you can keep your 1000 shekels. Give 200 shekels to each man for the grapes he brought. But I will keep my own vineyard.

¹³There you are, sitting in the garden. Friends are listening to your voice. Let me hear it too!

¹⁴Hurry, my lover! Be like a gazelle or a young deer on the mountains of spice.

Isaiah

1 ¹This is the vision of Isaiah son of Amoz. God showed Isaiah what would happen to Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah saw this during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah.

²Heaven and earth, listen! This is what the LORD says: I raised my children and helped them grow up, but they have turned against me.

³A bull knows its master, and a donkey knows where its owner feeds it. But Israel does not know me. My people do not understand.

⁴Oh, what a sinful nation! Their guilt is like a heavy weight that they must carry. They are evil, destructive children. They left the LORD and insulted the Holy One of Israel. They turned away and treated him like a stranger.

⁵What good will it do to keep punishing you? You will continue to rebel. Your whole head and heart are already sick and aching.

⁶From the bottom of your feet to the top of your head, every part of your body has wounds, cuts, and open sores. You have not taken care of them. Your wounds have not been cleaned and bandaged.

⁷Your land is in ruins, and your cities are in flames. Your enemies have taken your land, and foreigners are taking what it produces. It looks like some foreigners destroyed it.

⁸The city of Jerusalem is now like an empty shed left in a vineyard. It is like an old straw hut abandoned in a field of cucumbers or like a city surrounded by enemies.

⁹If the LORD All-Powerful had not allowed a few people to live, we would have been destroyed completely like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And that almost happened!

¹⁰You officers of Sodom, listen to the LORD'S message. You people of Gomorrah, listen to God's teaching.

¹¹The LORD says, Why do you continue giving me all these sacrifices I have had enough of your sacrifices of rams and the fat from well-fed animals. I don't

want the blood of those bulls, sheep, and goats.

¹²When you people come to meet with me, you trample everything in my yard. Who told you to do this?

¹³Stop bringing me these worthless sacrifices. I hate the incense you give me. I cannot stand your festivals for the New Moon, the Sabbath, and other special meeting days. I hate the evil you do during these holy times together.

¹⁴I hate your monthly meetings and councils. They have become like heavy weights to me, and I am tired of carrying them.

¹⁵When you raise your arms to pray to me, I will refuse to look at you. You will say more and more prayers, but I will refuse to listen because your hands are covered with blood.

¹⁶Wash yourselves and make yourselves clean. Stop doing the evil things I see you do. Stop doing wrong.

¹⁷Learn to do good. Treat people fairly. Punish those who hurt others. Speak up for the widows and orphans. Argue their cases for them in court.

¹⁸I, the LORD, am the one speaking to you. Come, let's discuss this. Even if your sins are as dark as red dye, that stain can be removed and you will be as pure as wool that is as white as snow.

¹⁹If you listen to what I say, you will get the good things from this land.

²⁰But if you refuse to listen and rebel against me, your enemies will destroy you. The LORD himself said this.

²¹Look at Jerusalem. She was a faithful city. What made her become like a prostitute? In the past, Jerusalem was filled with justice, and goodness should live there now. Instead, there are murderers.

²²Once you were like pure silver, but now you are like the impurities that people throw away when the silver is purified. You are like good wine that has been weakened with water.

²³Your rulers are rebels and friends of thieves. They demand bribes and accept money for doing wrong. They take money to cheat people, and they don't speak up for widows and orphans. They will not even listen to their cries for help.

²⁴ Because of this, the Lord GOD All-Powerful, the Mighty One of Israel, says, Look, I will get relief from my enemies. You will not cause me any more trouble.

²⁵ People use lye to clean silver. In the same way, I will clean away all your wrongs. I will remove all the impurities from you.

²⁶ I will bring back the kind of judges that you had in the beginning. Your counselors will be like those that you had long ago. Then you will be called The Good and Faithful City.

²⁷ God is good and does what is right, so he will rescue Zion and the people who come back to him.

²⁸ But all the criminals and sinners will be destroyed. Those who stop following the LORD will be removed.

²⁹ In the future you will be ashamed of the oak trees and special gardens you chose to worship,

³⁰ You will be like an oak tree whose leaves are dying. You will be like a garden dying without water.

³¹ Powerful people will be like small, dry pieces of wood, and what they did will

be like the sparks that start a fire. These people and their works will both burn up, and no one will be able to put out that fire.

2¹ Isaiah son of Amoz saw this message about Judah and Jerusalem.

²In the last days the mountain of the LORD'S Temple will be the highest of all mountains. It will be raised higher than the hills. There will be a steady stream of people from all nations going there.

³People from many places will go there and say, Come, let's go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the Temple of the God of Jacob. Then God will teach us his way of living, and we will follow him. His teaching, the LORD'S message, will begin in Jerusalem on Mount Zion and will go out to all the world.

⁴Then God will act as judge to end arguments between nations. He will decide what is right for people from many lands. They will stop using their weapons for war. They will hammer their swords into plows and use their spears to make tools for harvesting. All fighting between nations will end. They will never again train for war.

⁵Family of Jacob, let us follow the LORD.

⁶Family of Jacob, you have abandoned your people. This is clear because they have been filled with bad influences from the East, and now your people try to tell the future like the Philistines. They have completely accepted those strange ideas.

⁷Jacob's land has been filled with silver and gold from other places. There are many treasures there. His land has been filled with horses and many chariots.

⁸His land is full of gods that the people bow down to worship. They made those idols themselves.

⁹The people have become worse and worse. They have become very low, and you leaders did nothing to lift them up!

¹⁰You should be afraid of the LORD! Go hide in the dirt and behind the rocks. Hide from his glorious power!

¹¹Proud people will stop being proud. They will bow down to the ground with shame, and only the LORD will still stand high.

¹²The LORD All-Powerful has a special day planned when he will punish the

proud and boastful people. They will be brought down.

¹³They might be like the tall cedar trees from Lebanon or the great oak trees from Bashan, but they will be cut down.

¹⁴They might be like the tall mountains and high hills

¹⁵or like the tall towers and high walls, but they will be brought down.

¹⁶They might be like great ships from Tarshish, filled with such wonderful cargo, but they will be brought down.

¹⁷At that time those proud people will fall. They will bow low to the ground, and only the LORD will stand high.

¹⁸All the idols will be gone.

¹⁹People will go into the holes in the ground and the cracks in the rocks because they fear the LORD and his great power as he stands to shake the earth.

²⁰At that time people will throw away their idols they made from gold and silver. They made these statues to worship, but they will throw them into holes in the ground where bats and moles live.

²¹ They will go down into cracks in the rocks and boulders because they are afraid of the LORD and his glorious power as he stands to shake the earth.

²² Stop trusting other people to save you. Do not think too highly of them; they are only humans who have not stopped breathing yet.

3¹ Understand what I am telling you: The Lord GOD All-Powerful will take away everything Judah and Jerusalem depend on. He will take away all the food and water.

² He will take away all the heroes and soldiers. He will take away all the judges, the prophets, the fortunetellers, and the elders.

³ He will take away the army officers and important officials. He will take away the skilled counselors, the magicians, and those who try to tell the future.

⁴ He says, I will put young boys in charge of you. They will be your leaders.

⁵ The people will turn against each other. Young people will not respect those who are older. The common people will not respect important leaders.

⁶At that time a man will grab one of his brothers from his own family and tell him, You have a coat, so you will be our leader. You will be the leader over all these ruins.

⁷But the brother will refuse and say, I cannot help you. I dont have enough food or clothes for my own family. You will not make me your leader.

⁸This will happen because Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen. They turned against the LORD. They said and did things against him, right in front of his glorious eyes.

⁹The look on their faces shows that they are guilty. They are like the people of Sodom; they dont care who sees their sin. But it will be very bad for them. They will get what they deserve.

¹⁰Tell the good people who do what is right that good things will happen to them. They will receive a reward for what they do.

¹¹But it will be very bad for wicked people, because they, too, will get what they deserve. They will get what they did to others.

¹²Even children will defeat my people, and women will rule over them. My people, your guides lead you the wrong way, and they destroy the path you should follow.

¹³Look, the LORD is standing to judge his people.

¹⁴The LORD is ready to present his case against the elders and leaders of his people. He says, You people have burned the vineyard, and what you stole from the poor is still in your houses.

¹⁵What gives you the right to hurt my people? What gives you the right to push the faces of the poor into the dirt? The Lord GOD All-Powerful said this.

¹⁶The LORD says, The women in Zion have become very proud. They walk around with their heads in the air, acting like they are better than other people. They flirt with their eyes and make tinkling sounds with their ankle bracelets as they take their quick little steps.

¹⁷The Lord will put sores on the heads of those women in Zion. The LORD will make their heads bald.

¹⁸Then the Lord will take away everything they are proud of: the

beautiful ankle bracelets, the necklaces that look like the sun and the moon,
¹⁹ the earrings, bracelets, and veils,
²⁰ the scarves, the ankle chains, the cloth belts worn around their waists, the bottles of perfume, the charms,
²¹ the signet rings, and the nose rings,
²² the fine dresses, robes, cloaks, and purses,
²³ the mirrors, linen dresses, turbans, and long shawls.

²⁴ Those women now have sweet-smelling perfume, but it will get moldy and stink. Now they wear belts, but then they will have only ropes to wear. Now they have their hair fixed in fancy ways, but then their heads will be shaved they will have no hair. Now they have party dresses, but then they will have only mourning clothes. They have beauty marks on their faces now, but then they will have another mark. It will be a mark burned into their skin to show that they are slaves.

²⁵ Your men will be killed with swords. Your heroes will die in war.

²⁶ There will be crying and sadness in the meeting places by the city gates.

Jerusalem will sit there empty, like a woman who has lost everything to thieves and robbers and now just sits on the ground and cries.

4¹ At that time seven women will grab one man and say, Please marry us! We will supply our own food and make our own clothes. You wont have to do anything else if you let us wear your name and take away our shame.

² At that time the LORD'S plant will be very beautiful and glorious. The people in Israel who survived will be very proud of what the land grows.

³ And all those who are left in Zion and Jerusalem will be called holy. Their names were on the list of people in Jerusalem who were allowed to live.

⁴ The Lord will wash away the filth from the daughters of Zion. He will wash away the blood from Jerusalem. With a spirit of judgment that burns like fire, he will make everything pure.

⁵ Then the LORD will create a cloud of smoke in the day and a bright flame of fire at night over every building and over every meeting of the people on the

mountain of Zion. And there will be a covering over everyone for protection.

⁶It will be a shelter to protect the people from the heat of the sun and from all kinds of storms and rain.

5¹ Now I will sing a song for my friend, my love song about his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

²He dug and cleared the field and planted the best grapevines there. He built a tower in the middle and cut a winepress into the stone. He expected good grapes to grow there, but there were only rotten ones.

³My friend said, You people living in Jerusalem and you people of Judah, think about me and my vineyard.

⁴What more could I do for my vineyard? I did everything I could. I hoped for good grapes to grow, but there were only rotten ones. Why did that happen?

⁵Now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will pull up the thornbushes that protect it, and I will burn them. I will break down the stone wall and use the stones for a walkway.

⁶I will turn my vineyard into useless land. No one will care for the plants or work in the field. Weeds and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.

⁷The vineyard that belongs to the LORD All-Powerful is the house of Israel. The grapevine, the plant he loves, is the man of Judah. The Lord hoped for justice, but there was only killing. He hoped for fairness, but there were only cries from people being treated badly.

⁸Look at you people! You join houses to houses and fields to fields until there is no room for anyone else. But when the punishment comes, you will be forced to live alone. You will be the only people in the whole land.

⁹I heard the LORD All-Powerful make this oath: I swear, all these houses will be destroyed. These big, fancy houses will be empty.

¹⁰A ten-acre vineyard will make only a little wine, and many sacks of seed will grow only a little grain.

¹¹How terrible it will be for you people who rise early in the morning and go

looking for beer to drink. You stay awake late at night, getting drunk on wine.

¹²At your parties with your wine, harps, drums, flutes, and other musical instruments, you don't see what the LORD has done. You don't notice what his hands have made.

¹³My people don't really know God. So they will be captured and taken away. Everyone, the respected leaders and the common people as well, will be hungry and thirsty.

¹⁴They will die, and the place of death will open its mouth wide and swallow many of them. Then the noisy crowds and all the beautiful, happy people who are now so comfortable will go down into the grave.

¹⁵Everyone, common people and leaders alike, will be humbled. Those who are now so proud will bow their heads in shame.

¹⁶The LORD All-Powerful will judge fairly, and people will honor him. They will respect the Holy God when he brings justice.

¹⁷ Their cities will become fields where lambs can graze. Young goats will eat grass where rich people once lived.

¹⁸ Look at those people! They pull their guilt and sins behind them like people pulling wagons with ropes.

¹⁹ They say, We wish God would hurry and do what he plans to do so that we can see it. Let his plan happen soon so that we can know what it is.

²⁰ Look at those people! They say good is bad and bad is good. They think light is dark and dark is light. They think sour is sweet and sweet is sour.

²¹ They think they are so smart. They think they are very intelligent.

²² They are famous for drinking wine and are heroes known for mixing drinks.

²³ And if you pay them enough money, they will forgive a criminal. But they will not let good people be judged fairly.

²⁴ So bad things will happen to them. Their descendants will be destroyed completely, just as fire burns straw and leaves. Their descendants will be like plants with rotten roots, whose flowers have all blown away like dust in the wind. Those people refused to obey the

teachings of the LORD All-Powerful. They hated the message from the Holy One of Israel.

²⁵ So the LORD became angry with his people, and he raised his hand to punish them. Even the mountains shook with fear. Dead bodies were left in the streets like garbage. And he is not finished yet. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing his people.

²⁶ Look! God is giving a sign to the nations far away. He is raising a flag and whistling for them to come. Now the enemy is coming from a faraway land and will soon enter the country. They are moving very quickly.

²⁷ The enemy soldiers never get tired and stumble. They never get sleepy and fall asleep. Their weapon belts are always ready. Their sandal straps never break.

²⁸ Their arrows are sharp. Their bows are strung and ready to shoot. The horses hooves are as hard as flint. Clouds of dust rise from behind their chariots.

²⁹ The shouts of the enemy sound like the roar of lions. Like strong, young

lions, they growl and grab their prey. The captives struggle and try to escape, but there is no one to save them.

³⁰Then there is a roar as loud as the ocean waves, and the captives turn their faces to the ground. And there is only darkness closing in as the light fades away in a black cloud.

6¹In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a very high and wonderful throne. His long robe filled the Temple.

²Seraph angels stood around him. Each angel had six wings. They used two wings to cover their faces, two wings to cover their bodies, and two wings to fly.

³The angels were calling to each other, Holy, holy, holy is the LORD All-Powerful. His Glory fills the whole earth.

⁴The sound was so loud that it caused the frame around the door to shake, and the Temple was filled with smoke.

⁵I was frightened and said, Oh, no! I will be destroyed. I am not pure enough to speak to God, and I live among people who are not pure enough to speak to him. But I have seen the King, the LORD All-Powerful.

⁶There was a fire on the altar. One of the Seraph angels used a pair of tongs to take a hot coal from the fire. Then the angel flew to me with it in his hand.

⁷Then he touched my mouth with the hot coal and said, When this hot coal touched your lips, your guilt was taken away, and your sins were erased.

⁸Then I heard the Lords voice, saying, Who can I send? Who will go for us? So I said, Here I am. Send me!

⁹Then the Lord said, Go and tell the people, Listen closely, but dont understand. Look closely, but dont learn.

¹⁰Confuse them. Make them unable to understand what they hear and see. If you dont do this, they might really look with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their minds. Then they might come back to me and be healed!

¹¹Then I asked, Lord, how long should I do this? He answered, Do this until the cities are destroyed and all the people are gone. Do this until there is no one left living in the houses and the land is destroyed and empty.

¹²The LORD will make the people go far away, and there will be large areas of empty land in the country.

¹³A tenth of the people will be allowed to stay in the land, but it will be destroyed again. They will be like an oak tree. When the tree is chopped down, a stump is left. This stump will be a very special seed that will grow again.

7¹ Ahaz was the son of Jotham, who was the son of Uzziah. Rezin was the king of Aram, Pekah son of Remaliah was the king of Israel. When Ahaz was king of Judah, Rezin and Pekah went up to Jerusalem to attack it, but they were not able to defeat the city.

²The family of David received a message that said, The armies of Aram and Ephraim have joined together in one camp. When King Ahaz heard this message, he and the people became frightened. They shook with fear like trees of the forest blowing in the wind.

³Then the LORD told Isaiah, You and your son Shear Jashub should go out and talk to Ahaz. Go to the place where the water flows into the Upper Pool, on

the street that leads up to Laundrymans Field.

⁴Tell Ahaz, Be careful, but be calm. Dont be afraid. Dont let those two men, Rezin and Remaliahs son, frighten you! They are like two burning sticks. They might be hot now, but soon they will be nothing but smoke. Rezin, Aram, and Remaliahs son became angry

⁵and made plans against you. They said,

⁶Lets go fight against Judah and divide it among ourselves. Then we will make Tabeels son the new king of Judah.

⁷But the Lord GOD says, Their plan will not succeed; it will not happen,

⁸because Damascus is the capital of Aram, and Rezin is the ruler of Damascus for now.

⁹Samaria is the capital of Ephraim, and Remaliahs son is the ruler of Samaria for now. If you dont believe this, you will not survive.

¹⁰Then the LORD spoke to Ahaz again

¹¹and said, Ask for a sign from the LORD your God to prove to yourself that this is true. You can ask for any sign you

want. The sign can come from a place as deep as Sheol or as high as the skies.

¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask for a sign as proof. I will not test the LORD.

¹³Then Isaiah said, Family of David, listen very carefully! Is it not enough that you would test the patience of humans? Will you now test the patience of my God?

¹⁴But the Lord will still show you this sign: The young woman is pregnant and will give birth to a son. She will name him Immanuel.

¹⁵He will eat milk curds and honey as he learns to choose good and refuse evil.

¹⁶But before he is old enough to make that choice, the land of the two kings you fear will be empty.

¹⁷But the LORD will bring troubled times to you. These troubles will be worse than anything that has happened since the time Israel separated from Judah. This will happen to your people and to your fathers family when God brings the king of Assyria to fight against you.

¹⁸At that time the LORD will call for the Fly that is now near the streams of

Egypt, and he will call for the Bee that is now in the country of Assyria. Those enemies will come to your country.

¹⁹They will settle in the deep valleys and in the caves, by the thornbushes and watering holes.

²⁰The Lord will use Assyria to punish Judah. Assyria will be hired and used like a razor to shave off Judah's beard and to remove the hair from his head and body.

²¹At that time someone might keep only one young cow and two sheep alive.

²²But there will be enough milk for them to eat milk curds. In fact, everyone left in the country will eat milk curds and honey.

²³There are now fields that have 1000 grapevines, and each grapevine is worth 1000 pieces of silver. But those fields will be covered with weeds and thorns.

²⁴That land will be wild and used only as a hunting ground where people go with bows and arrows.

²⁵People once worked the soil and grew food on these hills, but at that time they will not go there, because the fields will be covered with weeds and thorns. It will

be a place where cattle graze and sheep wander.

8¹The LORD told me, Get a large scroll, and use an ordinary pen to write these words: This is for Maher Shalal Hash Baz.

²I found some men who could be trusted to serve as witnesses: Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah. They watched me write those words.

³Then I went to my wife, the woman prophet. She became pregnant and had a son. The LORD told me, Name the boy Maher Shalal Hash Baz.

⁴He said that because before the boy learns to say Mama and Daddy, God will take all the wealth and riches from Damascus and Samaria and give them to the king of Assyria.

⁵The LORD spoke to me again.

⁶He said, These people refuse to accept the slow-moving waters of Shiloah. They prefer Rezin and Remaliahs son.

⁷But the Lord will bring the king of Assyria and all his power against them. The Assyrians will come like their swift moving river, like water that rises and spills over its banks.

⁸This water will be like a flash flood as it passes through Judah. It will rise to Judah's throat and almost drown him. But he will spread his wings over your whole country, Immanuel.

⁹All you nations, prepare for war. You will be defeated. Listen, all you faraway countries! Prepare for battle. You will be defeated.

¹⁰Make your plans for the fight. Your plans will be defeated. Give orders to your armies, but your orders will be useless, because God is with us!

¹¹The LORD spoke to me with his great power and warned me not to be like these people. He said,

¹²Don't think there is a plan against you just because the people say there is. Don't be afraid of what they fear. Don't let them frighten you!

¹³The LORD All-Powerful is the one you should fear. He is the one you should respect. He is the one who should frighten you.

¹⁴If you people would respect him, he would be a safe place for you. But you don't respect him, so he is like a stone that you stumble over. He is a rock that

makes both families of Israel fall. He has become a trap that all the people of Jerusalem will fall into.

¹⁵(Many people will trip over this rock. They will fall and be broken. They will be caught in the trap.)

¹⁶The Lord said, Write this agreement. Tie it up and seal it so that it cannot be changed. Give these teachings to my followers for safekeeping.

¹⁷The LORD has turned away from the family of Jacob. But I will wait for him. I trust that he will come to save us.

¹⁸Here I am with the children the LORD has given me. We are here as signs from the LORD All-Powerful, who lives on Mount Zion. He is using us to show his plans for the people of Israel.

¹⁹The people will say, Go to the fortunetellers and wizards who mumble and chirp like birds. Ask them what to do. But I say, Shouldnt people go to their God for help? Why go to the dead to get help for the living?

²⁰You should follow the teachings and the agreement. I swear, if you follow those other things, there is no future for you.

²¹ When the enemy comes, there will be hard times and hunger. And when he becomes hungry, he will become angry. He will say curses in the name of his king and his gods. Then he will lift his head upwards like a roaring lion.

²² And when the captives turn their faces to the ground, there is only a depressing darkness closing in the dark sadness of people forced to leave their country.

9¹ But there will be an end to the gloom those people suffered. In the past, people thought the land of Zebulun and Naphtali was not important. But later, that land will be honored the land along the sea, the land east of the Jordan River, and Galilee where the people from other nations live.

² Those people lived in darkness, but they will see a great light. They lived in a place as dark as death, but a great light will shine on them.

³ God, you will make the nation grow, and you will make the people happy. They will rejoice in your presence as they do at harvest time. It will be like

the joy when people take their share of things they have won in war.

⁴That will happen because you will lift the heavy yoke off their shoulders and take away their heavy burden. You will take away the rod that the enemy used to punish your people, as you did when you defeated Midian.

⁵Every boot that marched in battle and every uniform stained with blood will be destroyed and thrown into the fire.

⁶This will happen when the special child is born. God will give us a son who will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be Wonderful Counselor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.

⁷His power will continue to grow, and there will be peace without end. This will establish him as the king sitting on Davids throne and ruling his kingdom. He will rule with goodness and justice forever and ever. The strong love that the LORD All-Powerful has for his people will make this happen!

⁸The Lord gave a command against Jacob, and someone in Israel fell.

⁹So all the people in Ephraim, including the ruler in Samaria, learned their lesson. Those people are very proud and boastful now. They say,

¹⁰Yes, those bricks fell, but we will rebuild with strong stone. Yes, those little trees were chopped down, but we will plant new trees. And they will be large, strong trees.

¹¹The LORD found people to go up and fight against Rezin. He stirred up Rezins enemies.

¹²As for Israel, the Arameans are in front of him and the Philistines are behind him. And they are both eating away at him. But the Lord is not finished yet. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing Israel.

¹³The people did not stop sinning. They did not come to the LORD All-Powerful for help.

¹⁴So the LORD cut off Israels head and tail. He took away the branch and the stalk in one day.

¹⁵The head means the elders and important leaders. The tail means the prophets who told lies.

¹⁶Their guides are leading them the wrong way, so those who follow them will be destroyed.

¹⁷All of them are evil. So the Lord is not happy with the young men, and he will not show mercy to their widows and orphans. That is because they are evil hypocrites. They tell lies. The Lord has punished them, but he is not finished yet. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing his people.

¹⁸That evil was like a small fire that started among the weeds and thorns and then spread to the larger bushes in the forest. Finally, it became a giant fire, and everything went up in smoke.

¹⁹The LORD All-Powerful was angry, so the land was burned. The people were fuel for the fire. No one showed any compassion to anyone else.

²⁰People looked to the right and grabbed whatever they could, but they were still hungry. They grabbed whatever was on their left, but still they were not satisfied. So they turned on themselves and began to eat the bodies of their own children.

²¹ Manasseh fought against Ephraim, and Ephraim fought against Manasseh. Then both of them turned on Judah. But the Lord is not finished punishing his people. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing them.

10¹ Just look at those lawmakers who write evil laws and make life hard for the people.

² They are not fair to the poor. They take away the rights of the poor and allow people to steal from widows and orphans.

³ Lawmakers, you will have to explain what you have done. What will you do then? Your destruction is coming from a faraway country. Where will you run for help? Your money and your riches will not help you.

⁴ You will have to bow down like a prisoner. You will fall down like a dead man, but that will not help you. God will still be angry and ready to punish you.

⁵ The Lord says, I will use Assyria like a stick. In my anger I will use Assyria to punish Israel.

⁶ I will send Assyria to fight against the people who do evil. I am angry with

them, and I will command Assyria to fight against them. Assyria will defeat them and take their wealth. Israel will be like dirt for Assyria to trample in the streets.

⁷ But Assyria does not understand that I will use him. He does not think of himself as my tool. He only wants to destroy other people. He only plans to destroy many nations.

⁸ Assyria says to himself, All of my officers are like kings!

⁹ The city of Calno is no better than the city of Carchemish. Arpad is like Hamath, and Samaria is like Damascus.

¹⁰ I defeated those evil kingdoms, and now I control them. The idols those people worship are better than the idols of Jerusalem and Samaria.

¹¹ I defeated Samaria and her gods. I will also defeat Jerusalem and the idols her people have made.

¹² When the Lord finishes doing what he planned to Jerusalem and Mount Zion, he will punish Assyria. The king of Assyria is very proud. His pride made him do many bad things, so God will punish him.

¹³The king of Assyria said, I am very wise. By my own wisdom and power I have done many great things. I have defeated many nations. I have taken their wealth and their people as slaves. I am a very powerful man.

¹⁴With my own hands I have taken the riches of all these people, like someone taking eggs from a birds nest. A bird often leaves its nest and eggs, and there is nothing to protect the nest. There is no bird to chirp and fight with its wings and beak, so anyone can come take the eggs. And there is no one to stop me from taking all the people on earth.

¹⁵An ax is not better than the one who cuts with it. A saw is not better than the one who uses it. Is a stick stronger than the one who picks it up? It cant do anything to the person who is using it to punish someone!

¹⁶But Assyria doesnt understand this. So the Lord GOD All-Powerful will send a terrible disease against him. He will lose his wealth and power like a sick man losing weight. Then Assyrias glory will be destroyed. It will be like a fire burning until everything is gone.

¹⁷ The Light of Israel will be like a fire. The Holy One will be like a flame. He will be like a fire that first begins to burn the weeds and thorns

¹⁸ and then spreads to burn up the tall trees and vineyards. Finally, everything will be destroyed even the people. Assyria will be like a rotting log.

¹⁹ There will be a few trees left standing in the forest, so few that even a child could count them.

²⁰ Then the people from Jacobs family who are left living in Israel will stop depending on the one who beat them. They will learn to depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.

²¹ Those who are left in Jacobs family will again follow the Powerful God.

²² Israel, your people are as many as the sands of the sea, but only a few of them will be left to come back to God. But before that happens, your country will be destroyed. God has announced that he will destroy the land. And then justice will come into the land like a river flowing full.

²³ The Lord GOD All-Powerful really will destroy this land.

²⁴ The Lord GOD All-Powerful says, My people living in Zion, dont be afraid of Assyria! Yes, he will beat you, and it will be just like the time when Egypt beat you with a stick.

²⁵ But after a short time, my anger will stop. I will be satisfied that Assyria has punished you enough.

²⁶ Then the LORD All-Powerful will beat Assyria with a whip, just as he defeated Midian at Raven Rock. He will punish his enemies, as he did when he raised his stick over the sea and led his people from Egypt.

²⁷ He will take away the troubles Assyria brought you, troubles that are like heavy weights carried with a yoke on your neck. But that yoke will be taken off your neck. The burden will be lifted from your shoulders.

²⁸ The army of Assyria will enter near the Ruins (Aiath). They will walk on the Threshing Floor (Migron). They will keep their food in the Storehouse (Micmash).

²⁹ The army will cross the river at the Crossing (Maabarah) and sleep at Geba. Ramah will be afraid, and the people at Gibeah of Saul will run away.

³⁰Cry out, Bath Gallim! Laishah, listen! Anathoth, answer me!

³¹The people of Madmenah are running away. The people of Gebim are hiding.

³²This day the army will stop at Nob and prepare to fight against Mount Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

³³Look, the Lord GOD All-Powerful will use his great power and chop down that great tree. Their highest officials will be brought down. Their most important leaders will be humbled.

³⁴God will cut down his enemies. Like the tall trees of Lebanon he will cut them down with an ax.

11 ¹A small tree will begin to grow from the stump of Jesse. That branch will grow from Jesses roots.

²The LORD'S Spirit will always be with this new king to give him wisdom, understanding, guidance, and power. The Spirit will help him know and respect the LORD.

³He will find joy in obeying the LORD. This king will not judge people by the way things look. He will not judge by listening to rumors.

⁴ He will judge the poor fairly and honestly. He will be fair when he decides what to do for the poor of the land. If he decides people should be beaten, he will give the command, and they will be beaten. If he decides people must die, he will give the command, and those evil people will be killed. Goodness and fairness will be like a belt he wears around his waist.

⁵ (11: 4)

⁶ Then wolves will live at peace with lambs, and leopards will lie down with young goats. An ox and a lion will eat together. And a little child will be able to lead them.

⁷ Bears and cattle will graze in the same field, and all their young will lie down together and will not hurt each other. Lions will eat hay like cattle.

⁸ Even snakes will not harm people. Babies will be able to play near a cobra's hole and put their hands into the nest of a poisonous snake.

⁹ People will stop hurting each other. People on my holy mountain will not want to destroy things because they will know the LORD. The world will be full of

knowledge about him, like the sea is full of water.

¹⁰At that time there will be someone special from Jesses family. He will be like a flag that all the nations gather around. The nations will come to him and ask him what they should do. And the place where he is will be filled with glory.

¹¹At that time the Lord will again reach out and gather his people who are left in countries like Assyria, North Egypt, South Egypt, Ethiopia, Elam, Babylonia, Hamath, and other faraway countries around the world.

¹²He will gather the people of Israel and Judah who were forced to leave their country. They were scattered to all the faraway places on earth. But he will raise the flag as a sign for the other nations, and he will gather his people together again.

¹³Then Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, and Judah will have no enemies left. And Judah will not cause trouble for Ephraim.

¹⁴But Ephraim and Judah will attack the Philistines. These two nations will be like birds flying down to catch a

small animal. Together, they will take the riches from the people in the East. Ephraim and Judah will control Edom, Moab, and the people in Ammon.

¹⁵Just as the LORD divided the Red Sea near Egypt, he will raise his arm in anger over the Euphrates River and hit it. It will divide into seven small rivers. They will be so small that the people can walk across with their sandals on.

¹⁶Then God's people who are left in Assyria will have a way to leave. It will be just like the time God took the people out of Egypt.

12¹At that time you will say, I praise you, LORD! You have been angry with me, but don't be angry with me now. Show your love to me.

²God is the one who saves me. I trust him, and I am not afraid. The LORD YAH is my strength. He saves me, and I sing songs of praise about him.

³You people will get your water from the spring of salvation. Then you will be happy.

⁴At that time you will say, Praise the LORD and call out his name! Tell

everyone what he has done and how wonderful he is.

⁵Sing songs of praise about the LORD, because he has done great things. Spread this news about God throughout the whole world. Let all people know these things.

⁶People of Zion, shout about these things! The Holy One of Israel is with you in a powerful way. So sing and be happy!

13¹ God gave Isaiah son of Amoz this message about Babylon:

²Raise a flag on that mountain where nothing grows. Call out to the men. Wave your arms to let them know they should enter through the gates for important leaders.

³I have separated these men from the people, and I myself will command them. I have gathered these proud, happy soldiers of mine to show how angry I am.

⁴Listen to that loud noise in the mountains. It sounds like crowds of people. People from many kingdoms are gathering together. The LORD All-Powerful is calling his army together.

⁵They are coming from a faraway land. They are coming from beyond the horizon. The LORD will use this army as a weapon to show his anger. They will destroy the whole country.

⁶The LORD'S special day is near. So cry and be sad for yourselves. A time is coming when the enemy will steal your wealth. God All-Powerful will make that happen.

⁷People will lose their courage. Fear will make them weak.

⁸Everyone will be afraid. They will stare at each other with shock on their faces. Fear will grip them like the pains of a woman in childbirth.

⁹Look, the LORD'S special day is coming! It will be a terrible day. God will be very angry. He will destroy the country and wipe out the sinful people who live there.

¹⁰The skies will be dark. The sun, the moon, and the stars will not shine.

¹¹The Lord says, I will cause bad things to happen to the world. I will punish the evil people for their sin. I will make proud people lose their pride. I will stop the bragging of cruel people.

¹²There will be only a few people left. They will be as rare as pure gold.

¹³In my anger I will shake the sky, and the earth will be moved from its place. That will happen on the day the LORD All-Powerful shows his anger.

¹⁴Then the people from Babylon will run away like wounded deer or sheep that have no shepherd. Everyone will turn and run back to their own country and people.

¹⁵Anyone caught by the enemy will be killed with a sword.

¹⁶Everything in their houses will be stolen. Their wives will be raped, and their little children will be beaten to death while they watch.

¹⁷The Lord says, Look, I will cause the armies of Media to attack Babylon. No one can stop them even with offers of gold and silver.

¹⁸With their bows and arrows they will kill the young men. They will not show any kindness or mercy even to the babies and young children.

¹⁹Babylon is the most beautiful of all kingdoms, and the Babylonians are very

proud of it. But I, the Lord, will destroy Babylon like Sodom and Gomorrah.

²⁰No one will ever live in Babylon again. People will stay away from there. Not even those who move from place to place will ever set up their tents there. And shepherds will not let their sheep rest there.

²¹The only animals living there will be wild animals from the desert. People will not be living in their houses in Babylon. The houses will be full of owls and large birds. Wild goats will play in the houses.

²²Wild dogs and wolves will howl in the great and beautiful buildings. Babylon will be finished. The end is near, and it will not be delayed.

14¹The LORD will again show his love to Jacob. He will again choose the people of Israel. He will give them their land. Then the non-Israelites will join the Israelites, and both will become one family Jacobs family.

²Those nations will bring the Israelites back to their land. The men and women from the other nations will become slaves to Israel. In the past, those people forced the Israelites to become their

slaves. But in the future the Israelites will defeat those nations, and Israel will then rule over them in the LORD's land.

³In the past, you were slaves. People forced you to work hard. But the LORD will take away the hard work you were forced to do.

⁴At that time you will begin to sing this song about the king of Babylon: The king was cruel when he ruled us, but now his rule is finished.

⁵The LORD breaks the scepter of evil rulers; he takes away their power.

⁶In anger, the king of Babylon beat the people. He never stopped beating them. He was an evil ruler who ruled in anger. He never stopped hurting people.

⁷But now, the whole country rests and is quiet. Now the people begin to celebrate.

⁸You were an evil king, and now you are finished. Even the pine trees are happy. The cedar trees of Lebanon rejoice. They say, The king chopped us down, but now the king has fallen, and he will never stand again.

⁹The place of death is excited that you are coming. Sheol is waking the spirits

of all the leaders of the earth for you. Sheol is making the kings stand up from their thrones to meet you.

¹⁰They will make fun of you, saying, Now you are as dead as we are. Now you are just like us.

¹¹Your pride has been sent down to Sheol. The music from your harps announces the coming of your proud spirit. Maggots will be the bed you lie on, and other worms will cover your body like a blanket.

¹²You were like the morning star, but you have fallen from the sky. In the past, all the nations on earth bowed down before you, but now you have been cut down.

¹³You always told yourself, I will go to the skies above. I will put my throne above Gods stars. I will sit on Zaphon, the holy mountain where the gods meet.

¹⁴I will go up to the altar above the tops of the clouds. I will be like God Most High.

¹⁵But that did not happen. You were brought down to the deep pitSheol, the place of death.

¹⁶ People will come to look at your dead body. They will think about you and say, Is this the same man who caused great fear in all the kingdoms on earth,

¹⁷ who destroyed cities and turned the land into a desert, who captured people in war and would not let them go home?

¹⁸ The kings of other nations lie buried with honor, each king with his own grave.

¹⁹ But you were thrown out, far from your grave, like a rotting branch cut from a tree. You are like a dead man who fell in battle, trampled under the feet of other soldiers. Now you look like any other dead man wrapped in burial clothes.

²⁰ Other kings have their own graves, but you will not join them, because you ruined your own country and killed your own people. So your wicked descendants will be stopped.

²¹ Prepare to kill his children, because their father is guilty. His children will never take control of the land. They will never fill the world with their cities.

²² The LORD All-Powerful said, I will stand and fight against those people. I will destroy the famous city,

Babylon. I will destroy all the people there. I will destroy their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren. The LORD himself said this.

²³I will change Babylon. It will be a place for animals, not people. It will be a swamp. I will use the broom of destruction to sweep Babylon away. The LORD All-Powerful said this.

²⁴The LORD All-Powerful made this promise: This will happen exactly as I meant for it to happen. It will happen just the way I planned.

²⁵I will destroy the king of Assyria in my country. I will trample him on my mountains. He forced my people to be his slaves; he put a yoke on their necks. But that pole will be taken off Judah's neck, and that burden will be removed.

²⁶This is what I plan to do for this land. I will use my power to punish all those nations.

²⁷When the LORD All-Powerful makes a plan, no one can change it. When he raises his arm to punish, no one can stop him.

²⁸This message was given to me the year King Ahaz died:

²⁹Country of Philistia, don't be happy that the king who beat you is now dead. It is true that his rule has ended, but his son will come and rule. It will be like one snake giving birth to a more dangerous one. The new king will be like a quick and dangerous snake to you.

³⁰But even the poorest of my people will be able to eat safely. And their children will be able to lie down and feel safe. But I will make your family die from hunger, and your enemy will kill anyone who survives.

³¹People near the city gates, cry! People in the city, cry out! Everyone in Philistia, your courage will melt like hot wax. Look to the north! There is a cloud of dust. An army is coming, and everyone in that army is strong.

³²But what will the messengers from that nation report about us? They will say, The LORD made Zion strong, and his poor people went there for safety.

15¹This is a message about Moab: One night armies took the wealth from Ar in Moab, and the city was

destroyed. One night armies took the wealth from Kir in Moab, and the city was destroyed.

²The king's family and the people of Dibon go to the places of worship to cry. The people of Moab are crying for Nebo and Medeba. They have shaved their heads and beards to show their sadness.

³Everywhere in Moab, on the housetops and in the streets, people are wearing sackcloth. Everyone is crying.

⁴In Heshbon and Elealeh they are crying loudly. You can hear their voices as far away as Jahaz. Even the soldiers are frightened. They are shaking with fear.

⁵My heart cries, full of sorrow for Moab. Its people run away to Zoar for safety. They run to Eglath Shelishiyah. The people are crying as they go up the road to Luhith. You can hear their cries of sorrow as they follow the road to Horonaim.

⁶But Nimrim Brook is as dry as a desert. The grass has dried up, and the plants are all dead. Nothing is green.

⁷ So the people gather up everything they own and cross the border at Arabah stream.

⁸ You can hear crying everywhere in Moab as far away as Eglaim and Beer Elim.

⁹ The water of Dimon is full of blood, and I will bring even more troubles to Dimon. A few people living in Moab have escaped the enemy, but I will send lions to eat them.

16 ¹ You people should send a gift to the king of the land. You should send a lamb from Sela, through the desert, to the mountain in the city of Jerusalem.

² The women of Moab try to cross the river Arnon. They run around looking for help, like little birds that have fallen from their nest.

³ They say, Help us! Tell us what to do. Protect us from our enemies as shade protects us from the noon sun. We are running from our enemies. Hide us! Don't give us to our enemies.

⁴ People from Moab were forced to leave their homes. So let them live in your land. Hide them from their enemies.

The robbing will stop. The enemy will be defeated. The men who hurt the people will be gone from the land.

⁵Then a new king will come. He will be from Davids family. He will be loyal, loving, and kind. He will be a king who judges fairly. He will do what is right and good.

⁶We have heard that the people of Moab are very proud and conceited. They are hot-tempered braggers, but their boasts are only empty words.

⁷Because of their pride, everyone in Moab will mourn. They will wish for the way things used to be. They will wish for the raisin cakes from Kir Hareseth.

⁸The fields of Heshbon and the vines of Sibmah no longer grow grapes. Foreign rulers have destroyed the vines. The enemy has reached Jazer and has spread into the desert and down to the sea.

⁹I will cry with the people of Jazer and Sibmah, because the grapes have been destroyed. I will cry with the people of Heshbon and Elealeh because there will be no harvest. There will be no summer fruit, and there will be no shouts of joy for the harvest.

¹⁰There will be no joy and happiness in the orchard. I will end the happy singing and shouting in the vineyard. The grapes are ready to make wine, but they will all be ruined.

¹¹So I will hum a sad song for Moab and Kir Heres, like a harp playing a funeral song.

¹²The people of Moab will go to their high places to worship. They will go to their temple to pray, but it will not help them.

¹³The LORD said these things about Moab many times.

¹⁴And now the LORD says, In three years (counting as exactly as a hired helper would) all those people and the things they are proud of will be gone. Only a few of their weakest people will be left.

17¹This is a message about Damascus: Damascus is now a city, but it will be destroyed. Only ruined buildings will be left there.

²People will leave the cities of Aroer. Flocks of sheep will wander freely in those empty towns; there will be no one to bother them.

³The fort cities of Ephraim will be destroyed. The government in Damascus will be finished. Those left in Aram will lose everything, just like the people of Israel, says the LORD All-Powerful.

⁴At that time Jacobs wealth will all be gone. Yes, Israel will be like a sick man who has become weak and thin.

⁵That time will be like the grain harvest in Rephaim Valley. The workers gather the plants that grow in the field. Then they cut the heads of grain from the plants and collect the grain.

⁶That time will also be like the olive harvest. People knock olives from the trees, but a few olives are usually left at the top of each tree. Four or five olives are left on some of the top branches. It will be the same for those cities, says the LORD All-Powerful.

⁷Then the people will look up to the one who made them. Their eyes will see the Holy One of Israel.

⁸They will not trust the great things they have made. They will not go to the special gardens and altars they made for false gods.

⁹At that time all the walled cities will be empty. They will be like the mountains and the forests in the land before the Israelites came. In the past, all the people ran away because the Israelites were coming. In the future the country will be empty again.

¹⁰This will happen because you have forgotten the God who saves you. You have not remembered that God is your place of safety. You brought some very good grapevines from faraway places. You might plant those grapevines, but they will not grow.

¹¹You will plant your grapevines one day and try to make them grow, and the next day they will blossom. But at harvest time, you will go to gather the fruit from the plants, and you will see that everything is dead. A sickness will kill all the plants.

¹²Listen to all these people! Their loud crying sounds like the noise from the sea. Listen, it is like the crashing of waves in the sea.

¹³And like the waves, they will rush away when God speaks harshly to them. They will be like chaff blown away by the

wind. They will be like weeds chased by a storm.

¹⁴That night, the people will be frightened. By morning, nothing will be left. So our enemies will get nothing. They will come to our land, but nothing will be there.

18¹ Look at the land along the rivers of Ethiopia where you can hear the buzzing of insect wings.

²That land sends people down the Nile River in reed boats. Fast messengers, go to the people who are tall and smooth, who are feared far and wide. Go to that powerful nation that defeats other countries and whose land is divided by rivers. Go warn them!

³Like a flag on a hill, everyone on earth will see what happens. Like a trumpet call, everyone in the country will hear it.

⁴The LORD said, I will be in the place prepared for me. I will quietly watch these things happen: On a beautiful summer day, at noon, people will be resting. It will be during the hot harvest time when there is no rain, but only early morning dew.

⁵Then something terrible will happen. Earlier in the year, the flowers bloomed and the new grapes formed buds and began to grow. But before the crop is harvested, the enemy will come and cut the plants. They will break the vines and throw them away.

⁶The vines will be left for the birds from the mountains and the wild animals to eat. The birds will feed on them throughout the summer, and that winter the wild animals will eat the vines.

⁷At that time a special offering will be brought to the LORD All-Powerful from the people who are tall and smooth, from those who are feared far and wide, from that powerful nation that defeats other countries and whose land is divided by rivers. This offering will be brought to the LORD'S place on Mount Zion.

19¹A message about Egypt: Look, the LORD is coming on a fast cloud. He will enter Egypt, and all the false gods of Egypt will shake with fear. Egypt's courage will melt away like hot wax.

²The Lord says, I will cause the Egyptians to fight against themselves.

Men will fight their brothers. Neighbors will be against neighbors. Cities will be against cities. Kingdoms will be against kingdoms.

³The Egyptians will be afraid and confused. They will ask their false gods and wise men what they should do. They will ask their wizards and magicians, but I will ruin their plans.

⁴The Lord GOD All-Powerful says, I will give Egypt to a hard master. A powerful king will rule over the people.

⁵The water in the Nile River will dry up and disappear.

⁶All the rivers will smell very bad. The canals in Egypt will be dry, and the water will be gone. All the water plants will rot.

⁷All the plants along the riverbanks will die and blow away. Even the plants at the widest part of the river will dry up, blow away, and disappear.

⁸The fishermen, all those who catch fish from the Nile River, will become sad and they will cry. They depend on the Nile River for their food, but it will be dry.

⁹Those who make cloth from flax, who weave it into linen, will all be sad.

¹⁰Those who weave cloth will be broken, and those who work for money will be depressed.

¹¹The leaders of the city of Zoan are fools. Pharaohs wise advisors give bad advice. They say they are wise. They say they are from the old family of the kings, but they are not as smart as they think.

¹²Egypt, where are your wise men? They should learn what the LORD All-Powerful has planned for Egypt. They should be the ones to tell you what will happen.

¹³The leaders of Zoan have been fooled. The leaders of Noph have believed lies, so they lead Egypt the wrong way.

¹⁴The LORD confused them, so they wander around and lead Egypt the wrong way. Everything they do is wrong. They are like drunks rolling in their vomit.

¹⁵There is nothing the leaders can do. They are the heads and the tails. They are the tops and the stalks of plants.

¹⁶At that time the Egyptians will be like frightened women. They will be afraid of the LORD All-Powerful, because he will raise his arm to punish the people.

¹⁷ The land of Judah brings fear to everyone in Egypt. Anyone in Egypt who hears the name Judah will be afraid. This will happen because the LORD All-Powerful has planned terrible things to happen to Egypt.

¹⁸ At that time there will be five cities in Egypt where people speak Hebrew. One of these cities will be named Destruction City. The people in these cities will promise to follow the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁹ At that time there will be an altar for the LORD in the middle of Egypt. At the border of Egypt there will be a monument to show honor to the LORD.

²⁰ This will be a sign to show that the LORD All-Powerful does amazing things. Any time the people cry for help from the LORD, he will send help. He will send someone to save and defend the people to rescue the people from those who hurt them.

²¹ At that time the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and they really will know the LORD. They will serve him and give him many sacrifices. They will make promises to the LORD, and they will do what they promise.

²²The LORD will punish the Egyptians, but then he will heal them, and they will come back to him. The LORD will listen to their prayers and heal them.

²³At that time there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. Then the Assyrians will go to Egypt, and the Egyptians will go to Assyria. Egypt will work with Assyria.

²⁴Then Israel, Assyria, and Egypt will join together and control the land. This will be a blessing for the land.

²⁵The LORD All-Powerful will bless these countries. He will say, Egypt, you are my people. Assyria, I made you. Israel, I own you. You are all blessed!

20¹Sargon was the king of Assyria. He sent his military commander to fight against Ashdod. The commander went there and captured the city.

²At that time the LORD spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz. He said, Go, take the sackcloth off your waist and the sandals off your feet. So Isaiah obeyed the Lord and went without clothes or sandals.

³Then the LORD said, My servant Isaiah has gone without clothes or sandals for

three years. This is a sign for Egypt and Ethiopia.

⁴The king of Assyria will defeat Egypt and Ethiopia. Assyria will take prisoners and lead them away from their countries. The people, young and old, will be led away without clothes or sandals. They will be completely naked.

⁵Those who looked to Ethiopia for help will be shattered. Those who were amazed by Egypt's glory will be ashamed.

⁶People living along the coast will say, We trusted those countries to help us. We ran to them so that they would rescue us from the king of Assyria. But look at them. They have been captured, so how can we escape?

21 ¹This is a message about the desert by the sea: It is coming like a storm blowing through the Negev. It is coming in from the desert, from a frightening nation.

²I was given a vision of the hard times to come. I see traitors turning against you. I see people taking your wealth. Elam, go against them! Media, surround the city! I will put an end to all their moaning.

³I saw those terrible things, and now I am afraid. My fear makes my stomach hurt like the pain of giving birth. What I hear frightens me. What I see makes me shake with fear.

⁴I am worried and shaking with fear. My pleasant evening has become a nightmare.

⁵People are rushing around shouting their orders: Set the table! Post the guard! Get something to eat and drink! Officers, get up! Polish your shields!

⁶The Lord said to me, Go find someone to guard this city. He must report whatever he sees.

⁷Whether he sees a chariot and a team of horses or men riding donkeys or camels, he must listen carefully.

⁸Then one day the watchman called out, My master, every day I have been in the watchtower watching. Every night I have been standing on duty.

⁹Look! I see a man in a chariot with a team of horses. The messenger said, Babylon has been defeated! It has fallen to the ground! All the statues of her false gods were thrown to the ground and broken to pieces.

¹⁰My people, you will be like the grain crushed on my threshing floor. I have told you everything I heard from the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel.

¹¹This is a message about Dumah: There is someone calling to me from Seir, Guard, how much of the night is left? How much longer will it be night?

¹²The guard answered, Morning is coming, but then night will come again. If you have something else to ask, then come back later and ask.

¹³This is a message about Arabia: A caravan from Dedan spent the night near some trees in the Arabian Desert.

¹⁴They gave water to some thirsty travelers. The people of Tema gave them food.

¹⁵They were running from swords that were ready to kill. They were running from bows that were ready to shoot. They were running from a hard battle.

¹⁶The Lord told me this would happen. He said, In one year, the way a hired helper counts time, all Kedars glory will be gone.

¹⁷ Only a few of the archers, the great soldiers of Kedar, will be left alive. The LORD, the God of Israel, told me this.

22 ¹ This is a message about the Valley of Vision: Jerusalem, what is wrong? Why has everyone gone up to hide in their upper rooms?

² This city was so happy, but now there is a terrible uproar. There are bodies lying everywhere, but they were not killed with swords. The people died, but not while fighting.

³ All your officers ran away together, but they have all been captured without bows. All the leaders ran away together, but they were found and captured.

⁴ So I say, Don't look at me! Let me cry! Don't rush to comfort me about the destruction of Jerusalem.

⁵ The Lord GOD All-Powerful chose a special day for there to be riots and confusion. People trampled on each other in the Valley of Vision. The city walls were pulled down. People in the valley shouted up at those on the mountain.

⁶ Horse soldiers from Elam took their bags of arrows and rode into battle. Soldiers from Kir rattled their shields.

⁷Your favorite valley was filled with chariots. Horse soldiers were stationed in front of the city gates.

⁸Then the cover protecting Judah was removed, and the people turned to the weapons they kept at the Forest Palace.

⁹Then you noticed how many cracks there were in the walls around the City of David, so you began collecting water from the Lower Pool. You counted the houses and used stones from them to repair the walls. Then you built a pool between the double walls for storing water from the Old Pool. You did all this to protect yourselves and did not trust God who made all these things. You did not even notice the one who planned these things long ago.

¹⁰(22: 9)

¹¹(22: 9)

¹²So the Lord GOD All-Powerful told the people to cry and mourn for their dead friends. He told them to shave their heads and wear mourning clothes.

¹³But instead, everyone was happy. The people celebrated by killing cattle and sheep for a feast. Eating meat and

drinking wine, they said, Lets eat and drink now, for tomorrow we die.

¹⁴The LORD All-Powerful said this to me, and I heard it with my own ears: You are guilty of doing wrong, and I promise that you will die before this guilt is forgiven. The Lord GOD All-Powerful said these things.

¹⁵The Lord GOD All-Powerful told me to go to Shebna, the palace manager,

¹⁶and say this: What are you doing here? None of your relatives are buried here, are they? Then what right do you have to prepare a tomb for yourself in this high place? Why are you cutting a tomb out of this rock?

¹⁷What a big man you are! But the LORD will crush you. He will roll you into a small ball and throw you far away into the open arms of another country, and there you will die. You are very proud of your chariots. But in that faraway land, your new ruler will have better chariots. And your chariots will not look important in his palace.

¹⁸(22: 17)

¹⁹I will force you out of your position here. Your new leader will take you away from your important job.

²⁰At that time I will call for my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah.

²¹I will take your robe and put it on him. I will give him your scepter. I will give him the important job you have, and he will be like a father to the people of Jerusalem and Judah's family.

²²I will put the key to David's house around his neck. If he opens a door, no one will be able to close it. If he closes a door, no one will be able to open it.

²³He will be like a favorite chair in his father's house. I will make him like a strong peg in a solid board.

²⁴All the honored and important things of his father's house will hang on him. All the adults and little children will depend on him. They will be like little dishes and big water bottles hanging on him.

²⁵The LORD All-Powerful said, At that time the peg that is now in the solid board will get weak and break. It will fall to the ground, and everything hanging on it will be destroyed. Then everything I said in this message will happen. It

will happen because I, the LORD, said it would.

23¹ This is a message about Tyre: Ships traveling from Cyprus heard this message: Cry, you ships from Tarshish! Your harbor has been destroyed.

² You people living near the sea, mourn in silence. The merchants of Sidon sent traders across the sea and filled the city with riches.

³ They traveled the seas looking for grain. The men from Tyre bought grain that grows near the Nile River and sold it to other nations.

⁴ Sidon, you should be very sad, because now the Sea and the Fort of the Sea say, I have no children. I have never felt the pain of birth; I have never given birth to children. I have never raised young men and women.

⁵ When Egypt hears the news about Tyre, it will feel the pain of sorrow.

⁶ You ships, try to escape to Tarshish! Cry out, you people living near the sea!

⁷ Can this be that happy city that was founded so long ago? Is it that same city

whose people traveled so far to settle other lands?

⁸This city produced so many leaders. Its merchants were like princes. Its traders had the whole world's respect. So who made these plans against Tyre?

⁹It was the LORD All-Powerful. He decided to destroy the great things they were so proud of. He wanted to disgrace those who were so highly respected.

¹⁰Ships from Tarshish, go back home. Cross the sea as if it were a river. No one will stop you now.

¹¹The LORD raised his arm over the sea to make the kingdoms angry enough to fight against Tyre. He commanded Canaan to destroy her place of safety.

¹²He said, City of Sidon, you have been hurt badly, so you will no longer rejoice like a bride. Go ahead, go to Cyprus for help, but you will not find a place to rest there either.

¹³As for Babylon, look at the land of the Chaldeans! It is not even a country now. Assyria built war towers to attack it. The soldiers took everything from the beautiful houses. Assyria destroyed Babylon. They turned it into a pile

of ruins and made it a place for wild animals.

¹⁴So be sad, you ships from Tarshish. Your place of safety has been destroyed.

¹⁵People will forget about Tyre for 70 years that is, about the length of a kings rule. After 70 years, Tyre will be like the prostitute in this song:

¹⁶Oh, woman who men forgot, take your harp and walk through the city. Play your song well and sing it often. Maybe someone will remember you.

¹⁷After 70 years, the LORD will review Tyres case, and he will give her a decision. Tyre will again have trade. She will be like a prostitute for all the nations on earth.

¹⁸But Tyre will not keep the money she earns. The profit from her trade will be saved for the LORD. Tyre will give that money to the people who serve the LORD to buy good food and nice clothes.

24¹ Look, the LORD is destroying this land. He will clean out the land completely and force all the people to go far away.

²At that time, whatever happens to the common people will also happen

to the priests. Slaves and masters will be the same. Women slaves and their women masters will be the same. Buyers and sellers will be the same. Those who borrow and those who lend will be the same. Bankers and those who owe the bank will be the same.

³Everyone will be forced out of the land. All the wealth will be taken. This will happen because the LORD commanded it.

⁴The country will be empty and sad. The world will be empty and weak. The great leaders of the people in this land will become weak.

⁵The people have ruined the land. They did what God said was wrong. They did not obey Gods laws. They made an agreement with God a long time ago, but they broke their agreement with God.

⁶The people living in this land are guilty of doing wrong, so God has vowed to destroy the land. The people will be punished, and only a few of them will survive.

⁷The grapevines are dying. The new wine is bad. People who were happy are now sad.

⁸They have stopped showing their joy. The happy music from the drums and harps has ended.

⁹They no longer sing as they drink their wine. The beer now tastes bitter to those who drink it.

¹⁰Total Confusion is a good name for this city. The city has been destroyed. People cannot enter the houses. The doors are blocked.

¹¹People still ask for wine in the marketplaces, but all the joy is gone. It was carried off with everything else.

¹²All that is left is destruction. Even the gates are crushed.

¹³At harvest time, people knock olives from the trees. But a few olives are left in the trees. It will be like that in this land and among the nations.

¹⁴Those who are left will begin shouting louder than the ocean. They will rejoice about the LORD'S greatness.

¹⁵They will say, People in the east, praise the LORD! People in faraway lands, praise the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

¹⁶We hear songs of praise for God from every place on earth. They praise the

God who does what is right. But I say, Enough! I have had enough. What I see is terrible. Traitors are turning against people and hurting them.

¹⁷I see troubles for you people living in this land. I see fear, pits, and problems all around.

¹⁸People will hear about the danger, and they will be afraid. Some of them will run away, but they will fall into holes and be trapped. Some of them will climb out of the holes, but they will be caught in another trap. The floodgates in the sky above will open, and the floods will begin. The foundations of the earth will shake.

¹⁹There will be earthquakes, and the earth will split open.

²⁰The sins of the world are very heavy, so the earth will fall under the weight. It will shake like an old house. It will fall like a drunk. It will not be able to stand.

²¹At that time the LORD will judge the heavenly armies in heaven and the earthly kings on earth.

²²Many people will be gathered together. They have been locked in the

Pit. They have been in prison. But finally, after a long time, they will be judged.

²³The LORD will rule as king on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. His Glory will be shown to the city leaders with such brightness that the moon will be embarrassed and the sun will be ashamed.

25 ¹LORD, you are my God. I honor you and praise your name, because you have done amazing things. The words you said long ago are completely true; everything happened exactly as you said it would.

²And you destroyed the city that was protected by strong walls. Now it is only a pile of rocks. The foreign palace has been destroyed. It will never be rebuilt.

³That is why powerful nations will honor you. Powerful people from strong cities will fear you.

⁴You have been a safe place for poor people in trouble. You are like a shelter from floods and shade from the heat when powerful men attack. They are like rain streaming down the walls that protect us from the storm.

⁵ Like the heat of summer in a dry land, the angry shouts of those foreigners brought us to our knees. But like a thick cloud that blocks the summer heat, you answered their challenge.

⁶ The LORD All-Powerful will give a feast for all the people on this mountain. At the feast, there will be the best foods and wines. The meat will be good and tender, the wine pure and clear.

⁷ But now there is a veil covering all nations and people. This veil is called death.

⁸ But death will be destroyed forever. And the Lord GOD will wipe away every tear from every face. In the past, all of his people were sad, but God will take away that sadness from the earth. All of this will happen because the LORD said it would.

⁹ At that time people will say, Here is our God! He is the one we have been waiting for. He has come to save us. We have been waiting for our LORD. So we will rejoice and be happy when he saves us.

¹⁰ The LORD'S power is on this mountain, and Moab will be defeated.

The Lord will trample the enemy like someone walking on straw in a pile of waste.

¹¹They will reach out their arms to escape like someone trying to swim. But their pride will sink with each stroke they take.

¹²He will destroy their high walls and safe places. He will throw them down into the dust on the ground.

26 ¹At that time people will sing this song in Judah: We have a strong city with strong walls and defenses. But God gives us our salvation.

²Open the gates for those who do what is right. They are the Gods faithful followers.

³God, you give true peace to people who depend on you, to those who trust in you.

⁴So trust the LORD always, because in the LORD YAH you have a place of safety forever.

⁵But he will destroy the proud city and punish those who live there. He will throw that high city down to the ground. It will fall into the dust.

⁶And those who were hurt by that city will walk all over its ruins. Those who lost everything will trample it under their feet.

⁷Honesty is the path good people follow. They follow the path that is straight and true. And God, you make that way smooth and easy to follow.

⁸But, LORD, we are waiting for your way of justice. We want to honor you and your name.

⁹At night my soul longs to be with you, and the spirit in me wants to be with you at the dawn of every new day. When your way of justice comes to the world, people will learn the right way of living.

¹⁰Evil people will not learn to do good, even if you show them only kindness. They will still do wrong, even if they live in a good world. They never see the LORD'S greatness.

¹¹LORD, your arm is raised to punish them, but they don't see it. Show them how strong your love is for your people. Then those who are evil will be ashamed. Yes, your fire will destroy your enemies.

¹²LORD, you have succeeded in doing everything we tried to do, so give us peace.

¹³LORD, you are our God, but in the past, we followed other lords. We belonged to other masters, but now we want people to remember only one name yours.

¹⁴Those dead lords will not come to life. Those ghosts will not rise from death. You decided to destroy them, and you destroyed everything that makes us think about them.

¹⁵LORD, you have helped the nation you love. You made our nation grow and brought honor to yourself.

¹⁶LORD, people remember you when they are in trouble. So because of your punishment, we called out to you.

¹⁷LORD, because of you we were in pain, like a woman giving birth, who struggles and cries out when it is time.

¹⁸But we struggled in pain for nothing. We gave birth only to wind. We did nothing to save the land. No one was born to live in the world.

¹⁹But the Lord says, Your people have died, but they will live again. The bodies

of my people will rise from death. Dead people in the ground, stand and be happy! The dew covering you is like the dew sparkling in the light of a new day. It shows that a new time is coming, when the earth will give birth to the dead who are in it.

²⁰ My people, go into your rooms and lock your doors. Hide in there for a short time until Gods anger is finished.

²¹ Look! The LORD is coming out from his place to judge the people of the world for the bad things they have done. The earth will reveal the blood that has been spilled on it. It will no longer hide the proof of those murders.

27 ¹ At that time the LORD will judge Leviathan, the crooked snake. He will use his great sword, his hard and powerful sword, to punish Leviathan, that twisting, turning snake. He will kill the monster of the sea.

² At that time people will sing about the pleasant vineyard.

³ I, the LORD, will care for the vineyard. I will water it at the right time. I will guard it day and night. No one will hurt it.

⁴I am not angry. But if there is war and someone builds a wall of thornbushes, then I will march to it and burn it.

⁵But if anyone comes to me for safety and wants to make peace with me, then let them come and make peace.

⁶In the future Jacob will take root firmly on his soil. Then Israel will sprout and bloom, and the world will be filled with his fruit.

⁷Israel was not hurt as badly as the enemy who tried to hurt it. Many of its people were killed, but not as many as those who tried to kill them.

⁸The Lord will settle his argument with Israel by sending the people far away. He will speak harshly to Israel. His words will burn like the hot desert wind.

⁹How will Jacobs guilt be forgiven? What will happen so his sins can be taken away? The rocks of the altar will be crushed to dust; the statues and altars for worshiping false gods will all be destroyed.

¹⁰The great city will be empty; it will be like a desert. All the people will be gone they will run away. The city will be like an open pasture. Young cattle will

eat grass there. The cattle will eat leaves from the branches of the vines.

¹¹The vines will become dry, and the branches will break off. Women will use them for firewood. The people refuse to understand. So God, their Maker, will not comfort them or be kind to them.

¹²At that time the LORD will begin separating his people from others. He will begin at the Euphrates River and will gather his people from there to the River of Egypt. You people of Israel will be gathered together one by one.

¹³Many of my people are now lost in Assyria. Some of my people have run away to Egypt. But at that time a great trumpet will be blown, and all those people will come back to Jerusalem. They will bow down before the LORD on that holy mountain.

28¹ Look at Samaria! The drunks of Ephraim are proud of that city. It sits on a hill with a rich valley around it. The Samaritans think their city is a beautiful crown of flowers. But they are drunk with wine, and this beautiful crown is just a dying plant.

²Look, the Lord has someone who is strong and brave. He will come into the country like a storm of hail and rain. Like a powerful river of water flooding the country, he will throw that crown down to the ground.

³The drunks of Ephraim are proud of their beautiful crown, but that city will be trampled down.

⁴That city sits on a hill with a rich valley around it. But that beautiful crown of flowers is just a dying plant. It will be like the first figs of summer. As soon as someone sees a ripe one, they pick it and eat it.

⁵At that time the LORD All-Powerful will become the Beautiful Crown. He will be the Wonderful Crown of Flowers for his people who are left.

⁶Then he will give wisdom to the judges who rule his people. He will give strength to the people who are in battles at the city gates.

⁷But now those leaders are drunk. The priests and prophets are all drunk with wine and beer. They stumble and fall down. The prophets are drunk when they

see their dreams. The judges are drunk when they make their decisions.

⁸Every table is covered with vomit. There is not a clean place anywhere.

⁹The people say, Who does he think he is trying to teach and explain his message to? Does he think we are babies who were at their mothers breast only a very short time ago?

¹⁰He speaks to us as though we were babies: Saw lasaw saw lasaw Qaw laqaw qaw laqaw Zeer sham zeer sham.

¹¹So God will use this strange way of talking, and he will use other languages to speak to these people.

¹²In the past he spoke to them and said, Here is a resting place. Let those who are tired come and rest. This is the place of peace. But they would not listen to him.

¹³So the LORD'S words will be senseless sounds to them: Saw lasaw saw lasaw. Qaw laqaw qaw laqaw. Zeer sham zeer sham. When the people try to walk, they will fall backwards. They will be defeated, trapped, and captured.

¹⁴You leaders in Jerusalem should listen to the LORD'S message, but now you refuse to listen to him.

¹⁵You have said, We have made an agreement with death. We have a contract with death. So we will not be punished. Punishment will pass us without hurting us. We will hide behind our tricks and lies.

¹⁶Because of these things, the Lord GOD says, Look, I am putting a foundation stone in the ground in Zion, a stone that has been tested. It is a cornerstone of great value that will make a strong foundation to build on. Anyone who trusts in this stone will never be put to shame.

¹⁷Workers use a string and weight to show their work is straight and true. I will use justice as the string and goodness as the weight when I lay that foundation. But your safe places were built on lies. So they will be destroyed and washed away when the troubles come against you like hail storms and floods.

¹⁸Your agreement with death will be erased. Your contract with Sheol will not

help you. Someone will come and punish you. He will make you like the dirt he walks on.

¹⁹He will come and take you away. Your punishment will be terrible. Your punishment will come early in the morning, and it will continue late into the night. Then you will understand this story:

²⁰A man tried to sleep on a bed that was too short for him. He had a blanket that was not wide enough to cover him. The bed and blanket were useless, and so were your agreements.

²¹The LORD will fight as he did at Mount Perazim. He will be angry as he was in Gibeon Valley. He will do what he must do. It will be what some stranger should do, but he will finish his work. Yes, this is a strangers job.

²²Now dont complain about these things. If you fight against them, you will only tighten the ropes around you. The words I heard will not change. They came from the Lord GOD All-Powerful, the ruler of all the earth, and these things will be done.

²³ Listen closely to the message I am telling you.

²⁴ Does a farmer plow his field all the time? No, he doesnt just work the soil.

²⁵ He prepares the ground, and then he plants the seed. He plants different kinds of seeds in different ways. He scatters dill seeds, he throws cumin seeds on the ground, and he plants wheat in rows. A farmer plants barley in its special place, and he plants spelt seeds at the edge of his field.

²⁶ Our God is using this to teach you a lesson. This example shows us that God is fair when he punishes his people.

²⁷ Does a farmer use large boards with sharp teeth to crush dill seeds? No, and he doesnt use a wagon to crush cumin seeds. He uses a small stick to break the hulls off.

²⁸ People grind grain to make flour, but they dont grind it forever. As God does in punishing people, a worker might drive his wagon over the grain to remove the hulls, but he does not allow the horses to crush it.

²⁹This lesson comes from the LORD All-Powerful, who gives wonderful advice. He is very wise.

29¹ God says, Look at Ariel, the city where David camped. Keep on having your festivals, year after year.

²But I will punish Ariel. The city will be filled with sadness and crying, but it will always be my Ariel.

³I will put armies all around you, Ariel. I will raise war towers against you.

⁴You will be pulled to the ground. Your voice will rise from the ground like the voice of a ghost. Your words come like a whisper from the dirt.

⁵There will be so many foreigners that they will be like dust. Cruel people will be like the chaff blowing in the wind. Then suddenly,

⁶the LORD All-Powerful will punish you with earthquakes, thunder, and loud noises. There will be storms, strong winds, and a burning, destructive fire.

⁷Many nations will fight against Ariel. It will be a nightmare. Armies will surround Ariel and punish her.

⁸But it will also be like a dream to those armies. They will not get what

they want. It will be like a hungry man dreaming about food. When the man wakes up, he is still hungry. It will be like a thirsty man dreaming about water. When the man wakes up, he is still thirsty. The same thing is true about all the nations fighting against Zion. Those nations will not get what they want.

⁹Be surprised and amazed! You will become drunk, but not from wine. Look and be amazed! You will stumble and fall, but not from beer.

¹⁰The LORD will make you sleepy. He will close your eyes. (The prophets are your eyes.) He will cover your heads. (The prophets are your heads.)

¹¹To you my words are like the words in a book that is closed and sealed. You can give the book to someone who can read and tell that person to read it. But that person will say, I cannot read the book. It is closed and I cannot open it.

¹²Or you can give the book to someone who cannot read and tell that person to read it. That person will say, I cannot read the book because I don't know how to read.

¹³The Lord says, These people come to honor me with words, but I am not really important to them. The worship they give me is nothing but human rules they have memorized.

¹⁴So I will continue to amaze them by doing powerful and amazing things. Their wise men will lose their wisdom. Even the most intelligent among them will not be able to understand.

¹⁵Look at them! They try to hide things from the LORD. They think he will not understand. They do their evil things in darkness. They tell themselves: No one can see us. No one will know who we are.

¹⁶You turn things upside down. You think the clay is equal to the potter. You think that something that is made can tell the one who made it, You did not make me! This is like a pot telling its maker, You know nothing.

¹⁷This is the truth: After a very short time, Lebanon will become rich farmland, and the farmland will be like thick forests.

¹⁸The deaf will hear the words in the book. The blind will see through the darkness and fog.

¹⁹The LORD will make poor people happy. The poorest people will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

²⁰This will happen when the people who are mean and cruel have come to an end. It will happen when those who enjoy doing bad things are gone.

²¹They lie about good people. They try to trap people in court. They try to destroy innocent people.

²²So the LORD, who made Abraham free, speaks to Jacobs family. He says, Now the people of Jacob will not be embarrassed and ashamed.

²³They will look around at all the children they have I made with my hands, and they will say that my name is holy. They will honor the Holy One of Jacob. They will respect the God of Israel.

²⁴Many of these people did not understand, so they did what was wrong. They complained, but now they will learn their lesson.

30¹ The LORD said, Look at these children. They don't obey me. They make plans, but they don't ask me to help them. They make agreements with other nations, but my Spirit does not want those agreements. These people are adding more and more sins to the ones they have already done.

² They are going down to Egypt for help, but they did not ask me if that was the right thing to do. They hope they will be saved by the Pharaoh. They want Egypt to protect them.

³ But I tell you, hiding in Egypt will not help you. Pharaoh will not be able to protect you.

⁴ Your leaders have gone to Zoan, and your representatives have gone to Hanes.

⁵ But they will be disappointed. They are depending on a nation that cannot help them. Egypt is useless; it will not help. Egypt will bring nothing but shame and embarrassment.

⁶ This is a message about the Negev animals: This desert is a dangerous place full of trouble. There are lions, adders, and deadly snakes. People travel

through there with their wealth loaded onto donkeys. They carry treasures on the backs of camels to pay a nation that cannot help them.

⁷Yes, Egypt's help is worth nothing! so I call Egypt the Do-Nothing Dragon.

⁸Now write this on a sign so everyone can see it, and write this in a book. Write these things for a future time. This will be far, far in the future:

⁹These people are like children who refuse to obey. They lie and refuse to listen to the LORD'S teachings.

¹⁰They tell the prophets, Don't see dreams about things we should do. Don't tell us the truth. Say nice things to us and make us feel good. See only good things for us.

¹¹Stop seeing things that will really happen. Get out of our way. Stop telling us about the Holy One of Israel.

¹²The Holy One of Israel says, You people have refused to accept this message from me. You depend on fighting and lies to help you.

¹³You are guilty of these things. So you are like a tall wall with cracks in it. That wall will fall and break into small pieces.

¹⁴You will be like a large clay jar that breaks into many small, useless pieces. You cannot use them to get a hot coal from the fire or to get water from a pool in the ground.

¹⁵The Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, says, If you come back to me you will be saved. Only by remaining calm and trusting in me can you be strong. But you don't want to do that.

¹⁶You say, No, we need fast horses for battle. That is true you will need fast horses, but only to run away because your enemy will be faster than your horses.

¹⁷One enemy soldier will make threats, and a thousand of your men will run away. And when five of them make threats, all of you will run away. The only thing that will be left of your army will be a flagpole on a hill.

¹⁸So the LORD is waiting to show his mercy to you. He wants to rise and comfort you. The LORD is the God who does the right thing, so he will bless everyone who waits for his help.

¹⁹You people who live in Jerusalem on Mount Zion will not continue crying. The

Lord will hear your crying, and he will comfort you. When he hears you, he will help you.

²⁰The Lord might give you sorrow and pain like the bread and water you eat every day. But God is your teacher, and he will not continue to hide from you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes.

²¹If you wander from the right path, either to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice behind you saying, You should go this way. Here is the right way.

²²Then you will take your idols covered with gold and silver and make them unfit to be used again. You will throw them away like filthy rags and say, Go away!

²³At that time the Lord will send you rain. You will plant seeds, and the ground will grow food for you. You will have a very large harvest. You will have plenty of food in the fields for your animals. There will be large fields for your sheep.

²⁴Your cattle and donkeys will have all the food they need. There will be much food. You will have to use shovels and pitchforks to spread all the food for your animals to eat.

²⁵Every mountain and hill will have streams filled with water. These things will happen after many people are killed and the enemys towers are pulled down.

²⁶At that time the light from the moon will be as bright as the sun, and the light from the sun will be seven times brighter than it is now. One day of sunlight will be like a whole weeks worth. This will happen when the LORD bandages his broken people and heals the hurts from their beatings.

²⁷Look! The LORD is coming from far away. His anger is like a fire with thick clouds of smoke. His mouth is filled with anger, and his tongue is like a burning fire.

²⁸His breath is like a great river that rises until it reaches the throat. He will judge the nations as if putting them through a strainer that separates the ones fit for destruction. He will put a bit in their mouths to lead them to the place they dont want to go.

²⁹You will sing happy songs, like the nights when you begin a festival. You will be very happy walking to the LORD'S

mountain and listening to the flute on the way to worship the Rock of Israel.

³⁰The LORD will cause all people to hear his great voice and to see his powerful arm come down in anger. That arm will be like a great fire that burns everything. His power will be like a great storm with much rain and hail.

³¹Assyria will be frightened by the LORD'S voice and the stick that will beat him.

³²And as the LORD beats Assyria, his people will keep the rhythm with their drums and harps.

³³Topheth has been made ready for a long time. It is ready for the king. It was made very deep and wide. There is a very big pile of wood and fire there, and the LORD'S breath will come like a stream of burning sulfur to start the fire.

31 ¹Look at the people going down to Egypt for help. They think the horses they get will save them. They hope the many chariots and powerful soldiers will protect them. But the people don't trust the Holy One of Israel. They didn't ask the LORD for help.

²But he is the wise one who is bringing the disaster. And they will not be able to stop what he commanded. The Lord will attack those who are evil and all who try to help them.

³The Egyptians are only human, not God. The horses from Egypt are only animals, not spirit. The LORD will stretch out his arm, and the helper will be defeated. And those who wanted help will fall. They will all be destroyed together.

⁴The LORD told me: When a lion or its cub catches an animal to eat, the lion stands over the dead animal and roars, and nothing can frighten it away. If men come and yell at the lion, the lion will not be afraid. They might make a lot of noise, but the lion will not run away. In the same way, the LORD All-Powerful will come down to Mount Zion. He will fight on that hill.

⁵Just as birds fly over their nest to protect it, so the LORD All-Powerful will defend Jerusalem. He will save her. He will pass over and save Jerusalem.

⁶People of Israel, you should come back to the God you turned away from.

⁷That is because when those things happen, people will reject the gold and silver idols you made when you sinned against me.

⁸It is true that Assyria will be defeated with a sword, but it will not be a human sword that defeats him. Assyria will be destroyed, but that destruction will not come from a mans sword. Assyria will run away from Gods sword, but the young men will be caught and made slaves.

⁹Their place of safety will be destroyed. Their leaders will be defeated, and they will abandon their flag. The LORD, whose fireplace is on Zion and whose oven is in Jerusalem, is the one who said this.

32¹ Listen to what I say! A king should rule in a way that brings justice. Leaders should make fair decisions when they lead the people.

²If this would happen, the king would be like a shelter to hide from the wind and rain, like streams of water in a dry land, and like the cool shadow of a large rock in a hot land.

³Then people would actually see what they look at. They would actually listen to what they hear.

⁴People who are now confused would be able to understand. Those who cannot speak clearly now would be able to speak clearly and quickly.

⁵Fools would not be called great men. People would not respect men who make secret plans.

⁶Fools say foolish things, and in their minds they plan evil things to do. They want to do what is wrong. They say bad things about the LORD. They don't let hungry people eat their food. They don't let thirsty people drink the water.

⁷They use evil like a tool and plan ways to steal from the poor. They tell lies about the poor and keep them from being judged fairly.

⁸But a good leader plans good things to do, and that will make him a leader over other leaders.

⁹Some of you women are calm now; you feel safe. But you should stand and listen to the words I say.

¹⁰You feel safe now, but after one year you will be troubled. That is because you

will not gather grapes next year there will be no grapes to gather.

¹¹ Women, you are calm now, but you should be afraid. You feel safe now, but you should be worried. Take off your nice clothes and put on sackcloth. Wrap it around your waist.

¹² Beat your breasts in sorrow. Cry because your fields are empty. Your vineyards once gave grapes, but now they are empty.

¹³ Cry for the land of my people. Cry because only thorns and weeds will grow there. Cry for the city and for all the houses that were once filled with joy.

¹⁴ People will leave the capital city. The palace and towers will be left empty. People will not live in houses; they will live in caves. Wild donkeys and sheep will live in the city; animals will go there to eat grass.

¹⁵ This will continue until God gives us his Spirit from above. Then the desert will become rich farmland and the farmland will be like thick forests.

¹⁶ That is, what is now a desert will be filled with right decisions, and what is now a farmland will be filled with justice.

¹⁷ That justice will bring peace and safety forever.

¹⁸ My people will be safe in their homes and in their calm, peaceful fields.

¹⁹ But before this happens, the forest must fall and the city must be torn down.

²⁰ Some of you live away from the cities. You plant seeds by every stream and let your cattle and donkeys roam free. You will be very blessed.

33¹ Look at you. You attack others when you have not been attacked. You turn against others when no one has turned against you. So when you stop your attacks, you will be attacked. When you stop turning against others, they will turn against you.

² LORD, be kind to us. We have waited for your help. Give us strength every morning. Save us when we are in trouble.

³ Your powerful voice makes people run away in fear. Your greatness causes the nations to run away.

⁴ You people stole things in war. Those things will be taken from you. Many will come and take your wealth. It will be like

the times when locusts come and eat all your crops.

⁵The LORD is very great. He lives in a very high place. He fills Zion with justice and goodness.

⁶Jerusalem, you are rich with wisdom and knowledge of God. You are rich with salvation. You respect the LORD, and that makes you rich.

⁷But listen! The messengers are crying outside. The messengers who bring peace are crying very hard.

⁸The roads are empty; there is no one walking along the paths. People don't respect each other. They have broken the agreements they made, and they refuse to believe what witnesses tell them.

⁹The land is sick and dying. Lebanon is dying and Sharon Valley is dry and empty. Bashan and Carmel once grew beautiful plants, but now those plants have stopped growing.

¹⁰The LORD says, Now, I will stand and show people how great and powerful I am.

¹¹You people have done useless things. These things are like hay and straw.

They are worth nothing! Your spirit will be like a fire and burn you.

¹²People will be burned until their bones become lime. They will burn quickly like thorns and dry bushes.

¹³You people in faraway lands, listen to what I have done. You people who are near me, learn about my power.

¹⁴The sinners in Zion are afraid. Those who do wrong shake with fear. They say, Can any of us live through this fire that destroys? Who can live near this fire that burns forever?

¹⁵Good, honest people who refuse to hurt others for money will live through that fire. They refuse to take bribes or listen to plans to murder other people. They refuse to look at plans for doing bad things.

¹⁶They will live safely in high places. They will be protected in high rock fortresses. They will always have food and water.

¹⁷Your eyes will see the King in his beauty. You will see the great land.

¹⁸When you think about the troubles you had in the past, you will wonder, Where are those foreigners who spoke

languages we could not understand. Where are the officials and tax collectors from other lands? Where are the spies who counted our defense towers?

¹⁹ (33: 18)

²⁰ Look at Zion, the city of our religious festivals. Look at Jerusalem that beautiful place of rest. Jerusalem is like a tent that will never be moved. The pegs that hold her in place will never be pulled up. Her ropes will never be broken,

²¹ because the LORD is our powerful leader there. That land is a place with streams and wide rivers, but there will be no enemy boats or powerful ships on those rivers. You men who work on such boats can stop your work with the ropes. You cannot make the mast strong enough. You will not be able to open your sails, because the LORD is our judge. He makes our laws. He is our king. He saves us. The LORD will give us our wealth. Even crippled people will get their share.

²² (33: 21)

²³ (33: 21)

²⁴ No one living there will say, I am sick, because everyone living there has had their guilt removed.

34¹ All you nations, come near and listen! Listen, all you people. The earth and everyone on it should listen to these things. Everything in this world should hear this.

²The LORD is angry with all the nations and their armies. He will destroy them completely. He will put them all to death.

³Those who are killed will be thrown outside. The smell will rise from their bodies. Their blood will flow down the mountains.

⁴Every star in the sky will disappear, and the skies will be rolled shut like a scroll. Everything in the sky will wither and fall like dead leaves from the vine, like figs dried up on the tree.

⁵The Lord says, When my sword is finished with everything in the sky, it will come down on Edom. I have judged them guilty, and they must die.

⁶The LORD has decided on a time for sacrifice in Bozrah, a time for killing in all of Edom. So the sword of the LORD is covered with blood and fat blood from the goats and fat from the kidneys of the rams.

⁷ So the rams, the cattle, and even the strong bulls will be killed. The land will be wet with their blood. The soil will be soaked with their fat.

⁸ Yes, the LORD has chosen a time for punishment. He has chosen a year when people must pay for the wrong they did to Zion.

⁹ Edom's rivers will be like hot tar. Edom's ground will be like burning sulfur.

¹⁰ The fires will burn day and night no one will stop the fire. The smoke will rise from Edom forever. The land will be destroyed forever and ever. No one will ever travel through that land again.

¹¹ Birds and small animals will own that land. It will be a home for owls and ravens. God will leave that land in ruins. People will call it the empty desert.

¹² The freemen and leaders will all be gone, and there will be nothing left for them to rule.

¹³ Thorns and wild bushes will grow in all the beautiful homes there. Wild dogs and owls will live in them. Wild animals will make their homes there. Big birds will live in the grasses that grow there.

¹⁴Wild cats will live there with hyenas. Wild goats will call to their friends. Night animals will spend some time there and find a place to rest.

¹⁵Snakes will make their homes there and lay their eggs. The eggs will open, and small snakes will crawl from the dark places. Birds that eat dead things will gather there like women visiting their friends.

¹⁶Look in the LORD'S scroll and read what it says: Not one of these will be missing. Not one will be without its mate. God said he would make this happen, so his Spirit will bring them together.

¹⁷God decided what he should do with them, and then he chose a place for them. He drew a line and showed them their land. So they will own that land forever. They will live there year after year.

35¹The dry desert will rejoice. The desert will be glad and blossom.

²It will be covered with flowers and dance with joy. It will be as beautiful as the forest of Lebanon, the hill of Carmel, and the Sharon Valley. This will happen because all people will see the Glory of

the LORD. They will see the beauty of our God.

³Make the weak arms strong again. Strengthen the weak knees.

⁴Say to those who are afraid and confused, Be strong! Don't be afraid! Look, your God will come, and he will punish your enemies. He will pay them back for what they have done. He will come and save you.

⁵Then the eyes of the blind will be opened so that they can see, the ears of the deaf will be opened so that they can hear.

⁶Crippled people will dance like deer, and those who cannot speak now will use their voices to sing happy songs. This will happen when springs of water begin to flow in the dry desert.

⁷Now people see mirages that look like water, but then there will be real pools of water. There will be wells in the dry land and water will flow from the ground. Tall water plants will grow where wild animals once ruled.

⁸There will be a great road there, a highway called The Holy Road. Evil people will not be allowed to use that

road. It will be only for those who follow the right way, never for those who live foolishly.

⁹There will be no dangers on that road no lions or other animals that attack people. The only people to travel that road will be the people God saves.

¹⁰The LORD will make his people free, and they will come back to him. They will come into Zion rejoicing. They will be happy forever. Their happiness will be like a crown on their heads. Gladness and joy will fill them completely. Sorrow and sadness will be far, far away.

36 ¹During Hezekiah's 14th year as king, Sennacherib king of Assyria went to fight against all the strong cities of Judah. Sennacherib defeated those cities.

²He sent his commander with a large army to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. The commander and his army left Lachish and went to Jerusalem. They stopped near the aqueduct by the Upper Pool, on the street that leads up to Laundrymans Field.

³Three men from Jerusalem went out to talk with the commander. These

men were Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Joah son of Asaph, and Shebna. Eliakim was the palace manager, Joah was the record keeper, and Shebna was the royal secretary.

⁴The commander told them, Tell Hezekiah this is what the great king, the king of Assyria says: What are you trusting in to help you?

⁵I tell you, if you are trusting in power and great battle plans, that is useless. Those are nothing but empty words. Now I ask you, who do you trust so much that you are willing to rebel against me?

⁶Are you depending on Egypt to help you? Egypt is like a broken walking stick. If you lean on it for support, it will only stab you and hurt you. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, cannot be trusted by anyone who depends on him for help.

⁷So maybe you will say, We trust the LORD our God to help us. But Hezekiah destroyed the altars and high places where people worshiped your God, right? Hezekiah told the people of Judah and Jerusalem, You must worship only at this one altar here in Jerusalem.

⁸If you still want to fight, my master, the king of Assyria, will make this agreement with you. I promise that I will give you 2000 horses if you can find enough men to ride them into battle.

⁹But even then, you couldnt beat even one of my masters lowest ranking officers. So why do you still depend on Egypts chariots and horse soldiers?

¹⁰Now, do you think I came to this country to destroy it without the LORD'S help. No, it was the LORD who said to me, Go up against this country and destroy it!

¹¹Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the commander, Please, speak to us in Hebrew. We understand that language. Dont speak to us in the language of Judah. If you use our language, the people on the city walls will understand you.

¹²But the commander said, My master did not send me to speak only to you and your master. I was also sent to speak to those people sitting there on the wall. They will not have enough food or water either; they, too, will eat their own waste and drink their own urine like you!

¹³Then the commander shouted loudly in Hebrew,

¹⁴Hear this message from the great king, the king of Assyria: Don't let Hezekiah fool you. He cannot save you from my power.

¹⁵Don't believe Hezekiah when he says, Trust in the LORD! The LORD will save us. He will not let the king of Assyria defeat the city.

¹⁶Don't listen to Hezekiah. Listen to the king of Assyria. The king of Assyria says, 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.

¹⁷You 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, new wine, bread, and vineyards.

¹⁸Don't let Hezekiah change your mind when he says, The LORD will save us. Did any of the gods of other nations save their land from the king of Assyria?

¹⁹Where are the gods of their cities, Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods

of Sepharvaim? Did they save Samaria from my power?

²⁰Did any of the gods in the other countries save their land from me? So why do you think the LORD will save Jerusalem from me?

²¹But the people were silent. They did not say a word to the commander because King Hezekiah had given them a command. He said, Don't say anything to him.

²²Then the palace manager (Eliakim son of Hilkiyah), 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.

37 ¹When King Hezekiah listened to their message, he tore his clothes to show he was upset. Then he put on sackcloth and went to the LORD'S Temple.

²Hezekiah sent Eliakim, the palace manager, Shebna, the royal secretary, and the elders of the priests to the prophet, Isaiah son of Amoz. They wore

the special clothes that showed they were sad and upset.

³They said to Isaiah, King Hezekiah has commanded that today will be a special day for sorrow and sadness. It will be a very sad day as sad as when a baby should be born, but there is not enough strength for the birth.

⁴The commanders master, the king of Assyria, has sent him to say bad things about the living God. Maybe the LORD your God will hear it and prove the enemy is wrong. So pray for those who are still left alive.

⁵When King Hezekiah's officers came to Isaiah,

⁶he said to them, Give this message to your master, Hezekiah: The LORD says, Don't be afraid of what you heard from the commanders! Don't believe what those boys from the king of Assyria said to make fun of me.

⁷Look, I will send a spirit against the king of Assyria. He will get a report that will make him return to his own country. And I will cut him down with a sword in his own country.

⁸The commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. He found him at Libnah, fighting against that city.

⁹Then the king of Assyria got a report that said, King Tirhakah of Ethiopia is coming to fight you. So the king of Assyria sent messengers to Hezekiah again.

¹⁰He told them, Tell King Hezekiah of Judah these things: Don't be fooled by the god you trust when he says, Jerusalem will not be defeated by the king of Assyria.

¹¹You have heard what the kings of Assyria did to all the other countries. We destroyed them completely. Will you be saved? No!

¹²Did the gods of those people save them? No, my ancestors destroyed them all. They destroyed the cities of Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden living in Tel Assar.

¹³Where is the king of Hamath? The king of Arpad? The king of the city of Sepharvaim? The kings of Hena and Ivvah?

¹⁴Hezekiah received the letters from the messengers and read them. Then he

went up to the LORD'S Temple and laid the letters out in front of the LORD.

¹⁵He prayed to the LORD:

¹⁶LORD All-Powerful, God of Israel, you sit as King above the Cherub angels. You alone are the God who rules all the kingdoms on earth. You made heaven and earth.

¹⁷LORD, please pay attention and hear this. Open your eyes, LORD, and see what is happening. Listen to all the insults against the living God in the message Sennacherib sent!

¹⁸It is true, LORD. The kings of Assyria did destroy all those nations.

¹⁹They 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.

²⁰But you are the LORD our God, so please save us from the king of Assyria. Then all the other nations will know that you are the LORD, the only God.

²¹Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: The LORD, the God of Israel, says, You prayed to me

about the message that came from King Sennacherib of Assyria. I have heard you.

²² So this is the LORD'S message against Sennacherib: The virgin daughter Zion does not think you are important. She makes fun of you. Daughter Jerusalem shakes her head at you and laughs behind your back.

²³ But who 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!

²⁴ You sent your officers to insult the Lord. This is what you said: I took my many chariots up the high mountains deep inside Lebanon. I cut down its tallest cedars and its best fir trees. I have been on its highest mountain and deep inside its forests.

²⁵ I dug wells and drank water from new places. I dried up the rivers of Egypt and walked where the water was.

²⁶ How could you say this, Sennacherib? Did no one ever tell you that I, the Lord, planned these things long ago? From ancient times I decided what would

happen. And now I have made it happen. I let you tear down strong cities and change them into piles of rocks.

²⁷The people living there had no power. They were afraid and confused. They were about to be cut down like grass and plants in the field. They were like grass growing on the housetops, dying before it grows tall.

²⁸I 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.

²⁹Yes, 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.

³⁰Then the Lord said, I will give you a sign to show you that these words are true. You will not be able to plant seeds this year, so next year you will eat grain that grew wild from the previous years crop. But in the third year, you will eat grain from seeds that you planted. You will harvest your crops, and you will have plenty to eat. You will plant vineyards and eat grapes from them.

³¹ The people from the family of Judah who have escaped and are left alive will be like plants that send their roots deep into the ground and produce fruit above the ground.

³² That is because a few people will come out of Jerusalem alive. There will be survivors coming from Mount Zion. The strong love of the LORD All-Powerful will do this.

³³ So the LORD says this about the king of Assyria: He will not come into this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not bring his shields up against this city or build up a hill of dirt to attack its walls.

³⁴ He will go back the way he came. He will not come into this city. The LORD says this!

³⁵ I will protect this city and save it. I will do this for myself and for my servant David.

³⁶ That night the angel of the LORD went out and killed 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up in the morning, they saw all the dead bodies.

³⁷ So King Sennacherib of Assyria went back to Nineveh and stayed there.

³⁸One day Sennacherib was in the temple of his god Nisroch, worshipping him. His sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with a sword and ran away to Ararat. So Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon became the new king of Assyria.

38¹ At that time Hezekiah became sick and almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to see him and told him, The LORD told me to tell you this: You will die soon. So you should tell your family what they should do when you die. You will not get well.

²Hezekiah turned toward the wall that faced the Temple and began praying to the LORD.

³LORD, remember that I have faithfully served you with all my heart. I have done what you say is good. Then Hezekiah cried very hard.

⁴Then Isaiah received this message from the LORD:

⁵Go to Hezekiah and tell him that the LORD, the God of your ancestor David, says, I heard your prayer, and I saw your tears. I will add 15 years to your life.

⁶I will save you and this city from the king of Assyria. I will protect this city.

⁷This is the sign from the LORD to show you that he will do what he says:

⁸Look, I am causing the shadow that is on the steps of Ahaz to move back ten steps. The sun's shadow will go back up the ten steps that it has already been on.

⁹This is the letter from Hezekiah when he became well:

¹⁰I thought I would live a full life. But now, in the middle of my life, the time has come for me to die.

¹¹So I said, I will not see the LORD YAH in the land of the living again. I will not see the people living on earth.

¹²My home, my shepherds tent, is being pulled down and taken from me. I am finished like the cloth someone rolls up and cuts from the loom. You ended my life in such a short time.

¹³All night I cried as loud as a lion, but my hopes were crushed like a lion eating bones. You finished my life in such a short time.

¹⁴I cried like a bird and moaned like a dove. My eyes became tired, but I

continued looking to the heavens. Lord, I am so depressed. Promise to help me.

¹⁵What can I say? He told me what would happen, and he will make it happen. I have had these troubles in my soul, so now I will be humble all my life.

¹⁶Lord, use this hard time to make my spirit live again. Help my spirit become strong and healthy. Help me become well! Help me live again!

¹⁷Look, my troubles are gone! I now have peace. You love me very much. You did not let me rot in the grave. You took my sins and threw them away.

¹⁸The dead cannot praise you. People in Sheol cannot sing praises to you. Those who have died and gone below are not trusting in your faithfulness.

¹⁹People who are alive, people like me, are the ones who will praise you. Fathers should tell their children about how faithful you are.

²⁰So I say, The LORD saved me. So we will sing and play songs in the LORD'S Temple all our lives.

²¹Then Isaiah told Hezekiah, Crush figs together and put them on your sore. Then you will get well.

²²Hezekiah asked Isaiah, What is the sign that proves I will get well and go to the LORD'S Temple?

39¹At that time Merodach Baladan son of Baladan was king of Babylon. He sent some men with letters and a gift to Hezekiah when he heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

²This made Hezekiah very happy, so he showed them all the valuable things in his storehouses. He showed them the silver, the gold, the spices, and the expensive perfumes. He showed them the building where he stored the weapons. He showed them everything in his treasuries and everything in his house and throughout his kingdom.

³Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked him, What did these men say? Where did they come from? Hezekiah said, These men came all the way from Babylon just to see me.

⁴So Isaiah asked him, What did they see in your house? Hezekiah said, They saw everything in my palace. I showed them all my wealth.

⁵Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah,
Listen to this message from the LORD
All-Powerful:

⁶The time is coming when everything
in your house and everything your
ancestors have saved until today will be
carried away to Babylon. Nothing will be
left! The LORD All-Powerful said this.

⁷The Babylonians will take your own
sons, and your sons will become officers
in the palace of the king of Babylon.

⁸Then 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.)

40¹Your God says, Comfort, comfort
my people.

²Speak kindly to Jerusalem and tell her,
Your time of service is finished. You have
paid the price for your sins. I, the LORD,
have punished you twice for every sin
you committed.

³Listen, there is someone shouting:
Prepare a way in the desert for the
LORD. Make a straight road there for our
God.

⁴Every valley must be filled. Every mountain and hill should be made flat. The crooked roads should be made straight, and the rough ground made smooth.

⁵Then the Glory of the LORD will be shown to everyone. Together, all people will see it. Yes, this is what the LORD himself said!

⁶A voice said, Speak! So the man said, What should I say? The voice said, People are like grass. Any glory they enjoy is like a wildflower.

⁷When a wind from the LORD blows on them, the grass dies and the flower falls. Yes, all people are like grass.

⁸Grass dies and flowers fall, but the word of our God lasts forever.

⁹Zion, you have good news to tell. Go up on a high mountain and shout the good news. Jerusalem, you have good news to tell. Don't be afraid; speak loudly. Tell this news to all the cities of Judah: Look, here is your God!

¹⁰The Lord GOD is coming with power. He will use his power to rule all the people. He will bring rewards for his

people. He will have their payment with him.

¹¹ Like a good shepherd, he takes care of his people. He gathers them like lambs in his arms. He holds them close, while their mothers walk beside him.

¹² Who measured the oceans in the palm of his hand? Who used his hand to measure the sky? Who used a bowl to measure all the dust of the earth? Who used scales to measure the mountains and hills?

¹³ Who could know the LORD'S mind? Who could be his teacher or give him advice?

¹⁴ Did the Lord ask for anyone's help? Did anyone teach him to be fair? Did anyone teach him knowledge? Did anyone teach him to be wise?

¹⁵ Look, all the nations in the world are like one small drop in the bucket. If the Lord took all the faraway nations and put them on his scales, they would be like small pieces of dust.

¹⁶ All the trees in Lebanon are not enough to burn on the altar for the Lord. And all the animals in Lebanon are not enough to kill for a sacrifice.

¹⁷ Compared to God, all the nations of the world are nothing. Compared to him, they are worth nothing at all.

¹⁸ Can you compare God to anything? Can you make a picture of God?

¹⁹ No, but some people make statues from rock or wood, and they call them gods. One worker makes a statue. Then another worker covers it with gold and makes silver chains for it.

²⁰ For the base he chooses special wood, a kind of wood that will not rot. Then he finds a good wood worker, and the worker makes a god that will not fall over.

²¹ Surely you know the truth, dont you? Surely you have heard. Surely someone told you long ago. Surely you understand who made the earth.

²² It is the Lord who sits above the circle of the earth. And compared to him, people are like grasshoppers. He rolled open the skies like a piece of cloth. He stretched out the skies like a tent to sit under.

²³ He takes away the power of rulers. He makes the worlds leaders completely worthless.

²⁴ They are like plants that are planted in the ground. But before they can send their roots into the ground, God blows on the plants; they become dead and dry, and the wind blows them away like straw.

²⁵ The Holy One says, Can you compare me to anyone? No one is equal to me.

²⁶ Look up to the skies. Who created all those stars? Who created all those armies in the sky? Who knows every star by name? He is very strong and powerful, so not one of these stars is lost.

²⁷ People of Jacob, this is true. Israel, you should believe it. So why do you say, The LORD cannot see the way I live; he will not find me and punish me?

²⁸ Surely you know the truth. Surely you have heard. The LORD is the God who lives forever! He created all the faraway places on earth. He does not get tired and weary. You cannot learn all he knows.

²⁹ He helps tired people be strong. He gives power to those without it.

³⁰ Young men get tired and need to rest. Even young boys stumble and fall.

³¹ But those who trust in the LORD will become strong again like eagles that grow new feathers. They will run and not get weak. They will walk and not get tired.

41 ¹ The Lord says, Faraway countries, be quiet and listen to me! Nations be brave. Come to me and speak. We will meet together and decide who is right.

² Who woke up the man who is coming from the east? He called Justice to march with him. He uses his sword to crush nations. He uses his bow and conquers kings they run away like straw blown by the wind.

³ He chases armies and is never hurt. He goes places he has never been before.

⁴ Who was able to make all this happen? Who controlled the lives of everyone from the beginning? I, the LORD, am the one. I was here at the beginning, and I will be here when all things are finished.

⁵ People along the coast saw this, and they were frightened. Nations at the ends of the earth shook with fear. They have come near. They have arrived.

⁶Workers help each other. They encourage each other to be strong.

⁷One worker cuts wood to make a statue. He encourages the man who works with gold. Another worker uses a hammer and makes the metal smooth. Then he encourages the man at the anvil. This last worker says, This work is good; the metal will not come off. Then he nails the statue to a base so that it will not fall over. And it never moves!

⁸The Lord says, You, Israel, are my servant. Jacob, I chose you. You are from the family of my friend, Abraham.

⁹You were in a faraway country, but I reached out to you. I called you from that faraway place. I said, You are my servant. I chose you, and I have not rejected you.

¹⁰Dont worry! am with you. Dont be afraid! am your God. I will make you strong. I will help you. I will support you with my right hand that brings victory.

¹¹Look, some people are angry with you, but they will be ashamed and disgraced. Your enemies will be lost and disappear.

¹²You will look for the people who were against you, but you will not be able to find them. Those who fought against you will disappear completely.

¹³I am the LORD your God, who holds your right hand. And I tell you, Don't be afraid! I will help you.

¹⁴People of Israel, descendants of Jacob, you may be weak and worthless, but do not be afraid. I myself will help you. This is what the LORD himself says. I am the Holy One of Israel, the one who saves you.

¹⁵Look, I have made you like a new threshing board with many sharp teeth. You will trample mountains and crush them. You will make the hills like chaff.

¹⁶You will throw them into the air, and the wind will blow them away and scatter them. Then you will be happy in the LORD. You will be proud of the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁷The poor and needy look for water, but they cannot find any. Their tongues are dry with thirst. I, the LORD, will answer their prayers. I, the God of Israel, will not leave them to die.

¹⁸I will make rivers flow on dry hills. I will make springs of water flow through the valleys. I will change the desert into a lake filled with water. There will be springs of water in that dry land.

¹⁹I will make trees grow in the desert. There will be cedar, acacia, olive, cypress, fir, and pine trees.

²⁰I will do this so that people will see it and know who did it. They will notice what happened. Then they will understand that the LORD'S hand made it happen, that the Holy One of Israel created it all.

²¹The LORD, the king of Jacob, says, Come, present your arguments. Show me your proof.

²²Let your idols come in and tell us what will happen. Idols, tell us what happened in the beginning. We will listen closely so that we can make a decision. Tell us what will happen in the future.

²³What signs did you give in the past to prove that you really are gods? Do something! Do anything, good or bad, so that we can see that you are alive. Then we might fear and respect you.

²⁴ Look, you false gods are worthless. You cannot do anything. Only some horrible fool would want to worship you.

²⁵ I called someone in the north to come. He is coming from the east where the sun rises, and he honors my name. He tramples kings the way a potter softens clay with his feet.

²⁶ Who told us about this before it happened so that we could say he was right? None of your idols told us anything. They didn't say a word, and they cannot hear anything you say.

²⁷ I, the Lord, was the first one to tell Zion about these things. I sent a messenger to Jerusalem to say, Look, your people are coming back!

²⁸ I looked at those false gods. Not one of them said anything. They had no advice to offer. I asked them questions, but they didn't say a word.

²⁹ Those gods are all less than nothing. They cannot do anything. They are worthless.

42¹ Here is my servant, the one I support. He is the one I have chosen, and I am very pleased with him.

I have filled him with my Spirit, and he will bring justice to the nations.

²He will not cry out or shout or try to make himself heard in the streets.

³He will not break even a crushed reed. He will not put out even the weakest flame. He will bring true justice.

⁴He will not grow weak or give up until he has brought justice to the world. And people in faraway places will hope to receive his teachings.

⁵The LORD, the true God, said these things. He is the one who created the sky and spread it out over the earth. He formed the earth and everything it produced. He breathes life into all the people on earth. He gives a spirit to everyone who walks on the earth.

⁶I, the LORD, was right to call you. I will hold your hand and protect you. You will be the sign of my agreement with the people. You will be a light for the other nations.

⁷You will make the blind able to see. You will free those who are held as captives. You will lead those who live in darkness out of their prison.

⁸I am YAHWEH. That is my name. I will not give my glory to another. I will not let statues take the praise that should be mine.

⁹In the past, I told you what would happen, and it happened! Now I am telling you something new, and I am telling you now, before it happens.

¹⁰Sing a new song to the LORD; praise him everywhere on earth all you who sail on the seas, everything in the sea, and all you people in faraway places!

¹¹Deserts and cities, villages of Kedar, praise the Lord! People living in Sela, sing for joy! Sing from the top of your mountain.

¹²Give glory to the LORD. Praise him, all you people in faraway lands!

¹³The LORD will go out like a strong soldier. Like a man going into battle, he will be full of excitement. He will shout with a loud cry, and he will defeat his enemies.

¹⁴For a long time I have said nothing. I have controlled myself and kept quiet. But now I will cry out like a woman giving birth. My breathing is getting faster and louder.

¹⁵I will destroy the hills and mountains. I will dry up all the plants that grow there. I will change rivers to dry land and dry up pools of water.

¹⁶Then I will lead the blind along a path they never knew to places where they have never been before. I will change darkness into light for them. I will make the rough ground smooth. I will do these things for them; I will not abandon my people.

¹⁷But some of them have left me. They say to their gold statues, You are my gods. They trust their false gods, but they will be disappointed and shamed.

¹⁸Deaf people, listen to me! Blind people, look and see!

¹⁹In all the world, no one is more blind than my servant. No one is more deaf than my messenger. No one is more blind than my chosen people, the servant of the LORD.

²⁰My people see what they should do, but they do not obey me. They can hear with their ears, but they refuse to listen to me.

²¹ The LORD wants them to do what is right. He wants them to honor his wonderful teachings.

²² But look at his people. Others have defeated them and have stolen from them. The young men are afraid. They are locked in prisons. People have taken advantage of them, and there is no one to protect them. Others take their money, and there is no one to say, Give it back!

²³ Will any of you pay attention to this warning? Will you ever learn to listen?

²⁴ Who let Jacob be defeated? Who let others take what belonged to Israel? The LORD allowed them to do this. We sinned against him, so he let others take away our wealth. The people did not want to live the way he wanted. They refused to listen to his teaching.

²⁵ So he poured out his anger on them and brought wars against them. It was as if there were fires all around them, but they didnt know what was happening. It was as if they were burning, but they didnt try to understand.

43¹ Jacob, the LORD created you. Israel, he made you, and now

he says, Dont be afraid. I saved you. I named you. You are mine.

²When you have troubles, I am with you. When you cross rivers, you will not be hurt. When you walk through fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not hurt you.

³Thats because I, the LORD, am your God. I, the Holy One of Israel, am your Savior. I gave Egypt to pay for you. I gave Ethiopia and Seba to make you mine.

⁴You are precious to me, and I have given you a special place of honor. I love you. Thats why I am willing to trade others, to give up whole nations, to save your life.

⁵So dont be afraid, because I am with you. I will gather your children and bring them to you. I will gather them from the east and from the west.

⁶I will tell the north: Give my people to me. I will tell the south: Dont keep my people in prison. Bring my sons and daughters to me from the faraway places.

⁷Bring to me all the people who are mine, the people who have my name.

I made them for myself. I made them, and they are mine.

⁸Bring out the people who have eyes but are blind. Bring out the people who have ears but are deaf.

⁹All people and all nations should also be gathered together. Which of their gods said this would happen? Which of their gods would tell what happened in the beginning? They should bring their witnesses. The witnesses should speak the truth. This will show they are right.

¹⁰The LORD says, You people are my witnesses and the servant I chose. I chose you so that you would help people believe me. I chose you so that you would understand that I Am He I am the true God. There was no God before me, and there will be no God after me.

¹¹I myself am the LORD, and there is no other Savior.

¹²I am the one who spoke to you, saved you, and told you those things. It was not some stranger who was with you. You are my witnesses, and I am God. This is what the LORD himself said.

¹³I have always been God. When I do something, no one can change what I

have done. And no one can save people from my power.

¹⁴The LORD, the Holy One of Israel, saves you, and he says, I will send armies to Babylon for you. Many people will be captured. Those Chaldeans will be taken away in their own boats. They are so proud of those boats.

¹⁵I am the LORD your Holy One. I made Israel. I am your King.

¹⁶The Lord is making roads through the sea. He is making a path for his people, even through rough waters. The LORD says,

¹⁷Those who fight against me with their chariots, horses, and armies will be defeated. They will never rise again. They will be destroyed. They will be put out like the flame in a lamp.

¹⁸So dont remember what happened in earlier times. Dont think about what happened a long time ago,

¹⁹because I am doing something new! Now you will grow like a new plant. Surely you know this is true. I will even make a road in the desert, and rivers will flow through that dry land.

²⁰The wild animals will thank me. The large animals and birds will honor me when I put water in the desert and make rivers flow through that dry land. I will do this to give water to my chosen people.

²¹I made them, and they will sing songs of praise to me.

²²Jacob, you did not pray to me. Israel, you became tired of me.

²³You have not brought your sheep as sacrifices to me. You have not honored me with your sacrifices. I did not force you to give gifts to me like slaves. I did not force you to burn incense until you became tired.

²⁴So you did not use your money to buy things to honor me. But you did force me to be like your slave. You sinned until the bad things you did made me very tired.

²⁵I, I am the one who wipes away all your sins. I do this to please myself. I will not remember your sins.

²⁶But you should remember me. Lets meet together and decide what is right. Tell your story and prove that you are innocent.

²⁷Your first father sinned, and your lawyers committed crimes against me.

²⁸I will make your Temple leaders unfit to serve there. I will destroy Jacob. Bad things will happen to Israel.

44¹ Jacob, you are my servant. Israel, I chose you. Listen to me!

²I am the LORD, and I made you. I am the one who created you. I have helped you since you were in your mothers womb. Jacob, my servant, dont be afraid. Jeshurun, I chose you.

³I will pour water for thirsty people, and streams will flow through the desert. I will pour my Spirit on your children, and I will bless your family.

⁴They will sprout like grass in the spring and grow like trees by streams of water.

⁵One man will call himself, I am the LORD'S. Another will use the name, Jacob. Another man will sign his name as The LORD'S Hand. And another will use the name, Israel.

⁶The LORD is the king of Israel. The LORD All-Powerful is the one who will set Israel free. And he says, I am the only God. There are no other gods. I am the Beginning and the End.

⁷ There is no other God like me. If there is, that god should speak now. Let him lay out everything he has done since the time I made these ancient people. Let him show me the signs he gave long ago that prove he knew what would happen in the future.

⁸ Don't be afraid! Don't worry. I am the one who always told you what would happen. You are my proof. There is no other God; I am the only one. There is no other Rock; I know I am the only one.

⁹ Some people make idols, but they are worthless. They love their statues, which are useless. Those who serve as witnesses for these statues cannot even see. They don't know enough to be ashamed.

¹⁰ Who made these false gods? Who covered these useless statues?

¹¹ Workers made them, and the workers are only human. If they all would come together before me, we could discuss this. Then they would all be ashamed and afraid.

¹² One worker uses his tools to heat iron over hot coals. Then he uses his hammer to beat the metal to shape it

into a statue. He uses his own powerful arms. But when he gets hungry, he loses his strength. If he does not drink water, he becomes weak.

¹³Another worker uses his string line and compass to draw lines on the wood to show where he should cut. Then he uses his chisels and cuts a statue from the wood. He uses his calipers to measure the statue. In this way, the worker makes the wood look exactly like a man, and this statue of a man does nothing but sit in the house.

¹⁴To split the cedar tree, the worker took some oak or cypress wedges. To make sure he had plenty of wood, he planted some pines. But it was the rain that made them grow.

¹⁵When the man wanted a fire, he took some of the wood to keep him warm. He also used some of it to bake his bread. But then he used that same wood to make a statue to worship as a god! That god is only a statue that he made, but he bows down to it!

¹⁶He burns half of the wood in the fire. He uses the fire to cook his meat, and he eats the meat until he is full. He burns

the wood to keep himself warm He says, Good! Now I am warm, and I can see by the light of the fire.

¹⁷ There is a little of the wood left, so he makes a statue and calls it his god. He bows down before it and worships it. He prays to it and says, You are my god, save me!

¹⁸ People like that dont know what they are doing! They dont understand. It is as if they have mud in their eyes so they cannot see. Their minds cannot understand.

¹⁹ They dont realize what they are doing. They arent smart enough to think, I burned half of the wood in the fire. I used the hot coals to bake my bread and cook the meat I ate. And I used the wood that was left to make this terrible thing. I am worshipping a block of wood!

²⁰ Someone like that is deceived. They dont know what they are doing. They cannot save themselves, and they will not admit, This statue I am holding is a lie!

²¹ Jacob, remember these things! Israel, remember, you are my servant. I

made you, and you are my servant. So, Israel, don't forget me.

²²Your sins were like a big cloud, but I wiped them all away. Your sins are gone, like a cloud that disappeared into thin air. I rescued and protected you, so come back to me.

²³Skies, rejoice for what the LORD has done. Earth, shout for joy down to your deepest parts! Start singing, you mountains and all you trees in the forest! Yes, the LORD has saved Jacob. He has shown his glory by saving Israel.

²⁴The one who rescued you is the LORD, the one who formed you in your mother's womb. He says, I, the LORD, made everything. I put the skies there myself. I spread out the earth before me.

²⁵False prophets tell lies, but the Lord shows that their lies are false. He makes fools of those who do magic. He confuses even the wise. They think they know a lot, but he makes them look foolish.

²⁶The Lord sends his servants to tell his messages to the people, and he makes those messages come true. He sends messengers to tell the people what they

should do, and he proves that the advice is good. The Lord says to Jerusalem, People will live in you again. He says to the cities of Judah, You will be rebuilt. He says to them, I will repair your ruins.

²⁷ He tells the deep waters, Become dry! I will make your streams dry too.

²⁸ He says to Cyrus, You are my shepherd. You will do what I want. You will say to Jerusalem, You will be rebuilt! You will tell the Temple, Your foundations will be put in place!

45 ¹ This is what the LORD said to Cyrus, his chosen king: I took you by your right hand to help you defeat nations, to strip other kings of their power, and to open city gates that will not be closed again.

² I will go in front of you and make the mountains flat. I will break the city gates of bronze and cut the iron bars on the gates.

³ I will give you the wealth that is stored in secret places. I will give you those hidden treasures. Then you will know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by name.

⁴I do this for my servant, Jacob. I do it for my chosen people, Israel. Cyrus, I am calling you by name. You dont know me, but I know you.

⁵I am the LORD, the only God. There is no other God except me. I put your clothes on you, but still you dont know me.

⁶I am doing this so that everyone will know that I am the only God. From the east to the west people will know that I am the LORD and that there is no other God.

⁷I made the light and the darkness. I bring peace, and I cause trouble. I, the LORD, do all these things.

⁸May the clouds in the skies above drop goodness on the earth like rain. May the earth open and let salvation grow. And may victory grow with it! I, the LORD, created him.

⁹Look at these people! They are arguing with the one who made them. Look at them argue with me. They are like pieces of clay from a broken pot. Clay does not say to the one molding it, Man, what are you doing? Things that are made dont

have the power to question the one who makes them.

¹⁰A father gives life to his children, and they cannot ask, Why are you giving me life? They cannot question their mother and ask, Why are you giving birth to me?

¹¹The LORD God is the Holy One of Israel. He created Israel, and he says, My children, you asked me to show you a sign. You told me to show you what I have done.

¹²I made the earth, and I created the people on it. I used my own hands to make the skies. And I command all the armies in the sky.

¹³I was right to give power to Cyrus, and I will make his work easy. He will rebuild my city, and he will set my people free without bribes or payment. The LORD All-Powerful said this.

¹⁴The LORD says, Egypt and Ethiopia are rich, but, Israel, you will get those riches. The tall people from Seba will be yours. They will walk behind you with chains around their necks. They will bow down before you and ask you to pray for them and say, The true God really is with you, and there is no other God.

¹⁵You are the God people cannot see.
You are the God who saves Israel.

¹⁶Many people make false gods, but they will be disappointed. All of them will go away ashamed.

¹⁷But Israel will be saved by the LORD.
That salvation will continue forever.
Never again will Israel be shamed.

¹⁸The LORD is God. He made the skies and the earth. He put the earth in its place. He did not want the earth to be empty when he made it. He created it to be lived on. I am the LORD. There is no other God.

¹⁹I have spoken openly, not in secret. I did not hide my words in a dark and secret place. I did not tell the people of Jacob to look for me in empty places. I am the LORD, and I speak the truth. I say only what is right.

²⁰You people who escaped from other nations, gather together before me. These people carry statues of false gods. They pray to useless gods, but they dont know what they are doing.

²¹Tell them to come to me. Let them present their case and discuss these things. Who told you about this before

it happened? Who told you this so long ago? I, the LORD, am the one who said these things. I am the only God, the one who does what is right. I am the one who saves, and there is no other!

²² So all you people in faraway places, turn to me and be saved, because I am God, and there is no other.

²³ When I make a promise, that promise is true. It will happen. And I swear by my own power that everyone will bow before me and will take an oath to obey me.

²⁴ They will say, Goodness and strength come only from the LORD. And all who show their anger against him will be humiliated.

²⁵ The LORD will help the people of Israel live right and praise their God.

46 ¹ The Lord says, Bel has fallen to the ground. Nebo is kneeling before me. Men put those idols on the backs of animals. They are only heavy burdens that must be carried. They do nothing but make people tired.

² But they all bowed down and fell to the ground. They couldn't escape; they were all carried away like prisoners.

³Family of Jacob, listen to me! You who are left from the family of Israel, listen! I have carried you since you left your mothers womb. I carried you when you were born,

⁴and I will still be carrying you when you are old. Your hair will turn gray, and I will still carry you. I made you, and I will carry you to safety.

⁵Can you compare me to anyone? No one is equal to me. You cannot understand everything about me. There is nothing like me.

⁶Some people are rich with gold and silver. Gold falls from their purses, and they weigh their silver on scales. They pay an artist to make a false god from wood. Then they bow down and worship that false god.

⁷They put their false god on their shoulders and carry it. That false god is useless; people have to carry it! People set the statue on the ground, and it cannot move. That false god never walks away from its place. People can yell at it, but it will not answer. That false god is only a statue; it cannot save people from their troubles.

⁸Sinners, change your heart and mind. Think about this again. Remember it and be strong.

⁹Remember what happened long ago. Remember, I am God and there is no other God. There is no other like me.

¹⁰In the beginning, I told you what would happen in the end. A long time ago, I told you things that have not happened yet. When I plan something, it happens. I do whatever I want to do.

¹¹I am calling a man from the east to do what I want. He will come like an eagle from a faraway country. He will do all that I have planned. Everything I said will happen just as I said it would.

¹²Listen to me, you stubborn people! You are far from doing what is right.

¹³But I am close to making things right. Salvation will not be delayed much longer. I will bring salvation to Zion and to my wonderful Israel.

47 ¹Fall down and sit in the dirt, city of Babylon. You have no throne, so sit on the ground, people of Babylon. You are not the ruler now. You are no longer the beautiful young princess that people said you were.

²Get the millstones ready and grind the grain into flour. Take off your veil and fancy clothes. Lift your skirt and get ready to cross the rivers.

³Men will see your naked body and use you for sex. I will make you pay for the bad things you did, and I will not let anyone help you.

⁴My people say, God saves us. His name is the LORD All-Powerful, the Holy One of Israel.

⁵So Babylon, sit down and shut up. Daughter of the Chaldeans, go into the dark prison. You will no longer be The Queen of the Kingdoms.

⁶I was angry with my people. They were mine, but I turned against them. I let you punish them, but you showed them no mercy. Even for those who were old you made the work hard.

⁷You said, I will live forever. I will always be the queen. You didnt care what you did to my people. You didnt think about what might happen later.

⁸So now listen, you who love only pleasure! Feeling so safe, you tell yourself, I alone am important, and no

one else matters. I will never be a widow or lose my children.

⁹These two things will happen to you: First, you will lose your children and then your husband. And none of your magic spells will help you.

¹⁰You do bad things but still feel safe. You say to yourself, No one sees the wrong I do. You thought that your wisdom and knowledge would save you. You tell yourself, I alone am important, and no one else matters.

¹¹But disaster is coming your way. You dont know when it will happen, but disaster is coming. And there is nothing you can do to stop it.

¹²You worked hard all your life learning magic and spells. So start using that magic. Maybe those spells will help you. Maybe you will be able to frighten someone.

¹³You have many advisors. Are you tired of the advice they give? Then send out your men who read the stars. They can tell when the month starts, so maybe they can tell you when your troubles will come.

¹⁴But they cannot even save themselves. They will burn like straw. They will burn so fast that there will be no coals left to cook bread. There will be no fire left to sit by.

¹⁵That's what will happen to those you have worked with, the people you did business with all your life. They will all go their own way. There will be no one left to save you.

48¹Family of Jacob, listen to me! You people call yourself Israel, but you are from Judah's family. When you take an oath, I, the LORD, the God of Israel, am the one whose name you use, but you are not honest and sincere.

²Yes, you call yourselves citizens of the holy city, those who depend on the God of Israel. The LORD All-Powerful is his name.

³Long ago I told you what would happen. I told you about these things. And suddenly I made them happen.

⁴I did that because I knew you were stubborn. You were like iron that will not bend, with heads as hard as bronze.

⁵So long ago I told you what would happen. I told you about those things

long before they happened. I did this so that you could not say, The gods we made did this. Our idols, our statues, made this happen.

⁶You heard what I said would happen. And you can see it has all been done. Shouldnt you tell this to others? Now I will tell you about new things, secrets you have not known before.

⁷This is something that is happening now, not long ago. You have not heard about it before today. So you cannot say, We already knew that.

⁸But even in the past you didnt listen. You didnt learn anything. You never listen to what I say. I have always known that you would turn against me. You have rebelled against me from the time you were born.

⁹But I will be patient. I will do this for myself. People will praise me for not becoming angry and destroying you. You will praise me for waiting.

¹⁰Look, I will make you pure, but not in the way you make silver pure. I will make you pure by giving you troubles.

¹¹I will do this for myself for me! I will not let you treat me as if I am not

important. I will not let some false god take my glory and praise.

¹²Jacob, listen to me! Israel, I called you to be my people. So listen to me! I am the Beginning, and I am the End.

¹³I made the earth with my own hands. My right hand made the sky. And if I call them, they will come to stand before me.

¹⁴All of you, come here and listen to me. Did any of the false gods say these things would happen? No! The LORD'S friend will do what he wants to Babylon and the Chaldeans.

¹⁵I told you that I would call him. I will lead him, and I will make him succeed.

¹⁶Come here and listen to me! I was there when Babylon began as a nation. And from the beginning, I spoke clearly so that people could know what I said. Now, the Lord GOD sends me and his Spirit to tell you these things.

¹⁷The LORD, the Savior, the Holy One of Israel, says, I am the LORD your God. I teach you for your own good. I lead you in the way you should go.

¹⁸If you had obeyed me, then peace would have come to you like a full flowing river. Good things would have

come to you again and again, like the waves of the sea.

¹⁹If you had obeyed me, you would have had as many children as there are grains of sand. And they would always have been mine and would never have been destroyed.

²⁰My people, leave Babylon! My people, run from the Chaldeans! Tell the news with joy. Spread the news around the world. Tell them, The LORD rescued his servant Jacob.

²¹They never got thirsty as he led them through the desert, because he made water flow from a rock. He split the rock, and water flowed out.

²²But the LORD also said, There is no peace for evil people.

49¹Hear me, people by the sea.
Listen to me, you faraway nations.
The LORD called me before I was born.
He called my name while I was still in my mothers womb.

²He used me to speak for him. He used me like a sharp sword, but he also held me in his hand to protect me. He used me like a sharp arrow, but he also kept me safe in his arrow bag.

³He told me, Israel, you are my servant. I will do wonderful things with you.

⁴I said, I worked hard for nothing. I wore myself out, but I did nothing useful. I used all my power, but I did not really do anything. So the LORD must decide what to do with me. He must decide my reward.

⁵The LORD is the one who made me in my mothers womb, so that I could be his servant. He wanted me to lead Jacob and Israel back to him. The LORD gives me honor. I get my strength from my God.

⁶And now he says, You are a very important servant to me. You must bring back to me the tribes of Jacob. You must bring back the people of Israel who are still alive. But I have something else for you to do that is even more important: I will make you a light for the other nations. You will show people all over the world the way to be saved.

⁷The LORD, the Savior and Holy One of Israel, speaks to his servant. People hate that servant. Nations despise him. He is now a slave to rulers. The Lord says to him, Kings will see you and stand to

honor you. Great leaders will bow down to you. This will happen for the LORD. The Holy One of Israel is the one who chose you, and he can be trusted.

⁸This is what the LORD says, There will be a special time when I show my kindness. Then I will answer your prayers. There will be a special day when I will save you. Then I will help you and protect you. And you will be the proof of my agreement with the people. The country is destroyed now, but you will give the land back to the people who own it.

⁹You will tell the prisoners, Come out of your prison! You will tell those who are in darkness, Come out of the dark! The people will eat along the road, and they will have food even on empty hills.

¹⁰They will not be hungry or thirsty. The hot sun and wind will not hurt them. Their Comforter will lead them. He will lead them by springs of water.

¹¹I will make a road for my people. The mountains will be made flat, and the low roads will be raised.

¹²Look! People are coming to me from faraway places. They are coming to me

from the north and from the west. They are coming to me from Aswan in Egypt.

¹³Heavens and earth, be happy!

Mountains, shout with joy! The LORD comforts his people. He is good to his poor people.

¹⁴But now Zion says, The LORD has left me; the Lord has forgotten me.

¹⁵But the Lord says, Can a woman forget her baby? Can she forget the child who came from her body? Even if she can forget her children, I cannot forget you.

¹⁶I drew a picture of you on my hand. You are always before my eyes.

¹⁷Your children will come back to you, and those who destroyed you will leave.

¹⁸Look up! Look all around you! All of your children are gathering together and coming to you. The LORD says, On my life, I promise you this: Your children will be like jewels that you tie around your neck. Your children will be like the necklace that a bride wears.

¹⁹You are destroyed and defeated now. Your land is useless. But after a short time, you will have many people in your

land. And those who destroyed you will be far, far away.

²⁰You were sad for the children you lost, but they will tell you, This place is too small! Give us a bigger place to live!

²¹Then you will say to yourself, Who gave me all these children? I was sad and lonely. My children were taken away. They were gone. So who gave me these children? Look, I was the only one left. Where did all these children come from?

²²This is what the Lord GOD says: Look, I will wave my hand to the nations. I will raise my flag for everyone to see. Then they will bring your children to you. They will carry your children on their shoulders, and they will hold them in their arms.

²³Kings will be their teachers. The daughters of kings will care for them. The kings and their daughters will bow down to you. They will kiss the dirt at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD, and anyone who trusts in me will not be disappointed.

²⁴If a strong soldier takes a prisoner, can you set him free? If a powerful

soldier guards someone, can the prisoner escape?

²⁵Here is the LORD'S answer: The prisoners will escape. Those captured by the strong soldier will be set free. That's because I will fight your battles, and I will save your children.

²⁶Those people hurt you, but I will force them to eat their own bodies. Their own blood will be the wine that makes them drunk. Then everyone will know that the LORD saved you. Everyone will know that the Powerful One of Jacob saved you.

50¹This is what the LORD says: People of Israel, you say that I divorced your mother, Jerusalem. But where is the legal paper that proves I divorced her? My children, did I owe money to someone? Did I sell you to pay a debt? No, you were sold because of the bad things you did. Your mother was sent away because of the bad things you did.

²I came home and found no one there. I called and called, but no one answered. Do you think I cannot get you back? Do you think I cannot save you? Look, if I

gave the command, the ocean would dry up! I can turn rivers into a desert. The fish would die without water, and their bodies would rot.

³I can make the skies dark. I can cover the skies in darkness as black as sackcloth.

⁴The Lord GOD gave me the ability to teach, so now I teach these sad people. Every morning he wakes me and teaches me like a student.

⁵The Lord GOD helps me learn, and I have not turned against him. I will not stop following him.

⁶I will let those people beat me and pull the hair from my beard. I will not hide my face when they say bad things to me and spit at me.

⁷The Lord GOD will help me, so the bad things they say will not hurt me. I will be strong. I know I will not be disappointed.

⁸God is with me, and he is the one who shows that I am innocent. So no one can say I am guilty. If anyone wants to try to prove me wrong, they should come here, and we will have a trial.

⁹But look, the Lord GOD helps me, so no one can prove me guilty. As for them,

they will all be like worthless old clothes, eaten by moths.

¹⁰People who respect the LORD also listen to his servant. That servant lives completely trusting in God without knowing what will happen. He really trusts in the LORD'S name and depends on his God.

¹¹The Lord says, Look, you people want to do whatever you want. So light your own fires and torches, but you will be punished. You will fall into your fires and torches and be burned. I will make that happen.

51 ¹Some of you people try hard to live good lives. You go to the LORD for help. Listen to me. You should look at Abraham your father. He is the rock you were cut from.

²Abraham is your father, so look at him. Look at Sarah, who gave birth to you. Abraham was alone when I called him. Then I blessed him, and he began a great family with many descendants.

³In the same way, the LORD will bless Zion. He will feel sorry for her and her people, and he will do something great for her. He will turn the desert into a

garden. It will be like the Garden of Eden. The land was empty, but it will become like the LORD'S garden. People there will be very happy. They will sing victory songs to thank God for what he did.

⁴My people, listen to me! My decisions will be like lights showing people how to live.

⁵I will soon save you and show that I am fair. I will use my power and judge all nations. All the faraway places are waiting for me. They wait for my power to help them.

⁶Look up to the heavens! Look around you at the earth below! The skies will disappear like clouds of smoke. The earth will become like worthless old clothes. The people on earth will die, but my salvation will continue forever. My goodness will never end.

⁷You people who understand goodness should listen to me. You people who follow my teachings should hear the things I say. Don't be afraid of evil people. Don't let their insults upset you.

⁸They will be like old clothes eaten by moths. They will be like wool eaten

by worms. But my goodness will last forever. My salvation will continue forever and ever.

⁹Wake up! Wake up! Arm of the LORD, clothe yourself with strength. Show your power the way you did long ago, as you have from ancient times. You are the one who destroyed Rahab. You defeated the Dragon.

¹⁰You dried up the water that was in the deep sea. You made a road through the deepest parts of the sea. Your people crossed over and were saved.

¹¹The LORD will save his people. They will return to Zion with joy. They will be very happy. Their happiness will be like a crown on their heads forever. They will be singing with joy. All sadness will be gone far away.

¹²The Lord says, I am the one who comforts you. So why should you be afraid of people? They are only humans who live and die like the grass.

¹³I, the LORD, am the one who made you. With my power I made the earth and spread the sky over the earth. But you have forgotten me, so you are always afraid that angry men will hurt

you. Those men planned to destroy you, but where are they now?

¹⁴People in prison will soon be made free. They will not die and rot in prison. They will have plenty of food.

¹⁵I am the LORD your God, the one who stirs up the sea and makes the waves roar. The LORD All-Powerful is his name.

¹⁶My servant, I gave you the words I want you to say, and I covered you with my hands to protect you. I did this to make a new heaven and earth and so that you would say to Israel, You are my people.

¹⁷Wake up! Wake up! Jerusalem, get up! The LORD was very angry with you. So you were punished. It was like a cup of poison you had to drink, and you drank it all.

¹⁸Jerusalem had many people, but none of them became leaders for her. None of the children she raised became guides to lead her.

¹⁹Troubles came to you, Jerusalem, in pairs: Your land was destroyed and lies in ruins, and your people suffered from

famine and war. But no one felt sorry for you or showed you mercy.

²⁰Your people became weak. They fell on the ground and lay there. They were lying on every street corner, like animals caught in a net. They were punished by the LORD'S anger until they could not accept any more punishment. When God said he would give them more punishment, they became very weak.

²¹Listen to me, poor Jerusalem. You are weak like a drunk, but you are not drunk from wine. You are weak from that cup of poison.

²²Your God is the one who fights for his people. He is your Lord GOD, and he says to you, Look, I am taking this cup of poison away from you. It is full of my anger, and I am taking it out of your hand. You will not be punished by my anger again.

²³I will now use my anger to punish the people who hurt you. They tried to kill you. They told you, Bow down before us, and we will walk all over you. Your back became like the ground under their feet. You were like a dirt road for them to walk on.

52¹ Wake up! Wake up! Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Holy city of Jerusalem, stand up and put on your beautiful clothes! Those filthy foreigners will not enter you again.

² Jerusalem, get up and shake off the dust! City of Zion, you were a prisoner, but take the chains off your neck.

³ The LORD says, You were not sold for money. So I will not use money to set you free.

⁴ The Lord GOD says, First, my people went down to Egypt and became slaves. Then Assyria made them slaves.

⁵ Now look what has happened. Another nation has taken my people, says the LORD. That country did not pay to take my people, but they rule over them and laugh at them, and they say bad things about me all the time. The LORD is the one saying these things.

⁶ This happened so that my people will learn about me. My people will know who I am. My people will know my name, and they will know that I Am He is speaking to them.

⁷ How wonderful it is to see someone coming over the hills to tell good news.

How wonderful to hear him announce,
There is peace! We have been saved!
and to hear him say to Zion, Your God is
the king!

⁸The city guards are shouting. They are
all rejoicing together. They can all see
the LORD returning to Zion.

⁹Ruins of Jerusalem, be happy again!
Rejoice because the LORD comforted his
people and set Jerusalem free.

¹⁰The LORD showed his holy strength to
all the nations. All the faraway countries
saw how God saved his people.

¹¹So leave Babylon! Leave that place!
Priests, you carry the things that belong
to the LORD. So make yourselves pure.
Don't touch anything that is not pure.

¹²You will leave Babylon, but they will
not force you to leave in a hurry. You will
not be forced to run away. The LORD will
be in front of you. The God of Israel will
be behind you.

¹³The Lord says, Look, my servant will
succeed in what he has to do, and he will
be raised to a position of high honor.

¹⁴But many people were shocked when
they saw him. He was beaten so badly

that they could hardly recognize him as a man.

¹⁵It is also true that many nations will be amazed at him. Kings will look at him and be unable to speak. They will not hear the story about my servant; they will see it happen! They will not hear the story, but they will understand!

53¹Who really believed what we heard? Who saw in it the LORD'S great power?

²He was always close to the Lord. He grew up like a young plant, like a root growing in dry ground. There was nothing special or impressive about the way he looked, nothing we could see that would cause us to like him.

³People made fun of him, and even his friends left him. He was a man who suffered a lot of pain and sickness. We treated him like someone of no importance, like someone people will not even look at but turn away from in disgust.

⁴The fact is, it was our suffering he took on himself; he bore our pain. But we thought that God was punishing him,

that God was beating him for something he did.

⁵But he was being punished for what we did. He was crushed because of our guilt. He took the punishment we deserved, and this brought us peace. We were healed because of his pain.

⁶We had all wandered away like sheep. We had gone our own way. And yet the LORD put all our guilt on him.

⁷He was treated badly, but he never protested. He said nothing, like a lamb being led away to be killed. He was like a sheep that makes no sound as its wool is being cut off. He never opened his mouth to defend himself.

⁸He was taken away by force and judged unfairly. The people of his time did not even notice that he was killed. But he was put to death for the sins of his people.

⁹He had done no wrong to anyone. He had never even told a lie. But he was buried among the wicked. His tomb was with the rich.

¹⁰But the LORD was pleased with this humble servant who suffered such pain. Even after giving himself as an offering

for sin, he will see his descendants and enjoy a long life. He will succeed in doing what the LORD wanted.

¹¹After his suffering he will see the light, and he will be satisfied with what he experienced. The Lord says, My servant, who always does what is right, will make his people right with me; he will take away their sins.

¹²For this reason I will treat him as one of my great people. I will give him the rewards of one who wins in battle, and he will share them with his powerful ones. I will do this because he gave his life for the people. He was considered a criminal, but the truth is, he carried away the sins of many. Now he will stand before me and speak for those who have sinned.

54¹Woman, be happy! You have not had any children, but you should be very happy. Yes, the woman who is alone will have more children than the woman with a husband. This is what the LORD says.

²Make your tent bigger. Open your doors wide. Don't think small! Make your tent large and strong,

³because you will grow in all directions. Your children will take over many nations and live in the cities that were destroyed.

⁴Dont be afraid! You will not be disappointed. People will not say bad things against you. You will not be embarrassed. When you were young, you felt shame. But you will forget that shame now. You will not remember the shame you felt when you lost your husband.

⁵Your real husband is the one who made you. His name is the LORD All-Powerful. The Holy One of Israel is your Savior, and he is the God of all the earth!

⁶Like a woman whose husband has left her, you were very sad. You were like a young wife left all alone. But the LORD has called you back to him. This is what your God says.

⁷For a short time I turned away from you, but with all my love I will welcome you again.

⁸I was so angry that for a while I did not want to see you. But now I want to comfort you with kindness forever. The LORD your Savior said this.

⁹Remember, in Noah's time I punished the world with the flood. But I made a promise to Noah that I would never again destroy the world with water. In the same way, I promise that I will never again be angry with you and say bad things to you.

¹⁰The mountains may disappear, and the hills may become dust, but my faithful love will never leave you. I will make peace with you, and it will never end. The LORD who loves you said this.

¹¹You poor city! Enemies came against you like storms, and no one comforted you. But I will rebuild you. I will use a beautiful mortar to lay the stones of your walls. I will use sapphire stones when I lay the foundation.

¹²The stones on top of the wall will be made from rubies. I will use shiny jewels for the gates. I will use precious stones to build the walls around you.

¹³I, the LORD, will teach your children, and they will have real peace.

¹⁴You will be built on goodness. You will be safe from cruelty and fear. So you will have nothing to fear. Nothing will come to hurt you.

¹⁵I will never send anyone to attack you. And if any army tries to attack you, you will defeat them.

¹⁶Look, I made the blacksmith. He blows on the fire to make it hotter. Then he takes the hot iron and makes the kind of tool he wants to make. In the same way, I made the Destroyer to destroy things.

¹⁷People will make weapons to fight against you, but their weapons will not defeat you. Some people will say things against you, but anyone who speaks against you will be proved wrong. The LORD says, That is what my servants get! They get the good things that come from me, their LORD.

55 ¹All you people who are thirsty, come! Here is water for you to drink. Don't worry if you have no money. Come, eat and drink until you are full! You don't need money. The milk and wine are free.

²Why waste your money on something that is not real food? Why should you work for something that does not really satisfy you? Listen closely to me and you

will eat what is good. You will enjoy the food that satisfies your soul.

³Listen closely to what I say. Listen to me so that you will live. I will make an agreement with you that will last forever. It will be an agreement you can trust, like the one I made with David a promise to love him and be loyal to him forever.

⁴I made David a witness of my power for all nations. I promised him that he would become a ruler and commander of many nations.

⁵There are nations in places you dont know, but you will call for them to come. They dont know you, but they will run to you. This will happen because the LORD, your God, wants it. It will happen because the Holy One of Israel honors you.

⁶So you should look for the LORD before it is too late. You should call to him now, while he is near.

⁷Evil people should stop living evil lives. They should stop thinking bad thoughts. They should come to the LORD again, and he will comfort them. They should come to our God because he will freely forgive them.

⁸The LORD says, My thoughts are not like yours. Your ways are not like mine.

⁹Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.

¹⁰Rain and snow fall from the sky and don't return until they have watered the ground. Then the ground causes the plants to sprout and grow, and they produce seeds for the farmer and food for people to eat.

¹¹In the same way, my words leave my mouth, and they don't come back without results. My words make the things happen that I want to happen. They succeed in doing what I send them to do.

¹²So you will go out from there with joy. You will be led out in peace. When you come to the mountains and hills, they will begin singing. All the trees in the fields will clap their hands.

¹³Large cypress trees will grow where there were thornbushes. Myrtle trees will grow where there were weeds. All this will happen to make the LORD

known, to be a permanent reminder of his goodness and power.

56¹ The LORD said these things, Be fair to all people. Do what is right, because soon my salvation will come to you. My goodness will soon be shown to the whole world.

² I will bless those who refuse to do wrong and who obey the law about the Sabbath.

³ Some foreigners who choose to follow the LORD should not say, The LORD will not really accept me like the rest of his people. A eunuch should not say, I am only a dry piece of wood. I cannot have any children.

⁴ They should not say that because the LORD says, Some eunuchs obey the laws about the Sabbath. They choose to do what I want, and they follow my agreement.

⁵ So I will put a memorial stone in my Temple for them. Their name will be remembered in my city! Yes, I will give those eunuchs something better than sons and daughters. I will give them a name that will last forever! They will not be cut off from my people.

⁶Some foreigners will choose to follow me, the LORD. They will want to serve me and love my name. They will want to be my servants. They will keep the Sabbath as a special day of worship, and they will continue to follow closely my agreement.

⁷So I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them happy in my house of prayer. The offerings and sacrifices they give me will please me, because my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

⁸The Lord GOD said these things. The Israelites were forced to leave their country, but the Lord will gather them together again. He says, I will bring them back together!

⁹Wild animals in the forest, come and eat.

¹⁰The watchmen are all blind. They don't know what they are doing. They are like dogs that will not bark. They lie on the ground and sleep. Oh, they love to sleep.

¹¹They are like hungry dogs. They are never satisfied. The shepherds don't know what they are doing. Like their

sheep, they have all wandered away. They are greedy. All they want is to satisfy themselves.

¹²They come and say, I will drink some wine. I will drink some beer. I will do the same thing tomorrow, but I will drink even more.

57 ¹All the good people are gone, and no one even noticed. The loyal followers were gathered up, but no one knows why. The reason they were gathered up is that trouble is coming.

²But peace will come too, and those who trust him will get to rest in their own beds.

³Come here, you children of witches. Your father committed adultery, and your mother was unfaithful.

⁴You are children out of control, full of lies. You make fun of me. You make faces and stick out your tongue at me.

⁵All you want is to worship false gods under every green tree. You kill children by every stream and sacrifice them in the rocky places.

⁶You love to worship the smooth rocks in the rivers. You pour wine on them to worship them. You give sacrifices to

them, but those rocks are all you get. Do you think this makes me happy? You make your bed on every hill and high mountain.

⁷ You go up to those places and offer sacrifices.

⁸ You hide the things that help you remember me behind the doors and doorframes. You were with me, but you got up to go to them. You spread out your bed and gave yourself to them. You love their beds and enjoy looking at their naked bodies.

⁹ You use your oils and perfumes to look nice for Molech. You sent your messengers to faraway lands, and this will bring you down to the place of death.

¹⁰ All of them made you tired, but you never gave up. You found new strength, because you enjoyed them.

¹¹ You did not remember me. You did not even notice me! So who were you worrying about? Who were you afraid of? Why did you lie? Look, I have been quiet for a long time. Is that why you didnt honor me?

¹²I could tell about your good works and all the religious things you do, but that will not help you.

¹³When you need help, you cry to those false gods that you have gathered around you. Let them help you! But I tell you, the wind will blow them all away. A puff of wind will blow them all away. But the one who depends on me will get the land I promised and enjoy my holy mountain.

¹⁴Clear the road! Clear the road! Make the way clear for my people!

¹⁵God is high and lifted up. He lives forever. His name is holy. He says, I live in a high and holy place, but I also live with people who are humble and sorry for their sins. I will give new life to those who are humble in spirit. I will give new life to those who are sorry for their sins.

¹⁶I will not accuse my people forever. I will not always be angry. If I continued to show my anger, then the human spirit, the life I gave them, would die before me.

¹⁷Israel's evil greed made me angry, so I punished them. I turned away from them because I was angry. But

they continued to do wrong. They did whatever they wanted.

¹⁸I have seen their way of life, but I will heal them. I will guide and comfort them and those who mourn for them.

¹⁹I will teach them a new word: peace. I will give peace to those who are near and to those who are far away. I will heal them. The LORD himself said this.

²⁰But evil people are like the angry ocean. They cannot be quiet and peaceful. They are angry, and like the ocean, they stir up mud. My God says,

²¹There is no peace for evil people.

58¹ Shout as loud as you can and don't stop. Shout like a trumpet! Tell the people what they did wrong. Tell the family of Jacob about their sins.

²They still come every day to worship me, acting as if they want to learn my ways. They pretend to be a nation that lives right and obeys the commands of their God. They ask me to judge them fairly. They want their God to be near them.

³They say, We fast to show honor to you. Why don't you see us? We starve our bodies to show honor to you. Why

don't you notice us? But God says, You do things to please yourselves on those special days of fasting. And you punish your servants, not your own bodies.

⁴You are hungry, but not for food. You are hungry for arguing and fighting, not for bread. You are hungry to hit people with your evil hands. This is not the way to fast if you want your prayers to be heard in heaven!

⁵Do you think I want to see people punish their bodies on those days of fasting? Do you think I want people to look sad and bow their heads like dead plants? Do you think I want people to wear mourning clothes and sit in ashes to show their sadness? That is what you do on your days of fasting. Do you think that is what the LORD wants?

⁶I will tell you the kind of day I want: a day to set people free. I want a day that you take the burdens off others. I want a day when you set troubled people free and you take the burdens from their shoulders.

⁷I want you to share your food with the hungry. I want you to find the poor who don't have homes and bring them into

your own homes. When you see people who have no clothes, give them your clothes! Dont hide from your relatives when they need help.

⁸If you do these things, your light will begin to shine like the light of dawn. Then your wounds will heal. Your Goodness will walk in front of you, and the Glory of the LORD will come following behind you.

⁹Then you will call to the LORD, and he will answer you. You will cry out to him, and he will say, Here I am. Stop causing trouble and putting burdens on people. Stop saying things to hurt people or accusing them of doing things they didnt do.

¹⁰Feel sorry for hungry people and give them food. Help those who are troubled and satisfy their needs. Then your light will shine in the darkness. You will be like the bright sunshine at noon.

¹¹The LORD will always lead you and satisfy your needs in dry lands. He will give strength to your bones. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring that never goes dry.

¹²Your cities have been destroyed for many years, but you will rebuild them and their foundations will last for a long time. You will be called Fence Fixer and Builder of Roads and Houses.

¹³That will happen when you stop sinning against God's law about the Sabbath and when you stop doing things to please yourself on that special day. You should call the Sabbath a happy day. You should honor the LORD'S special day by not saying and doing things that you do every other day of the week.

¹⁴Then you could enjoy the LORD. As the LORD himself says, I could carry you up to the highest mountain and let you enjoy the land that I gave to your father Jacob.

59¹ Look, the LORD'S power is enough to save you. He can hear you when you ask him for help.

²It is your sins that separate you from your God. He turns away from you when he sees them.

³That's because your hands are covered with blood from the people you murdered. You tell lies and say evil things.

⁴You cant be trusted, even in court. You lie about each other and depend on false arguments to win your cases. You create pain and produce wickedness.

⁵You hatch evil, like eggs from a poisonous snake. Anyone who eats the eggs will die. And if you break one of them open, a poisonous snake will come out. Your lies are like spider webs.

⁶They cannot be used for clothes, and you cannot cover yourself with them. Your hands are always busy sinning and hurting others.

⁷Your feet run toward evil. You are always ready to kill innocent people. You think of nothing but evil. Everywhere you go you cause trouble and ruin.

⁸You dont know how to live in peace. You dont do what is right and fair. You are crooked, and anyone who lives like that will never know true peace.

⁹All fairness and goodness is gone. There is only darkness around us, so we must wait for the light. We hope for a bright light, but all we have is darkness.

¹⁰We are like people without eyes. We walk into walls like blind people. We stumble and fall as if it was night.

Even in the daylight, we cannot see. At noontime, we fall like dead men.

¹¹We are always complaining; we growl like bears and moan like doves. We are waiting for justice, but there is none. We are waiting to be saved, but salvation is still far away.

¹²That's because we committed crimes against our God. Our own sins speak out against us. We know we are guilty. We know we have sinned.

¹³We rebelled against the LORD and lied to him. We turned away from our God and left him. We planned to hurt others and to rebel against God. From hearts filled with lies, we talked about it and made our plans.

¹⁴We pushed Justice away. Fairness stands off in the distance. Truth has fallen in the streets. Goodness is not allowed in the city.

¹⁵Loyalty is gone, and people who try to do good are robbed. The LORD looked and saw there was no justice. He did not like what he saw.

¹⁶He did not see anyone speak up for the people. He was shocked to see that no one stood up for them. So with his

own power he saved them. His desire to do what is right gave him strength.

¹⁷He put on the armor of goodness, the helmet of salvation, the uniform of punishment, and the coat of strong love.

¹⁸He will give his enemies the punishment they deserve. They will feel his anger. He will punish all his enemies. People along the coast will get the punishment they deserve.

¹⁹People from the west to the east will fear the LORD and respect his Glory. He will come quickly, like a fast-flowing river driven by a wind from the LORD.

²⁰Then a redeemer will come to Zion to save the people of Jacob who have turned away from sin.

²¹The LORD says, As for me, this is the agreement that I will make with these people. I promise my Spirit that I put on you and my words that I put in your mouth will never leave you. They will be with you and your children and your childrens children, for now and forever.

60¹Jerusalem, get up and shine!
Your Light is coming! The Glory of the LORD will shine on you.

²Darkness now covers the earth, and the people are in darkness. But the LORD will shine on you, and his Glory will appear over you.

³Then the nations will come to your light. Kings will come to your bright sunrise.

⁴Look around you! See all the people gathering around. Those are your sons coming from far away, and your daughters are there beside them.

⁵At that time you will see your people, and your faces will shine with happiness. First, you will be afraid, but then you will be excited. All the riches from across the seas will be set before you. The riches of the nations will come to you.

⁶Herds of camels from Midian and Ephah will cross your land. Long lines of camels will come from Sheba. They will bring gold and incense. People will sing praises to the LORD.

⁷People will collect all the sheep from Kedar and give them to you. They will bring you rams from Nebaioth. You will offer those animals on my altar, and I will accept them. I will make my wonderful Temple even more beautiful.

⁸Look at the people. They are rushing toward you like clouds quickly crossing the sky. They are like doves flying to their nests.

⁹The faraway lands are waiting for me. The great cargo ships are ready to sail. They are ready to bring your children from faraway lands. They will bring silver and gold with them to honor the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel. He has done wonderful things for you.

¹⁰Children from other lands will rebuild your walls. Their kings will serve you. When I was angry, I hurt you, but now I want to be kind to you. So I will comfort you.

¹¹Your gates will always be open. They will not be closed, day or night. Nations and kings will bring their wealth to you.

¹²Any nation or kingdom that does not serve you will be destroyed.

¹³All the great things of Lebanon will be given to you. People will bring pine trees, fir trees, and cypress trees to you. These trees will be used for lumber to make my Holy Place more beautiful. This place is like a stool in front of my throne, and I will honor it.

¹⁴In the past, people hurt you, but they will bow down before you. In the past, people hated you, but they will bow down at your feet. They will call you The City of the LORD'S, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁵People hated you. You were left all alone with no one passing through. But I will make you great from now on. You will be happy forever and ever.

¹⁶Nations will give you what you need, like a child drinking milk from its mother. But you will drink riches from kings. Then you will know that I, the LORD, who saves you. You will know that I, the Great God of Jacob, protects you.

¹⁷You now have copper, but I will bring you gold. You now have iron, but I will bring you silver. I will change your wood into copper and your rocks into iron. I will change your punishment into peace. And those who punished you will be replaced with those who are kind to you.

¹⁸There will never again be news of violence in your country. People will never again attack your country and steal from you. You will name your walls, Salvation and your gates, Praise.

¹⁹The sun will no longer be your light during the day. The light from the moon will no longer be your light at night. The LORD will be your light forever. Your God will be your glory.

²⁰Your sun will never go down again. Your moon will never again be dark. That's because the LORD will be your light forever, and the dark days of mourning will end.

²¹All your people will be good. They will get the land forever. They are the young plant in my garden that will grow to be a wonderful tree. I made them with my own hands.

²²The smallest family will become a large family group. The smallest tribe will become a powerful nation. When the time is right, I, the LORD, will come quickly. I will make these things happen.

61 ¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on me. The LORD has chosen me to tell good news to the poor and to comfort those who are sad. He sent me to tell the captives and prisoners that they have been set free.

²He sent me to announce that the time has come for the LORD to show his

kindness, when our God will also punish evil people. He has sent me to comfort those who are sad,

³ those in Zion who mourn. I will take away the ashes on their head, and I will give them a crown. I will take away their sadness, and I will give them the oil of happiness. I will take away their sorrow, and I will give them celebration clothes. He sent me to name them Good Trees and The LORD'S Wonderful Plant.

⁴ Then the old cities that were destroyed will be rebuilt. Those ancient ruins will be made new, as they were in the beginning.

⁵ Then your enemies will come to care for your sheep, and their children will work in your fields and in your gardens.

⁶ You will be called, The LORD'S Priests, The Servants of our God. You will be proud of all the riches that have come to you from all the nations on earth.

⁷ In the past, other people shamed you and said bad things to you. You were shamed much more than any other people. So in your land you will get two times more than other people. You will get the joy that continues forever.

⁸That's because I am the LORD and I love justice. I hate stealing and everything that is wrong. So I will give the people what they deserve. I will make an agreement with my people forever.

⁹Their descendants will be known throughout the earth, and everyone will know their children. Whoever sees them will know that the LORD has blessed them.

¹⁰The LORD makes me very happy. I am completely happy with my God. He dressed me in the clothes of salvation. He put the victory coat on me. I look like a man dressed for his wedding, like a bride covered with jewels.

¹¹The earth causes plants to grow, and a garden makes the seeds planted there rise up. In the same way, the Lord GOD will make goodness and praise grow throughout the nations.

62¹ I love Zion, so I will continue to speak for her. I love Jerusalem, so I will not stop speaking. I will speak until goodness shines like a bright light, until salvation burns bright like a flame.

²Then all nations will see your goodness. All kings will see your honor. Then you will have a new name that the LORD himself will give you.

³You will be like a beautiful crown that the LORD holds up, like a kings crown in the hand of your God.

⁴You will never again be called The People God Left. Your land will never again be called The Land God Destroyed. You will be called The People God Loves. Your land will be called Gods Bride, because the LORD loves you, and your land will be his.

⁵As a young man takes a bride and she belongs to him, so your land will belong to your children. As a man is happy with his new wife, so your God will be happy with you.

⁶Jerusalem, I put guards on your walls. They will not be silent. They will keep praying day and night. Guards, keep praying to the LORD. Remind him of his promise. Dont ever stop praying.

⁷Dont give him any rest until he rebuilds Jerusalem and makes it a place that everyone on earth will praise.

⁸The LORD made a promise and guaranteed it by his own power. And he will use that power to keep his promise. The Lord said, I promise that I will never again give your food to your enemies. I promise that they will never again take the wine you make.

⁹Whoever gathers the food will eat it and praise the LORD. Whoever gathers the grape will drink the wine in the courtyards of my Temple.

¹⁰Come through the gates! Clear the way for the people! Prepare the road! Move all the stones off the road! Raise a flag as a sign for the nations!

¹¹Listen, the LORD is speaking to all the faraway lands: Tell the people of Zion, Look, your Savior is coming. He is bringing your reward to you. He is bringing it with him.

¹²His people will be called The Holy People, The Saved People of the LORD. And you, Jerusalem, will be called The City God Wants, The City God Is With.

63¹ Who is this coming from Edom, from the city of Bozrah? His clothes are stained bright red. He is glorious in his clothes. He is walking tall

with his great power. He says, I have the power to save you, and I speak the truth.

²Why are your clothes bright red? They are like the clothes of someone who tramples grapes to make wine.

³He answers, I walked in the winepress by myself. No one helped me. I was angry, and I trampled the grapes. The juice splashed on my clothes, so now they are stained.

⁴I chose a time to punish people. Now the time has come for me to save and protect my people.

⁵I looked around, but I saw no one to help me. I was surprised that no one supported me. So I used my own power to save my people. My own anger supported me.

⁶In my anger I trampled down the nations. I punished them in anger and spilled their blood on the ground.

⁷I will remember the kind things the LORD has done, and I will remember to praise him. The LORD has given many good things to the family of Israel. He has been very kind to us. He has shown us mercy.

⁸He said, These are my people. These are my real children. So he saved them.

⁹The people had many troubles, but he was not against them. He loved them and felt sorry for them, so he saved them. He sent his special angel to save them. He picked them up and carried them, just as he did long ago.

¹⁰But they turned against him and made his Holy Spirit very sad. So the Lord became their enemy and fought against them.

¹¹Then they remembered what happened long ago. They remembered Moses and those with him. So where is the one who brought them through the sea along with the shepherds who led his flock? Where is the one who sent his Holy Spirit to live among them?

¹²He was by Moses side and led him with his wonderful hand. He divided the water, so that the people could walk through the sea. He made his name famous by doing those great things.

¹³He led the people through the deep sea. Like a horse running through the desert, they walked without falling.

¹⁴ Like cattle going down to the valley,
The Spirit of the LORD led them. This is
how you led your people and made your
name wonderful.

¹⁵ Please, look down from the heavens.
See what is happening now. Look down
at us from your great and holy home in
heaven. Where is your strong love for
us? Where is your compassion? Why are
you hiding your kind love from me?

¹⁶ Look, you are our father! Abraham
does not know us. Israel does not
recognize us. LORD, you are our father!
You are the one who has always saved
us!

¹⁷ LORD, why are you pushing us away
from you? Why are you making it hard
for us to follow you? Come back to us!
We are your servants. Come to us and
help us! Our tribes belong to you.

¹⁸ Your holy people had their land only
a short time. Then our enemies trampled
down your holy Temple.

¹⁹ Some people don't follow you. They
don't wear your name. And we have been
like them for a very long time.

64¹ If you would tear open the skies
and come down to earth, then

everything would change. Mountains would melt before you.

²The mountains would burst into flames like burning bushes. The mountains would boil like water on the fire. Then your enemies would learn about you. And all nations would shake with fear when they see you.

³But you have done awesome things that we did not expect. You came down, and mountains shook in fear before you.

⁴No one has ever heard of such a God. No one has ever heard such a story. No one has ever seen any God except you, who does such great things for those who trust him.

⁵You welcome people who enjoy doing good and who remember you by living the way you want them to. But we sinned against you, and you became angry with us. But you always saved us!

⁶We are all dirty with sin. Even our good works are not pure. They are like bloodstained rags. We are all like dead leaves. Our sins have carried us away like wind.

⁷We dont call to you for help. We arent excited about following you, so you have

turned away from us. We are helpless before you, because we are full of sin.

⁸But, LORD, you are our father. We are like clay, and you are the potter. Your hands made us all.

⁹LORD, dont continue to be angry with us! Dont remember our sins forever! Please, look at us! We are all your people.

¹⁰Your holy cities are as empty as the desert. Zion has become a desert. Jerusalem is destroyed.

¹¹Our ancestors worshiped you in our holy Temple. That wonderful Temple has now been burned. All our precious possessions have been destroyed.

¹²LORD, will these things always keep you from helping? Will you continue to say nothing? Will you punish us forever?

65 ¹I helped people who had not come to me for advice. Those who found me were not looking for me. I spoke to a nation that does not use my name. I said, Here I am! Here I am!

²All day long I stood ready to accept those who turned against me. But they kept doing whatever they wanted to do, and all they did was wrong.

³They keep doing things, right in front of me, that make me angry. They offer sacrifices and burn incense in their special gardens.

⁴They sit among the graves, waiting to get messages from the dead. They eat the meat of pigs, and their pots are full of soup made from unclean meat.

⁵But they tell others, Dont come near me! Dont touch me because I am holy! They are like smoke in my eyes, and their fire burns all the time.

⁶Look, here is a letter that lists all your sins. I will not be quiet until I pay you back for these sins. I will do it by punishing you.

⁷I, the LORD, am doing this because of your sins and the sins of your ancestors. They did these sins when they burned incense in the mountains. They shamed me on those hills, and I punished them first.

⁸The LORD says, When there is new wine in the grapes, people squeeze out the wine. But they dont completely destroy the grapes because the grapes can still be used. I will do the same thing

to my servants. I will not destroy them completely.

⁹I will keep some of the people of Jacob. Some of the people of Judah will get my mountains. I will choose the people who will get the land. My servants will live there.

¹⁰Then Sharon Valley will be a field for sheep. The Valley of Achor will be a place for cattle to rest. All this will be for my people, for the people who come to me for help.

¹¹But you people left the LORD, so you will be punished. You forgot about my holy mountain. You began to worship Luck. You held feasts for the false god, Fate.

¹²But I decided what would happen to you: you will be killed with a sword. You will all be killed, because I called to you, but you refused to answer me. I spoke to you, but you would not listen. You did what I said is evil and chose to do what I did not like.

¹³So this is what the Lord GOD says: My servants will eat, but you evil people will be hungry. My servants will drink,

but you will be thirsty. My servants will be happy, but you will suffer shame.

¹⁴My servants will shout for joy, but you will cry out in pain. Your spirits will be broken, and you will be very sad.

¹⁵Your names will be like curses to my chosen servants. The Lord GOD will kill you, and then he will call his servants by a new name.

¹⁶The Lord says, People now ask blessings from the earth. But in the future they will ask blessings from the faithful God. People now trust in the power of the earth when they make a promise. But in the future they will trust in the God who is faithful. That's because the troubles in the past will all be forgotten. They will be hidden from my sight.

¹⁷I am creating a new heaven and a new earth. The troubles of the past will be forgotten. No one will remember them.

¹⁸My people will be happy and rejoice forever and ever because of what I will make. I will make a Jerusalem that is full of joy, and I will make her people happy.

¹⁹Then I will rejoice with Jerusalem. I will be happy with my people. There will never again be crying and sadness in that city.

²⁰In that city there will never be a baby who lives only a few days, and every older person will live for a long, long time. A person who lives 100 years will be called young. And whoever doesn't live that long will be considered cursed.

²¹In that city whoever builds a house will live there; whoever plants a vineyard will eat the grapes from that garden.

²²Never again will one person build a house and another person live there. Never again will one person plant a garden and another eat the fruit from it. My people will live as long as the trees. My chosen people will get full use of whatever they make.

²³Never again will a woman suffer childbirth and have her baby die. Women will not fear childbirth. I, the LORD, will bless all my people and their children.

²⁴I will answer them before they call for help. I will help them before they finish asking.

²⁵Wolves and little lambs will eat together. Lions will eat hay like cattle, and snakes will eat only dust. They will not hurt or destroy each other on my holy mountain. This is what the LORD said.

66¹This is what the LORD says: Heaven is my throne, and the earth is where I rest my feet. So do you think you can build a house for me? Do I need a place to rest?

²I am the one who made all things. They are all here because I made them, says the LORD. These are the people I care for: the poor, humble people who obey my commands.

³Some people kill bulls as a sacrifice, but they also beat people. They kill sheep as a sacrifice, but they also break the necks of dogs. They offer up grain offerings, but they also offer the blood of pigs. They burn incense, but they also love their worthless idols. They choose their own ways, and they love their terrible idols.

⁴So I decided to use their own tricks. I will punish them using what they are most afraid of. I will do this because I

called to them, but they did not answer. I spoke to them, but they did not listen. They did what I said is evil. They chose to do what I did not like.

⁵You who obey the LORD'S commands, listen to what he says: Your brothers hated you. They turned against you because you followed me. Your brothers said, When the LORD shows his glory, then we will rejoice with you. But they will be punished.

⁶Listen! There is a loud noise coming from the city and from the Temple. It is the LORD punishing his enemies. He is giving them the punishment they deserve.

⁷A woman does not give birth before she feels the pain. A woman must feel the pain of childbirth before she can see the boy she gives birth to. Who ever heard of such a thing? In the same way, no one ever saw a new world begin in one day. No one has ever heard of a new nation that began in one day. But when Zion feels the pain, she will give birth to her children.

⁸(66:7)

⁹In the same way, I will not cause pain without allowing something new to be born. The LORD says this: I promise that if I cause you the pain of birth, I will not stop you from having your new nation. Your God said this.

¹⁰Jerusalem and all her friends, be happy! All of you who were sad for her, be happy and rejoice with her!

¹¹Be happy that you will receive mercy like milk coming from her breast. Jerusalem's milk will satisfy you! You will drink it and enjoy her glory.

¹²This is what the LORD says: Look, I will give Jerusalem peace that will flow in like a river. Wealth from all the nations will come flowing into her like a flood. And like little babies, you will drink that milk. I will hold you in my arms, and bounce you on my knees.

¹³I will comfort you like a mother comforting her child. You will be comforted in Jerusalem.

¹⁴When you see these things, you will be happy. You will be free and grow like grass. The LORD'S servants will see his power, but his enemies will see his anger.

¹⁵Look, the LORD is coming with fire. His armies are coming with clouds of dust. He is angry, and he will punish his enemies with flames.

¹⁶The LORD will judge the people and will punish them with fire and his sword. There will be many people killed by the LORD.

¹⁷The LORD says, These are the people who wash themselves and make themselves pure so that they can go into their special gardens to worship their idols. They follow each other into the gardens to eat meat from pigs, rats, and other dirty things. But they will all be destroyed together.

¹⁸They have evil thoughts and do evil things, so I am coming to punish them. I will gather all nations and all people. Everyone will be gathered together to see my Glory.

¹⁹I will put a mark on some of the people. I will send some of these saved people to the nations of Tarshish, Libya, Lud (the land of archers), Tubal, Greece, and all the faraway lands. Those people have never heard my teachings. They have never seen my Glory. So the saved

people will tell the nations about my glory.

²⁰And they will bring all your brothers and sisters from those other nations to my holy mountain Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD. Your brothers and sisters will ride on horses, mules, camels, and in chariots and wagons. They will be like the gifts that the Israelites bring on clean plates to the Temple of the LORD.

²¹I will also choose some of these people to be priests and Levites. The LORD himself said this.

²²The LORD says, I will make a new worldnew heavens and a new earththat will last forever. In the same way, your names and your children will always be with me.

²³Everyone will come to worship me on every worship day; they will come every Sabbath and every first day of the month. This is what I, the LORD, have said.

²⁴Whoever goes out of the city will see the dead bodies of those who sinned against me. The worms eating those bodies will never die, and the fires

burning them will never go out. It will be horrible to anyone who sees it.

Jeremiah

1 ¹These are the messages of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah. Jeremiah belonged to the family of priests who lived in the town of Anathoth. That town is in the land that belongs to the tribe of Benjamin.

²The LORD began to speak to Jeremiah in the 13th year that Josiah, son of Amon, was king of the nation of Judah.

³He continued to speak to Jeremiah during the time that Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, was king of Judah and during the eleven years and five months that Zedekiah, also a son of Josiah, was king of Judah. In the fifth month of Zedekiahs eleventh year as king, the people who lived in Jerusalem were taken away into exile.

⁴The LORD'S message came to me:

⁵Before I made you in your mothers womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I chose you for a special work. I chose you to be a prophet to the nations.

⁶Then I said, But, Lord GOD, I don't know how to speak. I am only a boy.

⁷But the LORD said to me, Don't say, I am only a boy. You must go everywhere I send you and say everything I tell you to say.

⁸Don't be afraid of anyone. I am with you, and I will protect you. This message is from the LORD.

⁹Then the LORD reached out with his hand and touched my mouth. He said to me, Jeremiah, I am putting my words in your mouth.

¹⁰Today I have put you in charge of nations and kingdoms. You will pull up and tear down. You will destroy and overthrow. You will build up and plant.

¹¹The LORD'S message came to me: Jeremiah, what do you see? I answered, I see a stick made from almond wood.

¹²The LORD said to me, You have seen very well, and I am watching to make sure that my message to you comes true.

¹³The LORD'S message came to me again: Jeremiah, what do you see? I answered, I see a pot of boiling water. That pot is tipping over from the north.

¹⁴The LORD said to me, Something terrible will come from the north. It will happen to all the people who live in this country.

¹⁵In a short time I will call all the people in the northern kingdoms. This is what the LORD says. The kings of those countries will come and set up their thrones near the gates of Jerusalem. They will attack the city walls of Jerusalem. They will attack all the cities in Judah.

¹⁶And I will announce judgment against my people, because they are evil and have turned away from me. They offered sacrifices to other gods and worshiped idols they made with their own hands.

¹⁷As for you, Jeremiah, get ready. Stand up and speak to the people. Tell them everything that I tell you to say. Don't be afraid of the people. If you are afraid of them, I will give you good reason to be afraid of them.

¹⁸As for me, today I will make you like a strong city, an iron column, a bronze wall. You will be able to stand against everyone in the land, against the kings of the land of Judah, the leaders of

Judah, the priests of Judah, and against the people of the land of Judah.

¹⁹All those people will fight against you, but they will not defeat you, because I am with you, and I will save you. This message is from the LORD.

2¹The LORD'S message came to me:
²Jeremiah, go and speak to the people of Jerusalem. Tell them that this is what the LORD says: At the time you were a young nation, you were faithful to me. You followed me like a young bride. You followed me through the desert, through a land that had never been used for farmland.

³The people of Israel were a holy gift to the LORD. They were the first fruit he gathered. Anyone who tried to hurt them was judged guilty and was punished severely. This message is from the LORD.

⁴Family of Jacob, hear the LORD'S message. Tribes of Israel, listen.

⁵This is what the LORD says: Do you think that I was not fair to your ancestors? Is that why they turned away from me? Your ancestors worshiped

worthless idols, and they became worthless themselves.

⁶Your ancestors did not say, The LORD brought us out of Egypt. He led us through the desert, through a dry and rocky land. He led us through a dark and dangerous land. No one lives there; people don't even travel through that land. But the Lord led us through that land. So where is he now?

⁷I brought you into a good land, a land filled with many good things. I did this so that you could eat the fruit and crops that grow there. But you only made my land dirty. I gave that land to you, but you made it a bad place.

⁸The priests did not ask, Where is the LORD? The people who know the law did not want to know me. The leaders of the people of Israel turned against me. The prophets spoke in the name of the false god Baal. They worshiped worthless idols.

⁹The LORD says, So now I will accuse you again, and I will also accuse your grandchildren.

¹⁰Go across the sea to the island of Cyprus. Send someone to the land of

Kedar. Look very carefully. See if anyone has ever done anything like this.

¹¹Has any nation ever stopped worshiping their old gods so that they could worship new gods? No! And their gods are not really gods at all! But my people stopped worshiping their glorious God and started worshiping idols that are worth nothing.

¹²Skies, be shocked at what happened! Shake with great fear! This message is from the LORD.

¹³My people have done two evil things. They turned away from me, and they dug their own water cisterns. I am the source of living water; those cisterns are broken and cannot hold water.

¹⁴Israel is not a slave, is he? He was not born a slave, was he? Then why did the enemy carry him away as a captive?

¹⁵Like a lion the enemy has roared at Israel. They have destroyed Israel's land. The cities have been burned, and no one is left in them.

¹⁶People of Israel, armies from Memphis and Tahpanhes have smashed the top of your head.

¹⁷ This trouble is your own fault. The LORD your God was leading you the right way, but you turned away from him.

¹⁸ People of Judah, think about this: How did it help you to go to Egypt and drink from the Nile River? How did it help you to go to Assyria and drink from the Euphrates River?

¹⁹ You have done wrong, and that will only bring punishment to you. Trouble will come to you, and it will teach you a lesson. Think about it and understand how bad it is to turn away from the LORD your God. It is wrong not to fear and respect me. This message is from Lord GOD All-Powerful.

²⁰ Judah, long ago you broke free from me, like an ox that breaks its yoke and the ropes holding it. You said to me, I will not serve you! On every high hill and under every green tree you offered your body in the worship of false gods.

²¹ Judah, I planted you like a special vine. You were all from good seed. How did you turn into a different vine that grows bad fruit?

²² Even if you wash yourself with lye, even if you use much soap, I can still

see your guilt. This message is from the Lord GOD.

²³ Judah, how can you say to me, I am not guilty because I have not worshiped the Baal idols? Think about what you did in the valley. Think about what you have done. You are like a fast she-camel that runs from place to place.

²⁴ You are like a wild donkey that lives in the desert. At mating time, she sniffs the wind. No one can control her when she is in heat. At mating time, every male that wants her will get her. She is easy to find.

²⁵ Judah, stop chasing after idols! Stop wanting those other gods. But you say, It is no use! I cannot stop! I love those other gods. I cant stop chasing them.

²⁶ A thief is ashamed when people catch him stealing. The people of Israel should be ashamed too and so should their kings and leaders, priests and prophets.

²⁷ They say to pieces of wood, You are my father. They say to a rock, You gave birth to me. All these people will be ashamed. They dont look to me for help. They have turned their backs on me. But when the people of Judah get into

trouble, they say to me, Come and save us!

²⁸ But where are the idols you made for yourselves? Lets see if they come and save you when you are in trouble! People of Judah, you have as many idols as you have cities!

²⁹ Why do you argue with me? You have all turned against me. This message was from the LORD.

³⁰ I punished you people of Judah, but it did not help. You did not come back when you were punished. With your swords you killed the prophets who came to you. Like a dangerous lion, you killed the prophets.

³¹ People of this generation, pay attention to the LORD'S message: Have I been like a desert to the people of Israel? Have I been like a dark and dangerous land to them? My people say, We are free to go our own way. We will not come back to you! Why do they say these things?

³² A young woman does not forget her jewelry. A bride does not forget to wear her wedding dress. But my people have forgotten me too many times to count.

³³ Judah, you have become so good at finding lovers. Even the worst women could learn some evil ways from you.

³⁴ You have blood on your hands! It is the blood of poor, innocent people. You did not catch them breaking into your house. You killed them for no reason!

³⁵ But still, you say, I am innocent. God is not angry with me. So I will also judge you guilty of lying, because you say, I have done nothing wrong.

³⁶ You go from one place to another looking for help, always changing your mind. But Egypt will also disappoint you, just as Assyria did.

³⁷ So you will eventually leave Egypt too, and you will hide your face in shame. You trusted these countries, but the LORD rejected them, so they cannot help you win.

3¹ If a man divorces his wife and she goes and marries someone else, the first husband cannot take her back. If he did, it would make the land unclean. Judah, you and all your false gods are like a prostitute with many lovers! So why do you think you can come back to me? This message is from the LORD.

²Look up to the bare hilltops, Judah. Is there any place where you have not had sex with your lovers? You sat by the road waiting for lovers, like an Arab in the desert. You made the land dirty with all the evil sins you did when you were unfaithful to me.

³You sinned, so the rain has not come. There has not been any springtime rains. But still you refuse to be ashamed. The look on your face is like that of a prostitute who refuses to be ashamed.

⁴But didnt you just call me Father? Didnt you say, You have been my friend since I was a child?

⁵You also said, God will not always be angry with me. His anger will not continue forever. Judah, you say that, but you do as much evil as you can.

⁶The LORD spoke to me during the time King Josiah was ruling the nation of Judah. He said, Jeremiah, you saw the bad things Israel did! You saw how she was unfaithful to me. She was unfaithful to me with every idol on every hill and under every green tree.

⁷I said to myself, Israel will come back to me after she has finished doing these

evil things. But she did not come back to me. And Israels unfaithful sister, Judah, saw what she did.

⁸Judah knew why I sent Israel away. I divorced her because she committed the sin of adultery. But that did not make her unfaithful sister Judah afraid. She also went out and acted like a prostitute.

⁹And that did not bother her at all. Like a prostitute she committed adultery by worshiping idols made from stone and wood. She polluted the whole country with her sin.

¹⁰Israels unfaithful sister did not come back to me with her whole heart. She only pretended to come back. This message is from the LORD.

¹¹The LORD said to me, Israel was not faithful to me, but she had a better excuse than unfaithful Judah.

¹²Jeremiah, look toward the north and speak this message: Come back, you faithless people of Israel. This message is from the LORD. I will stop frowning at you. I am full of mercy. The LORD says, I will not be angry with you forever.

¹³But you must recognize your sin. You turned against the LORD your God.

That is your sin. You worshiped the idols of other nations. You worshiped them under every green tree. You did not obey me. This message is from the LORD.

¹⁴The LORD says, You people are unfaithful, but come back to me because I am your master. I will take one person from every city and two people from every family and bring you to Zion.

¹⁵Then I will give you new rulers who will be faithful to me. They will lead you with knowledge and understanding.

¹⁶In those days there will be many of you in the land. This message is from the LORD. At that time people will never again say, I remember the days when we had the Box of the LORD'S Agreement. They will not even think about the Holy Box anymore. They will not even remember or miss it. They will never make another Holy Box.

¹⁷At that time the city of Jerusalem will be called The LORD'S Throne. All nations will come together in the city of Jerusalem to give honor to the name of the LORD. They will not follow their stubborn, evil hearts anymore.

¹⁸In those days the family of Judah will join the family of Israel. They will come together from a land in the north to the land I gave to their ancestors.

¹⁹This message is from the LORD: I want to treat you like my own children. I want to give you a pleasant land, a land more beautiful than any other nation. I thought you would call me Father. I thought you would always follow me. But you have been unfaithful to me, family of Israel! You have been like an unfaithful wife who leaves her husband.

²⁰(3: 19)

²¹You can hear crying on the bare hills. The people of Israel are crying and praying for mercy. They have taken the wrong path. They have forgotten me, the LORD their God.

²²My children, you have been unfaithful, but I want you to come back to me. Come back and I will show you the way to be faithful. Just say, Yes, we will come back, because you are the LORD our God.

²³It was useless for us to worship idols on the hills. The wild celebrations we had there were foolish. Surely the salvation

of Israel comes only from the LORD our God.

²⁴As long as we can remember, that shameful god Baal has eaten everything our fathers owned. He took their sheep and cattle, their sons and daughters.

²⁵Let us lie down in our shame. Let disgrace cover us like a blanket. We have sinned against the LORD our God. We and our fathers have sinned. We have not obeyed the LORD our God from the time we were children.

4¹This message is from the LORD. Israel, if you want to come back, then come back to me. Throw away your idols. Don't wander farther away from me.

²If you do these things, then you will be able to use my name to make a promise. You will be able to say, As the LORD lives. You will be able to use these words in a truthful, honest, and right way. If you do these things, the nations will be blessed by the Lord. They will brag about what the Lord has done.

³This is what the LORD says to the people of Judah and to Jerusalem: Your fields have not been plowed. Plow those

fields! Don't plant seeds among the thorns.

⁴Become the LORD'S people. Change your hearts. Men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, if you don't change, then I will become very angry. My anger will spread fast like a fire, and it will burn you up. No one will be able to put out that fire because of the evil you have done.

⁵Give this message to the people of Judah: Tell everyone in the city of Jerusalem: Blow the trumpet all over the country. Shout out loud and say, Come together! Let us all escape to the strong cities for protection.

⁶Raise the signal flag toward Zion. Run for your lives! Don't wait! Do this because I am bringing disaster from the north. I am bringing terrible destruction.

⁷A lion has come out of his cave. A destroyer of nations has begun to march. He has left his home to destroy your land. Your towns will be destroyed. There will be no one left to live in them.

⁸The LORD is angry with us, so put on sackcloth and cry out loud!

⁹The LORD says, When this happens, the king and his officers will lose their

courage. The priests will be filled with fear, and the prophets will be shocked.

¹⁰Then I, Jeremiah, said, Lord GOD, you have tricked the people of Judah and Jerusalem. You said to them, You will have peace. But now the sword is pointing at their throats!

¹¹At that time this message will be given to the people of Judah and Jerusalem: A hot wind blows from the bare hills. It comes from the desert to my people. It is not like the gentle wind that is used to separate the grain from the chaff.

¹²It is a stronger wind than that, and it comes from me. Now I will announce my judgment against the people of Judah.

¹³Look! The enemy rises up like a cloud. His chariots look like a windstorm. His horses are faster than eagles. It will be very bad for us! We are ruined!

¹⁴People of Jerusalem, wash the evil from your hearts. Make your hearts pure so that you can be saved. Don't continue making evil plans.

¹⁵Listen! The voice of a messenger from the land of Dan is speaking. Someone is

bringing bad news from the hill country of Ephraim:

¹⁶Report it to this nation. Spread the news to the people in Jerusalem. Enemies are coming from a faraway country. They are shouting words of war against the cities of Judah.

¹⁷The enemy has surrounded Jerusalem like men guarding a field. Judah, you turned against me, so the enemy is coming against you. This message is from the LORD.

¹⁸The way you lived and the things you did brought this trouble to you. It is your evil that made your life so hard. Your evil life brought the pain that hurts deep in your heart.

¹⁹My sadness and worry is making my stomach hurt. I am bent over in pain. I am so afraid. My heart is pounding inside me. I cannot keep quiet, because I have heard the trumpet blow. The trumpet is calling the army to war.

²⁰Disaster follows disaster. The whole country is destroyed! Suddenly my tents are destroyed. My curtains are torn down.

²¹ How long must I see the war flags and hear the trumpets call to battle?

²² The Lord said, My people are foolish. They don't know me. They are stupid children. They don't understand. They are skillful at doing evil, but they don't know how to do good.

²³ I looked at the earth. It was empty; there was nothing on it. I looked at the sky, and its light was gone.

²⁴ I looked at the mountains, and they were shaking. All the hills were trembling.

²⁵ I looked, but there were no people. All the birds of the sky had flown away.

²⁶ I looked, and the good land had become a desert. All the cities in that land were destroyed by the LORD and his great anger.

²⁷ This is what the LORD says: The whole country will be ruined, but I will not completely destroy the land.

²⁸ So the people in the land will cry for the dead. The sky will grow dark. I have spoken and will not change. I have made a decision, and I will not change my mind.

²⁹The people of Judah will hear the sound of the horse soldiers and the archers, and the people will run away! Some of them will hide in caves; some will hide in the bushes; some will climb up into the rocks. All the cities of Judah will be empty. No one will live in them.

³⁰Judah, you have been destroyed. So what are you doing now? Why are you putting on your best red dress? Why are you putting on your gold jewelry? Why are you putting on your eye makeup? You make yourself beautiful, but it is a waste of time. Your lovers hate you. They are trying to kill you.

³¹I hear a cry like a woman in labor, a scream like a woman giving birth to her first baby. It is the cry of daughter Zion. She is lifting her hands in prayer, saying, Oh! I am about to faint! Murderers are all around me!

5¹The Lord says, Walk the streets of Jerusalem. Look around and think about these things. Search the public squares of the city. See if you can find one good person, one who does honest things and who searches for the truth. If

you find one good person, I will forgive Jerusalem.

²The people make promises and say, As the LORD lives. But they dont really mean it!

³LORD, I know that you want people to be loyal to you. You hit the people of Judah, but they did not feel any pain. You destroyed them, but they refused to learn their lesson. They became very stubborn. They refused to be sorry for the bad things they did.

⁴But I said to myself, It must be only the poor who are so foolish. They have not learned the way of the LORD. They dont know the teachings of their God.

⁵So I will go to the leaders of Judah. I will talk to them. Surely they know the way of the LORD, the law of their God. But the leaders had all joined together to break away from serving God.

⁶So a lion from the forest will attack them. A wolf from the desert will kill them. A leopard is hiding near their cities, to tear to pieces anyone who comes out. Thats because the people have sinned again and again. Many times they have wandered away from God.

⁷ God says, People of Judah, why should I forgive you? Your children have abandoned me. They made promises to idols that are not really gods! I gave your children everything they needed, but they were still unfaithful to me! They spent their time with prostitutes.

⁸ They are like horses that have had plenty to eat and are ready to mate. They are like a horse that is calling its neighbors wife.

⁹ Should I punish the people of Judah for doing these things? This message is from the LORD. You know I should punish a nation such as this. I should give it the punishment it deserves.

¹⁰ Go along the rows of Judahs grapevines. Cut down the vines. (But dont completely destroy them.) Cut off all their branches, because they dont belong to the LORD.

¹¹ The family of Israel and the family of Judah have been unfaithful to me in every way. This message is from the LORD.

¹² Those people lied about the LORD. They said, He will not do anything to us. Nothing bad will happen to us. We will

never see an army attack us. We will never starve.

¹³The prophets are only empty wind. The word of God is not in them. Bad things will happen to them.

¹⁴The LORD God All-Powerful said these things: The people said I would not punish them. So, Jeremiah, the words I give you will be like fire, and these people will be like wood. That fire will burn them up completely.

¹⁵Family of Israel, this message is from the LORD. I will soon bring a nation from far away to attack you. It is an old nation; it is an ancient nation. The people of that nation speak a language that you do not know. You cannot understand what they say.

¹⁶Their arrow bags are like open graves. All their men are strong soldiers.

¹⁷They will eat all the crops that you gathered. They will eat all your food. They will destroy your sons and daughters. They will eat your flocks and your herds. They will eat your grapes and your figs. They will destroy your strong cities with their swords. They will

destroy the strong cities that you trust in.

¹⁸This message is from the LORD: But, Judah, when these terrible days come, I will not fully destroy you.

¹⁹The people will ask, Why has the LORD our God done all these things to us? Give them this answer from me: You people of Judah left me, and you served foreign idols in your own land. Because you did this, you will now serve foreigners in a land that does not belong to you.

²⁰Tell this message to the family of Jacob, and tell it in the nation of Judah.

²¹Hear this message, you foolish people who have no sense. You have eyes, but you dont see! You have ears, but you dont listen!

²²Surely you are afraid of me. This message is from the LORD. You should shake with fear in front of me. I am the one who made the sandy shores to hold back the sea. I made it that way to keep the water in its place forever. The waves may pound the beach, but they will not destroy it. The waves may roar as they

come in, but they cannot go beyond the beach.

²³ But the people of Judah are stubborn. They are always planning ways to turn against me. They turned away from me and left me.

²⁴ The people of Judah never say to themselves, Let's fear and respect the LORD our God. He gives us autumn and spring rains at just the right time. He makes sure that we have a good harvest time.

²⁵ You don't have these blessings because you have done wrong. Your sins have kept these good things away from you.

²⁶ Among my people are those who are evil. They are like men who make nets for catching birds. They set their traps, but they catch people instead of birds.

²⁷ Like a cage full of birds, their lives are full of evil lies. Their cheating has made them rich and powerful.

²⁸ They are well fed and well dressed. There is no end to the evil they do. They don't care what happens to orphans, and they don't help the poor get what they need.

²⁹ Should I punish the people of Judah for these things? This is what the LORD is asking you, and he says, A nation like this should get the punishment it deserves.

³⁰ A terrible and shocking thing has happened in the land of Judah.

³¹ The prophets tell lies. The priests will not do what they were chosen to do, and my people love it this way! But what will you people do when your punishment comes?

6¹ Run for your lives, people of Benjamin! Run away from the city of Jerusalem! Blow the war trumpet in the city of Tekoa! Put up the warning flag in the city of Beth Hakkerem! Do these things because disaster is coming from the north. Terrible destruction is coming to you.

² Jerusalem, you are like a beautiful meadow. But I will destroy you!

³ Enemy shepherds will surround you with all their flocks. They will set up their tents all around you, and each one will let his sheep eat the grass.

⁴ Get ready to fight against Jerusalem. Get up! We will attack the city at noon.

But it is already getting late. The evening shadows are growing long.

⁵So get up! We will attack the city at night! Lets destroy the strong walls that are around Jerusalem.

⁶This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: Cut down the trees around Jerusalem, and build a siege mound against it. This city should be punished because inside there is no justiceonly slavery.

⁷As a well keeps its water fresh, so Jerusalem keeps its wickedness fresh. I hear about the robbing and violence in this city all the time. I see nothing but pain and sickness there all the time.

⁸Listen to this warning, Jerusalem, or I will turn my back on you. I will make your land an empty desert. No one will be able to live there.

⁹This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: Gather the people of Israel who were left on their land. Gather them the way you would gather the last grapes on a grapevine. Check each vine, like the workers check each vine when they pick the grapes.

¹⁰Who can I speak to? Who can I warn? Who will listen to me? The people of Israel have closed their ears, so they cannot hear my warnings. They don't like the LORD'S teachings. They don't want to hear his message.

¹¹But I am full of the LORD'S anger, and I am tired of holding it in! Pour out my anger on the children playing in the streets and on the young soldiers gathered there as well. A man and his wife will both be captured as well as all the old people.

¹²Their houses will be given to others. Their fields and their wives will be given to other people. I will raise my hand and punish the people of Judah. This message is from the LORD.

¹³All the people of Israel want more and more money. All of them, from the least important to the most important, are like that. Even the prophets and priests tell lies.

¹⁴They should bandage the wounds my people have suffered, but they treat their wounds like small scratches. They say, It's all right, everything is all right. But it is not all right!

¹⁵They should be ashamed of the evil things they do, but they are not ashamed at all. They don't know enough to be embarrassed by their sins. So they will be punished with everyone else. They will be thrown to the ground when I punish the people. This is what the LORD says.

¹⁶And the LORD says this: Stand at the crossroads and look. Ask where the old road is. Ask for the road that will lead the right way, and walk on that road. If you do, you will find rest for yourselves. But you said, We will not walk on the good road.

¹⁷I chose watchmen to watch over you. I told them, Listen for the sound of the war trumpet. But they said, We will not listen!

¹⁸So listen, all you nations, and pay attention, you people in those countries.

¹⁹Hear this, people of the earth: I am going to bring disaster to the people of Judah because of all the evil they planned, and because they ignored my messages. They refused to obey my law.

²⁰Why do you bring me incense from the country of Sheba? Why do you bring

me sweet-smelling cane from a faraway country? Your burnt offerings dont make me happy. Your sacrifices dont please me.

²¹ So this is what the LORD says: I will give the people of Judah problems. They will be like stones that make people fall. Fathers and sons will stumble over them. Friends and neighbors will die.

²² This is what the LORD says: An army is coming from the north. A great nation is coming from faraway places on earth.

²³ The soldiers carry bows and spears. They are cruel; they have no mercy. They are so powerful. They sound like the roaring ocean as they ride their horses. That army is coming, ready for battle. It is coming to attack you, Jerusalem.

²⁴ We have heard the news about that army, and we are paralyzed with fear. We feel trapped by our troubles, in pain like a woman giving birth.

²⁵ Dont go out into the fields. Dont go on the roads because the enemy has swords, and there is danger everywhere.

²⁶ My people, put on sackcloth and roll in the ashes. Cry loudly for the dead.

Cry as if you lost an only son. Do this because the destroyer will come against us very quickly.

²⁷ Jeremiah, I want you to be like a worker who tests metals. You will test my people and watch how they live.

²⁸ My people have turned against me, and they are very stubborn. They say bad things about people. They are like bronze and iron that are covered with rust and tarnish.

²⁹ They are like a worker who tried to make silver pure. The bellows blew strongly, and the fire became hotter, but only lead came from the fire. The worker wasted his time trying to make that silver pure. In the same way, the evil was not removed from my people.

³⁰ My people will be called Rejected Silver. They will be given that name because the LORD did not accept them.

7 ¹ This is the LORD'S message to Jeremiah:

² Jeremiah, stand at the gate of the LORD'S house. Teach this message at the gate: Hear the message from the LORD, all you people of the nation of Judah. All you who come through these

gates to worship the LORD, hear this message.

³The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Change your lives and do what is right. Then I will let you live in this place.

⁴Dont trust the lies that some people say. They say, This is the Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD!

⁵If you change your lives and do what is right, I will let you live in this place. You must be fair to each other.

⁶You must not take advantage of widows or orphans or people visiting in your land. Dont kill innocent people! And dont follow other gods, because they will only ruin your lives.

⁷If you obey me, I will let you live in this place. I gave this land to your ancestors for them to keep forever.

⁸But you are trusting lies that are worthless.

⁹Will you steal and murder? Will you commit adultery? Will you falsely accuse other people? Will you worship the false god Baal and follow other gods that you have not known?

¹⁰If you commit these sins, do you think that you can stand before me in this house that is called by my name? Do you think you can stand before me and say, We are safe, just so you can do all these terrible things?

¹¹This Temple is called by my name. Is this Temple nothing more to you than a hideout for robbers? I have been watching you. This message is from the LORD.

¹²You people of Judah, go now to the town of Shiloh. Go to the place where I first made a house for my name. The people of Israel also did evil things. Go and see what I did to that place because of the evil they did.

¹³You people of Israel were doing all these evil things. This message is from the LORD! I spoke to you again and again, but you refused to listen to me. I called to you, but you did not answer.

¹⁴So I will destroy the house called by my name in Jerusalem. I will destroy that Temple as I destroyed Shiloh. And that house in Jerusalem that is called by my name is the Temple you trust in.

I gave that place to you and to your ancestors.

¹⁵I will throw you away from me just as I threw away all your brothers from Ephraim.

¹⁶As for you, Jeremiah, don't pray for these people of Judah. Don't beg for them or pray for them. Don't beg me to help them. I will not listen to your prayer for them.

¹⁷I know you see what they are doing in the towns of Judah. You can see what they are doing in the streets of the city of Jerusalem.

¹⁸This is what the people of Judah are doing: The children gather wood. The fathers use the wood to make a fire. The women make the dough and then make cakes of bread to offer to the Queen of Heaven. The people of Judah pour out drink offerings to worship other gods. They do this to make me angry.

¹⁹But I am not the one they are really hurting. This message is from the LORD. They are only hurting themselves. They are bringing shame on themselves.

²⁰So this is what the Lord GOD says: I will show my anger against this place.

I will punish people and animals. I will punish the trees in the field and the crops that grow in the ground. My anger will be like a hot fire no one will be able to stop it.

²¹ This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Go and offer as many burnt offerings and sacrifices as you want. Eat the meat of those sacrifices yourselves.

²² I brought your ancestors out of Egypt. I spoke to them, but I did not give them any commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices.

²³ I only gave them this command: Obey me and I will be your God, and you will be my people. Do all that I command, and good things will happen to you.

²⁴ But your ancestors did not listen to me. They did not pay attention to me. They were stubborn and did what they wanted to do. They did not become good. They became even more evil they went backward, not forward.

²⁵ From the day that your ancestors left Egypt to this day, I have sent my servants to you. My servants are the

prophets. I sent them to you again and again.

²⁶ But your ancestors did not listen to me. They did not pay attention to me. They were very stubborn and did evil even worse than their fathers did.

²⁷ Jeremiah, you will tell these things to the people of Judah. But they will not listen to you. You will call to them, but they will not answer you.

²⁸ So you must tell them these things: This is the nation that did not obey the LORD its God. These people did not listen to Gods teachings. They dont know the true teachings.

²⁹ Jeremiah, cut off your hair and throw it away. Go up to the bare hilltop and cry, because the LORD has rejected this generation of people. He has turned his back on these people. And in anger he will punish them.

³⁰ Do this because I have seen the people of Judah doing evil things. This message is from the LORD. They have set up their idols, and I hate those idols. They have set up idols in the Temple that is called by my name. They have made my house dirty!

³¹ The people of Judah built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom where they killed their own sons and daughters and burned them as sacrifices. This is something I never commanded. Something like this never even entered my mind!

³² So I warn you. The days are coming, says the LORD, when people will not call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom anymore. No, they will call it the Valley of Slaughter. They will give it this name because they will bury the dead people in Topheth until there is no more room to bury anyone else.

³³ Then the bodies of the dead people will become food for the birds of the sky. Wild animals will eat the bodies of those people. There will be no one left alive to chase the birds or animals away.

³⁴ I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and happiness in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. There will be no more sounds of the bride and bridegroom in Judah or Jerusalem. The land will become an empty desert.

8¹ This message is from the LORD: At that time men will take the bones of

the kings and important rulers of Judah from their tombs. They will take the bones of the priests and prophets from their tombs. They will take the bones of all the people of Jerusalem from their tombs.

²They will spread the bones on the ground under the sun, the moon, and the stars. The people of Jerusalem love to worship the sun, the moon, and the stars. No one will gather the bones and bury them again. So the bones of those people will be like dung thrown on the ground.

³I will force the people of Judah to leave their homes and their land. They will be taken away to foreign lands. Some of the people of Judah who were not killed in the war will wish that they had been killed. This message is from the LORD.

⁴Jeremiah, say this to the people of Judah: This is what the LORD says: You know if a man falls down, he gets up again. And if a man goes the wrong way, he turns around and comes back.

⁵The people of Judah went the wrong way. But why do the people of Jerusalem

continue going the wrong way? They believe their own lies. They refuse to turn around and come back.

⁶I have listened to them very carefully, but they don't say what is right. They are not sorry for their sins. They don't think about the evil they have done. They do things without thinking. They are like horses running into a battle.

⁷Even the birds in the sky know the right time to do things. The storks, doves, swifts, and thrushes know when it is time to fly to a new home. But my people don't know what the LORD wants them to do.

⁸You keep saying, We have the LORD'S teachings. So we are wise! But this is not true, because the scribes have lied with their pens.

⁹These wise people refused to listen to the LORD'S teachings. So they are not really wise at all. These wise people were trapped. They became shocked and ashamed.

¹⁰So I will give their wives to other men. I will give their fields to new owners. All the people of Israel want more and more money. All of them,

from the least important to the most important, are like that. Even the prophets and priests tell lies.

¹¹They should bandage the wounds my people have suffered, but they treat their wounds like small scratches. They say, Its all right, everything is all right. But it is not all right!

¹²They should be ashamed of the evil things they do, but they are not ashamed at all. They dont know enough to be embarrassed by their sins. So they will be punished with everyone else. They will be thrown to the ground when I punish the people. This is what the LORD says.

¹³I will take away their fruit and crops so that there will be no harvest, says the LORD. There will be no grapes on the vine and no figs on the fig tree. Even the leaves will become dry and die. I will take away the things I gave them.

¹⁴They will say, Why are we just sitting here? Come, lets run to the strong cities. If the LORD our God is going to make us die, then lets die there. We have sinned against the LORD, so he has given us poisoned water to drink.

¹⁵We hoped to have peace, but nothing good has come. We hoped that he would forgive us, but only disaster has come.

¹⁶From the land of the tribe of Dan, we hear the snorting of the enemys horses. The ground shakes from the pounding of their hooves. They have come to destroy the land and everything in it. They have come to destroy the city and all the people who live there.

¹⁷People of Judah, I am sending poisonous snakes to attack you. These snakes cannot be controlled. They will bite you. This message is from the LORD.

¹⁸God, I am very sad and afraid.

¹⁹Listen to my people. Everywhere in this country, people are crying for help. They say, Is the LORD still at Zion? Is Zions King still there? But God says, The people of Judah worshiped their worthless foreign idols. That made me very angry! Why did they do that?

²⁰And the people say, Harvest time is over. Summer is gone, and still we have not been saved.

²¹My people are hurt, so I am hurt. I am too sad to speak.

²² Surely there is some medicine in Gilead. Surely there is a doctor in Gilead. So why are the wounds of my people not healed?

9¹ If my head were filled with water, and if my eyes were a fountain of tears, I would cry day and night for my people who have been destroyed.

² If only I had a place in the desert a house where travelers spend the night so I could leave my people. I could go away from them, because they are all unfaithful to God. They have all turned against him.

³ They use their tongues like a bow; lies fly from their mouths like arrows. Lies, not truth, have grown strong in this land. They go from one sin to another. They don't know me. This is what the LORD says.

⁴ Watch your neighbors! Don't trust your own brothers, because every brother is a cheat. Every neighbor talks behind your back.

⁵ Everyone lies to their neighbor. No one speaks the truth. The people of Judah have taught their tongues to lie. They

sinned until they were too tired to come back.

⁶One bad thing followed another, and lies followed lies. The people refused to know me. This is what the LORD says.

⁷So the LORD All-Powerful says, A worker heats metal in a fire to test it and see if it is pure. I will test the people of Judah like that. I have no other choice. My people have sinned.

⁸The people of Judah have tongues as sharp as arrows. Their mouths speak lies. They all speak kindly to their neighbors, but they are secretly planning ways to attack them.

⁹Should I punish the people of Judah for doing these things? This message is from the LORD. You know I should punish a nation such as this. I should give it the punishment it deserves.

¹⁰I, Jeremiah, will cry for the mountains. I will sing a funeral song for the empty fields, because all the animals were taken away. No one goes there anymore. The sounds of cattle cannot be heard. The birds have flown away, and the animals are gone.

¹¹ The Lord says, I will make the city of Jerusalem a pile of garbage. It will be a home for jackals. I will destroy the cities in the land of Judah, so no one will live there.

¹² Is there a man who is wise enough to understand these things? Is there someone who has been taught by the LORD? Can anyone explain his message? Why was the land ruined? Why was it made like an empty desert where no one goes?

¹³ The LORD answered, It is because the people of Judah stopped following my teachings. I gave them my teachings, but they refused to listen to me. They did not follow my teachings.

¹⁴ The people of Judah lived their own way. They were stubborn. They followed the false god Baal. Their fathers taught them to follow those false gods.

¹⁵ So the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says, I will soon make the people of Judah eat bitter food and drink poisoned water.

¹⁶ I will scatter the people of Judah throughout other nations. They will live in strange nations that they and their

fathers never knew about. I will send men with swords. They will kill the people of Judah. They will kill them until all the people are gone.

¹⁷This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: Now think about these things! Call for the women who get paid to cry at funerals. Send for the people who are good at that job.

¹⁸The people say, Let those women come quickly and cry for us. Then our eyes will fill with tears that flow over our eyelids like streams of water.

¹⁹The sound of loud crying is heard from Zion: We are really ruined! We are so ashamed! We must leave our land, because our houses have been destroyed. Now our houses are only piles of rock.

²⁰Now, women of Judah, listen to the message from the LORD. Listen to the words from his mouth. Teach your daughters how to cry loudly. Each of them must learn to sing this funeral song:

²¹Death has climbed in through our windows and has come into our palaces. Death has come to our children who play

in the streets and to the young men who meet in the public places.

²²This is what you should say: The LORD says, Dead bodies will lie in the fields like dung. Their bodies will lie on the ground like grain a farmer has cut. But there will be no one to gather them.

²³This is what the LORD says: The wise must not brag about their wisdom. The strong men must not brag about their strength. The rich must not brag about their money.

²⁴But if someone wants to brag, then let them brag about this: Let them brag that they learned to know me. Let them brag that they understand that I am the LORD, that I am kind and fair, and that I do good things on earth. I love this kind of bragging. This message is from the LORD.

²⁵This is what the LORD says: The time is coming when I will punish all those who are circumcised only in the body.

²⁶I am talking about the people of the nations of Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and all those who live in the desert. The circumcision they do is not the kind the Lord wants. But the people

of Israel are not really circumcised either. They are not circumcised in their hearts.

10¹ Family of Israel, listen to the LORD! He is speaking to you.

²This is what the LORD says: Don't live like people from other nations. Don't be afraid of special signs in the sky. The other nations are afraid of what they see in the sky. But you must not be afraid of them.

³The customs of other people are worth nothing. Their idols are nothing but wood from the forest. Their idols are made by workers with their chisels.

⁴They make their idols beautiful with silver and gold. They use hammers and nails to fasten their idols down so they will not fall over.

⁵The idols of the other nations are like a scarecrow in a cucumber field. They cannot walk. They cannot talk, and the people must carry them. So don't be afraid of their idols. They cannot hurt you. And they cannot help you either.

⁶LORD, there is no one like you. You are great! Your name is great and powerful!

⁷Everyone should respect you, King of all the nations. You deserve their

respect. There are many wise men among the nations, but not one of them is as wise as you.

⁸All the people of the other nations are stupid and foolish. Their teachings come from worthless wooden statues.

⁹They use silver from the city of Tarshish and gold from the city of Uphaz and make their statues. Carpenters and metalworkers make the idols. They put blue and purple clothes on them. Wise men make these gods.

¹⁰But the LORD is the only true God. He is the only God who is alive. He is the King who rules forever. The earth shakes when he is angry. The people of the nations cannot stop his anger.

¹¹The Lord says, Tell them this message: These false gods did not make heaven and earth. They will be destroyed and disappear from heaven and earth.

¹²God is the one who used his power and made the earth. He used his wisdom and built the world. With his understanding he stretched the sky over the earth.

¹³God causes the loud thunder, and he causes great floods of water to fall from

the sky. He makes clouds rise in the sky every place on earth. He sends lightning with the rain. He brings out the wind from his storehouses.

¹⁴People are so stupid! Metalworkers are fooled by the idols that they themselves made. These statues are nothing but lies. They are stupid.

¹⁵These idols are worth nothing. They are something to make fun of. In the time of judgment they will be destroyed.

¹⁶But Jacobs God is not like the idols. He made everything, and Israel is the family that God chose to be his own people. His name is LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁷Get everything you own and prepare to leave. People of Judah, you are trapped in the city, and the enemy is all around it.

¹⁸This is what the LORD says: This time, I will throw the people of Judah out of this country. I will bring pain and trouble to them. I will do this so that they will learn their lesson.

¹⁹I am hurt badly. I am injured and I cannot be healed. But I told myself, This is my sickness; I must suffer through it.

²⁰My tent is ruined. All its ropes are broken. My children left me. They are gone. No one is left to put up my tent. No one is left to fix a shelter for me.

²¹The shepherds are stupid. They don't try to find the LORD. They are not wise, so their flocks are scattered and lost.

²²Listen! A loud noise! The noise is coming from the north. It will destroy the cities of Judah. Judah will become an empty desert. It will be a home for jackals.

²³LORD, I know people don't really know how to live right.

²⁴LORD, correct us! But be fair! Don't punish us in anger!

²⁵If you are angry, then punish the other nations. They don't know or respect you. They don't worship you. Those nations destroyed Jacob's family. They destroyed Israel completely. They destroyed Israel's homeland.

11 ¹This is the message from the LORD:

²Jeremiah, listen to the words of this agreement and tell them to the people living in Jerusalem and the rest of Judah.

³Tell them that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Bad things will happen to anyone who does not obey this agreement.

⁴I am talking about the agreement I made with your ancestors when I brought them out of that furnace called Egypt. At that time I told them, Listen to me and obey all the commands I give you. Then you will be my people and I will be your God.

⁵I did this to keep the promise that I had made to your ancestors. I promised to give them a very fertile land flowing with milk and honey. And you are living in that country today. I answered, Amen, LORD.

⁶The LORD said to me, Jeremiah, tell this message in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: Listen to the words of this agreement, and then obey these laws.

⁷I gave a warning to your ancestors at the time I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I have warned them again and again to this day. I told them to obey me.

⁸But your ancestors did not listen to me. They were stubborn and did what their own evil hearts wanted. The agreement says that bad things will happen to them if they don't obey. So I made all the bad things happen to them. I commanded them to obey the agreement, but they did not.

⁹The LORD said to me, Jeremiah, I know that the people of Judah and the people living in Jerusalem have made secret plans.

¹⁰They are committing the same sins that their ancestors did. Their ancestors refused to listen to my message. They followed and worshiped other gods. The family of Israel and the family of Judah have broken the agreement I made with their ancestors.

¹¹So this is what the LORD says: I will soon make something terrible happen to the people of Judah. They will not be able to escape. They will be sorry and cry to me for help, but I will not listen to them.

¹²The people in the towns of Judah and in the city of Jerusalem will go and pray to their idols for help. They burn incense

to those idols. But their idols will not be able to help the people of Judah when that terrible disaster comes.

¹³People of Judah, you have many idols there are as many idols as there are towns in Judah. You have built many altars for worshiping that disgusting god Baal there are as many altars as there are streets in Jerusalem.

¹⁴As for you, Jeremiah, don't pray for these people of Judah. Don't beg for them. Don't say prayers for them. I will not listen. They will suffer and then call to me for help, but I will not listen.

¹⁵Judah is the one I love, but why is she in my temple? She has done too many evil things. Judah, do you think vows and sacrifices will keep you from being destroyed? Will I then allow you to enjoy your evil ways?

¹⁶The LORD gave you a name. He called you, A green olive tree, beautiful to look at. But with a powerful storm, he will set that tree on fire, and its branches will be burned up.

¹⁷The LORD All-Powerful planted you, and he said that disaster will come to you. That is because the family of Israel

and the family of Judah have done evil things. They offered sacrifices to Baal, and that made him angry!

¹⁸The LORD showed me that the men of Anathoth were making plans against me. He showed me what they were doing, so I knew they were against me.

¹⁹Before he showed me this, I was like a gentle lamb waiting to be butchered. I did not understand that they were against me. They were saying this about me: Let us destroy the tree and its fruit! Let us kill him! Then people will forget him.

²⁰So I prayed, LORD All-Powerful, you are a fair judge. You know how to test peoples hearts and minds. I will tell you my arguments, and I will let you give them the punishment they deserve.

²¹The LORD said to me: Those people from Anathoth are planning to take your life. They are telling you not to prophesy in the name of the LORD or they will kill you. This is what I have to say about them:

²²I, the LORD All-Powerful, promise that I will soon punish those people.

Their young men will die in war. Their sons and daughters will die from hunger.

²³No one from the city of Anathoth will be left. No one will survive. I will punish them and cause something bad to happen to them.

12¹ LORD, if I argue with you, you are always right. But I want to ask you about some things that don't seem right. Why are wicked people successful? Why do people you cannot trust have such easy lives?

²You have put these wicked people here like plants with strong roots. They grow and produce fruit. With their mouths they say that you are near and dear to them, but in their hearts they are really far away from you.

³But you know my heart, LORD. You see me and test my mind. Drag the evil people away like sheep to be killed. Choose them for the day of slaughter.

⁴How much longer will the land be dry? How long will the grass be dry and dead? The birds and the animals of this land have all died, and it is the fault of the wicked. But they are saying, Jeremiah

will not live long enough to see what happens to us.

⁵Jeremiah, if running a race against men makes you tired, how will you race against horses? If you trip and fall in an open field, what will you do in the thornbushes by the Jordan River?

⁶These men are your own brothers. Members of your own family are making plans against you. People from your own family are shouting at you. Don't trust them, even when they speak to you like friends.

⁷I have abandoned my house. I have left my own property. I have given Judah, the one I love, to her enemies.

⁸My own people turned against me like a wild lion. They roared at me, so I turned away from them.

⁹My own people have become like a dying animal surrounded by vultures. These birds are circling around her. Come on, wild animals. Come get something to eat.

¹⁰Many shepherds have ruined my vineyard. They have trampled the plants in my field. They have made my beautiful field a desert.

¹¹ They have turned it into an empty desert. It is dry and dead. The whole land has been ruined, and no one is left to care for it.

¹² The empty hills are covered with soldiers who have come to destroy everything. The LORD is using them to punish that land from one end to the other. No one is safe.

¹³ The people will plant wheat, but they will harvest only thorns. They will work hard until they are very tired, but they will get nothing for all their work. They will be ashamed of their crop. The LORD'S anger caused this.

¹⁴ This is what the LORD says: I will tell you what I will do for all those who live around the land of Israel. They are very wicked. They have destroyed the land I gave to the people of Israel. I will pull the evil people up and throw them out of their land, and I will pull the people of Judah up with them.

¹⁵ But after I pull them up out of their land, I will feel sorry for them. I will bring each family back to its own property and to its own land.

¹⁶I want these people to learn their lessons well. In the past they taught my people to use Baals name to make promises. Now, I want them to learn to use my name. I want them to say, As the LORD lives . If they do that, I will allow them to be successful, and I will let them live among my people.

¹⁷But if a nation does not listen to my message, I will completely destroy it. I will pull it up like a dead plant. This message is from the LORD.

13¹This is what the LORD said to me: Jeremiah, go and buy a linen loincloth. Then put it around your waist. Dont let it get wet.

²So I bought a linen loincloth, just as the LORD told me to do, and I put it around my waist.

³Then the message from the LORD came to me a second time.

⁴This was the message: Jeremiah, take the loincloth you bought and are wearing, and go to Perath. Hide the loincloth there in a crack in the rocks.

⁵So I went to Perath and hid the loincloth there, just as the LORD told me to do.

⁶Many days later the LORD said to me, Now, Jeremiah, go to Perath. Get the loincloth that I told you to hide there.

⁷So I went to Perath and dug up the loincloth. I took it out of the crack in the rocks where I had hidden it. But now I could not wear the loincloth, because it was ruined. It was not good for anything.

⁸Then the message from the LORD came to me.

⁹This is what the LORD said: The loincloth is ruined and not good for anything. In the same way, I will ruin the proud people of Judah and Jerusalem.

¹⁰I will ruin them because they refuse to listen to my messages. They are stubborn and do only what they want to do. They follow and worship other gods. They will be like this linen loincloth. They will be ruined and not good for anything.

¹¹A loincloth is wrapped tightly around a mans waist. In the same way, I wrapped the family of Israel and the family of Judah around me. This message is from the LORD. I did that so that they would be my people and bring me fame, praise, and honor. But my people did not listen to me.

¹²Jeremiah, say to the people of Judah: This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Every wineskin should be filled with wine. They will laugh and say to you, Of course, we know that every wineskin should be filled with wine.

¹³Then you will say to them, This is what the LORD says: I will make everyone who lives in this land helpless, like a drunken man. I am talking about the kings who sit on Davids throne. I am also talking about the priests, the prophets, and all the people who live in Jerusalem.

¹⁴I will make them stumble and fall against each another, even the fathers and sons. This message is from the LORD. I will not feel sorry or have pity for them. I will not allow compassion to stop me from destroying the people of Judah.

¹⁵Listen and pay attention. The LORD has spoken to you. Do not be proud.

¹⁶Honor the LORD your God. Praise him or he will bring darkness. Praise him before you fall on the dark hills. You people of Judah are hoping for light, but the Lord will turn the light into thick

darkness. He will change it into the deepest gloom.

¹⁷ If you people of Judah don't listen to him, I will hide and cry. Your pride will cause me to cry. I will cry very hard. My eyes will overflow with tears, because the LORD'S flock will be captured.

¹⁸ Tell these things to the king and his wife, Come down from your thrones. Your beautiful crowns have fallen from your heads.

¹⁹ The cities in the Negev are locked. No one can open them. All the people of Judah have been taken away as captives. They were carried away as prisoners.

²⁰ Jerusalem, look! The enemy is coming from the north! Where is the flock you were once in charge of? That beautiful flock is gone now.

²¹ I will let your enemies become your rulers people you once trusted with your secrets. What will you say then? Surely you will feel great pain, like a woman giving birth.

²² You might ask yourself, Why has this bad thing happened to me? It happened because of your many sins. That's why

they were allowed to tear off your clothes and take advantage of you.

²³A black man cannot change the color of his skin, and a leopard cannot change its spots. And you, Jerusalem, who always do what is evil, cannot change and do good.

²⁴I will force you to leave your homes. You will run in all directions. You will be like chaff blown away by the desert wind.

²⁵This is what will happen to you. This is your part in my plans. This message is from the LORD. Why will this happen? Because you forgot me. You trusted false gods.

²⁶Jerusalem, I will pull your skirt up over your face. Everyone will see you, and you will be ashamed.

²⁷I have seen the terrible things you have done. I have seen you laughing and having sex with your lovers. I know all about your disgusting worship of other gods. I have seen you on the hills and in the fields. It will be very bad for you, Jerusalem. How long will you continue your filthy sins?

14¹ This is the LORD'S message to Jeremiah about the time of no rain:

² The nation of Judah cries for people who have died. The people in the cities of Judah grow weaker and weaker. They lie on the ground. People in Jerusalem, cry to God for help.

³ The leaders of the people send their servants to get water. The servants go to the water storage places, but they don't find any water. The servants come back with empty jars, so they are ashamed and embarrassed. They cover their heads from shame.

⁴ No one prepares the ground for crops. No rain falls on the land. The farmers are depressed. So they cover their heads from shame.

⁵ Even the mother deer in the field leaves her newborn baby alone, because there is no grass.

⁶ Wild donkeys stand on the bare hills. They sniff the wind like jackals. But their eyes cannot find any food, because there are no plants to eat.

⁷ We know that this is our fault. We are now suffering because of our sins. LORD,

do something to help us for the good of your name. We admit that we have left you many times. We have sinned against you.

⁸God, you are the hope of Israel! You save Israel in times of trouble. But now it seems like you are a stranger in the land, like you are a traveler who only stays one night.

⁹You seem like a man who has been attacked by surprise, like a soldier who does not have the power to save anyone. But, LORD, you are with us. We are called by your name, so don't leave us without help!

¹⁰This is what the LORD says about the people of Judah: The people of Judah love nothing more than to wander away from me. They don't hesitate to leave me. So now the LORD will not accept them. Now he will remember the evil they do. He will punish them for their sins.

¹¹Then the LORD said to me, Jeremiah, don't pray for good things to happen to the people of Judah.

¹²They might begin to fast and pray to me, but I will not listen to their prayers.

Even if they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings to me, I will not accept them. I will destroy the people of Judah with war. I will take away their food, and they will starve. And I will destroy them with terrible diseases.

¹³But I said, Lord GOD, the prophets were telling the people something different. They were telling the people of Judah, You will not suffer from war or from hunger. The Lord will give you peace in this land.

¹⁴Then the LORD said to me, Jeremiah, those prophets are telling lies in my name. I did not send them or command them or speak to them. Their prophecies came from false visions, worthless magic, and their own wishful thinking.

¹⁵So this is what I, the LORD, say about the prophets who are speaking in my name. I did not send them. They said, No enemy will ever attack this country. There will never be hunger in this land. So those prophets will die from hunger or by an enemys sword.

¹⁶And the people they spoke to will be thrown into the streets. The people will die from hunger and from an enemys

sword. I will punish them, and no one will be there to bury them, their wives, their sons, or their daughters.

¹⁷ Jeremiah, speak this message to the people of Judah: My eyes fill with tears night and day without stopping. I will cry for my dear people, because someone hit them and crushed them. They have been hurt very badly.

¹⁸ If I go into the country, I see the bodies of those killed in war. If I go into the city, I see people sick from hunger. The priests and prophets continue their work, but they don't understand what is happening.

¹⁹ Lord, have you completely rejected the nation of Judah? Do you hate Zion? You hurt us so badly that we cannot be made well again. Why did you do that? We were hoping for peace, but nothing good has come. We were hoping for a time of healing, but only terror came.

²⁰ LORD, we know that we are wicked. We know that our ancestors did evil things. Yes, we sinned against you.

²¹ For the good of your name, don't push us away. Don't take away the honor from

your glorious throne. Remember your agreement with us and do not break it.

²²Foreign idols don't have the power to bring rain. The sky does not have the power to send down showers of rain. You, the LORD our God, are our only hope. You are the one who made all these things.

15¹The LORD said to me, Jeremiah, even if Moses and Samuel were here to pray for the people of Judah, I would not feel sorry for them. Send the people of Judah away from me! Tell them to go!

²They might ask you, Where will we go? Tell them this is what the LORD says: I have chosen some people to die. They will die. I have chosen some to be killed with swords. They will be killed with swords. I have chosen some to die from hunger. They will die from hunger. I have chosen some to be taken away to a foreign country. They will be prisoners there.

³I will send four kinds of destroyers against them. This message is from the LORD. I will send the enemy with a sword to kill. I will send the dogs to drag

their bodies away. I will send birds of the air and wild animals to eat and destroy their bodies.

⁴I will make the people of Judah an example of something terrible for all the people on earth. I will do this to the people of Judah because of what Manasseh did in Jerusalem. Manasseh was the son of King Hezekiah. Manasseh was a king of Judah.

⁵No one will feel sorry for you, city of Jerusalem. No one will be sad and cry for you. No one will go out of their way to even ask how you are.

⁶Jerusalem, you left me. This message is from the LORD. Again and again you left me! So I will punish and destroy you. I am tired of holding back your punishment.

⁷I will separate the people of Judah with my pitchfork. I will scatter them at the city gates of the land. My people have not changed, so I will destroy them. I will take away their children.

⁸Many women will lose their husbands. There will be more widows than there is sand in the sea. I will bring a destroyer at noontime. The destroyer will attack

the mothers of the young men of Judah. I will bring pain and fear on the people of Judah. I will make this happen very quickly.

⁹The enemy will attack with swords and kill the people. They will kill the survivors from Judah. A woman with seven children will lose them. She will cry until she becomes weak and struggles to breathe. She will be upset and confused, because her bright day has become dark. This message is from the LORD.

¹⁰Mother, I am sorry that you gave birth to me. I am the one who must accuse and criticize the whole land. I have not loaned or borrowed anything, but everyone curses me.

¹¹Surely, LORD, I have served you well. In times of disaster and trouble, I prayed to you about my enemies.

¹²Jeremiah, you know that no one can shatter a piece of iron. I mean the iron mixed with bronze that is from the north.

¹³The people of Judah have many treasures. I will give these riches to other people. They will not have to buy

them, because Judah has many sins. The people sinned in every part of Judah.

¹⁴People of Judah, I will make you slaves of your enemies. You will be slaves in a land that you never knew. I am very angry. My anger is like a hot fire, and you will be burned.

¹⁵LORD, you understand me. Remember me and take care of me. People are hurting me. Give them the punishment they deserve. You are being patient with them. But dont destroy me while you remain patient with them. Think about me. Think about the pain I suffer for you.

¹⁶Your words came to me, and I ate them up. They made me very happy. I was glad to be called by your name, LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁷I never sat with the crowd as they laughed and had fun. I sat by myself because of your influence on me. You filled me with anger at the evil around me.

¹⁸I dont understand why I still hurt. I dont understand why my wound is not cured and cannot be healed. I think you have changed. You are like a spring of

water that became dry. You are like a spring whose water has stopped flowing.

¹⁹Then the LORD said, Jeremiah, if you change and come back to me, I will not punish you. If you change and come back to me, then you may serve me. If you speak important things, not worthless words, then you may speak for me. The people of Judah should change and come back to you. But don't you change and be like them.

²⁰I will make you strong. The people will think you are strong, like a wall made of bronze. The people of Judah will fight against you, but they will not defeat you. They will not defeat you, because I am with you. I will help you, and I will save you. This message is from the LORD.

²¹I will save you from these evil people. They frighten you, but I will save you from them.

16¹The LORD'S message came to me:

²Jeremiah, you must not get married. You must not have sons or daughters in this place.

³This is what the LORD says about the sons and daughters who are born in the land of Judah and about their mothers and fathers:

⁴They will die from terrible diseases. And no one will cry for them or bury them. Their bodies will lie on the ground like dung. Or they will die in war, or they will starve to death. Their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the earth.

⁵So the LORD says, Jeremiah, don't go into a house where people are eating a funeral meal. Don't go there to cry for the dead or to show your sorrow. Don't do these things, because I have taken back my blessing. I will not be kind to the people of Judah. I will not feel sorry for them. This message is from the LORD.

⁶Important people and common people will die in the land of Judah. No one will bury them or cry for them. No one will cut himself or shave his head to show sorrow for them.

⁷No one will bring food to those who are crying for the dead. No one will comfort those whose mother or father has died.

No one will offer a drink to comfort those who are crying for the dead.

⁸Jeremiah, dont go into a house where the people are having a party. Dont go into that house and sit down to eat and drink.

⁹This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel says: I will soon stop the sounds of people having fun. I will stop the happy sounds of people enjoying a wedding party. This will happen during your lifetime. I will do these things very soon.

¹⁰Jeremiah, you will tell the people of Judah these things, and the people will ask you, Why has the LORD said these terrible things to us? What have we done wrong? What sin have we done against the LORD our God?

¹¹You must tell them: Terrible things will happen to you because your ancestors stopped following me. This message is from the LORD. They stopped following me and began to follow and serve other gods. They worshiped those other gods. Your ancestors left me and stopped obeying my law.

¹²But you people have sinned more than your ancestors. You are very stubborn, and you are doing only what you want to do. You are not obeying me. Because you do only what you want to do,

¹³so I will throw you out of this country. I will force you to go to a foreign land. You will go to a land that you and your ancestors never knew. There you can serve false gods all you want to. I will not help you or show you any favors.

¹⁴People make promises and say, As surely as the LORD lives the Lord who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt . But the time is coming, says the LORD, when people will not say that.

¹⁵They will say something new. They will say, As surely as the LORD lives the Lord who brought the Israelites out of the northern land, who brought them out of all the countries where he had sent them . Why will they say that? Because I will bring the Israelites back to the land that I gave to their ancestors.

¹⁶I will soon send for many fishermen to come to this land. This message is from the LORD. They will catch the

people of Judah. After that happens, I will send for many hunters to come to this land. They will hunt the people of Judah on every mountain and hill and in the cracks of the rocks.

¹⁷I see everything they do. The people of Judah cannot hide the things they do. Their sin is not hidden from me.

¹⁸I will pay the people of Judah back for the evil things they did. I will punish them two times for every sin. I will do this because they have made my land dirty. They made my land dirty with their terrible idols. I hate those idols, but they have filled my country with their idols.

¹⁹LORD, you are my strength and my protection. You are a safe place to run to in time of trouble. The nations will come to you from all around the world. They will say, Our fathers had false gods. They worshiped those worthless idols, but the idols did not help them.

²⁰Can people make real gods for themselves? No, they can only make statues that are not really gods.

²¹So I will teach those who make idols. Right now I will teach them about my power and my strength. Then they will

know that I am God. They will know that I am the LORD.

17 ¹The sins of Judah are written where they cannot be erased cut into stone with an iron pen, cut deep with a hard tip into the stone that is the hearts of the people. Their sins are carved into the horns of their altars.

²Their children remember the altars that were dedicated to false gods. They remember the wooden poles that were dedicated to Asherah. They remember those things under the green trees and on the hills.

³They remember those things on the mountains in the open country. The people of Judah have many treasures. I will give those things to other people. People will destroy all the high places in your country. You worshiped there, and that was a sin.

⁴You will lose the land I gave you. I will let your enemies take you to be their slaves. That is because I am very angry. My anger is like a hot fire, and you will be burned forever.

⁵This is what the LORD says: Bad things will happen to those who put their

trust in people. Bad things will happen to those who depend on human strength. That is because they have stopped trusting the LORD.

⁶They are like a bush in a desert where no one lives. It is in a hot and dry land. It is in bad soil. That bush does not know about the good things that God can give.

⁷But those who trust in the LORD will be blessed. They know that the LORD will do what he says.

⁸They will be strong like trees planted near a stream that send out roots to the water. They have nothing to fear when the days get hot. Their leaves are always green. They never worry, even in a year that has no rain. They always produce fruit.

⁹Nothing can hide its evil as well as the human mind. It can be very sick, and no one really understands it.

¹⁰But I am the LORD, and I can look into a persons heart. I can test a persons mind and decide what each one should have. I can give each person the right payment for what they do.

¹¹Sometimes a bird will hatch an egg that it did not lay. Those who cheat to

get money are like that bird. But when their lives are half finished, they will lose the money. At the end of their lives, it will be clear that they were fools.

¹²From the very beginning, our Temple has been a glorious throne for God. It is a very important place.

¹³LORD, you are the hope of Israel. You are like a spring of living water. Those who stop following the LORD will have a very short life.

¹⁴LORD, if you heal me, I surely will be healed. Save me, and I surely will be saved. Lord, I praise you!

¹⁵The people of Judah continue to ask me questions. They say, Jeremiah, what about the message from the LORD? Lets see that message come true.

¹⁶Lord, I did not run away from you. I followed you. I became the shepherd you wanted. I did not want the terrible day to come. You know what I said. You see all that is happening.

¹⁷Please dont make me afraid of you. I depend on you in times of trouble.

¹⁸People are hurting me. Make them ashamed, but dont disappoint me. Let them be filled with fear, but dont give

me any reason to fear. Bring the terrible day of disaster to my enemies. Break them, and break them again.

¹⁹This is what the LORD said to me: Jeremiah, go and stand at the Peoples Gate, where the kings of Judah go in and out. Tell the people my message, and then go to all the other gates of Jerusalem and do the same.

²⁰Say to the people, Listen to this message from the LORD. Listen, kings of Judah. Listen, all you people of Judah. All you who come through these gates into Jerusalem, listen to me!

²¹This is what the LORD says: Be careful that you dont carry a load on the Sabbath day. And dont bring a load through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day.

²²Dont bring a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day. Dont do any work on that day. You must make the Sabbath day a holy day. I gave this same command to your ancestors,

²³but they did not obey me. They did not pay attention to me. Your ancestors were very stubborn. I punished them,

but it did not do any good. They did not listen to me.

²⁴ But you must be careful to obey me, says the LORD. You must not bring a load through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath. You must make the Sabbath day a holy day. You will do this by not doing any work on that day.

²⁵ If you obey this command, the kings and leaders will be from Davids family. It will be the kings who sit on Davids throne and the leaders from Judah and Jerusalem who come through the gates of Jerusalem riding on chariots and on horses. And Jerusalem will have people living in it forever.

²⁶ People will come to Jerusalem from the towns and villages of Judah, from the land where the tribe of Benjamin lives, from the western foothills, from the hill country, and from the Negev. All these people will bring burnt offerings, sacrifices, grain offerings, incense, and thank offerings to the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem.

²⁷ But if you dont listen to me and obey me, bad things will happen. If you carry loads into Jerusalem on the Sabbath

day, you are not keeping it as a holy day. So I will start a fire that cannot be put out. That fire will start at the gates of Jerusalem, and it will burn until it burns even the palaces.

18¹ This is the message that came to Jeremiah from the LORD:

² Jeremiah, go down to the potters house. I will give you my message there.

³ So I went down to the potters house. I saw the potter working with clay at the wheel.

⁴ He was making a pot from clay. But there was something wrong with the pot. So the potter used that clay again, and he made another pot. He used his hands to shape the pot the way he wanted it to be.

⁵ Then this message from the LORD came to me:

⁶ Family of Israel, you know that I can do the same thing with you. You are like the clay in the potters hands, and I am like the potter. This message is from the LORD.

⁷ There may come a time when I will speak about a nation or a kingdom that I will pull up by its roots. Or maybe I will

say that I will pull that nation or kingdom down and destroy it.

⁸But if the people of that nation change their hearts and lives and stop doing evil things, I will change my mind and not follow my plans to bring disaster to them.

⁹There may come another time when I speak about a nation that I will build up or plant.

¹⁰But if I see that nation doing evil things and not obeying me, I will think again about the good I had planned to do for that nation.

¹¹So, Jeremiah, say to the people of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem, This is what the LORD says: I am preparing troubles for you right now. I am making plans against you. So stop doing the evil things you are doing. Each person must change and start doing good things.

¹²But the people of Judah will answer, It will not do any good to try. We will continue to do what we want. We will do what our stubborn, evil hearts want.

¹³Listen to what the LORD says: Ask the other nations this question: Have

you ever heard of anyone doing the evil things that Israel has done? And Israel is special to God. Israel is like Gods bride!

¹⁴You know that rocks never leave the fields by themselves. You know that the snow on the mountains of Lebanon never melts. You know that cool, flowing streams dont become dry.

¹⁵But my people have forgotten about me. They make offerings to worthless idols. My people stumble in the things they do. They stumble around in the old paths of their ancestors. My people would rather walk along back roads and poor highways than to follow me on the good roads.

¹⁶So Judahs country will become an empty desert. People will whistle and shake their heads every time they pass by. They will be shocked at how the country was destroyed.

¹⁷I will scatter the people of Judah. They will run from their enemies. I will scatter the people of Judah like an east wind that blows things away. I will destroy them. They will not see me coming to help them. No, they will see me leaving.

¹⁸Then the enemies of Jeremiah said, Come, let us make plans against Jeremiah. Surely the teaching of the law by the priest will not be lost, and the advice from the wise men will still be with us. We will still have the words of the prophets. So let us tell lies about him. That will ruin him. We will not pay attention to anything he says.

¹⁹LORD, listen to me! Listen to my arguments and decide who is right.

²⁰I have been good to the people of Judah, but now they are paying me back with evil. They are trying to trap me and kill me.

²¹So make their children starve in a famine. Let their enemies defeat them with swords. Let their wives be without children. Turn their wives into widows. Let the men from Judah be put to death. Let the young men be killed in battle.

²²Let there be crying in their houses. Make them cry when you suddenly bring an enemy against them. Let all this happen because my enemies tried to trap me. They hid traps for me to step in.

²³LORD, you know about their plans to kill me. Don't forgive their crimes. Don't erase their sins. Destroy my enemies! Punish them while you are angry!

19¹The LORD said to me, Jeremiah, go and buy a clay jar from a potter.

²Go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, near the front of the Potsherd Gate. Take some of the elders of the people and some priests with you. Tell them what I tell you.

³Say to those who are with you, King of Judah and people of Jerusalem, listen to this message from the LORD! This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: I will soon make a terrible thing happen to this place! Everyone who hears about it will be amazed and full of fear.

⁴I will do these things because the people of Judah have stopped following me. They have made this a place for foreign gods. The people of Judah have burned sacrifices in this place to other gods. The people long ago did not worship those gods. Their ancestors did not worship them. These are new

gods from other countries. The kings of Judah filled this place with the blood of innocent children.

⁵The kings of Judah built high places for the god Baal. They use those places to burn their sons in the fire. They burned their sons as burnt offerings to the god Baal. I did not tell them to do that. I did not ask them to offer their sons as sacrifices. I never even thought of such a thing.

⁶Now people call this place Topheth and the Valley of Hinnom. But I give you this warning. This message is from the LORD: The days are coming, when people will call this place the Valley of Slaughter.

⁷At this place, I will ruin the plans of the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The enemy will chase them, and I will let the people of Judah be killed with swords in this place. I will make their dead bodies food for the birds and wild animals.

⁸I will completely destroy this city. People will whistle and shake their heads when they pass by Jerusalem. They will be shocked when they see how the city was destroyed.

⁹The enemy will bring its army around the city. That army will not let people go out to get food, so the people in the city will begin to starve. They will become so hungry that they will eat the bodies of their own sons and daughters, and then they will begin to eat each other.

¹⁰Jeremiah, tell this to the people, and while they are watching, break the jar.

¹¹Then say this: The LORD All-Powerful says, I will break the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, just as someone breaking a clay jar! And like a broken jar, the nation of Judah cannot be put back together again. The dead people will be buried here in Topheth until there is no more room.

¹²I will do this to these people and to this place. I will make this city like Topheth. This message is from the LORD.

¹³The houses in Jerusalem will become as dirty as this place, Topheth. The kings palaces will be ruined like this place, Topheth, because the people worshiped false gods on the roofs of their houses. They worshiped the stars and burned sacrifices to honor them. They gave drink offerings to false gods.

¹⁴Then Jeremiah left Topheth where the LORD had told him to speak. Jeremiah went to the LORD'S Temple and stood in the courtyard of the Temple. Jeremiah said to all the people:

¹⁵This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel says: I said I would bring many disasters to Jerusalem and the villages around it. I will soon make this happen because the people are very stubborn. They refuse to listen and obey me.

20¹Pashhur son of Immer was a priest. He was the highest officer in the Temple of the LORD. When he heard Jeremiah say those things in the Temple yard,

²he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten. And he had his hands and feet locked between large blocks of wood. This was at the Upper Gate of Benjamin of the LORD'S Temple.

³The next day Pashhur took Jeremiah out from between the blocks of wood. Then Jeremiah said to him, The LORD'S name for you is not Pashhur. Now his name for you is, Surrounded by Terror.

⁴That is your name because of what the LORD says: I will soon make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. You will watch enemies killing your friends with swords. I will give all the people of Judah to the king of Babylon. He will take them away to the country of Babylon, and his army will kill the people of Judah with their swords.

⁵The people of Jerusalem worked hard to build things and become wealthy, but I will give all these things to their enemies. The king in Jerusalem has many treasures, but I will give all the treasures to the enemy. The enemy will take them and carry them away to the country of Babylon.

⁶And Pashhur, you and all the people living in your house will be taken away. You will be forced to go and live in the country of Babylon. You will die in Babylon, and you will be buried in that foreign country. You told lies to your friends. You said these things would not happen. But all your friends will also die and be buried in Babylon.

⁷LORD, you tricked me, and I certainly was fooled. You are stronger than I am,

so you won. I have become a joke. People laugh at me and make fun of me all day long.

⁸Every time I speak, I shout. I am always shouting about violence and destruction. I tell the people about the message that I received from the LORD. But they only insult me and make fun of me.

⁹Sometimes I say to myself, I will forget about him. I will not speak anymore in his name. But when I say that, his message is like a fire burning inside me! It feels like it is burning deep in my bones! I get tired of trying to hold his message inside. And finally, I am not able to hold it in.

¹⁰I hear people whispering against me. Everywhere, I hear things that frighten me. Even my friends are speaking against me. People are just waiting for me to make a mistake. They are saying, Let us lie and say that he did something bad. Maybe we can trick Jeremiah. Then we will have him. We will finally be rid of him. Then we will grab him and take our revenge on him.

¹¹ But the LORD is with me. He is like a strong soldier. So those who are chasing me will fall. They will not defeat me. They will fail. They will be disappointed. They will be ashamed, and they will never forget that shame.

¹² LORD All-Powerful, you test good people. You look deeply into a persons mind. I told you my arguments against these people. So let me see you give them the punishment they deserve.

¹³ Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD! He saves the lives of the poor! He saves them from the wicked!

¹⁴ Curse the day that I was born! Dont bless the day my mother had me.

¹⁵ Curse the man who told my father the news that I was born. Its a boy! he said. You have a son. He made my father very happy when he told him the news.

¹⁶ Let that man be like the cities the LORD destroyed. He had no pity on them. Let him hear shouts of war in the morning; let him hear battle cries at noontime,

¹⁷ because he did not kill me while I was in my mothers womb. If he had killed me

then, my mother would have been my grave, and I would not have been born.

¹⁸Why did I have to come out of her body? All I have seen is trouble and sorrow, and my life will end in shame.

21 ¹This is the message that came to Jeremiah from the LORD. This was when King Zedekiah of Judah sent Pashhur son of Malkijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to Jeremiah. They brought a message for Jeremiah.

²They said to Jeremiah, Pray to the LORD for us. Ask him what will happen. We want to know, because King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is attacking us. Maybe the LORD will do great things for us, as he did in the past. Maybe he will make Nebuchadnezzar stop attacking us and leave.

³Then Jeremiah answered Pashhur and Zephaniah. He said, Tell King Zedekiah,

⁴This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: You have weapons of war in your hands that you are using to defend yourselves from the Babylonians and their king. But I will make those weapons worthless. The army from Babylon is

outside the wall all around the city. Soon I will bring that army into Jerusalem.

⁵I myself will fight against you people of Judah. I will fight against you with my own powerful hand. I am very angry with you, so I will fight against you with my own powerful arm. I will fight very hard against you and show how angry I am.

⁶I will kill everything living in Jerusalem, both people and animals. They will die from a terrible disease that will spread all through the city.

⁷After that happens, says the LORD, I will give King Zedekiah of Judah and all his officials to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. And I will give to Nebuchadnezzar the people who remain alive in Jerusalem those who did not die from the terrible disease and the people who did not die in war or from hunger. I will give them all to King Nebuchadnezzar. The people of Judah will be captured by their enemies who want to kill them. Nebuchadnezzar's army will use their swords to kill the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar will not show any mercy. He will not feel sorry for them.

⁸Also tell the people of Jerusalem, This is what the LORD says: Understand that I will let you choose to live or die.

⁹Anyone who stays in Jerusalem will die in war or from hunger or from a terrible disease. But anyone who goes out of Jerusalem and surrenders to the Babylonians attacking you will live. Only those who leave the city will win anything in this wartheir lives!

¹⁰I have decided to make trouble for the city of Jerusalem. I will not help this city! I will give it to the king of Babylon, who will burn it with fire. This message is from the LORD.

¹¹Say this to Judahs royal family: Listen to the message from the LORD.

¹²Family of David, this is what the LORD says: You must judge people fairly every day. Save people from those who rob them. If you dont do that, I will be angry. My anger will be like a fire that no one can put out. This will happen because you have done evil things.

¹³Jerusalem, I am against you. You sit on top of the mountain. You sit like a queen over this valley. You people of Jerusalem say, No one can attack us. No

one can come into our strong city. This message is from the LORD.

¹⁴You will get the punishment you deserve. I will start a fire in your forests that will completely burn everything around you. This message is from the LORD.

22¹The LORD said, Jeremiah, go down to the kings palace. Go to the king of Judah and tell this message there:

²Listen to this message from the LORD, King of Judah. You rule from Davids throne, so listen. King, you and your officials must listen well. All of your people who come through the gates of Jerusalem must listen to the message from the Lord.

³This is what the LORD says: Do what is right and fair. Protect those who have been robbed from the ones who robbed them. Dont take advantage of orphans or widows. Dont kill innocent people.

⁴If you obey these commands, kings who sit on Davids throne will continue to come through the gates into the city of Jerusalem. They will come through the gates with their officials. The kings,

their officials, and their people will come riding in chariots and on horses.

⁵But I, the LORD, tell you that if you don't obey these commands, then I promise with an oath in my own name that this king's palace will be destroyed; it will become a pile of rocks.

⁶This is what the LORD says about the palace where the king of Judah lives: The palace is tall like the forests of Gilead, like the mountains of Lebanon. But I will make it like a desert, as empty as a city where no one lives.

⁷I will send men to destroy the palace, each armed with weapons. They will cut up your strong, beautiful cedar beams and throw them into the fire.

⁸People from many nations will pass by this city. They will ask each other, Why has the LORD done such a terrible thing to Jerusalem? Jerusalem was such a great city.

⁹This will be the answer to that question: God destroyed Jerusalem because the people of Judah stopped following the agreement of the LORD their God. They worshiped and served other gods.

¹⁰Don't cry for the king who has died. Don't cry for him. But cry very hard for the king who must leave this place. Cry for him because he will never return or see his homeland again.

¹¹This is what the LORD says about Jehoahaz son of Josiah, who became king of Judah after his father Josiah died: Jehoahaz has gone away from Jerusalem. He will never return.

¹²He will die in the place where the Egyptians have taken him, and he will not see this land again.

¹³It will be very bad for King Jehoiakim. He is doing wrong so that he can build his palace. He is cheating people so that he can build rooms upstairs. He is not paying his own people. He is making them work for nothing.

¹⁴Jehoiakim says, I will build myself a great palace, with huge rooms upstairs. So he built it with large windows. He used cedar wood for paneling, and he painted it red.

¹⁵Jehoiakim, having a lot of cedar in your house does not make you a great king. Your father Josiah was satisfied to have food and drink. He did what was

right and fair, so everything went well for him.

¹⁶Josiah helped poor and needy people, so everything went well for him. Jehoiakim, what does it mean to know God? It means living right and being fair. That is what it means to know me. This message is from the LORD.

¹⁷Jehoiakim, your eyes look only for what benefits yourself. You are always thinking about getting more for yourself. You are willing to kill innocent people. You are willing to steal things from other people.

¹⁸So this is what the LORD says to King Jehoiakim son of Josiah: The people of Judah will not cry for Jehoiakim. They will not say to each other, Brother, I am so sad! Sister, I am so sad! They will not cry for Jehoiakim. They will not say about him, Master, I am so sad! King, I am so sad!

¹⁹The people of Jerusalem will bury Jehoiakim like a donkey. They will drag his body away and throw it outside the gates of Jerusalem.

²⁰Judah, go up to the mountains of Lebanon and cry out. Let your voice be

heard in the mountains of Bashan. Cry out in the mountains of Abarim, because all your lovers will be destroyed.

²¹ Judah, you felt safe, but I warned you. I warned you, but you refused to listen. You have lived like this from the time you were young. And from the time you were young, you have not obeyed me, Judah.

²² Judah, the punishment I give will come like a storm, and it will blow all your shepherds away. You thought some of the other nations would help you. But these nations will also be defeated. Then you will really be disappointed. You will be ashamed of all the evil things you did.

²³ King, you seem so safe in your palace of cedar. Its as if you live in Lebanon! But when your punishment comes, you will groan. You will be in pain like a woman giving birth!

²⁴ As surely as I live, says the LORD, I will do this to you, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah: Even if you were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off.

²⁵ Jehoiachin, I will give you to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and the

Babylonians. Those are the people you are afraid of. They want to kill you.

²⁶I will throw you and your mother into another country where neither of you was born. You and your mother will die in that country.

²⁷Jehoiachin, you will want to come back to your land, but you will never be allowed to come back.

²⁸Jehoiachin is like a broken pot that someone threw away. He is like a pot that no one wants. Why will Jehoiachin and his children be thrown out and sent away into a foreign land?

²⁹Land, land, land of Judah! Listen to this message from the LORD!

³⁰The LORD says, Write this down about Jehoiachin: He does not have children anymore! Jehoiachin will not be successful because none of his children will sit on the throne of David. None of his children will rule in Judah.

23¹ It will be very bad for the shepherds of the people of Judah. They are destroying the sheep. They are making the sheep run from my pasture in all directions. This message is from the LORD.

²They are responsible for my people. And this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to them: You shepherds have made my sheep run away in all directions. You have forced them to go away, and you have not taken care of them. But I will take care of you! I will punish you for the evil things you did. This message is from the LORD:

³I sent my sheep to other countries. But I will gather together my sheep that are left, and I will bring them back to their pasture. When my sheep are back in their pasture, they will have many children and grow in number.

⁴I will place new shepherds over my sheep. They will take care of my sheep, and my sheep will never again feel afraid. None of my sheep will be lost. This message is from the LORD.

⁵This message is from the LORD: The time is coming, when I will raise up a good branch from Davids family. He will be a king who will rule in a wise way. He will do what is fair and right in the land.

⁶When he rules, Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. This will be

his name: The LORD Makes Things Right for Us.

⁷ So the time is coming, says the LORD, when people will not make a promise by saying, As surely as the LORD lives, the one who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt .

⁸ But people will say something new: As surely as the LORD lives, the one who brought the Israelites out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had sent them . Then the people of Israel will live in their own land.

⁹ A message to the prophets: I am very sad my heart is broken. All my bones are shaking. Because of the LORD and his holy words, I am like a man who is drunk.

¹⁰ The land of Judah is full of people who commit adultery. They are unfaithful in many ways. So God cursed the land, and it became very dry. The plants are dried and dying in the pastures. The fields have become like the desert. The prophets are evil. They use their influence and power in the wrong way.

¹¹ This message is from the LORD: The prophets and even the priests are evil. I have seen them doing evil things in my own Temple.

¹² So I will make their path dark and slippery, and they will fall in the darkness. I will bring disaster on them; I will punish them. This message is from the LORD.

¹³ I saw the prophets of Samaria doing something very wrong. I saw them prophesy in the name of the false god Baal. They led the people of Israel away from me.

¹⁴ I have even seen the prophets of Jerusalem doing sinful things. They are committing adultery and living a life of lies. They support their fellow prophets and never stop doing evil. They have become like Sodom; they are all like Gomorrah.

¹⁵ So this is what the LORD All-Powerful says about those Jerusalem prophets: I will make them suffer. Their food will be bitter, their water like poison. I will punish them because they started a spiritual sickness that spread through the whole country.

¹⁶This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: Don't pay attention to what those prophets are saying to you. They are trying to fool you. They talk about visions, but they did not get their visions from me. Their visions come from their own minds.

¹⁷Some of the people hate the real messages from the LORD, so the prophets give them a different message. They say, You will have peace. Some of the people are very stubborn. They do only what they want to do. So the prophets say, Nothing bad will happen to you!

¹⁸But none of these prophets has stood in the heavenly council. None of them has seen or heard the message from the LORD. None of them has paid close attention to his message.

¹⁹Now the punishment from the LORD will come like a storm. His anger will be like a tornado. It will come crashing down on the heads of those wicked people.

²⁰The LORD'S anger will not stop until he finishes what he plans to do. When

that day is over, you will understand this clearly.

²¹ I did not send those prophets, but they ran to tell their messages. I did not speak to them, but they spoke in my name.

²² If they had stood in my heavenly council, then they would have told my messages to the people of Judah. They would have stopped the people from doing bad things. They would have stopped them from doing evil.

²³ This message is from the LORD. I am God, and I am always near. I am not far away.

²⁴ Someone might try to hide from me in some hiding place. But it is easy for me to see that person, says the LORD, because I am everywhere in heaven and earth. This message is from the LORD:

²⁵ There are prophets who tell lies in my name. They say, I have had a dream! I have had a dream! I heard them say those things.

²⁶ How long will this continue? They think up lies and then they teach them to the people.

²⁷ They are trying to make the people of Judah forget my name by telling each other these false dreams. They are trying to make my people forget me, just as their ancestors forgot me and worshiped the false god Baal.

²⁸ Straw is not the same as wheat! In the same way, the dreams of those prophets are not messages from me. If people want to tell about their dreams, let them. But those who hear my message must speak it truthfully. This is what the LORD says.

²⁹ Yes, the LORD says, You must treat my message carefully, like a fire or like a hammer that can smash a rock.

³⁰ This message is from the LORD: So I am against the false prophets. They keep stealing my words from each other.

³¹ Yes, the LORD says, I am against the false prophets. They use their own words and pretend that it is a message from me.

³² I am against the false prophets who tell false dreams. This message is from the LORD. They mislead my people with their lies and false teachings. I did not send them to teach the people. I never

commanded them to do anything for me. They cannot help the people of Judah at all. This message is from the LORD.

³³The people of Judah, or a prophet or a priest, may ask you, Jeremiah, what is the LORD'S announcement? You will answer them and say, You are his burden, and I will throw this burden down. This message is from the LORD.

³⁴A prophet or a priest, or maybe one of the people, might say, This is the LORD'S announcement . Because of that lie, I will punish that person and their whole family.

³⁵This is what you will say to each other: What was the LORD'S answer? or What did the LORD say?

³⁶But you will never again use the expression, The LORD'S announcement. That is because his message should not be a burden for anyone. But you changed the words of our God. He is the living God, the LORD All-Powerful!

³⁷If you want to learn about Gods message, ask a prophet, What answer did the LORD give you? or What did the LORD say?

³⁸But don't say, 'What was the LORD'S announcement?' If you use these words, the LORD will say this to you: 'You should not have called my message the LORD'S announcement. I told you not to use those words.'

³⁹But you called my message a burden, so I will pick you up like a burden and throw you away from me. I gave the city of Jerusalem to your ancestors. But I will throw you and that city away from me,

⁴⁰and I will make you a disgrace forever. You will never forget your shame.

24¹The LORD showed me these things: I saw two baskets of figs arranged in front of the Temple of the LORD. (I saw this vision after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took Jehoiachin as a prisoner. Jehoiachin, the son of King Jehoiakim, and all his important officials were taken away from Jerusalem. They were taken to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also took away all the carpenters and metalworkers of Judah.)

²One basket had very good figs in it, the kind that ripen early in the season.

But the other basket had rotten figs. They were too rotten to eat.

³The LORD said to me, What do you see, Jeremiah? I answered, I see figs. The good figs are very good, and the rotten figs are very rotten. They are too rotten to eat.

⁴Then the message from the LORD came to me.

⁵The LORD, the God of Israel, said: The people of Judah were taken from their country. Their enemy brought them to Babylon. Those people will be like these good figs. I will be kind to them.

⁶I will protect them. I will bring them back to the land of Judah. I will not tear them down. I will build them up. I will not pull them up. I will plant them so that they can grow.

⁷I will make them want to know me. They will know that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God. I will do this because the prisoners in Babylon will turn to me with their whole hearts.

⁸But the LORD also says, I will treat King Zedekiah of Judah like those figs that are too rotten to eat. Zedekiah, his

high officials, all those who are left in Jerusalem, and those people of Judah who are living in Egypt will be like those rotten figs.

⁹I will punish them. Their punishment will shock all the people on earth. People will make fun of those people from Judah. People will tell jokes about them and curse them in all the places where I scatter them.

¹⁰I will bring war, famine, and disease against them. I will attack them until they have all been killed. Then they will no longer be on the land that I gave to them and to their ancestors.

25¹This is the message that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah. This message came in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah. The fourth year of his time as king was the first year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon.

²This is the message that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the people of Jerusalem:

³I have been a prophet for these past 23 years, from the 13th year that Josiah

son of Amon was the king of Judah. And from that time until today I have spoken messages to you from the LORD again and again. But you have not listened.

⁴The LORD has sent his servants, the prophets, to you over and over again. But you have not listened to them. You have not paid any attention to them.

⁵Those prophets said, Change your lives and stop doing evil! If you change, you can return to the land that the LORD gave you and your ancestors long ago. He gave you this land to live in forever.

⁶Dont follow other gods. Dont serve or worship them. Dont worship idols that someone has made. That only makes me angry with you. By doing this you only hurt yourselves.

⁷But you did not listen to me. This message is from the LORD. You worshiped idols that someone made, and that made me angry. And it only hurt you.

⁸So this is what the LORD All-Powerful says, You have not listened to my messages.

⁹I will soon send for all the tribes of the north. This message is from the LORD. I

will soon send for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He is my servant. I will bring those people against the land of Judah and against the people of Judah. I will bring them against all the nations around you too. I will destroy all those countries. I will make those lands like an empty desert forever. People will see those countries, and whistle at how badly they were destroyed.

¹⁰I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and happiness in those places. There will be no more happy sounds of the brides and bridegrooms. I will take away the sound of people grinding meal. I will take away the light of the lamp.

¹¹That whole area will be an empty desert. All these people will be slaves of the king of Babylon for 70 years.

¹²But when the 70 years have passed, I will punish the king of Babylon. I will punish the nation of Babylon. This message is from the LORD. I will punish the land of the Babylonians for their sins. I will make that land a desert forever.

¹³I said many bad things will happen to Babylon, and all of them will happen. Jeremiah spoke about those foreign

nations. And all the warnings are written in this book.

¹⁴Yes, the people of Babylon will have to serve many nations and many great kings. I will give them the punishment they deserve for all the things they have done.

¹⁵The LORD, the God of Israel, said this to me: Jeremiah, take this cup of wine from my hand. It is the wine of my anger. I am sending you to different nations. Make all the nations drink from this cup.

¹⁶They will drink this wine. Then they will vomit and act like crazy people. They will do this because of the war that I will soon bring against them.

¹⁷So I took the cup of wine from the LORD'S hand. I went to those nations and I made them drink from the cup.

¹⁸I poured this wine for the people of Jerusalem and Judah. I made the kings and leaders of Judah drink from the cup. I did this so that they would become an empty desert. I did this so that place would be destroyed so badly that people would whistle and say curses about it. And it happened Judah is like that now.

¹⁹I also made Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, drink from that cup. I made his officials, his important leaders, and all his people drink from it.

²⁰I also made all the Arabs and all the kings of the land of Uz drink from the cup. I made all the kings of the land of the Philistines drink from it too. These were the kings of the cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and what remains of the city Ashdod.

²¹Then I made the people of Edom, Moab, and Ammon drink from the cup.

²²I made all the kings of Tyre and Sidon and all the kings of the faraway countries drink from that cup.

²³I made the people of Dedan, Tema, and Buz and all those who cut their hair at their temples drink from it.

²⁴I made all the kings of Arabia drink from the cup. These kings live in the desert.

²⁵I made all the kings from Zimri, Elam, and Media drink from the cup.

²⁶I made all the kings of the north, those who were near and far, drink from the cup. I made them drink one after the other. I made all the kingdoms that

are on earth drink from that cup. Finally, after all these other nations, the king of Babylon will drink from it too.

²⁷ Jeremiah, say to those nations, this is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Drink this cup of my anger. Get drunk from it and vomit. Fall down and dont get up. Dont get up because I am bringing wars against you.

²⁸ They will refuse to take the cup from your hand. They will refuse to drink it, but you will tell them, This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: You will surely drink from this cup!

²⁹ I am already making these bad things happen to Jerusalem, the city that is called by my name. Maybe you people think that you will not be punished, but you are wrong. You will be punished! I am giving the command for war to come against all the people of the earth. This message is from the LORD.

³⁰ Jeremiah, you will tell them this message: The LORD shouts from above. He shouts from his holy Temple. He shouts against his people. His shouts are loud like the songs of people walking on grapes to make wine.

³¹ The noise spreads to all the people on earth. What is all the noise about? The LORD tells why he is punishing all the nations. He has given his arguments against them. He has judged them, and now he is killing the wicked with his sword. This message is from the LORD.

³² This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: Disasters will soon spread from country to country. They will come like a powerful storm to all the faraway places on earth!

³³ The dead bodies of those killed by the LORD will reach from one end of the earth to the other. No one will cry for them. No one will gather up their bodies and bury them. They will be left lying on the ground like dung.

³⁴ Shepherds, you should be leading the sheep. Start crying, you great leaders! Roll around on the ground in pain, you leaders of the sheep. It is now time for your slaughter. You will be scattered everywhere, like pieces flying from a broken jar.

³⁵ There will be no place for the shepherds to hide. They will not escape.

³⁶I hear the shepherds shouting. I hear the leaders of the sheep crying, because the LORD is destroying their pastures.

³⁷Those peaceful pastures will be ruined because of the LORD'S anger.

³⁸He is like an angry lion that has left his cave. And because of his terrible anger and by the attacks of the enemy army, their land will become an empty desert.

26¹This message came from the LORD during the first year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah.

²The LORD said, Jeremiah, stand in the Temple yard of the LORD. Give this message to all the people of Judah who are coming to worship at the Temple of the LORD. Tell them everything that I tell you to speak. Don't leave out any part of my message.

³Maybe they will listen and obey my message. Maybe they will stop living such evil lives. If they change, I will change my mind about my plans to punish them. I am planning this punishment because of the many evil things they have done.

⁴You will say to them, This is what the LORD says: I gave my teachings to you. You must obey me and follow my teachings.

⁵You must listen to what my servants say to you. The prophets are my servants. I have sent my prophets to you again and again, but you did not listen to them.

⁶If you don't obey me, I will make my Temple in Jerusalem just like my Holy Tent at Shiloh. People all over the world will think of Jerusalem when they ask for bad things to happen to other cities.

⁷The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah say all these words at the LORD'S Temple.

⁸Jeremiah finished speaking everything the LORD had commanded him to say to the people. Then the priests, the prophets, and all the people grabbed Jeremiah. They said, You will die for saying such terrible things!

⁹How dare you say such a thing in the name of the LORD! How dare you say that this Temple will be destroyed like the one at Shiloh! How dare you say that Jerusalem will become a desert with no

one living in it! All the people gathered around Jeremiah in the Temple of the LORD.

¹⁰Now the rulers of Judah heard about everything that was happening. So they came out of the kings palace. They went up to the LORD'S Temple. They took their places at the entrance of the New Gate. The New Gate is a gate leading to the LORD'S Temple.

¹¹Then the priests and the prophets spoke to the rulers and all the other people. They said, Jeremiah should be killed. He said bad things about Jerusalem. You heard him say those things.

¹²Then Jeremiah spoke to all the rulers of Judah and all the other people. He said, The LORD sent me to say these things about this Temple and this city. Everything that you have heard is from the Lord.

¹³You people, change your lives! You must start doing good! You must obey the LORD your God. If you do that, he will change his mind. He will not do the bad things he told you about.

¹⁴As for me, I am in your power. Do to me what you think is good and right.

¹⁵But if you kill me, be sure of one thing. You will be guilty of killing an innocent person. You will make this city and everyone living in it guilty too. The LORD really did send me to you. The message you heard really is from the Lord.

¹⁶Then the rulers and all the people spoke. They said to the priests and the prophets, Jeremiah must not be killed. What he told us comes from the LORD our God.

¹⁷Then some of the elders stood up and spoke to all the people.

¹⁸They said, Micah the prophet was from the city of Moresheth. He was a prophet during the time that Hezekiah was king of Judah. Micah said this to all the people of Judah: This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: Zion will be destroyed. It will become a plowed field. Jerusalem will become a pile of rocks. Temple Mount will be an empty hill overgrown with bushes.

¹⁹King Hezekiah of Judah and the people of Judah did not kill Micah. You

know that Hezekiah respected the LORD and wanted to please him. So the LORD changed his mind and didn't do the bad things to Judah that he said he would do. If we hurt Jeremiah, we will bring many troubles on ourselves. And those troubles will be our own fault.

²⁰In the past there was another man who spoke the LORD'S message. His name was Uriah son of Shemaiah from the city of Kiriath Jearim. Uriah said the same things against this city and this land that Jeremiah did.

²¹King Jehoiakim, his army officers, and the leaders of Judah heard Uriah and became angry. King Jehoiakim wanted to kill Uriah, but Uriah heard about it. Uriah was afraid, so he escaped to the land of Egypt.

²²But King Jehoiakim sent Elnathan son of Acbor and some other men to Egypt.

²³They brought Uriah from Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim ordered Uriah to be killed with a sword. Uriah's body was thrown into the burial place where the poor are buried.

²⁴There was an important man named Ahikam son of Shaphan who supported

Jeremiah. He kept Jeremiah from being killed by the priests and prophets.

27 ¹A message from the LORD came to Jeremiah. It came during the fourth year that Zedekiah son of Josiah was king of Judah.

²This is what the LORD said to me: Jeremiah, make a yoke out of straps and poles. Put that yoke on the back of your neck.

³Then send a message to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon. Send the message with the messengers of these kings who have come to Jerusalem to see King Zedekiah of Judah.

⁴Tell them to give the message to their masters. Tell them that this is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Tell your masters that

⁵I made the earth and all the people on it. I made all the animals on the earth. I did this with my great power and my strong arm. I can give the earth to anyone I want.

⁶Now I have given all your countries to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He is

my servant. I will make even the wild animals obey him.

⁷All nations will serve Nebuchadnezzar and his son and his grandson. Then the time will come for Babylon to be defeated. Many nations and great kings will make Babylon their servant.

⁸But if some nations or kingdoms refuse to serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and refuse to be put under his control, I will punish them, says the LORD. I will destroy them with war, hunger, and disease. I will use Nebuchadnezzar to destroy any nation that fights against him.

⁹So don't listen to your prophets. Don't listen to those who use magic to tell what will happen in the future. Don't listen to those who say they can interpret dreams. Don't listen to those who talk to the dead or to people who practice magic. All of them tell you, You will not be slaves to the king of Babylon.

¹⁰But they are telling you lies. They will only cause you to be taken far from your homeland. I will force you to leave your homes, and you will die in another land.

¹¹ But the nations that put their necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and obey him will live. I will let them stay in their own country and serve the king of Babylon, says the LORD. The people from those nations will live in their own land and farm it.

¹² I gave the same message to King Zedekiah of Judah. I said, Zedekiah, you must place your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and obey him. If you serve the king of Babylon and his people, you will live.

¹³ If you don't agree to serve the king of Babylon, you and your people will die from war, hunger, and disease. This is what the LORD said would happen.

¹⁴ But the false prophets are saying, You will never be slaves to the king of Babylon. Don't listen to those prophets, because they are telling you lies.

¹⁵ I didn't send them, says the LORD. They are telling lies and saying that the message is from me. So I will send you people of Judah away. You will die, and the prophets who spoke to you will die also.

¹⁶Then I told the priests and all the people that this is what the LORD says: Those false prophets are saying, The Babylonians took many things from the LORD'S Temple. These things will be brought back soon. Dont listen to them because they are telling you lies.

¹⁷Dont listen to those prophets. Serve the king of Babylon. Accept your punishment, and you will live. There is no reason for you to cause this city of Jerusalem to be destroyed.

¹⁸If they are prophets and their message is from the LORD, let them pray. Let them pray to the LORD about the things that are still in the LORD'S Temple, in the kings palace, and in Jerusalem. Let them pray that all those things will not be taken away to Babylon.

¹⁹This is what the LORD All-Powerful says about the things that are still left in Jerusalem. In the Temple, there are the pillars, the bronze sea, the moveable stands, and other things. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon left those things in Jerusalem.

²⁰He didnt take them away when he took Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim

king of Judah away as a prisoner. Nebuchadnezzar also took other important people away from Judah and Jerusalem.

²¹ This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says about the things still left in the LORD'S Temple and in the king's palace and in Jerusalem:

²² All those things will also be taken to Babylon. They will be brought to Babylon until the day comes when I go to get them, says the LORD. Then I will bring those things back. I will put them back in this place.

28¹ That same year, in the fifth month of the fourth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah, the prophet Hananiah son of Azzur spoke to me. Hananiah was from the town of Gibeon. He was in the LORD'S Temple when he spoke to me. The priests and all the people were there also. This is what Hananiah said:

² The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: I will break the yoke that the king of Babylon has put on the people of Judah.

³ Before two years are over, I will bring back all the things that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took from the LORD'S Temple. Nebuchadnezzar has carried those things to Babylon. But I will bring them back here to Jerusalem.

⁴ I will also bring the king of Judah, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, back to this place. And I will bring back all the people of Judah that Nebuchadnezzar forced to leave their homes and go to Babylon, says the LORD. So I will break the yoke that the king of Babylon put on the people of Judah.

⁵ Then the prophet Jeremiah answered the prophet Hananiah. They were standing in the Temple of the LORD. The priests and all the people there could hear Jeremiah's answer.

⁶ Jeremiah said to Hananiah, Amen! May the LORD do that. May the LORD make the message you say come true. May he bring the things of the LORD'S Temple back to this place from Babylon. And may he bring all those who were forced to leave their homes back to this place.

⁷ But listen to what I have to say to you and to all the people.

⁸ There were prophets long before you and I became prophets, Hananiah. They spoke against many countries and great kingdoms and always warned that war, hunger, and disease would come to them.

⁹ But the prophet who says that we will have peace must be tested. If his message comes true, people can know that he really was sent by the LORD.

¹⁰ Jeremiah was wearing a yoke around his neck. The prophet Hananiah took the yoke from Jeremiahs neck and broke it.

¹¹ Then Hananiah spoke loudly so that all the people could hear him. He said, This is what the LORD says: In the same way, I will break the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He put that yoke on all the nations of the world, but I will break it before two years are over. After Hananiah said that, Jeremiah left the Temple.

¹² After Hananiah had taken the yoke off Jeremiahs neck and had broken it, this message from the LORD came to Jeremiah:

¹³The LORD said to Jeremiah, Go and tell Hananiah that this is what the LORD says: You have broken a wooden yoke, but I will make a yoke of iron in the place of the wooden yoke.

¹⁴The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, is the one saying this. I will put a yoke of iron on the necks of all these nations. I will do that to make them serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and they will be slaves to him. I will even give Nebuchadnezzar control over the wild animals.

¹⁵Then the prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, Listen, Hananiah! The LORD did not send you. But you have made the people of Judah trust in lies.

¹⁶So this is what the LORD says: Soon I will take you from this world, Hananiah. You will die this year, because you taught the people to turn against the LORD.

¹⁷Hananiah died in the seventh month of that same year.

29¹ Jeremiah sent a letter to the captives in Babylon. He sent it to the elders, the priests, the prophets, and

all the other people who Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem to Babylon.

²(This letter was sent after King Jehoiachin, the queen mother, the officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the carpenters, and the metalworkers had been taken from Jerusalem.)

³King Zedekiah of Judah sent Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiyah to King Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah gave them the letter to take to Babylon. This is what the letter said:

⁴This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says to all the people he sent into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon:

⁵Build houses and live in them. Settle in the land. Plant gardens and eat the food you grow.

⁶Get married and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons, and let your daughters be married. Do this so that they also may have sons and daughters. Have many children and grow in number in Babylon. Don't become fewer in number.

⁷ Also, do good things for the city I sent you to. Pray to the LORD for the city you are living in, because if there is peace in that city, you will have peace also.

⁸ The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says, Don't let your prophets and those who practice magic fool you. Don't listen to the dreams they have.

⁹ They are telling lies, and they are saying that their message is from me. But I didn't send it. This message is from the LORD.

¹⁰ This is what the LORD says: Babylon will be powerful for 70 years. After that time, I will come to you people who are living in Babylon. I will keep my good promise to bring you back to Jerusalem.

¹¹ I say this because I know the plans that I have for you. This message is from the LORD. I have good plans for you. I don't plan to hurt you. I plan to give you hope and a good future.

¹² Then you will call my name. You will come to me and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

¹³ You will search for me, and when you search for me with all your heart, you will find me.

¹⁴I will let you find me. This message is from the LORD. And I will bring you back from your captivity. I forced you to leave this place. But I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have sent you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to this place.

¹⁵You people might say, But the LORD has given us prophets here in Babylon.

¹⁶But this is what the LORD says about your relatives who were not carried away to Babylon. I am talking about the king who is sitting on Davids throne now and all the other people who are still in the city of Jerusalem.

¹⁷The LORD All-Powerful says, I will soon bring war, hunger, and disease against those who are still in Jerusalem. And I will make them the same as bad figs that are too rotten to eat.

¹⁸I will attack those who are still in Jerusalem with war, hunger, and disease. I will cause such pain that all the kingdoms of the earth will be frightened at what has happened to those people. They will be destroyed. People will whistle with amazement when they hear what happened. And people will use

them as an example when they ask for bad things to happen to people. People will insult them wherever I force them to go.

¹⁹I will make all these things happen because the people of Jerusalem have not listened to my message. This message is from the LORD. I sent my message to them again and again. I used my servants, the prophets, to give my messages to them, but they didn't listen. This message is from the LORD.

²⁰You people are captives. I forced you to leave Jerusalem and go to Babylon. So listen to the message from the LORD.

²¹This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah: These two men have been telling you lies. They have said that their message is from me. I will give these two prophets to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. And he will kill them in front of all you who are captives in Babylon.

²²They will be an example of a terrible way to die. Yes, in the future, when the Jewish captives want something bad to happen to someone, they will say

this curse: May the LORD treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab, those men the king of Babylon burned in the fire!

²³They did very bad things among the people of Israel. They committed the sin of adultery with their neighbors wives. They also spoke lies and said those lies were a message from me. I did not tell them to do that. I know what they have done. I am a witness. This message is from the LORD.

²⁴Also give a message to Shemaiah from the Nehelam family.

²⁵This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Shemaiah, you sent letters to all the people in Jerusalem and to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah. You also sent letters to all the priests. You sent those letters in your own name, not by my authority. Your letter to Zephaniah said,

²⁶The LORD has made you priest in place of Jehoiada. You are to be in charge of the LORD'S Temple. You know you should arrest anyone who acts crazy and pretends to be a prophet. Anyone like that should have chains put around his feet and neck.

²⁷ You have Jeremiah from Anathoth there, who is pretending to be a prophet. So why have you not stopped him?

²⁸ He has sent this message to us in Babylon: You people in Babylon will be there for a long time, so build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what they produce.

²⁹ Zephaniah the priest read the letter to Jeremiah the prophet.

³⁰ Then this message from the LORD came to Jeremiah:

³¹ Jeremiah, send this message to all the captives in Babylon: This is what the LORD says about Shemaiah, the man from the Nehelam family: Shemaiah has spoken to you, but I didnt send him. He has made you believe a lie.

³² Because Shemaiah has done that, says the LORD, I will soon punish Shemaiah, the man from the Nehelam family. I will completely destroy his family, and he will not share in the good things I will do for my people. This message is from the LORD. I will punish Shemaiah because he has taught the people to turn against the LORD.

30¹ This is the message that came to Jeremiah from the LORD.

² The LORD, the God of the people of Israel, said, Jeremiah, write in a book the words I have spoken to you. Write this book for yourself.

³ Do this because the days will come this message is from the LORD when I will bring my people, Israel and Judah, back from exile. This message is from the LORD. I will put the people back in the land that I gave to their ancestors. Then my people will own that land again.

⁴ The LORD spoke to me about the people of Israel and Judah.

⁵ This is what the LORD said: We hear people crying from fear. There is fear, not peace.

⁶ Ask this question and consider it: Can a man have a baby? Of course not! Then why do I see every strong man holding his stomach like a woman having labor pains? Why is everyones face turning white like a dead man?

⁷ This is a very important time for Jacob. This is a time of great trouble. There will never be another time like this, but Jacob will be saved.

⁸At that time, says the LORD All-Powerful, I will break the yoke from the necks of the people of Israel and Judah, and I will break the ropes holding you. People from foreign countries will never again force my people to be slaves.

⁹The people of Israel and Judah will not serve foreign countries. No, they will serve the LORD their God. I will send them David their king, and they will serve him.

¹⁰So Jacob, my servant, dont be afraid! This message is from the LORD. Israel, dont be afraid. I will save you from that faraway place. You are captives in that faraway land, but I will save your descendants. I will bring them back from that land. Jacob will have peace again. People will not bother Jacob. There will be no enemy to frighten my people.

¹¹People of Israel and Judah, I am with you. This message is from the LORD. I will save you. I sent you to those nations, but I will completely destroy all of them. It is true; I will destroy those nations, but I will not destroy you. You must be punished for the bad things you did, but I will discipline you fairly.

¹²This is what the LORD says: You people of Israel and Judah have a wound that cannot be cured. You have an injury that will not heal.

¹³There is no one to care for your sores, so you will not be healed.

¹⁴You became friends with many nations, but those nations don't care about you. Your friends have forgotten you. I hurt you like an enemy. I punished you very hard. I did this because of your great guilt. I did this because of your many sins.

¹⁵Israel and Judah, why are you still crying about your wound? There is no cure for it. I did this to you because of your great guilt. I did this because of your many sins.

¹⁶Those nations destroyed you, but now they have been destroyed. Israel and Judah, your enemies will become captives. They stole things from you, but others will steal from them. They took things from you in war, but others will take things from them in war.

¹⁷And I will bring your health back and heal your wounds, says the LORD, because other people said you were

outcasts. They said, No one cares about Zion.

¹⁸This is what the LORD says: Jacobs people are now in captivity, but they will come back. And I will have pity on Jacobs houses. The city is now only an empty hill covered with ruined buildings, but the city will be rebuilt on its hill. And the kings palace will be rebuilt where it should be.

¹⁹People in those places will sing songs of praise, and there will be the sound of laughter. I will give them many children. Israel and Judah will not be small. I will bring honor to them. No one will look down on them.

²⁰Jacobs family will be like the family of Israel long ago. I will make Israel and Judah strong, and I will punish those who hurt them.

²¹The LORD says, One of their own people will lead them. That ruler will come from my people. People can come close to me only if I ask them to. So I will ask that leader to come near, and he will be close to me.

²²You will be my people, and I will be your God.

²³The LORD was very angry! He punished the people. The punishment came like a storm. It came like a tornado against those wicked people.

²⁴The LORD will be angry until he is through punishing them. He will be angry until he finishes the punishment he planned. When that day comes, you people of Judah will understand.

31 ¹This is what the LORD said, At that time I will be the God of all the tribes of Israel. And they will be my people.

²This is what the LORD says: Those who escaped the enemys sword will find comfort in the desert. Israel will go there looking for rest.

³From far away, the LORD will appear to his people. The Lord says, I love you people with a love that continues forever. That is why I have continued showing you kindness.

⁴Israel, my bride, I will rebuild you. You will be a country again. You will pick up your tambourines again. You will dance with all the other people who are having fun.

⁵You farmers of Israel will plant vineyards again. You will plant the vineyards on the hills around the city of Samaria. The farmers will enjoy the fruit from the vineyards.

⁶There will be a time when watchmen shout this message: Come, let's go up to Zion to worship the LORD our God! Even the watchmen in the hill country of Ephraim will shout that message.

⁷This is what the LORD says: Be happy and sing for Jacob! Shout for Israel, the greatest of the nations! Sing your praises and shout: LORD, save your people! Save those of Israel who are still living.

⁸Remember, I will bring Israel from that country in the north. I will gather the people of Israel from the faraway places on earth. Some of the people will be blind and crippled. Some of the women will be pregnant and ready to give birth. But many people will come back.

⁹They will come back crying, but I will lead them and comfort them. I will lead them by streams of water. I will lead them on an easy road, where they will not stumble. I will lead them in that way

because I am Israel's father. And Ephraim is my firstborn son.

¹⁰Nations, listen to this message from the LORD! Tell this message in the faraway lands by the sea: God scattered the people of Israel, but he will bring them back together. And he will watch over his flock like a shepherd.

¹¹The LORD will bring Jacob back. He will save his people from those who are stronger.

¹²The people of Israel will come to the top of Zion, and they will shout with joy. Their faces will shine with happiness about the good things the LORD gives them. He will give them grain, new wine, olive oil, young sheep and cattle. They will be like a garden that has plenty of water. And the people of Israel will not be troubled anymore.

¹³Then the young women of Israel will be happy and dance. And the men, young and old, will join in the dancing. I will change their sadness into happiness. I will comfort my people, making them happy instead of sad.

¹⁴I will give the priests plenty of food. And my people will be filled and satisfied

with the good things I give them. This message is from the LORD.

¹⁵This is what the LORD says: A sound is heard in Ramah bitter crying and great sadness. Rachel cries for her children, and she refuses to be comforted, because her children are gone.

¹⁶But the LORD says, Stop crying. Don't fill your eyes with tears. You will be rewarded for your work. This message is from the LORD. The people of Israel will come back from their enemys land.

¹⁷Israel, there is hope for you. This message is from the LORD. Your children will come back to their own land.

¹⁸I have heard Ephraim crying: Lord, you punished me, and I learned my lesson. I was like a calf that was never trained. Please stop punishing me, and I will come back to you. You really are the LORD my God.

¹⁹I wandered away from you. But I finally realized how wrong I was. So I changed my heart and life. I am ashamed and embarrassed about the foolish things I did when I was young.

²⁰The LORD says, You know that Ephraim is my dear son. I love that child.

Yes, I often criticized him, but I still think about him. I love him very much, and I really do want to comfort him.

²¹ People of Israel, repair the road signs. Put up signs that show the way home. Watch the road. Remember the road you are leaving on. Israel, my bride, come home. Come back to your towns.

²² Unfaithful daughter, how long will you wander around? The LORD has created something new in the land: A woman surrounding a man.

²³ This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: I will again do good things for the people of Judah. I will bring back those who were taken away as prisoners. At that time the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: May the LORD bless you, good home and holy mountain!

²⁴ People in all the towns of Judah will live together in peace. Farmers and those who move around with their flocks will live peacefully together in Judah.

²⁵ I will give rest and strength to those who are weak and tired.

²⁶After hearing that, I, Jeremiah, woke up and looked around. My sleep was very pleasant.

²⁷The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will help the family of Israel and Judah to grow. I will help their children and animals to grow too. It will be like planting and caring for a plant.

²⁸In the past I watched over Israel and Judah, but I watched for the time to pull them up. I tore them down. I destroyed them. I gave many troubles to them. But now I will watch over them to build them up and make them strong. This message is from the LORD.

²⁹People will not use this saying anymore: The parents ate the sour grapes, but the children got the sour taste.

³⁰No, people will die for their own sins. Those who eat sour grapes will get the sour taste.

³¹This is what the LORD said, The time is coming when I will make a new agreement with the family of Israel and with the family of Judah.

³²It will not be like the agreement I made with their ancestors. I made that

agreement when I took them by the hand and brought them out of Egypt. I was their master, but they broke that agreement. This message is from the LORD.

³³In the future I will make this agreement with the people of Israel. This message is from the LORD. I will put my teachings in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

³⁴People will not have to teach their neighbors and relatives to know the LORD, because all people, from the least important to the most important, will know me. This message is from the LORD. I will forgive them for the evil things they did. I will not remember their sins.

³⁵He makes the sun shine in the day, and he makes the moon and the stars shine at night. He stirs up the sea so that its waves crash on the shore. The LORD All-Powerful is his name. This is what the LORD says:

³⁶The descendants of Israel will never stop being a nation. That would happen

only if I lost control of the sun, moon, stars, and sea.

³⁷The LORD says, I will never reject the descendants of Israel. That would happen only if people could measure the sky above, and learn all the secrets of the earth below. Only then would I reject them for the bad things they have done. This message is from the LORD.

³⁸This message is from the LORD, The days are coming when the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt for the LORD. The whole city will be rebuilt from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.

³⁹The measuring line will stretch from the Corner Gate straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to the place named Gorah.

⁴⁰The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown and all the terraces down to the bottom of Kidron Valley all the way to the corner of Horse Gate will be holy to the LORD. The city of Jerusalem will never again be torn down or destroyed.

32¹This is the message from the LORD that came to Jeremiah during the tenth year that Zedekiah was

king of Judah. The tenth year of Zedekiah was the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar.

²At that time the army of the king of Babylon was surrounding the city of Jerusalem, and Jeremiah was under arrest in the courtyard of the guard. This courtyard was at the palace of the king of Judah.

³King Zedekiah of Judah had put Jeremiah in prison in that place. Zedekiah didn't like the things Jeremiah prophesied. Jeremiah had said, This is what the LORD says: I will soon give the city of Jerusalem to the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar will capture this city.

⁴King Zedekiah of Judah will not escape from the army of the Babylonians. But he will surely be given to the king of Babylon. And Zedekiah will speak to the king of Babylon face to face. He will see him with his own eyes.

⁵The king of Babylon will take Zedekiah to Babylon. Zedekiah will stay there until I have punished him. This message is from the LORD. If you fight against the army of the Babylonians, you will not succeed.

⁶While Jeremiah was a prisoner, he said, This message from the LORD came to me. This was the message:

⁷Jeremiah, your cousin, Hanamel, will come to you soon. He is the son of your uncle Shallum. Hanamel will say to you, Jeremiah, buy my field near the town of Anathoth. Buy it because you are my nearest relative. It is your right and your responsibility to buy that field.

⁸Then it happened just as the LORD said. My cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard. Hanamel said to me, Jeremiah, buy my field near the town of Anathoth, in the land of the tribe of Benjamin. Buy that land for yourself because it is your right to buy it and own it. So I knew that this was a message from the LORD.

⁹I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel. I weighed out 17 shekels of silver for him.

¹⁰I signed the deed and had a copy of the deed sealed up. I got some men to witness what I had done, and I weighed out the silver on the scales.

¹¹Then I took the sealed copy of the deed, which contained the demands and

limits of my purchase, and the copy that was not sealed.

¹²I gave the deed to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah. I did this while my cousin Hanamel and the other witnesses were there. They also signed the deed. There were also many people of Judah sitting in the courtyard who saw me give the deed to Baruch.

¹³With all the people watching, I said to Baruch,

¹⁴This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Take both copies of the deedthe sealed copy and the copy that was not sealedand put them in a clay jar. Do this so that these deeds will last a long time.

¹⁵The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says, In the future my people will once again buy houses, fields, and vineyards in the land of Israel.

¹⁶After I gave the deed to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD:

¹⁷Lord GOD, with your great power you made the earth and the sky. There is nothing too hard for you to do.

¹⁸You are loyal and kind to thousands of people, but you also bring punishment

to children for their fathers sins. Great and powerful God, your name is the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁹You plan and do great things. You see everything that people do. You give a reward to those who do good things, and you punish those who do bad things you give them what they deserve.

²⁰You have been doing powerful miracles in the land of Egypt until now, in Israel and elsewhere. You are the one who made yourself as famous as you are today.

²¹You used powerful miracles and brought your people Israel out of Egypt. You used your own powerful hand to do this. Your power was amazing!

²²You gave the Israelites this land that you promised to give to their ancestors long ago. It is a very good land filled with many good things.

²³They came into this land and took it for their own. But they didnt obey you. They didnt follow your teachings or do what you commanded. So you made all these terrible things happen to them.

²⁴And now the enemy has surrounded the city. They are building ramps so that

they can get over the walls of Jerusalem and capture it. Because of war, hunger, and disease, the city of Jerusalem will fall to the Babylonian army. The Babylonians are attacking the city now. You said this would happen, and now you see it is happening.

²⁵Lord GOD, all those bad things are happening. But now you are telling me, Jeremiah, buy the field with silver and choose some men to witness the purchase. You are telling me this while the Babylonian army is ready to capture the city. Why should I waste my money like that?

²⁶Then this message from the LORD came to Jeremiah:

²⁷I am the LORD. I am the God of every person on the earth. You know that nothing is impossible for me.

²⁸The LORD also said, I will soon give the city of Jerusalem to the Babylonian army and to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The army will capture the city.

²⁹The Babylonian army is already attacking the city of Jerusalem. They will soon enter the city and start a fire. They will burn down this city. There are houses

in this city where the people of Jerusalem made me angry by offering sacrifices to the false god Baal on the housetops. And they poured out drink offerings to other idol gods. The Babylonian army will burn down those houses.

³⁰I have watched the people of Israel and the people of Judah. Everything they do is evil. They have done evil things since they were young. The people of Israel have made me very angry because they worship idols that they made with their own hands. This message is from the LORD.

³¹From the time that Jerusalem was built until now, the people of this city have made me angry. This city has made me very angry, so I must remove it from my sight.

³²I will destroy Jerusalem because of all the evil things the people of Israel and Judah have done. The people, their kings, leaders, their priests and prophets, the men of Judah, and the people of Jerusalem have all made me angry.

³³They should have come to me for help, but they turned their backs on me.

I tried to teach them again and again, but they would not listen to me. I tried to correct them, but they would not listen.

³⁴They have made their idols, and I hate those idols. They put their idols in the Temple that is called by my name, so they made my Temple dirty.

³⁵In the Valley of Ben Hinnom, they built high places to the false god Baal. They built those worship places so that they could burn their sons and daughters as sacrifices. I never commanded them to do such a terrible thing. I never even thought the people of Judah would do such a terrible thing.

³⁶You people are saying, The king of Babylon will capture Jerusalem. He will use war, hunger, and disease to defeat this city. But this is what the LORD, the God of the people of Israel, says:

³⁷I have forced the people of Israel and Judah to leave their land. I was very angry with them, but I will bring them back to this place. I will gather them from the land where I forced them to go. I will bring them back to this place. I will let them live in peace and safety.

³⁸The people of Israel and Judah will be my people, and I will be their God.

³⁹I will give them the desire to be one, united people. They will have one goal to worship me all their lives. They and their children will want to do this.

⁴⁰I will make an agreement with the people of Israel and Judah that will last forever. In this agreement I will never turn away from them. I will always be good to them. I will make them want to respect me. Then they will never turn away from me.

⁴¹They will make me happy. I will enjoy doing good to them. And I will surely plant them in this land and make them grow. I will do this with all my heart and soul.

⁴²This is what the LORD says: I have brought this great disaster to the people of Israel and Judah. In the same way, I will bring good things to them. I promise to do good things for them.

⁴³You people are saying, This land is an empty desert. There are no people or animals here. The Babylonian army defeated this country. But in the future

people will once again buy fields in this land.

⁴⁴They will use their money and buy fields. They will sign and seal their agreements. They will witness the people signing their deeds. They will again buy fields in the land where the tribe of Benjamin lives, in the area around Jerusalem, in the towns of the land of Judah, in the hill country, in the western foothills, and in the area of the southern desert. This will happen because I will bring them back home. This message is from the LORD.

33¹ While Jeremiah was still locked up in the courtyard of the guards, the message from the LORD came to him a second time:

²The LORD, made the earth, and it continues the way he made it. The LORD is his name. He says,

³Judah, pray to me, and I will answer you. I will tell you important secrets. You have never heard these things before.

⁴The LORD is the God of Israel. This is what he says about the houses in Jerusalem and about the palaces of the kings of Judah: The enemy will pull these

houses down. They will build ramps up to the top of the city walls. They will use swords and fight the people in these cities.

⁵The people in Jerusalem have done many bad things. I am angry with them. I have turned against them, so I will kill many people there. The Babylonian army will come to fight against Jerusalem. There will be many dead bodies in the houses in Jerusalem.

⁶But then I will heal the people in that city. I will let them enjoy peace and safety.

⁷I will make good things happen to Judah and Israel again and make them strong as in the past.

⁸They sinned against me, but I will wash away that sin. They fought against me, but I will forgive them.

⁹Then Jerusalem will be a wonderful place. The people will be happy. People from other nations will praise it when they hear about the good things happening there. They will hear about the good things I am doing for Jerusalem.

¹⁰This is what the LORD says: You people say that your country is an empty desert, with no people or animals living there. Yes, the streets of Jerusalem and the towns of Judah are empty. Nothing lives there now, people or animals. But someday the sounds of life will return

¹¹sounds of joy and happiness. There will be the happy sounds of a bride and groom. There will be the sounds of people bringing their gifts to the LORD'S Temple. They will say, Praise the LORD All-Powerful! The LORD is good! His faithful love will last forever! They will say this because I will again do good things to Judah. It will be as it was in the beginning. This is what the LORD says.

¹²The LORD All-Powerful says, This place is empty now. There are no people or animals living here. But there will be people in all the towns of Judah. There will be shepherds, and there will be pastures where they will let their flocks rest.

¹³Shepherds will count their sheep as the sheep walk in front of them. They will be counting their sheep all around the country in the hill country, in the

western foothills, in the Negev, and in all the other towns of Judah.

¹⁴This message is from the LORD: I made a special promise to the people of Israel and Judah. The time is coming when I will do what I promised.

¹⁵At that time I will make a good branch grow from Davids family. That branch will do what is good and right for the country.

¹⁶When he rules, the people of Judah will be saved. They will live safely in Jerusalem. This will be his name: The LORD Makes Things Right For Us.

¹⁷The LORD says, Someone from Davids family will always sit on the throne and rule the family of Israel.

¹⁸And there will always be priests from the family of Levi. They will always stand before me and offer burnt offerings and sacrifice grain offerings and give sacrifices to me.

¹⁹This message from the LORD came to Jeremiah.

²⁰The LORD says, I have an agreement with day and night. I agreed that they would continue forever. You cannot change that agreement. Day and night

will always come at the right time. If you could change that agreement,

²¹ then you could change my agreement with David and Levi. Then descendants from David would not be the kings, and the family of Levi would not be priests.

²² But I will give many descendants to my servant David and to the tribe of Levi. They will be as many as the stars in the sky no one can count all the stars. And they will be as many as the grains of sand on the seashore no one can count the grains of sand.

²³ Jeremiah received this message from the LORD:

²⁴ Jeremiah, have you heard what the people are saying? They are saying, The LORD turned away from the two families of Israel and Judah. He chose those people, but now he does not even accept them as a nation.

²⁵ The LORD says, If my agreement with day and night does not continue, and if I had not made the laws for the sky and earth, maybe I would leave those people.

²⁶ Then maybe I would turn away from Jacobs descendants. And then maybe I

would not let Davids descendants rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But David is my servant, and I will be kind to those people. I will again cause good things to happen to them.

34¹ The LORD spoke his message to Jeremiah at the time when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and all the towns around it. Nebuchadnezzar had with him all his army and the armies of all the kingdoms and peoples in the empire he ruled.

² This is what the LORD, the God of the people of Israel, said: Jeremiah, go to King Zedekiah of Judah and give him this message: Zedekiah, this is what the LORD says: I will give the city of Jerusalem to the king of Babylon very soon, and he will burn it down.

³ You will not escape from the king of Babylon. You will surely be caught and given to him. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes. He will talk to you face to face, and you will go to Babylon.

⁴ But listen to the promise of the LORD, King Zedekiah of Judah. This is what the

LORD says about you: You will not be killed with a sword.

⁵You will die in a peaceful way. People made funeral fires to honor your ancestors, the kings who ruled before you became king. In the same way, people will make a funeral fire to honor you. They will cry for you and sadly say, Oh, my master! I myself make this promise to you. This message is from the LORD.

⁶So Jeremiah told all this message to Zedekiah in Jerusalem.

⁷This was while the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem. The army of Babylon was also fighting against the cities of Judah that had not been captured. These cities were Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities left in the land of Judah.

⁸King Zedekiah had made an agreement with all the people in Jerusalem to give freedom to all the Hebrew slaves.

A message from the LORD came to Jeremiah after Zedekiah had made that agreement.

⁹Everyone was supposed to free their Hebrew slaves. All male and female

Hebrew slaves were to be set free. No one was supposed to keep another person from the tribe of Judah in slavery.

¹⁰So all the leaders of Judah and all the people accepted this agreement. They would free their male and female slaves so that they would no longer serve them. Everyone agreed, and so all the slaves were set free.

¹¹But after that, the people who had slaves changed their minds. So they took the people they had set free and made them slaves again.

¹²Then this message from the LORD came to Jeremiah:

¹³This is what the LORD, the God of the people of Israel, says: I brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt, where they were slaves. When I did that, I made an agreement with them.

¹⁴I said to your ancestors, At the end of every seven years, everyone must set their Hebrew slaves free. If you have fellow Hebrews who have sold themselves to you, you must let them go free after they have served you for six years. But your ancestors did not listen to me or pay attention to me.

¹⁵A short time ago you changed your hearts to do what is right. Everyone set free their fellow Hebrews who were slaves. And you even made an agreement before me in the Temple that is called by my name.

¹⁶But now you have changed your minds. You have shown that you do not honor my name, because each of you has taken back the male and female slaves that you had set free. You have forced them to become slaves again.

¹⁷So this is what the LORD says: You people have not obeyed me. You have not given freedom to your fellow Hebrews. So, because you have not given them freedom, I will give you a special kind of freedom—freedom to die in war or by disease or by hunger! This message is from the LORD. When the other nations see what I have done to you, they will all be shocked.

¹⁸I will hand over those who broke my agreement and have not kept the promises they made before me. They cut a calf in half before me and made a vow by walking between the two pieces.

¹⁹These are the people who made that agreement before me by walking between the pieces of the calf: the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the important officials of the court, the priests, and the people of the land.

²⁰So I will give them to their enemies and to everyone who wants to kill them. Their bodies will become food for the birds of the air and for the wild animals of the earth.

²¹I will give King Zedekiah of Judah and his leaders to their enemies and to everyone who wants to kill them. I will give Zedekiah and his people to the army of the king of Babylon, even though that army has left Jerusalem.

²²But I will give the order, says the LORD, to bring the Babylonian army back to Jerusalem. That army will fight against Jerusalem. They will capture it, set it on fire, and burn it down. And I will destroy the towns in the land of Judah. They will become empty deserts. No one will live there.

35¹ During the time when Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah, was king of

Judah, the LORD spoke this message to Jeremiah:

²Go to the Recabite family and invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the LORD'S Temple. Offer them wine to drink.

³So I went to get Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, who was the son of Habazziniah. And I got all of Jaazaniahs brothers and sons and the whole family of the Recabites together.

⁴Then I brought them into the Temple of the LORD. We went into the room of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah. Hanan was a man of God. The room was next to the room where the princes of Judah stay. It was over the room of Maaseiah son of Shallum. Maaseiah was the doorkeeper in the Temple.

⁵Then I put some bowls full of wine and some cups in front of the Recabite family. And I said to them, Drink some wine.

⁶But the Recabite family answered, We never drink wine. We never drink it because our ancestor Jonadab son of Recab gave us this command: You

and your descendants must never drink wine.

⁷ Also you must never build houses, plant seeds, or plant vineyards. You must never do any of those things. You must live only in tents. If you do that, you will live a long time in the land where you move from place to place.

⁸ So we have obeyed everything our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. None of us ever drinks wine, and neither do our wives, sons, or daughters.

⁹ We never build houses to live in, we never own vineyards or fields, and we never plant crops.

¹⁰ We have lived in tents and have obeyed everything our ancestor Jonadab commanded us.

¹¹ But when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked the country of Judah, we did go into Jerusalem. We said to each other, Come, we must enter the city of Jerusalem so that we can escape the Babylonian army and the Aramean army. So we have stayed in Jerusalem.

¹² Then this message from the LORD came to Jeremiah:

¹³The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says to go to the people of Judah and Jerusalem and tell them this message: You should learn a lesson and obey my message. This message is from the LORD.

¹⁴Jonadab son of Recab ordered his sons not to drink wine, and that command has been obeyed. To this day the descendants of Jonadab have obeyed their ancestors command. They do not drink wine. But I have given commands to you people of Judah again and again, and you have not obeyed me.

¹⁵Time after time I have sent my servants the prophets to you. They said, You must each stop doing evil things and do what is right. Dont follow other gods. Dont worship or serve them. If you obey me, you will live in the land I have given to you and your ancestors. But you have not paid attention to my message.

¹⁶The descendants of Jonadab obeyed the commands that their ancestor gave them, but the people of Judah have not obeyed me.

¹⁷So this is what the LORD God All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: I

said that many bad things would happen to Judah and Jerusalem. I will soon make all those bad things happen. I spoke to the people, but they refused to listen. I called out to them, but they didn't answer me.

¹⁸Then Jeremiah said to the Recabite family, This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: You have obeyed the commands of your ancestor Jonadab. You have followed all of his teachings. You have done everything he commanded.

¹⁹So the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: There will always be a descendant of Jonadab son of Recab to serve me.

36¹The LORD spoke his message to Jeremiah during the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah. This was the message from the Lord:

²Jeremiah, get a scroll and write on it all the messages I have spoken to you. I have spoken to you about the nations of Israel and Judah and all the other nations. Write all the words that I have

spoken to you from the time that Josiah was king, until now.

³ Maybe the people of Judah will hear what I am planning to do to them and will stop doing bad things. If they will do that, I will forgive them for the bad sins they have committed.

⁴ So Jeremiah called a man named Baruch son of Neriah. Jeremiah spoke the messages the LORD had given him. While he spoke, Baruch wrote the messages on the scroll.

⁵ Then Jeremiah said to Baruch, I cannot go to the LORD'S Temple. I am not allowed to go there.

⁶ So I want you to go to the Temple of the LORD. Go there on a day of fasting and read to the people from the scroll. Read to the people the messages from the LORD that you wrote on the scroll as I spoke them to you. Read them to all the people of Judah who come into Jerusalem from the towns where they live.

⁷ Perhaps they will ask the LORD to help them. Perhaps each person will stop doing bad things. The LORD has

announced that he is very angry with them.

⁸So Baruch son of Neriah did everything Jeremiah the prophet told him to do. Baruch read aloud the scroll that had the LORD'S messages written on it. He read it in the LORD'S Temple.

⁹In the ninth month of the fifth year that Jehoiakim was king, a fast was announced. All those who lived in the city of Jerusalem and everyone who had come into Jerusalem from the towns of Judah were supposed to fast before the LORD.

¹⁰At that time Baruch read the scroll that contained Jeremiahs words. He read the scroll in the Temple of the LORD to all the people who were there. Baruch was in the room of Gemariah in the upper courtyard when he read from the scroll. That room was located at the entrance of the New Gate of the Temple. Gemariah was the son of Shaphan. Gemariah was a scribe in the Temple.

¹¹A man named Micaiah heard all the messages from the LORD that Baruch read from the scroll. Micaiah was the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan.

¹²When Micaiah heard the messages from the scroll, he went down to the secretarys room in the kings palace. All the royal officials were sitting there in the kings palace. These are the names of the officials: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Acbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah; all the other royal officials were there too.

¹³Micaiah told them everything he had heard Baruch read from the scroll.

¹⁴Then all the officials sent a man named Jehudi to Baruch. (Jehudi was the son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah. Shelemiah was the son of Cushi.) Jehudi said to Baruch, Bring the scroll that you read from and come with me. Baruch son of Neriah took the scroll and went with Jehudi to the officials.

¹⁵Then the officials said to Baruch, Sit down and read the scroll to us. So Baruch read the scroll to them.

¹⁶When the royal officials heard all the messages from the scroll, they were afraid and looked at each other. They said to Baruch, We must tell King

Jehoiakim about these messages on the scroll.

¹⁷ Then the officials asked Baruch, Tell us, Baruch, where did you get these messages that you wrote on the scroll? Did you write down what Jeremiah said to you?

¹⁸ Yes, Baruch answered. Jeremiah spoke, and I wrote down all the messages with ink on this scroll.

¹⁹ Then the royal officials said to Baruch, You and Jeremiah must go and hide. Dont tell anyone where you are hiding.

²⁰ Then the royal officials put the scroll in the room of Elishama the scribe. They went to King Jehoiakim and told him all about the scroll.

²¹ So King Jehoiakim sent Jehudi to get the scroll. Jehudi brought the scroll from the room of Elishama the scribe. Then Jehudi read the scroll to the king and all the servants who stood around the king.

²² The time this happened was in the ninth month, so King Jehoiakim was sitting in the part of the palace used for winter. There was a fire burning in a small fireplace in front of the king.

²³ Jehudi began to read from the scroll. But after he would read two or three columns, King Jehoiakim would grab the scroll. Then he would cut those columns off the scroll with a small knife and throw them into the fireplace. Finally, the whole scroll was burned in the fire.

²⁴ And, when King Jehoiakim and his servants heard the message from the scroll, they were not afraid. They did not tear their clothes to show sorrow for doing wrong.

²⁵ Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah tried to talk King Jehoiakim out of burning the scroll, but he would not listen to them.

²⁶ Instead King Jehoiakim commanded some men to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. These men were Jerahmeel, a son of the king, Seraiah son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel. But they could not find Baruch and Jeremiah, because the LORD had hidden them.

²⁷ King Jehoiakim burned the scroll on which Baruch had written all the words that Jeremiah had spoken to him. Then

this message from the LORD came to Jeremiah:

²⁸Get another scroll. Write all the messages on it that were on the first scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned.

²⁹Also tell King Jehoiakim of Judah that this is what the LORD says: Jehoiakim, you burned that scroll. You said, Why did Jeremiah write that the king of Babylon will surely come and destroy this land and kill all the people and animals in it?

³⁰So this is what the LORD says about King Jehoiakim of Judah: Jehoiakims descendants will not sit on Davids throne. When Jehoiakim dies, he will not get a kings funeral, but his body will be thrown out on the ground. His body will be left out in the heat of the day and the cold frost of the night.

³¹I will punish Jehoiakim and his children, and I will punish his officials. I will do this because they are wicked. I will bring terrible disasters on them and on all those who live in Jerusalem and on the people from Judah. I will bring all these bad things on them, just as

I warned them, because they have not listened to me.

³²Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch son of Neriah, the scribe. As Jeremiah spoke, Baruch wrote on the scroll the same messages that were on the scroll that King Jehoiakim had burned in the fire. And many other words like those messages were added to the second scroll.

37 ¹Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. He appointed Zedekiah son of Josiah to be the king of Judah in the place of Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim.

²But Zedekiah, his servants, and the people of Judah did not pay attention to the messages the LORD had given to Jeremiah the prophet.

³King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to Jeremiah the prophet with a message. This was the message they brought to Jeremiah: Jeremiah, pray to the LORD our God for us.

⁴At that time Jeremiah had not yet been put into prison, so he was free to go anywhere he wanted.

⁵Also at that time Pharaohs army had marched from Egypt toward Judah. The Babylonian army had surrounded the city of Jerusalem in order to defeat it. Then they had heard about the army from Egypt marching toward them. So the army from Babylon left Jerusalem to fight with the army from Egypt.

⁶This message from the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet:

⁷This is what the LORD, the God of the people of Israel, says: Jehucal and Zephaniah, I know that King Zedekiah of Judah sent you to me to ask questions. Tell King Zedekiah this: Pharaohs army marched out of Egypt to come here to help you against the army of Babylon. But Pharaohs army will go back to Egypt.

⁸After that, the army from Babylon will come back here and attack Jerusalem. Then they will capture and burn it.

⁹This is what the LORD says: People of Jerusalem, dont fool yourselves. Dont say to yourselves, The army of Babylon will surely leave us alone. They will not.

¹⁰People of Jerusalem, even if you could defeat all the Babylonian army that is attacking you, there would still be a few

wounded men left in their tents. Even those few wounded men would come out of their tents and burn Jerusalem down.

¹¹When the Babylonian army left Jerusalem to fight the army of the Pharaoh of Egypt,

¹²Jeremiah wanted to travel from Jerusalem to the land of Benjamin. He wanted to be there for a division of some property that belonged to his family.

¹³But when Jeremiah got to the Benjamin Gate of Jerusalem, the captain in charge of the guards arrested him. The captain's name was Irijah son of Shelemiah. Shelemiah was the son of Hananiah. So Irijah the captain arrested Jeremiah and said, Jeremiah, you are leaving us to join the Babylonian side.

¹⁴Jeremiah said to Irijah, That is not true! I am not leaving to join the Babylonians. But Irijah refused to listen to Jeremiah. And Irijah arrested Jeremiah and took him to the royal officials of Jerusalem.

¹⁵Those officials were very angry with Jeremiah. They gave an order for Jeremiah to be beaten. Then they put him in a prison. The prison was in the

house of Jonathan, a scribe for the king of Judah. His house had been made into a prison.

¹⁶They put Jeremiah into a cell under the house of Jonathan. The cell was in a dungeon under the ground. Jeremiah was there for a long time.

¹⁷Then King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah and had him brought to the palace. Zedekiah talked to Jeremiah in private. He asked Jeremiah, Is there any message from the LORD? Jeremiah answered, Yes, he said that you will be given to the king of Babylon.

¹⁸Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, What have I done wrong? What crime have I done against you or your officials or the people of Jerusalem? Why have you thrown me into prison?

¹⁹King Zedekiah, where are your prophets now? They told you a false message. They said, The king of Babylon will not attack you or this land of Judah.

²⁰But now, my lord, king of Judah, please listen to me. Please let me bring my request to you. This is what I ask: Dont send me back to the house of

Jonathan the scribe. If you send me back, I will die there.

²¹ So King Zedekiah gave orders for Jeremiah to be put under guard in the courtyard. And he ordered that Jeremiah should be given bread from the street bakers. He was given bread until there was no more bread in the city. So Jeremiah stayed under guard in the courtyard.

38¹ Some of the royal officials heard what Jeremiah was saying. They were Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah. Jeremiah was telling all the people this message:

² This is what the LORD says: Everyone who stays in Jerusalem will die from war, hunger, or disease. But everyone who surrenders to the army of Babylon will live and escape with their lives.

³ And this is what the LORD says: This city of Jerusalem will surely be given to the army of the king of Babylon. He will capture this city.

⁴ Then the royal officials who heard what Jeremiah was telling the people

went to King Zedekiah. They said to the king, Jeremiah should be put to death. He is discouraging the soldiers who are still in the city and everyone else by what he is saying. He is not looking for peace; he is just trying to cause trouble.

⁵So King Zedekiah said to the officials, Jeremiah is in your control. I cannot do anything to stop you.

⁶So the officials took Jeremiah and put him into Malkijahs cistern. Malkijah was the kings son. The cistern was in the Temple yard where the kings guard stayed. They used ropes to lower Jeremiah into the cistern. The cistern didnt have any water in it, only mud. And Jeremiah sank down into the mud.

⁷But a man named Ebed Melech heard that the officials had put Jeremiah into the cistern. Ebed Melech was from Ethiopia, and he was a eunuch in the kings palace. King Zedekiah was sitting at the Benjamin Gate, so Ebed Melech left the kings palace and went to talk to the king at the gate.

⁸Ebed Melech said, My lord and king, these officials have done evil. They have treated Jeremiah the prophet badly.

They have thrown him into a cistern and left him there to die.

⁹ (38: 8)

¹⁰ Then King Zedekiah gave a command to Ebed Melech, the Ethiopian: Ebed Melech, take three men from the palace with you, and go get Jeremiah out of the cistern before he dies.

¹¹ So Ebed Melech took the men with him. But first he went to a room under the storeroom in the king's palace. He took some old rags and worn-out clothes from that room. Then he let the rags down with some ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern.

¹² Ebed Melech, the Ethiopian, said to Jeremiah, Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms. When we pull you out, these rags will pad your underarms. Then the ropes will not hurt you. So Jeremiah did as Ebed Melech said.

¹³ The men pulled Jeremiah up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah stayed under guard in the Temple yard.

¹⁴ Then King Zedekiah sent someone to get Jeremiah the prophet. He had

Jeremiah brought to the third entrance to the Temple of the LORD. Then the king said, Jeremiah, I am going to ask you something. Dont hide anything from me, but tell me everything honestly.

¹⁵Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, If I give you an answer, you will probably kill me. And even if I give you advice, you will not listen to me.

¹⁶But King Zedekiah secretly swore an oath to Jeremiah. Zedekiah said, As surely as the LORD lives, who gives us breath and life, I will not kill you, Jeremiah. And I promise not to give you to the officials who want to kill you.

¹⁷Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, The LORD God All-Powerful is the God of Israel. This is what he says, If you surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, your life will be saved, and Jerusalem will not be burned down. And you and your family will live.

¹⁸But if you refuse to surrender, Jerusalem will be given to the Babylonian army. They will burn Jerusalem down, and you will not escape from them.

¹⁹But King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, But I am afraid of the men of Judah who

have already gone over to the side of the Babylonian army. I am afraid that the soldiers will give me to those men, and they will treat me badly.

²⁰ But Jeremiah answered, The soldiers will not give you to the men of Judah. King Zedekiah, obey the LORD by doing what I tell you. Then things will go well for you, and your life will be saved.

²¹ But if you refuse to surrender to the army of Babylon, the LORD has shown me what will happen. This is what he has told me:

²² All the women who are left in the house of the king of Judah will be brought out. They will be brought to the important officials of the king of Babylon. Your women will make fun of you with a song. This is what they will say: Your friends were stronger than you, and they led you the wrong way. You trusted them, but now your feet are stuck in the mud, and your friends have left you.

²³ All your wives and children will be brought out. They will be given to the Babylonian army. You yourself will not escape from the army of Babylon. You

will be captured by the king of Babylon, and Jerusalem will be burned down.

²⁴Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, Don't tell anyone that I have been talking to you. If you do, you might die.

²⁵If the officials find out that I talked to you, they will come to you and say, Jeremiah, tell us what you said to King Zedekiah and what he said to you. Be honest with us, and tell us everything, or we will kill you.

²⁶If they say this to you, tell them, I was begging the king not to send me back to the cell in the dungeon under Jonathans house. If I were to go back there, I would die.

²⁷It happened that the royal officials of the king did come to Jeremiah to question him. So Jeremiah told them everything the king had ordered him to say. Then they left Jeremiah alone. No one had heard what Jeremiah and the king had talked about.

²⁸So Jeremiah stayed under guard in the Temple yard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

39¹This is how Jerusalem was captured: During the tenth month

of the ninth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He surrounded the city to defeat it.

²And on the ninth day of the fourth month in Zedekiah's eleventh year, the wall of Jerusalem was broken through.

³Then all the royal officials of the king of Babylon came into the city of Jerusalem. They came in and sat down at the Middle Gate. These are the names of the officials: Nergal-Sharezzer, the governor of the district of Samgar, a very high official; Nebo Sarsekim, another very high official; and various other important officials were there also.

⁴King Zedekiah of Judah saw the officials from Babylon, so he and the soldiers with him ran away. They left Jerusalem at night. They went out through the king's garden and out through the gate that was between the two walls. Then they went toward the desert.

⁵The Babylonian army chased Zedekiah and the soldiers with him. They caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho.

They captured Zedekiah and took him to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was at the town of Riblah in the land of Hamath. At that place, Nebuchadnezzar decided what to do to Zedekiah.

⁶There at the town of Riblah, the king of Babylon killed Zedekiah's sons and he killed all the royal officials of Judah while Zedekiah watched.

⁷Then Nebuchadnezzar tore out Zedekiah's eyes. He put bronze chains on Zedekiah and took him to Babylon.

⁸The army of Babylon set fire to the king's palace and the houses of the people of Jerusalem. And they broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

⁹Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king of Babylon's special guards. He took all the people who had surrendered to him and all the people still in Jerusalem and made them captives. He carried them away to Babylon.

¹⁰But commander Nebuzaradan left behind some of the poor people of Judah who owned nothing. Nebuzaradan gave them vineyards and farmland in Judah.

¹¹ Nebuchadnezzar also gave an order about Jeremiah to commander Nebuzaradan:

¹² Find Jeremiah and take care of him. Don't hurt him. Give him whatever he asks for.

¹³ So Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king's special guards, Nebushazban, a chief officer in the army of Babylon, Nergal-Sharezer, a high official, and all the other officers of the army of Babylon sent for Jeremiah.

¹⁴ They had Jeremiah taken out of the Temple yard where he had been under the guard of the king of Judah. They turned Jeremiah over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan. Gedaliah had orders to take Jeremiah back home. So Jeremiah was taken home, and he stayed among his own people.

¹⁵ While the guards were watching Jeremiah in the Temple yard, a message from the LORD came to him. This was the message:

¹⁶ Jeremiah, go and tell Ebed Melech the Ethiopian this message: This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Very soon I will make my

messages about this city of Jerusalem come true. My messages will come true through disaster, not through something good. You will see everything come true with your own eyes.

¹⁷But I will save you on that day, Ebed Melech. This is the message from the LORD. You will not be given to the people you are afraid of.

¹⁸I will save you, Ebed Melech. You will not die from a sword, but you will escape and live. That will happen because you have trusted in me. This message is from the LORD.

40¹The LORD spoke his message to Jeremiah after he was set free at the city of Ramah. Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king of Babylons special guards, found Jeremiah in Ramah. Jeremiah was bound with chains. He was with all the captives from Jerusalem and Judah. They were being taken away in captivity to Babylon.

²When commander Nebuzaradan found Jeremiah, he spoke to him. He said, Jeremiah, the LORD, your God, announced that this disaster would come to this place.

³And now the LORD has done everything just as he said he would do. This disaster happened because you people of Judah sinned against the LORD. You did not obey him.

⁴But now, Jeremiah, I will set you free. I am taking the chains off your wrists. If you want to, come with me to Babylon, and I will take good care of you. But if you dont want to come with me, then dont come. Look, the whole country is open to you. Go anywhere you want.

⁵Or go back to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan. The king of Babylon has chosen Gedaliah to be governor over the towns of Judah. Go and live with Gedaliah among the people. Or you can go anywhere you want. Then Nebuzaradan gave Jeremiah some food and a present and let him go.

⁶So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. He stayed with Gedaliah among those who were left behind in the land of Judah.

⁷There were some soldiers from the army of Judah, officers and their men, still out in the open country when Jerusalem was destroyed. They heard

that the king of Babylon had put Gedaliah son of Ahikam in charge of those who were left in the land. Those who were left were men, women, and children who were very poor. They were not carried off to Babylon as captives.

⁸So the soldiers came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. They were Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and his brother Jonathan, sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, sons of Ephai from Netophah, and Jaazaniah son of the Maacathite, and the men who were with them.

⁹Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, made an oath to make the soldiers and their men feel more secure. This is what he said: You soldiers, don't be afraid to serve the Babylonian people. Settle down in the land and serve the king of Babylon. If you do this, things will go well for you.

¹⁰I myself will live in Mizpah. I will speak for you before the Chaldeans who come here. You leave that work to me. You should harvest the wine, the summer fruit, and the oil. Put what you

harvest in your storage jars. Live in the towns that you control.

¹¹All the people of Judah who were in the countries of Moab, Ammon, Edom, and all the other countries heard that the king of Babylon had left some people of Judah in the land. And they heard that the king of Babylon had chosen Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, to be governor over them.

¹²When the people of Judah heard this news, they came back to the land of Judah. They came back to Gedaliah at Mizpah from all the countries where they had been scattered. So they came back and gathered a large harvest of wine and summer fruit.

¹³Johanan son of Kareah and all the officers of the army of Judah who were still in the open country came to Gedaliah. Gedaliah was at the town of Mizpah.

¹⁴Johanan and the officers with him said to Gedaliah, Do you know that Baalis, the king of the Ammonites, wants to kill you? He has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to kill you. But Gedaliah son of Ahikam didnt believe them.

¹⁵Then Johanan son of Kareah spoke to Gedaliah in private at Mizpah. Johanan said to Gedaliah, Let me go and kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah. No one will know anything about it. We should not let Ishmael kill you. That would cause all the people of Judah who are gathered around you to be scattered to different countries again. And that would mean that the few survivors of Judah would be lost.

¹⁶But Gedaliah son of Ahikam said to Johanan son of Kareah, Dont kill Ishmael. The things you are saying about Ishmael are not true.

41 ¹In the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah (the son of Elishama) came to Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael came with ten of his men. They came to the town of Mizpah. Ishmael was a member of the kings family. He had been one of the officers of the king of Judah. Ishmael and his men ate a meal with Gedaliah.

²While they were eating together, Ishmael and his ten men got up and killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam with a sword. Gedaliah was the man the king of

Babylon had chosen to be governor of Judah.

³ Ishmael also killed all the Jews who were with Gedaliah at the town of Mizpah. He also killed the Babylonian soldiers who were there with Gedaliah.

⁴ The day after Gedaliah was murdered, 80 men came to Mizpah. They were bringing grain offerings and incense to the LORD'S Temple. They had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes, and cut themselves. They came from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria. None of these men knew that Gedaliah had been murdered.

⁵ (41: 4)

⁶ Ishmael left Mizpah and went to meet the 80 men. He cried while he walked out to meet them. Ishmael met them and said, Come with me to meet with Gedaliah son of Ahikam.

⁷ As soon as they were in the city, Ishmael and the men with him began to kill the 80 men and throw them into a deep cistern! But ten of the men said to Ishmael, Dont kill us! We have hidden some things in a field. We have wheat and barley and oil and honey. So Ishmael

stopped and didnt kill them with the others.

⁸(41: 7)

⁹(Ishmael threw the dead bodies into the cistern until it was full, and that cistern was very big! It had been built by a king of Judah named Asa. King Asa had made the cistern so that during war there would be water in the city. Asa did this to protect his city from King Baasha of Israel.)

¹⁰Ishmael captured all the other people in the town of Mizpah and started to cross over to the country of the Ammonites. They included the kings daughters, and all those who were left there. Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king of Babylons special guards, had chosen Gedaliah to watch over those people.

¹¹Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him heard about all the evil things Ishmael had done.

¹²So Johanan and the army officers with him took their men and went to fight Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They

caught Ishmael near the big pool of water that is at the town of Gibeon.

¹³When the captives that Ishmael had taken saw Johanan and the army officers, they were very happy.

¹⁴Then all the captives who Ishmael had taken from the town of Mizpah ran to Johanan son of Kareah.

¹⁵But Ishmael and eight of his men escaped from Johanan and ran away to the Ammonites.

¹⁶So Johanan son of Kareah and all his army officers rescued the captives. Ishmael had murdered Gedaliah and then he had taken those people from Mizpah. Among the survivors were soldiers, women, children, and court officials. Johanan brought them back from the town of Gibeon.

¹⁷Johanan and the other army officers were afraid of the Chaldeans. The king of Babylon had chosen Gedaliah to be governor of Judah. But Ishmael murdered Gedaliah, and Johanan was afraid that the Chaldeans would be angry. So they decided to run away to Egypt. On the way to Egypt, they stayed

at Geruth Kimham, near the town of Bethlehem.

¹⁸(41:17)

42¹ While they were at Geruth Kimham, Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah son of Hoshaiah went to Jeremiah the prophet. All the army officers went with Johanan and Jezaniah. All the people, from the least important to the most important, went to Jeremiah.

² They said to him, Jeremiah, please listen to what we ask. Pray to the LORD your God for all those who are survivors from the family of Judah. Jeremiah, you can see that there are not many of us left. At one time there were many of us.

³ Jeremiah, pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do.

⁴ Then Jeremiah the prophet answered, I understand what you want me to do. I will pray to the LORD your God, as you asked me to do. I will tell you everything the LORD says. I will not hide anything from you.

⁵ Then the people said to Jeremiah, If we dont do everything the LORD your God tells us, then we hope the LORD will

be a true and faithful witness against us. We know he will send you to tell us what to do.

⁶It doesn't matter if we like the message or if we don't like the message. We will obey the LORD our God. We are sending you to the Lord for a message from him. We will obey what he says. Then good things will happen to us. Yes, we will obey the LORD our God.

⁷At the end of ten days, the message from the LORD came to Jeremiah.

⁸Then Jeremiah called together Johanan son of Kareah and the army officers who were with him. He also called all the other people together, from the least important to the most important.

⁹Then Jeremiah said to them, You sent me to the LORD, the God of Israel, and I asked him what you wanted me to ask. This is what he says:

¹⁰If you will stay in Judah, I will make you strong. I will not destroy you. I will plant you, and I will not pull you up. I will do this because I am sad about the terrible things that I made happen to you.

¹¹ Now you are afraid of the king of Babylon. But don't be afraid of him. Don't be afraid of the king of Babylon, says the LORD, because I am with you. I will save you. I will rescue you. He will not get his hands on you.

¹² I will be kind to you, and the king of Babylon will also treat you with mercy. He will bring you back to your land.

¹³ But you might say, We will not stay in Judah. If you say that, you will disobey the LORD your God.

¹⁴ And you might say, No, we will go and live in Egypt. We will not be bothered with war there. We will not hear the trumpets of war, and in Egypt we will not be hungry.

¹⁵ If you say that, listen to this message from the LORD, you survivors from Judah. This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: If you decide to go and live in Egypt, this will happen:

¹⁶ You are afraid of the sword of war, but it will defeat you there. And you are worried about hunger, but you will be hungry in Egypt. You will die there.

¹⁷ Everyone who decides to go live in Egypt will die by war, hunger, or disease. Not one person who goes to Egypt will survive. Not one of them will escape the terrible things that I will bring to them.

¹⁸ This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: I showed my anger against Jerusalem. I punished the people who lived there. In the same way, I will show my anger against everyone who goes to Egypt. People will use you as an example when they ask for bad things to happen to other people. You will become like a curse word. People will be ashamed of you, and they will insult you. And you will never see Judah again.

¹⁹ Survivors of Judah, the LORD told you: Don't go to Egypt. I warn you right now,

²⁰ you are making a mistake that will cause your deaths. You sent me to the LORD your God. You said to me, Pray to the LORD our God for us. Tell us everything the LORD our God says to do. We will obey him.

²¹ So today, I have told you the message from the Lord. But you have not obeyed

the LORD your God. You have not done all that he sent me to tell you to do.

²²So now be sure you understand this: You want to go live in Egypt. But these things will happen to you in Egypt: You will die by a sword, or hunger, or terrible sickness.

43¹ So Jeremiah finished telling the people the message from the LORD their God. He told them everything that the LORD their God had sent him to tell them.

²Azariah son of Hoshaiah, Johanan son of Kareah, and some other men were proud and stubborn. They became angry with Jeremiah. They said to him, Jeremiah, you are lying! The LORD our God didn't send you to say to us, You must not go to Egypt to live there.

³Jeremiah, we think that Baruch son of Neriah is encouraging you to be against us. He wants you to give us to the Babylonians. He wants you to do this so they can kill us. Or he wants you to do this so that they can make us captives and take us to Babylon.

⁴So Johanan, the army officers, and all the people disobeyed the LORD'S

command. The Lord had commanded them to stay in Judah.

⁵But Johanan, son of Kareah, and the army officers did not obey this command. Instead, they took the survivors from Judah to Egypt. In the past the enemy had taken the survivors to other countries, but they had come back to Judah.

⁶Now Johanan and all the army officers took all the men, women, and children and led them to Egypt. Among those people were the kings daughters. (Nebuzaradan had put Gedaliah in charge of those people. Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king of Babylons special guards.) Johanan also took Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah.

⁷These people didnt listen to the LORD. So they all went to Egypt to the town of Tahpanhes.

⁸In the town of Tahpanhes, Jeremiah received this message from the LORD:

⁹Jeremiah, get some large stones. Take them and bury them in the clay and brick sidewalk in front of Pharaohs official

building in Tahpanhes. Do this while the people of Judah are watching you.

¹⁰Then say to those who are watching you: This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: I will send for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to come here. He is my servant, and I will set his throne over these stones I have buried here. Nebuchadnezzar will spread his canopy above these stones.

¹¹He will come here and attack Egypt. He will bring death to those who are to die. He will bring captivity to those who are to be taken captive. And he will bring the sword to those who are to be killed with a sword.

¹²Nebuchadnezzar will start a fire in the temples of the false gods of Egypt. He will burn the temples and he will take the idols away. Shepherds pick the bugs and thorns off their clothes to make them clean. In the same way, Nebuchadnezzar will pick Egypt clean. Then he will safely leave Egypt.

¹³He will destroy the memorial stones that are in the temple of the Sun God in Egypt, and he will burn down the temples of the false gods of Egypt.

44 ¹Jeremiah received a message from the Lord for all the people of Judah living in the Egyptian towns of Migdol, Tahpanhes, Memphis, and in southern Egypt. This was the message:

²This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: You people saw the disasters that I brought on the city of Jerusalem and on all the towns of Judah. The towns are empty piles of stones today.

³They were destroyed because the people living in them did evil. They gave sacrifices to other gods, and that made me angry! Your people and your ancestors did not worship those gods in the past.

⁴I sent my servants, the prophets, to those people again and again. They spoke my message and said to the people, Don't do this terrible thing. I hate for you to worship idols.

⁵But they didn't listen to the prophets or pay attention to them. They didn't stop doing wicked things. They didn't stop making sacrifices to other gods.

⁶So I showed my anger against them. I punished the towns of Judah and the

streets of Jerusalem. My anger made Jerusalem and the towns of Judah the empty piles of stone they are today.

⁷ So this is what the LORD God All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Why are you hurting yourselves by continuing to worship idols? You are separating the men and women, the children and babies from the family of Judah. And so you leave yourselves without anyone left from the family of Judah.

⁸ Why do you people want to make me angry by making idols? Now you are living in Egypt. And now you are making me angry by offering sacrifices to the false gods of Egypt. You will destroy yourselves, and it will be your own fault. The people of all the other nations on the earth will say bad things about you and make fun of you.

⁹ Have you forgotten about the wicked things your ancestors did? And have you forgotten about the wicked things the kings and queens of Judah did? Have you forgotten about the wicked things you and your wives did in Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

¹⁰Even to this day the people of Judah have not made themselves humble. They have not shown any respect for me, and they have not followed my teachings. They have not obeyed the laws I gave you and your ancestors.

¹¹So this is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: I have decided to make terrible things happen to you. I will destroy the whole family of Judah.

¹²There were a few survivors from Judah. They came here to Egypt. But I will destroy the few survivors from the family of Judah. They will be killed with swords or die from hunger. The people of other nations will point at them and wish evil for them. People will be shocked and frightened by what has happened to them. The name Judah will become a curse word and an insult.

¹³I will punish those who have gone to live in Egypt. I will use war, hunger, and disease to punish them. I will punish them just as I punished the city of Jerusalem.

¹⁴Not one of the few survivors of Judah who have gone to live in Egypt will escape my punishment. None of them

will survive to come back to Judah. They want to come back to Judah and live there. But not one of them will go back to Judah, except a few people who escape.

¹⁵There were many people from Judah living in southern Egypt. Many of the women from Judah were meeting together in a large group and making sacrifices to other gods, and their husbands knew what they were doing. Those men said to Jeremiah,

¹⁶We will not listen to the message from the LORD that you spoke to us.

¹⁷We promised to make sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven, and we will do everything we promised. We will offer sacrifices and pour out drink offerings in worship to her. We did that in the past. Our ancestors, our kings, and our officials did that in the past. All of us did those things in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. When we worshiped the Queen of Heaven, we had plenty of food. We were successful. Nothing bad happened to us.

¹⁸But then we stopped making sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven, and

we stopped pouring out drink offerings to her. And we have had problems ever since we stopped worshiping her. Our people have been killed by war and hunger.

¹⁹Then the women spoke up and said to Jeremiah, Our husbands knew what we were doing. We had their permission to make sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven. We had their permission to pour out drink offerings to her. Our husbands also knew that we were making cakes that looked like her.

²⁰Then Jeremiah spoke to all the men and women who told him these things.

²¹He said, The LORD remembered that you made sacrifices in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. You and your ancestors, your kings, your officials, and the people of the land did that. He remembered what you had done and thought about it.

²²The LORD hated the terrible things you did, and he could not be patient with you any longer. So he made your country an empty desert. No one lives there now. Other people say bad things about that country.

²³The reason all those bad things happened to you is that you made sacrifices to other gods. You sinned against the LORD. You didn't obey him or follow his teachings or the laws he gave you. You didn't keep your part of the agreement.

²⁴Then Jeremiah spoke to all the men and women. He said, All you people of Judah who are now in Egypt, listen to this message from the LORD.

²⁵This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: You women did what you said you would do. You said, We will keep the promises we made. We promised to make sacrifices and pour out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven. So go ahead. Do what you promised you would do. Keep your promises.

²⁶But listen to this message from the LORD, all you people of Judah who are living in Egypt: I, the LORD, use my own great name to make this promise: None of the people of Judah who are now living in Egypt will ever again use my name to make promises. They will never again say, As surely as the Lord GOD lives .

²⁷I am watching over the people of Judah, but I am not watching over them to take care of them. I am watching over them to bring them harm. The people of Judah who live in Egypt will die from hunger or be killed in war until they are completely destroyed.

²⁸Some people of Judah will escape being killed by the sword. They will come back to Judah from Egypt. But only a few people of Judah will escape. Then the survivors of Judah who came to live in Egypt will know whose word proves to be true. They will know whether my word or their word came true.

²⁹I will give you people proof, says the LORD, that I will punish you here in Egypt. Then you will know for sure that my promises to harm you will really happen.

³⁰This will be your proof that I will do what I say. This is what the LORD says: Pharaoh Hophra is the king of Egypt. His enemies want to kill him. I will give Pharaoh Hophra to his enemies. Just as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah to his enemy Nebuchadnezzar, in the same

way I will give Pharaoh Hophra to his enemies.

45¹ In the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah, Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch son of Neriah. Baruch wrote down on a scroll everything Jeremiah said:

² Baruch, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to you:

³ You have been complaining about how bad things are for you. You say that I, the LORD, have given you pain and sorrow. You say you are worn out from your suffering and can't get any rest.

⁴ Baruch, this is what the LORD told me to say to you: Throughout Judah I will tear down everything I have built, and I will pull up all that I have planted.

⁵ I will cause everyone to suffer terrible things. So if you are making any great plans for yourself, Baruch, forget about them. You will be running for your life. But I promise that wherever you go, I will protect you from death. This is what the LORD says.

46¹ Jeremiah received the following messages from the LORD about many different nations.

²This message is about the nation of Egypt when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated the Egyptian army of Pharaoh Neco. This happened at Carchemish, a city by the Euphrates River, in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah. The Lord said,

³Get your large and small shields ready. March out for battle.

⁴Get the horses ready. Soldiers, get on your horses. Go to your places for battle. Put your helmets on. Sharpen your spears. Put your armor on.

⁵What do I see? That army is afraid. The soldiers are running away. Their brave soldiers are defeated. They run away in a hurry. They don't look back. There is danger all around. This is what the LORD says.

⁶Fast men cannot run away. Strong soldiers cannot escape. They will all stumble and fall. This will happen in the north, by the Euphrates River.

⁷Who is coming like the Nile River? Who is coming like that strong, fast river?

⁸It is Egypt that comes like the rising Nile River. It is Egypt that comes like

that strong, fast river. Egypt says, I will come and cover the earth. I will destroy the cities and the people in them.

⁹Horse soldiers, charge into battle. Chariot drivers, drive fast. March on, brave soldiers. Soldiers from Cush and Put, carry your shields. Soldiers from Lydia, use your bows.

¹⁰But on that day, the Lord GOD All-Powerful will win. He will give his enemies the punishment they deserve. His sword will kill until it is finished, until it has satisfied its thirst for blood. Yes, the Lord GOD All-Powerful will kill them as a sacrifice in the land of the north by the Euphrates River.

¹¹Egypt, go to Gilead and get some medicine. You will make up many medicines, but they will not help. You will not be healed.

¹²The nations will hear you crying. Your cries will be heard all over the earth. One brave soldier will run into another brave soldier. And both brave soldiers will fall down together.

¹³This is the message the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet about Nebuchadnezzar coming to attack Egypt.

¹⁴Announce this message in Egypt. Tell it in the city of Migdol. Tell it in Memphis and Tahpanhes. Get ready for war, because people all around you are being killed with swords.

¹⁵Egypt, your strong soldiers will be killed. They will not be able to stand because the LORD will push them down.

¹⁶They will stumble again and again. They will fall over each other. They will say, Get up; let's go back to our own people. Let us go back to our homeland. Our enemy is defeating us. We must get away.

¹⁷In their homelands, those soldiers will say, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is only a lot of noise. His time of glory is over.

¹⁸This message is from the King. The King is the LORD All-Powerful. I promise, as surely as I live, a powerful leader will come. He will be like Mount Tabor or Mount Carmel among smaller mountains.

¹⁹People of Egypt, pack your things. Get ready for captivity, because Memphis will be a ruined, empty land. Those cities will be destroyed, and no one will live there.

²⁰ Egypt is like a beautiful cow. But a stinging fly is coming from the north to attack her.

²¹ The hired soldiers in Egypt's army are like fat calves. They will all turn and run away. They will not stand strong against the attack. Their time of destruction is coming. They will soon be punished.

²² Egypt is like a snake hissing and trying to escape. The enemy comes closer and closer, and the Egyptian army is trying to slither away. The enemy will attack Egypt with axes, like men cutting down trees.

²³ This is what the LORD says: They will chop down Egypt's forest. There are many trees in that forest, but they will all be cut down. There are more enemy soldiers than locusts. There are so many soldiers that no one can count them.

²⁴ Egypt will be ashamed. The enemy from the north will defeat her.

²⁵ The LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says, Very soon I will punish Amon, the god of Thebes, and I will punish Pharaoh, Egypt, and her gods. I will punish the kings of Egypt, and I

will punish the people who depend on Pharaoh.

²⁶I will let all of them be defeated by their enemies their enemies want to kill them. I will give the people to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his servants. Long ago, Egypt lived in peace. And after all these times of trouble, Egypt will live in peace again. This is what the LORD says.

²⁷Jacob, my servant, do not be afraid. Do not be frightened, Israel. I will save you from those faraway places. I will save your children from the countries where they are captives. Jacob will have peace and safety again, and no one will make him afraid.

²⁸This is what the LORD says. Jacob, my servant, do not be afraid. I am with you. I sent you away to many different places. But I will not destroy you completely. But I will destroy all those nations. You must be punished for the bad things you did. So I will not let you escape your punishment. I will discipline you, but I will be fair.

47 ¹This is the message from the LORD that came to Jeremiah

the prophet about the Philistines. This message came before Pharaoh attacked the city of Gaza.

²This is what the LORD says: Look, the enemy is gathering in the north like rising water. They will come like a river spilling over its banks. They will cover the whole country like a flood. They will cover the towns and the people living in them. Everyone in the country will cry for help. Everyone will cry out in pain.

³They will hear the sound of running horses, the noisy chariots, the rumbling wheels. Fathers will not be able to protect their children. They will be too weak to help,

⁴because the time has come to destroy all the Philistines. The time has come to destroy all who help Tyre and Sidon. The LORD will destroy the Philistines, those who came from the island of Crete.

⁵The people from Gaza will be sad and shave their heads. The people from Ashkelon will be silenced. Survivors from the valley, how long will you cut yourselves?

⁶Sword of the LORD, you have not stopped. How long will you keep fighting?

Go back into your scabbard! Stop! Be still!

⁷ But how can the sword of the Lord rest? The LORD gave it a command. He commanded it to attack the city of Ashkelon and the seacoast.

48¹ This message is about the country of Moab. This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: It will be bad for Mount Nebo. Mount Nebo will be ruined. The town of Kiriathaim will be humbled. It will be captured. The strong place will be humbled. It will be shattered.

² Moab will not be praised again. Men in Heshbon will plan Moab's defeat. They will say, Come, let us put an end to that nation. Madmenah, you will also be silenced. The sword will chase you.

³ Listen to the cries from Horonaim. They are cries of much confusion and destruction.

⁴ Moab will be destroyed. Her little children will cry for help.

⁵ Moab's people go up the path to Luhith. They are crying bitterly as they go. On the road down to the town of Horonaim, cries of pain and suffering can be heard.

⁶Run away! Run for your lives! Run away like a weed blowing through the desert.

⁷You trust in the things you made and in your wealth, so you will be captured. The god Chemosh will be taken into captivity, and his priests and officials will be taken with him.

⁸The Destroyer will come against every town. Not one town will escape. The valley will be ruined. The high plain will be destroyed. The LORD said this would happen, so it will happen.

⁹Spread salt over the fields in Moab. The country will be an empty desert. Moab's towns will become empty. No one will live in them.

¹⁰Bad things will happen to those who don't obey the LORD and don't use their swords to kill those people.

¹¹Moab has never known trouble. Moab is like wine left to settle. Moab has never been poured from one jar to another. He has not been taken into captivity. So he tastes as he did before, and his smell has not changed.

¹²This is what the LORD says: But I will soon send men to pour you from your

jars. Then they will empty the jars and smash them to pieces.

¹³Then the people of Moab will be ashamed of their false god, Chemosh. They will be like the people of Israel who trusted that god in Bethel but were ashamed when he did not help them.

¹⁴You cannot say, We are good soldiers. We are brave men in battle.

¹⁵The enemy will attack Moab. The enemy will enter its towns and destroy them. Its best young men will be killed in the slaughter. This message is from the King. The Kings name is the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁶The end of Moab is near. Moab will soon be destroyed.

¹⁷All you who live around Moab should cry for that country. You know how famous Moab is. So cry for it. Say, The rulers power is broken. Moabs power and glory is gone.

¹⁸You people living in Dibon, come down from your place of honor. Sit on the ground in the dust, because the Destroyer is coming. And he will destroy your strong cities.

¹⁹You people living in Aroer, stand next to the road and watch. See the man running away. See that woman running away. Ask them what happened.

²⁰Moab will be ruined and filled with shame. Moab will cry and cry. Announce at the Arnon River that Moab is destroyed.

²¹People on the high plain have been punished. Judgment has come to the towns of Holon, Jahzah, and Mephaath.

²²Judgment has come to the towns of Dibon, Nebo, and Beth Diblathaim.

²³Judgment has come to the towns of Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul, and Beth Meon.

²⁴Judgment has come to the towns of Kerioth and Bozrah. Judgment has come to all the towns of Moab, far and near.

²⁵Moabs strength has been cut off. Its arm has been broken. This is what the LORD says.

²⁶The people of Moab thought they were greater than the LORD. So punish them until they act like a drunk, falling and rolling around in his vomit. Then people will make fun of them.

²⁷Moab, you made fun of Israel. Israel was caught by a gang of thieves. Every

time you spoke about Israel, you shook your head and acted as if you were better than Israel.

²⁸People in Moab, leave your towns. Go live among the rocks; be like a dove that makes its nest at the opening of a cave.

²⁹We have heard about Moab's pride. He was very proud. He thought he was important. He was always bragging. He was very, very proud.

³⁰The LORD says, I know Moab gets angry quickly and brags about himself, but his boasts are lies. He cannot do what he says.

³¹So I cry for Moab. I cry for everyone in Moab. I cry for the men from Kir Hareseth.

³²I cry with the people of Jazer for Jazer. Sibmah, in the past your vines spread all the way to the sea. They reached as far as the town of Jazer. But the Destroyer has taken your fruit and grapes.

³³Joy and happiness are gone from the large vineyards of Moab. I stopped the flow of wine from the winepresses. There is no singing and dancing from people

walking on the grapes to make wine.
There are no shouts of joy.

³⁴The people of the towns of Heshbon and Elealeh are crying. Their cry is heard even as far away as the town of Jahaz. Their cry is heard from the town of Zoar, as far away as the towns of Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah. Even the waters of Nimrim are dried up.

³⁵I will stop Moab from making burnt offerings on the high places. I will stop them from making sacrifices to their gods. This is what the LORD says.

³⁶I am very sad for Moab. My heart cries like the sad sound of a flute playing a funeral song. I am sad for the people from Kir Hareseth. Their money and riches have all been taken away.

³⁷Everyone has a shaved head. Everyones beard is cut off. Everyones hands are cut and bleeding. Everyone is wearing sackcloth around their waists.

³⁸People are crying for the dead everywhere in Moabon every housetop and in every public square. There is sadness because I have broken Moab like an empty jar. This is what the LORD says.

³⁹ Moab is shattered. The people are crying. Moab surrendered. Now Moab is ashamed. People make fun of Moab, but what happened fills them with fear.

⁴⁰ The LORD says, Look! An eagle is diving down from the sky. It is spreading its wings over Moab.

⁴¹ The towns of Moab will be captured. The strong hiding places will be defeated. At that time Moabs soldiers will be filled with fear, like a woman giving birth.

⁴² The nation of Moab will be destroyed, because they thought that they were more important than the LORD.

⁴³ This is what the LORD says: People of Moab, fear, deep holes, and traps wait for you.

⁴⁴ People will be afraid and run away, and they will fall into the deep holes. Anyone who climbs out of the deep holes will be caught in the traps. I will bring the year of punishment to Moab. This is what the LORD says.

⁴⁵ People have run from the powerful enemy. They ran to safety in the town of Heshbon. But a fire started in Heshbon. That fire started in Sihons town, and it

is destroying the leaders of Moab. It is destroying those proud people.

⁴⁶It will be bad for you, Moab.

Chemosh's people are being destroyed. Your sons and daughters are being taken away as prisoners and captives.

⁴⁷Moab's people will be taken away as captives. But in days to come, I will bring them back. This message is from the LORD. This ends the judgment on Moab.

49¹This message is about the Ammonites. This is what the LORD says: Ammonites, do you think that the people of Israel don't have children? Do you think there are no children to take the land when the parents die? Maybe that is why Milcom took God's land?

²The LORD says, The time will come in Rabbah of Ammon when people hear the sounds of battle. Rabbah of Ammon will be destroyed. It will be an empty hill covered with ruined buildings, and the towns around it will be burned. Those people forced the people of Israel to leave their own land. But later, Israel will force them to leave. This is what the LORD says.

³ People in Heshbon, cry because the town of Ai is destroyed! Women in Rabbah of Ammon, cry! Put on sackcloth and cry. Run to the city for safety, because the enemy will take away the god Milcom, with his priests and officials.

⁴ You brag about your strength, but you are losing your strength. You trust in your wealth to save you. You think no one would even think of attacking you.

⁵ But this is what the Lord GOD All-Powerful says: I will bring troubles to you from every side. You will all run away, and no one will be able to bring you together again.

⁶ The Ammonites will be taken away as captives. But the time will come when I will bring the Ammonites back. This message is from the LORD.

⁷ This message is about Edom. This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: Is there no more wisdom in Teman? Are the wise men of Edom not able to give good advice? Have they lost their wisdom?

⁸ You people living in Dedan, run away and hide, because I will punish Esau for the bad things he did.

⁹Workers pick grapes from grapevines, but they leave a few grapes on the plants. If thieves come at night, they don't take everything.

¹⁰But I will take everything from Esau. I will find all his hiding places. He will not be able to hide from me. His children, relatives, and neighbors will all die.

¹¹No one will be left to care for his children. His wives will have no one to depend on.

¹²This is what the LORD says: Some people don't deserve to be punished, but they suffer. But, Edom, you deserve to be punished, so you will really be punished. You will not escape the punishment you deserve. You will be punished.

¹³The LORD says, By my own power, I make this promise: I promise that the city of Bozrah will be destroyed. It will become a ruined pile of rocks. People will use it as an example when they ask for bad things to happen to other cities. People will insult that city, and all the towns around Bozrah will become ruins forever.

¹⁴I heard a message from the LORD: He sent this messenger to the nations.

This is the message: Gather your armies together! Get ready for battle! March against the nation of Edom!

¹⁵Edom, I will make you become unimportant. Everyone will hate you.

¹⁶Edom, you made other nations afraid, so you thought you were important. But your pride has fooled you. You live in caves, high on the cliff. Your home is high in the hills. But even if you build your home as high as an eagles nest, I will bring you down from there. This is what the LORD says.

¹⁷Edom will be destroyed. People will be shocked to see the destroyed cities. They will whistle from amazement at the destroyed cities.

¹⁸Edom will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns around them. No one will live there. This is what the LORD says.

¹⁹Sometimes a lion will come from the thick bushes near the Jordan River. And it will go into the fields where people put their sheep and cattle. I am like that lion. I will go to Edom. And I will frighten the people and make them run away. None of their young men will stop me.

No one is like me. No one will challenge me. None of their leaders will stand up against me.

²⁰ So listen to what the LORD has planned to do to the people of Edom. Listen to what he has decided to do to the people in Teman. The enemy will drag away the young kids of Edom's flock. Edom's pastures will be empty because of what they did.

²¹ At the sound of Edom's fall, the earth will shake. Their cry will be heard all the way to the Red Sea.

²² Just as an eagle flies high to see the animal it will attack, so the Lord will spread his wings over Bozrah. And Edom's soldiers will be filled with fear like a woman giving birth.

²³ This message is about the city of Damascus: The towns of Hamath and Arpad are afraid. They are afraid because they heard the bad news. They are discouraged. They are worried and afraid.

²⁴ The city of Damascus has become weak. The people want to run away. They are ready to panic. They are overcome

with fear and pain, like a woman giving birth.

²⁵ Damascus is a happy city. The people have not left that fun city yet.

²⁶ So the young men will die in the public squares of that city. All her soldiers will be killed at that time. This is what the LORD All-Powerful says.

²⁷ I will set the walls of Damascus on fire. The fire will completely burn up the strong forts of Ben-Hadad.

²⁸ This message is about the tribe of Kedar and the rulers of Hazor. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated them. This is what the LORD says: Go and attack the tribe of Kedar. Destroy the people of the East.

²⁹ Their tents and flocks will be taken away. Their tents and all their riches will be carried off. Their enemy will take away the camels. Men will shout this to them: Terrible things are happening all around us.

³⁰ Run away quickly! People in Hazor, find a good place to hide. This message is from the LORD. Nebuchadnezzar has made plans against you. He thought of a smart plan to defeat you.

³¹ There is a nation that feels so safe and secure that it does not have gates or fences to protect it. And no one lives near enough to help them. So attack that nation! says the LORD.

³² Their camels are there to be taken in battle. Their large herds of cattle will be yours. I will scatter them throughout the earth those people who cut their hair short. I will bring disaster on them from every direction. This message is from the LORD.

³³ Hazor will become a home for wild dogs, an empty desert forever. No one will live there. No one will stay in that place.

³⁴ Early in the time when Zedekiah was king of Judah, Jeremiah the prophet received a message from the LORD about the nation of Elam.

³⁵ The LORD All-Powerful says, I will break Elam's bow very soon. It is Elam's strongest weapon.

³⁶ I will bring the four winds against Elam. I will bring them from the four corners of the skies. I will send the people of Elam to every place on the earth where the four winds blow. Elam's

captives will be carried away to every nation.

³⁷ I will break Elam to pieces while their enemies are watching. I will break Elam in front of the people who want to kill them. I will bring terrible troubles to them. I will show them how angry I am. This message is from the LORD. I will send a sword to chase Elam. The sword will chase them until I have killed them all.

³⁸ I will show Elam that I am in control, and I will destroy its king and his officials. This message is from the LORD.

³⁹ But in the future I will make good things happen to Elam. This message is from the LORD.

50¹ This is the message the LORD spoke through the prophet Jeremiah about Babylon and its people.

² Announce this to all nations! Lift up a flag and announce the message! Speak the whole message and say, The nation of Babylon will be captured. The god Bel will be put to shame. The god Marduk will be very afraid. Babylons idols will be put to shame. Her gods will be filled with terror.

³A nation from the north will attack Babylon. That nation will make Babylon like an empty desert. No one will live there. All the people and animals will run away.

⁴The LORD says, At that time the people of Israel and Judah will come together. Together they will cry, and they will look for the LORD their God.

⁵They will ask how to go to Zion. They will start in that direction, And they will say, Come, let us join ourselves to the LORD. Lets make an agreement that will last forever. Lets make an agreement that we will never forget.

⁶My people have been like lost sheep. Their shepherds led them the wrong way and caused them to wander into the mountains and hills. They forgot where their resting place was.

⁷They were attacked by all who saw them. And their attackers said, We were not wrong to attack them because they sinned against the LORD. They should have stayed close to him, their true resting place. The LORD is the one their fathers trusted in.

⁸Run away from Babylon. Leave the land of the Babylonians. Be like the goats that lead the flock.

⁹I will bring many nations together from the north. This group of nations will get ready for war against Babylon. Babylon will be captured by people from the north. Those nations will shoot many arrows at Babylon. Their arrows will be like soldiers who don't come back from war with their hands empty.

¹⁰The enemy will take all the wealth from the Chaldeans. The soldiers will take all they want. This is what the LORD says.

¹¹Babylon, you are excited and happy. You took my land. You dance around like a young cow that got into the grain. Your laughter is like the happy sounds that horses make.

¹²Now your mother will be very ashamed. The woman who gave you birth will be embarrassed. Babylon will be the least important of all the nations. She will be an empty, dry desert.

¹³The LORD will show his anger, so no one will live there. Babylon will be completely empty. Everyone who passes

by Babylon will be afraid. They will shake their heads when they see how badly it has been destroyed.

¹⁴Prepare for war against Babylon. All you soldiers with bows, shoot your arrows at Babylon. Dont save any of your arrows. Babylon has sinned against the LORD.

¹⁵Soldiers around Babylon, shout the cry of victory! Babylon has surrendered! Her walls and towers have been pulled down! The LORD is giving her people the punishment they deserve. You nations should give Babylon the punishment she deserves. Do to her what she has done to other nations.

¹⁶Dont let the people from Babylon plant their crops. Dont let them gather the harvest. The soldiers of Babylon brought many prisoners to their city. Now the enemy soldiers have come, so the prisoners are going back home. They are running back to their own countries.

¹⁷Israel is like a flock of sheep that was scattered all over the country. Israel is like sheep that were chased away by lions. The first lion to attack was the king of Assyria. The last lion to crush

Israels bones was King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

¹⁸So this is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: I will soon punish the king of Babylon and his country as I punished the king of Assyria.

¹⁹I will bring Israel back to his own fields. He will eat food that grows on Mount Carmel and in the land of Bashan. He will eat and be full. He will eat on the hills in the lands of Ephraim and Gilead.

²⁰The LORD says, At that time people will try hard to find Israels guilt, but there will be no guilt. People will try to find Judahs sins, but no sins will be found. That is because I am saving a few survivors from Israel and Judah. And I am forgiving them for all their sins.

²¹The LORD says, Attack the country of Merathaim! Attack the people living in Pekod! Attack them! Kill them and destroy them completely! Do everything I commanded you!

²²The noise of battle can be heard all over the country. It is the noise of much destruction.

²³Babylon was called The Hammer of the Whole Earth. But now the Hammer

is shattered. Babylon is the most ruined of the nations.

²⁴ Babylon, I set a trap for you, and you were caught before you knew it. You fought against the LORD, so you were found and captured.

²⁵ The LORD has opened up his storeroom and brought out the weapons of his anger. The Lord GOD All-Powerful brought out those weapons because he has work to do in the land of the Chaldeans.

²⁶ Come against Babylon from far away. Break open the storehouses where she keeps her grain. Destroy Babylon completely. Don't leave anyone alive. Pile up her dead bodies like big piles of grain.

²⁷ Kill all the young men in Babylon. Let them be slaughtered like bulls. How terrible for them that their day of defeat has come! It is time for them to be punished.

²⁸ People are running out of Babylon. They are escaping from that country and coming to Zion. They are telling everyone the good news about what the Lord is doing. The LORD our God is giving Babylon the punishment it deserves. The

Lord is destroying Babylon, because it destroyed his Temple!

²⁹Call for the archers. Tell them to attack Babylon. Tell them to surround the city. Don't let anyone escape. Pay her back for the bad things she has done. Do to her what she has done to other nations. Babylon did not respect the LORD. Babylon was very rude to the Holy One of Israel. So punish Babylon.

³⁰Babylon's young men will be killed in the streets. All her soldiers will die on that day. This is what the LORD says.

³¹Babylon, you are too proud, and I am against you, says the Lord GOD All-Powerful. I am against you, and the time has come for you to be punished.

³²Proud Babylon will stumble and fall, and no one will help her get up. I will start a fire in her towns. That fire will completely burn up everyone around her.

³³This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: The people of Israel and Judah are slaves. The enemy took them, and the enemy will not let Israel go.

³⁴But God will get them back. His name is the LORD God All-Powerful. He will defend them very strongly. He will argue

their case so that he can let their land rest. But there will be no rest for those living in Babylon.

³⁵The LORD says, Sword, kill the people living in Babylon. Sword, kill the kings officials and the wise men of Babylon.

³⁶Sword, kill the priests of Babylon. They will be like fools. Sword, kill the soldiers of Babylon. They will be full of fear.

³⁷Sword, kill the horses and chariots of Babylon. Sword, kill all the soldiers hired from other countries. They will be like frightened women. Sword, destroy the treasures of Babylon. Those treasures will be taken away.

³⁸Sword, strike the waters of Babylon. Those waters will be dried up. Babylon has many, many idols. These idols show that the people of Babylon are foolish. So bad things will happen to them.

³⁹Babylon will never again be filled with people. Wild dogs, ostriches, and other desert animals will live there. But no one will live there ever again.

⁴⁰God completely destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns around them. In the same way, no one will live

in Babylon, and no one will ever go to live there. This is what the LORD says.

⁴¹ Look! There are people coming from the north. They come from a powerful nation. Many kings are coming together from all around the world.

⁴² Their armies have bows and spears. The soldiers are cruel. They have no mercy. The soldiers come riding on their horses; the sound is as loud as the roaring sea. They stand in their places, ready for battle. They are ready to attack you, city of Babylon.

⁴³ The king of Babylon heard about those armies, and he is paralyzed with fear. He is overcome with fear and pain, like a woman giving birth.

⁴⁴ Sometimes a lion will come from the thick bushes near the Jordan River. It will walk into the fields where people have their animals. I will be like that lion; I will chase Babylon from its land. Who should I choose to do this? There is no one like me. There is no one who can challenge me. No shepherd will come to chase me away. I will chase away the Babylonians.

⁴⁵ Listen to what the LORD has planned to do to Babylon. Listen to what he has decided to do to the Babylonians. I promise that an enemy will drag away the young kids of Babylons flock, and Babylon will become an empty pasture.

⁴⁶ Babylon will fall, and that fall will shake the earth. People in all nations will hear about the destruction of Babylon.

51 ¹ The LORD says, I will cause a powerful, destructive wind to blow against Babylon and the Babylonians.

² I will send foreigners to destroy Babylon like a wind that blows away chaff. They will strip everything from the land. Armies will surround the city, and there will be terrible destruction.

³ The Babylonian soldiers will not get to use their bows and arrows. They will not even put on their armor. Dont feel sorry for the soldiers of Babylon. Destroy her army completely!

⁴ Babylons soldiers will be killed in the land of the Chaldeans. They will be badly wounded in the streets of Babylon.

⁵ The LORD All-Powerful did not leave Israel and Judah alone, like a widow. No, they are guilty of leaving the Holy One

of Israel. Their God did not leave them. They left him!

⁶Run away from Babylon. Run to save your lives! Dont stay and be killed because of Babylons sins! It is time for the LORD to punish the Babylonians for the bad things they have done. Babylon will get the punishment that she deserves.

⁷Babylon was like a gold cup in the LORD'S hand. She made the whole world drunk. The nations drank Babylons wine, so they went crazy.

⁸But Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken. Cry for her! Get medicine for her pain, and maybe she can be healed.

⁹We tried to heal Babylon, but she cannot be healed. So let us leave her, and let each of us go to our own country. God in heaven will decide Babylons punishment. He will decide what will happen to Babylon.

¹⁰The LORD got even for us. Come, lets tell about that in Zion. Lets tell what the LORD our God has done.

¹¹Sharpen the arrows! Get your shields! The LORD has stirred up the kings of the Medes because he wants to

destroy Babylon. The army from Babylon destroyed his Temple in Jerusalem, so he will give them the punishment they deserve.

¹²Lift up a flag against the walls of Babylon. Bring more guards. Put the watchmen in their places. Get ready for a secret attack. The LORD will do what he has planned. He will do what he said he would do against the people of Babylon.

¹³Babylon, you live near much water. You are rich with treasures, but your end as a nation has come. It is time for you to be destroyed.

¹⁴The LORD All-Powerful used his name to make this promise: Babylon, I will fill you with so many enemy soldiers they will be like a cloud of locusts. They will win their war against you. They will stand over you shouting their victory cry.

¹⁵God used his great power and made the earth. He used his wisdom to build the world and his understanding to stretch out the skies.

¹⁶When he thunders, the waters in the skies roar. He sends clouds all over the earth. He sends lightning with the

rain. He brings out the wind from his storehouses.

¹⁷ But people are so stupid. They don't understand what God has done. Skilled workers make statues of false gods. Those statues are only false gods. They show how foolish those workers are. Those statues are not alive.

¹⁸ Those idols are worthless. People made them, and they are nothing but a joke. Their time of judgment will come, and those idols will be destroyed.

¹⁹ But God, who is Jacob's Portion, is not like those worthless statues. People didn't make God; God made his people. He made everything. His name is the LORD All-Powerful.

²⁰ The Lord says, Babylon, you are my club. I used you to smash nations. I used you to destroy kingdoms.

²¹ I used you to smash horse and rider. I used you to smash chariot and driver.

²² I used you to smash men and women. I used you to smash men, old and young. I used you to smash young men and young women.

²³ I used you to smash shepherds and flocks. I used you to smash farmers and

oxen. I used you to smash governors and important officials.

²⁴ But I will repay Babylonia and all the Babylonians for all the evil things they did to Zion. I will pay them back so that you can see it, Judah. This is what the LORD says.

²⁵ And the LORD says, Babylon, you are like a volcano that destroys the whole country. But I have turned against you, and I will turn you into a burned-out mountain.

²⁶ People will not take stones from Babylon to use as the foundation of a building. That is because they will not find any stones big enough for cornerstones. Your city will be a pile of broken rocks forever. This is what the LORD says.

²⁷ Lift up the war flag in the land! Blow the trumpet in all the nations! Prepare the nations for war against Babylon. Call these kingdoms to come fight against Babylon: Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz. Choose a commander to lead the army against her. Send so many horses that they are like a swarm of locusts.

²⁸Get the nations ready for battle against her. Get the kings of the Medes ready. Get their governors and all their important officials ready. Get all the countries they rule ready for battle against Babylon.

²⁹The land shakes and moves as if it is in pain. It will shake when the LORD does to Babylon what he plans to make the land of Babylon an empty desert, a place where no one will live.

³⁰Babylons soldiers have stopped fighting. They stay in their forts. Their strength is gone. They have become like frightened women. Babylons houses are burning. The bars of her gates are broken.

³¹One messenger follows another. Messenger follows messenger. They announce to the king of Babylon that his whole city has been captured.

³²The places where people cross the rivers have been captured. The swamplands are burning. All of Babylons soldiers are afraid.

³³This is what the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Babylon is like a threshing floor, where people beat the

grain at harvest time. And the time to beat Babylon is coming soon.

³⁴ King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed us in the past. In the past he hurt us. In the past he took our people away, and we became like an empty jar. He took the best we had. He was like a giant monster that ate everything until it was full. He took the best we had and then threw us away.

³⁵ Babylon did terrible things to hurt us. Now I want those things to happen to Babylon. The people living in Zion said, The people of Babylon are guilty of killing our people. Now they are being punished for the bad things they did. The city of Jerusalem said those things.

³⁶ So this is what the LORD says: I will defend you, Judah. I will make sure that Babylon is punished. I will dry up Babylons sea. And I will make her water springs become dry.

³⁷ Babylon will become a pile of ruined buildings, a place fit only for wild dogs. People will be shocked and shake their heads at what is left there. It will be a place where no one lives.

³⁸The people of Babylon are like roaring young lions. They growl like baby lions.

³⁹They are acting like powerful lions. I will give a party for them. I will make them drunk. They will laugh and have a good time, and then they will sleep forever. They will never wake up. This is what the LORD says.

⁴⁰Babylon will be like sheep, rams, and goats waiting to be killed. I will lead them to the slaughter.

⁴¹Sheshach will be defeated. The best and proudest country of the whole earth will be taken captive. People from other nations will look at Babylon, and what they see will make them afraid.

⁴²The sea will rise over Babylon. Its roaring waves will cover her.

⁴³Babylon will be like a dry, desert land. Its cities will be empty ruins. No one will live in those cities. No one will even travel through them.

⁴⁴I will punish the false god Bel in Babylon. I will make him vomit out the people he swallowed. The wall around Babylon will fall, and other nations will stop coming to Babylon.

⁴⁵ Come out of the city of Babylon, my people. Run to save your lives. Run from the LORD'S great anger.

⁴⁶ Don't be sad, my people. Rumors will spread, but don't be afraid. One rumor comes this year. Another rumor will come next year. There will be rumors about terrible fighting in the country. There will be rumors about rulers fighting against other rulers.

⁴⁷ The time will surely come when I will punish the false gods of Babylon, and the whole land of Babylon will be put to shame. There will be many dead people, lying in the streets of that city.

⁴⁸ Then heaven and earth and all that is in them will shout with joy about Babylon. They will shout because an army came from the north and fought against Babylon. This is what the LORD says.

⁴⁹ Babylon killed people from Israel. Babylon killed people from every place on earth. So Babylon must fall!

⁵⁰ You people escaped the swords. You must hurry and leave Babylon. Don't wait! You are in a faraway land, but

remember the LORD where you are and remember Jerusalem.

⁵¹ We people of Judah are ashamed. We have been insulted, because unfit strangers have gone into the holy places of the LORD'S Temple.

⁵² The LORD says, The time is coming, when I will punish the idols of Babylon. At that time wounded people will cry with pain everywhere in that country.

⁵³ Babylon might grow until she touches the sky. Babylon might make her forts strong, but I will send people to fight against that city. And they will destroy her. This is what the LORD says.

⁵⁴ We can hear people crying in Babylon. We hear the sound of people destroying things in the land of Babylon.

⁵⁵ The LORD will destroy Babylon very soon. He will stop the loud noises in that city. Enemies will come roaring in like ocean waves. People all around will hear that roar.

⁵⁶ The army will come and destroy Babylon. Its soldiers will be captured, and their bows will be broken, This will happen because the LORD punishes people for the bad things they do. He

gives them the full punishment they deserve.

⁵⁷ I will make Babylons wise men and important officials drunk. I will make the governors, officers, and soldiers drunk too. Then they will sleep forever. They will never wake up. This is what the King says. His name is the LORD All-Powerful.

⁵⁸ This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: Babylons thick, strong wall will be pulled down. Her high gates will be burned. The people of Babylon will work hard, but it will not help. They will get very tired trying to save the city. But they will only be fuel for the flames.

⁵⁹ This is the message that Jeremiah gave to the officer Seraiah son of Neriah. Neriah was the son of Mahseiah. Seraiah went to Babylon with King Zedekiah of Judah. This happened in the fourth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah. At that time Jeremiah gave this message to Seraiah, the officer.

⁶⁰ Jeremiah had written on a scroll all the terrible things that would happen to Babylon. He had written all these things about Babylon.

⁶¹ Jeremiah said to Seraiah, Seraiah, go to Babylon. Be sure to read this message so that all the people can hear you.

⁶² Then say, LORD, you have said that you will destroy this place, Babylon. You will destroy it so that no people or animals will live in it. This place will be an empty ruin forever.

⁶³ After you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates River.

⁶⁴ Then say, In the same way, Babylon will sink. Babylon will rise no more. It will sink because of the terrible things that I will make happen here. The words of Jeremiah end here.

52¹ Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king of Judah. He ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mothers name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah. Hamutals family was from the town of Libnah.

² Zedekiah did evil things, just as King Jehoiakim had done. The LORD did not like Zedekiah doing those evil things.

³ Terrible things happened to the people of Jerusalem and Judah because the LORD was angry with them. Finally,

he threw them out of his presence. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

⁴So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's rule, on the tenth day of the tenth month, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. The army of Babylon set up their camp outside of Jerusalem. Then they built ramps all around the city walls so that they could get over the walls.

⁵The city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the army of Babylon until the eleventh year that Zedekiah was king.

⁶By the ninth day of the fourth month of that year, the hunger in the city was very bad. There was no food left for the people in the city to eat.

⁷On that day the army of Babylon broke into Jerusalem. The soldiers of Jerusalem ran away. They left the city at night. They went through the gate between the two walls. That gate was near the king's garden. Even though the army of Babylon had surrounded the city, the soldiers of Jerusalem still ran away toward the desert.

⁸But the Babylonian army chased King Zedekiah and caught him on the plains of Jericho. All of Zedekiah's soldiers ran away.

⁹The army of Babylon captured King Zedekiah and took him to the king of Babylon who was at the city of Riblah, in the land of Hamath. At Riblah the king of Babylon announced his judgment on King Zedekiah.

¹⁰There at the town of Riblah, the king of Babylon killed Zedekiah's sons while Zedekiah watched. The king of Babylon also killed all the royal officials of Judah.

¹¹Then the king of Babylon tore out Zedekiah's eyes. He put bronze chains on him and took him to Babylon. In Babylon he put Zedekiah into prison. He stayed in prison until the day he died.

¹²Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king of Babylon's special guard. He was one of the king's most important officials while at Jerusalem. He came to Jerusalem on the tenth day of the fifth month, in the 19th year that Nebuchadnezzar was king.

¹³Nebuzaradan burned the LORD'S Temple, the king's palace, and every

important building in Jerusalem, as well as all the houses.

¹⁴All the Babylonian soldiers that were with the commander broke down the walls around Jerusalem.

¹⁵Commander Nebuzaradan took the people who were still in Jerusalem and those who had surrendered earlier and made them captives. He took them and the skilled craftsmen who were left in Jerusalem as captives to Babylon.

¹⁶But Nebuzaradan left some of the poorest people behind in the land. He left them to work in the vineyards and the fields.

¹⁷The Babylonian army broke up the bronze columns of the LORD'S Temple. They also broke up the stands and the bronze tank that were in the LORD'S Temple. They carried all that bronze to Babylon.

¹⁸The army of Babylon also took these things from the Temple: pots, shovels, lamp snuffers, large bowls, pans, and all the bronze things that were used in the Temple service.

¹⁹The commander of the kings special guards took these things away: basins,

firepans, large bowls, pots, lampstands, pans, and bowls used for drink offerings. He took everything that was made of gold or silver.

²⁰The two pillars, the Sea and the twelve bronze bulls under it, and the moveable stands were very heavy. King Solomon had made those things for the LORD'S Temple. The bronze that those things were made of was so heavy it could not be weighed.

²¹Each of the bronze pillars was 31 feet tall. Each pillar was almost 21 feet around. Each pillar was hollow. The wall of each pillar was 3 inches thick.

²²The bronze capital on top of the first pillar was over 5 feet tall. It was decorated with a net design and bronze pomegranates all around it. The other pillar had pomegranates too. It was like the first pillar.

²³There were 96 pomegranates on the sides of the pillars. All together, there were 100 pomegranates above the net design that went around the pillars.

²⁴The commander of the kings special guards took Seraiah the high priest and Zephaniah the next highest priest as

prisoners. The three doorkeepers were also taken as prisoners.

²⁵The commander of the kings special guards also took the officer in charge of the fighting men. He also took seven of the kings advisors as prisoners. They were still there in Jerusalem. He also took the scribe who was in charge of putting people in the army. And he took 60 of the ordinary people who were there in the city.

²⁶Nebuzaradan, the commander, took all these officials and brought them to the king of Babylon. The king was at the city of Riblah in the country of Hamath. There at Riblah the king ordered all of them to be killed. So the people of Judah were taken from their country.

²⁷ (52: 26)

²⁸This is how many people Nebuchadnezzar carried into captivity: In Nebuchadnezzars 7th year as king of Babylon, 3023 people were taken from Judah.

²⁹In Nebuchadnezzars 18th year as king of Babylon, 832 people were taken from Jerusalem.

³⁰In Nebuchadnezzar's 23rd year as king, Nebuzaradan took 745 people of Judah into captivity. Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king's special guards. In all, 4600 people were taken captive.

³¹King Jehoiachin of Judah was in prison in Babylon for 37 years. In the 37th year of his imprisonment, King Evil Merodach of Babylon was very kind to Jehoiachin. He let Jehoiachin out of prison in that year. This was the same year that Evil Merodach became king of Babylon. He set Jehoiachin free from prison on the 25th day of the 12th month.

³²Evil Merodach spoke kindly to Jehoiachin. He gave Jehoiachin a place of honor higher than the other kings who were with him in Babylon.

³³So Jehoiachin took his prison clothes off. For the rest of his life, he ate regularly at the king's table.

³⁴Every day the king of Babylon paid Jehoiachin enough to take care of his needs until the day Jehoiachin died.

Lamentations

1 ¹ Jerusalem was once a city full of people, but now the city is so empty. She was one of the greatest cities in the world, but now she is like a poor widow. She was once a princess among cities, but now she has been made a slave.

² She cries bitterly in the night. Her tears are on her cheeks. She has no one to comfort her. Many nations were friendly to her, but not one of them comforts her now. All her friends have turned their backs on her and have become her enemies.

³ Judah suffered very much, and then she was taken into captivity. She lives among other nations but has found no rest. The people who chased her caught her where there was no way out.

⁴ The roads to Zion are very sad, because no one comes to Zion for the festivals anymore. All of Zions gates have been destroyed; all her priests groan in sorrow. Zions young women

have been taken away, and all this made Zion sad.

⁵Jerusalem's enemies have won. Her enemies have been successful. This happened because the LORD punished her. He punished Jerusalem for her many sins. Her children have gone away. Their enemies captured them and took them away.

⁶Daughter Zion has lost her beauty. Her princes are like starving deer looking for grass. They are too weak to run away from those who chase them.

⁷Now that Jerusalem is suffering and homeless, she thinks about her past. She remembers all the nice things she had long ago. But her people were captured by the enemy, and there was no one to help her. When her enemies saw her, they laughed, because she was destroyed.

⁸Jerusalem sinned very badly. Because Jerusalem sinned, she became a ruined city that people shake their heads about. In the past people respected her. But now they hate her, because they abused her. Jerusalem groaned and turned away.

⁹Jerusalem's skirts were dirty. She gave no thought to what would become of her. Her fall was amazing. She had no one to comfort her. She says, LORD, see how I am hurt! See how my enemy thinks he is so great!

¹⁰The enemy stretched out his hand. He took all her nice things. In fact, she saw the foreign nations go inside her Temple. And you said those people could not join in our assembly!

¹¹All the people of Jerusalem are groaning. All of her people are looking for food. They are giving away all their nice things for food to stay alive. Jerusalem says, Look, LORD. Look at me! See how people hate me.

¹²All you who pass by on the road, you don't seem to care. But look at me and see. Is there any pain like my pain? Is there any pain like the pain that has come to me? Is there any pain like the pain that the LORD has punished me with? He has punished me on the day of his great anger.

¹³The Lord sent fire from above that went down into my bones. He stretched out a net for my feet. He turned me all

the way around. He made me into a wasteland. I am sick all day.

¹⁴My sins were tied up like a yoke. My sins were tied up in the Lords hands. His yoke is on my neck. He has made me weak. He has given me to those who I cannot stand up against.

¹⁵The Lord turned away all my powerful men who were inside my walls. Then he brought an army against me. He brought them to kill my young soldiers. The Lord has trampled his dearest city like grapes in a winepress.

¹⁶I cry about all these things. Tears are flowing down my cheeks. There is no one near to comfort me. There is no one who can make me feel better. My children are like a wasteland, because the enemy won.

¹⁷Zion spread out her hands. There was no one to comfort her. The LORD had given orders to Jacobs enemies. He ordered them to surround the city. Jerusalem has become a dirty rag that her enemies threw away.

¹⁸Now Jerusalem says, I refused to listen to the LORD, so he is right for doing these things. So listen, all you people!

Look at my pain! My young women and men have gone into captivity.

¹⁹I called out to my lovers, but they tricked me. My priests and my elders have died in the city. They were looking for food for themselves. They wanted to keep themselves alive.

²⁰Look at me, LORD. I am in distress! I am upset, as if my heart turned upside down inside of me. I feel this way because I have been so stubborn. Out in the streets, I lost my children to the swords. Inside, it is like death.

²¹Listen to me, I am groaning. I have no one to comfort me. All my enemies have heard of my trouble. They are happy that you did this to me. You said there would be a time of punishment. You said you would punish my enemies. Now do what you said. Let my enemies be like I am now.

²²Look how evil my enemies are! Then you can treat them the same way you treated me because of all my sins. Do this because I am groaning again and again. Do this because my heart is sick.

2¹ Look how the Lord has covered daughter Zion with the cloud of his

anger. He has thrown her, the glory of Israel, from the sky to the ground. In his anger he showed no care even for the Temple where he rests his feet.

²The Lord destroyed the houses of Jacobs people without mercy. In his anger he tore down the strong walls of Judah. He threw that kingdom and its rulers down to the ground in shame.

³He was so angry that he took away the strength of Israel. He refused to help them when the enemy came. He came against the people of Jacob like a flaming fire that burns everything around it.

⁴He bent his bow like an enemy. With his right hand he pulled back the arrow. He killed all our finest young men. He poured out his anger like fire on the tents of Zion.

⁵Like an enemy the Lord has swallowed up Israel. He has destroyed her palaces and strong walls. He has caused great sadness and crying for the dead in Judah.

⁶He tore up the place where he lived like someone plowing up a garden. He ruined the place where the people came together to worship him. The LORD

has made people forget the special assemblies and special days of rest in Zion. He rejected the king and the priests. He was angry and rejected them.

⁷He rejected his altar, and he left his holy place of worship. He let the enemy pull down the walls of the palaces of Jerusalem. The enemy shouted with joy in the LORD'S Temple. They made noise as though it were a festival.

⁸The LORD planned to destroy the wall of Jerusalem. He marked it with a measuring line. He didnt stop himself from destroying it. He made all the walls cry out in sadness. Together they wasted away.

⁹Jerusalem's gates have sunk into the ground. The bars on her gates are completely destroyed. Her king and princes have been taken to other nations. The teaching of the law has stopped. And her prophets no longer receive visions from the LORD.

¹⁰The elders of Zion sit on the ground. They sit on the ground and are quiet. They pour dust on their heads. They put on sackcloth. The young women of

Jerusalem bow their heads to the ground in sorrow.

¹¹ My eyes are worn out with tears, and my insides are upset. My heart feels like it has been poured on the ground; I feel this way because of the destruction of my people. Children and babies are fainting in the public squares of the city.

¹² They ask their mothers, Where is the bread and wine? as they pour out their life in their mothers laps.

¹³ My dear Jerusalem, what can I say about you? What can I compare you to? What can I say you are like? How can I comfort you, city of Zion? You have been hurt much too badly for anyone to heal.

¹⁴ Your prophets saw visions for you, but their visions were only worthless lies. They didnt speak against your sins. They didnt try to make things better. They spoke messages for you, but they were false messages that fooled you.

¹⁵ Those who pass by on the road clap their hands and laugh at you. They make fun of Jerusalem, shaking their heads at the sight of her. They ask, Is this the city that people called The Most Beautiful City and The Joy of all the Earth?

¹⁶All your enemies laugh at you. They whistle and grind their teeth at you. They say, We have swallowed them up! This is the day we were hoping for. We have finally seen this happen!

¹⁷The LORD did what he planned to do. He did what he said he would do. He did what he commanded a long time ago. He destroyed, and he had no pity. He made your enemies happy because of what happened to you. He made your enemies strong.

¹⁸Cry out with all your heart to the Lord! Jerusalem, let tears roll down your walls. Let your tears flow like a river day and night. Don't stop crying or let your eyes dry.

¹⁹Get up throughout the night and cry for help. Let your sorrow pour out before the Lord like water. Lift up your hands in prayer to him. Ask him to let your children live. They are starving to death on every street corner.

²⁰Look at us, LORD! Have you ever treated anyone else so badly? Is it right for women to eat their own babies, the children they have cared for? Should

priests and prophets be killed in the Temple of the Lord?

²¹ Young men and old men lie on the ground in the streets of the city. My young women and young men have been killed by the sword. You killed them on the day of your anger. You killed them without mercy!

²² You invited terror to come to me from all around. You invited terror as though you were inviting it to a festival. No one escaped on the day of the LORD'S anger. My enemy killed the people who I raised and brought up.

3¹ I am a man who has seen much trouble. God beat us with a stick, and I saw it happen.

² He led and brought me into darkness, not light.

³ He turned his hand against me. He did this again and again, all day.

⁴ He wore out my flesh and skin. He broke my bones.

⁵ He built up bitterness and trouble against me. He surrounded me with bitterness and trouble.

⁶ He put me in the dark, like someone who died long ago.

⁷ He shut me in, so I could not get out.
He put heavy chains on me.

⁸ Even when I cry out and ask for help,
he does not listen to my prayer.

⁹ He has blocked up my path with
stones. He has made my path crooked.

¹⁰ He is like a bear about to attack me,
like a lion that is in a hiding place.

¹¹ He led me off my path. He tore me to
pieces and ruined me.

¹² He made his bow ready. He made me
the target for his arrows.

¹³ He shot me in the stomach with his
arrows.

¹⁴ I have become a joke to all my
people. All day long they sing songs
about me and make fun of me.

¹⁵ He gave me this poison to drink. He
filled me with this bitter drink.

¹⁶ He pushed my teeth into rocky
ground. He pushed me into the dirt.

¹⁷ I thought I would never have peace
again. I forgot about good things.

¹⁸ I said to myself, I no longer have any
hope that the LORD will help me.

¹⁹ Remember, I am very sad, and I have
no home. Remember the bitter poison
that you gave me.

²⁰I remember well all my troubles, and I am very sad.

²¹But then I think about this, and I have hope:

²²We are still alive because the LORD'S faithful love never ends.

²³Every morning he shows it in new ways! You are so very true and loyal!

²⁴I say to myself, The LORD is my God, and I trust him.

²⁵The LORD is good to those who wait for him. He is good to those who look for him.

²⁶It is good to wait quietly for the LORD to save them.

²⁷It is good for a man to wear his yoke from the time he is young.

²⁸He should sit alone and be quiet when the Lord puts his yoke on him.

²⁹He should bow down to the Lord. Maybe there is still hope.

³⁰He should turn his cheek to the one who hits him and let people insult him.

³¹He should remember that the Lord does not reject people forever.

³²When he punishes, he also has mercy. He has mercy because of his great love and kindness.

³³ He does not enjoy causing people pain. He does not like to make anyone unhappy.

³⁴ He does not like any prisoner on earth to be trampled down.

³⁵ He does not like anyone to be unfair to another person. Some people will do such things right in front of God Most High.

³⁶ He does not like anyone to cheat another person. He does not like any of these things.

³⁷ No one can say something and make it happen, unless the Lord orders it.

³⁸ God Most High commands both good and bad things to happen.

³⁹ No one alive can complain when he punishes them for their sins.

⁴⁰ Let us check and see what we have done. Then let us turn back to the LORD.

⁴¹ Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to the God of heaven.

⁴² Let us say to him, We have sinned and have been stubborn. Because of this, you have not forgiven us.

⁴³ You wrapped yourself with anger. You chased us. You killed us without mercy!

⁴⁴You wrapped yourself in a cloud so that no prayer could get through.

⁴⁵You made us like garbage and dirt to the other nations.

⁴⁶All of our enemies speak angrily against us.

⁴⁷We have been frightened. We have fallen into a pit. We have been badly hurt. We have been broken.

⁴⁸My eyes flow with streams of tears. I cry because of the destruction of my people.

⁴⁹My eyes will flow without stopping. I will keep on crying.

⁵⁰I will continue to cry until you look down and see us, LORD! I will continue to cry until you see us from heaven.

⁵¹My eyes make me sad, when I see what happened to the young women in my city.

⁵²For no reason, my enemies hunted me like a bird.

⁵³They threw me alive into a pit and then threw stones at me.

⁵⁴Water came up over my head. I said to myself, I am finished.

⁵⁵LORD, I called your name from the bottom of the pit.

⁵⁶You heard my voice. You didnt close your ears. You didnt refuse to rescue me.

⁵⁷You came to me on the day that I called out to you. You said to me, Dont be afraid.

⁵⁸You defended me and bought me back to life.

⁵⁹LORD, you have seen my trouble. Now judge my case for me.

⁶⁰You have seen how my enemies have hurt me. You have seen all the evil plans that they made against me.

⁶¹You heard them insult me, LORD. You have heard all the evil plans that they made against me.

⁶²The words and the thoughts of my enemies are against me all the time

⁶³when they sit down and when they stand up. Look how they make fun of me!

⁶⁴Give them back what they deserve, LORD. Pay them back for what they have done.

⁶⁵Make them stubborn and then curse them.

⁶⁶Chase them in anger and destroy them. Wipe them off the face of the earth, LORD!

4¹ See how the gold has turned dark, how the pure gold has changed. There are jewels scattered all around at every street corner.

²The precious people of Zion were once worth more than gold. But now they are treated like something worthless, like the cheap clay jars a potter makes.

³Even a wild dog feeds her babies. Even the jackal lets her pups suck at her breast. But my people neglect their young, like ostriches in the desert.

⁴Babies are so thirsty their tongues stick to the roof of their mouths. Young children ask for bread, but no one gives them any.

⁵Those who ate rich food are now dying in the streets. Those who grew up wearing nice red clothes now pick through garbage piles.

⁶The sin of my people was very great greater than the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. Those cities were destroyed suddenly, but not by any human hand.

⁷ Some of the men of Judah were dedicated to God in a special way. They were purer than snow, whiter than milk. Their skin glowed with color like coral, and their beards shined like sapphire.

⁸ But now their faces are blacker than soot. No one even recognizes them in the streets. Their skin is wrinkled over their bones. Their skin is like wood.

⁹ It was better for those who were killed by the sword than for those who died of hunger. Those starving people were sad and hurt. They died because they got no food from the field.

¹⁰ Then even nice women cooked their own children. The children were food for their mothers. This happened when my people were destroyed.

¹¹ The LORD used all of his anger. He poured out all his anger. He made a fire in Zion that burned it down to the foundations.

¹² The kings of the earth could not believe what had happened. The people of the world could not believe what had happened. They could not believe that enemies would be able to come through the city gates of Jerusalem.

¹³This happened because the prophets of Jerusalem sinned. This happened because the priests of Jerusalem did evil things. They were shedding the blood of good people in the city of Jerusalem.

¹⁴The prophets and priests walked around like blind men in the streets. They had become dirty with blood. No one could even touch their clothes because they were dirty.

¹⁵People shouted, Go away! Go away! Dont touch us. They wandered around and had no home. People in other nations said, We dont want them to live with us.

¹⁶The LORD himself destroyed them. He didnt look after them anymore. He didnt respect the priests. He was not friendly to the elders of Judah.

¹⁷We have worn out our eyes looking for help, but no help comes. We kept on looking for a nation to save us. We kept watch from our watchtower, but no nation came to us.

¹⁸Our enemies hunted us all the time. We could not even go out into the streets. Our end came near. Our time was up. Our end came!

¹⁹The men who chased us were faster than eagles in the sky. They chased us into the mountains. They hid in the desert to catch us.

²⁰The king was very important to us. He was like the breath we breathe, but he was trapped by them. The LORD himself chose the king, and we said this about the king, We will live in his shadow. He protects us from the nations.

²¹Be happy, people of Edom. Be happy, you who live in the land of Uz. But remember, the cup of the Lords anger will come around to you too. When you drink from that cup, you will get drunk and strip off all your clothes.

²²Your punishment is complete, Zion. You will not go into captivity again. But the Lord will punish your sins, people of Edom. He will uncover your sins.

5¹Remember, LORD, what happened to us. Look and see our shame.

²Our land has been turned over to strangers. Our houses have been given to foreigners.

³We have become orphans. We have no father. Our mothers have become like widows.

⁴We have to buy the water that we drink. We have to pay for the wood that we use.

⁵We are forced to wear a yoke on our necks. We get tired, and we have no rest.

⁶We made an agreement with Egypt. We also made an agreement with Assyria to get enough bread.

⁷Our ancestors sinned against you, and now they are dead. And we are suffering because of their sins.

⁸Slaves have become our rulers. No one can save us from them.

⁹We risk our lives to get food. There are men in the desert with swords.

¹⁰Our skin is hot like an oven. We have a high fever because of our hunger.

¹¹The enemy raped the women of Zion. They raped the women in the cities of Judah.

¹²The enemy hanged our princes. They didnt honor our elders.

¹³The enemy made our young men grind grain at the mill. Our young men stumbled under loads of wood.

¹⁴The elders no longer sit at the gates of the city. The young men no longer make music.

¹⁵We have no more joy in our hearts. Our dancing has changed to crying for the dead.

¹⁶The crown has fallen from our head. Things have gone bad for us because we sinned.

¹⁷For this reason our hearts have become sick, and our eyes cannot see clearly.

¹⁸Mount Zion is a wasteland. Foxes run around on Mount Zion.

¹⁹But you rule forever, LORD. Your kingly chair lasts forever and ever.

²⁰You seem to have forgotten us forever. You seem to have left us alone for such a long time.

²¹Bring us back to you, LORD. We will gladly come back to you. Make our lives as they were before.

²²You were very angry with us. Have you completely rejected us?

Ezekiel

1 ¹ I am the priest, Ezekiel son of Buzzi. I was in exile by the Kebar Canal in Babylonia when the skies opened up, and I saw visions of God. This was on the fifth day of the fourth month of the thirtieth year. (This was the fifth year of King Jehoiachins exile. The word of the LORD came to Ezekiel. The power of the LORD came over him at that place.)

² (1: 1)

³ (1: 1)

⁴ I was watching a big storm come in from the north. It was a big cloud with a strong wind, and there was fire flashing from it. Light was shining out all around it. It looked like hot metal glowing in a fire.

⁵ Inside the cloud, there were four living beings that looked like people.

⁶ But each one of them had four faces and four wings.

⁷ Their legs were straight. Their feet looked like calves feet, and they sparkled like polished brass.

⁸Under their wings were human arms. There were four living beings. Each living being had four faces and four wings.

⁹The wings touched each other. The living beings did not turn when they moved. They went in the direction they were looking.

¹⁰Each living being had four faces. In the front they each had a mans face. There was a lions face on the right side and a bulls face on the left side. There was an eagles face on the back.

¹¹Their wings were spread out over them. With two of the wings each living being reached out to touch the one near it, and with the other two wings it covered its body.

¹²Each living being went in the direction it was looking. They went wherever the spirit caused them to go, but they did not turn when they moved.

¹³That is what the living beings looked like. Inside the area between the living beings, there was something that looked like burning coals of fire. This fire was like small torches that kept moving around among the living beings. The fire

glowed brightly and lightning flashed from it.

¹⁴The living beings ran back and forth as fast as lightning.

¹⁵I was looking at the living beings when I noticed four wheels that touched the ground. There was one wheel by each living being. All the wheels looked the same. The wheels looked as if they were made from a clear, yellow jewel. They looked like there was a wheel inside a wheel.

¹⁶(1:15)

¹⁷They could turn to move in any direction. But the living beings did not turn when they moved.

¹⁸The rims of the wheels were tall and frightening. There were eyes all over the rims of all four wheels.

¹⁹The wheels always moved with the living beings. If the living beings went up into the air, the wheels went with them.

²⁰They went wherever the spirit wanted them to go, and the wheels went with them, because the power that moved the living being was in the wheels.

²¹So if the living beings moved, the wheels moved. If the living beings

stopped, the wheels stopped. If the wheels went into the air, the living beings went with them, because the spirit was in the wheels.

²²There was an amazing thing over the heads of the living beings. It was like a bowl turned upside down, and the bowl was clear like crystal.

²³Under this bowl, each living being had wings reaching out to the one next to it. Two wings spread out one way and two wings spread out the other way, covering its body.

²⁴Then I heard the wings. Every time the living beings moved, their wings made a very loud noise like a lot of water rushing by. They were loud like the Lord All-Powerful. They were as loud as an army or a crowd of people. When the living beings stopped moving, they put their wings down by their side.

²⁵The living beings stopped moving and lowered their wings. Then there was another loud sound that came from above the bowl over their heads.

²⁶There was something that looked like a throne on top of the bowl. It was blue like sapphire. There was also something

that looked like a man sitting on the throne.

²⁷ I looked at him from his waist up. He looked like hot metal with fire all around him. I looked at him from his waist down. It looked like fire with a glow that was shining all around him.

²⁸ The light shining around him was like a rainbow in a cloud. It was the Glory of the LORD. As soon as I saw that, I fell to the ground. I bowed with my face to the ground, and then I heard a voice speaking to me.

2¹ The voice said, Son of man, stand up and I will speak with you.

² Then the Spirit came into me and lifted me up on my feet, and I listened to the one who spoke to me.

³ He said, Son of man, I am sending you to speak to the family of Israel. Those people and their ancestors turned against me many times. They have sinned against me many times and they are still sinning against me today.

⁴ I am sending you to speak to them, but they are very stubborn. They are very hardheaded, but you must speak

to them. You must say, This is what the Lord GOD says.

⁵They are people who refuse to obey, so they may not listen to you. But even if they dont stop sinning, at least they will know that there is a prophet living among them.

⁶Son of man, dont be afraid of the people or what they say. It is true that they will turn against you and try to hurt you. Their words will be sharp like thorns and will sting like scorpions. But dont be afraid of what they say. They are people who refuse to obey, but dont be afraid of them.

⁷You must tell them what I say, whether they listen or not. They are people who usually refuse to listen!

⁸Son of man, listen to what I am telling you. Dont turn against me like those people who refuse to obey. Now open your mouth to receive the words I will give you to speak.

⁹Then I saw an arm reach out toward me. It was holding a scroll with words written on it.

¹⁰It rolled the scroll open in front of me. Words were on the front and on the

back of the scroll. There were all kinds of sad songs, sad stories, and warnings.

3¹ God said to me, Son of man, eat what you see. Eat this scroll, and then go tell these things to the family of Israel.

² So I opened my mouth and he put the scroll into my mouth.

³ Then God said, Son of man, I am giving you this scroll. Swallow it! Let that scroll fill your body. So I ate the scroll. It was as sweet as honey in my mouth.

⁴ Then God said to me, Son of man, go to the family of Israel. Speak my words to them.

⁵ I am not sending you to some foreigners you cannot understand. You don't have to learn another language. I am sending you to the family of Israel.

⁶ I am not sending you to many different countries where people speak languages you cannot understand. If you went to those people and spoke to them, they would listen to you. But you will not have to learn those hard languages.

⁷ No, I am sending you to the family of Israel. Only, these people have hard heads they are very stubborn! And the

people of Israel will refuse to listen to you. They don't want to listen to me.

⁸But I will make you just as stubborn as they are, and your head just as hard.

⁹A diamond is harder than flint rock. In the same way, you will be more stubborn than they are, and your head will be harder. Then you will not be afraid of them or those who always turn against me.

¹⁰Then God said to me, Son of man, listen to every word I say to you and remember them.

¹¹Then go to all of your people in exile and tell them, This is what the Lord GOD says. They will not listen, and they will not stop sinning, but you must still tell them my message.

¹²Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard a voice behind me. It was very loud, like thunder. It said, Blessed is the Glory of the LORD!

¹³Then the wings of the living beings began moving. The wings made a very loud noise as they touched each other, and the wheels in front of them began making a noise as loud as thunder.

¹⁴The Spirit lifted me and took me away. I was very sad and upset in my spirit, but I felt the LORD'S power in me.

¹⁵I went to the people of Israel who were forced to live in Tel Aviv by the Kebar Canal. I sat there among them for seven days, shocked and silent.

¹⁶After seven days, the LORD spoke to me and said,

¹⁷Son of man, I am making you a watchman for Israel. I will tell you about bad things that will happen to them, and you must warn Israel.

¹⁸If I say, These evil people will die! Then you must warn them. You must tell them to change their lives and stop doing evil. If you don't warn them, they will die because they sinned. But I will also make you responsible for their death, because you did not go to them and save their lives.

¹⁹If you warn them and tell them to change their lives and stop doing evil, but they refuse to listen, they will die because they sinned. But since you warned them, you will have saved your own life.

²⁰If good people stop being good and begin to do evil, and I send something that makes them stumble and sin, they will die because they sinned. But since you did not warn them and remind them of the good things they had done, I will make you responsible for their death.

²¹But if you warn good people and tell them to stop sinning, and they listen to your warning and stop sinning, they will not die. In that way you will have saved your own life.

²²The LORD'S power came to me. He said to me, Get up and go to the valley. I will speak to you in that place.

²³So I got up and went out to the valley. The Glory of the LORD was there as I had seen it by the Kebar Canal. So I bowed with my face to the ground.

²⁴But the Spirit came into me and lifted me up on my feet. He said to me, Go home and lock yourself in your house.

²⁵Son of man, people will come with ropes and tie you up. They will not let you go out among the people.

²⁶I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth you will not be able to talk. So they will not have anyone to

teach them that they are doing wrong, because they are always turning against me.

²⁷ But I will talk to you, and then I will allow you to speak. But you must say to them, This is what the Lord GOD says. If a person wants to listen, fine. If a person refuses to listen, fine. But those people always turn against me.

4¹ Son of man, take a brick and scratch a picture on it. Draw a picture of a city the city of Jerusalem.

² And then pretend you are an army surrounding the city. Build a dirt wall around the city to help you attack it. Build a dirt road leading up to the city wall. Bring battering rams and set up army camps around the city.

³ And then take an iron pan and put it between you and the city. It will be like an iron wall separating you and the city. In this way you will show that you are against it. You will surround the city and attack it. This is an example for the family of Israel to show that I will destroy Jerusalem.

⁴ Then you must lie down on your left side. You must do this thing that shows

that you are taking the sins of the people of Israel on yourself. You will carry the guilt for as many days as you lie on your left side.

⁵You must bear the guilt of Israel for 390 days. In this way I am telling you how long Israel will be punished; one day equals one year.

⁶After that time, you will lie on your right side for 40 days. This time you will bear the guilt of Judah for 40 days. One day equals one year. I am telling you how long Judah must be punished.

⁷Now, roll up your sleeve and raise your arm over the brick. Act like you are attacking the city of Jerusalem. Do this to show that you are speaking as my messenger to the people.

⁸Now look, I am tying ropes on you. You will not be able to roll over from one side to another until your attack against the city is finished.

⁹You must get some grain to make bread. Get some wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt. Mix all these things together in one bowl and grind them to make flour. You will use this flour to make bread. You will eat only

this bread during the 390 days that you lie on your side.

¹⁰You will be allowed to use only 1 cup of that flour each day to make bread. You will eat that bread from time to time throughout the day.

¹¹You can drink only 3 cups of water each day. You can drink it from time to time throughout the day.

¹²You must make your bread each day. You must get dry human dung and burn it. Then you must cook the bread over this burning dung. You must eat this bread in front of the people.

¹³Then the LORD said, This will show that the family of Israel will eat unclean bread in foreign countries and that I am the one who forced them to leave Israel and go to there!

¹⁴Then I said, Oh, but Lord GOD, I have never eaten any unclean food. I have never eaten meat from an animal that died from a disease or from an animal that was killed by a wild animal. I have never eaten unclean meat not from the time that I was a little baby until now. None of that bad meat ever entered my mouth.

¹⁵Then God said to me, Very well, I will let you use dry cow dung to cook your bread. You dont have to use dry human dung.

¹⁶Then God said to me, Son of man, I am destroying Jerusalems supply of bread. People will have only a little bread to eat. They will be very worried about their food supply, and they will have only a little water to drink. Every time they take a drink, they will feel more afraid.

¹⁷That is because there will not be enough food and water for everyone. They will be terrified as they watch each other wasting away because of their sins.

5¹ Son of man, after your famine you must do this: Take a sharp sword and use it like a barbers razor. Shave off your hair and beard. Put the hair on a scale and weigh it. Separate it into three equal parts. Put a third of your hair on the brick that has the picture of the city on it. Burn that hair in that city. Then use the sword and cut a third of your hair into small pieces all around the outside of the city. Next, throw a third of your hair into the air and let the wind blow it

away. This will show that I will pull out my sword and chase some of the people into faraway countries.

²(5:1)

³But then you must get a few of those hairs and wrap them up in your robe.

⁴Take some of those hairs and throw them into the fire. This will show that a fire will start there and burn throughout the whole house of Israel.

⁵Then the Lord GOD said to me, The brick is a picture of Jerusalem. I put Jerusalem in the middle of other nations with countries all around her.

⁶The people refused to obey my commands. They were worse than any of the other nations! They broke more of my laws than any of the people in the countries around them. They refused to listen to my commands. They did not obey my laws.

⁷So the Lord GOD says, I will do this because you did not obey my laws and commands. You broke more of my laws than the people who lived around you, and you did what even they know is wrong!

⁸So the Lord GOD says, So now, even I am against you! I will punish you while those other people watch.

⁹I will do things to you that I have never done before. And I will never do those terrible things again, because you did so many terrible things.

¹⁰People in Jerusalem will be so hungry that parents will eat their own children, and children will eat their own parents. I will punish you in many ways, and those who are left alive, I will scatter to the winds.

¹¹The Lord GOD says, Jerusalem, I promise by my life that I will punish you! I promise that I will punish you, because you did terrible things to my Holy Place. You did horrible things that made it dirty. I will punish you. I will not show any mercy or feel sorry for you.

¹²A third of your people will die inside the city from diseases and hunger. Another third will die in battle outside the city. And then I will pull out my sword and chase the last third of your people into faraway countries.

¹³Only then will I stop being angry with your people. I will know that they have

been punished for the bad things they did to me. They will know that I am the LORD and that I spoke to them because of my strong love for them!

¹⁴God said, Jerusalem, I will destroy you you will be nothing but a pile of rocks. The people around you will make fun of you. Everyone who walks by will make fun of you.

¹⁵People around you will make fun of you, but you will also be a lesson for them. They will see that I was angry and punished you. I was very angry and I warned you. I, the LORD, told you what I would do.

¹⁶I told you I would send you terrible times of hunger. I told you I would send you things that would destroy you. I told you that I would take away your supply of food and that those times of hunger would come again and again.

¹⁷I told you I would send hunger and wild animals against you that would kill your children. I told you there would be disease and death everywhere in the city. I told you I would bring enemy soldiers to fight against you. I, the LORD, told you all these things would happen!

6¹ Then the word of the LORD came to me again.

² He said, Son of man, turn toward the mountains of Israel and speak against them for me.

³ Tell them this: Mountains of Israel, listen to this message from the Lord GOD! This is what the Lord GOD says to the hills and mountains and to the ravines and valleys: Look! I am bringing the enemy to fight against you. I will destroy your high places.

⁴ Your altars will be broken into pieces. Your incense altars will be smashed, and I will throw down your dead bodies in front of your filthy idols.

⁵ I will put the dead bodies of the people of Israel in front of their filthy idols. I will scatter your bones around your altars.

⁶ Bad things will happen wherever your people live. Their cities will become piles of rock. Their high places will be destroyed so that those places of worship will never be used again. The altars will all be destroyed. People will never worship those filthy idols again. The incense altars will be smashed.

Everything you made will be destroyed completely.

⁷Your people will be killed, and then you will know that I am the LORD!

⁸God said, But I will let a few of your people escape. They will live in other countries for a short time. I will scatter them and force them to live in other countries.

⁹Then the survivors will be taken as prisoners. They will be forced to live in other countries, but they will remember me. I broke their spirit. They will hate themselves for the evil things they did. In the past, they turned away from me and left me. They chased after their filthy idols. They were like a woman leaving her husband and running off with another man. They did many terrible things,

¹⁰but they will learn that I am the LORD. Then they will know that if I say that I will do something, I will do it! They will know that I caused all the troubles that happened to them.

¹¹Then the Lord GOD said to me, Clap your hands and stamp your feet. Speak against all the terrible things that the

people of Israel have done. Warn them that they will be killed by disease and hunger. Tell them they will be killed in war.

¹²People far away will die from disease. People near this place will be killed with swords, and those who are left in the city will starve to death. Only then will I stop being angry.

¹³Only then will you know that I am the LORD. You will know this when you see your dead bodies in front of your filthy idols and around their altars. Those bodies will be near every one of your places for worship, on every high hill and mountain, under every green tree and every oak tree with leaves. You offered your sacrifices everywhere. They were a sweet smell for your filthy idols.

¹⁴But I will raise my arm over you and punish you and your people, wherever they live! I will destroy your country! It will be completely empty from the desert in the south to Riblah in the north. Then they will know that I am the LORD!

7¹ Then the word of the LORD came to me.

²He said, Now, son of man, here is a message from the Lord GOD. This message is for the land of Israel: The end! The end is coming. The whole country will be destroyed.

³Your end is coming now! I will show how angry I am with you. I will punish you for the evil things you did. I will make you pay for all the terrible things you did.

⁴I will not show you any mercy or feel sorry for you. I am punishing you for the evil things you did. You have done such terrible things. Now, you will know that I am the LORD.

⁵This is what the Lord GOD said: There will be one disaster after another!

⁶The end is coming, and it will come quickly!

⁷You people living in Israel, do you hear the whistle? The enemy is coming. That time of punishment is coming very soon. The noise of the enemy is getting louder and louder on the mountains.

⁸Very soon now, I will show you how angry I am. I will show all of my anger against you. I will punish you for the evil

things you did. I will make you pay for all the terrible things you did.

⁹I will not show you any mercy or feel sorry for you. I am punishing you for the evil things you did. You have done such terrible things. Now, you will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁰That time of punishment has come like a plant sprouting, budding, and flowering. God has given the signal, the enemy is prepared, and the proud king (Nebuchadnezzar) is ready.

¹¹This violent man is ready to punish the evil people. There are many people in Israel but he is not one of them. He is not a person in that crowd. He is not some important leader from them.

¹²The time of punishment has come. The day is here. Those who buy things will not be happy, and those who sell things will not feel bad about selling them because that terrible punishment will happen to everyone.

¹³The people who sold their property will never go back to it. Even if some people escape alive, they will never go back to their property, because this vision is for the whole crowd. So even

if some people escape alive, it will not make everyone feel better.

¹⁴They will blow the trumpet to warn the people. The people will get ready for battle, but they will not go out to fight because I will show the whole crowd how angry I am.

¹⁵The enemy with his sword is outside the city. Disease and hunger is inside the city. If some people go out into the fields, enemy soldiers will kill them. If they stay in the city, hunger and disease will destroy them.

¹⁶But some people will escape. The survivors will run to the mountains, but they will not be happy. They will be sad for all their sins. They will cry and make sad noises like doves.

¹⁷They will be too tired and sad to raise their arms. Their legs will be like water.

¹⁸They will wear sackcloth and be covered with fear. You will see the shame on every face. They will shave their heads to show their sadness.

¹⁹They will throw their silver idols into the streets. They will treat their gold statues like dirty rags, because those things will not be able to save them when

the LORD shows his anger. Those things were nothing but a trap that caused the people to fall. They will not give food to the people or put food in their bellies.

²⁰They used their beautiful jewelry and made an idol. They were proud of that statue. They made their terrible statues. They made those filthy things, so I will throw them away like a dirty rag.

²¹I will let strangers take them. Those strangers will make fun of them. They will kill some of the people and take others away as prisoners.

²²I will turn my head away from them I will not look at them. The strangers will ruin my Temple they will go into the secret parts of that holy building and make it unfit for worship.

²³Make chains for the prisoners, because many people will be punished for killing other people. There will be violence every place in the city.

²⁴I will bring evil people from other nations, and they will get all the houses of the people of Israel. I will stop all you powerful people from being so proud. Those people from other nations will get all your places of worship.

²⁵You will shake with fear. You will look for peace, but there will be none.

²⁶You will hear one sad story after another. You will hear nothing but bad news. You will look for a prophet and ask him for a vision. The priests will have nothing to teach you, and the elders will not have any good advice to give you.

²⁷Your king will be crying for the people who died. The leaders will wear sackcloth. The common people will be very afraid, because I will pay them back for what they did. I will decide their punishment, and I will punish them. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

8¹One day I, Ezekiel, was sitting in my house, and the elders of Judah were sitting there in front of me. This was on the fifth day of the sixth month of the sixth year of exile. Suddenly, the power of the Lord GOD came on me.

²I saw something that looked like fire, like a mans body. From the waist down, he was like fire. From the waist up, he was bright and shining like hot metal in a fire.

³Then I saw something that looked like an arm. The arm reached out and

grabbed me by the hair on my head. Then the Spirit lifted me into the air, and in a vision from God he took me to Jerusalem. He took me to the inner gate the gate that is on the north side. The statue that makes God jealous is by that gate.

⁴ But the Glory of the God of Israel was there. The Glory looked just like the vision I saw in the valley by the Kebar Canal.

⁵ God spoke to me. He said, Son of man, look toward the north. So I looked, and there, north of the Altar Gate by the entrance, was that statue that made God jealous.

⁶ Then God said to me, Son of man, do you see what terrible things the people of Israel are doing? They built that thing here, right next to my Temple! And if you come with me, you will see even more terrible things!

⁷ So I went to the entrance to the courtyard, and I saw a hole in the wall.

⁸ God said to me, Son of man, make a hole in the wall. So I made a hole in the wall, and there I saw a door.

⁹Then God said to me, Go in and look at the terrible, evil things that the people are doing here.

¹⁰So I went in and looked. I saw statues of all kinds of reptiles and animals that you hate to think about. The statues were the filthy idols that the people of Israel worshiped. There were pictures of those animals carved all around on every wall!

¹¹Then I noticed that Jaazaniah son of Shapham and the 70 elders of Israel were there with the people worshiping in that place. There they were, right at the front of the people, and each leader had his own incense dish in his hand. The smoke from the burning incense was rising into the air.

¹²Then God said to me, Son of man, do you see what the elders of Israel do in the dark? Each man has a special room for his own false god. They say to themselves, The LORD cannot see us. The LORD left this country.

¹³Then he said to me, If you come with me, you will see these men doing even more terrible things!

¹⁴Then God led me to the entrance to the LORD'S Temple. This gate was on the north side. I saw women sitting there and crying. They were sad about the false god Tammuz!

¹⁵God said to me, Son of man, do you see these terrible things? Come with me and you will see things that are even worse than this!

¹⁶Then he led me to the inner courtyard of the LORD'S Temple area. There I saw 25 men bowing down and worshiping. They were at the entrance to the LORD'S Temple between the porch and the altar but they were facing the wrong way. Their backs were to the Holy Place. They were bowing down to worship the sun!

¹⁷Then God said, Son of man, do you see this? The people of Judah think my Temple is so unimportant that they will do these terrible things here in my Temple! This country is filled with violence, and they constantly do things to make me angry. Look, they are wearing rings in their noses to honor the moon as a false god!

¹⁸I will show them my anger! I will not show them any mercy or feel sorry for

them! They will shout to me but I refuse to listen to them!

9¹ Then God shouted to the leaders in charge of punishing the city. Each leader had his own destructive weapon in his hand.

² Then I saw six men walking on the road from the upper gate. This gate is on the north side. Each man had his own deadly weapon in his hand. One of the men wore linen clothes. He wore a scribes pen and ink set at his waist. Those men went to the bronze altar in the Temple and stood there.

³ Then the Glory of the God of Israel rose from above the Cherub angels where he had been. Then the Glory went to the door of the Temple and stopped when he was over the threshold. Then he called to the man wearing the linen clothes and the scribes pen and ink set.

⁴ Then the LORD said to him, Go through the city of Jerusalem. Put a mark on the forehead of everyone who feels sad and upset about all the terrible things people are doing in this city.

⁵ Then I heard God say to the other men, I want you to follow the first man.

You must kill all those who do not have the mark on their foreheads. It doesn't matter if they are elders, young men or young women, children or mothers you must use your weapon and kill everyone who does not have the mark on their forehead. Don't show any mercy. Don't feel sorry for anyone. Start here at my Temple. So they started with the elders in front of the Temple.

⁶(9: 5)

⁷He said to them, Make this Temple unclean fill this courtyard with dead bodies! Now go! So they went and killed the people in the city.

⁸I stayed there while the men went to kill the people. I bowed with my face to the ground and said, Oh, Lord GOD, in showing your anger against Jerusalem, are you killing all the survivors in Israel?

⁹He said, The family of Israel and Judah has committed many terrible sins! People are being murdered everywhere in this country, and the city is filled with crime. That is because the people say to themselves, The LORD has left this country. The LORD cannot see what we are doing.

¹⁰So I will not show any mercy or feel sorry for them. They brought it on themselves. I am only giving them the punishment they deserve!

¹¹Then the man wearing linen clothes and a scribes pen and ink set spoke up. He said, I have done what you commanded.

10¹Then I looked up at the bowl over the heads of the Cherub angels. The bowl looked clear blue like sapphire, and there was something that looked like a throne over it.

²Then the one sitting on the throne said to the man dressed in linen clothes, Step into the area between the wheels under the Cherub angels. Take a handful of the burning coals from between the Cherub angels and go throw them over the city of Jerusalem. The man walked past me.

³The Cherub angels were standing in the area south of the Temple as the man walked to them. The cloud filled the inner courtyard.

⁴Then the Glory of the LORD rose up off the Cherub angels near the threshold of the door of the Temple. Then the cloud filled the Temple, and the bright light

from the Glory of the LORD filled the whole courtyard.

⁵The noise from the wings of the Cherub angels could be heard all the way out into the outer courtyard. The sound was very loudlike the thundering voice when God All-Powerful speaks.

⁶God had given the man dressed in linen clothes a command. He had told him to go into the area between the wheels among the Cherub angels and get some hot coals. So the man went there and stood by the wheel.

⁷One of the Cherub angels reached out his hand and took some of the hot coals from the area between the Cherub angels. He poured the coals into the mans hands, and the man left.

⁸(The Cherub angels had what looked like human arms under their wings.)

⁹Then I noticed that there were four wheels. There was one wheel by each Cherub angel, and the wheels looked like a clear yellow jewel.

¹⁰There were four wheels, and they all looked the same. They looked like there was a wheel in a wheel.

¹¹ They could go in any direction when they moved, but the Cherub angels did not turn around when they moved. They went in the direction that the head was looking. They did not turn around when they moved.

¹² There were eyes all over their bodies. There were eyes on their backs, on their arms, on their wings, and on their wheelson all four wheels!

¹³ These wheels were what I heard called, the area between the wheels.

¹⁴ Each Cherub angel had four faces. The first was the face of a Cherub, the second was the face of a man, the third was a lions face, and the fourth was an eagles face. (These Cherub angels were the living beings I saw in the vision by the Kebar Canal.) Then the Cherub angels rose into the air,

¹⁵ (10: 14)

¹⁶ and the wheels rose with them. When the Cherub angels raised their wings and flew into the air, not even the wheels turned around.

¹⁷ If they flew into the air, the wheels went with them. If they stood still, so

did the wheels, because the spirit of the living being was in them.

¹⁸Then the Glory of the LORD rose from the threshold of the Temple, moved to the place over the Cherub angels, and stopped there.

¹⁹Then the Cherub angels raised their wings and flew into the air. I saw them leave. The wheels went with them. Then they stopped at the East Gate of the LORD'S Temple. The Glory of the God of Israel was in the air above them.

²⁰These were the living beings under the Glory of the God of Israel in the vision at the Kebar Canal, and now I realized that they were Cherub angels.

²¹Each living being had four faces, four wings, and something that looked like human arms under their wings.

²²The faces of the Cherub angels were the same as the four faces on the living beings in the vision by the Kebar Canal. They all looked straight ahead in the direction they were going.

11 ¹Then the Spirit carried me to the East Gate of the LORD'S Temple. This gate faces the east, where the sun comes up. I saw 25 men there at

the entrance of this gate. Some of the leaders were among them, including Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah.

²Then God spoke to me and said, Son of man, these are the men who make evil plans for this city. They always tell the people to do evil things.

³These men say, We will be building our houses again very soon. We are as safe in this city as meat in a pot!

⁴So you must speak to the people for me. Son of man, prophesy against the people.

⁵Then the Spirit of the LORD came on me. He said to me, Tell them that this is what the LORD said: House of Israel, you are planning big things. But I know what you are thinking.

⁶You have killed many people in this city. You have filled the streets with dead bodies.

⁷Now, the Lord GOD says this, The dead bodies are the meat, and the city is the pot. But he (Nebuchadnezzar) will come and take you out of this safe pot.

⁸You are afraid of the sword, but I am bringing the sword against you! This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁹He also said, I will take you out of this city and give you to strangers. I will punish you.

¹⁰You will die by the sword. I will punish you here in Israel, so you will know that I am the LORD.

¹¹Yes, this place will be the cooking pot, and you will be the meat cooking in it. I will punish you here in Israel.

¹²Then you will know that I am the LORD. It was my law that you broke. You did not obey my commands. You decided to live like the nations around you.

¹³As soon as I finished speaking for God, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died! I fell to the ground. I bowed with my face touching the ground and said, Oh, Lord GOD, you are going to completely destroy all the survivors of Israel!

¹⁴But then the LORD spoke to me and said,

¹⁵Son of man, remember your brothers, the family of Israel. They were forced to leave their country, but I will bring them back. But now, the people living

in Jerusalem are saying, Stay far away from the LORD. This land was given to us it is ours!

¹⁶So tell them this: The Lord GOD says, It is true, I forced my people to go far away to other nations. I did scatter them among many countries. But I will be their temple for a short time while they are in those other countries.

¹⁷But you must tell those people that the Lord GOD will bring them back. I have scattered you among many nations, but I will gather you together and bring you back from those nations. I will give the land of Israel back to you.

¹⁸When my people come back, they will destroy all the terrible, filthy idols that are here now.

¹⁹I will bring them together and make them like one person. I will put a new spirit in them. I will take away that heart of stone, and I will put a real heart in its place.

²⁰Then they will obey my laws and my commands. They will do the things I tell them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

²¹ Then God said, But now, their hearts belong to those terrible, filthy idols, and I must punish those people for the bad things they have done. This is what the Lord GOD said.

²² Then the Cherub angels raised their wings and flew into the air. The wheels went with them. The Glory of the God of Israel was above them.

²³ The Glory of the LORD rose into the air and left the city and stopped on the hill east of Jerusalem.

²⁴ Then the Spirit lifted me into the air and brought me back to Babylonia. It brought me back to the people who were forced to leave Israel. I saw all this in the vision from God. Then the one I saw in the vision rose into the air and left me.

²⁵ Then I spoke to the people in exile. I told them about everything the LORD showed me.

12¹ Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

² Son of man, you live among people who refuse to obey me. They have eyes to see what I have done for them, but they don't see those things. They have ears to hear what I told them to do, but

they will not listen. They are people who refuse to obey.

³So, son of man, pack some things as if you are leaving on a trip. Pretend that you are a prisoner being taken far away. Do this during the day so that everyone can see you. Even though these people refuse to listen to me, maybe when they see you going away, they will understand what I have been trying to tell them.

⁴During the day, take your bags outside so that the people can see you. Then in the evening, pretend you are going away. Act as if you are a prisoner going to a faraway country.

⁵While the people are watching, make a hole in the wall and go out through that hole in the wall.

⁶At night, put your bag on your shoulder and leave. Cover your face so that you cannot see where you are going. You must do these things so that the people can see you, because I am using you as an example to the family of Israel.

⁷So I did as I was commanded. During the day, I took my bags and acted as if I were going to a faraway country. That

evening, I used my hands and made a hole in the wall. During the night, I put my bag on my shoulder and left. I did this so that all the people could see me.

⁸The next morning, the LORD spoke to me and said,

⁹Son of man, did the people of Israel those people who always refuse to obey ask you what you were doing?

¹⁰Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: This sad message is about the leader of Jerusalem and all the people of Israel who live there.

¹¹Tell them, I am an example for all of you. What I have done will happen to you. You will be forced to go to a faraway country as prisoners.

¹²And your leader will make a hole in the wall and sneak out at night. He will cover his face so that people will not recognize him. His eyes will not be able to see where he is going.

¹³He will try to escape, but I will catch him! He will be caught in my trap. Then I will bring him to Babylon the land of the Chaldeans. But he will not be able to see where he is going.

¹⁴I will force the king's people to live in the foreign countries around Israel, and I will scatter his army to the winds. The enemy soldiers will chase after them.

¹⁵Then they will know that I am the LORD. They will know that I scattered them among the nations. They will know that I forced them to go to other countries.

¹⁶But I will let a few of the people live. They will not die from the disease, hunger, and war. I will let them live so that they can tell other people about the terrible things they did against me. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁷Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

¹⁸Son of man, you must act as if you are very frightened. You must shake when you eat your food. You must act worried and afraid when you drink your water.

¹⁹You must say this to the common people: This is what the Lord GOD says to the people living in Jerusalem and in the other parts of Israel. You will be very worried while you eat your food. You will be terrified while you drink your water, because everything in your country will

be destroyed! This will happen because the people living there are so violent.

²⁰ Many people live in your cities now, but those cities will be ruined. Your whole country will be destroyed! Then you will know that I am the LORD.

²¹ Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

²² Son of man, why do people quote this saying about the land of Israel: Trouble will not come soon; what is seen in visions will not come?

²³ Tell the people that the Lord GOD will end that saying. They will not say that about Israel anymore. Now they will quote this saying: Trouble will come soon; what is seen in visions will happen.

²⁴ There will not be any more false visions in Israel. There will not be any more magicians telling things that dont come true.

²⁵ Thats because I am the LORD, and if I say something will happen, it will happen! I will not wait any longer. Those troubles are coming soon in your own lifetime. Hear me, you people who always refuse to obey! When I say something, I make it happen. This is what the Lord GOD said.

²⁶Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

²⁷Son of man, the people of Israel think that the visions I give you are for a time far in the future. They think you are talking about things that will happen many years from now.

²⁸So you must tell them this, The Lord GOD says: I will not delay any longer. If I say something will happen, it will happen! This is what the Lord GOD said.

13¹Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

²Son of man, you must speak to the prophets of Israel for me. They are only saying what they want to say. You must speak to them. Tell them, Listen to this message from the LORD!

³This is what the Lord GOD says. Bad things will happen to you foolish prophets. You are following your own spirits. You are not telling people what you really see in visions.

⁴Israel, your prophets are false prophets. They are like jackals hunting for food among the ruins of a city.

⁵You have not put guards where the city walls are broken. And you have not repaired the walls to protect the family

of Israel. So when the day comes for the LORD to punish you, you will lose the war!

⁶Your prophets say they have seen visions. They did their magic to see what will happen next. But everything they said would happen is a lie. They claim to speak for the LORD, but the LORD did not send them. And they still think that what they said is what will happen.

⁷If you prophets saw visions, they were not true. And all you got from your magic was lies! So how can you say that the LORD told you those things? I did not speak to you!

⁸So now, the Lord GOD really will speak. He says, You told lies. You saw visions that were not true. So now I am against you! This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁹I will punish those prophets who tell their false visions and lie about the future. I will remove them from my people. Their names will not be in the list of the family of Israel. They will never again come to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord GOD!

¹⁰Again and again those false prophets lied to my people. They said there would be peace, but there is no peace. The people need to fix the walls and prepare for war. But they only slap a thin coat of plaster over the broken walls.

¹¹Tell them that I will send hail and a strong rain. The wind will blow hard, and a tornado will come. Then the wall will fall down.

¹²When the wall falls down, the people will ask the prophets, What happened to the plaster you put on the wall?

¹³The Lord GOD says, I am angry and I will send a storm against you. I am angry and I will send a strong rain. I am angry and I will make hail fall from the sky and completely destroy you!

¹⁴You put plaster on the wall, but I will destroy the whole wall. I will pull it to the ground. The wall will fall on you, and then you will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁵I will finish showing my anger against the wall and those who put plaster on it. Then I will say, There is no wall, and there are no workers to put plaster on it.

¹⁶All these things will happen to the false prophets of Israel. They speak to

the people of Jerusalem and say there will be peace, but there is no peace. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁷God said, Son of man, look at the women prophets in Israel. They say the things they want to say, so you must speak against them for me. You must say this to them:

¹⁸This is what the Lord GOD says: Bad things will happen to you women. You sew cloth bracelets for people to wear on their arms. You make special scarves for people to wear on their heads. You say those things have magic powers to control peoples lives. You trap the people only to keep yourselves alive!

¹⁹You make them think I am not important. You turn them against me for a few handfuls of barley and a few scraps of bread. You tell lies to my people. They love to listen to lies. You kill those who should live, and you let people live who should die.

²⁰So this is what the Lord GOD says to you: You make those cloth bracelets to trap people, but I will set them free. I will tear those bracelets off your arms,

and the people will be free from you. They will be like birds flying from a trap.

²¹ And I will tear up those scarves and save my people from your power. They will escape from your trap, and you will know that I am the LORD.

²² You prophets tell lies. Your lies hurt good people! did not want to hurt them! You support the wicked and encourage them. You dont tell them to change their lives. You dont try to save their lives!

²³ So you will not see any more useless visions or do any more magic. I will save my people from your power, and you will know that I am the LORD.

14¹ Some of the elders of Israel came to me. They sat down to talk with me.

² The LORD spoke to me and said,

³ Son of man, these men came to talk to you. But they still have their filthy idols. They kept the things that made them sin. They still worship those statues, so why do they come to me for advice? Should I answer their questions?

⁴ But I will give them an answer. You must tell them this: This is what the Lord GOD says: If any Israelites come to a

prophet and ask me for advice, I myself will answer their questions. I, the LORD, will answer them even if they still have their filthy idols, even if they kept the things that made them sin, and even if they still worship those statues. I will speak to them in spite of all their filthy idols.

⁵This is because I want to touch their hearts. I want to show them that I love them, even though they left me for their filthy idols.

⁶So tell the family of Israel, This is what the Lord GOD says: Come back to me and leave your filthy idols. Turn away from those terrible, false gods.

⁷If any Israelites or foreigners who live in Israel come to me for advice, I will give them an answer. I, the LORD, will answer them even if they still have their filthy idols, even if they kept the things that made them sin, and even if they worship those statues. This is the answer I will give them:

⁸I will turn against them and destroy them. They will be an example to others. People will laugh at them. I will remove

them from my people. Then you will know that I am the LORD!

⁹And if a prophet is foolish enough to give his own answer, I, the LORD, will show him how foolish he is! I will use my power against him. I will destroy him and remove him from among my people, Israel.

¹⁰So both the one who came for advice and the prophet who gave an answer will get the same punishment.

¹¹Why? So that those prophets will stop leading my people away from me, and my people will stop being filthy with sin. Then they will be my special people, and I will be their God. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹²Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

¹³Son of man, I will punish any nation that leaves me and sins against me. I will stop their food supply. I might cause a famine and remove the people and animals from that country.

¹⁴I would punish that country even if Noah, Daniel, and Job lived there. They could save their own lives by their goodness, but they could not save the

whole country. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁵Or I might send wild animals through that country to kill all the people. Then no one would travel through that country because of the wild animals.

¹⁶If Noah, Daniel, and Job lived there, those three men could save their own lives. But I promise by my own life that they could not save the lives of other people not even their own sons and daughters! That evil country would be destroyed. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁷Or I might send an enemy army to fight against that country. The soldiers would destroy that country I would remove all the people and animals from that country.

¹⁸If Noah, Daniel, and Job lived there, those three men could save their own lives. But I promise by my own life that they could not save the lives of other people not even their own sons and daughters! That evil country would be destroyed. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁹Or I might send a disease against that country. I will pour my anger down on the people. I will remove all the people and animals from that country.

²⁰If Noah, Daniel, and Job lived there, those three men could save their own lives because they are good men. But I promise by my own life that they could not save the lives of other people not even their own sons and daughters! This is what the Lord GOD said.

²¹Then the Lord GOD said, So think how bad it will be for Jerusalem. I will send all four of those punishments against that city! I will send enemy soldiers, hunger, disease, and wild animals against that city. I will remove all the people and animals from that country.

²²Some of the people will escape from that country. They will bring their sons and daughters and come to you for help. Then you will see how bad those people really are, and you will feel better about all the troubles that I am bringing to Jerusalem.

²³You will see how they live and all the bad things they do. Then you will know

that I had a good reason for punishing them. This is what the Lord GOD said.

15 ¹ Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

² Son of man, are the pieces of wood from a grapevine any better than the little branches cut from trees in the forest?

³ You cant use its wood to make anything, can you? Its not even good for pegs to hang dishes on!

⁴ It can be used to make a fire. But after the ends burn and the middle is scorched, what then?

⁵ If you cant make anything from that wood before it is burned, you surely cant make anything after it is burned!

⁶ The people of Jerusalem are as useless as the wood from the grapevines growing among the trees of the forest. So I will throw them into the fire to burn like that wood! This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁷ I will punish those people. But some of them will be like the sticks that dont burn completely. They will be punished, but they will not be destroyed completely. You will see that I punished them, and you will know that I am the LORD!

⁸I will destroy that country because the people left me to worship false gods. This is what the Lord GOD said.

16 ¹Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

²Son of man, tell the people of Jerusalem about the terrible things they have done.

³You must say, This is what the Lord GOD says to Jerusalem: Look at your history. You were born in Canaan. Your father was an Amorite. Your mother was a Hittite.

⁴Jerusalem, on the day you were born, there was no one to cut your navel cord. No one put salt on you and washed you to make you clean. No one wrapped you in cloth.

⁵No one felt sorry for you or took care of you. On the day you were born, your parents threw you out into the field, because no one wanted you.

⁶Then I passed by. I saw you lying there, kicking in the blood. You were covered with blood, but I said, Please live! Yes, you were covered with blood, but I said, Please live!

⁷I helped you grow like a plant in the field. You grew and grew. You became a young woman: your periods began, your breasts grew, and your hair began to grow. But you were still bare and naked.

⁸I looked you over. I saw you were ready for love, so I spread my clothes over you and covered your nakedness. I promised to marry you. I made the agreement with you, and you became mine. This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁹I washed you in water. I poured water over you to wash away the blood that was on you, and then I put oil on your skin.

¹⁰I gave you a nice dress and soft leather sandals, a linen headband, and a silk scarf.

¹¹I also gave you some jewelry. I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck.

¹²I gave you a nose ring, earrings, and a beautiful crown to wear.

¹³You were beautiful in your gold and silver jewelry, and your linen, silk, and embroidered material. You ate the best foods. You were very, very beautiful, and you became the queen!

¹⁴You became famous for your beauty, all because I made you so lovely! This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁵But you began to trust in your beauty. Being well known, you became a prostitute and gave yourself to every man who passed by. Your beauty became theirs to enjoy!

¹⁶You took your beautiful clothes and used them to decorate your places for worship. And you offered yourself as a prostitute there. You gave yourself to every man who came by!

¹⁷Then you took your beautiful jewelry that I gave you, and you used the gold and silver to make statues of men, and you had sex with them too!

¹⁸Then you took the beautiful cloth and made clothes for those statues. You took the perfume and incense I gave you and put it in front of those idols.

¹⁹I gave you bread, honey, and oil, but you gave that food to your idols. You offered them as a sweet smell to please your false gods. This actually happened! This is what the Lord GOD said.

²⁰You and I had children together, but you took our children. You killed them

and gave them to those false gods! But that is only some of the evil things you did when you were unfaithful to me and went to those false gods.

²¹ You slaughtered my sons and then passed them through the fire to those false gods.

²² You left me and did all those terrible things. You never remembered what happened when you were young. You did not remember that you were naked and kicking in blood when I found you.

²³ After all these evil things, it will be very bad for you! The Lord GOD said all these things.

²⁴ After all those things, you made a mound for worshiping that false god. You built places for worshiping those gods on every street corner.

²⁵ There you made your beauty a disgrace. You used it to catch every man who walked by. You raised your skirt so that they could see your legs, and you offered yourself as a prostitute to them.

²⁶ Then you went to Egypt, your neighbor that is always ready for sex. With more and more sexual sin, you made me angry.

²⁷ So I punished you! I took away part of your land. I let your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, do what they wanted to you. Even they were shocked at the evil things you did.

²⁸ Then you went to have sex with Assyria. You could not get enough. You were never satisfied.

²⁹ So you turned to Canaan, and then to Babylonia, and still you were not satisfied.

³⁰ You are so weak. You let all those men cause you to sin. You acted just like a prostitute who wants to be the one in control. This is what the Lord GOD said.

³¹ God said, But you were not exactly like a prostitute. You built your mounds at the head of every road, and you built your places for worship at every street corner. You had sex with all those men, but you did not ask them to pay you the way a prostitute does.

³² You are a woman guilty of adultery. You would rather have sex with strangers than with your own husband.

³³ Most prostitutes force men to pay them for sex, but you gave money to

your many lovers. You paid all the men around to come in to have sex with you.

³⁴You are just the opposite of most prostitutes who force men to pay them, because you pay the men to have sex with you.

³⁵Prostitute, listen to the message from the LORD.

³⁶This is what the Lord GOD says: You have spent your money and let your lovers and filthy gods see your naked body and have sex with you. You have killed your children and poured out their blood. This was your gift to those false gods.

³⁷So I am bringing all of your lovers together. I will bring all the men you loved and all the men you hated. I will bring them all together and let them see you naked. They will see you completely naked.

³⁸Then I will punish you. I will punish you as a murderer and a woman who committed the sin of adultery. You will be punished as if by an angry and jealous husband.

³⁹I will let those lovers have you. They will destroy your mounds. They will burn

your places for worship. They will tear off your clothes and take your beautiful jewelry. They will leave you bare and naked as you were when I found you.

⁴⁰They will bring a crowd of people and throw rocks at you to kill you. Then they will cut you into pieces with their swords.

⁴¹They will burn your house. They will punish you so that all the other women can see. I will stop you from living like a prostitute. I will stop you from paying money to your lovers.

⁴²Then I will stop being angry and jealous. I will calm down. I will not be angry anymore.

⁴³Why will all these things happen? Because you did not remember what happened when you were young. You did all those bad things and made me angry. So I had to punish you for doing them, but you planned even more terrible things. This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁴⁴All the people who talk about you will now have one more thing to say. They will say, Like mother, like daughter.

⁴⁵You are your mothers daughter. You dont care about your husband or your children. You are like your sister. Both

of you hated your husband and your children. You are like your parents. Your mother was a Hittite and your father was an Amorite.

⁴⁶Your older sister was Samaria. She lived to the north of you with her daughters. Your younger sister was Sodom. She lived to the south of you with her daughters.

⁴⁷You did all the terrible things they did, but you also did much worse!

⁴⁸I am the Lord GOD. As I live, I swear that your sister Sodom and her daughters never did as many bad things as you and your daughters.

⁴⁹Your sister Sodom and her daughters were proud. They had too much to eat and too much time on their hands, and they did not help poor, helpless people.

⁵⁰Sodom and her daughters became too proud and began to do terrible things in front of me. So I punished them!

⁵¹And Samaria did only half as many bad things as you did. You did many more terrible things than Samaria! You have done so many more terrible things than your sisters have done. Sodom and Samaria seem good compared to you.

⁵² So you must bear your shame. You have made your sisters look good compared to you. You have done terrible things, so you should be ashamed.

⁵³ I destroyed Sodom and the towns around it, and I destroyed Samaria and the towns around it. And I will destroy you too, Jerusalem. But I will build those cities again, and I will rebuild you too.

⁵⁴ I will comfort you. Then you will remember the terrible things you did, and you will be ashamed.

⁵⁵ So you and your sisters will be rebuilt. Sodom and the towns around her, Samaria and the towns around her, and you and the towns around you will all be rebuilt.

⁵⁶ In the past, you were proud and made fun of your sister Sodom. But you will not do that again.

⁵⁷ You did that before you were punished, before your neighbors started making fun of you. The daughters of Edom and Philistia are making fun of you now.

⁵⁸ Now you must suffer for the terrible things you did. This is what the LORD said.

⁵⁹ This is what the Lord GOD said: I will treat you like you treated me! You broke your marriage promise. You did not respect our agreement.

⁶⁰ But I will remember the agreement we made when you were young. I made an agreement with you that will continue forever!

⁶¹ I will bring your sisters to you, and I will make them your daughters. That was not in our agreement, but I will do that for you. Then you will remember the terrible things you did, and you will be ashamed.

⁶² So I will make my agreement with you, and you will know that I am the LORD.

⁶³ You will remember me, and you will be so ashamed of the evil things you did that you will not be able to say anything. But I will make you pure, and you will never be ashamed again! This is what the Lord GOD said.

17 ¹ Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

² Son of man, I have a story with a hidden meaning for you to tell the family of Israel.

³Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: A large eagle with big wings came to Lebanon. He had feathers covered with spots.

⁴He broke the top out of the big cedar tree (Lebanon) and brought it to Canaan. He set the branch down in a city of merchants.

⁵Then the eagle took some of the seeds from Canaan. He planted them in good soil by a good river.

⁶The seeds grew and became a grapevine. It was a good vine. The vine was not tall, but it spread to cover a large area. The vine grew stems, and smaller vines grew very long.

⁷Then another eagle with big wings saw the grapevine. The eagle had many feathers. The grapevine wanted this new eagle to care for it. So it stretched its roots and branches toward the eagle. Its branches stretched toward this eagle. The branches grew away from the field where it was planted. The grapevine wanted the new eagle to water it.

⁸The grapevine was planted in a good field near plenty of water. It could have

grown branches and fruit. It could have become a very good grapevine.

⁹This is what the Lord GOD says: Do you think that plant will succeed? No, the new eagle will pull the plant from the ground, and the bird will break the plants roots. It will eat up all the grapes. Then the new leaves will wilt. That plant will be very weak. It will not take strong arms or a powerful nation to pull that plant up by the roots.

¹⁰Will the plant grow where it is planted? No, the hot east wind will blow, and the plant will become dry and die. It will die there where it was planted.

¹¹The LORD spoke to me and said,

¹²Explain this story to the people of Israel who always turn against me. Tell them this: The first eagle is the king of Babylonia. He came to Jerusalem and took away the king and other leaders. He brought them to Babylonia.

¹³Then Nebuchadnezzar made an agreement with a man from the kings family. Nebuchadnezzar forced that man to make a promise. So this man promised to be loyal to Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar made this man the

new king of Judah. Then he took all the powerful men away from Judah.

¹⁴So Judah became a weak kingdom that could not turn against King Nebuchadnezzar. The people were forced to keep the agreement Nebuchadnezzar made with the new king of Judah.

¹⁵But this new king tried to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar anyway! He sent messengers to Egypt to ask for help. The new king asked for many horses and soldiers. Now, do you think the new king of Judah will succeed? Do you think the new king will have enough power to break the agreement and escape punishment?

¹⁶The Lord GOD says, By my life, I swear that this new king will die in Babylonia! Nebuchadnezzar made this man the new king of Judah, but he broke his promise with Nebuchadnezzar. This new king ignored that agreement.

¹⁷The king of Egypt will not be able to save the king of Judah. He might send many soldiers, but Egypt's great power will not save Judah. Nebuchadnezzar's army will build dirt roads and dirt walls to capture the city. Many people will die.

¹⁸But the king of Judah will not escape, because he ignored his agreement. He broke his promise to Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁹The Lord GOD makes this promise: By my life, I swear that I will punish the king of Judah, because he ignored my warnings and broke our agreement.

²⁰I will set my trap, and he will be caught in it. Then I will bring him to Babylon, and I will punish him there. I will punish him because he turned against me,

²¹and I will destroy his army. I will destroy his best soldiers and scatter them to the wind. Then you will know that I am the LORD and that I told you these things.

²²This is what the Lord GOD says: I will take a branch from a tall cedar tree. I will take a small branch from the top of the tree, and I myself will plant it on a very high mountain.

²³I myself will plant it on a high mountain in Israel. That branch will grow into a tree. It will grow branches and make fruit and become a beautiful cedar tree. Many birds will sit on its

branches and live in the shadows under its branches.

²⁴Then the other trees will know that I, the LORD, make tall trees fall to the ground, and I make small trees grow tall. I make green trees become dry, and I make dry trees become green. I am the LORD. If I say that I will do something, then I will do it!

18 ¹The LORD spoke to me and said, ²Why do you people say this proverb: The parents ate the sour grapes, but the children got the sour taste?

³But the Lord GOD says, By my life, I swear that people in Israel will not think this proverb is true anymore!

⁴I will treat everyone, child and parent, just the same. The one who sins is the one who will die!

⁵A person who is good will live! He is fair and does what is right.

⁶He doesnt go to the mountains to share food offered to idols. He doesnt pray to those filthy idols in Israel. He doesnt commit adultery with his neighbors wife or with a woman during her period.

⁷ He doesn't take advantage of others. If someone borrows money from him, he might take something of value before he gives the money. But when that person pays him back, he returns what he took. He gives food to the hungry and clothes to people who need them.

⁸ If someone wants to borrow money from him, he lends the money and doesn't charge interest on the loan. He refuses to be crooked. He is always fair with everyone. People can trust him.

⁹ He obeys my laws and studies my rules so that he can learn to be fair and dependable. He is good, so he will live. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁰ But someone like that might have a son who does not do any of these good things. The son steals things and kills people.

¹¹ He does things his father never did. He goes to the mountains and eats foods offered to false gods. He commits the sin of adultery with his neighbor's wife.

¹² He mistreats poor, helpless people. He takes advantage of them. When a debt is paid, he does not give back what

he took from them. He prays to filthy idols and does other terrible things.

¹³He lends money to people who need it, but he forces them to pay interest on the loan. The evil son will not be allowed to live. He will be put to death because he did such terrible things, and he will be responsible for his own death.

¹⁴Now, that evil son might also have a son. But this son sees the bad things his father did, and he refuses to live as his father did. He treats people fairly.

¹⁵He does not go to the mountains and eat foods offered to false gods. He does not pray to filthy idols in Israel. He does not commit the sin of adultery with his neighbors wife.

¹⁶He does not take advantage of people. If someone borrows money from him, the good son takes something of value and then gives the other person the money. When that person pays him back, the good son gives back what he took. The good son gives food to hungry people, and he gives clothes to those who need them.

¹⁷He helps the poor. If people want to borrow money, the good son lends

them the money, and he does not charge interest on the loan. He obeys my laws and follows them. He will not be put to death for his fathers sins. The good son will live.

¹⁸The father hurts people and steals things. He never does anything good for my people! He will die because of his own sins.

¹⁹You might ask, Why will the son not be punished for his fathers sins? The reason is that the son was fair and did good things. He very carefully obeyed my laws, so he will live.

²⁰The one who sins is the one who will be put to death. A son will not be punished for his fathers sins, and a father will not be punished for his sons sins. A good mans goodness belongs to him alone, and a bad mans evil belongs to him alone.

²¹Now, if evil people change their lives, they will live and not die. They might stop doing all the bad things they did and begin to carefully obey all my laws. They might become fair and good.

²² God will not remember all the bad things they did. He will remember only their goodness, so they will live!

²³ The Lord GOD says, I don't want evil people to die. I want them to change their lives so that they can live!

²⁴ Now, maybe good people might stop being good. They might change their lives and begin to do all the terrible things that evil people have done in the past. (The evil people changed, so they can live.) So if those good people change and become bad, God will not remember all the good things they did. He will remember that they turned against him and began to sin. So they will die because of their sin.

²⁵ You people might say, The Lord isn't fair! But listen, family of Israel. I am fair. You are the ones who are not fair!

²⁶ If good people change and become evil, they must die for the bad things they do.

²⁷ And if evil people change and become good and fair, they will save their lives. They will live!

²⁸ They saw how wicked they were and came back to me. They stopped doing

the evil things they did in the past. So they will live! They will not die!

²⁹The people of Israel said, That's not fair! The Lord isn't fair! I am fair! You are the ones who are not fair!

³⁰Why? Because, family of Israel, I will judge each of you only for what you do! This is what the Lord GOD said. So come back to me! Stop committing those crimes and do away with those things that cause you to sin!

³¹Throw away all the terrible idols with which you committed your crimes! Change your heart and spirit. People of Israel, why should you do things that will cost you your life?

³²I don't want to kill you! Please come back and live! This is what the Lord GOD said.

19¹The Lord said to me, You must sing this sad song about the leaders of Israel:

²Your mother is like a female lion, lying there with the male lions. She went to lie down with the young male lions and had many babies.

³One of her cubs gets up. He has grown to be a strong young lion. He has learned

to catch his food. He killed and ate a man.

⁴The people heard him roar, and they caught him in their trap. They put hooks in his mouth and carried the young lion to Egypt.

⁵The mother lion had hoped that cub would become the leader, but now she has lost all hope. So she took another of her cubs and trained him to be a lion.

⁶He hunted with the adult lions and became a strong young lion. He learned to catch his food. He killed and ate a man.

⁷He attacked the palaces and destroyed the cities. Everyone in that country was too afraid to speak when hearing his growl.

⁸Then the people who lived around him set a trap for him, and they caught him in their trap.

⁹They put hooks on him and locked him up. They had him in their trap, so they took him to the king of Babylon. And now, you cannot hear his roar on the mountains of Israel.

¹⁰Your mother is like a grapevine planted near the water. She had plenty of water, so she grew many strong vines.

¹¹Then she grew large branches. They were like a strong walking stick. They were like a kings scepter. The vine grew taller and taller. It had many branches and reached to the clouds.

¹²But the vine was pulled up by the roots, and thrown down to the ground. The hot east wind blew and dried its fruit. The strong branches broke, and they were thrown into the fire.

¹³Now that grapevine is planted in the desert. It is a very dry and thirsty land.

¹⁴A fire started in the large branch and spread to destroy all of its vines and fruit. So there was no strong walking stick. There was no kings scepter. This was a sad song about death, and it was sung as a sad song about death.

20¹One day, some of the elders of Israel came to me to ask the LORD for advice. This was on the tenth day of the fifth month of the seventh year of exile. The elders sat down in front of me.

²Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

³Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel. Tell them This is what the Lord GOD says: Have you come to ask me what you should do? I, the Lord GOD, tell you that, as surely as I live, I will not listen to you.

⁴Should you judge them? Will you judge them, son of man? You must tell them about the terrible things their fathers have done.

⁵You must tell them, This is what the Lord GOD says: On the day I chose Israel, I raised my hand to Jacobs family and made a promise to them in Egypt. When I let them know who I was, I raised my hand and said: I am the LORD your God.

⁶On that day, I promised to take you out of Egypt and lead you to the land I was giving to you. That was a good land filled with many good things. It was the most beautiful of all countries!

⁷I told the family of Israel to throw away their horrible idols. I told them not to become filthy with those filthy statues from Egypt. I said, I am the LORD your God.

⁸But they turned against me and refused to listen to me. They did not throw away their horrible idols. They did not leave their filthy statues in Egypt. So I decided to destroy them in Egypt to let them feel the full force of my anger.

⁹But I did not destroy them. I had already told the Egyptians that I would bring my people out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people.

¹⁰I brought the family of Israel out of Egypt. I led them into the desert.

¹¹Then I gave them my laws and told them all my rules. All those who obey them will live.

¹²I also told them about all the special days of rest, which were a special sign between us. They showed that I am the LORD and that I was making them special to me.

¹³But the family of Israel turned against me in the desert. They did not follow my laws. They refused to obey my rules even though people who obey my laws live because of them. They treated my special days of rest as if they were

not important. They worked on those days many times. I decided to destroy them in the desert to let them feel the full force of my anger.

¹⁴But I did not destroy them. The other nations saw me bring Israel out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people.

¹⁵I made another promise to those people in the desert. I promised that I would not bring them into the land I was giving them. That was a good land filled with many good things. It was the most beautiful of all countries!

¹⁶The people of Israel refused to obey my rules or to follow my laws. They treated my days of rest as if they were not important. They did all these things because their hearts belonged to their filthy idols.

¹⁷But I felt sorry for them, so I did not destroy them. I did not completely destroy them in the desert.

¹⁸I spoke to their children and told them, Don't be like your parents. Don't make yourselves filthy with their filthy

idols. Dont follow their laws or obey their commands.

¹⁹I am the LORD. I am your God. Obey my laws and keep my commands. Do the things I tell you.

²⁰Show that my days of rest are important to you. Remember, they are a special sign between us. I am the LORD, and these days show you that I am your God.

²¹But the children turned against me and did not obey my laws. They did not keep my commandseven though people who obey my laws live because of them. They treated my special days of rest as though they were not important. So I decided to destroy them completely in the desertto let them feel the full force of my anger.

²²But I stopped myself. The other nations saw me bring Israel out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people.

²³So I made vow against those people in the desert. I vowed to scatter them among the nations, to send them to many different countries.

²⁴The people of Israel did not obey my commands. They refused to obey my laws. They treated my special days of rest as though they were not important, and they worshiped the filthy idols of their fathers.

²⁵So I gave them laws that were not good. I gave them commands that would not bring life.

²⁶I let them make themselves filthy with their gifts. They even began to sacrifice their own firstborn children. In this way I would destroy them. Then they would know that I am the LORD.

²⁷So now, son of man, speak to the family of Israel. Tell them, This is what the Lord GOD says: The people of Israel said bad things about me and made evil plans against me.

²⁸But I still brought them to the land I promised to give them. They saw all the hills and green trees, so they went to all those places to worship. They took their sacrifices and anger offerings to all those places. They offered their sacrifices that made a sweet smell, and they offered their drink offerings at those places.

²⁹I asked the people of Israel why they were going to the high places. But that high place is still there today.

³⁰Since Israel did those things, speak to them and tell them, This is what the Lord GOD says: You people are polluting yourselves by doing the things your ancestors did. By offering yourselves as prostitutes to their disgusting idols, you make yourselves unfaithful to me. Is that what you want?

³¹You offer to those idols the same gifts your ancestors did. You are putting your children in the fire as an offering to your false gods. You are still polluting yourselves with these filthy idols today! Do you really think that I should let you come to me and ask me for advice? I am the Lord GOD. By my life, I swear that I will not answer your questions or give you advice!

³²You keep saying you want to be like the other nations. You live like the people in other nations. You serve pieces of wood and stone idols!

³³The Lord GOD says, By my life, I swear that I will rule over you as king. But I will raise my powerful arm and

punish you. I will show my anger against you!

³⁴I will bring you out of these other nations. I scattered you among these nations, but I will gather you together and bring you back from these countries. But I will raise my powerful arm and punish you. I will show my anger against you!

³⁵I will lead you into a desert as I did before, but this will be a place where other nations live. We will stand face to face, and I will judge you.

³⁶I will judge you as I judged your ancestors in the desert near Egypt. This is what the Lord GOD said.

³⁷I will judge you guilty and punish you according to the agreement.

³⁸I will remove all those who turned against me and sinned against me. I will remove them from your homeland. They will never again come to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

³⁹Now, family of Israel, this is what the Lord GOD says: Whoever wants to worship their filthy idols, let them go and worship them. But later, dont think

you will get any advice from me. You will not ruin my name anymore not when you continue to give your gifts to your filthy idols!

⁴⁰The Lord GOD says, People must come to my holy mountain the high mountain in Israel to serve me! The whole family of Israel will be on their land; they will be there in their country. There you can come to ask me for advice, and you must come there to bring me your offerings. You must bring the first part of your crops to me there. You must bring all your holy gifts to me in that place.

⁴¹Then I will be pleased with the sweet smell of your sacrifices. That will happen when I bring you back. I scattered you among many nations, but I will gather you together and make you my special people again. And all the nations will see it.

⁴²Then you will know that I am the LORD. You will know this when I bring you back to the land of Israel, the land I promised to give to your ancestors.

⁴³In that country you will remember all the evil things you did that made you filthy, and you will be ashamed.

⁴⁴Family of Israel, you did many evil things, and you should be destroyed because of them. But to protect my good name, I will not give you the punishment you really deserve. Then you will know that I am the LORD. This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁴⁵Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

⁴⁶Son of man, look toward the Negev. Speak against the southern part of Judah. Tell them what will happen to the Negev Forest.

⁴⁷Say to the Negev Forest, Listen to the word of the LORD. This is what the Lord GOD said: Look, I am ready to start a fire in your forest. The fire will destroy every green tree and every dry tree. The flame that burns will not be put out. All the land from south to north will be burned by the fire.

⁴⁸Then all people will see that I, the LORD, have started the fire. The fire will not be put out!

⁴⁹Then I said, Oh, Lord GOD! If I say this, the people will say that I am only telling them stories.

21 ¹ So the word of the LORD came to me again. He said,

² Son of man, look toward Jerusalem and speak against their holy places. Speak against the land of Israel for me.

³ Say to the land of Israel, This is what the LORD said: I am against you! I will pull my sword from its sheath. I will remove all people from you the good and the evil.

⁴ I will cut off both good people and evil people from you. I will pull my sword from its sheath and use it against all people from south to north.

⁵ Then everyone will know that I am the LORD. They will know that I have pulled my sword from its sheath. My sword will not go back into its sheath again until it is finished.

⁶ Son of man, make sad sounds like a sad person with a broken heart. Make these sad sounds in front of the people.

⁷ Then they will ask you, Why are you making these sad sounds? Then you must say, Because of the sad news that

is coming. Every heart will melt with fear. All hands will become weak. Every spirit will become weak. All knees will be like water. Look, that bad news is coming. These things will happen! This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁸The LORD spoke to me and said,

⁹Son of man, speak to the people for me. Say this, This is what the Lord says: Look, a sword, a sharp sword, and it has been polished.

¹⁰The sword was made sharp for killing. It was polished to flash like lightning. My son, you ran away from the stick I used to punish you. You refused to be punished with that wooden stick.

¹¹So the sword has been polished. Now it can be used. The sword was sharpened and polished. Now it can be put in the hand of the killer.

¹²Son of man, shout out and scream because the sword will be used against my people and all the rulers of Israel. They wanted war so they will be with my people when the sword comes. So slap your thigh to show your sadness,

¹³because it is not just a test. You refused to be punished with the wooden

stick, so what else should I use to punish you? A sword? This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁴Son of man, speak to the people for me. Strike your hands together! Let the sword come down twice, no, three times! This is a sword for killing. It is a sword for killing many, many people. It will cut into them from every side.

¹⁵Their hearts will melt with fear, and many people will fall. The sword is ready at their city gates. It has been polished for killing and will flash like lightning.

¹⁶Sword, be sharp! Cut on the right side. Cut straight ahead. Cut on the left side. Go wherever your edge was chosen to go.

¹⁷Then I, too, will clap my hands and stop showing my anger. I, the LORD, have spoken!

¹⁸The LORD spoke to me and said,

¹⁹Son of man, draw a map showing two roads that the king of Babylon can follow with his sword in hand. Both roads will begin at the same place, but then they will separate and go different directions. At that place you should put up a sign.

²⁰The sign should show where each road goes. One road leads to the Ammonite city of Rabbah. The other road leads to Judah, to the protected city, Jerusalem.

²¹The king of Babylon will come to where the two roads separate. He will decide which way to go by using different kinds of magicshaking his arrows, asking his family idols, and looking at the liver from an animal he has killed.

²²These things will point to the road on his right, the road leading to Jerusalem. They will tell him to attack it with battering rams and command his soldiers to begin the killing. They will shout the battle cry and set the battering rams against the gates. They will build a wall of dirt around the city and a road leading up to the walls. They will build wooden towers to attack the city.

²³But the people in Jerusalem will think this is all a big mistake. They will not believe that this could happen, because they had made a peace agreement with Babylons king. But the king will remind them that they are guilty of breaking

that agreement, and he will take them captive.

²⁴This is what the Lord GOD says: You have done many evil things. Your sins are very clear. You forced me to remember that you are guilty, so the enemy will catch you in his hand.

²⁵And you, evil leader of Israel, you will be killed. Your time of punishment has come! The end is here!

²⁶This is what the Lord GOD says: Take off the turban! Take off the crown! The time has come to change. The important leaders will be brought low, and those who are not important now will become important leaders.

²⁷I will completely destroy that city! But this will not happen until the right man becomes the new king. Then I will let him have this city.

²⁸Son of man, speak to the people for me. Say this, This is what the Lord GOD says to the people of Ammon and their shameful god: Look, a sword! The sword is out of its sheath. It has been polished. The sword is ready to kill. It was polished to flash like lightning!

²⁹Your visions are useless. Your magic will not help you. It is only a bunch of lies. The sword is now at the throats of evil men. They will soon be only dead bodies. Their time has come. The time has come for their evil to end.

³⁰Put the sword back in its sheath. Babylon, I will judge you in the place where you were created, in the land where you were born.

³¹I will pour out my anger against you. My anger will burn you like a hot wind. I will hand you over to cruel men. Those men are skilled at killing people.

³²You will be like fuel for the fire. Your blood will flow deep into the earth. People will never remember you again. I, the LORD, have spoken!

22¹The LORD spoke to me and said,
²Son of man, will you judge the city of murderers? Will you tell her about all the terrible things she has done?

³You must say, This is what the Lord GOD says: The city is full of murderers, so her time of punishment will come. She made filthy idols for herself, and those idols made her filthy!

⁴ People of Jerusalem, you killed many people. You made filthy idols. You are guilty, and the time has come to punish you. Your end has come. Other nations will make fun of you and laugh at you.

⁵ People far and near will make fun of you. You have ruined your name. You are filled with confusion.

⁶ Look, all the leaders in Israel are using their strength just to kill other people.

⁷ And the people in Jerusalem don't respect their parents. There in the city, they mistreat the foreigners. They cheat orphans and widows in that place.

⁸ You hate all that I consider holy. You treat my special days of rest as if they are not important.

⁹ In Jerusalem, people tell lies in order to kill innocent people. They go to the mountains to worship false gods and then come back to Jerusalem to eat their fellowship meals. In Jerusalem, people commit many sexual sins.

¹⁰ There men commit sexual sins with their fathers wife. There the men rape women even during their monthly time of bleeding.

¹¹ One man commits a terrible sin against his own neighbors wife. Another man has sex with his daughter-in-law and makes her unclean. Another man rapes his fathers daughterhis very own sister.

¹² There men accept bribes to kill people. You lend money and charge interest on the loans. You cheat your neighbors just to make a little money. You have even forgotten me. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹³ Now look! I will slam my hand down and stop you! I will punish you for cheating and killing people.

¹⁴ Will you be brave then? Will you be strong at the time I come to punish you? I am the LORD. I have spoken, and I will do what I said!

¹⁵ I will scatter you among the nations. I will force you to go to many countries. I will completely destroy the filthy things in this city.

¹⁶ But Jerusalem, you will become unclean. And the other nations will see all these things happen. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁷ The LORD spoke to me and said,

¹⁸ Son of man, bronze, iron, lead, and tin are important metals, but when a worker melts silver to make it pure, those metals are poured off as waste. Israel has become like that waste to me.

¹⁹ So this is what the Lord GOD says: All of you have become like worthless waste. So I will gather you into Jerusalem.

²⁰ Workers put silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into a fire. They blow on the fire to make it hotter. Then the metals begin to melt. In the same way, I will put you in my fire and melt you. That fire is my hot anger.

²¹ I will put you in my fire of anger and blow on it, and you will begin to melt.

²² In that city, you will be like silver melting in a fire. Then you will know that I am the LORD, and that I poured out my anger on you.

²³ The LORD spoke to me and said,

²⁴ Son of man, speak to Israel. Tell her that she is not pure. I am angry at that country, so that country has not received its rain.

²⁵ The prophets in Jerusalem are making evil plans. They are like a lionit roars when it begins to eat the animal it

caught. They have destroyed many lives. They have taken many valuable things and made widows of many of the women in Jerusalem.

²⁶The priests have really hurt my teachings. They don't treat my holy things right—they don't show they are important. They treat holy things the same as things that are not holy. They treat clean things like things that are unclean. They don't teach the people about these things. They refuse to respect my special days of rest. They treat me as though I am not important.

²⁷The leaders in Jerusalem are like a wolf eating the animal it has caught. They attack people and kill them just to get rich.

²⁸The prophets don't warn the people—they cover up the truth. They are like workers who don't really repair a wall—they only put plaster over the holes. They only see lies. They do their magic to learn the future, but they only tell lies. They say, This is what the Lord GOD said. But they are only lying—the LORD did not speak to them!

²⁹The common people take advantage of each other. They cheat and steal from each other. They get rich by taking advantage of poor, helpless beggars, and they really cheat the foreigners. They are not fair to them at all!

³⁰I asked the people to change their lives and protect their country. I asked people to fix the walls. I wanted them to stand by those holes in the wall and fight to protect their city. But no one came to help!

³¹So I will show them my anger! I will completely destroy them. I will punish them for the evil things they have done. It is all their fault. This is what the Lord GOD said.

23 ¹The LORD spoke to me and said, ²Son of man, listen to this story about Samaria and Jerusalem. There were two sisters, daughters of the same mother.

³They became prostitutes in Egypt while they were still young girls. That's where they first let men touch and handle their young breasts.

⁴The older daughter was named Oholah, and her sister was named

Oholibah. They became my wives, and we had children. I am using the name Oholah to mean Samaria and the name Oholibah to mean Jerusalem.

⁵Then Oholah became unfaithful to meshe began to live like a prostitute. She began to want her lovers. She saw the Assyrian soldiers

⁶in their blue uniforms. They were all handsome young men riding horses. They were leaders and officers,

⁷and Oholah gave herself to them. They were handpicked soldiers in the Assyrian army, and she wanted them all! She polluted herself with their filthy idols.

⁸She continued the prostitution she began in Egypt. There men made love to her when she was a young girl. They touched her young breasts and used her as a prostitute.

⁹So I let her lovers have her. She wanted Assyria, so I gave her to them!

¹⁰They raped her. They took her children and killed her. They punished her, and women still talk about her.

¹¹Her younger sister Oholibah saw all these things happen. But Oholibah

sinned more than her sister did! She was more unfaithful than Oholah.

¹²She wanted the Assyrian leaders and officers. She wanted those soldiers in blue uniforms riding their horses. They were all handsome young men.

¹³I saw that both women were going to ruin their lives with the same mistakes.

¹⁴Oholibah continued to be unfaithful to me. In Babylon she saw pictures of men carved on the walls. These were pictures of Chaldean men wearing their red uniforms.

¹⁵They wore belts around their waists and long turbans on their heads. All those men looked like chariot officers. They all looked like native-born Babylonian men,

¹⁶and Oholibah wanted them.

¹⁷So the Babylonian men came to her bed to have sex with her. They used her and made her so filthy that she became disgusted with them.

¹⁸Oholibah let everyone see that she was unfaithful. She let so many men enjoy her naked body that I became disgusted with her just as I had become disgusted with her sister.

¹⁹But Oholibah thought about her time as a prostitute in Egypt when she was young, and she turned to even more prostitution.

²⁰She remembered the lovers who excited her there, who were like animals in their sexual desires and abilities.

²¹Oholibah, you dreamed of those times when you were young, when your lovers touched and handled your young breasts.

²²So, Oholibah, this is what the Lord GOD says: You became disgusted with your lovers, but I will bring them here, and they will surround you.

²³I will bring all the men from Babylon, especially the Chaldeans. I will bring the men from Pekod, Shoa, and Koa, and all the men from Assyria. I will bring all the leaders and officers, all those handsome young men, chariot officers, and handpicked soldiers riding their horses.

²⁴That crowd of men will come to you in large groups, riding on their horses and in their chariots. They will have their spears, shields, and helmets. They will gather around you, and I will tell them

what you have done to me. Then they will punish you their own way.

²⁵I will show you how jealous I am. They will become angry and hurt you. They will cut off your nose and ears. They will kill you with a sword. Then they will take your children and burn whatever is left of you.

²⁶They will take your nice clothes and jewelry.

²⁷This is how I will stop your shameful acts and your love affair with Egypt. You will stop wishing you could go back there. You will never remember Egypt again!

²⁸This is what the Lord GOD says: I am giving you to those you hate, to those you thought were sickening.

²⁹And they will show how much they hate you! They will take everything you worked for, and they will leave you bare and naked! Everyone will see that you are nothing but a prostitute. Your own shameful sins

³⁰are the reason I am punishing you. You acted like a prostitute with other nations, polluting yourself by worshiping their idols.

³¹ You followed the example of your sister Oholah. So I will punish you the same way. I will give you the same cup I gave her to drink.

³² This is what the Lord GOD says: You will drink from your sisters cup, a big cup, tall and wide. It holds so much that after you drink it all, everyone will laugh and make fun of you.

³³ You will be drunk and miserable, because that cup is full of fear and ruin. It is the same cup your sister Samaria drank.

³⁴ You will drink until the cup is empty. Then you will break it to pieces and use them to tear at your breasts. This will happen because I, the Lord GOD, have said so.

³⁵ So this is what the Lord GOD said: Jerusalem, you forgot me. You threw me away and left me behind. So now you must suffer for leaving me and living like a prostitute. You must suffer for your wicked dreams.

³⁶ The LORD said to me, Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then tell them about the terrible things they have done.

³⁷ They committed the sin of adultery. They are guilty of murder. They acted like prostitutes they left me to be with their filthy idols. They had my children, but they forced them to pass through fire. They did this to give food to their filthy idols.

³⁸ They also treated my special days of rest and my holy place as though they were not important.

³⁹ They killed their children for their idols, and then they went into my holy place and made it filthy too! They did this inside my Temple!

⁴⁰ They have sent for men from faraway places. You sent a messenger to these men, and they came to see you. You bathed for them, painted your eyes, and put on your jewelry.

⁴¹ You sat on a fine bed with a table set before it. You put my incense and my oil on this table.

⁴² The noise in Jerusalem sounded like a crowd of people having a party. Many people came to the party. People were already drinking as they came in from the desert. They gave bracelets and beautiful crowns to the women.

⁴³ Then I spoke to one of the women who was worn out from her sexual sins. I asked her, Will they continue to do sexual sins with her, and she with them?

⁴⁴ But they kept going to her as they would go to a prostitute. Yes, they went again and again to Oholah and Oholibah, those wicked women.

⁴⁵ But good men will judge them guilty of adultery and murder, because Oholah and Oholibah committed adultery and their hands are covered with blood!

⁴⁶ This is what the Lord GOD said: Gather the people together to punish and terrorize Oholah and Oholibah.

⁴⁷ They will throw stones at these women and kill them. They will cut the women to pieces with their swords. They will kill their children and burn their houses.

⁴⁸ In this way I will remove that shame from this country, and all the other women will be warned not to do the shameful things you have done.

⁴⁹ They will punish you for the wicked things you did. You will be punished for worshiping your filthy idols. Then you will know that I am the Lord GOD.

24¹ The word of the LORD came to me. This was on the tenth day of the tenth month in the ninth year of exile. He said,

² Son of man, write today's date and this note: On this date the army of the king of Babylon surrounded Jerusalem.

³ Tell this story to the family who refuses to obey (Israel). Tell them, This is what the Lord GOD says: Put the pot on the fire. Put on the pot and pour in the water.

⁴ Put in the pieces of meat. Put in every good piece, the thighs and the shoulders. Fill the pot with the best bones.

⁵ Use the best animals in the flock. Pile the wood under the pot, and boil the pieces of meat. Boil the soup until even the bones are cooked.

⁶ So this is what the Lord GOD says: It will be bad for Jerusalem. It will be bad for that city of murderers. Jerusalem is like a pot with rust on it, and those spots of rust cannot be removed! That pot is not clean, and the rust cannot be removed, so the meat must be thrown out and not divided among the priests.

⁷ Jerusalem is like a pot with rust on it. This is because the blood from the murders is still there! She put the blood on the bare rock. She did not pour the blood on the ground and cover it with dirt.

⁸ I put her blood on the bare rock so it would not be covered. I did this so that people would become angry and punish her for killing innocent people.

⁹ So this is what the Lord GOD says: It will be bad for that city of murderers! I will pile up plenty of wood for the fire.

¹⁰ Put plenty of wood under the pot. Light the fire. Cook the meat until it is well done. Mix in the spices, and let the bones be burned up.

¹¹ Then let the pot stand empty on the coals. Let it become so hot that its stains begin to glow. Those stains will be melted away. The rust will be destroyed.

¹² Jerusalem might work hard to scrub away her stains. But that rust will not go away! Only the fire of punishment will remove it.

¹³ You sinned against me and became stained with sin. I wanted to wash you and make you clean, but the stains would

not come out. I will not try washing you again until my hot anger is finished with you!

¹⁴I am the LORD. I said your punishment would come, and I will make it happen. I will not hold back the punishment or feel sorry for you. I will punish you for the evil things you did. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁵Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

¹⁶Son of man, you love your wife very much, but I am going to take her away from you. Your wife will die suddenly, but you must not show your sadness. You must not cry loudly. You will cry and your tears will fall,

¹⁷but you must mourn quietly. Dress as you normally do; wear your turban and sandals; don't cover your mustache, and don't eat the food people normally eat when someone dies.

¹⁸The next morning I told the people what God had said. That evening, my wife died. The next morning I did what God commanded.

¹⁹Then the people said to me, Why are you doing this? What does it mean?

²⁰Then I said to them, The word of the LORD came to me. He told me

²¹to speak to the family of Israel. The Lord GOD said, Look, I will destroy my holy place. You are proud of that place and sing songs of praise about it. You love to see it. You really love that place. But I will destroy it, and your children that you left behind will be killed in battle.

²²But you will do the same things that I have done about my dead wife. You will not cover your mustache or eat the food people normally eat when someone dies.

²³You will wear your turbans and your sandals. You will not show your sadness publicly or cry publicly, but you will waste away with guilt and talk to each other quietly about your grief.

²⁴So Ezekiel is an example for you. You will do all the same things he did. That time of punishment will come, and then you will know that I am the Lord GOD.

²⁵The Lord said, Son of man, I will take away the place that makes the people feel safe Jerusalem, that beautiful city that makes them so happy. They really love that place. They love to look at it.

But I will take it away from them, and I will also take their children. On that day one of the survivors will come to you with the bad news about Jerusalem.

²⁶ (24: 25)

²⁷ That same day you will be able to talk to the messenger. You will not be silent anymore. This will be a sign to the people, and they will know that I am the LORD.

25 ¹ The LORD spoke to me and said, ² Son of man, look toward the people of Ammon and speak against them for me.

³ Say to them: Listen to the word of the Lord GOD! This is what the Lord GOD says: You were happy when my holy place was destroyed. You were against the land of Israel when it was polluted. You were against the family of Judah when the people were carried away as prisoners.

⁴ So I will give you to the people from the east. They will get your land. Their armies will set up their camps in your country and will live among you. They will eat your fruit and drink your milk.

⁵I will make the city Rabbah a pasture for camels and the country of Ammon a sheep pen. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

⁶This is what the Lord GOD says: You were happy that Jerusalem was destroyed. You clapped your hands and stamped your feet. You had fun insulting the land of Israel,

⁷so I will punish you. You will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. You will lose your inheritance and die in faraway lands. I will destroy your country! Then you will know that I am the LORD.

⁸This is what the Lord GOD says: Moab and Seir say, The family of Judah is just like any other nation.

⁹I will cut into Moab's shoulder. I will take away its cities that are on its border, the glory of the land, Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon, and Kiriathaim.

¹⁰Then I will give these cities to the people of the east. They will get your land. I will also let those people from the east destroy the Ammonites, and people will forget they were ever a nation.

¹¹ So I will punish Moab, and then they will know that I am the LORD.

¹² This is what the Lord GOD says: The people of Edom turned against the family of Judah and tried to get even. The people of Edom are guilty.

¹³ So the Lord GOD says: I will punish Edom. I will destroy the people and the animals in Edom. I will destroy the whole country of Edom, all the way from Teman to Dedan. The Edomites will be killed in battle.

¹⁴ I will use my people Israel and get even against Edom. In this way the people of Israel will show my anger against Edom. Then the people of Edom will know that I punished them. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁵ This is what the Lord GOD says: The Philistines tried to get even. They were very cruel. They let their anger burn inside them too long.

¹⁶ So the Lord GOD said, I will punish the Philistines. Yes, I will destroy those people from Crete. I will completely destroy those people who live on the seacoast.

¹⁷I will punish them I will get even. I will let my anger teach them a lesson. Then they will know that I am the LORD!

26 ¹In the eleventh year of exile, on the first day of the month, the LORD spoke to me. He said,

²Son of man, Tyre said bad things about Jerusalem: Hurray! The city gate protecting the people is destroyed! The city gate is open for me. The city of Jerusalem is ruined, so I can get plenty of valuable things out of it!

³So the Lord GOD says: I am against you, Tyre! I will bring many nations to fight against you. They will come again and again, like waves on the beach.

⁴The enemy soldiers will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers. I will also scrape the topsoil from her land. I will make Tyre a bare rock.

⁵Tyre will become a place by the sea for spreading fishing nets. I have spoken! The Lord GOD says, Tyre will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war.

⁶Her daughters on the mainland will be killed in battle. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

⁷ This is what the Lord GOD says: I will bring an enemy from the north against Tyre. That enemy is Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon! He will bring a very large army. There will be horses, chariots, horse soldiers and many other soldiers. They will be from many different nations.

⁸ Nebuchadnezzar will kill your daughters on the mainland. He will build towers to attack your city. He will build a dirt road around your city and a dirt road leading up to the walls.

⁹ He will bring the logs to break down your walls. He will use picks and break down your towers.

¹⁰ There will be so many of his horses that the dust from them will cover you. Your walls will shake at the noise of horse soldiers, wagons, and chariots when the king of Babylon enters the city through your city gates. Yes, they will come into your city because its walls will be pulled down.

¹¹ The king of Babylon will come riding through your city. His horses hoofs will come pounding over your streets. He will kill your people with swords. The

strong columns in your city will fall to the ground.

¹²Nebuchadnezzars men will take away your riches. They will take the things you wanted to sell. They will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses. They will throw the wood and stones into the sea like garbage.

¹³So I will stop the sound of your happy songs. People will not hear your harps anymore.

¹⁴I will make you a bare rock. You will be a place by the sea for spreading fishing nets! You will not be rebuilt, because I, the LORD, have spoken! This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁵This is what the Lord GOD says to Tyre: The countries along the Mediterranean coast will shake at the sound of your fall. That will happen when your people are hurt and killed.

¹⁶Then all the leaders of the countries by the sea will step down from their thrones and show their sadness. They will take off their special robes and their beautiful clothes. Then they will put on their clothes of shaking. They will sit on the ground and shake with fear. They

will be shocked at how quickly you were destroyed.

¹⁷They will sing this sad song about you: Tyre, you were a famous city. People came from across the sea to live in you. You were famous, but now you are gone! You were strong on the sea, and so were the people who lived in you. You made all who live on the mainland afraid of you.

¹⁸Now, on the day you fall, the countries along the coast will shake with fear. You started many colonies along the coast. Now those people will be afraid when you are gone!

¹⁹This is what the Lord GOD says: Tyre, you will become an old, empty city. No one will live there. I will cause the sea to flow over you. The great sea will cover you.

²⁰I will send you down into that deep hole to the place of death. You will join those who died long ago. I will send you to the world below, like all the other old, empty cities. You will be with all the others who go down to the grave. No one will live in you then. You will never again be in the land of the living!

²¹ Other people will be afraid about what happened to you. You will be finished. People will look for you, but they will never find you again. That is what the Lord GOD says.

27 ¹ The word of the LORD came to me again. He said,

² Son of man, sing this sad song about Tyre.

³ Say this about Tyre: Tyre, you are the door to the seas. You are the merchant for many nations. You travel to many countries along the coast. This is what the Lord GOD says: Tyre, you think that you are so beautiful. You think you are perfectly beautiful!

⁴ The Mediterranean Sea is the border around your city. Your builders made you perfectly beautiful, like the ships that sail from you.

⁵ Your builders used cypress trees from the mountains of Senir to make your planks. They used cedar trees from Lebanon to make your mast.

⁶ They used oak trees from Bashan to make your oars. They used pine trees from Cyprus to make the cabin on your

deck. They decorated that shelter with ivory.

⁷For your sail they used colorful linen made in Egypt. That sail was your flag. The coverings over your cabin were blue and purple. They came from the island of Cyprus.

⁸Men from Sidon and Arvad rowed your boats for you. Tyre, your wise men were the pilots on your ships.

⁹The elders and wise men from Byblos were on board to help put caulking between the boards on your ship. All the ships of the sea and their sailors came to trade and do business with you.

¹⁰Men from Persia, Lud, and Put were in your army. They were your men of war who hung their shields and helmets on your walls. They brought honor and glory to your city.

¹¹Men from Arvad and Cilicia were guards standing on the wall around your city. Men from Gammad were in your towers. They hung their shields on the walls around your city and made your beauty complete.

¹²Tarshish was one of your best customers. They traded silver, iron, tin,

and lead for all the wonderful things you sold.

¹³People in Greece, Turkey, and the area around the Black Sea traded with you. They traded slaves and bronze for the things you sold.

¹⁴People from the nation of Togarmah traded horses, war horses, and mules for the things you sold.

¹⁵The people of Rhodes traded with you. You sold your things in many places. People brought ivory tusks and ebony wood to pay you.

¹⁶Aram traded with you because you had so many good things. They traded emeralds, purple cloth, fine needlework, fine linen, coral, and rubies for the things you sold.

¹⁷The people in Judah and Israel traded with you. They paid for the things you sold with the wheat, olives, early figs, honey, oil, and balm.

¹⁸Damascus was a good customer. They traded with you for the many wonderful things you had. They traded wine from Helbon and white wool for those things.

¹⁹ Damascus traded wine from Uzal for the things you sold. They paid with wrought iron, cassia, and sugar cane.

²⁰ Dedan provided good business and traded with you for saddle blankets and riding horses.

²¹ Arabia and all the leaders of Kedar traded lambs, rams, and goats for your goods.

²² The merchants of Sheba and Raamah traded with you. They traded all the best spices and every kind of precious stone and gold for your goods.

²³ Haran, Canneh, Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Kilmad traded with you.

²⁴ They paid with the finest clothing, blue cloth, cloth with fine needlework, rugs of many colors, and the strongest ropes. These were the things they traded with you.

²⁵ The ships from Tarshish carried the things you sold. Tyre, you are like one of those cargo ships. You are on the sea, loaded with many riches.

²⁶ Your oarsmen rowed you far out to sea. But a powerful east wind will destroy your ship at sea.

²⁷ All your wealth will spill into the sea. Your wealth the things you buy and sell will spill into the sea. Your whole crew sailors, pilots, and the men who put caulking between the boards on your ship will spill into the sea. The merchants and soldiers in your city will all sink into the sea. That will happen on the day that you are destroyed!

²⁸ You send your merchants to faraway places. Those places will shake with fear when they hear your pilots cry!

²⁹ Your whole crew will jump ship. The sailors and pilots will jump ship and swim to the shore.

³⁰ They will be very sad about you. They will cry, throw dust on their heads, and roll in ashes.

³¹ They will shave their heads for you. They will put on sackcloth. They will cry for you like someone crying for someone who died.

³² And in their loud crying they will sing this sad song about you: No one is like Tyre! Tyre is destroyed, in the middle of the sea!

³³ Your merchants sailed across the seas. You satisfied many people with

your great wealth and the things you sold. You made the kings of the earth rich!

³⁴ But now you are broken by the seas and by the deep waters. All the things you sell and all your people have fallen.

³⁵ All the people living on the coast are shocked about you. Their kings are terrified. Their faces show their shock.

³⁶ The merchants in other nations whistle about you. What happened to you will frighten people, because you were destroyed. You are gone forever.

28 ¹ The LORD spoke to me and said, ² Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, This is what the Lord GOD says: You are very proud! And you say, I am a god! I sit on the seat of gods in the middle of the seas. But you are a man and not God! You only think you are a god.

³ You think you are wiser than Daniel and no secret is hidden from you.

⁴ Through your wisdom and understanding you have gotten riches for yourself. And you put gold and silver in your treasuries.

⁵Through your great wisdom and trade, you have made your riches grow. And now you are proud because of those riches.

⁶So this is what the Lord GOD says: Tyre, you thought you were like a god.

⁷I will bring strangers to fight against you. They are most terrible among the nations! They will pull out their swords and use them against the beautiful things your wisdom brought you. They will ruin your glory.

⁸They will bring you down to the grave. You will be like a sailor who died at sea.

⁹That person will kill you. Will you still say, I am a god? No, he will have you in his power. You will see that you are a man, not God!

¹⁰Strangers will treat you like a foreigner and kill you, because I gave the command! This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹¹The LORD spoke to me and said,

¹²Son of man, sing this sad song about the king of Tyre. Say to him, This is what the Lord GOD says: You were the perfect man so full of wisdom and perfectly handsome.

¹³You were in Eden, the garden of God. You had every precious stone rubies, topaz, and diamonds, beryls, onyx, and jasper, sapphires, turquoise, and emeralds. And each of these stones was set in gold. You were given this beauty on the day you were created. God made you strong.

¹⁴You were one of the chosen Cherubs who spread your wings over my throne. I put you on the holy mountain of God. You walked among the jewels that sparkled like fire.

¹⁵You were good and honest when I created you, but then you became evil.

¹⁶Your business brought you many riches. But they also put cruelty inside you, and you sinned. So I treated you like something unclean and threw you off the mountain of God. You were one of the chosen Cherubs who spread your wings over my throne. But I forced you to leave the jewels that sparkled like fire.

¹⁷Your beauty made you proud. Your glory ruined your wisdom. So I threw you down to the ground, and now other kings stare at you.

¹⁸You did many wrong things. You were a very crooked merchant. In this way, you made the holy places unclean. So I brought fire from inside you. It burned you! You burned to ashes on the ground. Now everyone can see your shame.

¹⁹All the people in other nations were shocked about what happened to you. What happened to you will make people very afraid. You are finished!

²⁰The LORD spoke to me and said,

²¹Son of man, look toward Sidon and speak for me against that place.

²²Say, This is what the Lord GOD says: I am against you, Sidon! Your people will learn to respect me. I will punish Sidon. Then people will know that I am the LORD. Then they will learn that I am holy, and they will treat me that way.

²³I will send disease and death to Sidon, and many people inside the city will die. Soldiers outside the city will kill many people. Then people will know that I am the LORD!

²⁴Then the surrounding nations that hate Israel will no longer be like stinging nettles and painful thorns. And they will know that I am the Lord GOD.

²⁵This is what the Lord GOD said: I scattered the people of Israel among other nations, but I will gather the family of Israel together again. Then the nations will know that I am holy, and they will treat me that way. At that time the people of Israel will live in their land I gave that land to my servant Jacob.

²⁶They will live safely in the land. They will build houses and plant vineyards. I will punish the nations around them that hated them. Then the people of Israel will live in safety, and they will know that I am the LORD their God.

29¹ On the twelfth day of the tenth month of the tenth year of exile, the LORD spoke to me. He said,

²Son of man, look toward Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Speak for me against him and Egypt.

³Say, This is what the Lord GOD says: I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt. You are the great monster lying beside the Nile River. You say, This is my river! I made this river!

⁴But I will put hooks in your jaws. The fish in the Nile River will stick to your scales. I will pull you and your fish up

out of your rivers and onto the dry land. You will fall on the ground, and no one will pick you up or bury you. I will give you to the wild animals and birds. You will be their food.

⁵ (29: 4)

⁶ Then all the people living in Egypt will know that I am the LORD! Why will I do these things? Because the people of Israel leaned on Egypt for support, but Egypt was only a weak blade of grass.

⁷ The people of Israel leaned on Egypt for support, but Egypt only pierced their hands and shoulder. They leaned on you for support, but you broke and twisted their back.

⁸ So this is what the Lord GOD says: I will bring a sword against you. I will destroy all your people and animals.

⁹ Egypt will be empty and destroyed. Then they will know that I am the LORD. God said, Why will I do these things? Because you said, This is my river. I made this river.

¹⁰ So I am against you. I am against the many branches of your Nile River. I will destroy Egypt completely. The cities

will be empty from Migdol to Aswan and as far as the border of Ethiopia.

¹¹No person or animal will pass through Egypt. Nothing will pass through or settle there for 40 years.

¹²I will destroy Egypt. The cities will be in ruins for 40 years! I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. I will make them strangers in foreign lands.

¹³This is what the Lord GOD says: I will scatter the people of Egypt among many nations. But at the end of 40 years, I will gather those people together again.

¹⁴I will bring back the Egyptian captives. I will bring back the Egyptians to the land of Pathros, to the land where they were born. But their kingdom will not be important.

¹⁵It will be the least important kingdom. It will never again lift itself above the other nations. I will make them so small that they will not rule over the nations.

¹⁶And the family of Israel will never again depend on Egypt. The Israelites will remember their sin they will remember that they turned to Egypt for help and not to God, and they will know that I am the Lord GOD.

¹⁷ On the first day of the first month in the twenty-seventh year of exile, the LORD spoke to me. He said,

¹⁸ Son of man, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon made his army fight hard against Tyre. They shaved every soldier's head. Every shoulder was rubbed bare from carrying heavy loads. Nebuchadnezzar and his army worked hard to defeat Tyre, but they got nothing from all that hard work.

¹⁹ So this is what the Lord GOD says: I will give Egypt to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and he will carry away the people. He will take the many valuable things in Egypt to pay his army.

²⁰ I will give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as a reward for the hard work he did for me. This is what the Lord GOD said!

²¹ On that day I will make the family of Israel strong. So Ezekiel, I will let you speak to them. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

30¹ The word of the LORD came to me again. He said,

² Son of man, speak for me. Say, This is what the Lord GOD says: Cry and say, A terrible day is coming.

³That day is near! Yes, the LORD'S day for judging is near. It will be a cloudy day, the time for judging the nations.

⁴A sword will come against Egypt! People in Ethiopia will shake with fear, when Egypt falls. The army of Babylon will take the Egyptians as prisoners. Egypt's foundations will be torn down.

⁵Many people made peace agreements with Egypt. But all those people from Ethiopia, Put, Lud, all Arabia, Libya, and the people of Israel will be destroyed!

⁶This is what the LORD says: Those who support Egypt will fall! The pride in her power will end. The people in Egypt will be killed in battle, all the way from Migdol to Aswan. This is what the Lord GOD said!

⁷Egypt will join the other countries that were destroyed. Its cities will be among those that are in ruins.

⁸I will start a fire in Egypt, and all her helpers will be destroyed. Then they will know that I am the LORD!

⁹At that time I will send out messengers. They will go in ships to carry the bad news to Ethiopia. Ethiopia now feels safe, but the people of Ethiopia

will shake with fear when Egypt is punished. That time is coming!

¹⁰This is what the Lord GOD says: I will use the king of Babylon. I will use Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the people of Egypt.

¹¹Nebuchadnezzar and his people are the most terrible of the nations, and I will bring them to destroy Egypt. They will pull out their swords against Egypt. They will fill the land with dead bodies.

¹²I will make the Nile River become dry land. Then I will sell the dry land to evil people. I will use strangers to make that land empty. I, the LORD, have spoken!

¹³This is what the Lord GOD says: I will also destroy the idols in Egypt. I will take the statues away from Memphis. There will no longer be a leader in the land of Egypt. I will put fear there instead.

¹⁴I will make Pathros empty. I will start a fire in Zoan. I will punish Thebes.

¹⁵I will pour out my anger against Pelusium, the fortress of Egypt! I will destroy the people of Thebes.

¹⁶I will start a fire in Egypt; the city of Pelusium will ache with fear. The soldiers will break into the city Thebes, and

Memphis will have new troubles every day.

¹⁷The young men of Heliopolis and Bubastis will die in battle, and the women will be taken away as prisoners.

¹⁸It will be a dark day in Tahpanhes when I break Egypt's control. Her proud power will be finished! A cloud will cover Egypt, and her daughters will be taken away as prisoners.

¹⁹So I will punish Egypt. Then they will know that I am the LORD!

²⁰On the seventh day of the first month of the eleventh year of exile, the LORD spoke to me. He said,

²¹Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. No one will wrap his arm with a bandage. It will not heal, so his arm will not be strong enough to hold a sword.

²²This is what the Lord GOD says: I am against Pharaoh, king of Egypt. I will break both his arms, the strong arm and the arm that is already broken. I will make the sword fall from his hand.

²³I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations.

²⁴I will make the arms of the king of Babylon strong. I will put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh will cry out in pain, the kind of cry that a dying man makes.

²⁵So I will make the arms of the king of Babylon strong, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall. Then they will know that I am the LORD. I will put my sword in the hand of the king of Babylon. Then he will stretch the sword out against the land of Egypt.

²⁶I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD!

31 ¹On the first day of the third month in the eleventh year of exile, the LORD spoke to me. He said,

²Son of man, say this to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to his people: You are so great! Who can I compare you to?

³Assyria was a cedar tree in Lebanon with beautiful branches, with forest shade, and very tall. Its top was among the clouds!

⁴The water made the tree grow. The deep river made the tree tall. Rivers

flowed around the place where the tree was planted. Only small streams flowed from that tree to all the other trees of the field.

⁵So that tree was taller than all the other trees of the field, and it grew many branches. There was plenty of water, so the tree branches spread out.

⁶All the birds of the sky made their nests in the branches of that tree, and all the animals of the field gave birth under the branches of that tree. All the great nations lived under the shade of that tree.

⁷The tree was very beautiful. It was so large! It had such long branches. Its roots had plenty of water.

⁸Even the cedar trees in Gods garden were not as big as this tree. Cypress trees did not have as many branches. Plane trees did not have such branches. No tree in Gods garden was as beautiful as this tree.

⁹I gave it many branches and made it beautiful. And all the trees in Eden, Gods garden, were jealous!

¹⁰So this is what the Lord GOD says: That tree grew tall. Its top reached up to

the clouds. It grew so big that it became proud!

¹¹ So I let a powerful king have that tree. That ruler punished the tree for the bad things it did. I took that tree out of my garden.

¹² Strangersthe most terrible people in the worldcut it down and scattered its branches on the mountains and in the valleys. Its broken limbs drifted down the rivers flowing through that land. There was no more shadow under that tree, so all the people left.

¹³ Now birds live in that fallen tree. Wild animals walk over its fallen branches.

¹⁴ Now, none of the trees by that water will be proud. They will not try to reach the clouds. None of the strong trees that drink that water will brag about being tall, because all of them must die. They will all go down into the world below, to Sheol, the place of death. They will join the other people who died and went down into that deep hole.

¹⁵ This is what the Lord GOD says: I made the people cry on the day that tree went down to Sheol. I covered him with the deep ocean. I stopped its rivers and

all the water stopped flowing. I made Lebanon mourn for it. All the trees of the field became sick with sadness for that big tree.

¹⁶I made the tree fall and the nations shook with fear at the sound of the falling tree. I sent the tree down to the place of death to join the other people who had gone down into that deep hole. In the past, all the trees of Eden, the best of Lebanon, drank that water. The trees were comforted in the world below.

¹⁷Yes, those trees also went down with the big tree to the place of death. They joined the people who were killed in battle. That big tree made the other trees strong. Those trees had lived under the big trees shadow among the nations.

¹⁸Egypt, there were many big and powerful trees in Eden. Which of those trees should I compare you to? They all went down into the world below! And you, too, will join those foreigners in that place of death. You will lie there among the people killed in battle. Yes, that will happen to Pharaoh and to the crowds of people with him! This is what the Lord GOD said.

32¹ On the first day of the twelfth month in the twelfth year of exile, the LORD spoke to me. He said,

² Son of man, sing this sad song about Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Say to him: You thought you were like a powerful young lion walking proud among the nations. But really, you are like a dragon in the lakes. You push your way through the streams. You make the water muddy with your feet and stir up the rivers of Egypt.

³ This is what the Lord GOD says: I have gathered many people together. Now I will throw my net over you. Then those people will pull you in.

⁴ Then I will drop you on the dry ground. I will throw you down in the field. I will let all the birds come and eat you. I will let wild animals from every place come and eat you until they are full.

⁵ I will scatter your body on the mountains. I will fill the valleys with your dead body.

⁶ I will pour your blood on the mountains, and it will soak down into the ground. The rivers will be full of you.

⁷ I will make you disappear. I will cover the sky and make the stars dark. I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not shine.

⁸ I will darken the lights in the sky over you. I will make your whole country dark. This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁹ I will make many people sad and upset when I bring an enemy to destroy you. Nations you don't even know will be upset.

¹⁰ I will make many people shocked about you. Their kings will be terrified of you, when I swing my sword before them. They will shake with fear on the day you fall. Each king will be afraid for his own life.

¹¹ That will happen because of what the Lord GOD said: The sword of the king of Babylon will come to fight against you.

¹² I will use those soldiers to kill your people in battle. They come from the most terrible of the nations. They will destroy the things Egypt is proud of. The people of Egypt will be destroyed.

¹³ There are many animals by the rivers in Egypt. I will also destroy all those animals. People will not make the waters

muddy with their feet anymore. The hoofs of cattle will not make the water muddy anymore.

¹⁴So I will make the water in Egypt calm. I will cause their rivers to run slowly they will be slick like oil. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁵I will make the land of Egypt empty. That land will lose everything. I will punish all the people living in Egypt. Then they will know that I am the LORD!

¹⁶This is a sad song that people will sing for Egypt. The daughters in other nations will sing this sad song. They will sing it as a sad song about Egypt and all its people. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁷On the fifteenth day of that month in the twelfth year of exile, the LORD spoke to me. He said,

¹⁸Son of man, cry for the people of Egypt. Lead Egypt and the daughters from powerful nations to the grave. Lead them to the world below where they will be with the other people who went down into that deep hole.

¹⁹Egypt, you are no better than anyone else! Go down to the place of death. Go lie down with those foreigners.

²⁰Egypt will go to be with all the other men who were killed in battle. The enemy has pulled her and all her people away.

²¹Strong and powerful men were killed in battle. Those foreigners went down to the place of death. And from that place, those who were killed will speak to Egypt and his helpers.

²²Assyria and all its army are there in the place of death. Their graves are deep down in that deep hole. All the Assyrian soldiers were killed in battle, and their graves are all around his grave. When they were alive, they made people afraid, but they were all killed in battle.

²³ (32: 22)

²⁴Elam is there and all its army is around her grave. All of them were killed in battle. Those foreigners went deep down into the ground. When they were alive, they made people afraid. But they carried their shame with them down to that deep hole.

²⁵They have made a bed for Elam and all its soldiers who were killed in battle. Elams army is all around its grave. All those foreigners were killed in battle. When they were alive, they scared people. But they carried their shame with them down into that deep hole. They were put with all the other people who were killed.

²⁶Meshech, Tubal, and all their armies are there. Their graves are around it. All those foreigners were killed in battle. When they were alive, they made people afraid.

²⁷But now they are lying down by the powerful men who died long, long ago! They were buried with their weapons of war. Their swords will be laid under their heads. But their sins are on their bones, because when they were alive, they scared people.

²⁸Egypt, you also will be destroyed, and you will lie down by those foreigners. You will lie with the other soldiers who were killed in battle.

²⁹Edom is there also. His kings and other leaders are there with him. They were powerful soldiers, but now they lie

with the other men who were killed in battle. They are lying there with those foreigners. They are there with the other people who went down into that deep hole.

³⁰The rulers from the north are there, all of them, and there are all the soldiers from Sidon. Their strength scared people, but they are embarrassed. Those foreigners lie there with the other men who were killed in battle. They carried their shame with them down into that deep hole.

³¹Yes, Pharaoh and all his army will be killed in battle. Pharaoh will be comforted when he sees his many men and all the others who went down into the place of death. This is what the Lord GOD said.

³²People were afraid of Pharaoh when he was alive, but he will lie down next to those foreigners. Pharaoh and his army will lie down with all the other soldiers who were killed in battle. This is what the Lord GOD said.

33 ¹The LORD spoke to me and said, ²Son of man, speak to your people. Say to them, Whenever I bring enemy soldiers to fight against a country,

the people choose someone to be a watchman.

³If this guard sees enemy soldiers coming, he blows the trumpet and warns the people.

⁴If people hear the warning but ignore it, the enemy will capture them and take them away as prisoners. They will be responsible for their own death.

⁵They heard the trumpet, but they ignored the warning. So they are responsible for their own deaths. If they had paid attention to the warning, they could have saved their own lives.

⁶But what if the guard sees the enemy soldiers coming, but does not blow the trumpet? Since he doesn't warn the people, the enemy will capture them and take them away as prisoners. They will be taken away because they sinned, but the guard will also be responsible for their deaths.

⁷Now, son of man, I am choosing you to be a watchman for the family of Israel. If you hear a message from my mouth, you must warn the people for me.

⁸I might say to you, These evil people will die. Then you must go warn them for

me. If you don't warn them and tell them to change their lives, those evil people will die because they sinned. But I will make you responsible for their deaths.

⁹But if you do warn the evil people to change their lives and stop sinning, and if they refuse to stop, they will die because they sinned. But you have saved your life.

¹⁰So, son of man, speak to the family of Israel for me. They might say, We have sinned and broken the law. Our sins are too heavy to bear. We rot away because of them. What can we do to live?

¹¹You must say to them, The Lord GOD says: By my life, I swear that I don't enjoy seeing people die, not even evil people! I don't want them to die. I want them to come back to me. I want them to change their lives so that they can really live. So come back to me! Stop doing bad things! Why must you die, family of Israel?

¹²Son of man, tell your people: The good things people did in the past will not save them if they become bad and begin to sin. In the same way, the bad things people did in the past will not

destroy them if they turn from their evil. So remember, the good things people did in the past will not save them if they begin to sin.

¹³Maybe I will tell good people that they will live. But maybe those good people will begin to think that the good things they did in the past will save them. So they might begin to do bad things, but I will not remember the good things they did in the past! No, they will die because of the bad things they begin to do.

¹⁴Or maybe I will tell some evil people that they will die. But they might change their lives, stop sinning, and begin to live right. They might become good and fair.

¹⁵They might give back the things they took when they loaned money. They might pay for the things they stole. They might begin to follow the laws that give life and stop doing bad things. Then they will surely live. They will not die.

¹⁶I will not remember the bad things they did in the past, because now they live right and are fair. So they will live!

¹⁷But your people say, That's not fair! The Lord cannot be like that! But they

are the people who are not fair! They are the people who must change!

¹⁸If good people stop doing good and begin to sin, they will die because of their sins.

¹⁹And if evil people stop doing wrong and start living right and being fair, they will live.

²⁰You still say that I am not fair, but I am telling you the truth. Family of Israel, everyone will be judged for what they do!

²¹On the fifth day of the tenth month in the twelfth year of exile, a person who had escaped from the battle in Jerusalem came to me and said, The city has been taken!

²²The evening before that person came to me, the power of the LORD came on me. The Lord opened my mouth. So when that person came, I could speak again.

²³Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

²⁴Son of man, there are Israelites who live in the ruined cities in Israel. They are saying, Abraham was only one man, and God gave him all this land. Now,

we are many people, so surely this land belongs to us! It is our land!

²⁵You must tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: You eat meat with the blood still in it. You look to your idols for help. You murder people, so why should I give you this land?

²⁶You depend on your own sword. Each of you does terrible things. Each of you commits sexual sins with his neighbors wife, so you cannot have the land!

²⁷You must tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: By my life, I promise that the people living in the ruined cities will be killed with a sword! If any people are out in the country, I will let animals kill and eat them. If people are hiding in the fortresses and the caves, they will die from disease.

²⁸I will make that place an empty wasteland. That country will lose all the things it was proud of. The mountains of Israel will become empty. No one will pass through that place.

²⁹The people have done many terrible things, so I will make that place an empty wasteland. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

³⁰ And now about you, son of man. Your people lean against the walls and stand in their doorways talking about you. They tell each other, Come on, lets go hear what the LORD says.

³¹ So they come to you as if they were my people. They sit in front of you as if they were my people. They hear your words, but they will not do the things you say. They only want to do what feels good. They only want to cheat people and make more money.

³² You are nothing to these people but a singer singing love songs. You have a good voice. You play your instrument well. They listen to your words, but they will not do what you say.

³³ But the things you sing about really will happen, and then the people will know that there was a prophet living among them.

34 ¹ The LORD spoke to me and said, ² Son of man, speak against the shepherds of Israel for me. Speak to them for me. Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: You shepherds of Israel have only been feeding yourselves.

It will be very bad for you! Why don't you shepherds feed the flock?

³You eat the fat sheep and use their wool to make clothes for yourselves. You kill the fat sheep, but you don't feed the flock.

⁴You have not made the weak strong. You have not cared for the sick sheep. You have not put bandages on the sheep that were hurt. Some of the sheep wandered away, and you did not go get them and bring them back. You did not go to look for the lost sheep. No, you were cruel and severe that's the way you tried to lead the sheep!

⁵And now the sheep are scattered because there was no shepherd. They became food for every wild animal, so they were scattered.

⁶My flock wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My flock was scattered over all the face of the earth. There was no one to search or to look for them.

⁷So, you shepherds, listen to the word of the LORD.

⁸The Lord GOD says, I swear that wild animals will catch my sheep, and my

people will become food for all those animals because they did not have any real shepherds. My shepherds did not look out for my flock. They did not feed my flock. No, they only killed the sheep and fed themselves!

⁹So, you shepherds, listen to the word of the LORD!

¹⁰The Lord GOD says, I am against the shepherds. I will demand my sheep from them. I will fire them. They will not be my shepherds anymore. Then the shepherds will not be able to feed themselves, and I will save my flock from their mouths. Then my sheep will not be food for them.

¹¹The Lord GOD says, I myself will be their Shepherd. I will search for my sheep and take care of them.

¹²If a shepherd is with his sheep when they begin to wander away, he will go searching for them. In the same way, I will search for my sheep. I will save them and bring them back from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day.

¹³I will bring them back from those nations. I will gather them from those

countries and bring them back to their own land. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the places where people live.

¹⁴I will lead them to grassy fields. They will go to the place high on the mountains of Israel and lie down on good ground and eat the grass. They will eat in rich grassland on the mountains of Israel.

¹⁵Yes, I will feed my flock, and I will lead them to a place of rest. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁶I will search for the lost sheep. I will bring back the sheep that were scattered and put bandages on the sheep that were hurt. I will make the weak sheep strong, but I will destroy the fat and powerful shepherds. I will feed them the punishment they deserve.

¹⁷This is what the Lord GOD says: And you, my flock, I will judge between one sheep and another. I will judge between the male sheep and the male goats.

¹⁸You can eat the grass growing on the good land. So why do you also crush the grass that other sheep want to eat? You can drink plenty of clear water. So

why do you also stir the water that other sheep want to drink?

¹⁹My flock must eat the grass you crushed with your feet, and they must drink the water you stir with your feet!

²⁰So the Lord GOD says to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the thin sheep!

²¹You push with your side and shoulder. You knock down all the weak sheep with your horns. You push until you have forced them away,

²²so I will save my flock. They will not be caught by wild animals anymore. I will judge between one sheep and another.

²³Then I will put one shepherd over them, my servant David. He will feed them and be their shepherd.

²⁴Then I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David will be the ruler living among them. I, the LORD, have spoken.

²⁵And I will make a peace agreement with my sheep. I will take harmful animals away from the land. Then the sheep can be safe in the desert and sleep in the woods.

²⁶I will bless the sheep and the places around my hill. I will cause the rains to fall at the right time and will shower them with blessings.

²⁷And the trees growing in the field will produce their fruit. The earth will give its harvest, so the sheep will be safe on their land. I will break the yokes on them and save them from the power of the people who made them slaves. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

²⁸They will not be caught like an animal by the nations anymore. Those animals will not eat them anymore. No, they will live safely. No one will make them afraid.

²⁹I will give them some land that will make a good garden. Then they will not suffer from hunger in that land or suffer the insults from the nations anymore.

³⁰Then they will know that I am the LORD their God. The family of Israel will know that I am with them and that they are my people. This is what the Lord GOD said!

³¹You are my sheep, the sheep of my grassland. You are only human beings, and I am your God. This is what the Lord GOD said.

35 ¹The LORD spoke to me and said,
²Son of man, look toward Mount Seir and speak against it for me.

³Say to it, This is what the Lord GOD says: I am against you, Mount Seir! I will punish you and make you an empty wasteland.

⁴I will destroy your cities, and you will become empty. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

⁵Why? Because you have always been against my people. You used your sword against Israel at the time of their trouble, at the time of their final punishment.

⁶So the Lord GOD says, But I promise by my own life that I will let death have you. Death will chase you. You did not hate killing people, so death will chase you.

⁷I will make Mount Seir an empty ruin. I will kill everyone who enters or leaves that city.

⁸I will cover its mountains with those who are killed. There will be dead bodies all over your hills, in your valleys, and in all your ravines.

⁹I will make you empty forever. No one will live in your cities. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁰You said, These two nations and countries, Israel and Judah, will be mine. We will take them for our own. But the LORD is there!

¹¹And the Lord GOD says, You were jealous of my people. You were angry and hateful to them. So by my life, I swear that I will punish you the same way you hurt them! I will punish you and let my people know that I am with them.

¹²And then you, too, will know that I am the LORD. I have heard you making fun of Israels hill country. You said, It is in ruins, just waiting for us to swallow it up.

¹³Your proud boasting is really against me. Time after time you have insulted me, and I have heard every word.

¹⁴This is what the Lord GOD says: All the earth will be happy when I destroy you.

¹⁵You were happy when the country of Israel was destroyed. I will treat you the same way. Mount Seir and the whole

country of Edom will be destroyed. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

36¹ Son of man, speak to the mountains of Israel for me. Tell them to listen to the word of the LORD!

² Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: The enemy said bad things against you. They said: Hurray! Now the ancient mountains will be ours!

³ So speak to the mountains of Israel for me. Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: The enemy destroyed your cities and attacked you from every direction. They did this so that you would belong to the other nations. Then people talked and whispered about you.

⁴ So, mountains of Israel, listen to the word of the Lord GOD! This is what the Lord GOD says to the mountains, hills, streams, valleys, empty ruins, and abandoned cities that have been looted and laughed at by the other nations around them.

⁵ The Lord GOD says, I swear, I will let my strong feelings speak for me! I will let Edom and the other nations feel my anger. They took my land for themselves. They really had a good time when they

showed how much they hated this land. They took the land for themselves, just so they could destroy it.

⁶So say these things about the land of Israel. Speak to the mountains and to the hills, to the streams, and to the valleys. Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: I will let my strong feelings and anger speak for me, because you had to suffer the insults from those nations.

⁷So this is what the Lord GOD says: I am the one making this promise! I swear that the nations around you will have to suffer for those insults.

⁸But mountains of Israel, you will grow new trees and produce fruit for my people Israel. My people will soon come back.

⁹I am with you, and I will help you. People will till your soil and plant seeds in you.

¹⁰There will be many people living on you. The whole family of Israel all of them will live there. The cities will have people living in them. The destroyed places will be rebuilt.

¹¹I will give you many people and animals, and they will grow and have

many children. I will bring people to live on you as in the past. I will make it better for you than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

¹²Yes, I will lead many people my people, Israel to your land. You will be their property, and you will not take away their children again.

¹³This is what the Lord GOD says: Land of Israel, people say bad things to you. They say you destroyed your people. They say you took the children away from your people.

¹⁴But you will not destroy people anymore or take away their children again. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁵I will not let those other nations insult you anymore. You will not be hurt by them anymore. You will not take the children away from your people again. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁶Then the LORD spoke to me and said,

¹⁷Son of man, the family of Israel lived in their own country, but they made that land filthy by the bad things they did. To me, they were like a woman who becomes unclean because of her monthly time of bleeding.

¹⁸They spilled blood on the ground when they murdered people in the land. They made the land filthy with their idols, so I showed them how angry I was.

¹⁹I scattered them among the nations and spread them through all the lands. I gave them the punishment they deserved for the bad things they did.

²⁰But even in those other nations, they ruined my good name. How? Those nations said, These are the LORD'S people, but they left his land.

²¹The people of Israel ruined my holy name wherever they went, and I felt sorry for my name.

²²So tell the family of Israel that this is what the Lord GOD says: Family of Israel, you ruined my holy name in the places where you went. I am going to do something to stop this. I will not do it for your sake, Israel. I will do it for my holy name.

²³I will show the nations how holy my great name really is. You ruined my good name in those nations! But I will show you that I am holy. I will make you respect my name, and then those

nations will know that I am the LORD.
This is what the Lord GOD said.

²⁴I will take you out of those nations, gather you together, and bring you back to your own land.

²⁵Then I will sprinkle pure water on you and make you pure. I will wash away all your filth, the filth from those nasty idols, and I will make you pure.

²⁶I will also put a new spirit in you to change your way of thinking. I will take out the heart of stone from your body and give you a tender, human heart.

²⁷I will put my Spirit inside you and change you so that you will obey my laws. You will carefully obey my commands.

²⁸Then you will live in the land that I gave to your ancestors. You will be my people, and I will be your God.

²⁹Also, I will save you and keep you from becoming unclean. I will command the grain to grow. I will not bring a famine against you.

³⁰I will give you large crops of fruit from your trees and the harvest from your fields so that you will never again

feel the shame of being hungry in a foreign country.

³¹ You will remember the bad things you did. You will remember that those things were not good. Then you will hate yourselves because of your sins and the terrible things you did.

³² The Lord GOD says, I want you to remember this: I am not doing these things for your good! I am doing them for my good name. Family of Israel, you should be ashamed and embarrassed about the way you lived!

³³ This is what the Lord GOD says: On the day that I wash away your sins, I will bring people back to your cities. The ruined cities will be rebuilt.

³⁴ People will begin again to work the land so when other people pass by they will not see ruins anymore.

³⁵ They will say, In the past, this land was ruined, but now it is like the Garden of Eden. The cities were destroyed. They were ruined and empty, but now they are protected, and there are people living in them.

³⁶ Then the nations that are still around you will know I am the LORD and that I

rebuilt those places. I planted things in this land that was empty. I am the LORD. I said this, and I will make them happen!

³⁷This is what the Lord GOD says: I will also let the family of Israel come to me and ask me to do these things for them. I will make them grow and become many people. They will be like flocks of sheep.

³⁸During the special festivals, Jerusalem was filled with flocks of sheep and goats that had been made holy. In the same way, the cities and ruined places will be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

37 ¹The LORD'S power came on me. The Spirit of the LORD carried me out of the city and put me down in the middle of the valley. The valley was full of dead mens bones.

²There were many bones lying on the ground in the valley. The Lord made me walk all around among the bones. I saw the bones were very dry.

³Then the Lord said to me, Son of man, can these bones come to life? I answered, Lord GOD, only you know the answer to that question.

⁴Then he said to me, Speak to these bones for me. Tell them, Dry bones, listen to the word of the LORD!

⁵This is what the Lord GOD says to you: I will cause breath to come into you, and you will come to life!

⁶I will put sinew and muscles on you, and I will cover you with skin. Then I will put breath in you, and you will come back to life! Then you will know that I am the LORD.

⁷So I spoke to the bones for the LORD, as he said. I was still speaking, when I heard the loud noise. The bones began to rattle, and bone joined together with bone!

⁸There before my eyes I saw sinew and muscles begin to cover the bones. Skin began to cover them, but there was no breath in them.

⁹Then the Lord said to me, Speak to the wind for me. Son of man, speak to the wind for me. Tell the wind that this is what the Lord GOD says: Wind, come from every direction and breathe air into these dead bodies! Breathe into them and they will come to life again!

¹⁰So I spoke to the wind for the LORD, as he said, and the breath came into the dead bodies. They came to life and stood up. There were many of them a large army!

¹¹Then he said to me, Son of man, these bones are like the whole family of Israel. The people of Israel say, Our bones have dried up; our hope is gone. We have been completely destroyed!

¹²So speak to them for me. Tell them this is what the Lord GOD says: My people, I will open your graves and bring you up out of them! Then I will bring you to the land of Israel.

¹³My people, I will open your graves and bring you up out of your graves, and then you will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁴I will put my Spirit in you, and you will come to life again. Then I will lead you back to your own land. Then you will know that I am the LORD. You will know that I said this and that I made it happen. This is what the LORD said.

¹⁵The word of the LORD came to me again. He said,

¹⁶Son of man, get one stick and write this message on it: This stick belongs

to Judah and his friends, the people of Israel. Then take another stick and write on it, This stick of Ephraim belongs to Joseph and his friends, the people of Israel.

¹⁷Then join the two sticks together. In your hand, they will be one stick.

¹⁸Your people will ask you to explain what that means.

¹⁹Tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim and his friends, the people of Israel. Then I will put that stick with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick. In my hand, they will become one stick!

²⁰Take the sticks that you wrote on and hold them in front of you.

²¹Tell the people that this is what the Lord GOD says: I will gather the people of Israel from among the nations. I will gather them from all around and bring them back to their own land.

²²I will make them one nation in their land among the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over them all. They will no longer be two nations.

They will not be split into two kingdoms anymore.

²³And they will no longer continue to make themselves filthy with their idols and horrible statues or with any of their other crimes. Instead, I will save them from all the places where they have sinned, and I will wash them and make them pure. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

²⁴And my servant David will be the king over them. There will be only one shepherd over all of them. They will live by my rules and obey my laws. They will do the things I tell them.

²⁵They will live on the land that I gave to my servant Jacob. Your ancestors lived in that place, and my people will live there. They and their children and their grandchildren will live there forever. My servant David will be their leader forever.

²⁶And I will make a peace agreement with them. This agreement will continue forever. I agree to give them their land. I agree to make them numerous and to put my holy place among them forever.

²⁷ My Holy Tent will be with them. Yes, I will be their God and they will be my people.

²⁸ The other nations will know that I am the LORD, and they will know that I make Israel my special people by putting my holy place there among them forever.

38 ¹ The LORD spoke to me and said, ² Son of man, look toward Gog in the land of Magog. He is the most important leader of the nations of Meshech and Tubal. Speak for me against Gog.

³ Tell him that this is what the Lord GOD says: Gog, you are the most important leader of the nations of Meshech and Tubal, but I am against you.

⁴ I will capture you and bring you back. I will bring back all the men in your army, all the horses, and horse soldiers. I will put hooks in your mouths, and I will bring all of you back. All the soldiers will be wearing their uniforms with all their shields and swords.

⁵ Soldiers from Persia, Ethiopia, and Put will be with them. They will all be wearing their shields and helmets.

⁶There will also be Gomer with all its groups of soldiers, and there will be the nation of Togarmah from the far north with all its groups of soldiers. There will be many people in that parade of prisoners.

⁷Be prepared. Yes, prepare yourself and the armies that have joined with you. You must watch and be ready.

⁸After a long time you will be called for duty. In the later years you will come into the land that has been healed from war. The people in that land were gathered from many nations and brought back to the mountains of Israel. In the past, the mountains of Israel had been destroyed again and again. But these people will have come back from those other nations. They all will have lived in safety.

⁹But you will come to attack them. You will come like a storm. You will come like a thundercloud covering the land. You and all your groups of soldiers from many nations will come to attack them.

¹⁰This is what the Lord GOD says: At that time an idea will come into your

mind. You will begin to make an evil plan.

¹¹You will say, I will go attack the country that has towns without walls (Israel). The people there live in peace and think they are safe. There are no walls around the cities to protect them. They don't have any locks on their gates they don't even have gates!

¹²I will defeat them and take all their valuable things away from them. I will fight against the places that were destroyed but now have people living in them. I will fight against the people who were gathered from the nations. Now they have cattle and property. They live at the crossroads of the world.

¹³Sheba, Dedan, and merchants of Tarshish, and all the cities they trade with will ask you, Did you come to capture valuable things? Did you bring your groups of soldiers together to grab the good things and to carry away silver, gold, cattle, and property? Did you come to take all those valuable things?

¹⁴Son of man, speak to Gog for me. Tell him that this is what the Lord GOD

says: You will come to attack my people while they are living in peace and safety.

¹⁵You will come from your place out of the far north, and you will bring many people with you. All of them will ride on horses. You will be a large and a powerful army.

¹⁶You will come to fight against my people Israel. You will be like a thundercloud covering the land. When that time comes, I will bring you to fight against my land. Then, Gog, the nations will learn how powerful I am! They will learn to respect me and know that I am holy. They will see what I will do to you!

¹⁷This is what the Lord GOD says: At that time people will remember that I spoke about you in the past. They will remember that I used my servants, the prophets of Israel. They will remember that the prophets of Israel spoke for me in the past and said that I would bring you to fight against them.

¹⁸The Lord GOD said, At that time Gog will come to fight against the land of Israel. I will show my anger.

¹⁹In my anger and strong emotions, I make this promise: I promise that there

will be a strong earthquake in the land of Israel.

²⁰At that time all living things will shake with fear. The fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the wild animals in the fields, and all the little creatures crawling on the ground will shake with fear. The mountains will fall down and the cliffs will break apart. Every wall will fall to the ground!

²¹The Lord GOD says, On the mountains of Israel, I will call for every kind of terror against Gog. His soldiers will be so afraid that they will attack each other and kill each other with their swords.

²²I will punish Gog with diseases and death. I will cause hailstones, fire, and sulfur to rain down on Gog and his groups of soldiers from many nations.

²³Then I will show how great I am. I will prove that I am holy. Many nations will see me do these things, and they will learn who I am. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

39¹ Son of man, speak against Gog for me. Tell him that this is what the Lord GOD says: Gog, you are the most important leader of the countries

Meshech and Tubal, but I am against you.

² I will capture you and bring you back. I will bring you from the far north. I will bring you to fight against the mountains of Israel.

³ But I will knock your bow from your left hand and your arrows from your right hand.

⁴ You will be killed on the mountains of Israel. You, your groups of soldiers, and all the other nations with you will be killed in the battle. I will give you as food to every kind of bird that eats meat and to all the wild animals.

⁵ You will not enter the city. You will be killed out in the open fields. I have spoken! This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁶ I will send fire against Magog and those people living along the coast. They think they are safe, but they will know that I am the LORD.

⁷ And I will make my holy name known among my people Israel. I will not let people ruin my holy name anymore. The nations will know that I am the LORD. They will know that I am the Holy One in Israel.

⁸That time is coming! It will happen! This is what the Lord GOD said. That is the day I am talking about.

⁹At that time people living in the cities of Israel will go out to the fields. They will collect the enemys weapons and burn them. They will burn all the shields, bows and arrows, clubs and spears. They will use the weapons as firewood for seven years.

¹⁰They will not have to gather wood from the fields or chop firewood from the forests because they will use the weapons as firewood. They will take the valuable things from the soldiers who wanted to steal from them. They will take the good things from the soldiers who took good things from them. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹¹At that time I will choose a place in Israel to bury Gog. He will be buried in the Valley of the Travelers, east of the Dead Sea. It will block the road for travelers, because Gog and all his army will be buried in that place. People will call it The Valley of Gogs Army.

¹²It will take seven months for the family of Israel to bury them. They must do this to make the land pure.

¹³The common people will bury the enemy soldiers, and the people will become famous on the day that I bring honor to myself. The Lord GOD said those things.

¹⁴Workers will be given a full-time job burying the dead soldiers to make the land pure. The workers will work for seven months. They will go around looking for dead bodies.

¹⁵They will go around looking, and if anyone sees a bone, a marker will be put up by it. The sign will stay there until the gravediggers come and bury the bone in the Valley of Gogs Army,

¹⁶near a city named Army. In this way they will make the country pure.

¹⁷This is what the Lord GOD said: Son of man, speak to all the birds and wild animals for me. Tell them, Come here! Come here! Gather around. Come eat this sacrifice I am preparing for you. There will be a very big sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. Come, eat the meat and drink the blood.

¹⁸You will eat the meat from the bodies of powerful soldiers and drink the blood from world leaders. They will be like rams, lambs, goats, and fat bulls from Bashan.

¹⁹You can eat all the fat you want and drink blood until you are full. You will eat and drink from my sacrifice, which I will kill for you.

²⁰You will have plenty of meat to eat at my table. There will be horses and chariot drivers, powerful soldiers, and all the other fighting men. This is what the Lord GOD said.

²¹I will let the other nations see what I have done, and they will begin to respect me! They will see my power that I used against the enemy.

²²Then from that day on, the family of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God.

²³And the nations will know why the family of Israel was carried away as prisoners to other countries. They will learn that my people turned against me, so I turned away from them. I let their enemies defeat them, so my people were killed in battle.

²⁴They sinned and made themselves filthy, so I punished them for the things they did. I turned away from them and refused to help them.

²⁵So this is what the Lord GOD says: Now I will bring the family of Jacob back from captivity. I will have mercy on the whole family of Israel. I will show my strong feelings for my holy name.

²⁶The people will forget their shame and all the times they turned against me. They will live in safety on their own land. No one will make them afraid.

²⁷I will bring my people back from other countries. I will gather them from the lands of their enemies. Then many nations will see how holy I am.

²⁸They will know that I am the LORD their God. That is because I made them leave their homes and go as prisoners to other countries. But then I gathered them together again and brought them back to their own land.

²⁹I will pour out my Spirit on the family of Israel, and I will never turn away from my people again. This is what the Lord GOD said.

40¹ In the twenty-fifth year after we were taken away into captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, the LORD'S power came on me. This was fourteen years after the Babylonians took Jerusalem. On that day, the Lord took me there in a vision.

² In the vision, God carried me to the land of Israel. He put me down near a very high mountain. On the mountain in front of me was a building that looked like a city.

³ He took me to that place. There was a man there who looked like polished bronze. He had a cloth tape measure and a measuring rod in his hand. He was standing by the gate.

⁴ The man said to me, Son of man, use your eyes and ears. Look at these things and listen to me. Pay attention to everything that I show you, because you have been brought here so that I can show you these things. You must tell the family of Israel all that you see.

⁵ I saw a wall that went all the way around the outside of the Temple. In the mans hand there was a ruler for

measuring things. It was 6 cubits long using the long measurement, so the man measured the thickness of the wall. It was one ruler thick. He measured the height of the wall. It was one ruler tall.

⁶Then the man went to the east gate. He walked up its steps and measured the opening for the gate. It was one ruler wide.

⁷The guardrooms were one ruler long and one ruler wide. The walls between the rooms were 5 cubits thick. The opening by the porch at the end of the gateway that faced the Temple was also one ruler wide.

⁸Then he measured the porch.

⁹It was 8 cubits long. He measured the walls on either side of the gate. Each side wall was 2 cubits wide. The porch was at the end of the gateway that faced the Temple.

¹⁰There were three little guardrooms on each side of the gateway. All these rooms and their side walls measured the same.

¹¹The man measured the entrance to the gateway. It was 10 cubits wide and 13 cubits long.

¹²There was a low wall in front of each room. That wall was 1 cubit tall and 1 cubit thick. The rooms were square. Each wall was 6 cubits long.

¹³The man measured the gateway from the outside edge of the roof of one room to the outside edge of the roof of the opposite room. It was 25 cubits. Each door was directly opposite the other door.

¹⁴He measured the faces of all the side walls, including the side walls on either side of the porch at the courtyard. The total was 60 cubits.

¹⁵From the inside edge of the outer gate to the far end of the porch was 50 cubits.

¹⁶There were small windows above all the guardrooms, the side walls, and the porch. The wide part of the windows faced into the gateway. There were carvings of palm trees on the walls that were on either side of the gateway.

¹⁷Then the man led me into the outer courtyard. I saw thirty rooms and a pavement that went all the way around the courtyard. The rooms were along the wall and faced in toward the pavement.

¹⁸The pavement was as wide as the gates were long. The pavement reached to the inside end of the gateway. This was the lower pavement.

¹⁹The man measured the distance from the inside of the lower gateway to the outside of the inner courtyard. It was 100 cubits on the east side as well as on the north side.

²⁰Then the man measured the length and width of the north gate that was in the wall surrounding the outer courtyard.

²¹This gateway, its three rooms on each side, and its porch all measured the same as the first gate. The gateway was 50 cubits long and 25 cubits wide.

²²Its windows, its porch, and its carvings of palm trees measured the same as the east gate. On the outside, there were seven steps leading up to the gate. Its porch was at the inside end of the gateway.

²³Across the courtyard from the north gate, there was a gate to the inner courtyard. It was like the gate on the east. The man measured from the gate on the inner wall to the gate on the outer wall. It was 100 cubits from gate to gate.

²⁴ Then the man led me to the south wall. I saw a gate in the south wall. He measured its side walls and its porch. They measured the same as the other gates.

²⁵ The gateway and its porch had windows all around like the other gates. The gateway was 50 cubits long and 25 cubits wide.

²⁶ There were seven steps going up to this gate. Its porch was at the inside end of the gateway. It had carvings of palm trees on the walls that were on either side of the gateway.

²⁷ A gate was on the south side of the inner courtyard. The man measured from the gate on the inner wall to the gate on the outer wall. It was 100 cubits from gate to gate.

²⁸ Then the man led me through the south gate into the inner courtyard. He measured this gate. This gateway measured the same as the other gates to the inner courtyard.

²⁹ Its rooms, side walls, and porch also measured the same as the other gates. There were windows all around the

gateway and its porch. The gateway was 50 cubits long and 25 cubits wide.

³⁰The porch was 25 cubits wide and 5 cubits long.

³¹And its porch was at the end of the gateway next to the outer courtyard. Carvings of palm trees were on the walls on either side of the gateway. There were eight steps leading up to the gate.

³²Then the man led me into the inner courtyard on the east side. He measured the gate. It measured the same as the other gates.

³³Its rooms, side walls, and porch also measured the same as the other gates. There were windows all around the gateway and its porch. The gateway was 50 cubits long and 25 cubits wide.

³⁴And its porch was at the end of the gateway next to the outer courtyard. Carvings of palm trees were on the walls on either side of the gateway. There were eight steps leading up to the gate.

³⁵Then the man led me to the north gate. He measured it, and it measured the same as the other gates.

³⁶Its rooms, side walls, and porch also measured the same as the other gates.

There were windows all around the gateway and its porch. The gateway was 50 cubits long and 25 cubits wide.

³⁷ And its porch was at the end of the gateway next to the outer courtyard. Carvings of palm trees were on the walls on either side of the gateway. There were eight steps leading up to the gate.

³⁸ There was also a doorway in the side walls of the gates. That doorway led into a room where the priests washed the sacrifices.

³⁹ There were two tables on each side of the door of this porch. The animals for the burnt offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings were killed on these tables.

⁴⁰ There were also two tables on each side of the door on the outside wall of this porch.

⁴¹ So there were four tables on the inside wall and four tables on the outside wall eight tables that the priests used when they killed the animals for sacrifices.

⁴² There were also four tables made from cut stone for the burnt offerings. These tables were 1 1/2 cubits long, 1

1/2 cubits wide, and 1 cubit high. On these tables, the priests put their tools that they used to kill the animals for the burnt offerings and other sacrifices.

⁴³There were meat hooks three inches long on all the walls in this area. The meat of the offerings was put on the tables.

⁴⁴There were two rooms in the inner courtyard. One was by the north gate facing south. The other room was by the south gate facing north.

⁴⁵The man said to me, The room that looks to the south is for the priests who are on duty and serving in the Temple area.

⁴⁶But the room that looks to the north is for the priests who are on duty and serving at the altar. The priests are from the tribe of Levi. But the priests in this second group are the descendants of Zadok. They are the only people who can carry the sacrifices to the altar to serve the LORD.

⁴⁷The man measured the inner courtyard. The courtyard was a perfect square. It was 100 cubits long and 100

cubits wide. The altar was in front of the Temple.

⁴⁸Then the man led me to the porch of the Temple and measured the walls on either side of the porch. Each side wall was 5 cubits thick and 3 cubits wide. The opening between them was 14 cubits.

⁴⁹The porch was 20 cubits wide and 12 cubits long. Ten steps went up to the porch. There were two columns for the walls on either side of the porchone at each wall.

41 ¹Then the man led me into the Holy Place. He measured the walls on either side of the room. The side walls were 6 cubits thick on each side.

²The door was 10 cubits wide. The sides of the doorway were 5 cubits on each side. He measured that room. It was 40 cubits long and 20 cubits wide.

³Then the man went into the last room. He measured the walls on either side of the doorway. Each side wall was 2 cubits thick and 7 cubits wide. The doorway was 6 cubits wide.

⁴Then he measured the length of the room. It was 20 cubits long and 20

cubits wide. He said to me, This is the Most Holy Place.

⁵Then the man measured the wall of the Temple. It was 6 cubits thick. There were side rooms all around the Temple. They were 4 cubits wide.

⁶The side rooms were on three different floors, one above the other. There were 30 rooms on each floor. The wall of the Temple was built with ledges. The side rooms rested on these ledges but were not connected to the Temple wall itself.

⁷Each floor of the side rooms around the Temple was wider than the floor below. The walls of the rooms around the Temple became narrower the higher they went so that the rooms on the top floors were wider. A stairway went up from the lowest floor to the highest floor through the middle floor.

⁸I also saw that the Temple had a raised base all the way around it. It was the foundation for the side rooms, and it was a full ruler high.

⁹The outer wall of the side rooms was 5 cubits thick. There was an open area between the side rooms of the Temple

¹⁰and the priests rooms. It was 20 cubits wide and went all the way around the Temple.

¹¹The doors of the side rooms opened onto the raised base. There was one entrance on the north side and one entrance on the south side. The raised base was 5 cubits wide all around.

¹²There was a building in this restricted area west of the Temple. The building was 70 cubits wide and 90 cubits long. The wall of the building was 5 cubits thick all around.

¹³Then the man measured the Temple. The Temple was 100 cubits long. The restricted area, including the building and its walls, was also 100 cubits long.

¹⁴The restricted area on the east side, in front of the Temple, was 100 cubits long.

¹⁵The man measured the length of the building in the restricted area at the rear of the Temple. It was 100 cubits from one wall to the other wall. The Most Holy Place, the Holy Place, and the porch by the courtyard

¹⁶had wood paneling on all the walls. All the windows and doors had wood

trim around them. By the doorway, the Temple had wood paneling from the floor up to the windows and up to the part of the wall

¹⁷ over the doorway. On all the walls in the inner room and the outer room of the Temple were carvings

¹⁸ of Cherub angels and palm trees. A palm tree was between each Cherub angel. Every Cherub angel had two faces.

¹⁹ One face was a mans face looking toward the palm tree on one side. The other face was a lions face looking toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved all around on the Temple.

²⁰ From the floor to the area above the door, Cherub angels and palm trees were carved on all walls of the Holy Place.

²¹ The walls on either side of the Holy Place were square. In front of the Most Holy Place, there was something that looked like

²² an altar made from wood. It was 3 cubits high and 2 cubits long. Its corners, its base, and its sides were wood. The

man said to me, This is the table that is before the LORD.

²³ Both the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place had a double door.

²⁴ Each of the doors was made from two smaller doors. Each door was really two swinging doors.

²⁵ Also Cherub angels and palm trees were carved on the doors of the Holy Place. They were like those carved on the walls. There was a wood roof over the front of the porch.

²⁶ There were windows with frames around them and palm trees on the walls on both sides of the porch, on the roof over the porch, and on the rooms around the Temple.

42¹ Then the man led me through the north gate out into the outer courtyard. He led me to a building with many rooms that was west of the restricted area and the building on the north side.

² This building was 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide. People entered it from the courtyard on the north side.

³ The building was three stories tall and had balconies. The 20-cubit inner

courtyard was between the building and the Temple. On the other side, the rooms faced the pavement of the outer courtyard.

⁴There was a path 10 cubits wide and 100 cubits long running along the south side of the building, even though the entrance was on the north side.

⁵Since this building was three stories tall and did not have columns like those columns of the outer courtyards, the top rooms were farther back than the rooms on the middle and bottom floors. The top floor was narrower than the middle floor, which was narrower than the bottom floor because the balconies used this space.

⁶(42:5)

⁷There was a wall outside that was parallel to the rooms and ran along the outer courtyard. It ran in front of the rooms for 50 cubits.

⁸The row of rooms that ran along the outer courtyard was 50 cubits long, although the total length of the building, as on the Temple side, was 100 cubits long.

⁹The entrance was below these rooms at the east end of the building so that people could enter from the outer courtyard.

¹⁰The entrance was at the start of the wall beside the courtyard. There were rooms on the south side, by the restricted area and the other building. These rooms had a

¹¹path in front of them. They were like the rooms on the north side. They had the same length and width and the same kind of doors.

¹²The entrance to the lower rooms was at the east end of the building so that people could enter from the open end of the path by the wall.

¹³The man said to me, The north rooms and south rooms across from the restricted area are holy. These rooms are for the priests who offer the sacrifices to the LORD. That is where the priests will put the most holy offerings and eat them. That is because that place is holy. The most holy offerings are the grain offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings.

¹⁴The priests who enter the holy area must leave their serving clothes in that holy place before they go out into the outer courtyard, because these clothes are holy. If a priest wants to go to the part of the Temple where the other people are, he must go to those rooms and put on other clothes.

¹⁵The man had finished measuring inside the Temple area. Then he brought me out through the east gate and measured all around that area.

¹⁶He measured the east side with the ruler. It was 500 cubits long.

¹⁷He measured the north side. It was 500 cubits long.

¹⁸He measured the south side. It was 500 cubits long.

¹⁹He went around to the west side and measured it. It was 500 cubits long.

²⁰He measured the four walls that went all the way around the Temple. The wall was 500 cubits long and 500 cubits wide. It separated the holy area from the area that is not holy.

43¹The man led me to the east gate.

²There the Glory of the God of Israel came from the east. Gods voice was loud like the sound of the sea. The ground was bright with the light from the Glory of God.

³The vision that I saw was like the vision I saw by the Kebar Canal. I bowed with my face to the ground.

⁴The Glory of the LORD came into the Temple through the east gate.

⁵Then the Spirit picked me up and brought me into the inner courtyard. The Glory of the LORD filled the Temple.

⁶I heard someone speaking to me from inside the Temple. The man was still standing beside me.

⁷The voice from the Temple said to me, Son of man, this is the place with my throne and footstool. I will live in this place among the people of Israel forever. The family of Israel will not ruin my holy name again. The kings and their people will not bring shame to my name by committing sexual sins or by burying the dead bodies of their kings in this place.

⁸They will not bring shame to my name by putting their threshold next to my threshold, and their doorposts

next to my doorposts. In the past, only a wall separated them from me. So they brought shame to my name every time they sinned and did those terrible things. That is why I became angry and destroyed them.

⁹Now let them take their sexual sins and the dead bodies of their kings far away from me. Then I will live among them forever.

¹⁰Now, son of man, tell the family of Israel about the Temple. Then, when they learn about the plans for the Temple, they will be ashamed of their sins.

¹¹And they will be ashamed of all the bad things they have done. Let them know the design of the Temple. Let them know how it should be built, where the entrances and exits are, and all the designs on it. Teach them about all its rules and all its laws. Write these things for everyone to see so that they can obey all the laws and rules for the Temple.

¹²This is the law of the Temple: The whole area surrounding it on the top of the mountain is most holy. This is the law of the Temple.

¹³These are the measurements of the altar in cubits using the long measurement: There was a gutter all the way around the base of the altar. It was 1 cubit deep, and each side was 1 cubit wide. There was a rim around the edge 1 span high. This is how tall the altar was:

¹⁴From the ground to the lower ledge, the base measured 2 cubits. It was 1 cubit wide. It measured 4 cubits from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge. It was 2 cubits wide.

¹⁵The place for the fire on the altar was 4 cubits high. The four corners were shaped like horns.

¹⁶The place for the fire on the altar was 12 cubits long by 12 cubits wide. It was perfectly square.

¹⁷The ledge was also square, 14 cubits long by 14 cubits wide. The border around it was 1/2 cubit wide. (The gutter around the base was 1 cubit wide.) The steps going up to the altar were on the east side.

¹⁸Then the man said to me, Son of man, this is what the Lord GOD says: These are the rules for the altar: At the time you build the altar, use these rules

to offer burnt offerings and to sprinkle blood on it.

¹⁹You will give a young bull as a sin offering to the men from Zadoks family. These men are the priests from the tribe of Levi. They are the men who serve me by bringing the offerings to me. This is what the Lord GOD said.

²⁰You will take some of the bulls blood and put it on the altars four horns, on the four corners of the ledge, and on the rim around it. In this way you will make the altar pure.

²¹Then take the bull for the sin offering and burn it in the proper place in the Temple area, outside the Temple building.

²²On the second day you will offer a male goat that has nothing wrong with it. It will be for a sin offering. The priests will make the altar pure the same way they made it pure with the bull.

²³When you have finished making the altar pure, you will offer a young bull that has nothing wrong with it and a ram from the flock that has nothing wrong with it.

²⁴ Then you will offer them before the LORD. The priests will sprinkle salt on them. Then they will offer the bull and ram up as a burnt offering to the LORD.

²⁵ You will prepare a goat every day for seven days for a sin offering. Also, you will prepare a young bull and a ram from the flock. These animals must have nothing wrong with them.

²⁶ For seven days the priests will make the altar pure and ready for use in worshipping God.

²⁷ On the eighth day, and every day after that, the priests must offer your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar. Then I will accept you. This is what the Lord GOD said.

44¹ Then the man brought me back to the east gate of the Temple area. We were outside the gate and the gate was shut.

² The LORD said to me, This gate will stay shut. It will not be opened. No one will enter through it, because the LORD of Israel has entered through it. So it must stay shut.

³ Only the ruler of the people may sit at this gate when he eats a meal with the

LORD. He must enter through the porch of the gateway and go out the same way.

⁴Then the man led me through the north gate to the front of the Temple. I looked and saw the Glory of the LORD filling the LORD'S Temple. I bowed with my face touching the ground.

⁵The LORD said to me, Son of man, look very carefully! Use your eyes and ears. Look at these things, and listen very carefully to everything that I tell you about all the rules and laws about the LORD'S Temple. Look carefully at the entrances to the Temple and at all the exits from the holy place.

⁶Then give this message to all the people of Israel who refused to obey me. Tell them, This is what the Lord GOD said: Family of Israel, I have had enough of the terrible things you have done!

⁷You brought foreigners into my Temple who are not circumcised and have not given themselves to me. In this way you made my Temple unclean. You broke our agreement and did terrible things, and then you gave me the offerings of bread, the fat, and the blood. But this only made my Temple unclean.

⁸You did not take care of my holy things. No, you let foreigners have responsibility of my holy place!

⁹This is what the Lord GOD says: A foreigner who is not truly circumcised must not come into my Temple not even a foreigner living permanently among the people of Israel. He must be circumcised, and he must give himself completely to me before he can come into my Temple.

¹⁰In the past, the Levites left me when Israel turned away from me. Israel left me to follow their idols. The Levites will be punished for their sin.

¹¹The Levites were chosen to serve in my holy place. They guarded the gates of the Temple. They served in the Temple. They killed the animals for the sacrifices and burnt offerings for the people. They were chosen to help the people and to serve them.

¹²But the Levites helped the people sin against me! They helped the people worship their idols! So I am making this promise against them: They will be punished for their sin. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹³So the Levites will not bring offerings to me like the priests. They will not come near any of my holy things or the things that are most holy. They must carry their shame because of the terrible things that they did.

¹⁴But I will let them take care of the Temple. They will work in the Temple and do the things that must be done in it.

¹⁵The priests are all from the tribe of Levi. But only priests from Zadoks family took care of my holy place when the people of Israel turned away from me. So only Zadoks descendants will bring offerings to me. They will stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood from the animals they sacrifice. This is what the Lord GOD said!

¹⁶They will enter my holy place and come near my table to serve me. They will take care of the things I gave them.

¹⁷When they enter the gates of the inner courtyard, they will wear linen clothes. They will not wear wool while they serve at the gates of the inner courtyard and in the Temple.

¹⁸They will wear linen turbans on their heads, and they will wear linen

underwear. They will not wear anything that makes them sweat.

¹⁹Before they go out into the outer courtyard to the people, they will take off the clothes they wear while serving me. They will put these clothes away in the holy rooms. Then they will put on other clothes. In this way they will not let people touch those holy clothes.

²⁰These priests will not shave their heads or let their hair grow long. The priests may only trim the hair of their heads.

²¹None of the priests may drink wine when they go into the inner courtyard.

²²The priests must not marry a widow or a divorced woman. No, they must only marry a virgin from the family of Israel or a woman whose dead husband was a priest.

²³Also, the priests must teach my people the difference between things that are holy and things that are not holy. They must help my people know what is clean and what is unclean.

²⁴The priests will be the judges in court. They will follow my laws when they judge people. They will obey my

laws and my rules at all my special feasts. They will respect my special days of rest and keep them holy.

²⁵They will not go near a dead person to make themselves unclean. But they may make themselves unclean if the dead person is their father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or a sister who is not married.

²⁶After the priest has been made clean, he must wait seven days.

²⁷Then he can go back into the holy place. But on the day he goes into the inner courtyard to serve in the holy place, he must offer a sin offering for himself. This is what the Lord GOD said.

²⁸About the land that will belong to the Levites: I am their property. You will not give the Levites any land in Israel. I am their share in Israel.

²⁹They will have the right to eat the grain offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings. Also, anything in Israel that is a special gift to God will belong to them.

³⁰And the first part of the harvest from every kind of crop will be for the priests. You will also give the priests the first part

of your flour. This will bring blessings to your house.

³¹ The priests must not eat any bird or animal that has died a natural death or has been torn to pieces by a wild animal.

45 ¹ You will divide the land for the Israelite tribes by throwing lots. At that time you will separate out a part of the land. It will be a holy part for the LORD. The land will be 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits wide. All this land will be holy.

² A square area that is 500 cubits long on each side will be for the Temple. There will be an open space around the Temple that is 50 cubits wide.

³ In the holy area you will measure 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide. The Temple will be in this area. The Temple area will be the Most Holy Place.

⁴ This holy part of the land will be for the priests, the servants of the Temple. This is where they approach the LORD to serve him. It will be a place for the priests houses and a place for the Temple.

⁵ Another area, 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide, will be for the Levites

who serve in the Temple. This land will also become cities for the Levites.

⁶And you will give the city an area that is 5000 cubits wide and 25,000 cubits long. It will be along the side of the holy area. It will be for all the family of Israel.

⁷The ruler will have land on both sides of the holy area and the land belonging to the city. It will be next to the holy area and the area belonging to the city. It will be the same width as the land that belongs to a tribe. It will go all the way from the west border to the east border.

⁸This land will be the rulers property in Israel. So he will not need to make life hard for my people anymore. But they will give the land to the Israelites for their tribes.

⁹This is what the Lord GOD said: Enough, you rulers of Israel! Stop being cruel and stealing things from people! Be fair and do what is right! Stop forcing my people out from their homes! This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁰Stop cheating people. Use accurate scales and measures!

¹¹The ephah and the bath must be the same size: A bath and an ephah must

both equal $1/10$ homer. Those measures will be based on the homer.

¹²A shekel must equal 20 gerahs. A mina must equal 60 shekels. It must be equal to 20 shekels plus 25 shekels plus 15 shekels.

¹³This is a special offering that you must give: $1/6$ ephah of wheat for every homer of wheat; $1/6$ ephah of barley for every homer of barley;

¹⁴ $1/10$ bath of olive oil for every cor of olive oil; (Remember: Ten baths make a homer, and ten baths make a cor.)

¹⁵and one sheep for every 200 sheep from every watering hole in Israel. Those special offerings are for the grain offerings, for the burnt offerings, and for the fellowship offerings. These offerings are to remove the sins of the people. This is what the Lord GOD said.

¹⁶Everyone in the country will give to this offering for the ruler of Israel.

¹⁷But the ruler must give the things needed for the special holy days. The ruler must provide the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the drink offerings for the feast days, for the New Moon, for the Sabbaths, and for

all the other special meeting days of the family of Israel. He must give all the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings, and fellowship offerings that are used to make the family of Israel pure.

¹⁸This is what the Lord GOD says: In the first month, on the first day of the month, you will take a young bull that has nothing wrong with it. You must use that bull to make the Temple pure.

¹⁹The priest will take some of the blood from the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the Temple and on the four corners of the ledge of the altar and on the posts of the gate to the inner courtyard.

²⁰You will do the same thing on the seventh day of that month for anyone who has sinned by mistake or without knowing it. So you will make the Temple pure.

²¹On the 14th day of the first month you must celebrate the Passover. The Festival of Unleavened Bread begins at this time. It continues for seven days.

²²At that time the ruler will offer a bull for himself and for all the people of Israel. The bull will be for a sin offering.

²³During the seven days of the festival, the ruler will offer seven bulls and seven rams that have nothing wrong with them. They will be burnt offerings to the LORD. The ruler will offer one bull on every day of the seven days of the festival, and he will offer a male goat every day for a sin offering.

²⁴The ruler will give an ephah of barley as a grain offering with each bull, and an ephah of barley with each ram. He must give a hin of oil for each ephah of grain.

²⁵He must do the same thing for the seven days of the Festival of Shelters. This festival begins on the 15th day of the seventh month. These offerings will be the sin offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering and the oil offering.

46¹This is what the Lord GOD says: The east gate of the inner courtyard will be closed on the six working days. But it will be opened on the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon.

²The ruler will go into the porch of that gate and stand by the gatepost. Then the priests will offer the rulers burnt offering and fellowship offerings. The ruler will worship at the opening of that gate and then go out. But the gate will not be shut until evening.

³On the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon, the common people will also worship the LORD at that gate.

⁴The ruler will offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the Sabbath. He must provide six lambs that have nothing wrong with them and a ram that has nothing wrong with it.

⁵He must give an ephah of grain offering with the ram. As for the grain offering with the lambs, the ruler can give as much as he wants. But he must give 1 hin of olive oil for each ephah of grain.

⁶On the day of the New Moon he must offer a young bull that has nothing wrong with it. He will also offer six lambs and a ram that have nothing wrong with them.

⁷The ruler must give an ephah of grain as an offering with the bull and an ephah of grain as an offering with the ram. As

for the grain offering with the lambs, he can give as much as he wants. But he must give 1 hin of olive oil for each ephah of grain.

⁸When the ruler goes in, he must enter at the porch of the east gate and he must leave that same way.

⁹When the common people come to meet with the LORD at the special festivals, whoever enters through the north gate to worship will go out through the south gate, and whoever enters through the south gate will go out through the north gate. People must not return the same way they entered. Each person must go out straight ahead.

¹⁰The ruler should be there among the people. When the people go in, the ruler will go in with them, and when they go out, the ruler will too.

¹¹At the festivals and other special meetings, an ephah of grain as an offering must be offered with each young bull, and an ephah of grain as an offering must be offered with each ram. As for the grain offering with the lambs, the ruler can give as much as he wants. But

he must give 1 hin of olive oil for each ephah of grain.

¹²When the ruler gives a freewill offering to the LORD it might be a burnt offering, a fellowship offering, or a freewill offering the east gate will be opened for him. Then he will offer his burnt offering and his fellowship offerings as he does on the Sabbath day. After he leaves, the gate will be shut.

¹³Every day you will provide a year-old lamb that has nothing wrong with it. It will be for a burnt offering to the LORD. You will provide it every morning.

¹⁴Also, you will offer a grain offering with the lamb every morning. You will give 1/6 ephah of flour and 1/3 hin of oil to make the fine flour moist. It will be the daily grain offering to the LORD.

¹⁵So they will give the lamb, the grain offering and the oil every morning, for a burnt offering forever.

¹⁶This is what the Lord GOD says: If the ruler gives a gift from part of his land to any of his sons, it will belong to his sons. It is their property.

¹⁷But if the ruler gives a gift from part of his land to one of his slaves, the gift

will belong to the slave only until the year of freedom. Then the gift will go back to the ruler. Only the rulers sons will keep a gift of land from the ruler.

¹⁸And the ruler will not take any of the peoples land or force them to leave their land. He must give some of his own land to his sons. In that way my people will not be forced to lose their land.

¹⁹The man led me through the entrance at the side of the gate. He led me to the holy rooms for the priests on the north side. There I saw a place at the west end of the path.

²⁰The man said to me, This is where the priests will boil the guilt offering and the sin offering and will bake the grain offering. Why? So they will not need to bring these offerings out into the outer courtyard. So they will not bring those holy things out where the common people are.

²¹Then the man led me out to the outer courtyard. He led me to the four corners of the courtyard. I saw smaller courtyards in each corner of the large courtyard.

²²There was a small, enclosed area in each of the four corners of the courtyard. Each small courtyard was 40 cubits long and 30 cubits wide. The four areas measured the same.

²³There was a brick wall around each of the four small courtyards, and there were places built into the brick walls for cooking.

²⁴The man said to me, These are the kitchens where those who serve at the Temple cook the sacrifices for the people.

47 ¹The man led me back to the entrance of the Temple. I saw water coming out from under the east gate of the Temple. (The front of the Temple is on the east side.) The water flowed down from under the south end of the Temple and ran south of the altar.

²The man led me out through the north gate and then around the outside to the outer gate on the east side. The water was flowing out on the south side of the gate.

³The man walked east with a tape measure in his hand. He measured 1000 cubits. Then he told me to walk through

the water at that place. The water was only ankle deep.

⁴He measured another 1000 cubits. Then he told me to walk through the water at that place. There the water came up to my knees. Then he measured another 1000 cubits and told me to walk through the water at that place. There the water was waist deep.

⁵He measured another 1000 cubits, but there the water was too deep to cross. It had become a river. The water was deep enough to swim in. It was a river that was too deep to cross.

⁶Then the man said to me, Son of man, did you pay close attention to the things you saw? Then the man led me back along the side of the river.

⁷As I walked back along the side of the river, I saw many trees on both sides of the water.

⁸He said to me, This water flows east, down to the Arabah Valley.

⁹This water flows into the Dead Sea so that the water in that sea becomes fresh and clean. There are many fish in this water, and all kinds of animals live where this river goes.

¹⁰You can see fishermen standing by the river all the way from En Gedi to En Eglaim. You can see them throwing their fishing nets and catching many kinds of fish. There are as many kinds of fish in the Dead Sea as there are in the Mediterranean Sea.

¹¹But the swamps and small marshes will not become fresh. They will be left for salt.

¹²All kinds of fruit trees will grow on both sides of the river. Their leaves never will become dry and fall. The fruit will never stop growing on those trees. The trees will produce fruit every month, because the water for the trees comes from the Temple. The fruit from the trees will be for food, and their leaves will be for healing.

¹³This is what the Lord GOD says: These are the borders for dividing the land among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph will have two parts.

¹⁴You will divide the land equally. I promised to give this land to your ancestors, so I am giving this land to you.

¹⁵Here are the borders of the land: On the north side, it goes from the Mediterranean Sea by way of Hethlon where the road turns toward Hamath and on to Zedad,

¹⁶Berothah, Sibraim (which is on the border between Damascus and Hamath) and Hazer Hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran.

¹⁷So the border will go from the sea to Hazar Enan on the northern border of Damascus and Hamath. This will be on the north side.

¹⁸On the east side, the border will go from Hazar Enan between Hauran and Damascus and continue along the Jordan River between Gilead and the land of Israel, to the eastern sea and all the way to Tamar. This will be the eastern border.

¹⁹On the south side, the border will go from Tamar all the way to the oasis at Meribah-kadesh. Then it will go along the Brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. This will be the southern border.

²⁰On the west side, the Mediterranean Sea will be the border all the way to the area in front of Lebo Hamath. This will be your western border.

²¹ So you will divide this land among you for the tribes of Israel.

²² You will divide it as a property for yourselves and for the foreigners who live among you and who have had children among you. These foreigners will be residents they will be like natural born Israelites. You will divide some land for them among the tribes of Israel.

²³ The tribe where that resident lives must give him some land. This is what the Lord GOD said!

48¹ The northern border goes east from the Mediterranean Sea to Hethlon to Hamath Pass and then all the way to Hazar Enan. This is on the border between Damascus and Hamath. The land for the tribes in this group will go from the east of these borders to the west. From north to south, the tribes in this area are Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, and Judah.

² (48: 1)

³ (48: 1)

⁴ (48: 1)

⁵ (48: 1)

⁶ (48: 1)

⁷ (48: 1)

⁸The next area of land will be for a special use. This land is south of Judah's land. This area is 25,000 cubits long from north to south. From east to west, it will be as wide as the land that belongs to the other tribes. The Temple will be in the middle of this section of land.

⁹You will dedicate this land to the LORD. It will be 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits wide.

¹⁰This special area of land will be divided among the priests and Levites. The priests will get one part of this area. The land will be 25,000 cubits long on the north side, 10,000 cubits wide on the west side, 10,000 cubits wide on the east side, and 25,000 cubits long on the south side. The LORD'S Temple will be in the middle of this area of land.

¹¹This land is for Zadok's descendants. These men were chosen to be my holy priests, because they continued to serve me when the other people of Israel left me. Zadok's family did not leave me like the other people from the tribe of Levi.

¹²This share from this holy part of the land will be especially for these priests. It will be next to the land of the Levites.

¹³Next to the land for the priests, the Levites will have a share of the land. It will be 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide. They will get the full length and width of this land 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits wide.

¹⁴The Levites will not sell or trade any of this land. They will not be able to sell any of it. They must not cut up this part of the country, because this land belongs to the LORD. It is very special. It is the best part of the land.

¹⁵There will be an area of land 5000 cubits wide by 25,000 cubits long that is left over from the land given to the priests and Levites. This land can be for the city, for grasslands for animals, and for building houses. The common people may use this land. The city will be in the middle of it.

¹⁶These are the city's measurements: The north side will be 4500 cubits. The south side will be 4500 cubits. The east side will be 4500 cubits. The west side will be 4500 cubits.

¹⁷The city will have grasslands. These grasslands will be 250 cubits on the north and 250 cubits on the south. They

will be 250 cubits on the east and 250 cubits on the west.

¹⁸What is left of the length along the side of the holy area will be 10,000 cubits on the east and 10,000 cubits on the west. This land will be along the side of the holy area. This land will grow food for the city workers.

¹⁹The city workers from all the tribes of Israel will farm this land.

²⁰This special area of land will be square. It will be 25,000 cubits long by 25,000 cubits wide. You must set apart this area for its special purposes. One part is for the priests, one part is for the Levites, and one part is for the city.

²¹Part of that special land will be for the ruler of the country. That special area of land is square. It is 25,000 cubits long by 25,000 cubits wide. Part of this special land is for the priests, part of it is for the Levites, and part of it is for the Temple. The Temple is in the middle of this area of land. The rest of the land belongs to the ruler of the country. The ruler will get the area between the land of Benjamin and the land of Judah.

²² (48: 21)

²³ South of this special area will be the land for the tribes that lived east of the Jordan River. Each tribe will get a section of land that goes from the eastern border to the Mediterranean Sea. From north to south, these tribes are Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad.

²⁴ (48: 23)

²⁵ (48: 23)

²⁶ (48: 23)

²⁷ (48: 23)

²⁸ The southern border of Gads land will go from Tamar to the Oasis at Meribah-kadesh, then along the Brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea.

²⁹ This is the land that you will divide among the tribes of Israel. This is what each group will get. This is what the Lord GOD said!

³⁰ These are the gates of the city. The gates will be named for the tribes of Israel. The north side of the city will be 4500 cubits long.

³¹ There will be three gates: Reubens Gate, Judahs Gate, and Levis Gate.

³² The east side of the city will be 4500 cubits long. There will be three gates:

Josephs Gate, Benjamins Gate, and Dans Gate.

³³The south side of the city will be 4500 cubits long. There will be three gates: Simeons Gate, Issachars Gate, and Zebuluns Gate.

³⁴The west side of the city will be 4500 cubits long. There will be three gates: Gads Gate, Ashers Gate, and Naphtalis Gate.

³⁵The distance around the city will be 18,000 cubits. From now on, the name of the city will be THE LORD IS THERE.

Daniel

1 ¹ Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and surrounded it with his army. This happened during the third year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah.

² The Lord allowed Nebuchadnezzar to defeat Jehoiakim king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar took all the dishes and other things from Gods Temple and carried them to Babylon. He put those things in the temple of his gods.

³ Then King Nebuchadnezzar ordered Ashpenaz, the man in charge of his officials, to bring some of the boys into the palace to train them. He was to include boys from among the Israelites, from important Judean families, and from the royal family of Judah.

⁴ King Nebuchadnezzar wanted only healthy boys who did not have any bruises, scars, or anything wrong with their bodies. He wanted handsome, smart young men who were able to learn things quickly and easily to serve in his

palace. He told Ashpenaz to teach these young men the language and writings of the Chaldeans.

⁵King Nebuchadnezzar gave the young men a certain amount of food and wine every day. This was the same kind of food that he ate. He wanted them to be trained for three years. After that, they would become servants of the king of Babylon.

⁶Among those young men were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from the tribe of Judah.

⁷Ashpenaz gave them Babylonian names. Daniel's new name was Belteshazzar, Hananiah's was Shadrach, Mishael's was Meshach, and Azariah's was Abednego.

⁸Daniel did not want to eat the king's rich food and wine because it would make him unclean. So he asked Ashpenaz for permission not to make himself unclean in this way.

⁹God caused Ashpenaz, the man in charge of the officials, to be kind and loyal to Daniel.

¹⁰But Ashpenaz told Daniel, I am afraid of my master, the king. He ordered me

to give you this food and drink. If you don't eat this food, you will begin to look weak and sick. You will look worse than other young men your age. The king will see this, and he will become angry with me. He might cut off my head. And it would be your fault.

¹¹ Then Daniel talked to the guard who had been put in charge of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah by Ashpenaz.

¹² He said, Please give us this test for ten days: Don't give us anything but vegetables to eat and water to drink.

¹³ Then after ten days, compare us with the other young men who eat the king's food. See for yourself who looks healthier, and then decide how you want to treat us, your servants.

¹⁴ So the guard agreed to test Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah for ten days.

¹⁵ After ten days, Daniel and his friends looked healthier than all the young men who ate the king's food.

¹⁶ So the guard continued to take away the king's special food and wine

and to give only vegetables to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

¹⁷God gave these four young men the wisdom and ability to learn many different kinds of writing and science. Daniel could also understand all kinds of visions and dreams.

¹⁸At the end of the three years of training, Ashpenaz brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁹The king talked to them and found that none of the young men were as good as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So these four young men became the king's servants.

²⁰Every time the king asked them about something important, they showed great wisdom and understanding. The king found they were ten times better than all the magicians and wise men in his kingdom.

²¹So Daniel served the king until the first year that Cyrus was king.

2¹During Nebuchadnezzar's second year as king, he had dreams. They bothered him, and he could not sleep.

²So the king called his wise men to come to him. They used magic and

watched the stars. They did this to try to interpret dreams and to learn what would happen in the future. The king wanted them to tell him what he had dreamed, so they came in and stood in front of him.

³Then the king said to them, I had a dream that bothers me. I want to know what it means.

⁴Then the Chaldeans answered the king in the Aramaic language. They said, King, live forever! Please tell your dream to us, your servants, and then we will tell you what it means.

⁵Then King Nebuchadnezzar said to them, No, you must tell me the dream, and then you must tell me what it means. If you dont, I will give an order for you to be cut into pieces. And I will order your houses to be destroyed until they are nothing but piles of dust and ashes.

⁶But if you tell me my dream and explain its meaning, I will give you gifts, rewards, and great honor. So tell me about my dream and what it means.

⁷ Again the wise men said to the king, Please, sir, tell us about the dream, and we will tell you what it means.

⁸ Then King Nebuchadnezzar answered, I know that you are trying to get more time. You know that I meant what I said.

⁹ You know that you will be punished if you don't tell me about my dream. So you have all agreed to lie to me. You are hoping for more time so that I will forget what I want you to do. Now tell me the dream. If you can tell me the dream, I will know that you can tell me what it really means.

¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered the king. They said, There is not a man on earth who can do what the king is asking! No king has ever asked the wise men, the men who do magic, or the Chaldeans to do something like this. Not even the greatest and most powerful king has ever asked his wise men to do such a thing.

¹¹ The king is asking something that is too hard to do. Only the gods could tell the king his dream and what it means. But the gods don't live with people.

¹²When the king heard that, he became very angry. So he gave an order for all the wise men of Babylon to be killed.

¹³King Nebuchadnezzar's order to kill all the wise men was announced. The king's men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

¹⁴Arioch was the commander of the king's guards. He was going to kill the wise men of Babylon, but Daniel talked to him. Daniel spoke politely to Arioch

¹⁵and said, Why did the king order such a severe punishment? Then Arioch explained the whole story about the king's dreams, and Daniel understood.

¹⁶When Daniel heard the story, he went to King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel asked the king to give him some more time. Then he would tell the king what the dream meant.

¹⁷So Daniel went to his house. He explained the whole story to his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

¹⁸Daniel asked his friends to pray to the God of heaven that God would be kind to them and help them understand this secret. Then Daniel and his friends

would not be killed with the other wise men of Babylon.

¹⁹During the night, God explained the secret to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven.

²⁰He said, Praise Gods name forever and ever! Power and wisdom belong to him.

²¹He changes the times and seasons. He gives power to kings, and he takes their power away. He gives wisdom to people, so they become wise. He lets people learn things and become wise.

²²He knows hidden secrets that are hard to understand. Light lives with him, so he knows what is in the dark and secret places.

²³God of my ancestors, I thank you and praise you. You gave me wisdom and power. You told us what we asked for. You told us about the kings dream.

²⁴Then Daniel went to Arioch, the man who King Nebuchadnezzar had chosen to kill the wise men of Babylon. Daniel said to Arioch, Dont kill the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king. I will tell him what his dream means.

²⁵ So very quickly, Arioch took Daniel to the king. Arioch said to the king, I have found a man among the captives from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.

²⁶ The king asked Daniel (Belteshazzar) a question. He said, Are you able to tell me about my dream, and what it means?

²⁷ Daniel answered, King Nebuchadnezzar, no wise man, no man who does magic, and no Chaldean could tell the king the secret things he has asked about.

²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who tells secret things. God has given King Nebuchadnezzar dreams to show him what will happen later. This was your dream, and this is what you saw while lying on your bed:

²⁹ King, as you were lying there on your bed, you began thinking about what might happen in the future. God can tell people about secret things she has shown you what will happen in the future.

³⁰ God also told this secret to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other men, but so that you, king, may know what it means. In that way you

will understand what went through your mind.

³¹ King, in your dream you saw a large statue in front of you that was very large and shiny. It was very impressive.

³² The head of the statue was made from pure gold. Its chest and the arms were made from silver. The belly and upper part of the legs were made from bronze.

³³ The lower part of the legs was made from iron. Its feet were made partly of iron and partly of clay.

³⁴ While you were looking at the statue, you saw a rock that was cut loose, but not by human hands. Then the rock hit the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them.

³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold broke to pieces all at the same time. And all the pieces became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summertime. The wind blew them away, and there was nothing left. No one could tell that a statue had ever been there. Then the rock that hit the statue became a very large mountain and filled up the whole earth.

³⁶That was your dream. Now we will tell the king what it means.

³⁷King, you are the most important king. The God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory.

³⁸He has given you control, and you rule over people and the wild animals and the birds. Wherever they live, God has made you ruler over them all. King Nebuchadnezzar, you are that head of gold on the statue.

³⁹Another kingdom will come after you, but it will not be as great as your kingdom. Next, a third kingdom will rule over the earth that is the bronze part.

⁴⁰Then there will be a fourth kingdom. That kingdom will be strong like iron. Just as iron breaks things and smashes them to pieces, that fourth kingdom will break all the other kingdoms and smash them to pieces.

⁴¹You saw that the feet and toes of the statue were partly clay and partly iron. That means the fourth kingdom will be a divided kingdom. It will have some of the strength of iron in it just as you saw the iron mixed with clay.

⁴²The toes of the statue were partly iron and partly clay. So the fourth kingdom will be partly strong like iron and partly weak like clay.

⁴³You saw the iron mixed with clay, but iron and clay don't completely mix together. In the same way, the people of the fourth kingdom will be a mixture. They will not be united as one people.

⁴⁴During the time of the kings of the fourth kingdom, the God of heaven will set up another kingdom that will last forever. It will never be destroyed. And it will be the kind of kingdom that cannot be passed on to another group of people. This kingdom will crush all the other kingdoms. It will bring them to an end, but that kingdom itself will last forever.

⁴⁵King Nebuchadnezzar, you saw a rock cut from a mountain, but no one cut that rock. The rock broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold to pieces. In this way God showed you what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and you can trust that this is what it means.

⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar bowed down in front of Daniel to honor him.

The king praised him. He gave an order that an offering and incense be given to honor Daniel.

⁴⁷ Then the king said to Daniel, I know for sure your God is the God over all gods and the Lord over all kings. He tells people about things they cannot know. I know this is true because you were able to tell these secret things to me.

⁴⁸ Then the king gave Daniel a very important job in his kingdom and gave him many expensive gifts. Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon and put him in charge of all the wise men of Babylon.

⁴⁹ Daniel asked the king to make Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego important officials over the province of Babylon. The king did as Daniel asked. Daniel himself became one of the important officials who was always near the king.

3¹ King Nebuchadnezzar had a gold idol made that was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide. Then he set the idol up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

²Then he called the satraps, prefects, governors, advisors, treasurers, judges, rulers, and all the other officials in his kingdom to come together. He wanted all of them to come to the dedication ceremony for the idol.

³So all the men came and stood in front of the idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁴Then the man who makes announcements for the king spoke in a loud voice, All you people from many nations and language groups, listen to me. This is what you are commanded to do:

⁵You must bow down as soon as you hear the sound of all the musical instruments. When you hear the horns, flutes, lyres, sambucas, harps, bagpipes, and all the other musical instruments, you must worship the gold idol. King Nebuchadnezzar has set this idol up.

⁶Whoever does not bow down and worship this gold idol will immediately be thrown into a very hot furnace.

⁷So as soon as they heard the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres, sambucas, bagpipes, and all the other musical

instruments, they bowed down and worshiped the gold idol. All the peoples, nations, and different language groups there worshiped the gold idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸Then some of the Chaldeans came up to the king and began speaking against the people from Judah.

⁹They said, King, may you live forever!

¹⁰King, you gave a command. You said that everyone who hears the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres, sambucas, harps, bagpipes, and all the other musical instruments must bow down and worship the gold idol.

¹¹And you also said that whoever does not bow down and worship the gold idol will be thrown into a very hot furnace.

¹²There are some Judeans who you made important officials in the province of Babylon that ignored your order, King. Their names are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They don't worship your gods, and they didn't bow down to worship the gold idol you set up.

¹³Nebuchadnezzar became very angry. He called for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So they were brought to him.

¹⁴And Nebuchadnezzar said to them, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you dont worship my gods? And is it true that you didnt bow down and worship the gold idol I have set up?

¹⁵Now when you hear the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres, sambucas, harps, bagpipes, and all the other musical instruments, you must bow down and worship the gold idol. If you are ready to worship the idol I have made, that is good. But if you dont worship it, you will be thrown very quickly into the hot furnace. Then no god will be able to save you from my power!

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, Nebuchadnezzar, we dont need to explain these things to you.

¹⁷If you throw us into the hot furnace, the God we serve can save us. And if he wants to, he can save us from your power.

¹⁸But even if God does not save us, we want you to know, King, that we refuse to serve your gods. We will not worship the gold idol you have set up.

¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar became very angry with Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego. He gave an order for the oven to be heated seven times hotter than it usually was.

²⁰Then he commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He told the soldiers to throw them into the hot furnace.

²¹So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were tied up and thrown into the hot furnace. They were wearing their robes, pants, cloth caps, and other clothes.

²²The king was very angry when he gave the command, so the soldiers quickly made the furnace very hot. The fire was so hot that the flames killed the strong soldiers. They were killed when they went close to the fire to throw in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

²³Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell into the fire. They were tied up very tightly.

²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar jumped to his feet. He was very surprised and he asked his advisors, We tied only three men, and we threw only three men into

the fire. Is that right? His advisors said, Yes, King.

²⁵The king said, Look! I see four men walking around in the fire. They are not tied up and they are not burned. The fourth man looks like an angel.

²⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar went to the opening of the hot furnace. He shouted, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, come out! Servants of the Most High God, come here! So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire.

²⁷When they came out, the satraps, prefects, governors, and royal advisors crowded around them. They could see that the fire had not burned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their bodies were not burned at all. Their hair was not burned, and their robes were not burned. They didnt even smell as if they had been near fire.

²⁸Then Nebuchadnezzar said, Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their God has sent his angel and saved his servants from the fire! These three men trusted their God and refused to obey my command. They

were willing to die instead of serving or worshiping any other god.

²⁹ So I now make this law: Anyone from any nation or language group who says anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be cut into pieces, and their house will be destroyed until it is a pile of dirt and ashes. No other god can save his people like this.

³⁰ Then the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego more important jobs in the province of Babylon.

4¹ King Nebuchadnezzar sent this letter to the many nations and language groups living around the world. Greetings:

² I am very happy to tell you about the miracles and wonderful things that the Most High God did for me.

³ God has done amazing miracles! He has done powerful miracles! His kingdom continues forever; his rule will continue for all generations.

⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at my palace. I was happy and successful.

⁵ I had a dream that made me afraid. I was lying on my bed, and I saw pictures

and visions in my mind. These things made me very afraid.

⁶So I gave an order that all the wise men of Babylon be brought to me to tell me what my dream meant.

⁷When the men of magic and the Chaldeans came, I told them about the dream, but they could not tell me what it meant.

⁸Finally, Daniel came to me. (I gave Daniel the name, Belteshazzar, to honor my god. The spirit of the holy gods is in him.) I told him about my dream.

⁹I said, Belteshazzar, you are the most important of all the men of magic. I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you. I know there is no secret that is too hard for you to understand. This was what I dreamed. Tell me what it means.

¹⁰These are the visions I saw while I was lying in my bed: I looked, and there in front of me was a tree standing in the middle of the earth. The tree was very tall.

¹¹The tree grew large and strong. The top of the tree touched the sky. It could be seen from anywhere on earth.

¹²The leaves of the tree were beautiful. It had much good fruit on it. And on the tree was plenty of food for everyone. The wild animals found shelter under the tree, and the birds lived in its branches. Every animal ate from the tree.

¹³I was looking at those things in the vision while lying on my bed. And then I saw a holy angel coming down from heaven.

¹⁴He spoke very loud and said, Cut down the tree, and cut off its branches. Strip off its leaves. Scatter its fruit around. The animals that are under the tree will run away. The birds that are in its branches will fly away.

¹⁵But let the stump and roots stay in the ground. Put a band of iron and bronze around it. The stump and roots will stay in the field with the grass all around it. It will live among the wild animals and plants in the fields. It will become wet with dew.

¹⁶He will not think like a man any longer. He will have the mind of an animal. Seven seasons will pass while he is like this.

¹⁷ Holy angels announced this punishment so that all the people on earth may know that God Most High rules over human kingdoms. God gives those kingdoms to whoever he wants, and he chooses humble people to rule them.

¹⁸ That is what I, King Nebuchadnezzar, dreamed. Now, Belshazzar, tell me what it means. None of the wise men in my kingdom can tell me what that dream means. But Belshazzar, you can interpret the dream because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.

¹⁹ Then Daniel (also called Belshazzar) became very quiet for a while. What he was thinking bothered him. So the king said, Belshazzar, don't let the dream or its meaning make you afraid. Then Belshazzar answered the king, My lord, I wish the dream were about your enemies, and I wish the meaning of the dream were about those against you.

²⁰ You saw a tree in your dream. The tree grew large and strong. Its top touched the sky, and it could be seen from all over the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, and it had plenty of fruit. The

fruit gave plenty of food for everyone. It was a home for the wild animals, and its branches were nesting places for the birds. You saw that tree.

²¹ (4: 20)

²² King, you are that tree! You have become great and powerful. You are like the tall tree that touched the sky your power reaches to the far parts of the earth.

²³ King, you saw a holy angel coming down from heaven. He said, Cut the tree down and destroy it. Put a band of iron and bronze around the stump and leave the stump and its roots in the ground. Leave it in the grass in the field. It will become wet with dew. He will live like a wild animal. Seven seasons will pass while he is like this.

²⁴ King, this is the meaning of the dream. God Most High has commanded these things to happen to my lord the king:

²⁵ King Nebuchadnezzar, you will be forced to go away from people. You will live among the wild animals. You will eat grass like cattle, and you will become wet with dew. Seven seasons will pass,

and then you will learn this lesson. You will learn God Most High rules over human kingdoms and gives them to whoever he wants.

²⁶The command to leave the stump of the tree and its roots in the ground means this: Your kingdom will be given back to you. This will happen when you learn that Most High God rules your kingdom.

²⁷So, King, please accept my advice. Stop sinning and do what is right. Stop doing bad things and be kind to poor people. Then you might continue to be successful.

²⁸All these things happened to King Nebuchadnezzar.

²⁹Twelve months after the dream, King Nebuchadnezzar was walking on the roof of his palace in Babylon. While on the roof, the king said, Look at Babylon! I built this great city. It is my palace. I built this great place by my power. I built this place to show how great I am.

³⁰(4: 29)

³¹The words were still in his mouth when a voice came from heaven. The voice said, King Nebuchadnezzar, these

things will happen to you: Your power as king has been taken away from you.

³²You will be forced to go away from people. You will live with the wild animals and eat grass like an ox. Seven seasons will pass before you learn your lesson. Then you will learn that God Most High rules over human kingdoms and gives them to whoever he wants.

³³These things happened immediately. Nebuchadnezzar was forced to go away from people. He began eating grass like an ox. He became wet from dew. His hair grew long like the feathers of an eagle, and his nails grew long like the claws of a bird.

³⁴Then at the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up toward heaven, and I was in my right mind again. Then I gave praise to God Most High. I gave honor and glory to him who lives forever. God rules forever! His kingdom continues for all generations.

³⁵People on earth are not really important. God does what he wants with the powers of heaven and the people on earth. No one can stop his powerful hand or question what he does.

³⁶At that time God gave me my right mind again, and he gave back my great honor and power as king. My advisors and the royal people began to ask my advice again. I became the king again even greater and more powerful than before.

³⁷Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, give praise, honor, and glory to the King of Heaven. Everything he does is right. He is always fair, and he is able to make proud people humble!

5¹ King Belshazzar gave a big party for 1000 of his officials. The king was drinking wine with them.

²As Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he ordered his servants to bring the gold and silver cups. His grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken these cups from the Temple in Jerusalem. King Belshazzar wanted his royal people, his wives, and his slave women to drink from those cups.

³So they brought the gold cups that had been taken from the Temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his officials, his wives, and his women slaves drank from them.

⁴As they were drinking, they gave praise to their idol gods, which were only statues made from gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

⁵Suddenly, a persons hand appeared and began writing on the wall. The fingers scratched words into the plaster on the wall, near the lampstand in the kings palace. The king was watching the hand as it wrote.

⁶King Belshazzar was very afraid. His face became white from fear, and his knees were shaking and knocking together. He could not stand up because his legs were too weak.

⁷The king called for the men of magic and the Chaldeans to be brought to him. He said to these wise men, I will give a reward to anyone who can read this writing and explain to me what it means. I will give him purple robes to wear and will put a gold chain around his neck. I will make him the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

⁸So all the kings wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or understand what it meant.

⁹King Belshazzars officials were confused, and the king became even more afraid and worried. His face was white from fear.

¹⁰Then the kings mother came into the place where the party was. She had heard the voices of the king and his royal officials. She said, King, may you live forever! Dont be afraid! Dont let your face be so white with fear!

¹¹There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the days of your father, this man showed that he could understand secrets. He showed that he was very smart and very wise. He showed that he was like the gods in these things. Your grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar, put this man in charge of all the wise men. He ruled over all the men of magic and the Chaldeans.

¹²The man I am talking about is named Daniel. The king gave him the name Belteshazzar. He is very smart and he knows many things. He could interpret dreams, explain secrets, and find the answer to very hard problems. Call for Daniel, he will tell you what the writing on the wall means.

¹³So they brought Daniel to the king and he asked, Is your name Daniel, one of the captives my father the king brought here from Judah?

¹⁴I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you understand secrets and are very smart and very wise.

¹⁵The wise men and the men of magic were brought to me to read this writing on the wall. I wanted them to explain to me what it means, but they could not explain it.

¹⁶I have heard that you are able to explain what things mean, and that you can find the answer to very hard problems. If you can read this writing on the wall and explain to me what it means, this is what I will do for you: I will give you purple robes to wear and will put a gold chain around your neck. Then you will become the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

¹⁷Then Daniel answered the king, King Belshazzar, you can keep your gifts for yourself, or you can give them to someone else. But I will still read the

writing on the wall for you and explain what it means.

¹⁸King, God Most High made your grandfather Nebuchadnezzar a very great and powerful king and gave him great wealth.

¹⁹People from many nations and language groups were very afraid of Nebuchadnezzar because God made him a very powerful king. Nebuchadnezzar killed whoever he wanted and let those who pleased him live. If he wanted to make people important, he made them important. If he wanted to bring them down, he brought them down.

²⁰But Nebuchadnezzar became proud and stubborn, so his power was taken away from him. He was taken off his royal throne and stripped of his glory.

²¹Then Nebuchadnezzar was forced to go away from people. His mind became like the mind of an animal. He lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like an ox. He became wet with dew. These things happened to him until he learned his lesson. He learned that God Most High rules over human kingdoms, and he gives them to whoever he wants.

²² But Belshazzar, you already knew this. You are Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, but still you have not made yourself humble.

²³ No, you did not become humble. Instead, you have turned against the Lord of heaven. You ordered the drinking cups from his Temple to be brought to you. Then you and your royal officials, your wives, and your slave women drank wine from those cups. You gave praise to the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone. They are not really gods; they cannot see or hear or understand anything. But you did not give honor to the God who has the power over your life and everything you do.

²⁴ So because of that, God sent the hand that wrote on the wall.

²⁵ These are the words that were written on the wall: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPARSIN.

²⁶ This is what these words mean: MENE: God has counted the days until your kingdom will end.

²⁷ TEKEL: You have been weighed on the scales and found not good enough.

²⁸UPARSIN: Your kingdom is being taken from you. It will be divided among the Medes and Persians.

²⁹Then Belshazzar gave an order for Daniel to be dressed in purple clothes. A gold chain was put around his neck, and he was appointed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

³⁰That very same night, Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was killed.

³¹A man named Darius the Mede became the new king. Darius was about 62 years old.

6¹Darius thought it would be a good idea to choose 120 satraps to rule throughout his kingdom.

²He chose three men to rule over the 120 satraps. Daniel was one of the three supervisors. The king put these men in this position to keep anyone from cheating him.

³Daniel proved himself to be a better supervisor than any of the others. He did this by his good character and great ability. The king was so impressed with Daniel that he planned to make him ruler over the whole kingdom.

⁴ But when the other supervisors and the satraps heard about this, they were very jealous. They tried to find reasons to accuse Daniel. So they watched what Daniel did as he went about doing the business of the government. But they could not find anything wrong with him, so they could not accuse him of doing anything wrong. Daniel was a man people could trust. He did not cheat the king, and he worked very hard.

⁵ Finally they said, We will never find any reason to accuse Daniel of doing something wrong. So we must find something to complain about that is connected to the law of his God.

⁶ So the two supervisors and the satraps went as a group to the king. They said, King Darius, live forever!

⁷ The supervisors, prefects, satraps, advisors, and governors have all agreed on something. We think that the king should make this law and that everyone must obey it: For the next 30 days, whoever prays to any god or man except you, King, will be thrown into the lions den.

⁸Now, King, make the law and sign the paper it is written on so that it cannot be changed, because the laws of the Medes and Persians cannot be canceled or changed.

⁹So King Darius made the law and signed it.

¹⁰Daniel always prayed to God three times every day. Three times every day, he bowed down on his knees to pray and praise God. Even though Daniel heard about the new law, he still went to his house to pray. He went up to the upper room of his house and opened the windows that faced toward Jerusalem. Then Daniel bowed down on his knees and prayed just as he always had done.

¹¹Then the supervisors and satraps went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.

¹²So they went to the king and talked to him about the law he had made. They said, King Darius, you signed a law that says, for the next 30 days anyone who prays to any god or man except you, the king, would be thrown into the lions den. You did sign that law, didnt you? The king answered, Yes, I signed that law,

and the laws of the Medes and Persians cannot be canceled or changed.

¹³Then they said to the king, That man Daniel is not paying any attention to you. He is one of the captives from Judah, and he is not paying attention to the law you signed. Daniel still prays to his God three times every day.

¹⁴The king became very sad and upset when he heard this. He decided to save Daniel. He worked until sunset trying to think of a way to save him.

¹⁵Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, Remember, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians says that no law or command signed by the king can ever be canceled or changed.

¹⁶So King Darius gave the order. They brought Daniel and threw him into the lions den. The king said to Daniel, May the God you serve save you!

¹⁷A big rock was brought and put over the opening of the lions den. Then the king used his ring and put his seal on the rock. He also used the rings of his officials and put their seals on the rock. This showed that no one could move that

rock and bring Daniel out of the lions den.

¹⁸Then King Darius went back to his house. He did not eat that night. He did not want anyone to come and entertain him. He could not sleep all night.

¹⁹The next morning, King Darius got up just as it was getting light and ran to the lions den.

²⁰He was very worried. When he got to the lions den, he called to Daniel. He said, Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God been able to save you from the lions? You always serve your God.

²¹Daniel answered, King, live forever!

²²My God sent his angel to save me. The angel closed the lions mouths. The lions have not hurt me because my God knows I am innocent. I never did anything wrong to you, King.

²³King Darius was very happy. He told his servants to lift Daniel out of the lions den. And when Daniel was lifted out of the den, they did not find any injury on his body. The lions did not hurt Daniel because he trusted in his God.

²⁴Then the king gave a command to bring the men who had accused Daniel

to the lions den. The men and their wives and children were thrown into the lions den. The lions grabbed them before they hit the floor. The lions ate their bodies and then chewed on their bones.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote this letter to all the people from other nations and language groups all around the world: Greetings:

²⁶ I am making a new law. This law is for people in every part of my kingdom. All of you must fear and respect the God of Daniel. Daniels God is the living God; he lives forever. His kingdom will never be destroyed. His rule will never end.

²⁷ God helps and saves people. He does amazing miracles in heaven and on earth. He saved Daniel from the lions.

²⁸ So Daniel was successful during the time Darius was king and when Cyrus the Persian was king.

7¹ During the first year that Belshazzar was king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream. He saw these visions while he was lying on his bed, and he wrote what he had dreamed.

² Daniel said: In my vision that night I saw the wind blowing from all four

directions. These winds made the sea rough.

³I saw four big animals and each one was different from the others. These four animals came up out of the sea.

⁴The first animal looked like a lion, but it had wings like an eagle. As I watched, its wings were torn off. It was helped up from the ground, and it stood up on two feet like a human. Then it was given a human mind.

⁵Then I saw another animal there in front of me that looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, Get up and eat all the meat you want!

⁶Then I noticed another animal in front of me. It looked like a leopard, but it had four wings on its back, and it had four heads. It was given authority to rule.

⁷After that, in my vision that night, I looked, and there in front of me was a fourth animal. It was terrifying, mean, and powerful. It had huge iron teeth and crushed in its teeth whatever it killed. And it smashed with its feet whatever was left. This fourth animal was different

from all the other animals I saw. This one had ten horns.

⁸While I was looking at the horns and thinking about them, another horn grew up among them. This was a little horn with eyes like a human. It also had a mouth that was bragging. Then the little horn pulled out three of the other horns.

⁹As I was looking, thrones were put in their places, and the Ancient King sat on his throne. His clothes were as white as snow. His hair was as white as wool. His throne was made from fire, and its wheels were made from flames.

¹⁰A river of fire flowed out from in front of the Ancient King. Millions of people were serving him. Hundreds of millions of people stood in front of him. Court was ready to begin, and the books were opened.

¹¹I kept on looking because the little horn was bragging. I kept watching until finally the fourth animal was killed. Its body was destroyed, and it was thrown into the burning fire.

¹²The authority and rule of the other animals had been taken from them. But

they were permitted to live for a certain period of time.

¹³As my vision that night continued, I looked, and there in front of me was someone who looked like a human being. He was coming on the clouds in the sky. He came up to the Ancient King, and the Kings servants brought him before the King.

¹⁴The one who looked like a human being was given authority, glory, and complete ruling power. People from every nation and language group will serve him. His rule will last forever. His kingdom will last forever. It will never be destroyed.

¹⁵I, Daniel, was confused and worried. The visions that went through my mind bothered me.

¹⁶I went to someone who was standing there and asked him what all this meant. So he explained it to me.

¹⁷He said, The four great animals are four kingdoms that will come from the earth.

¹⁸But Gods holy people will receive the kingdom, and they will have the kingdom forever and ever.

¹⁹Then I wanted to know what the fourth animal was and what it meant. The fourth animal was different from all the others. It was more terrifying with its iron teeth and bronze claws. It was the animal that crushed in its teeth whatever it killed and smashed with its feet whatever was left.

²⁰I wanted to know about the ten horns that were on the fourth animals head and about the little horn that grew there. That little horn pulled out three of the other ten horns. That little horn looked meaner than the other horns and it kept on bragging.

²¹As I was watching, this little horn began attacking and making war against Gods holy people and killing them.

²²The little horn kept killing Gods holy people until the Ancient King came and judged him. The Ancient King announced his decision about the little horn. This judgment helped Gods holy people, and they received the kingdom.

²³And he explained this to me: The fourth animal is a fourth kingdom that will come on the earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms. That fourth

kingdom will destroy the whole world. It will crush everything under its feet.

²⁴The ten horns are ten kings that will come from this fourth kingdom. After those ten kings are gone, another king will come. He will be different from the kings who ruled before him. He will defeat three of the other kings.

²⁵This special king will say things against God Most High, and he will hurt and kill Gods special people. That king will try to change the times and laws that have already been set. Gods holy people will be under that kings power for three and one-half years.

²⁶But the court will decide what should happen, and that kings power will be taken away. His kingdom will end completely.

²⁷Then Gods holy people will rule over the kingdom and all the people from all the kingdoms of earth. This kingdom will last forever, and people from all the other kingdoms will respect and serve them.

²⁸And that was the end of the dream. I, Daniel, was very afraid. My face became

very white from fear, and I did not tell the other people what I saw and heard.

8¹ After that vision, I, Daniel, saw another vision during the third year that Belshazzar was king.

² In the vision I saw that I was in the city of Susa. Susa was the capital city in the province of Elam. I was standing by the Ulai River.

³ I looked up and saw a ram standing at the side of the river. The ram had two long horns. The horns were both long, but one horn was longer than the other horn. The long horn was farther back than the other horn.

⁴ I watched the ram run into things with its horns. I watched the ram run to the west, to the north, and to the south. No animal could stop the ram, and no one could save the other animals. That ram did whatever it wanted, and it became very powerful.

⁵ I thought about the ram. While I was watching, I saw a male goat come from the west. It had one large horn that was easy to see. It ran so fast its feet barely touched the ground.

⁶The goat came to the ram with the two horns. (This was the ram I had seen standing by the Ulai River.) The goat was very angry and ran at the ram.

⁷As I watched, the goat ran at the ram and broke both of the rams horns. The ram could not stop the goat. The goat knocked it to the ground and walked all over it. There was no one to save the ram from the goat.

⁸So the goat became very powerful. But after he became strong, his big horn broke off. Then four horns grew in place of the one big horn. Those four horns were easy to see. They pointed in four different directions.

⁹Then a little horn grew from one of those four horns. It grew and became very big. It grew toward the southeast, toward the Beautiful Land.

¹⁰The little horn became very big. It grew until it reached the sky. It even threw some of heavens army to the ground and trampled them.

¹¹That little horn became very strong, and it turned against God, the Ruler of heavens army. It stopped the daily sacrifices that were offered to the

Ruler. And the holy place where people worshiped the Ruler was pulled down.

¹² Because of this sin, the daily sacrifices were stopped. Truth was thrown down to the ground. The little horn did these things and was very successful.

¹³ Then I heard two holy ones talking with each other. One of them asked the other one, who had been speaking, How long will the things in this vision last the stopping of the daily sacrifices, the sin that destroys, and the trampling down of the holy place and heavens army?

¹⁴ The other holy one said, This will last for 2300 days. Then the holy place will be repaired.

¹⁵ I, Daniel, saw this vision and tried to understand what it meant. While I was thinking about the vision, someone who looked like a man suddenly stood in front of me.

¹⁶ Then I heard a mans voice. This voice came from above the Ulai River. The voice called out, Gabriel, explain the vision to this man.

¹⁷ So Gabriel, the angel who looked like a man, came to me. I was very afraid and fell down to the ground. But Gabriel

said to me, Human, understand that this vision is about the time of the end.

¹⁸While Gabriel was speaking, I fell to the ground and went to sleep. It was a very deep sleep. Then Gabriel touched me and lifted me to my feet.

¹⁹He said, Now, I will explain the vision to you. I will tell you what will happen in the future. Your vision was about the end times.

²⁰You saw a ram with two horns. The horns are the countries of Media and Persia.

²¹The goat is the king of Greece. The big horn between its eyes is the first king.

²²That horn broke off and four horns grew in its place. The four horns are four kingdoms. Those four kingdoms will come from the nation of the first king, but they will not be as strong as the first king.

²³When the end is near for those kingdoms, there will be a very bold and cruel king who will be very tricky. This will happen when many people have turned against God.

²⁴ This king will be very powerful, but his power does not come from himself. This king will cause terrible destruction. He will be successful in everything he does. He will destroy powerful people even Gods holy people.

²⁵ This king will be very clever and will use lies to be successful. He will think that he is very important and will destroy many people, when they least expect it. He will try to fight even the Prince of princes. But that cruel kings power will be destroyed, and it will not be any human power that destroys him.

²⁶ What I said and the vision about those times are true. But dont tell anyone what you saw, because those things will not happen for a long, long time.

²⁷ I, Daniel, became very weak. I was sick for several days after that vision. Then I got up and went back to work for the king, but I was very upset about the vision. I did not understand what it meant.

9¹ These things happened during the first year that Darius son of Ahasuerus was king. Darius was a Mede

by birth, but he was appointed to be the king of Babylon.

²During his first year as king, I was studying the Scriptures and noticed in the LORD'S message to Jeremiah that 70 years would pass before Jerusalem would be rebuilt.

³Then I turned to the Lord God. I prayed to him and asked him for help. I did not eat any food. I put ashes on my head and put on the clothes that showed I was sad.

⁴I prayed to the LORD my God and told him about all my sins. I said, Lord, you are a great and awesome God. You keep your agreement of love and kindness with people who love you. You keep your agreement with the people who obey your commands.

⁵But we have sinned. We have done wrong. We have done evil things. We turned against you. We turned away from your commands and good decisions.

⁶The prophets were your servants. They spoke for you to our kings, to our leaders, to our fathers, and to the common people in our country. But we did not listen to them.

⁷ Lord, you are innocent, and the shame belongs to us, even now. Shame belongs to the people from Judah and Jerusalem, and to all the people of Israel, to those who are near and to those you scattered among many nations. They should be ashamed of all the evil things they did against you.

⁸ LORD, we should all be ashamed. All our kings and leaders should be ashamed. Our ancestors should be ashamed, because we sinned against you.

⁹ But, Lord our God, you are kind and forgiving, even though we turned against you.

¹⁰ We have not obeyed the LORD our God. He used his servants, the prophets, and gave us laws, but we have not obeyed his laws.

¹¹ All the people of Israel disobeyed your teachings and turned away from you. They did not listen to you. We sinned, so you did what you promised to do. All the curses and promises in the Law of Moses, your servant, happened to us.

¹²God said those things would happen to us and our leaders, and he made them happen. He made terrible things happen to us. No other city suffered the way Jerusalem suffered.

¹³All those terrible things happened to us. This happened just as it is written in the Law of Moses, but we still have not asked the LORD our God for help. We still have not stopped sinning. We still do not pay attention to your truth, Lord.

¹⁴The LORD kept the terrible things ready for us he made them happen to us. The LORD our God did this because he is fair in everything he does. But we still have not listened to him.

¹⁵Lord our God, you used your power and brought us out of Egypt. We are your people. You are famous because of that, even today. We have sinned and done terrible things.

¹⁶Lord, we and our ancestors sinned against you, so your people and your city became a disgrace to everyone around us. You do so many good things, so stop being angry at Jerusalem, your city, your holy mountain.

¹⁷ Now, our God, hear your servants prayer. Listen to my prayer for mercy. For your own sake, do good things for your holy place.

¹⁸ My God, listen to me! Open your eyes and see all the terrible things that have happened to us. See what has happened to the city that is called by your name. I am not saying we are good people. That is not why I am asking these things. I am asking these things because I know you are kind.

¹⁹ Lord, listen to me! Forgive us! Lord, pay attention, and then do something! Don't wait! Do something now! Do it for your own good! My God, do something now, for your city and your people who are called by your name.

²⁰ I was praying to the LORD my God about his holy mountain and telling about my sins and the sins of the people of Israel.

²¹ That was the time of the evening sacrifices. While I was still praying, Gabriel, the one I saw in the first vision, flew quickly to me and touched me. He came at the time of the evening sacrifice.

²² Gabriel helped me understand the things I wanted to know. He said, Daniel, I have come to give you wisdom and to help you understand.

²³ When you first started praying, the command was given to come speak to you. God loves you very much! You will understand this command, and you will understand the vision.

²⁴ God has allowed 70 weeks for your people and your holy city, Daniel. The 70 weeks are ordered for these reasons: to stop doing bad things, to stop sinning, to make people pure, to bring the goodness that continues forever, to put a seal on visions and prophets, and to dedicate a very holy place.

²⁵ Learn and understand these things, Daniel. From the time that the message went out to go back and rebuild Jerusalem until the time for the chosen king to come will be seven weeks. Then Jerusalem will be rebuilt. There will again be places for people to meet together in Jerusalem, and there will be a ditch around the city to protect it. Jerusalem will be built for 62 weeks, but there will be many troubles during that time.

²⁶After the 62 weeks, the chosen one will be killed. He will be gone. Then the people of the future leader will destroy the city and the holy place. That end will come like a flood. War will continue until the end. God has ordered that place to be completely destroyed.

²⁷Then the future ruler will make an agreement with many people. That agreement will continue for one week. The offerings and sacrifices will stop for a half of a week. And a destroyer will come. He will do terrible, destructive things, but God has ordered that destroyer to be completely destroyed.

10¹During the third year that Cyrus was the king of Persia, these things were shown to Daniel. (Daniels other name is Belteshazzar.) They are true, but very hard to understand. Daniel understood them because they were explained to him in a vision.

²At that time I, Daniel, was very sad for three weeks.

³During those three weeks, I didnt eat any fancy food; I didnt eat any meat or drink any wine. I didnt put any oil on my

head. I didnt do any of these things for three weeks.

⁴On the 24th day of the first month of the year, I was standing beside the great Tigris River.

⁵While I was standing there, I looked up and I saw a man standing in front of me. He was wearing linen clothes. He wore a belt made of pure gold around his waist.

⁶His body was like a smooth, shiny stone. His face was bright like lightning. His eyes were like flames of fire. His arms and feet were shiny like polished brass. His voice was loud like a crowd of people.

⁷I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision. The men with me didnt see the vision, but they were still afraid. They were so afraid that they ran away and hid.

⁸So I was left alone. I was watching this vision, and it made me afraid. I lost my strength. My face turned white like a dead persons face, and I was helpless.

⁹Then I heard the man in the vision talking. As I listened to his voice, I fell

into a deep sleep, with my face on the ground.

¹⁰Then a hand touched me. When that happened, I got on my hands and knees. I was so afraid that I was shaking.

¹¹The man in the vision said to me, Daniel, God loves you very much. Think very carefully about the words I will speak to you. Stand up; I have been sent to you. And when he said this, I stood up. I was still shaking because I was afraid.

¹²Then the man in the vision started talking again. He said, Daniel, do not be afraid. From the very first day you decided to get wisdom and to be humble in front of God, he has been listening to your prayers. I came to you because you have been praying.

¹³But the prince (angel) of Persia has been fighting against me for 21 days. Then Michael, one of the most important princes (angels), came to help me because I was stuck there with the king of Persia.

¹⁴Now I have come to you, Daniel, to explain to you what will happen to your

people in the future. The vision is about a time in the future.

¹⁵While the man was talking to me, I bowed low with my face toward the ground. I could not speak.

¹⁶Then the one who looked like a man touched my lips. I opened my mouth and started to speak. I said to the one standing in front of me, Sir, I am upset and afraid because of what I saw in the vision. I feel helpless.

¹⁷Sir, I am Daniel your servant. How can I talk with you? My strength is gone and it is hard for me to breathe.

¹⁸The one who looked like a man touched me again. When he touched me, I felt better.

¹⁹Then he said, Daniel, dont be afraid. God loves you very much. Peace be with you. Be strong now, be strong. When he spoke to me, I became stronger. Then I said, Sir, you have given me strength. Now you can speak.

²⁰So then he said, Daniel, do you know why I have come to you? Soon I must go back to fight against the prince (angel) of Persia. When I go, the prince (angel) of Greece will come.

²¹ But Daniel, before I go, I must first tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. No one stands with me against those evil angels except Michael, the prince (angel) over your people.

11 ¹ During the first year that Darius the Mede was king, I stood up to support Michael in his fight against the prince (angel) of Persia.

² Now then, Daniel, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will rule in Persia. Then a fourth king will come who will be much richer than all the other kings of Persia before him. He will use his riches to get power and turn everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

³ Then a very strong and powerful king will come who will rule with much power. He will do anything he wants.

⁴ Just as he comes to power, his kingdom will be broken up and scattered in all directions. It will not be divided among his descendants. And it will not be ruled in the same way because that kingdom will be pulled up and given to other people.

⁵ The southern king will become strong, but then one of his commanders will

defeat him. The commander will begin to rule, and he will be very powerful.

⁶Then after a few years, the southern king and that commander will make an agreement. The daughter of the southern king will marry the northern king. She will do this to bring peace, but she and the southern king will not be strong enough. People will turn against her and against the one who brought her to that country. And they will turn against her child and against the one who helped her.

⁷But someone from her family will come to take the southern king's place. He will attack the armies of the northern king. He will go into that king's strong fort. He will fight and win.

⁸He will take their gods and their metal idols and their expensive things made from silver and gold. He will take those things away to Egypt. Then he will not bother the northern king for a few years.

⁹The northern king will attack the southern kingdom. But he will lose, and then he will go back to his own country.

¹⁰The northern king's sons will prepare for war. They will get a large army

together. It will move through the land very quickly, like a powerful flood. That army will fight all the way to the strong fort of the southern king.

¹¹ Then the southern king will become very angry and march out to fight against the northern king. The northern king will have a large army, but he will lose the war.

¹² The northern army will be defeated, and those soldiers will be carried away. The southern king will be very proud, and he will kill thousands of soldiers from the northern army. But he will not continue to be successful.

¹³ The northern king will get another army that will be larger than the first one. After several years he will attack. His army will be ready for war. It will be very large and it will have many weapons.

¹⁴ In those times many people will be against the southern king. Some of your own people who love to fight will rebel against the southern king. They will not win, but they will make this vision come true.

¹⁵Then the northern king will come. He will build ramps against the walls and will capture a strong city. The southern army will not have the power to fight back. Even the best soldiers from the southern army will not be strong enough to stop the northern army.

¹⁶The northern king will do whatever he wants. No one will be able to stop him. He will gain power and control in the Beautiful Land, and he will have the power to destroy it.

¹⁷The northern king will decide to use all his power to fight against the southern king, and he will make an agreement with the southern king. The king of the north will let one of his daughters marry the southern king so that he can defeat the southern king. But those plans will not succeed. His plans will not help him.

¹⁸Then the northern king will turn his attention to the countries along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. He will defeat many of those cities. But then a commander will put an end to the pride of that northern king. He will turn his pride into shame.

¹⁹After that happens, the northern king will go back to the strong forts of his own country. But he will be weak and will fall. He will be finished.

²⁰After the northern king, there will be a new ruler who sends out tax collectors so that he can live like a king. But after a few years, he will be destroyed, although he will not die in battle.

²¹That ruler will be followed by a very cruel and hated man, who will not have the honor of being from a kings family. He will become a ruler by being tricky. He will attack the kingdom when the people feel safe.

²²He will defeat large and powerful armies. He will even defeat the leader with the agreement.

²³Many nations will make agreements with that cruel and hated ruler, but he will lie and trick them. He will gain much power, but only a few people will support him.

²⁴When the richest countries feel safe, that cruel and hated ruler will attack them. He will attack at just the right time and will be successful where his ancestors were not successful. He

will take things from the countries he defeated, and he will give them to his followers. He will plan to defeat and destroy strong cities. He will be successful but only for a short time.

²⁵ That very cruel and hated ruler will have a very large army. He will use that army to show his strength and courage and attack the southern king. The southern king will get a very large and powerful army and go to war. But the people who are against him will make secret plans, and the southern king will be defeated.

²⁶ People who were supposed to be good friends of the southern king will try to destroy him. His army will be defeated. Many of his soldiers will be killed in battle.

²⁷ Those two kings will want to make trouble. They will sit around the table planning their lies, but it will not do either one of them any good because God has set a time for their end to come.

²⁸ The northern king will go back to his own country with much wealth. Then he will decide to do bad things against the holy agreement. He will do the things he

planned, and then he will go back to his own country.

²⁹At the right time, the northern king will attack the southern king again. But this time he will not be successful as he was before.

³⁰Ships from Cyprus will come and fight against the northern king. He will see those ships coming and be afraid. Then he will turn back and take out his anger on the holy agreement. He will turn back and help those who stopped following the holy agreement.

³¹The northern king will send his army to do terrible things to the Temple in Jerusalem. They will stop the people from offering the daily sacrifice. Then they will do something really terrible. They will set up that terrible thing that causes destruction.

³²The northern king will use lies and smooth talking to trick those who quit following the holy agreement, so they will sin even worse. But those who know God and obey him will be strong. They will fight back.

³³Those wise teachers will help the other people understand what is

happening. But even they will have to suffer persecution. Some of them will be killed with swords. Some of them will be burned or taken prisoner. Some of them will have their homes and things taken away.

³⁴When those wise people are punished, they will receive some help, but many people who join them will be hypocrites.

³⁵Some of the wise people will stumble and make mistakes. But the persecution must come so that they can be made stronger and purer until the time of the end. Then, at the right time, that time of the end will come.

³⁶The northern king will do whatever he wants. He will brag about himself. He will praise himself and think that he is even better than a god. He will say things that no one has ever heard. He will say those things against the God of gods. He will be successful until all the evil things have happened. Then what God has planned to happen will happen.

³⁷That northern king will not care about the gods his ancestors worshiped. He will not care about the gods women worship.

He will not care about any god. Instead, he will praise himself and make himself more important than any god.

³⁸The northern king will not worship any god, but he will worship power. Power and strength will be his god. His ancestors didnt love power as he does. He will honor the god of power with gold and silver, expensive jewels, and gifts.

³⁹That northern king will attack strong fortresses with the help of this foreign god. He will give much honor to the foreign rulers who join him. He will put many people under their rule. He will make the rulers pay him for the land they rule over.

⁴⁰At the time of the end, the southern king will fight a battle against the northern king. The northern king will attack him with chariots and soldiers on horses and many large ships. The northern king will rush through the land like a flood.

⁴¹The northern king will attack the Beautiful Land. He will defeat many countries. But Edom, Moab, and the leaders of Ammon will be saved from him.

⁴²The northern king will show his power in many countries. Egypt will also learn how powerful he is.

⁴³He will get treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt. The Libyans and Ethiopians will obey him.

⁴⁴But that northern king will hear news from the east and the north that will make him afraid and angry. He will go to completely destroy many nations.

⁴⁵He will set up his kings tents between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain. But finally, that bad king will die. There will no one to help him when his end comes.

12¹ Daniel, at that time the great prince (angel) Michael will stand up. Michael is in charge of your people. There will be a time of much trouble, the worst time since nations have been on earth. But Daniel, at that time every one of your people whose name is found written in the book of life will be saved.

²There are many who are dead and buried. Some of them will wake up and live forever, but others will wake up to shame and disgrace forever.

³The wise people will shine as bright as the sky. Those who teach others to live right will shine like stars forever and ever.

⁴But you, Daniel, keep this message a secret. You must close the book and keep this secret until the time of the end. Many people will go here and there looking for true knowledge, and the true knowledge will increase.

⁵Then I, Daniel, noticed two other men. One man was standing on my side of the river, and the other was standing on the other side.

⁶The man who was dressed in linen was standing over the water in the river. One of the two men said to him, How long will it be before these amazing things come true?

⁷The man dressed in linen and standing over the water lifted his right and left hands toward heaven. And I heard him make a promise using the name of God who lives forever. He said, It will be for three and one-half years. The power of the holy people will be broken, and then all these things will finally come true.

⁸I heard the answer, but I really didn't understand. So I asked, Sir, what will happen after all this comes true?

⁹He answered, Go on about your life Daniel. The message is hidden. It will be a secret until the time of the end.

¹⁰Many people will be made pure they will make themselves clean. But evil people will continue to be evil. And those wicked people will not understand these things, but the wise people will understand them.

¹¹The daily sacrifice will be stopped. There will be 1290 days from that time until the time that the terrible thing that destroys is set up.

¹²The one who waits for and comes to the end of the 1335 days will be very happy.

¹³As for you, Daniel, go and live your life until the end. You will get your rest. At the end you will rise from death and receive your share of the promise.

Hosea

1 ¹This is the LORD'S message that came to Hosea son of Beerai during the time that Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, and Jeroboam son of Joash was king of Israel.

²This was the LORD'S first message to Hosea. The LORD said, Go, marry a prostitute who has had children as a result of her prostitution. Do this because the people in this country have acted like prostitutes they have been unfaithful to the LORD.

³So Hosea married Gomer daughter of Diblaim. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Hosea.

⁴The LORD said to Hosea, Name him Jezreel, because soon I will punish the family of Jehu for the people he killed at Jezreel Valley. Then I will put an end to the kingdom of the nation of Israel.

⁵And at that time I will break Israel's bow at Jezreel Valley.

⁶Then Gomer became pregnant again and gave birth to a daughter. The LORD said to Hosea, Name her Lo-Ruhamah, because I will not show mercy to the nation of Israel anymore, nor will I forgive them.

⁷But I will show mercy to the nation of Judah. I will save them, but I will not use bows or swords or war horses and soldiers to save them. I will save them by my own power.

⁸After Gomer had finished nursing Lo-Ruhamah, she became pregnant again and gave birth to a son.

⁹Then the Lord said, Name him Lo-Ammi, because you are not my people, and I am not your God.

¹⁰In the future the number of the people of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which you cannot measure or count. In the same place that God told them, You are not my people, he will call them children of the Living God.

¹¹Then the people of Judah and the people of Israel will be gathered together. They will choose one ruler for themselves, and their nation will be too

large for the land. Jezreels day will be great!

2¹ Then you will say to your brothers, You are my people, and you will say to your sisters, He has shown mercy to you.

² Talk to your mother. Ask her to change because she is no longer my wife, and I am no longer her husband! Tell her to stop acting like a prostitute. Tell her to take away her lovers from between her breasts.

³ If she refuses to stop her adultery, I will strip her naked and leave her as bare as she was the day she was born. I will take away her people, and she will be as empty and dry as a desert. I will cause her to die of thirst.

⁴ I will have no pity on her children because they are the children of prostitution.

⁵ Their mother has acted like a prostitute. She should be ashamed of what she did. She said, I will go to my lovers, who give me food and water, wool and linen, wine, and olive oil.

⁶So I, the Lord, will block Israels road with thorns; I will build a wall so that she will not be able to find her path.

⁷She will run after her lovers, but she will not be able to catch up with them. She will look for her lovers, but she will not be able to find them. Then she will say, I will go back to my first husband (the Lord). Life was better for me when I was with him. Life was better then than it is now.

⁸Israel didnt know that I, the Lord, was the one who gave her grain, wine, and oil. I kept giving her more and more silver and gold, but she used this silver and gold to make statues of Baal.

⁹So I will return and take back my grain at the time it is ready to be harvested. I will take back my wine at the time the grapes are ready. I will take back my wool and linen. I gave those things to her so that she could cover her naked body.

¹⁰Now I will strip her. She will be naked, so all her lovers can see her. No one will be able to save her from my power.

¹¹I will end all her happy holidays. I will stop her festivals, her New Moon

celebrations, and her days of rest. I will stop all her special feasts.

¹²I will destroy her vines and fig trees. She said, My lovers gave these things to me. But I will change her garden they will become like a wild forest. Wild animals will come and eat from those plants.

¹³Israel served false gods, so I will punish her. She burned incense to those false gods. She dressed up she put on her jewelry and nose ring. Then she went to her lovers and forgot me. This is what the LORD has said.

¹⁴So I, the Lord, will speak romantic words to her. I will lead her into the desert and speak tender words.

¹⁵There I will give her vineyards. I will give her Achor Valley as a doorway of hope. Then she will answer as she did when she came out of the land of Egypt.

¹⁶The LORD says, At that time you will call me My husband. You will not call me My Baal.

¹⁷I will take the names of those false gods out of her mouth. Then people will not use those names again.

¹⁸At that time I will make an agreement for the Israelites with the animals of the field, the birds of the sky, and the crawling things on the ground. I will break the bow, the sword, and the weapons of war in that land. I will make the land safe, so the people of Israel can lie down in peace.

¹⁹And I will make you my bride forever. I will make you my bride with goodness and justice and with love and mercy.

²⁰I will make you my faithful bride. Then you will really know the LORD.

²¹And at that time I will answer, says the LORD. I will speak to the skies, and they will give rain to the earth.

²²The earth will produce grain, wine, and oil, and they will meet Jezreels needs.

²³I will sow her many seeds on her land. To Lo-Ruhamah, I will show mercy. To Lo-Ammi, I will say, You are my people. And they will say to me, You are our God.

3¹Then the LORD said to me again, Your wife has many lovers. But you must continue to love her, because it is an example of the LORD'S love for

Israel. He continues to love them, but they continue to turn to other gods, and they love to share in the offering of raisin cakes to them.

²So I bought her back for 6 ounces of silver and 9 bushels of barley.

³Then I told her, You must stay at home with me for many days. You will not be like a prostitute. You will not have sexual relations with another man. I will be your husband.

⁴In the same way, the people of Israel will continue many days without a king or a leader. They will be without a sacrifice or a memorial stone. They will be without an ephod or a household god.

⁵After this the people of Israel will come back and look for the LORD their God and for David their king. In the last days they will come to honor the LORD and his goodness.

4¹ People of Israel, listen to the LORD'S message. The LORD has something to say against those who live in this land: The people in this land are not honest or loyal. They dont really know God.

²They are always cursing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery. They murder one person after another.

³So the country is like someone crying for the dead, and all of its people are weak. Even the animals of the field, the birds of the sky, and the fish in the sea are dying.

⁴No one should argue or blame another person. Priests, my argument is with you!

⁵You priests will fall in the daytime. And at night your prophets will fall with you. I will also destroy your mother.

⁶My people are destroyed because they have no knowledge. You priests have refused to learn, so I will refuse to let you be my priests. You have forgotten the law of your God, so I will forget your children.

⁷They became proud. They sinned more and more against me, so I will change their honor to shame.

⁸The priests fed on the peoples sins. They wanted more and more of their sin offerings.

⁹And the priests are as bad as the people. I will punish them for the things

they did. I will pay them back for the wrong things they did.

¹⁰They will eat, but they will not be satisfied. They will have sex with prostitutes, but they will still have no children. That's because they have left the LORD and have given themselves to other gods.

¹¹Sexual sins, strong drink, and new wine ruin a person's ability to think straight.

¹²My people are asking pieces of wood for advice. They think those sticks will answer them! They have chased after those false gods like prostitutes and have left their own God.

¹³They make sacrifices on the tops of the mountains and burn incense on the hills under oak trees, poplar trees, and elm trees. The shade under those trees looks nice. So your daughters lie under those trees like prostitutes, and your daughters-in-law commit sexual sins.

¹⁴I cannot blame your daughters or daughters-in-law for doing this, because your men go and have sex with the temple prostitutes and offer sacrifices

with them. This is how foolish people destroy themselves.

¹⁵Israel, just because you act like a prostitute doesn't mean that Judah should feel guilty too. People, don't go to Gilgal or Beth Aven. Don't use the Lord's name to make promises. Don't say, As the LORD lives !

¹⁶Israel is as stubborn as a young cow. So now the LORD will send them away. They will be like a lost sheep in an open field.

¹⁷Ephraim has joined his idols, so leave him alone.

¹⁸Ephraim has joined their drunkenness. Let them continue to be prostitutes. Let them be with their lovers.

¹⁹They went to those gods for safety, and they have lost their ability to think. Their altars will bring them shame.

5¹ Priests, nation of Israel, and people in the king's family, listen to me. You have been judged guilty! You were like a trap at Mizpah and like a net spread on the ground at Tabor.

²You have done many evil things, so I will punish you all.

³I know Ephraim. I know what Israel has done. Ephraim, right now you act like a prostitute. Israel is dirty with sin.

⁴The people of Israel have done many evil things, and these evil things keep them from coming back to their God. They are always thinking of ways to chase after other gods. They don't know the LORD.

⁵Israel's pride is a witness against them, so Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their sin. But Judah will also stumble with them.

⁶The leaders of the people went to look for the LORD. They took their sheep and cattle with them, but they did not find the LORD because he refused to accept them.

⁷They have not been faithful to the LORD. Their children are from some stranger. And now, he will destroy them and their land again.

⁸Blow the horn in Gibeah. Blow the trumpet in Ramah. Give the warning at Beth Aven. The enemy is behind you, Benjamin.

⁹Ephraim will become empty at the time of punishment. I, God, warn the

families of Israel that this really will happen.

¹⁰The leaders of Judah are like thieves trying to steal someones property, so I will pour out my anger on them like water.

¹¹Ephraim will be punished. He will be crushed and pressed like grapes, because he decided to follow filth.

¹²I will destroy Ephraim as a moth eats a piece of cloth. I will ruin Judah, like rot on a piece of wood.

¹³Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, so they went to Assyria for help. They told their problems to the great king, but he cannot heal you or cure your wound.

¹⁴I will be like a lion to Ephraim, like a young lion to the nation of Judah. I yes, I myself will rip them to pieces. I will carry them away, and no one can save them.

¹⁵I will go back to my place, until the people admit they are guilty, until they come looking for me. Yes, in their trouble they will try very hard to find me.

6¹Come, lets go back to the LORD.
He hurt us, but he will heal us. He

wounded us, but he will put bandages on us.

²After two days he will bring us back to life. He will raise us up on the third day. Then we can live near him.

³Lets learn about the LORD. Lets try very hard to know him. We know he is coming, just as we know the dawn is coming. He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain that waters the ground.

⁴Ephraim, what should I do with you? Judah, what should I do with you? Your love for me is like a morning mist, like the dew that is gone as soon as the day begins.

⁵That's why I sent my prophets to cut you down, to speak my message that warned you of death. And everyone can see that my judgment is fair. That is as clear as the morning sun.

⁶I want faithful love more than I want sacrifice; I want people to know God, not just to bring burnt offerings.

⁷But the people broke the agreement as Adam did. They were unfaithful to me in their country.

⁸Gilead is a city of people who do evil people who have tricked and killed others.

⁹The priests are like gangs of robbers hiding and waiting on the road to attack someone. They murder people before they reach safety in Shechem. They do such evil things.

¹⁰I have seen a terrible thing in the nation of Israel. Ephraim was unfaithful to God. Israel is dirty with sin.

¹¹Judah, there is also a time of harvest for you. It will happen when I bring my people back from captivity.

7¹ I will heal Israel! Then people will know that Ephraim sinned. They will know about Samarias lies. They will know about the thieves who come and go in that town.

²They dont believe that I will remember their crimes. The bad things they did are all around. I can see their sins clearly.

³Their evil makes their king happy. Their false gods please their leaders.

⁴A baker presses dough to make bread. He puts the bread in the oven. He does not make the fire hotter while the bread is rising. But the people of Israel are not

like that. They are always making their fire hotter.

⁵On Our Kings Day, the leaders get so drunk that they get sick. They become crazy with wine and make agreements with people who laugh at God.

⁶The people make their secret plans. Their hearts burn with excitement like an oven. Their excitement burns all night, and in the morning it is like a hot fire.

⁷They are all like hot ovens. They destroyed their rulers. All their kings fell. Not one of them called to me for help.

⁸Ephraim mixes with the nations. Ephraim is like a cake that was not cooked on both sides.

⁹Strangers destroy Ephraims strength, but Ephraim does not know it. Gray hairs are also sprinkled on Ephraim, but Ephraim does not know it.

¹⁰Ephraims pride speaks against him. The people had many troubles, but they still didnt go back to the LORD their God. They didnt look to him for help.

¹¹So Ephraim has become like a silly dove without understanding. The people called to Egypt for help. They went to Assyria for help.

¹²They go to those countries for help, but I will trap them. I will throw my net over them, and I will bring them down like the birds of the sky. I will punish them for their agreements.

¹³It will be very bad for those who left me. They refused to obey me, so they will be destroyed. I saved them, but they speak lies against me.

¹⁴They never call to me from their hearts. Yes, they cry on their beds. And they cut themselves when they ask for grain and new wine. But in their hearts, they have turned away from me.

¹⁵I trained them and made their arms strong, but they made evil plans against me.

¹⁶But they were like a boomerang. They changed directions, but they did not come back to me. Their leaders bragged about their strength, but they will be killed with swords. And the people in Egypt will laugh at them.

8¹Put the trumpet to your lips and give the warning. Be like an eagle over the LORD'S house. The Israelites have broken my agreement. They have not obeyed my law.

²They yell out at me, My God, we in Israel know you!

³But Israel refused the good things, so the enemy chases him.

⁴The Israelites chose their kings, but they didnt come to me for advice. They chose leaders, but they didnt choose men I knew. The Israelites used their silver and gold to make idols for themselves, so they will be destroyed.

⁵He has refused your calf, Samaria. God says, I am very angry with the Israelites. The people of Israel will be punished for their sin. Some worker made those statues. They are not God. Samarias calf will be broken into pieces.

⁶(8: 5)

⁷The Israelites did a foolish thing; it was like trying to plant the wind. But they will get only troubles; they will harvest a whirlwind. The grain in the fields will grow, but it will give no food. Even if it grew something, strangers would eat it.

⁸Israel was destroyed; its people are scattered among the nations like some dish that was thrown away because no one wanted it.

⁹Ephraim went to his lovers. Like a stubborn donkey, they led him off to Assyria.

¹⁰Yes, Israel was taken to the nations, but I will bring them back. But first, they must suffer a little by carrying the burden of that mighty king.

¹¹Ephraim built more and more altars, and that was a sin. They have been altars of sin for Ephraim.

¹²Even if I wrote 10,000 laws for Ephraim, he would treat them as if they were for some stranger.

¹³The Israelites love sacrifices. They offer the meat and eat it. The LORD does not accept their sacrifices. He remembers their sins, and he will punish them. They will be carried away as prisoners to Egypt.

¹⁴Israel has built palaces for their kings, and now Judah builds fortresses. But they have forgotten their Maker! So I will send a fire to destroy their cities and fortresses!

9¹ Israel, don't celebrate like the nations do. Don't be happy. You acted like a prostitute and left your God. You

committed your sexual sin on every threshing floor.

²But the grain from those threshing floors will not provide enough food for the people. And there will not be enough wine.

³Your people will not stay in the LORD'S land. Israel will return to slavery in Egypt. And some will go to Assyria, where they will have to eat food that is wrong for them to eat.

⁴They will not be able to give offerings of wine to the LORD. None of their sacrifices will please him. What they offer will be like food eaten at a funeral, and whoever eats it will become unclean. They can eat that food for their own hunger, but it cannot be taken into the LORD'S Temple.

⁵They will not be able to celebrate the LORD'S feasts or festivals.

⁶The people of Israel left because the enemy took everything from them. But Egypt will take the people themselves. Memphis will bury them. Weeds will grow over their silver treasures, and thorns will grow where the Israelites lived.

⁷The prophet says, Israel, learn this: The time of punishment has come. The time has come for you to pay for the evil things you did. But the people of Israel say, The prophet is a fool. This man with Gods Spirit is crazy. The prophet says, You will be punished for your terrible sins. You will be punished for your hate.

⁸God and the prophet are like guards watching over Ephraim, but there are many traps along his way. And people hate the prophet, even in the house of his God.

⁹The Israelites have gone deep into ruin as in the time of Gibeah. God will remember the Israelites sins, and he will punish them.

¹⁰At the time I, the Lord, found Israel, they were like fresh grapes in the desert. They were like the first figs on a fig tree at the beginning of the season. But when they came to Baal Peor, they changed. So I had to cut them off like rotten fruit. They became like the terrible things that they loved.

¹¹Like a bird, Ephraims glory will fly away. There will be no more pregnancies, no more births, and no more babies.

¹²But even if the Israelites do raise their children, it will not help, because I will take the children away from them. I will leave them, and they will have nothing but troubles.

¹³I can see that Ephraim is leading his children into a trap. Ephraim will lead his children out to the killer.

¹⁴LORD, give them what you will. Give them a womb that loses babies and breasts that cannot give milk.

¹⁵All their evil is in Gilgal; I began hating them there. I will force them to leave my house because of the evil things they do. I will not love them anymore. Their leaders are rebels who turned against me.

¹⁶Ephraim will be punished. Their root is dying. They will not have any more babies. They might give birth to babies, but I will kill the precious babies who come from their bodies.

¹⁷Those people will not listen to my God, so he will refuse to listen to them. And they will wander among the nations without a home.

10¹ Israel is like a vine that grows plenty of fruit. But as Israel got

more and more things, he built more and more altars to honor false gods. His land became better and better, so he put up better and better stones to honor false gods.

²The people of Israel tried to trick God, but now they must accept their guilt. He will break down their altars and destroy their memorial stones.

³Now the Israelites say, We have no king. We dont honor the LORD. And his king cannot do anything to us.

⁴They make promises, but they are only telling lies. They dont keep their promises. They make agreements with other countries. God does not like those agreements. The judges are like poisonous weeds growing in a plowed field.

⁵The people from Samaria worship the calves at Beth Aven. They will cry. The priests will cry, because their beautiful idol is gone. It was carried away.

⁶It was carried away as a gift to the great king of Assyria. He will keep Ephraims shameful idol. Israel will be ashamed of its idol.

⁷ Samarias false god will be destroyed. It will be like a piece of wood floating away on the waters surface.

⁸ Israel sinned and built many high places. The high places of Aven will be destroyed. Thorns and weeds will grow on their altars. Then they will say to the mountains, Cover us! and to the hills, Fall on us!

⁹ Israel, you have sinned since the time of Gibeah. And the people have continued to sin there. Those evil people at Gibeah will be trapped by war.

¹⁰ I will come to punish them. Armies will come together against them and punish the Israelites for both of their sins.

¹¹ Ephraim is like a trained young cow that loves to trample the grain on the threshing floor. I will put a good yoke on her neck. I will put the ropes on Ephraim. Then Judah will begin plowing. Jacob will break the ground himself.

¹² If you plant goodness, you will harvest faithful love. Plow your ground, and you will harvest with the LORD. He will come, and he will make goodness fall on you like rain.

¹³But you planted evil, and you harvested trouble. You have eaten fruit produced by lies, putting your trust in your own power and in your great army.

¹⁴So the noise of battle will surround your people, and the enemy will destroy all your fortresses. They will do what Shalman did when he destroyed Beth Arbel. They will kill even mothers and their children by beating them against rocks.

¹⁵And this will happen to you at Bethel, because you did so many evil things. When that day begins, the king of Israel will be fully destroyed.

11 ¹The Lord said, I loved Israel when he was a child, and I called my son out of Egypt.

²But the more I called the Israelites, the more they left me. The Israelites gave sacrifices to the false gods and burned incense to the idols.

³But I was the one who taught Ephraim to walk. I took the Israelites in my arms. I healed them, but they don't know that.

⁴I led them with ropes, but they were ropes of love. I was like a person who set them free. I bent down and fed them.

⁵The Israelites will not go back to Egypt. The king of Assyria will become their king, because they refused to turn back to God.

⁶The sword will swing against their cities and kill their strong men. It will destroy their leaders.

⁷My people expect me to come back. They will call to God above, but he will not help them.

⁸Ephraim, I don't want to give you up. Israel, I want to protect you. I don't want to destroy you, as I did the cities of Admah and Zeboiim. I am changing my mind. My love for you is too strong.

⁹I will not let my terrible anger win. I will not destroy Ephraim again. I am God and not a human. I am the Holy One. I am with you. I will not show my anger.

¹⁰I, the LORD, will roar like a lion, and my children will come and follow me. They will come from the west, shaking with fear.

¹¹They will come from Egypt, shaking like birds. They will come shaking like doves from the land of Assyria, and I will take them back home. This is what the LORD said.

¹²Ephraim surrounded me with false gods. The people of Israel turned against me. But Judah still walks with God and is true to the Holy One.

12¹Ephraim is wasting its time; Israel chases the wind all day long. The people tell more and more lies and steal more and more. They have made agreements with Assyria, and they are carrying their olive oil to Egypt.

²The LORD says, I have a complaint against Israel. Jacob must be punished for the bad things he did.

³While Jacob was still in his mother's womb, he began to trick his brother. Jacob was a strong young man, and at that time he fought with God.

⁴Jacob wrestled with God's angel and won. He cried and asked for a favor. That happened at Bethel. There he spoke to us.

⁵Yes, YAHWEH is the God of the armies. His name is YAHWEH.

⁶So come back to your God. Be loyal to him. Do the right thing, and always trust in your God!

⁷Jacob is a tricky merchant. He even cheats his friend! Even his scales lie.

⁸Ephraim said, I am rich! I have found true riches! No one will learn about my crimes. No one will learn about my sins.

⁹But I am still the LORD your God, as I was when you left the land of Egypt. I will make you live in tents, as you do during the Festival of Shelters.

¹⁰I spoke to the prophets and gave them many visions. I gave the prophets many ways to teach my lessons to you.

¹¹But the people in Gilead have sinned. There are many terrible idols in that place. They offer sacrifices to bulls at Gilgal. They have many altars. There are rows and rows of altars like the rows of dirt in a plowed field.

¹²Jacob ran away to the land of Aram. There he worked to get a wife. He took care of sheep to pay for her.

¹³Then the LORD used a prophet to bring Jacobs descendants out of Egypt. He used a prophet to keep these people of Israel safe.

¹⁴But the people of Israel have made the Lord very angry, and he will punish them for the murders they have committed. They will get what they deserve for insulting their Lord.

13¹ The tribe of Ephraim made itself very important in Israel. Ephraim spoke and people shook with fear. But Ephraim sinned by worshiping Baal so he must die.

² Now the Israelites sin more and more. They make idols for themselves. Workers make those fancy statues from silver, and then they talk to their statues. They offer sacrifices to them, and they kiss those calf idols.

³ That is why those people will soon disappear. They will be like a fog that comes early in the morning and then quickly disappears. The Israelites will be like chaff that is blown from the threshing floor. They will be like smoke that goes out a window and disappears.

⁴ I have been the LORD your God since the time you were in the land of Egypt. You did not know any other god except me. I am the one who saved you.

⁵ I knew you in the desert; I knew you in that dry land.

⁶ I gave food to the Israelites, and they ate it. They became full and satisfied. They became proud, and then they forgot me.

⁷That is why I will be like a lion to them. I will be like a leopard waiting by the road.

⁸I will attack them like a bear whose cubs were robbed from her. I will attack them and rip open their chests. I will be like a lion or other wild animal tearing and eating its prey.

⁹Israel, I helped you, but you turned against me. So now I will destroy you.

¹⁰Where is your king? Can he save you in any of your cities? Where are your judges? You asked for them, saying, Give me a king and leaders.

¹¹I was angry, and I gave you a king. And when I became very angry, I took him away.

¹²Ephraim tried to hide his guilt. He thought his sins were a secret, but he will be punished.

¹³His punishment will be like the pain of a woman giving birth. He will not be a wise son. The time will come for his birth, and he will not survive.

¹⁴I will save them from the grave. I will rescue them from death. Death, where are your diseases? Grave, where is your power? I am not looking for revenge.

¹⁵ Israel grows among his brothers, but a powerful east wind will come the LORD'S wind will blow from the desert. Then his well will dry up. His spring of water will be dry. The wind will take away anything of value.

¹⁶ Samaria must be punished because she turned against her God. The Israelites will be killed with swords. Their children will be torn to pieces, and their pregnant women will be ripped open.

14 ¹ Israel, you fell and sinned against God. So come back to the LORD your God.

² Think about what you will say, and come back to the LORD. Say to him, Take away our sin, and accept these words as our sacrifice. We offer you the praise from our lips.

³ Assyria will not save us. We will not ride on war horses. We will never again say, Our God to something we made with our hands. This is because you are the one who shows mercy to orphans.

⁴ The Lord says, I will forgive them for leaving me. I will show them my love without limits, because I have stopped being angry.

⁵I will be like the dew to Israel. Israel will blossom like the lily. He will grow like the cedar trees of Lebanon.

⁶His branches will grow, and he will be like a beautiful olive tree. He will be like the sweet smell from the cedar trees of Lebanon.

⁷The people of Israel will again live under my protection. They will grow like grain. They will bloom like a vine. They will be like the wine of Lebanon.

⁸Ephraim, I will have nothing more to do with idols. I am the one who answers your prayers and watches over you. I am like a fir tree that is always green. Your fruit comes from me.

⁹A wise person understands these things, and a smart person should learn them. The LORD'S ways are right. Good people follow them, but they cause sinners to fall.

Joel

1 ¹ Joel son of Pethuel received this message from the LORD:

² Leaders, listen to this message! Listen to me, all you people who live in the land. Has anything like this ever happened in your life? Did anything like this happen during your fathers lifetime?

³ You will tell these things to your children, and your children will tell their children, and your grandchildren will tell the people of the next generation.

⁴ What the cutting locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten. And what the swarming locust has left, the hopping locust has eaten. And what the hopping locust has left, the destroying locust has eaten!

⁵ Drunks, wake up and cry! All of you who drink wine, cry because your sweet wine is finished. You will not taste it again.

⁶ A powerful nation came to attack my land. Its soldiers were too many to count. Its weapons were as sharp as a

lions teeth and as powerful as a lions jaw.

⁷It destroyed my grapevine. Its good vines withered and died. It destroyed my fig tree, stripped off the bark and threw it away.

⁸Cry like a young woman crying because the man she was ready to marry has died.

⁹Priests, servants of the LORD, cry because there will be no more grain and drink offerings in the LORD'S Temple.

¹⁰The fields are ruined. Even the ground is crying because the grain is destroyed; the new wine is dried up, and the olive oil is gone.

¹¹Be sad, farmers! Cry loudly for the grapes, for the wheat, and for the barley, because the harvest in the field is ruined.

¹²The vines have become dry, and the fig tree is dying. All the trees in the field the pomegranate, the palm, and the apple have withered. And happiness among the people has died.

¹³Priests, put on sackcloth and cry loudly. Servants of the altar, cry loudly. Servants of my God, you will sleep in

sackcloth, because there will be no more grain and drink offerings in Gods Temple.

¹⁴Tell the people that there will be a special time of fasting. Call them together for a special meeting. Bring the leaders and everyone living in the land together at the Temple of the LORD your God, and pray to the LORD.

¹⁵Be sad because the LORD'S special day is near. At that time punishment will come like an attack from God All-Powerful.

¹⁶Our food is gone. Joy and happiness are gone from the Temple of our God.

¹⁷We planted seeds, but the seeds became dry and dead lying in the soil. Our plants are dry and dead. Our barns are empty and falling down.

¹⁸The animals are hungry and groaning. The herds of cattle wander around confused because they have no grass to eat. Even the sheep are dying.

¹⁹LORD, I am calling to you for help. Fire has changed our green fields into a desert. Flames have burned all the trees in the field.

²⁰Wild animals also need your help. The streams are drythere is no water!

Fire has changed our green fields into a desert.

2¹ Blow the trumpet on Zion. Shout a warning on my holy mountain. Let all the people who live in the land shake with fear. The LORD'S special day is coming; it is near.

² It will be a dark, gloomy day. It will be a dark and cloudy day. At sunrise you will see the army spread over the mountains. It will be a great and powerful army. There has never been anything like it before, and there will never be anything like it again.

³ The army will destroy the land like a burning fire. In front of them the land will be like the Garden of Eden. Behind them the land will be like an empty desert. Nothing will escape them.

⁴ They look like horses. They run like war horses.

⁵ Listen to them. It is like the noise of chariots riding over the mountains. It is like the noise of flames burning the chaff. They are a powerful people, who are ready for war.

⁶ Before this army, people shake with fear. Their faces become pale from fear.

⁷The soldiers run fast. They climb over the walls. Each soldier marches straight ahead. They don't move from their path.

⁸They don't trip each other. Each soldier walks in his own path. If one of the soldiers is hit and falls down, the others keep right on marching.

⁹They run to the city. They quickly climb over the wall. They climb into the houses. They climb through the windows like thieves.

¹⁰Before them, earth and sky shake. The sun and the moon become dark, and the stars stop shining.

¹¹The LORD calls loudly to his army. His camp is very large. The army obeys his commands. His army is very powerful. The LORD'S special day is a great and terrible day. No one can stop it.

¹²This is the LORD'S message: Now come back to me with all your heart. Cry and mourn, and don't eat anything! Show that you are sad for doing wrong.

¹³Tear your hearts, not your clothes. Come back to the LORD your God. He is kind and merciful. He does not become angry quickly. He has great love. Maybe

he will change his mind about the bad punishment he planned.

¹⁴Who knows, maybe he will change his mind and leave behind a blessing for you. Then you can give grain and drink offerings to the LORD your God.

¹⁵Blow the trumpet at Zion. Call for a special meeting. Call for a special time of fasting.

¹⁶Bring the people together. Call for a special meeting. Bring together the old men, the children, and the small babies still at their mothers breasts. Let the bride and her new husband come from their bedroom.

¹⁷Let the priests, the LORD'S servants, cry between the porch and the altar. All of them should say this: LORD, have mercy on your people. Dont let your people be put to shame. Dont let other people tell jokes about your people. Dont let the other nations laugh at us and say, Where is their God?

¹⁸Then the LORD cared very much about his land. He felt sorry for his people.

¹⁹The LORD spoke to his people. He said, I will send you grain, wine, and oil.

You will have plenty. I will not shame you among the nations anymore.

²⁰No, I will force the people from the north to leave your land and make them go into a dry, empty land. Some of them will go to the eastern sea and some to the western sea. They did such terrible things, but they will be like a dead and rotting body. There will be such a terrible smell!

²¹Land, don't be afraid. Be happy and full of joy. The LORD will do great things.

²²Animals of the field, don't be afraid. The desert pastures will grow grass. The trees will grow fruit. The fig trees and the vines will grow plenty of fruit.

²³So be happy, people of Zion. Be joyful in the LORD your God. He is good and will give you rain. He will send the early rains and the late rains as before.

²⁴The threshing floors will be filled with wheat, and the barrels will overflow with wine and olive oil.

²⁵I, the Lord, sent my army against you. The swarming locusts and the hopping locusts and the destroying locusts and the cutting locusts ate

everything you had. But I will pay you back for those years of trouble.

²⁶Then you will have plenty to eat. You will be full. You will praise the name of the LORD your God. He has done wonderful things for you. My people will never again be ashamed.

²⁷You will know that I am with Israel. You will know that I am the LORD your God. There is no other God. My people will never be ashamed again.

²⁸After this I will pour out my Spirit on all kinds of people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions.

²⁹In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, both men and women.

³⁰I will work wonders in the sky and on the earth. There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke.

³¹The sun will be changed into darkness, and the moon will be as red as blood. Then the great and fearful day of the LORD will come!

³²And everyone who trusts in the LORD will be saved. There will be survivors on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, just as the

LORD said. Yes, those left alive will be the ones the LORD has called.

3¹ Yes, at that time I will bring back the people of Judah and Jerusalem from captivity.

² I will also gather all the nations together. I will bring all these nations down into Jehoshaphat Valley. There I will judge them. Those nations scattered my people, Israel. They forced them to live in other nations, so I will punish those nations. They divided up my land.

³ They threw lots for my people. They sold boys to buy a prostitute, and they sold girls to buy wine to drink.

⁴ Tyre! Sidon! All of you areas of Philistia! You are not important to me! Are you punishing me for something I did? You might think that you are punishing me, but I will soon punish you.

⁵ You took my silver and gold. You took my precious treasures and put them in your temples.

⁶ You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks. That way you could take them far from their land.

⁷You sent my people to that faraway place, but I will bring them back. And I will punish you for what you did.

⁸I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah. Then they will sell them to the faraway Sabeans. This is what the LORD said.

⁹Announce this among the nations: Prepare for war! Wake up the strong men! Let all the men of war come near. Let them come up!

¹⁰Beat your plows into swords. Make spears from your pruning hooks. Let the weak man say, I am a strong soldier.

¹¹All you nations, hurry! Come together in that place. LORD, bring your strong soldiers.

¹²Wake up, nations! Come to Jehoshaphat Valley. There I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

¹³Bring the sickle, because the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, because the winepress is full. The barrels will be full and spilling over, because their evil is great.

¹⁴There are many, many people in the Valley of Decision. The LORD'S special day is near in the Valley of Decision.

¹⁵The sun and the moon will become dark. The stars will stop shining.

¹⁶The LORD God will shout from Zion. He will shout from Jerusalem, and the sky and the earth will shake. But the LORD God will be a safe place for his people. He will be a place of safety for the people of Israel.

¹⁷Then you will know that I am the LORD your God. I live on Zion, my holy mountain. Jerusalem will become holy. Strangers will never pass through that city again.

¹⁸On that day, the mountains will drip with sweet wine. The hills will flow with milk, and water will flow through all the empty rivers of Judah. A fountain will come from the LORD'S Temple. It will give water to Acacia Valley.

¹⁹Egypt will be empty. Edom will be an empty wilderness, because they were cruel to the people of Judah. They killed innocent people in their country.

²⁰But there will always be people living in Judah. People will live in Jerusalem through many generations.

²¹ Those people killed my people, so I really will punish them! The LORD God will live in Zion!

Amos

1 ¹This is the message of Amos, one of the shepherds from the city Tekoa. He saw visions about Israel during the time that Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Joash was king of Israel. This was two years before the earthquake.

²Amos said: The LORD will shout like a lion in Zion. His loud voice will roar from Jerusalem. The green pastures of the shepherds will turn brown and die. Even Mount Carmel will become dry.

³This is what the LORD says: I will definitely punish the people of Damascus for their many crimes. They crushed the people of Gilead with iron threshing tools.

⁴So I will start a fire at Hazael's house that will destroy the great palaces of Ben-Hadad.

⁵I will also break open the gates of Damascus and remove the one who sits on the throne in the Valley of Aven. I will remove the symbol of power from Beth

Eden, and the Arameans will be defeated and taken back to Kir. This is what the LORD said.

⁶This is what the LORD says: I will definitely punish the people of Gaza for their many crimes. They took an entire nation of people and sent them as slaves to Edom.

⁷So I will start a fire at the wall of Gaza that will destroy the high towers in Gaza.

⁸And I will destroy the one who sits on the throne in Ashdod. I will destroy the king who holds the scepter in Ashkelon. I will punish the people of Ekron. Then the Philistines who are still left alive will die. This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁹This is what the LORD says: I will definitely punish the people of Tyre for the many crimes they did. They took an entire nation and sent them as slaves to Edom. They did not remember the agreement they had made with their brothers (Israel).

¹⁰So I will start a fire at the walls of Tyre that will destroy the high towers in Tyre.

¹¹This is what the LORD says: I will definitely punish the people of Edom for

their many crimes. Edom chased his brother with the sword, and he showed no mercy. His anger never stopped. He kept tearing and tearing at Israel like a wild animal.

¹²So I will start a fire at Teman that will destroy the high towers of Bozrah.

¹³This is what the LORD says: I will definitely punish the Ammonites for their many crimes. They killed the pregnant women in Gilead. The Ammonites did this so that they could take that land and make their country larger.

¹⁴So I will start a fire at the wall of Rabbah that will destroy its high towers. Trouble will come into their country like a whirlwind.

¹⁵Then their kings and leaders will be captured. They will all be taken together. This is what the LORD said.

2¹This is what the LORD says: I will definitely punish the people of Moab for their many crimes. Moab burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime.

²So I will start a fire in Moab that will destroy the high towers of Kerioth. There will be terrible shouting and the sounds of a trumpet, and Moab will die.

³So I will bring an end to the kings of Moab, and I will kill all the leaders of Moab. This is what the LORD said.

⁴This is what the LORD says: I will definitely punish Judah for their many crimes. They refused to obey the LORD'S teachings and they did not keep his commands. Their ancestors believed lies, and those same lies caused the people of Judah to stop following God.

⁵So I will start a fire in Judah that will destroy the high towers of Jerusalem.

⁶This is what the LORD says: I will definitely punish Israel for their many crimes. They sold honest people for a little silver. They sold the poor for the price of a pair of sandals.

⁷They pushed their faces into the ground and walked on them. They stopped listening to suffering people. Fathers and sons had sexual relations with the same woman. They ruined my holy name.

⁸They took clothes from the poor, and then they sat on those clothes while worshiping at their altars. They loaned money to the poor, and then they took their clothes as a promise for payment.

They made people pay fines and used the money to buy wine for themselves to drink in the temple of their god.

⁹But it was I who destroyed the Amorites before them. They were as tall as cedar trees and as strong as oaks, but I destroyed their fruit above and their roots below.

¹⁰I was the one who brought you from the land of Egypt. For 40 years I led you through the desert. I helped you take the Amorites land.

¹¹I made some of your sons to be prophets and some of your young men to be Nazirites. People of Israel, it is true. This is what the LORD said.

¹²But you made the Nazirites break their promise. You told my prophets not to prophesy.

¹³You have become more than I can bear. I am bent low like a wagon loaded with grain.

¹⁴No one will escape, not even the fastest runner. Strong men will not be strong enough. Soldiers will not be able to save themselves.

¹⁵ People with bows and arrows will not survive. Fast runners will not escape. People on horses will not escape alive.

¹⁶ At that time even very brave soldiers will run away. They will not take the time to put their clothes on. This is what the LORD said.

3¹ People of Israel, listen to this message! This is what the LORD said about you, Israel. This message is about all the families that I brought from the land of Egypt.

² There are many families on earth, but you are the only family I chose to know in a special way. And you turned against me, so I will punish you for all your sins.

³ Two people will not walk together unless they have agreed to do so.

⁴ A lion will roar in the forest only if it catches its prey. A young lion roaring in his cave means he has caught something to eat.

⁵ A bird doesn't fly into a trap unless there is food in it. If a trap closes, it will catch the bird.

⁶ If people hear the warning blast of a trumpet, they shake with fear. If trouble

comes to a city, the LORD caused it to happen.

⁷When the Lord GOD decides to do something, he will first tell his servants, the prophets.

⁸When a lion roars, people are frightened. When the Lord GOD speaks, a prophet must prophesy.

⁹Go to the high towers in Ashdod and in Egypt and announce this message from the LORD: Come together on the mountains of Samaria. See the great confusion there because the people don't know how to live right. See how cruel they are to others. They take things from people to hide in their high towers. Their treasuries are filled with the things they have taken in war.

¹⁰(3: 9)

¹¹So the Lord GOD says, An enemy will surround your land. They will break down your strong walls and take the things you have hidden in your high towers.

¹²The LORD says, A lion might attack a lamb, and a shepherd might try to save the lamb. But the shepherd will save only a part of that lamb. He might pull

two legs or a part of an ear from the lions mouth. In the same way, most of the people of Israel will not be saved. Those who live in Samaria will save only a corner from a bed, or a piece of cloth from a couch.

¹³This is what the Lord GOD All-Powerful says: Warn the family of Jacob about these things.

¹⁴The people of Israel sinned, and I will punish them for their sins. And when I do, I will also destroy the altars at Bethel. The horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground.

¹⁵I will destroy all their houses, the winter houses and the summer houses. The houses of ivory will be ruined. Their many houses will be destroyed. This is what the LORD said.

4¹ Listen to me, you cows of Bashan on Samarias mountain. You hurt the poor and crush those in need. You tell your husbands, Bring us something to drink!

²The Lord GOD made a promise. He promised by his holiness that troubles will come to you. People will use hooks and take you away as prisoners. They

will use fishhooks to take away your children.

³Your city will be destroyed. The women will rush out through cracks in the wall and throw themselves onto the pile of dead bodies. This is what the LORD says:

⁴Go to Bethel and sin. Go to Gilgal and sin even more. Offer your sacrifices in the morning. Bring a tenth of your crops for the three-day festival.

⁵And offer a thank offering made with yeast. Tell everyone about the freewill offerings. Israel, you love to do those things. So go and do them. This is what the Lord GOD said.

⁶I didnt give you any food to eat. There was no food in any of your cities, but you didnt come back to me. This is what the LORD said.

⁷I also stopped the rain, and it was three months before harvest time. So no crops grew. Then I let it rain on one city, but not on another city. Rain fell on one part of the country, but on the other part of the country, the land became very dry.

⁸People went from one town to another trying to find water, but there was not enough water for everyone. And still you

did not come to me for help. This is what the LORD said.

⁹I made your crops die from heat and disease. I destroyed your gardens and your vineyards. Locusts ate your fig trees and olive trees. But you still didnt come to me for help. This is what the LORD said.

¹⁰I sent diseases against you, as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with swords. I took away your horses. I made your camp smell very bad from all the dead bodies, but still you didnt come back to me for help. This is what the LORD said.

¹¹I destroyed you as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. And those cities were completely destroyed. You were like a burned stick pulled from a fire, but still you didnt come back to me for help. This is what the LORD says.

¹²So, Israel, this is what I will do to you. You people of Israel, prepare to meet your God.

¹³He is the one who made the mountains and created the wind. He lets people know his thoughts. He changes the darkness into dawn. He walks over

the mountains of the earth. His name is YAHWEH, LORD God All-Powerful.

5¹ People of Israel, listen to this song. This funeral song is about you.

²The virgin of Israel has fallen. She will not get up anymore. She was left alone, lying in the dirt. There is no one to lift her up.

³This is what the Lord GOD says: Officers leaving the city with 1000 men will return with only 100 men. Officers leaving the city with 100 men will return with only ten men.

⁴The LORD says this to the nation of Israel: Come looking for me and live.

⁵But dont look in Bethel. Dont go to Gilgal. Dont cross the border and go down to Beersheba. The people of Gilgal will be taken away as prisoners, and Bethel will be destroyed.

⁶Come to the LORD and live. If you dont go to him, a fire will start at Josephs house, and no one in Bethel can stop it.

⁷You should go to the Lord for help. He is the one who made the Pleiades and Orion. He changes darkness into the morning light. He changes the day into the dark night. He calls for the

waters of the sea and pours them out on the earth. His name is YAHWEH! He keeps one strong city safe, and he lets another strong city be destroyed. You change justice to poison. You throw away fairness like trash.

⁸ (5: 7)

⁹ (5: 7)

¹⁰ You hate those prophets, who go to public places and speak against evil, even though they teach good, simple truths.

¹¹ You take unfair taxes from the poor. You take loads of wheat from them. You build fancy houses with cut stone, but you will not live in them. You plant beautiful vineyards, but you will not drink the wine from them.

¹² This is because I know about your many sins. You have done some very bad things: You hurt people who do right, you accept money to do wrong, and you keep the poor from receiving justice in court.

¹³ At that time wise teachers will be quiet, because it is a bad time.

¹⁴ You say that God is with you, so you should do good things, not evil. Then you

will live, and the LORD God All-Powerful will be with you.

¹⁵Hate evil and love goodness. Bring justice back into the courts. Maybe then the LORD God All-Powerful will be kind to the survivors from Josephs family.

¹⁶The Lord, the LORD God All-Powerful says, People will be crying in the public places. They will be crying in the streets. They will hire the professional criers.

¹⁷People will be crying in the vineyards, because I will pass through and punish you. This is what the LORD said.

¹⁸Some of you want to see the LORD'S special day of judgment. Why do you want to see that day of the LORD? His special day will bring darkness, not light.

¹⁹You will be like someone who escapes from a lion only to be attacked by a bear, or like someone who goes into the safety of his house, leans against the wall, and is bitten by a snake.

²⁰The LORD'S special day will be a day of darkness, not lighta day of gloom, without a ray of light.

²¹I hate your festivals; I will not accept them. I dont enjoy your religious meetings.

²² Even if you offer me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. I will not even look at the fat animals you give as fellowship offerings.

²³ Take your noisy songs away from here. I will not listen to the music from your harps.

²⁴ But let justice flow like a river, and let goodness flow like a stream that never becomes dry.

²⁵ Israel, you offered me sacrifices and offerings in the desert for 40 years.

²⁶ But you also carried statues of Sakkuth, your king, and Kaiwan. There was also that star god that you made for yourselves.

²⁷ So I will send you as captives, far beyond Damascus. This is what the LORD says. His name is God All-Powerful.

6¹ Oh, look at the people enjoying life in Zion, and those on Mount Samaria who feel so safe. They are such important leaders of a most important nation. The House of Israel comes to you for advice.

² Go look at Calneh. From there, go to the large city Hamath. Go to the Philistine city of Gath. Are you better

than these kingdoms? Their countries are larger than yours.

³You people are rushing toward the day of punishment. You bring near the rule of violence.

⁴But now you lie on ivory beds and stretch out on your couches. You eat tender young lambs from the flock and young calves from the stable.

⁵You play your harps, and like David, you practice on your musical instruments.

⁶You drink wine in fancy cups. You use the best perfumes. And it doesn't even bother you that Joseph's family is being destroyed.

⁷You people are stretched out on your couches now, but your good times will end. You will be taken away as prisoners to a foreign country, and you will be some of the first people taken.

⁸The Lord GOD used his own name and made an oath. The LORD God All-Powerful said: I hate what Jacob is proud of. I hate his strong towers. So I will let an enemy take the city and everything in it.

⁹At that time ten people in one house might survive, but they too will die.

¹⁰And when someone dies, a relative will come to get the body so that it can be taken out and burned. Relatives will come to take away the bones. They will call to anyone who might be hiding back in the house, Are there any other dead bodies in there with you? That person will answer, No, But the relative will interrupt and say, Hush! We must not mention the name of the LORD.

¹¹Look, the LORD will give the command, and the large houses will be broken to pieces, and the small houses will be broken to small pieces.

¹²Do horses run over loose rocks? No, and people don't use cows for plowing. But you turned everything upside down. You changed justice and goodness to bitter poison.

¹³You are so excited about defeating Lo Debar. And you boast, We have taken Karnaim by our own strength.

¹⁴But Israel, I will bring a nation against you that will bring troubles to your whole country from Lebo Hamath

to Arabah Brook. This is what the LORD God All-Powerful said.

7¹ This is what the Lord GOD showed me: He was making locusts. This was at the time the second crop began to grow, after the kings people had cut the first crop.

² Before the locusts could eat all the grass in the country, I said, Lord GOD, I beg you, forgive us! Jacob cannot survive! He is too small!

³ Then the LORD changed his mind about this. The LORD said, It will not happen.

⁴ This is what the Lord GOD showed me: I saw the Lord GOD calling for judgment by fire. The fire destroyed the ocean and was beginning to eat up the land.

⁵ But I said, Lord GOD, stop, I beg you! Jacob cannot survive! He is too small!

⁶ Then the LORD changed his mind about this. The Lord GOD said, It will not happen either.

⁷ This is what the Lord showed me: He stood by a wall with a plumb line in his hand. (The wall had been marked with a plumb line.)

⁸The LORD said to me, Amos, what do you see? I said, A plumb line. Then the Lord said to me, See, I will put a plumb line among my people Israel. I will not let their crooked ways pass inspection anymore.

⁹Isaacs high places will be destroyed. Israels holy places will be made into a pile of rocks. I will attack and kill Jeroboams family with swords.

¹⁰Amaziah, a priest at Bethel, sent this message to Jeroboam, the king of Israel: Amos is making plans against you. He is trying to make the people of Israel fight against you. He has been speaking so much that this country cannot hold all his words.

¹¹Amos has said, Jeroboam will die by the sword, and the people of Israel will be taken as prisoners out of their country.

¹²Amaziah also said to Amos, You seer, go down to Judah and eat there. Do your prophesying there.

¹³But dont prophesy anymore here at Bethel. This is Jeroboams holy place. This is Israels temple.

¹⁴ Then Amos answered Amaziah, I am not a professional prophet, and I am not from a prophets family. I raise cattle and take care of sycamore trees.

¹⁵ I was a shepherd and the LORD took me from following the sheep. The LORD said to me, Go, prophesy to my people Israel.

¹⁶ So listen to the LORD'S message. You tell me, Dont prophesy against Israel. Dont speak against Isaacs family.

¹⁷ But the LORD says, Your wife will become a prostitute in the city. Your sons and daughters will be killed with swords. Other people will take your land and divide it among themselves, and you will die in a foreign country. The people of Israel will definitely be taken from this country as prisoners.

8¹ This is what the Lord GOD showed me: I saw a basket of summer fruit.

² He said to me, Amos, what do you see? I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then the LORD said to me, The end has come to my people Israel. I will not ignore their sins anymore.

³ Their temple songs will become funeral songs. This is what the Lord GOD said.

There will be dead bodies everywhere. In silence, people will take out the dead bodies and throw them onto the pile.

⁴ Listen to me, you who trample on helpless people. You are trying to destroy the poor of this country.

⁵ You merchants say, When will the New Moon be over so that we can sell grain? When will the Sabbath be over so that we can bring out more wheat to sell? We can raise the price and make the measure smaller. We can fix the scales and cheat the people.

⁶ The poor cannot pay their loans, so we will buy them as slaves. We will buy those helpless people for the price of a pair of sandals. Oh, and we can sell the wheat that was spilled on the floor.

⁷ The LORD made a promise. He used his name, Pride of Jacob, and made this promise: I will never forget what those people did.

⁸ There will be an earthquake that will shake the whole land because of what they did. Everyone living there will cry for those who died. The land will be tossed around. The whole land will rise and fall like the Nile River in Egypt.

⁹The Lord GOD also said, At that time I will make the sun set at noon and make the land dark on a clear day.

¹⁰I will change your festivals into days of crying for the dead. All your songs will be songs of sadness for those who are dead. I will put mourning clothes on every body and baldness on every head. I will cause mourning everywhere, like that for an only son who has died. It will be a very bitter end.

¹¹The Lord GOD says: Look, the days are coming when I will cause a famine in the land. The people will not be hungry for bread. They will not be thirsty for water. No, they will be hungry for words from the LORD.

¹²The people will wander around the country, from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the north part of the country to the east. They will go back and forth looking for a message from the LORD, but they will not find it.

¹³At that time the beautiful young men and women will become weak from thirst.

¹⁴They made promises by the sin of Samaria, They said, Dan, as surely as

your god lives, we promise . And they said, As surely as the god of Beersheba lives, we promise . But they will fall and never get up again.

9¹ I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said, Hit the top of the columns, and shake them to the ground. Push them and they will fall on everyones head. As for those who survive, I will kill them with a sword. None of them will run away. None of them will escape.

² If they dig deep into the ground, I will pull them from there. If they go up into the skies, I will bring them down from there.

³ If they hide at the top of Mount Carmel, I will find them there and take them from that place. If they try to hide from me at the bottom of the sea, I will command the snake, and it will bite them.

⁴ If they are captured and taken away by their enemies, I will command the sword, and it will kill them there. Yes, I will watch over them, but I will watch for ways to give them troubles, not for ways to do good things.

⁵The Lord GOD All-Powerful will touch the land, and the land will melt. Then all the people who live in the land will cry for the dead. The land will rise and fall like the Nile River in Egypt.

⁶He built his upper rooms above the skies. He put his skies over the earth. He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out as rain on the land. YAHWEH is his name.

⁷This is what the LORD says: Israel, you are like the Ethiopians to me. I brought Israel out of the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Arameans from Kir.

⁸The Lord GOD is watching this sinful kingdom. The LORD says, I will wipe Israel off the face of the earth, but I will never completely destroy Jacobs family.

⁹I am giving the command to scatter the people of Israel among all nations. But it will be like someone sifting flour. A person shakes flour through a sifter. The good flour falls through, but the bad lumps are caught.

¹⁰Sinners among my people say, Nothing bad will happen to us. But all of them will be killed with swords.

¹¹ Davids tent has fallen, but at that time I will set it up again. I will fix its holes and repair its ruined parts. I will set it up as it was before.

¹² Then the people left alive in Edom, and all the people called by my name, will look to me for help. This is what the LORD said, and he will make it happen.

¹³ The LORD says, A time of great blessing is coming. Workers will still be harvesting when it is time to plow the fields again. They will still be trampling the grapes when it is time for a new crop. Sweet wine will drip from the mountains and pour from the hills.

¹⁴ I will bring my people, Israel, back from captivity. They will rebuild the ruined cities, and they will live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink the wine they produce. They will plant gardens and eat the crops they produce.

¹⁵ I will plant my people on their land, and never again will they be pulled up out of the land that I gave them. This is what the LORD your God said.

Obadiah

1 ¹This is the vision of Obadiah. This is what the Lord GOD says about Edom: We heard a report from the LORD. A messenger was sent to the nations. He said, Lets go fight against Edom.

²Edom, I will make you the smallest nation. Everyone will hate you very much.

³Your pride has fooled you. You live in those caves high on the cliff. Your home is high in the hills. So you say to yourself, No one can bring me to the ground.

⁴This is what the LORD says: Even though you fly high like the eagle and put your nest among the stars, I will bring you down from there.

⁵You really will be ruined! Thieves will come to you. Robbers will come in the night, and they will take all they want. When workers gather grapes in your vineyards, they will leave a few grapes behind.

⁶But the enemy will search hard for Esau hidden treasures, and they will find them all.

⁷All those who are your friends will force you out of the land. Those who were at peace with you will trick you, and they will defeat you. The soldiers who fought by your side are planning a trap for you. They say, He doesn't expect a thing!

⁸The LORD says, On that day, I will destroy the wise people from Edom. I will destroy the intelligent people from the mountain of Esau.

⁹Teman, your brave soldiers will be afraid. Everyone will be destroyed from the mountain of Esau. Many people will be killed.

¹⁰You will be covered with shame because you were very cruel to your brother Jacob. So you will be destroyed completely.

¹¹You joined the enemies of Israel. Strangers carried Israel's treasures away. Foreigners entered Israel's city gate. They threw lots to decide what part of Jerusalem they would get. And you were

right there with them, waiting to get your share.

¹²You should not have laughed at your brothers trouble. You should not have been happy when they destroyed Judah. You should not have bragged at the time of their trouble.

¹³You should not have entered the city gate of my people and laughed at their problems. You should not have taken their treasures in the time of their trouble.

¹⁴You should have not stood where the roads cross and destroyed those who were trying to escape. You should not have captured those who escaped alive.

¹⁵The Day of the LORD is coming soon to all the nations. And the evil you did to others will happen to you. The same bad things will fall down on your own head.

¹⁶You spilled blood on my holy mountain, so other nations will spill your blood. You will be finished. It will be as if you never existed.

¹⁷But there will be survivors on Mount Zion. They will be my special people. The nation of Jacob will take back what belongs to it.

¹⁸The family of Jacob will be like a fire. The nation of Joseph will be like a flame. But the nation of Esau will be like ashes. The people of Judah will burn Edom, and they will destroy it. Then there will be no survivors in the nation of Esau. This will happen because the LORD said it would.

¹⁹Then people from the Negev will live on the mountain of Esau. And people from the foothills will take the Philistine lands. They will live in the land of Ephraim and Samaria. Gilead will belong to Benjamin.

²⁰People from Israel were forced to leave their homes, but they will take back the land of Canaan, all the way to Zarephath. People from Judah were forced to leave Jerusalem and live in Sepharad. But they will take back the cities of the Negev.

²¹The winners will go up on Mount Zion to rule the people who live on Esau's mountain. And the kingdom will belong to the LORD.

Jonah

1 ¹The LORD spoke to Jonah son of Amittai:

²Nineveh is a big city. I have heard about the many evil things the people there are doing. So go and tell them I am ready to punish them.

³But Jonah tried to run away from the LORD. He went to Joppa and found a boat that was going to the faraway city of Tarshish. Jonah paid money for the trip and went on the boat. He wanted to travel with the people on this boat to Tarshish and run away from the LORD.

⁴But the LORD brought a great storm on the sea. The wind made the sea very rough. The storm was very strong, and the boat was ready to break apart.

⁵The men wanted to make the boat lighter to stop it from sinking, so they began throwing the cargo into the sea. The sailors were very afraid. Each man began praying to his god. Jonah had gone down into the boat to lie down, and he went to sleep.

⁶The captain of the boat saw Jonah and said, Wake up! Why are you sleeping? Pray to your god! Maybe your god will hear your prayer and save us!

⁷Then the men said to each other, We should throw lots to find out why this is happening to us. So the men threw lots. The lots showed that the troubles came to them because of Jonah.

⁸Then the men said to Jonah, It is your fault that this terrible thing is happening to us. Tell us, what have you done? What is your job? Where do you come from? What is your country? Who are your people?

⁹Jonah said to them, I am a Hebrew. I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the land and the sea.

¹⁰Jonah told the men he was running away from the LORD. The men became very afraid when they learned this. They asked Jonah, What terrible thing did you do against your God?

¹¹The wind and the waves of the sea were becoming stronger and stronger. So the men said to Jonah, What should we do to save ourselves? What should we do to you to make the sea calm?

¹²Jonah said to the men, I know I did wrong that is why the storm came on the sea. So throw me into the sea, and the sea will become calm.

¹³Instead, the men tried to row the ship back to the shore, but they couldnt do it. The wind and the waves of the sea were too strong and they were becoming stronger and stronger.

¹⁴So the men cried to the LORD, LORD, please dont say we are guilty of killing an innocent man. Please dont make us die for killing him. We know you are the LORD, and you will do whatever you want.

¹⁵So the men threw Jonah into the sea. The storm stopped, and the sea became calm.

¹⁶When the men saw this, they began to fear and respect the LORD. They offered a sacrifice and made special promises to the LORD.

¹⁷When Jonah fell into the sea, the LORD chose a very big fish to swallow Jonah. He was in the stomach of the fish for three days and three nights.

2¹ While Jonah was in the stomach of the fish, he prayed to the LORD his God. He said,

² I was in very bad trouble. I called to the LORD for help, and he answered me. I was deep in the grave. I cried to you, and you heard my voice.

³ You threw me into the sea. Your powerful waves splashed over me. I went down, down into the deep sea. The water was all around me.

⁴ Then I thought, Now I must go where you cannot see me, but I continued looking to your holy Temple for help.

⁵ The seawater closed over me. The water covered my mouth, and I could not breathe. I went down, down into the deep sea. Seaweed wrapped around my head.

⁶ I was at the bottom of the sea, the place where mountains begin. I thought I was locked in this prison forever, but the LORD my God took me out of my grave. God, you gave me life again!

⁷ My soul gave up all hope, but then I remembered the LORD. I prayed to you, and you heard my prayers in your holy Temple.

⁸Some people worship useless idols, but those statues never help them.

⁹I will give sacrifices to you, and I will praise and thank you. I will make special promises to you, and I will do what I promise. Salvation only comes from the LORD!

¹⁰Then the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out of its stomach onto the dry land.

3¹Then the LORD spoke to Jonah again and said,

²Go to that big city Nineveh, and say what I tell you.

³So Jonah obeyed the LORD and went to Nineveh. It was a very large city. A person had to walk for three days to travel through it.

⁴Jonah went to the center of the city and began speaking to the people. He said, After 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed!

⁵The people of Nineveh believed God. They decided to stop eating for a time to think about their sins. They put on special clothes to show they were sorry. All the people in the city did this,

from the most important to the least important.

⁶When the king of Nineveh heard about this, he left his throne, removed his robe, put on special clothes to show that he was sorry, and sat in ashes.

⁷The king wrote a special message and sent it throughout the city: A command from the king and his great rulers: For a short time no person or animal should eat anything. No herd or flock will be allowed in the fields. Nothing living in Nineveh will eat or drink water.

⁸But every person and every animal must be covered with a special cloth to show they are sad. People must cry loudly to God. Everyone must change their life and stop doing bad things.

⁹Who knows? Maybe God will stop being angry and change his mind, and we will not be punished.

¹⁰God saw what the people did. He saw that they stopped doing evil. So God changed his mind and did not do what he planned. He did not punish the people.

4¹Jonah was not happy that God saved the city. Jonah became angry.

²He complained to the LORD and said, LORD, I knew this would happen! I was in my own country, and you told me to come here. At that time I knew that you would forgive the people of this evil city, so I decided to run away to Tarshish. I knew that you are a kind God. I knew that you show mercy and don't want to punish people. I knew that you are kind, and if these people stopped sinning, you would change your plans to destroy them.

³So now, LORD, just kill me. It is better for me to die than to live.

⁴Then the LORD said, Do you think it is right for you to be angry?

⁵Jonah went out of the city to a place near the city on the east side. He made a shelter for himself and sat there in the shade, waiting to see what would happen to the city.

⁶The LORD made a gourd plant grow quickly over Jonah. This made a cool place for Jonah to sit and helped him to be more comfortable. He was very happy because of this plant.

⁷The next morning, God sent a worm to eat part of the plant. The worm began eating the plant, and the plant died.

⁸After the sun was high in the sky, God caused a hot east wind to blow. The sun became very hot on Jonah's head, and he became very weak. He asked God to let him die. He said, It is better for me to die than to live.

⁹But God said to Jonah, Do you think it is right for you to be angry just because this plant died? Jonah answered, Yes, it is right for me to be angry! I am angry enough to die!

¹⁰And the LORD said, You did nothing for that plant. You did not make it grow. It grew up in the night, and the next day it died. And now you are sad about it.

¹¹If you can get upset over a plant, surely I can feel sorry for a big city like Nineveh. There are many people and animals in that city. There are more than 120,000 people there who did not know they were doing wrong.

Micah

1 ¹ During the time that Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, the word of the LORD came to Micah. Micah was from Moresheth. He saw these visions about Samaria and Jerusalem.

² Listen, all you people! Earth and everyone on it, listen! The Lord GOD will be a witness against you. The Lord will come from his holy temple.

³ See, the LORD is leaving his place to come down and walk on the high places of the earth.

⁴ The mountains will melt under him like wax in a fire. The valleys will break apart and slide like water rushing down a hill.

⁵ This will happen because of Jacobs sin, because of the sins of the nation of Israel. What caused Jacob to sin? It was Samaria. Where is the high place in Judah? It is Jerusalem.

⁶ So I will change Samaria into a pile of rocks in the field, a place ready for planting grapes. I will push Samarias

stones down into the valley, leaving nothing but the foundations.

⁷All her idols will be broken into pieces. Her prostitutes wages (idols) will be burned in fire. I will destroy all her statues of false gods, because Samaria got her riches by being unfaithful to me. So those things will be taken by people who are not faithful to me.

⁸I will be very sad about what will happen. I will go without sandals and clothes. I will cry like a wild dog. I will mourn like an ostrich.

⁹Samarias wound cannot be healed. Her disease has spread to Judah. It has reached the city gate of my people; it has spread all the way to Jerusalem.

¹⁰Dont tell it in Gath. Dont cry in Acco. Roll yourself in the dust at Beth Ophrah.

¹¹You people living in Shaphir, pass on your way, naked and ashamed. The people living in Zaanan will not come out. The people in Beth Ezel will cry and take their support from you.

¹²The people living in Maroth wait for something good to happen, even though trouble has come down from the

LORD and has reached the city gate of Jerusalem.

¹³You people living in Lachish, get the horses ready for your chariots. You are guilty of the same sins Israel committed, and you brought those sins to Jerusalem.

¹⁴So you must give goodbye gifts to Moresheth in Gath. The houses in Aczib will trick the kings of Israel.

¹⁵You people who live in Mareshah, I will bring someone against you who will take the things you own. The Glory of Israel will come into Adullam.

¹⁶So cut off your hair, make yourself bald, because you will cry for the children you love. Make yourself bald like an eagle and show your sadness, because your children will be taken away from you.

2¹Trouble will come to those who make plans to sin. They lie on their beds making their evil plans. Then when the morning light comes, they do what they planned, because they have the power to do what they want.

²They want fields, so they take them. They want houses, so they take them.

They cheat a man and take his house and his land.

³That is why the LORD says: Look, I am planning trouble against this family. You will not be able to save yourselves. You will stop being proud, because bad times are coming.

⁴Then people will sing songs about you. They will sing this sad song: We are ruined! The LORD took away our land and gave it to other people. Yes, he took my land away from me. He has divided our fields among our enemies.

⁵So we will not be able to measure the land and divide it among the LORD'S people.

⁶The people say, Dont prophesy to us. Dont say those bad things about us. Nothing bad will happen to us.

⁷But people of Jacob, I must say these things. The LORD is losing his patience because of the bad things you did. If you lived right, I could say nice words to you.

⁸But you attack my people like enemies. You steal the clothes off the backs of people walking by. They think they are safe, but you are there to treat them like prisoners of war.

⁹You have taken nice houses away from the women of my people. You have taken my wealth away from their small children forever.

¹⁰Get up and leave! This will not be your place of rest, because you ruined it. You made it unclean, so it will be destroyed! It will be a terrible destruction!

¹¹These people don't want to listen to me. But if a man comes telling lies, they will accept him. They would accept a false prophet if he comes and says, There will be good times in the future, with plenty of wine and beer.

¹²Yes, people of Jacob, I will bring all of you together. I will bring together all those in Israel who are still living. I will put them together like sheep in the sheep pen, like a flock in its pasture. Then the place will be filled with the noise of many people.

¹³The One Who Breaks Through Walls will push through and walk to the front of his people. They will break through the gates and leave that city. They will leave with their king marching before them with the LORD at the front of his people.

3¹ Then I said, Listen, leaders of Jacob and officers of the nation of Israel! You should know what justice is.

² But you hate good and love evil. You tear the skin off the people and tear the flesh off their bones.

³ You are destroying my people. You take their skin off them and break their bones. You chop their bones up like meat to put in the pot!

⁴ Then you will pray to the LORD, but he will not answer you. No, he will hide his face from you, because what you do is evil.

⁵ Some false prophets are telling lies to the Lords people. This is what the LORD says about them: These prophets are led by their stomachs. They promise peace for those who give them food, but they promise war to those who do not give them food.

⁶ This is why it is like night for you and you dont have visions. You cannot see what will happen in the future, so it is like darkness to you. The sun has gone down on the prophets. They cannot see what will happen in the future, so it is like darkness to them.

⁷The seers are ashamed. The fortunetellers are embarrassed. None of them will say anything, because God will not speak to them.

⁸But the LORD'S Spirit has filled me with power, goodness, and strength. So now I can tell Jacob what they have done wrong. I can tell Israel how they have sinned!

⁹Leaders of Jacob and rulers of Israel, listen to me! You hate the right way of living! If something is straight, then you make it crooked!

¹⁰You build Zion by murdering people. You build Jerusalem by cheating people!

¹¹The judges in Jerusalem accept bribes to help them decide who wins in court. The priests in Jerusalem must be paid before they will teach the people. People must pay the prophets before they will look into the future. Then those leaders expect the LORD to help them. They say, The LORD lives here with us, so nothing bad will happen to us.

¹²Leaders, because of you, Zion will be destroyed. It will become a plowed field. Jerusalem will become a pile of

rocks. Temple Mount will be an empty hill overgrown with bushes.

4¹ In the last days the mountain of the LORD'S Temple will be on the highest of all mountains. It will be raised higher than the hills. There will be a steady stream of people going there.

² People from many nations will go there and say, Come, let's go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the Temple of the God of Jacob. Then God will teach us his way of living, and we will follow him. His teaching, the LORD'S message, will begin in Jerusalem on Mount Zion and will go out to all the world.

³ Then God will act as judge to end arguments between people in many places. He will decide what is right for great nations far and near. They will stop using their weapons for war. They will hammer their swords into plows and use their spears to make tools for harvesting. All fighting between nations will end. They will never again train for war.

⁴ They will sit under their own grapevine and fig tree. No one will make them afraid. That is because the LORD

All-Powerful said it would happen like that.

⁵All the people from other nations follow their own gods, but we will follow the LORD our God forever and ever!

⁶The LORD says, Jerusalem was hurt and crippled. She was thrown away. She was hurt and punished, but I will bring her back to me.

⁷The people of that crippled city will be the only ones left alive. They were forced to leave, but I will make them into a strong nation. The LORD will be their king. He will rule from Mount Zion forever.

⁸And you, Tower of Flocks, your time will come. Ophel, hill of Zion, you will again have the right to rule. Yes, the kingdom will be in Jerusalem as it was in the past.

⁹Now, why are you crying so loudly? Is your king gone? Have you lost your wise leader? Is that why you are suffering like a woman in labor?

¹⁰Cry out, you people of Jerusalem, and feel the pain, as if you were giving birth. You must go out of the city and live in the fields. You will go away to

Babylon, but you will also be saved from that place. The LORD will come and rescue you there. He will take you away from your enemies.

¹¹ Many nations have come to fight against you. They say, Look, there is Zion! Lets attack her!

¹² They have their plans, but they dont know what the LORD is planning. He brought them here for a special purpose. They will be crushed like grain on a threshing floor.

¹³ People of Jerusalem, get up and crush them! I will make you very strong. It will be as if you have horns of iron and hooves of bronze. You will beat many people into small pieces. You will give their wealth to the LORD. You will give their treasure to the Lord of all the earth.

5¹ Now, strong city, gather your soldiers! Our enemies are attacking us! They will strike Israels ruler in the face with a stick.

² You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, are the smallest town in Judah. But from you will come the one who will rule Israel for me. His family began in ancient times. He is from days long ago.

³The Lord will let his people be defeated until the woman gives birth to her child, the promised king. Then the rest of his brothers will come back to join the people of Israel.

⁴He will begin to rule Israel in the power of the LORD. Like a shepherd, he will lead his people in the wonderful name of the LORD his God. And they will live in safety because then his greatness will be known all over the world.

⁵He will bring a time of peace. Yes, the Assyrian army will come into our country and march through our land. But we have plenty of leaders we can send against them.

⁶With swords in hand our leaders will defeat the Assyrians and rule the land of Nimrod. They will save us from the Assyrians when they come into our land and march through our territory.

⁷But those from Jacob who are still living and scattered among the nations will be like dew from the LORD that does not depend on anyone. They will be like rain on the grass that does not wait for anyone.

⁸Those from Jacob who are still living are scattered among the nations. But they will be like a lion among the animals in the forest. They will be like a young lion among flocks of sheep. If the lion passes through, he goes where he wants to go. If he attacks an animal, no one can save it. The survivors will be like that.

⁹You will lift your hand against your enemies, and you will destroy them.

¹⁰The LORD says, At that time I will take away your horses, and I will destroy your chariots.

¹¹I will destroy the cities in your country. I will pull down all your fortresses.

¹²You will no longer try to do magic. You will have no more fortunetellers.

¹³I will destroy your statues of false gods. I will pull down your memorial stones. You will not worship what your hands have made.

¹⁴I will destroy the Asherah poles and your false gods.

¹⁵Some nations will not listen to me, but I will show my anger and get my revenge.

6¹ Now hear what the LORD says:
Present your argument to the mountains. Let the hills hear your story.

²The LORD has a complaint against his people. Mountains, listen to the LORD'S complaint. Foundations of the earth, hear the Lord. He will prove that Israel is wrong!

³He says, My people, tell me what I did! Did I do something wrong against you? Did I make life too hard for you?

⁴I will tell you what I did. I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to you. I brought you from the land of Egypt. I freed you from slavery.

⁵My people, remember the evil plans of Balak king of Moab. Remember what Balaam son of Beor said to Balak. Remember what happened from Acacia to Gilgal, and you will know the LORD is right!

⁶What must I bring when I come to meet with the LORD? What must I do when I bow down to God above? Should I come to him with burnt offerings and a year-old calf?

⁷Will the LORD be pleased with a thousand rams or with ten thousand

rivers of oil? Should I offer him my first child to pay for my wrongs? Should I sacrifice my very own child for my sins?

⁸Human, the LORD has told you what goodness is. This is what he wants from you: Be fair to other people. Love kindness and loyalty, and humbly obey your God.

⁹The LORD shouts to the city: A wise person respects the Lord's name. So pay attention to the punishing rod and to the one who uses it!

¹⁰Do the wicked still hide treasures that they have stolen? Do they still cheat people with baskets that are too small? Yes, all of this is still happening!

¹¹Some people carry special weights that they use to cheat people when they weigh their goods. Should I pardon them?

¹²The rich in that city are still cruel. The people there still tell lies. Yes, they tell their lies.

¹³So I have begun to punish you. I will destroy you because of your sins.

¹⁴You will eat, but you will not become full. You will still be hungry and empty. You will try to bring people to safety, but

people with swords will kill the people you rescued.

¹⁵You will plant your seeds, but you will not gather food. You will try to squeeze oil from your olives, but you will not get any oil. You will crush your grapes, but you will not get enough juice to have wine to drink.

¹⁶This is because you obey the laws of Omri. You do all the evil things that Ahabs family does. You follow their teachings, so I will let you be destroyed. People will whistle in amazement when they see your destroyed city. Then you will bear the shame that the other nations bring to you.

7 ¹I am upset because I am like fruit that has been gathered, like grapes that have already been picked. There are no grapes left to eat. There are none of the early figs that I love.

²By this I mean that all the faithful people are gone. There are no good people left. Everyone is planning to kill someone. Everyone is trying to trap their brother.

³People are good at doing bad things with both hands. Officials ask for bribes.

Judges take money to change their decisions in court. Important leaders do whatever they want to do.

⁴Even the best of them is as crooked as a tangled thornbush. Your prophets said this day would come, and the day of your watchmen has come. Now you will be punished. Now you will be confused!

⁵Dont trust your neighbor or trust a friend! Dont even speak freely with your wife.

⁶Your enemies will be the people in your own house. A son will not honor his father. A daughter will turn against her mother. A daughter-in-law will turn against her mother-in-law.

⁷So I will look to the LORD for help. I will wait for God to save me. My God will hear me.

⁸I have fallen, but enemy, dont laugh at me! I will get up again. I sit in darkness now, but the LORD will be a light for me.

⁹I sinned against the LORD, so he was angry with me. But he will argue my case for me in court. He will do what is right for me. Then he will bring me out into the light, and I will see that he is right.

¹⁰My enemy said to me, Where is the LORD your God? But my enemy will see this, and she will be ashamed. At that time I will laugh at her. People will walk over her, like mud in the streets.

¹¹The time will come when your walls will be rebuilt. At that time the country will grow.

¹²Your people will come back to your land. They will come back from Assyria and from the cities of Egypt. They will come from Egypt and from the other side of the Euphrates River. They will come from the sea in the west and from the mountains in the east.

¹³The land was ruined by the people who lived there and by what they did.

¹⁴So rule your people with your rod. Rule the flock of people who belong to you. That flock lives alone in the woods and up on Mount Carmel. That flock lives in Bashan and Gilead as they did in the past.

¹⁵I did many miracles when I took you out of Egypt. I will let you see more miracles like that.

¹⁶The nations will see those miracles, and they will be ashamed. They will see

that their power is nothing compared to mine. They will be amazed and put their hands over their mouths. They will cover their ears and refuse to listen.

¹⁷They will crawl in the dust like a snake. They will shake with fear. They will be like insects crawling from their holes in the ground and coming to the LORD our God. God, they will fear and respect you!

¹⁸There is no God like you. You take away peoples guilt. God will forgive his people who survive. He will not stay angry with them forever, because he enjoys being kind.

¹⁹He will come back and comfort us again. He will throw all our sins into the deep sea.

²⁰God, please be true to Jacob. Be kind and loyal to Abraham, as you promised our ancestors long ago.

Nahum

1 ¹This book is the vision of Nahum from Elkosh. This is the sad message about the city of Nineveh.

²The LORD is a jealous God. The LORD punishes the guilty, and he is very angry. The LORD punishes his enemies, and he stays angry with them.

³The LORD is patient, but he is also very powerful! The LORD will punish the guilty; he will not let them go free. You can see his power in the whirlwinds and storms. The clouds are like dust from his feet.

⁴He gives a command and the sea becomes dry. He dries up all the rivers. The green hills of Bashan and Carmel turn brown, and the flowers of Lebanon die.

⁵When the Lord appears, the mountains shake and the hills melt away. He will come, and the earth will shake with fear. The earth and everyone on it will shake with fear.

⁶No one can stand against his great anger. No one can endure his terrible anger. His anger burns like fire. The rocks break to pieces when he comes.

⁷The LORD is good. He is a safe place to go to in times of trouble. He takes care of those who trust him.

⁸But he completely destroys his enemies. He washes them away like a flood and chases them into the darkness.

⁹Why are you making plans against the LORD? He will bring complete destruction, so that you can never cause trouble again.

¹⁰You will be destroyed completely like thornbushes burning under a pot. You will be destroyed like dry weeds that burn quickly.

¹¹Someone from Nineveh is making evil plans against the LORD. That advisor is a worthless troublemaker.

¹²This is what the LORD said: The people of Assyria are at full strength. They have many soldiers, but they will all be cut down. They will all be finished. My people, I made you suffer, but I will make you suffer no more.

¹³ Now I will set you free from the power of Assyria. I will take the yoke off your neck and tear away the chains holding you.

¹⁴ King of Assyria, the LORD gave this command about you: You will not have any descendants to wear your name. I will destroy your carved idols and metal statues that are in the temple of your gods. I am preparing your grave, because your end is coming soon!

¹⁵ Judah, look! There, coming over the mountains, is a messenger bringing good news! He says there is peace. Judah, celebrate your special festivals and do what you promised. Those worthless troublemakers will not come through and attack you again. They have all been destroyed.

2¹ An enemy is coming to attack you, so guard the strong places of your city. Watch the road. Get ready for war. Prepare for battle!

² Yes, the LORD changed Jacobs pride. He made it like Israels pride. The enemy destroyed them and ruined their grapevines.

³The shields of his soldiers are red. Their uniforms are bright red. Their chariots are shining like flames of fire and are lined up for battle. Their horses are ready to go.

⁴The chariots race wildly through the streets and rush back and forth through the square. They look like burning torches, like lightning flashing from place to place!

⁵The enemy calls for his best soldiers. They stumble as they rush ahead. They run to the wall and set up their shield over the battering ram.

⁶But the gates by the rivers are open, and the enemy comes flooding in and destroys the king's palace.

⁷The enemy takes away the queen, and her slave girls moan sadly like doves. They beat their breasts to show their sadness.

⁸Nineveh is like a pool whose water is draining away. People yell, Stop! Stop running away! But it does not do any good.

⁹Take the silver! Take the gold! There are many things to take. There are many treasures.

¹⁰Now Nineveh is empty. Everything is stolen. The city is ruined. People have lost their courage, their hearts melt with fear, their knees knock together, their bodies shake, and their faces turn pale.

¹¹Where is the lions cave (Nineveh) now? The male and female lions lived there. Their babies were not afraid.

¹²The lion (king of Nineveh) killed people to feed his cubs and lionesses. He filled his cave with mens bodies. He filled his cave with women he had killed.

¹³The LORD All-Powerful says, I am against you, Nineveh. I will burn your chariots and kill your young lions in battle. You will not hunt anyone on earth again. People will never again hear bad news from your messengers.

3¹It will be very bad for that city of murderers. Nineveh is a city full of lies. It is filled with things taken from other countries. It is filled with plenty of people that it hunted and killed.

²You can hear the sounds of whips and the noise of wheels. You can hear horses galloping and chariots bouncing along!

³Soldiers on horses are attacking, their swords are shining, their spears are

gleaming! There are many dead people. Dead bodies are piled up too many bodies to count. People are tripping over the dead bodies.

⁴All this happened because of Nineveh. Nineveh is like a prostitute who could never get enough. She wanted more and more. She sold herself to many nations, and she used her magic to make them her slaves.

⁵The LORD All-Powerful says, I am against you, Nineveh. I will pull your dress up over your face. I will let the nations see your naked body. The kingdoms will see your shame.

⁶I will throw dirty things on you and treat you in a hateful way. People will look at you and laugh.

⁷Everyone who sees you will be shocked. They will say, Nineveh is destroyed. Who will cry for her? I know I cannot find anyone to comfort you, Nineveh.

⁸Nineveh, you are no better than Thebes on the Nile River. Thebes also had water all around her to protect herself from enemies. She used that water like a wall too.

⁹Ethiopia and Egypt made Thebes strong. Libya and the Sudan supported her,

¹⁰but Thebes was defeated. Her people were taken away as prisoners to a foreign country. Soldiers beat her small children to death at every street corner. They threw lots to see who got to keep the important people as slaves. They put chains on all the important men of Thebes.

¹¹So, Nineveh, you will also fall like a drunk. You will try to hide. You will look for a safe place away from the enemy.

¹²But Nineveh, all your strong places will be like fig trees. When new figs become ripe, people come and shake the tree. The figs fall into their mouths. They eat them, and the figs are gone.

¹³Nineveh, your people are all like women, and the enemy soldiers are ready to take them. The gates of your land are open wide for your enemies to come in. Fire has destroyed the wooden bars across the gates.

¹⁴Get water and store it inside your city, because the enemy soldiers will surround your city. Make your defenses

strong! Get clay to make more bricks and mix the mortar. Get the molds for making bricks.

¹⁵You can do all these things, but the fire will still destroy you completely. And the sword will kill you. Your land will look like a swarm of grasshoppers came and ate everything. Nineveh, you grew and grew. You became like a swarm of grasshoppers. You were like a swarm of locusts.

¹⁶You have many traders who go places and buy things. They are as many as the stars in the sky. They are like locusts that come and eat until everything is gone and then leave.

¹⁷And your government officials are also like locusts that settle on a stone wall on a cold day. But when the sun comes up, the rocks become warm, and the locusts all fly away. And no one knows where.

¹⁸King of Assyria, your shepherds fell asleep. These powerful men are sleeping. And now your sheep have wandered away on the mountains. There is no one to bring them back.

¹⁹Nineveh, you have been hurt badly, and nothing can heal your wound. Everyone who hears the news of your destruction claps their hands. They are all happy, because they all felt the pain you caused again and again.

Habakkuk

1 ¹This is the message that was given to Habakkuk the prophet.

²LORD, I continue to ask for help. When will you listen to me? I cried to you about the violence, but you did nothing!

³People are stealing things and hurting others. They are arguing and fighting. Why do you make me look at these terrible things?

⁴The law is weak and not fair to people. Evil people win their fights against good people. So the law is no longer fair, and justice does not win anymore.

⁵Look at the other nations! Watch them, and you will be amazed. I will do something in your lifetime that will amaze you. You would not believe it even if you were told about it.

⁶I will make the Babylonians a strong nation. They are cruel and powerful fighters. They will march across the earth. They will take houses and cities that dont belong to them.

⁷The Babylonians will scare the other people. They will do what they want to do and go where they want to go.

⁸Their horses will be faster than leopards and more dangerous than wolves at sunset. Their horse soldiers will come from faraway places. They will attack their enemies quickly, like a hungry eagle swooping down from the sky.

⁹The one thing they all want to do is fight. Their armies will march fast like the wind in the desert. And the Babylonian soldiers will take many prisoners as many as the grains of sand.

¹⁰The Babylonian soldiers will laugh at the kings of other nations. Foreign rulers will be like jokes to them. The Babylonian soldiers will laugh at the cities with tall, strong walls. They will simply build dirt roads up to the top of the walls and easily defeat the cities.

¹¹Then they will leave like the wind and go on to fight against other places. The only thing the Babylonians worship is their own strength.

¹²LORD, you are the one who lives forever! You are my holy God who never

dies! LORD, you created the Babylonians to do what must be done. Our Rock, you created them to punish people.

¹³Your eyes are too good to look at evil. You cannot stand to see people doing wrong. So why do you permit such evil? How can you watch while the wicked destroy people who are so much better?

¹⁴You made people like fish in the sea. They are like little sea animals without a leader.

¹⁵The enemy catches all of them with hooks and nets. The enemy catches them in his net and drags them in, and the enemy is very happy with what he caught.

¹⁶His net helps him live like the rich and enjoy the best food. So the enemy worships his net. He makes sacrifices and burns incense to honor his net.

¹⁷Will he continue to take riches with his net? Will he continue destroying people without showing mercy?

2¹I will stand like a guard and watch. I will wait to see what the LORD will say to me. I will wait and learn how he answers my questions.

²The LORD answered me, Write down what I show you. Write it clearly on clay tablets so that the message will be easy to read.

³This message is about a special time in the future. This message is about the end, and it will come true. Just be patient and wait for it. That time will come; it will not be late.

⁴This message cannot help those who refuse to listen to it, but those who are good will live because they believe it.

⁵Wine can trick a person. In the same way, a strong mans pride can fool him, but he will not find peace. He is like deathhe always wants more and more. And, like death, he will never be satisfied. He will continue to defeat other nations and to make those people his prisoners.

⁶But soon enough, all those people will laugh at him and tell stories about his defeat. They will laugh and say, Its too bad that the man who took so many things will not get to keep them! He made himself rich by collecting debts.

⁷Strong man, you have taken money from people. One day they will wake up

and realize what is happening, and they will stand against you. Then they will take things from you, and you will be very afraid.

⁸You have stolen things from many nations, so they will take much from you. You have killed many people and destroyed lands and cities. You have killed all the people there.

⁹Look at you people! You get rich by cheating people, and it hurts your own family. You build your houses high on the cliffs to protect yourself from danger.

¹⁰You planned shameful things, and that will bring shame to your own family. You have done wrong, and it will cost you your life.

¹¹The stones of the walls will cry out against you. Even the wooden rafters in your own house will prove that you are wrong.

¹²Look at them! They kill people to build their city and do wicked things to make their walled city strong.

¹³But the LORD All-Powerful will send a fire to destroy everything that those people worked to build. All their work will be for nothing.

¹⁴Then people everywhere will know about the Glory of the LORD. This news will spread just as water spreads out into the sea.

¹⁵It will be very bad for those who become angry and make other people suffer. Like an angry drunk, they knock others to the ground and strip them naked, just to see their naked bodies.

¹⁶But they will know the Lords anger. It will be like a cup of poison in the LORD'S right hand. They will taste that anger, and then they will fall to the ground like drunks. Evil ruler, you will drink from that cup. You will get shame, not honor.

¹⁷You hurt many people in Lebanon and stole many animals there. So you will be afraid because of the people who died and because of the bad things you did to that country. You will be afraid because of what you did to those cities and to the people who lived there.

¹⁸Their false god will not help them, because it is only a statue that someone covered with metal. It is only a statue, so whoever made it cannot expect it to help. That statue cannot even speak!

¹⁹Look at them! They speak to a wooden statue and tell it, Get up! Rescue me. They talk to a stone that cannot speak and say, Wake up! Don't you know those things cannot help you? That statue may be covered with gold and silver, but there is no life in it.

²⁰But the LORD is in his holy temple, so the whole earth should be silent in his presence and show him respect.

3¹The prayer of Habakkuk the prophet.

²LORD, I have heard the news about you. I am amazed, LORD, at the powerful things you did in the past. Now I pray that you will do great things in our time. Please make these things happen in our own days. But in your anger, remember to show mercy to us. Selah

³God is coming from Teman. The Holy One is coming from Mount Paran. Selah His glory covers the heavens, and his praise fills the earth!

⁴Rays of light shine from his hand, a bright, shining light. There is such power hiding in that hand.

⁵The sickness went before him, and the destroyer followed behind him.

⁶He stood and judged the earth. He looked at the people of all the nations, and they shook with fear. For many years the mountains stood strong, but those mountains fell to pieces. Those old, old hills fell down. God has always been able to do that.

⁷I saw that the cities of Cushan were in trouble and that the houses of Midian trembled with fear.

⁸LORD, were you angry at the rivers? Were you angry at the streams? Were you angry at the sea? Were you angry when you rode your horses and chariots to victory?

⁹Even then you showed your rainbow. It was proof of your agreement with the families of the earth. Selah And the dry land split the rivers.

¹⁰The mountains saw you and shook. The water flowed off the land. The water from the sea made a loud noise as it lost its power over the land.

¹¹The sun and the moon lost their brightness. They stopped shining when they saw your bright flashes of lightning. That lightning was like spears and arrows shooting through the air.

¹²In anger you walked on the earth and punished the nations.

¹³You came to save your people and to lead your chosen king to victory. You killed the leader in every evil family, from the least important person to the most important in the land. Selah

¹⁴You used Moses walking stick to stop the enemy soldiers. Those soldiers came like a powerful storm to fight against us. They thought they could defeat us easily, as robbing the poor in secret.

¹⁵But you marched your horses through the deep water, stirring up the mud.

¹⁶My whole body shook when I heard the story. My lips trembled. I felt weak deep down in my bones and stood there shaking. But I will wait patiently for destruction to come to those who attack us.

¹⁷Figs might not grow on the fig trees, and grapes might not grow on the vines. Olives might not grow on the olive trees, and food might not grow in the fields. There might not be any sheep in the pens or cattle in the barns.

¹⁸But I will still be glad in the LORD and rejoice in God my savior.

¹⁹The Lord GOD gives me my strength. He helps me run fast like a deer. He leads me safely on the mountains. To the music director. On my stringed instruments.

Zephaniah

1 ¹This is the message that the LORD gave to Zephaniah. He received this message during the time that Josiah son of Amon was king of Judah. Zephaniah was the son of Cush, who was the son of Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of Amariah, who was the son of Hezekiah.

²The LORD says, I will destroy everything on earth.

³I will destroy all the people and all the animals. I will destroy the birds in the air and the fish in the sea. I will destroy the evil people and everything that makes them sin. I will remove all people from the earth. This is what the LORD said.

⁴I will punish Judah and the people living in Jerusalem. I will remove from this place any sign of Baal worship. No one will remember the priests who serve the idols there.

⁵And those who go up on their roofs to worship the stars will be forgotten. They claim to worship me. They say, We promise to follow the LORD, but they

also worship the false god Milcom. So I will remove any memory of them from this place.

⁶They have turned away from me, the LORD. They have stopped following me. They no longer ask me, the LORD, for help.

⁷Be silent before the Lord GOD, because the LORD'S day for judging the people is coming soon. The LORD has prepared his sacrifice, and he has told his invited guests to get ready.

⁸The Lord said, On the LORD'S day of sacrifice, I will punish the kings sons and other leaders. I will punish all the people wearing clothes from other countries.

⁹At that time I will punish all the people who jump over the threshold and those who fill their masters house with lies and violence.

¹⁰The LORD also said, At that time people will be calling for help at Fish Gate in Jerusalem and mourning in the new part of town. They will hear the sound of destruction in the hills around the city.

¹¹ You people living in the lower part of town will cry, because all the traders and rich merchants will be destroyed.

¹² At that time I will take a lamp and search through Jerusalem. I will find all those who are satisfied to live their own way. They say, The LORD does nothing. He does not help, and he does not hurt! I will find them, and I will punish them.

¹³ Then others will take their wealth and destroy their houses. Those who built houses will not live in them, and those who planted vineyards will not drink the wine from the grapes.

¹⁴ The LORD'S special day for judging is coming soon! It is near and coming fast. People will hear very sad sounds on the LORD'S special day of judgment. Even strong soldiers will cry.

¹⁵ The Lord will show his anger at that time. It will be a time of terrible troubles and a time of destruction. It will be a time of darkness a black, cloudy, and stormy day.

¹⁶ It will be like a time of war when people hear horns and trumpets in the defense towers and protected cities.

¹⁷The Lord said, I will make life very hard on the people. They will walk around like the blind who don't know where they are going, because they sinned against the LORD. Their blood will be spilled on the ground. Their dead bodies will lie like dung on the ground.

¹⁸Their gold and silver will not help them! At that time the Lord will become very upset and angry. The LORD will destroy the whole world! He will completely destroy everyone on earth!

2¹ Shameless people, change your lives

²before you become like a dry and dying flower. In the heat of day, a flower will wilt and die. You will be like that when the LORD shows his terrible anger. So change your lives before the LORD shows his anger against you!

³All you humble people, come to the LORD! Obey his laws. Learn to do good things; learn to be humble. Maybe then you will be safe when the LORD shows his anger.

⁴No one will be left in Gaza. Ashkelon will be destroyed. By noon, the people

will be forced to leave Ashdod. Ekron will be empty.

⁵You people living by the sea, who came from Crete, this message from the LORD is about you. Canaan, land of the Philistines, you will be destroyed no one will live there!

⁶Your land by the sea will become empty fields for shepherds and their sheep.

⁷Then the land will belong to the survivors from Judah. The LORD their God will remember the people from Judah and restore their fortunes. Then they will let their sheep eat the grass in those fields. In the evenings they will lie down in the empty houses of Ashkelon.

⁸The Lord says, I know what the people of Moab and Ammon did. They embarrassed my people. They took their land to make their own countries larger.

⁹So, as surely as I am alive, Moab and the people of Ammon will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. I am the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel, and I promise those countries will be destroyed completely forever. Their land will be overgrown with weeds. It will be

like the land covered with salt by the Dead Sea. The survivors of my people will take that land and everything left in it.

¹⁰This will happen to the people of Moab and Ammon because they were so proud and cruel and humiliated the people of the LORD All-Powerful.

¹¹They will be afraid of the LORD, because he will destroy their gods. Then everyone in all the faraway lands will worship the Lord.

¹²People of Ethiopia, this even means you! The Lord's sword will kill your people.

¹³Then the Lord will turn north and punish Assyria. He will destroy Nineveh that city will be like an empty, dry desert.

¹⁴Only sheep and wild animals will live in those ruins. Owls and crows will sit on the columns that are left standing. Their calls will be heard coming through the windows. Crows will sit on the doorsteps. Black birds will make their homes in those empty houses.

¹⁵Nineveh is so proud now. It is such a happy city. The people think they

are safe. They think Nineveh is the greatest place in the world, but it will be destroyed! It will be an empty place where only wild animals go to rest. People who pass by will whistle and shake their heads when they see how badly the city was destroyed.

3¹ Jerusalem, your people fought against God. They hurt other people, and you have been stained with sin.

²They didnt listen to me or accept my teachings. Jerusalem didnt trust the LORD. Jerusalem didnt go to her God.

³Jerusalems leaders are like roaring lions. Her judges are like hungry wolves that come in the evening to attack the sheep, and in the morning nothing is left.

⁴Her prophets are always making secret plans to get more and more. Her priests have treated holy things as if they were not holy. They have done bad things to Gods teachings.

⁵But the LORD is still in that city, and he continues to be good. He does not do anything wrong. He continues to help his people. Morning after morning he makes good decisions for them. Not a day passes without his justice. He never

gives a decision that is crooked or is something to be ashamed of.

⁶The Lord says, I have destroyed whole nations and their defense towers. I destroyed their streets and now no one goes there anymore. Their cities are empty; no one lives there anymore.

⁷I tell you this so that you will learn a lesson. I want you to fear and respect me. If you do this, your home will not be destroyed, and I will not have to punish you the way I planned. But those evil people only wanted to do more of the same evil things they had already done!

⁸The LORD said, So just wait! Wait for me to stand and judge you. I have the right to bring people from many nations and use them to punish you. I will use them to show my anger against you. I will use them to show how upset I am, and the whole country will be destroyed.

⁹Then I will change people from other nations so that they can speak the language clearly and call out the name of the LORD. They will all worship me together, shoulder to shoulder, as one people.

¹⁰ People will come all the way from the other side of the river in Ethiopia. My scattered people will come to me. My worshipers will come and bring their gifts to me.

¹¹ Then, Jerusalem, you will no longer be ashamed of the wrong things your people do against me, because I will remove all the bad people from Jerusalem. I will take away all the proud people. There will not be any of them on my holy mountain.

¹² I will let only meek and humble people stay in my city, and they will trust the LORD'S name.

¹³ The survivors of Israel will not do bad things or tell lies. They will not try to trick people with lies. They will be like sheep that eat and lie down in peace, and no one will bother them.

¹⁴ Jerusalem, sing and be happy! Israel, shout for joy! Jerusalem, be happy and have fun!

¹⁵ The LORD stopped your punishment. He destroyed your enemies strong towers. King of Israel, the LORD is with you. You don't need to worry about anything bad happening.

¹⁶At that time Jerusalem will be told,
Be strong, dont be afraid!

¹⁷The LORD your God is with you. He is like a powerful soldier. He will save you. He will show how much he loves you and how happy he is with you. He will laugh and be happy about you,

¹⁸like people at a party. I will take away your shame. I will make them stop hurting you.

¹⁹At that time I will punish those who hurt you. I will save my hurt people and bring back those who were forced to leave. I will give them praise and honor everywhere, even in places where they suffered shame.

²⁰At that time I will lead you back home. I will bring your people back together. I will cause people everywhere to honor and praise you. You will see me bring back all the blessings you once had. This is what the LORD said.

Haggai

1 ¹ On the first day of the sixth month of the second year that Darius was king of Persia, Haggai received a message from the LORD. This message was for Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jehozadak. Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah and Joshua was the high priest. This is the message:

² This is what the LORD All-Powerful said, The people say it is not yet the right time to build the LORD'S Temple.

³ Again Haggai received a message from the LORD. Haggai spoke this message:

⁴ You people think the right time has come for you to live in nice houses. You live in houses with beautiful wooden paneling on the walls, but the Lords house is still in ruins.

⁵ Now the LORD All-Powerful says, Think about what is happening.

⁶ You have planted many seeds, but you have gathered only a few crops. You have food to eat, but not enough to get full. You have something to drink,

but not enough to get drunk. You have some clothes to wear, but not enough to keep warm. You earn a little money, but you don't know where it all goes. It's as though there is a hole in your pocket!

⁷The LORD All-Powerful said, Think about what you are doing.

⁸Go up to the mountains, get the wood, and build the Temple. Then I will be pleased with the Temple, and I will be honored. This is what the LORD said.

⁹The LORD All-Powerful said, You people look for a big harvest, but when you go to gather the crop, there is only a little grain. So you bring that grain home, and then I send a wind that blows it all away. Why is this happening? Because my house is still in ruins while each of you runs home to take care of your own house.

¹⁰That is why the sky holds back its dew and why the earth holds back its crops.

¹¹I gave the command for the land and the mountains to be dry. The grain, the new wine, the olive oil, and everything the earth produces will be ruined. All the

people and all the animals will become weak.

¹²The LORD God had sent Haggai to speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and to the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak. So these men and all the people listened to the voice of the LORD their God and to the words of Haggai the prophet. And the people showed their fear and respect for the LORD their God.

¹³Then Haggai, the LORD'S messenger, delivered this message to the people: The LORD says, I am with you!

¹⁴Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel was the governor of Judah. Joshua son of Jehozadak was the high priest. The LORD made them and the rest of the people excited about working on the Temple of their God, the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁵So they began this work on the 24th day of the sixth month in the second year Darius was the king.

2¹ On the 21st day of the seventh month, this message from the LORD came to Haggai:

²Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua

son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the people. Say this:

³How many of you people look at this Temple and try to compare it to the beautiful Temple that was destroyed? What do you think? Does this Temple seem like nothing when you compare it with the first Temple?

⁴But the LORD says, Zerubbabel, Dont be discouraged! And the LORD says, Joshua son of Jehozadak, you are the high priest. Dont be discouraged! And all you people who live in the land, dont be discouraged! Continue this work, because I am with you! This is what the LORD All-Powerful said!

⁵I made an agreement with you when you left Egypt, and I have kept my promise. My Spirit is with you, so dont be afraid!

⁶This is what the LORD All-Powerful said, In just a little while, I will once again shake things up. I will shake heaven and earth, and I will shake the sea and the dry land.

⁷I will shake up the nations, and they will come to you with wealth from every nation. And then I will fill this Temple

with glory. That is what the LORD All-Powerful said!

⁸All their silver really belongs to me! And all the gold is mine! This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

⁹And the LORD All-Powerful said This last Temple will be more beautiful than the first one, and I will bring peace to this place. Remember, this is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

¹⁰On the 24th day of the ninth month in the second year Darius was king of Persia, this message from the LORD came to Haggai the prophet:

¹¹The LORD All-Powerful commands you to ask the priests what the law says about these things:

¹²Suppose a man carries some meat in the fold of his clothes. This meat is part of a sacrifice, so it is holy. If his clothes touch some bread, cooked food, wine, oil, or some other food, will the thing the clothes touch become holy? The priests answered, No.

¹³Then Haggai said, Whoever touches a dead body will become unclean. Now if they touch anything else, will it also

become unclean? The priests answered, Yes, it will become unclean.

¹⁴Then Haggai said, This is what the LORD God said: This is also true about the people of this nation. They were not pure and holy before me. So anything they did with their hands and anything they offered at the altar became unclean.

¹⁵Think about what has happened to you. Think about how things were before you began working on the LORD'S Temple.

¹⁶People wanted 20 measures of grain, but there were only 10 measures in the pile. People wanted to get 50 jars of wine from the wine vat, but there were only 20.

¹⁷That was because I punished you. I sent the diseases that killed your plants and the hail that destroyed the things you made with your hands. I did this, but still you did not come to me. This is what the LORD said.

¹⁸The Lord said, Today is the 24th day of the ninth month. You have finished laying the foundation of the LORD'S Temple. So notice what happens from this day forward:

¹⁹Your seed for planting is still in the barn. And look at the vines, the fig trees, and the pomegranate and olive trees. They have not yet produced any fruit. But beginning today, I will bless you.

²⁰Another message from the LORD came to Haggai on the 24th day of the month. This is the message:

²¹Go to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah and tell him that I will shake heaven and earth.

²²And I will overthrow many kings and kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of those other people. I will destroy their chariots and their riders. I will defeat their war horses and riders. These armies are friends now, but they will turn against each other and kill each other with swords.

²³This is what the LORD All-Powerful says: Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, my servant, I have chosen you. I, the LORD, tell you that at that time I will use you like a signet ring to represent my authority! This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

Zechariah

1 ¹ Zechariah son of Berekiah received a message from the LORD. This was in the eighth month of the second year that Darius was king in Persia. (Zechariah was the son of Berekiah, who was the son of Iddo the prophet.) This is that message:

² The LORD became very angry with your ancestors.

³ So you must tell the people what the LORD All-Powerful says, Come back to me, says the LORD All-Powerful, and I will come back to you. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

⁴ Dont be like your ancestors. In the past the prophets spoke to them and said, The LORD All-Powerful wants you to change your evil way of living. Stop doing evil things! But your ancestors did not listen to me. This is what the LORD said.

⁵ Your ancestors are gone, and those prophets did not live forever.

⁶The prophets were my servants. I used them to tell your ancestors about my laws and teachings. Your ancestors finally learned their lesson and said, The LORD All-Powerful did what he said he would do. He punished us for the way we lived and for all the evil things we did. So they came back to God.

⁷On the 24th day of the eleventh month (Shebat) of the second year that Darius was king of Persia, Zechariah received another message from the LORD. (This was Zechariah son of Berekiah, son of Iddo.) This is the message:

⁸At night I saw a man riding a red horse. He was standing among some myrtle bushes in the valley. Behind him were riders on red, brown, and white horses.

⁹I said, Sir, what do these mean? Then the angel speaking to me said, I will show you what they mean.

¹⁰Then the man among the myrtle bushes said, These are the ones the LORD sent to go here and there on earth.

¹¹Then the riders on the horses spoke to the angel of the LORD standing among the myrtle bushes. They said, We

have gone all over the earth, and everything is calm and quiet.

¹²Then the angel of the LORD said, LORD All-Powerful, how long before you comfort Jerusalem and the cities of Judah? You have shown your anger at these cities for 70 years now.

¹³Then the LORD answered the angel who was talking with me. He spoke good, comforting words.

¹⁴Then the angel told me to tell the people this: The Lord All-Powerful says: I have a strong love for Jerusalem and Zion.

¹⁵And I am very angry at the nations that feel so safe. I was only a little angry, and I used them to punish my people. But they caused too much damage.

¹⁶So the LORD says, I will come back to Jerusalem and comfort her. The LORD All-Powerful says, Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and my house will be built there.

¹⁷The angel also said, The LORD All-Powerful says, My towns will be rich again. I will comfort Zion. I will again choose Jerusalem to be my special city.

¹⁸Then I looked up and I saw four horns.

¹⁹So I asked the angel who was talking with me, What do these horns mean? He said, These are the horns that forced the people of Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem to go to foreign countries.

²⁰The LORD showed me four workers.

²¹I asked him, What are these four workers coming to do? He said, The horns represent the nations that attacked the people of Judah and forced them to go to foreign countries. The horns threw the people of Judah to the foreign countries. The horns didnt show mercy to anyone. But these four workers have come to frighten the horns and throw them away.

2¹Then I looked up and saw a man holding a rope for measuring things.

²I asked him, Where are you going? He said to me, I am going to measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and how long it is.

³Then the angel who was speaking to me left, and another angel went out to talk to him.

⁴He said to him, Run and tell that young man this: Jerusalem will be a city

without walls, because there will be too many people and animals living there.

⁵The LORD says, I will be a wall of fire around her, to protect her, and to bring glory to that city, I will live there. The LORD says,

⁶Hurry! Leave the land in the North in a hurry. Yes, it is true that I scattered your people in every direction. This is what the LORD said.

⁷You people from Zion now live in Babylon. Escape! Run away from that city!

⁸The Lord sent me to the nations that took away your wealth. He sent me to bring you honor. And this is what the LORD All-Powerful says: If anyone even touches you, it will be the same as poking me in the eye.

⁹Watch and see how I will punish them: Their own slaves will become their masters and take all their wealth. Then you will know it was the LORD All-Powerful who sent me to tell you these things.

¹⁰The LORD says, Zion, be happy, because I am coming, and I will live in your city.

¹¹ At that time people from many nations will come to me. They will become my people, and I will live in your city. Then you will know that it was the LORD All-Powerful who sent me.

¹² The LORD will again choose Jerusalem to be his special city. Judah will be his share of the holy land.

¹³ Everyone, be quiet! The LORD is coming out of his holy house.

3¹ The angel showed me Joshua the high priest, standing in front of the angel of the LORD and Satan was standing by Joshua's right side. Satan was there to accuse Joshua of doing wrong.

² Then the angel of the LORD said to Satan, The LORD says no to you! The LORD has chosen Jerusalem to be his special city, and he says that you are wrong. He saved this man like a burning stick that someone pulls out of the fire.

³ Joshua was wearing a dirty robe as he stood in front of the angel.

⁴ Then the angel said to the other angels standing near him, Take those dirty clothes off Joshua. Then the angel spoke to Joshua. He said, Now, I have

taken away your guilt, and I am giving you a new change of clothes.

⁵Then I said, Put a clean turban on his head. So they put the clean turban on him and also put clean clothes on him while the angel of the LORD stood there.

⁶Then the angel of the LORD said this to Joshua:

⁷This is what the LORD All-Powerful said: Live the way I tell you, and do everything I say. And you will be in charge of my Temple. You will take care of its courtyard. You will be free to go anywhere in my Temple, just as these angels standing here.

⁸Listen, Joshua, you who are the high priest, and listen, you fellow priests seated before him. You are all examples to show what will happen when I bring my special servant. He is called, THE BRANCH.

⁹Look, I put a special stone in front of Joshua. There are seven sides on that stone. I will carve a special message on it. This will show that in one day, I will remove the guilt from this land. This is what the LORD All-Powerful says.

¹⁰The LORD All-Powerful says, At that time people will sit and talk with their friends and neighbors. They will invite each other to sit under the fig trees and grapevines.

4¹ Then the angel who was talking to me returned and woke me up. I was like a person waking up from sleep.

² Then the angel asked me, What do you see? I said, I see a solid gold lampstand. There are seven lamps on the lampstand, and there is a bowl on top of it. There are seven tubes coming from the bowl. One tube goes to each lamp. The tubes bring the oil in the bowl to each of the lamps.

³ There are two olive trees by the bowl, one on the right side and one on the left side. These trees produce the oil for the lamps.

⁴ Then I asked the angel who was speaking with me, Sir, what do these things mean?

⁵ The angel speaking with me said, Dont you know what these things are? No sir, I said.

⁶ He said, This is the message from the LORD to Zerubbabel: Your help will not

come from your own strength and power. No, your help will come from my Spirit. This is what the LORD All-Powerful says.

⁷That tall mountain will be like a flat place for Zerubbabel. He will build the Temple, and when the most important stone is put in place, the people will shout, Beautiful! Beautiful!

⁸The LORD'S message to me also said,

⁹Zerubbabel will lay the foundations for my Temple, and he will finish building it. Then you will know that the LORD All-Powerful sent me to you people.

¹⁰People will not be ashamed of the small beginnings, and they will be very happy when they see Zerubbabel with the plumb line, measuring and checking the finished building. Now the seven sides of the stone you saw represent the eyes of the LORD looking in every direction. They see everything on earth.

¹¹Then I said to him, I saw one olive tree on the right side of the lampstand and one on the left side. What do those two olive trees mean?

¹²I also said to him, I saw two olive branches by the gold tubes with gold

colored oil flowing from them. What do these things mean?

¹³Then the angel said to me, Don't you know what these things mean? I said, No, sir.

¹⁴So he said, They represent the two men chosen to serve the Lord of the whole world.

5¹ I looked up again, and I saw a flying scroll.

²The angel asked me, What do you see? I said, I see a flying scroll that is 30 feet long and 15 feet wide.

³Then the angel told me, There is a curse written on that scroll. On one side of the scroll, there is a curse against thieves and on the other side is a curse against people who lie when they make promises.

⁴The LORD All-Powerful says, I will send that scroll to the houses of thieves and people who lie when they use my name to make promises. That scroll will settle there and destroy even the stones and wooden posts of their houses.

⁵The angel who was talking to me went outside and said, Look! What do you see coming?

⁶I said, I dont know. What is it? He said, That is a measuring bucket. He also said, That bucket is for measuring the sins of the people in this country.

⁷A lid made of lead was lifted off the bucket, and there was a woman in the bucket.

⁸The angel said, The woman represents evil. Then the angel pushed the woman down into the bucket and put the lead lid back on it.

⁹Then I looked up and saw two women with wings like a stork. They flew out, and with the wind in their wings, they picked up the bucket. They flew through the air carrying the bucket.

¹⁰Then I asked the angel who was speaking with me, Where are they carrying the bucket?

¹¹The angel told me, They are going to build a house for it in Babylonia. After they build that house, they will put the bucket there.

6¹I looked up again, and I saw four chariots coming out from between two bronze mountains.

²Red horses were pulling the first chariot. Black horses were pulling the second chariot.

³White horses were pulling the third chariot, and spotted horses were pulling the fourth chariot.

⁴I asked the angel who was talking with me, Sir, what do these mean?

⁵The angel said, These are the four winds. They have just come from the Lord of the whole world.

⁶The black horses will go north, the white horses will go west, and the spotted horses will go south.

⁷These horses wanted to leave and go all over the earth. So the angel told them, Go throughout the earth. And so they went on their way.

⁸Then he shouted at me and said, Look, those horses that were going north finished their job in Babylon. They have calmed my spirit; I am not angry now!

⁹Then I received another message from the LORD. He said,

¹⁰Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah have come from the captives in Babylon. Get silver and gold from these men and go

the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah.

¹¹ Use the silver and gold to make a crown. Put it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak.

¹² Then tell him this is what the LORD All-Powerful says: There is a man called THE BRANCH. He will grow strong, and he will build the LORD'S Temple.

¹³ Yes, he will build the LORD'S Temple, and he will receive honor. He will sit on his throne and be the ruler, and a priest will stand by his throne. These two will work together in peace.

¹⁴ The crown will be kept in my Temple, so that when people see it, they will remember Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and the kindness of Zephaniahs son Josiah.

¹⁵ People living far away will come and build the LORD'S Temple. Then you will know for sure that the LORD All-Powerful sent me to you people. All these things will happen if you do what the LORD your God says.

7 ¹ Zechariah received a message from the LORD in the fourth year that Darius was the king of Persia. This was

on the fourth day of the ninth month (Kislev).

²The people of Bethel sent Sharezer, Regem-Melech, and his men to ask the LORD a question.

³They went to the prophets and to the priests at the Temple of the LORD All-Powerful. They asked them this question: For many years we have shown our sadness for the destruction of the Temple. In the fifth month of each year we have had a special time of crying and fasting. Should we continue to do this?

⁴I received this message from the LORD All-Powerful:

⁵Tell the priests and the other people in this country this: For seventy years you fasted and showed your sadness in the fifth month and in the seventh month. But was that fasting really for me?

⁶And when you ate and drank, was that for me? No, it was for your own good.

⁷The LORD used the earlier prophets to say the same thing long ago. That was when Jerusalem was still a rich city filled with people and there were still people

living in the surrounding towns, in the Negev, and in the western foothills.

⁸This is the LORD'S message to Zechariah:

⁹This is what the LORD All-Powerful said: You must do what is right and fair. You must be kind and show mercy to each other.

¹⁰Dont hurt widows and orphans, strangers, or poor people. Dont even think of doing bad things to each other!

¹¹But they refused to listen and refused to do what he wanted. They closed their ears so that they could not hear what God said.

¹²They were very stubborn and would not obey the law. The LORD All-Powerful used his Spirit and sent messages to his people through the prophets. But the people would not listen, so the LORD All-Powerful became very angry.

¹³So the LORD All-Powerful said, I called to them, and they did not answer. So now, if they call to me, I will not answer.

¹⁴I will bring the other nations against them like a storm. They didnt know those nations, but the country will be

destroyed after those nations pass through. This pleasant country will be destroyed.

8¹This is a message from the LORD All-Powerful.

²The LORD All-Powerful says, I have a very strong love for Mount Zion. I love her so much that I became angry when she was not faithful to me.

³The LORD says, I have come back to Zion, and I am living in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called FAITHFUL CITY. The mountain of the LORD All-Powerful will be called HOLY MOUNTAIN.

⁴The LORD All-Powerful says, Old men and women will again be seen in the public places in Jerusalem. People will live so long that they will need their walking sticks.

⁵And the city will be filled with children playing in the streets.

⁶The LORD All-Powerful says, The survivors will think it is wonderful, and so will I!

⁷The LORD All-Powerful says, Look, I am rescuing my people from countries in the east and west.

⁸I will bring them back here, and they will live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their good and faithful God.

⁹The LORD All-Powerful says, Be strong! You people are hearing the same message today that the prophets gave when the LORD All-Powerful first laid the foundations to rebuild his Temple.

¹⁰Before that time, people didnt have the money to hire workers or to rent animals. And it was not safe for people to come and go. There was no relief from all the troubles. I had turned everyone against their neighbor.

¹¹But it is not like that now. It will not be like that for the survivors. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

¹²These people will plant in peace. Their grapevines will produce grapes. The land will give good crops, and the skies will give rain. I will give all these things to my people.

¹³People began using the names Israel and Judah in their curses. But I will save Israel and Judah, and their names will become a blessing. So dont be afraid. Be strong!

¹⁴The LORD All-Powerful says, Your ancestors made me angry, so I decided to destroy them. I decided not to change my mind. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

¹⁵But now I have changed my mind. And in the same way I have decided to be good to Jerusalem and to the people of Judah. So don't be afraid!

¹⁶But you must do this: Tell the truth to your neighbors. When you make decisions in your cities, be fair and do what is right. Do what brings peace.

¹⁷Don't make secret plans to hurt your neighbors. Don't make false promises. You must not enjoy doing these things, because I hate them! This is what the LORD said.

¹⁸I received this message from the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁹The LORD All-Powerful says, You have special days of sadness and fasting in the fourth month, the fifth month, the seventh month, and the tenth month. These days of sadness must be changed into days of happiness. They will be good and happy festivals. And you must love truth and peace.

²⁰The LORD All-Powerful says, In the future people from many cities will come to Jerusalem.

²¹People from different cities will greet each other and say, We are going to worship the LORD All-Powerful. And the other person will say, I would like to go with you!

²²Many people and many powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to find the LORD All-Powerful and to worship him.

²³The LORD All-Powerful says, At that time many foreigners speaking different languages will come to a Jewish man, take hold of the hem of his robe, and ask, We heard that God is with you. Can we come with you to worship him?

9¹This is the LORD'S message against the land of Hadrach and against the city of Damascus. The tribes of Israel are not the only people who know about the LORD. Everyone looks to him for help.

²This message is also against the city of Hamath near Damascus. And this message is against Tyre and Sidon, even though those people have been so wise and skillful.

³Tyre is built like a fort. The people there have collected so much silver that it is like dust, and gold is as common as clay.

⁴But the Lord will take it all. He will destroy her powerful navy and that city will be destroyed by fire!

⁵The people in Ashkelon will see this and they will be afraid. The people of Gaza will shake with fear, and the people of Ekron will lose all hope when they see this happen. There will be no king left in Gaza. No one will live in Ashkelon anymore.

⁶The people in Ashdod will not even know who their real fathers are. The Lord says, I will completely destroy the proud Philistines.

⁷They will no longer eat meat with the blood still in it or any other forbidden food. Any Philistine left alive will become a part of my people; they will be just one more tribe in Judah. The people of Ekron will become a part of my people, as the Jebusites did.

⁸I will protect my country. I will not let enemy armies pass through it. I will not let them hurt my people anymore. With

my own eyes I have seen how much my people have suffered.

⁹People of Zion, rejoice! People of Jerusalem, shout with joy! Look, your king is coming to you! He is the good king who won the victory, but he is humble. He is riding on a donkey, on a young donkey born from a work animal.

¹⁰I will take the war chariots away from Ephraim and the horse soldiers from Jerusalem. I will destroy the bows used in war. Your king will bring news of peace to the nations. He will rule from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹Jerusalem, we used blood to seal your agreement, so I am setting your people free from that empty hole in the ground.

¹²Prisoners, go home! Now you have something to hope for. I am telling you now, I am coming back to you.

¹³Judah, I will use you like a bow. Ephraim, I will use you like arrows. Israel, I will use you like a sword to fight against the men of Greece.

¹⁴The LORD will appear to them, and he will shoot his arrows like lightning.

The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, and the army will rush forward like a desert dust storm.

¹⁵The LORD All-Powerful will protect them. The soldiers will use rocks and slings to defeat the enemy. They will spill the blood of their enemies. It will flow like wine. It will be like the blood that is thrown on the corners of the altar!

¹⁶At that time the LORD their God will save his people like a shepherd saves his sheep. They will be very precious to him. They will be like sparkling jewels in his land.

¹⁷Everything will be good and beautiful! There will be a wonderful crop, but it will not be just the food and wine. It will be all the young men and women!

10¹ Pray to the LORD for rain in the springtime. The LORD will send the lightning and the rain will fall, and he will make the plants grow in each persons field.

²People use their little statues and magic to learn what will happen in the future, but that is useless. They see visions and tell about their dreams, but it is nothing but worthless lies. So the

people are like sheep wandering here and there crying for help, but there is no shepherd to lead them.

³The Lord says, I am very angry with the shepherds. I made them responsible for what happens to my sheep. The people of Judah are his flock, and the LORD All-Powerful really does take care of his flock. He cares for them as a soldier cares for his beautiful war horse.

⁴The cornerstone, the tent peg, the war bow, and the advancing soldiers will all come from Judah together.

⁵They will defeat their enemy it will be like soldiers marching through mud in the streets. They will fight, and since the LORD is with them, they will defeat even the enemy soldiers riding horses.

⁶I will make Judah's family strong. I will help Joseph's family win the war. I will bring them back safely and comfort them. It will be as if I never left them. I am the LORD their God, and I will help them.

⁷The people of Ephraim will be as happy as soldiers who have too much to drink. Their children will be rejoicing and they,

too, will be happy. They will all have a happy time together with the LORD.

⁸I will whistle for them and call them all together. I really will save them. There will be many people.

⁹Yes, I have been scattering my people throughout the nations. But in those faraway places, they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and they will come back.

¹⁰I will bring them back from Egypt and Assyria. I will bring them to the area of Gilead. And since there will not be enough room, I will also let them live in nearby Lebanon.

¹¹They will go through a sea of troubles, but the waves will be stopped. Even the deepest waters of the Nile River will dry up. I will destroy Assyrias pride and take away Egypts power.

¹²I, the LORD, will make my people strong, and they will live for me. This is what the LORD said.

11 ¹Lebanon, open your gates so that the fire will come and burn your cedar trees.

²The cypress trees will cry because the cedar trees have fallen. Those powerful

trees will be taken away. Oak trees in Bashan will cry for the forest that was cut down.

³ Listen to the crying shepherds. Their powerful leaders were taken away. Listen to the roaring of the young lions. Their thick bushes near the Jordan River have all been taken away.

⁴ The LORD my God says, Care for the sheep that have been raised to be killed.

⁵ Buyers kill their sheep and are not punished. Those who sell the sheep say, Praise the LORD, I am rich! The shepherds don't feel sorry for their sheep.

⁶ And I don't feel sorry for the people who live in this country. The LORD says, Look, I will let everyone be under the control of their neighbor and king. I will let them destroy the country. I will not stop them!

⁷ So I took care of the sheep that had been raised to be killed those poor sheep. I found two sticks. I called one stick Favor, and I called the other stick Union. Then I began caring for the sheep.

⁸ I fired the three shepherds all in one month. I got angry at the sheep, and they began to hate me.

⁹Then I said, I quit! I will not take care of you! I will let those that want to die, die. I will let those who want to be destroyed, be destroyed, and those who are left will destroy each other.

¹⁰Then I took the stick named Favor, and I broke it. I did this to show that Gods agreement with his people was broken.

¹¹So that day the agreement was finished, and those poor sheep watching me knew that this message was from the LORD.

¹²Then I said, If you want to pay me, pay me. If not, dont! So they paid me 30 pieces of silver.

¹³Then the LORD said, So thats how much money they think Im worthsuch a large amount! Take it and throw it into the Temple treasury. So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them into the treasury at the LORD'S Temple.

¹⁴Then I cut the stick named Union into two pieces. I did this to show that the union between Judah and Israel had been broken.

¹⁵Then the LORD said to me, Now, get the things a foolish shepherd might use.

¹⁶This will show that I will get a new shepherd for this country. But this young man will not take care of the sheep that are being destroyed. He will not heal the hurt sheep or feed those that are left alive. And the healthy ones will be eaten completely only their hoofs will be left.

¹⁷Too bad for you, you worthless shepherd! You abandoned my sheep. Punish him! Strike his arm and right eye with a sword. His arm will be useless. His right eye will be blind.

12¹This is a message from the LORD about Israel. The Lord is the one who made the earth and the sky, and he put the human spirit in people. And this is what the LORD said:

²Look, I will make Jerusalem like a cup of poison to the nations around her. The nations will come and attack that city, and all of Judah will be caught in the trap.

³But I will make Jerusalem like a heavy rock those who try to take it will hurt themselves. They will be cut and scratched. All the nations on earth will come together to fight against Jerusalem.

⁴ But at that time I will scare the horse, and the soldier riding it will panic. I will make all the enemy horses blind, but my eyes will be open and I will be watching over Judah's family.

⁵ The leaders of Judah will encourage the people and say, The LORD All-Powerful is your God. He makes us strong.

⁶ At that time I will make the leaders of Judah like a fire burning in a forest. They will destroy their enemies like fire burning straw. They will destroy the enemy all around them, and the people in Jerusalem will again be able to sit back and relax.

⁷ The LORD will save the people of Judah first, so the people in Jerusalem will not be able to brag too much. David's family and the other people who live in Jerusalem will not be able to brag that they are better than the other people in Judah.

⁸ But the LORD will protect the people in Jerusalem. Even the man who trips and falls will become a great soldier like David. And the men from David's family

will be like godlike the LORD'S own angel leading the people.

⁹The Lord says, At that time I will destroy the nations that came to fight against Jerusalem.

¹⁰I will fill Davids family and the people living in Jerusalem with a spirit of kindness and mercy. They will look to me, the one they stabbed, and they will be very sad. They will be as sad as someone crying over the death of their only son, as sad as someone crying over the death of their firstborn son.

¹¹There will be a time of great sadness and crying in Jerusalem. It will be like what happens in Megiddo Valley when people cry over the death of Hadad Rimmon.

¹²Each and every family will cry by itself. The men in Davids family will cry by themselves, and their wives will cry by themselves. The men in Nathans family will cry by themselves, and their wives will cry by themselves.

¹³The men in Levis family will cry by themselves, and their wives will cry by themselves. The men in Simeons family

will cry by themselves, and their wives will cry by themselves.

¹⁴And the same thing will happen in all the other tribes. The men and women will cry by themselves.

13¹ But at that time a new spring of water will be opened for Davids family and for the other people living in Jerusalem. That fountain will be to wash away their sins and to make the people pure.

²The LORD All-Powerful says, At that time I will remove all the idols from the earth. People will not even remember their names, and I will remove the false prophets and unclean spirits from the earth.

³Whoever continues to prophesy will be punished. Even their parents, their own mother and father, will say to them, You have spoken lies in the name of the LORD, so you must die! Their own mother and father will stab them for prophesying.

⁴At that time the prophets will be ashamed of their visions and prophecies. They will not wear the rough cloth that shows a person is a prophet. They will

not wear those clothes to trick people with the lies they call prophecies.

⁵They will say, I am not a prophet. I am a farmer. I have worked as a farmer since I was a little child.

⁶But other people will say, Then what are these wounds in your hands? He will say, I was beaten in the house of my friends.

⁷The LORD All-Powerful says, Sword, wake up and strike the shepherd, my friend! Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will run away. And I will punish those little ones.

⁸The LORD says, Two-thirds of the people in the land will be struck down and die, but one-third will survive.

⁹Then I will test those survivors by giving them many troubles. The troubles will be like the fire a person uses to prove silver is pure. I will test them the way a person tests gold. Then they will call to me for help, and I will answer them. I will say, You are my people. And they will say, The LORD is my God.

14¹ Look, the LORD has a special day of judgment coming, when

the riches you have taken will be divided in your city.

²I will bring all the nations together to fight against Jerusalem. They will capture the city and destroy the houses. The women will be raped, and half of the people will be taken away as prisoners. But the rest of the people will not be taken from the city.

³Then the LORD will go to war with those nations. It will be a real battle.

⁴At that time he will stand on the Mount of Olives, the hill east of Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives will split in half. Part of the mountain will move to the north, and part to the south. A deep valley will open up, from the east to the west.

⁵You will try to run away as that mountain valley comes closer and closer to you. You will run away like the time you ran from the earthquake during the time of King Uzziah of Judah. But the LORD my God will come, and all his holy ones will be with him.

⁶That will be a very special day. There will not be any light, cold, or frost. Only the LORD knows how, but there will not be any day or night. Then, when

darkness usually comes, there will still be light.

⁷ (14: 6)

⁸At that time water will flow continually from Jerusalem. That stream will split and part of it will flow east, and part of it will flow west to the Mediterranean Sea. It will flow all year long, in the summer as well as in the winter.

⁹And the LORD will be the King of the whole world. At that time all people will worship him as the only LORD with only one name.

¹⁰And the whole land from Geba in the north to Rimmon in the south past Jerusalem will become a flat plain. The city of Jerusalem will stay in the same place, but it will be built high above the land around it. It will reach from the Benjamin Gate to the First Gate (that is, the Corner Gate) and from the Tower of Hananel to the kings winepresses.

¹¹People will move to Jerusalem because it will be a safe place to live. It will never again be destroyed.

¹²But the LORD will punish the nations that fought against Jerusalem. He will send a terrible disease against them.

Their skin will begin to rot while the people are still alive. Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.

¹³That terrible disease will be in the enemy camp, and all their horses, mules, camels, and donkeys will catch that terrible disease. At that time they will be afraid of the LORD. Each man will grab his neighbors hand, and they will fight each other. Even Judah will fight against Jerusalem. This will happen even while armies from all the nations are surrounding the city. There will much gold, silver, and clothing.

¹⁴(14: 13)

¹⁵(14: 13)

¹⁶Some of the people who came to fight Jerusalem will survive. And every year they will come to worship the king, the LORD All-Powerful. They will come to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

¹⁷And if people from any of the families on earth dont go to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD All-Powerful, no rain will fall on their land.

¹⁸If any of the families in Egypt dont come to celebrate the Festival

of Shelters, they will get that terrible disease that the LORD caused the enemy nations to get.

¹⁹That will be the punishment for Egypt, and for any other nation that does not come to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

²⁰At that time even the harnesses on the horses will have the label, HOLY TO THE LORD. And all the pots used in the LORD'S Temple will be just as important as the bowls used at the altar.

²¹In fact, every dish in Jerusalem and Judah will have the label, HOLY TO THE LORD ALL-POWERFUL. All the people offering sacrifices will come, take those dishes, and cook their special meals in them. At that time there will not be any merchants buying and selling things in the Temple of the LORD All-Powerful.

Malachi

1 ¹This is a message from the LORD to Israel. God used Malachi to tell this message to the people.

²The LORD said, I love you people. But you said, What shows you love us? The LORD said, Esau was Jacobs brother, but I chose Jacob.

³And I did not accept Esau. I destroyed his hill country. His country was destroyed, and now only jackals live there.

⁴The people of Edom might say, We were destroyed, but we will go back and rebuild our cities. But the LORD All-Powerful says, If they rebuild their cities, I will destroy them again. That is why people say Edom is an evil country a nation the LORD hates forever.

⁵You people saw these things, and you said, The LORD is great, even outside of Israel!

⁶The LORD All-Powerful said, Children honor their fathers. Servants honor their masters. I am your Father, so why dont

you honor me? I am your master, so why don't you respect me? You priests don't respect my name. But you say, What have we done that shows we don't respect your name?

⁷You bring unclean bread to my altar. But you ask, What makes that bread unclean? It is unclean because you show no respect for the altar of the LORD.

⁸You bring blind animals as sacrifices, and that is wrong. You bring sick and crippled animals for sacrifices, and that is wrong. Try giving those sick animals as a gift to your governor. Would he accept those sick animals? No, he would not accept them. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

⁹Now try asking God to be good to you. But he will not listen to you, and it is all your fault. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

¹⁰I wish one of you would close the Temple doors to stop the lighting of useless fires on my altar. I am not pleased with you. I will not accept your gifts. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

¹¹ People all around the world respect my name. All around the world they bring good gifts to me and burn good incense as a gift to me, because my name is important to all of them. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

¹² But you people show that you don't respect my name. You say that the Lord's altar is unclean. And you don't like the food from that altar.

¹³ You smell the food and refuse to eat it. You say it is bad. Then you bring sick, crippled, and hurt animals to me. You try to give sick animals to me as sacrifices, but I will not accept them. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

¹⁴ Some people have good, male animals that they could give as sacrifices, but don't. Some people bring good animals and promise to give those healthy animals to me. But then they secretly exchange those good animals and give me sick animals instead. Bad things will happen to those people. I am the Great King and people all around the world respect me! This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

2¹ Priests, this rule is for you.

² Listen to me! Pay attention to what I say. Show honor to my name. If you don't respect my name, bad things will happen to you. You will say blessings, but they will become curses. I will make bad things happen because you don't show respect for my name. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

³ Look, I will punish your descendants. During the festivals, you priests offer sacrifices to me. You take the dung and inside parts from the dead animals and throw them away. But I will smear the dung on your faces, and you will be thrown away with it!

⁴ Then you will learn why I am giving you this command. I am telling you these things so that my agreement with Levi will continue. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

⁵ The Lord said, I made that agreement with Levi. I promised to give him life and peace and I gave him those things. Levi respected me and showed honor to my name.

⁶ He taught the true teachings and didn't teach lies. Levi was honest, and he loved

peace. He followed me and saved many people from being punished for the evil things they did.

⁷ A priest should know Gods teachings. People should be able to go to a priest and learn Gods teachings. A priest should be the LORD'S messenger to the people.

⁸ But you priests stopped following me! You used the teachings to make people do wrong. You ruined the agreement with Levi. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

⁹ You dont live the way I told you. You have not accepted my teachings. So I will cause people to hate you and think you are worth nothing.

¹⁰ We all have the same father. The same God made every one of us. So why do people cheat each other? They show that they dont respect the agreement. They dont respect the agreement that our ancestors made with God.

¹¹ The people of Judah cheated other people. People in Jerusalem and Israel did terrible things. God loves the Temple, but the people in Judah didnt respect the LORD'S holy Temple. The people

of Judah began to worship a foreign goddess.

¹²The LORD will remove them from Judah's family. They might bring gifts to the LORD All-Powerful but it will not help.

¹³You can cry and cover the LORD'S altar with tears, but the Lord will not accept your gifts. He will not be pleased with the things you bring to him.

¹⁴You ask, Why are our gifts not accepted? It is because the LORD saw the evil things you did he is a witness against you. He saw you cheat on your wife. You have been married to her since you were young. She was your girlfriend. Then you made your vows to each other and she became your wife.

¹⁵God wants husbands and wives to become one body and one spirit. Why? So that they would have holy children and protect that spiritual unity. Don't cheat on your wife. She has been your wife from the time you were young.

¹⁶The LORD, the God of Israel, says, I hate divorce, and I hate the cruel things that men do. So protect your spiritual unity. Don't cheat on your wife.

¹⁷You have taught wrong things, and it makes the LORD very sad. People were doing evil things, but you said that this pleased the LORD and that he accepted those things. And you taught that God does not punish people for the evil they do.

3¹The LORD All-Powerful says, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way for me. Then suddenly, the Lord you are looking for will come to his temple. Yes, the messenger you are waiting for, the one who will tell about my agreement, is really coming!

²No one can prepare for that time or stand against him when he comes. He will be like a burning fire. He will be like the strong soap people use to make things clean.

³He will make the Levites clean. He will make them pure, like silver is made pure with fire! He will make them pure like gold and silver. Then they will bring gifts to the LORD, and they will do things the right way.

⁴Then the LORD will accept the gifts from Judah and Jerusalem. It will be as it was in the past the time long ago.

⁵Then I will bring you to justice. I will be an expert witness and testify about the evil things people do. I will speak out against those who do evil magic or commit adultery. I will speak out against those who make false promises and cheat their workers and dont pay them the money they promised. I will testify against those who dont help strangers, or widows and orphans. And I will testify against those who dont respect me. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

⁶I am the LORD, and I dont change. You are Jacobs children, and you have not been completely destroyed.

⁷But you never obeyed my laws. Even your ancestors stopped following me. Come back to me, and I will come back to you. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said. You say, How can we come back?

⁸People should not steal things from God, but you stole things from me. You say, What did we steal from you? You should have given me one-tenth of your things. You should have given me special gifts.

⁹In this way your whole nation has stolen things from me, so bad things are happening to you.

¹⁰The LORD All-Powerful says, Try this test. Bring one-tenth of your things to me. Put them in the treasury. Bring food to my house. Test me! If you do these things, I will surely bless you. Good things will come to you like rain falling from the sky. You will have more than enough of everything.

¹¹I will not let pests destroy your crops. All your grapevines will produce grapes. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

¹²People from other nations will be good to you. You will have a wonderful country. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

¹³The LORD says, You said cruel things to me. But you ask, What did we say about you?

¹⁴You said, It is useless to worship God. We did what the LORD All-Powerful told us, but we didnt gain anything. We cried like people at a funeral to show we were sorry for our sins, but it didnt help.

¹⁵We think proud people are happy. Evil people succeed. They do evil things

to test God's patience, and God does not punish them.

¹⁶Then the LORD'S followers spoke with each other, and the LORD listened to them. There is a book in front of him. In that book are the names of his followers. They are the people who honor the LORD'S name.

¹⁷The LORD said, They belong to me. I will be kind to them. Parents are very kind to their children who obey them. In the same way, I will be kind to my followers.

¹⁸You people will come back to me, and you will learn the difference between good and evil. You will learn the difference between someone who follows God and someone who does not.

4¹ That time of judgment is coming. It will be like a hot furnace. All the proud people will be punished. All the evil people will burn like straw. At that time they will be like a bush burning in the fire, and there will not be a branch or root left. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

²But for you, my followers, goodness will shine on you like the rising sun. And

it will bring healing power like the sun's rays. You will be free and happy, like calves set free from their pens.

³When the time comes for me to do these things, you will trample down the wicked. They will be like ashes under your feet. This is what the LORD All-Powerful said.

⁴Remember and obey the law of my servant Moses. I gave those laws and rules to him at Mount Horeb. They are for all the people of Israel.

⁵Look, I will send Elijah the prophet to you. He will come before that great and terrible time of judgment from the LORD.

⁶Elijah will help the parents become close to their children, and he will help the children become close to their parents. This must happen, or I will come and completely destroy your country.

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